

Daily Clips



July 11, 2018

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Bellinger shows off CF skills with HR robbery

By Ken Gurnick

SAN DIEGO -- Dodgers center fielder Cody Bellinger robbed Eric Hosmer of a home run in the fourth inning of Tuesday night's 4-1 loss to the Padres.

One batter after third baseman Justin Turner robbed Hunter Renfroe of a single with a diving stop, Bellinger went back and reached over the top of the fence to catch Hosmer's bid for his 10th home run.

Bellinger said he had to ask Kiké Hernandez whether it would have been a home run. Hernandez said it would have, and replays backed that up.

"That was the first one I've ever robbed," said Bellinger, primarily a first baseman. "Pretty cool."

Bellinger, who made the All-Star Game last year at first base and went on to win the National League Rookie of the Year Award, has started 20 games in center field this season and 63 games at first base. His time in center has increased since Chris Taylor took over at shortstop for the injured Corey Seager.

Bellinger's ability to play center has also provided another defensive option for Max Muncy, the Dodgers' Camping World Final Vote candidate for an All-Star berth, who started Tuesday's game at first base.

Remembering '88 Dodgers' Hollywood ending

By Chad Thornburg

BURBANK, Calif. -- From Orel Hershiser's dominant Cy Young Award campaign to Kirk Gibson's postseason heroics, baseball fans can relive the magic of the Dodgers' 1988 season this weekend.

"MLB Network Presents: Only In Hollywood", an hour-long special celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Dodgers' most recent World Series championship, debuts Sunday on MLB Network at 5 p.m. PT. It features narration by Emmy Award-winning actor Bryan Cranston and new interviews with Hall of Fame manager Tommy Lasorda, former Dodgers stars Hershiser and Gibson, and legendary broadcaster Vin Scully, among others.

The documentary film -- produced by Dave Patterson, Bruce Cornblatt, Jed Tuminaro and Matt Anderton -- premiered Tuesday night at The Burbank Studios' iHeartRadio Theater, the former home of Johnny Carson and Jay Leno's "Tonight Show" tapings.

Scully, Hershiser and former Dodgers general manager Fred Claire -- the architect of the 1988 squad -- were on hand for the premiere. Scully, who retired from broadcasting in 2016 after 67 years behind the mic, received a standing ovation from the screening audience members, who didn't retake their seats until Scully had finished introducing the film and walked off the stage.

"It was fun to have been a part of it," Scully said of that memorable season. "I was just along for the ride, but it was a remarkable ride, and I look back with wonderful feelings for everyone involved."

The 1988 season saw Gibson win the National League Most Valuable Player Award, Hershiser break Don Drysdale's MLB record with 59 consecutive scoreless innings -- a feat that remains untouched to this day -- and the underdog Dodgers make an unexpected run from fourth place in '87 to World Series champions.

Even before getting to the Fall Classic, the Dodgers needed seven games in the NL Championship Series to get past a 100-win Mets club that featured stars such as Dwight Gooden, David Cone and Darryl Strawberry. The Mets entered as heavy favorites after taking 10 of 11 matchups against the Dodgers during the regular season.

The series was highlighted by Los Angeles' come-from-behind victory against Gooden in Game 4. Catcher Mike Scioscia tied the game in the ninth with a two-run homer, and Gibson finished it in the 12th with his first of two iconic home runs that postseason. Hershiser was named the NLCS MVP Award winner after pitching a shutout in Game 7 to close out the series.

"If Doc Gooden beats them [in Game 4], the Mets go up, 3-1, and the Dodgers are virtually on the ropes," Scully said. "There's a reason to remember it for so many years. It really was a fairy tale."

The 104-win Athletics and their "Bash Brothers" -- Oakland sluggers Jose Canseco and Mark McGwire, who combined for 74 home runs in the regular season -- awaited in the World Series, where the Dodgers were again underdogs.

A hobbled Gibson, who injured both of his legs in the NLCS, wasn't expected to play. However, he provided one of baseball's most storied highlights by launching a pinch-hit walk-off homer off Hall of Fame closer Dennis Eckersley to clinch Game 1 for the Dodgers.

Los Angeles won the franchise's sixth and most recent title in five games. Hershiser was again named MVP of the series; he pitched two complete games, including a Game 2 shutout and the Game 5 clincher.

"It was so dramatic," Scully said. "Gibby coming off the bench wounded, using a bat as a cane, and then hitting the home run, which is unbelievable. It's one of those rare, precious moments. If you're a sports fan, you never forget it."

The 1988 team still resonates in Los Angeles today. Many moments in the documentary elicited cheers from the audience, even 30 years later.

"I think it's because we haven't won another one. The last champions are always honored," Hershiser said. "It was a special team, because we weren't expected to win. The Mets should have beat us, supposedly, on paper in the playoffs going in. And then Oakland was supposed to beat us. ... I think it was a little more euphoric because it was so unexpected."

The Dodgers returned to the World Series last season for the first time since 1988, but ultimately lost in seven games to the Houston Astros. This year's squad again has championship aspirations, but may have to surprise along the way after having dealt with injuries to several key stars, including Corey Seager, Justin Turner and Clayton Kershaw.

"Another special team, but special because of who's getting it done," Hershiser said. "You go in the year think it's going to be Justin Turner and Cody Bellinger and Corey Seager who are going carry the offense. And then Bellinger's off to a slump, Seager's having surgery, Justin Turner's hurt and he's on the DL, and now all of a sudden, it's Max Muncy, and Joc Pederson finds some power. Matt Kemp comes back and he's not supposed to be on the team, and all of a sudden he's a major contributor, and he's not only that, he's a starter in the All-Star Game."

"Walker Buehler comes up and does an amazing job. Ross Stripling comes out of the bullpen and does an amazing job. ... It's another one of those special years, because you couldn't write it down on paper, you couldn't try and predict it."

"This team fulfills the definition of fluid," Scully said. "There was one stage earlier where the Dodgers were without Hyun-Jin Ryu, Clayton Kershaw and Rich Hill. Three starting pitchers are out of the lineup, and they won 26 of 36. That's when I realized this was not a nine-man team, this was a 25-man team. And the Dodgers have always talked depth; they want backups. That's what they have, that's what's gotten them where they are, and it will get them where they will win the division."

It's an underdog narrative that may sound familiar to fans who witnessed the 1988 team's improbable run.

"I hope," Hershiser said. "I hope [a championship] happens, and I hope it happens soon. Dodgers fans deserve it."

Dodgers silenced by Padres rookie Lauer

By Ken Gurnick

SAN DIEGO -- The Dodgers have pretty much owned the Padres over the years, but San Diego rookie starter Eric Lauer pretty much owns the Dodgers.

He has only five Major League wins, but two are against the Dodgers, one in Mexico in May, the other on Tuesday night, when the Padres slugged their way to a 4-1 win.

"It's the Dodgers, man, nobody likes the Dodgers," Lauer said with a wry grin. "You want to get them more than any other team."

All-Star Final Vote candidate Max Muncy's team-high 21st home run with two out in the ninth inning prevented Lauer from recording the first shutout by a Padres rookie in 12 years.

That fourth hit allowed was the end for Lauer, who had enough runs to work with on a pair of fifth-inning home runs off Rich Hill, a three-run blast by No. 8 hitter Austin Hedges on a 1-2 fastball and a solo shot by Wil Myers. It was Myers' sixth home run in the last four games, one shy of Nate Colbert's Padres record for a four-game span.

Hill lasted a season-high seven innings with seven strikeouts, and he pitched well enough to win except for that fifth inning, which he opened by walking Jose Pirela, then allowing a single to Freddy Galvis before Hedges' home run.

"They had one good inning, a couple homers, and that was the big difference," said Hill. "Two pitches that they hit out. Complete frustration on my part right now, that's the way it is."

Hill's 4.64 ERA projects to his highest for a season since 2013. He's allowed 11 home runs in 54 1/3 innings, a rate of 1.82 per nine innings, the highest of his 14-year career. And he even had one pulled back by center fielder Cody Bellinger, who robbed Eric Hosmer in the fourth inning.

Hill (2-4) didn't argue the 0-2 pitch that could have struck out Hedges, but plate umpire Vic Carrapazza called it a ball.

"It could have went either way," Hill said. "At first glance, it looked like a strike. I don't second-guess the umpires too much. They have a tough job back there. Just one of those pitches you would have liked it to go your way. I'm tired of losing. I hate losing. When you have good stuff and things don't go your way, that's the game."

Manager Dave Roberts said Hill will start on Sunday, the last game before the All-Star break, with Alex Wood going to the bullpen for the weekend.

Lauer struck out eight. Included were three times each for Matt Kemp and Logan Forsythe. Kemp fanned a fourth time to end the game against Kirby Yates.

"The fastball velo was up a couple ticks. He was beating us with the fastball and striking the breaking ball when he needed to," said Roberts. "Obviously, he's had our number."

"And I thought we hit some balls well tonight. [Center fielder Manuel] Margot had a defensive highlight game. Muncy put a good swing late, but we really didn't threaten all night."

Kiké Hernandez scorched three balls for outs and Chris Taylor had one. The best offensive chance the Dodgers had was in the seventh. Margot robbed Justin Turner leading off with a diving catch of his line drive. Muncy single, Kemp struck out, Bellinger beat the shift with a double into the spot vacated by the third baseman that sent Muncy crashing into third. But Forsythe struck out to end the inning.

"He has a really weird heater," said Bellinger. "I think it's a slow delivery and the ball just kind of jumps. He was hitting spots, too, not a lot of balls over the plate."

The 23-year-old Lauer was a first-round pick (No. 25 overall) in the 2016 Draft out of Kent State. The Dodgers took high school shortstop Gavin Lux No. 20 that year, and he's batting .317 with an .897 OPS at Class A Advanced Rancho Cucamonga. Their first-round pick this year, J.T. Ginn, did not sign.

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Bellinger said he had to ask Hernandez if the ball he caught off the bat of Hosmer would have been a home run. Hernandez said it would have, and replays backed that up.

"That was the first one I've ever robbed," said Bellinger, primarily a first baseman. "Pretty cool."

UP NEXT

Kenta Maeda returns from the paternity list to start Wednesday night's 7:10 p.m. PT game against the Padres and Joey Lucchesi. Maeda struck out nine Angels in 5 2/3 innings, and the only run he allowed was on a balk, getting the best of countryman Shohei Ohtani and doing it on little sleep after the birth of his son on Friday.

Final Vote hopeful Muncy to compete in Derby

By Deesha Thosar

As Max Muncy's Final Vote candidacy hangs in the balance -- he ranked third in Wednesday's final update, with voting set to close at 1 p.m. PT -- the Dodgers' surprise slugger is the first to confirm he will participate in this year's T-Mobile Home Run Derby on Monday at Nationals Park.

The 27-year-old, who clubbed his 21st home run on Tuesday, has a .272/.412/.617 slash line and an impressive 1.029 OPS in 69 games for the Dodgers. Muncy spent all of last season in the Minor Leagues after hitting five home runs in 96 games with the A's from 2015-16.

Oakland released Muncy at the end of Spring Training in 2017, and the Dodgers signed him as a free agent shortly after as a utility man. He wasn't on Los Angeles' radar last season, but the Dodgers were scrambling for options at the hot corner when Logan Forsythe hit the shelf this April. With Justin Turner and Corey Seager also making appearances on the disabled list, Muncy's bat began heating up with Los Angeles, and the Dodgers had no choice but to keep the left-handed hitter in the lineup.

In all, eight players will participate in the Home Run Derby. The full field will be announced Wednesday at 7 p.m. PT.

In the meantime, fans can cast votes for the final player on each league's roster -- on computers, tablets and smartphones -- exclusively online, as well as via the MLB At Bat and MLB Ballpark mobile apps, until Wednesday at 1 p.m. PT.

Turner, who won last year's Final Vote for his first National League All-Star berth, told Muncy to enjoy the campaign.

"You never know when you'll get the opportunity again and the last thing I want to do is, it comes to an end, I not get in and you look back and think I wish I would have done this," said Turner. "That's what I meant by telling him to embrace it and don't feel like you're doing too much or asking too much of people because he's having an unbelievable year and deserves to be there."

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.

LA TIMES

With Walker Buehler coming back, Dodgers contemplate six-man rotation

By Andy McCullough

After a five-week absence from the Dodgers' starting rotation caused by a microfracture in his ribcage and a botched, one-outing stint as a reliever, Walker Buehler will start Friday against the Angels at Dodger Stadium.

With Buehler activated, the Dodgers will carry six qualified starters on their roster. The team will consider using a six-man rotation to start the second half of the season, manager Dave Roberts indicated before Tuesday's game against the Padres. The Dodgers play 17 days in a row after the break, and using six starters could lighten the load on the bullpen during that stretch.

"It's a time if it ever did make sense, it's one of those times," Roberts said. "That's something we're going to talk through over the break. It's something for us to really consider."

The Dodgers would need all six starters — Clayton Kershaw, Ross Stripling, Rich Hill, Alex Wood, Kenta Maeda and Buehler — to remain healthy between now and the start of the second half. That is never guaranteed. But Roberts acknowledged the team would need to reassign one of the pitchers if all remain upright.

"At some point, if everyone remains healthy — which is the goal — we're going to have to make a decision," Roberts said. "Because a six-man rotation isn't ideal for any extended period of time."

BAEZ MAKING PROGRESS, OTHERS NOT SO MUCH

The Dodgers sent a fleet of injured pitchers to Camelback Ranch while the team traveled to Anaheim and San Diego. Roberts deemed Pedro Baez (biceps tendinitis) as the closest pitcher in the group to a return, followed by Josh Fields (shoulder inflammation).

Tony Cingrani (shoulder discomfort) is "not feeling as great as he was a week ago," Roberts said.

Tom Koehler (strained anterior capsule) continues to throw bullpen sessions, but has had issues recuperating after outings, Roberts said. Koehler was expected to face hitters this week. He has yet to pitch in a game

"The curveball has been good, the fastball velocity has been good," Roberts said. "As I understand it, when he throws a 'pen, [he is struggling] to be able to recover and to be able to bounce back and do the same thing again."

SHORT HOPS

The Dodgers optioned reliever Edward Paredes to triple-A Oklahoma City as Maeda returned from paternity leave . . . Andrew Toles received the day off as the team faced a left-handed starter, Eric Lauer.

Padres' Lauer stifles Dodgers; Hill gives up two home runs

By Andy McCullough

The pitch that doomed the Dodgers on Tuesday evening was a four-seam fastball, the sport's most generic offering, emanating from the hand of San Diego Padres left-handed rookie Eric Lauer.

The pitch hovered between 93 and 95 mph in a 4-1 Dodgers defeat, and Lauer threw it 65 times. It left an impression on Cody Bellinger, who used an expletive while describing the fastball as a "weird heater."

"You see it," Bellinger said. "And then you're swinging at it. And then it's behind you."

Bellinger spoke for the rest of the offense after a quiet evening at the plate as Lauer (5-5) disarmed them for the second time this season. Lauer finished one out shy of a shutout, keeping the Dodgers quiet until Max Muncy hit a solo home run with two outs in the ninth, his 21st homer. The blemish could not cancel out the mess created by Rich Hill in the fifth inning, when he served up two home runs of his own, a three-run homer by catcher Austin Hedges and a solo shot from outfielder Wil Myers.

Lauer drained any drama from the game. He collected eight strikeouts. A night after scoring eight runs, the Dodgers (49-42) managed only four hits. They took one at-bat with runners in scoring position.

Hill gave up four runs in the fifth, which expedited the Dodgers toward a loss in their briefest game of the season: 2 hours, 18 minutes. Hill (2-4) struck out seven and expressed content with the effectiveness of his arsenal. He cursed the two mistakes that sunk his team.

"I'm tired of losing," Hill said. "I hate losing. When you have good stuff and things just don't go your way, that's the game. But it just sucks to lose, and it's something that really eats at me."

Hill's fastball touched 93 mph inside the placid confines of Petco Park, but as he piled up outs, his teammates stumbled trying to solve Lauer.

The Dodgers had faced Lauer on May 6 in Monterrey, Mexico, near the end of a hellish 10-day trip. Lauer shut out the Dodgers for six innings. In his next 11 starts, he pitched to a 4.58 ERA and allowed opposing hitters to post an .899 on-base-plus-slugging percentage in those games.

Yet the Dodgers managed only one hit through four innings. Muncy walked in the second and then got picked off first. Justin Turner walked in the fourth. He was stranded when Muncy struck out on a 3-2 fastball at the waist and Matt Kemp whiffed on an elevated, 95-mph fastball, his second of four strikeouts on the night.

"Today there was a lot of empty swings in the strike zone," manager Dave Roberts said. "And there was some hard contact that didn't have anything to show for it."

Anemic at the plate, the players could still help Hill in the field. Turner knocked down a hard grounder off the bat of Hunter Renfroe for the first out in the bottom of the fourth. On the next pitch, first baseman Eric Hosmer hammered an 89-mph fastball to center field. Bellinger situated himself at the wall and jumped to snag the ball before it landed beyond the fence.

Hill raised his arms in triumph as Bellinger descended with the ball. The play was thrilling, but it was also a harbinger of trouble for Hill. He lost his grip on the game in the fifth.

The sequence started with a walk to Jose Pirela, a player with little power and a .312 on-base percentage before Tuesday. Freddy Galvis singled, and there were two runners aboard for Hedges.

Hill went ahead in the count with a pair of strikes. Hedges fouled off a fastball. Hill missed outside with a curveball. With a 1-2 count, Hill put a 91-mph fastball over the heart of the plate. Hedges hit the ball over the left-field fence to end the scoreless deadlock.

Three batters later, Hill failed to command another fastball. This one bisected the plate for Myers, who launched a solo shot to expand his team's lead to four.

"Just two pitches that they hit out," Hill said. "Complete frustration on my part right now."

In the seventh, the Dodgers got a runner past first for the first time. Muncy hit a one-out single. Bellinger chopped a grounder through the vacated left side of the infield for a two-out double. Muncy barely beat the tag into third base, but the call was upheld after a replay review.

To the plate came Logan Forsythe, the least-productive hitter on the roster. Forsythe has already lost his role as the primary second baseman. Muncy starts against right-handed pitchers. But with a left-hander like Lauer on the mound, Forsythe was in the lineup. He appeared to hit a double in the fifth inning, but the umpires ruled the pitch hopped foul near the third base bag.

He could not even make contact in his next at-bat.

Forsythe is not an aggressive hitter, and Lauer capitalized with a pair of well-placed pitches to start the encounter. He snapped a curveball across the plate for strike one. He spotted a 93-mph fastball on the outside corner for strike two. Forsythe waved at a 94-mph fastball for strike three to leave the runners aboard.

"We really didn't threaten," Roberts said, "all night."

OC REGISTER

Walker Buehler's return has Dodgers considering a six-man rotation again

By Bill Plunkett

SAN DIEGO — Rookie right-hander Walker Buehler will rejoin the Dodgers' rotation and start Friday against the Angels at Dodger Stadium.

It will be Buehler's first start since June 8 – and give the Dodgers six healthy starting pitchers heading into the All-Star break (barring the always real possibility of an issue arising before then), not including rookie left-hander Caleb Ferguson who has been pitching out of the bullpen in long relief.

When the Dodgers return from the break, they will play a stretch of 17 consecutive games before they get another off day – and all 17 are against first-place teams (the Brewers, Phillies and Astros) or wild-card contenders (the Braves). Manager Dave Roberts said that stretch has the Dodgers considering a six-man rotation again.

The Dodgers have used the six-man rotation at times over the past two seasons when they were blessed with good health in the group – but usually not for long.

“We've talked about it,” Roberts said. “With, I think, 17 games in a row, if it ever did make sense that's one of those times. That's one of the things we're going to talk through over the break. It's something for us to really consider.”

If the Dodgers can maintain good health among their starters – and add left-hander Hyun-Jin Ryu (groin strain) at some point in the second half – the Dodgers will have something else to consider. Who goes to the bullpen?

Right-hander Kenta Maeda is the most likely candidate. He has pitched out of the bullpen before (four times last season and once this year) and was particularly good at it. It would also have an ancillary benefit to the Dodgers, slowing Maeda's progress toward the starter-based incentives in his bonus-heavy contract and thus giving the Dodgers a little more leeway under the luxury tax threshold. So far, Maeda has reached just one bonus milestone, earning \$1 million for making his 15th start of the season last week in Anaheim.

“At some point, if everyone stays healthy – which is the goal – we're going to have to make a decision because a six-man rotation isn't ideal for any extended period of time,” Roberts acknowledged. “I haven't looked that far out as far as off days and how it would play out. But coming out of the break, it (a six-man rotation) is a thought. After 17 days we'd have to re-assess.”

REHABBING RELIEVERS

After carrying an entire starting rotation on the DL for a good stretch of May, the Dodgers currently have nearly a bullpen's worth of relievers rehabbing in Arizona.

Roberts said Tuesday that right-hander Pedro Baez (biceps tendinitis) is the closest to returning among that group. Baez could begin a rehab assignment next week, according to Roberts.

Left-hander Tony Cingrani (shoulder strain) is still throwing bullpen sessions but Roberts indicated Cingrani's progress has stalled recently. He has been out for more than a month now, his second trip to the DL with shoulder issues.

"I don't want to say setback, but he's not feeling as great as he was probably a week ago," Roberts said.

Right-hander Josh Fields (shoulder inflammation) has been eligible to return since Sunday and could be next after Baez to rejoin the Dodgers.

Right-hander Tom Koehler, meanwhile, continues a throwing program in an attempt to return from a shoulder injury he suffered in March that has kept him on the DL all season. According to Roberts, Koehler is throwing bullpen sessions and is scheduled to throw to hitters this week. But his ability to recover after each throwing session is limiting his progress.

"The curveball has been good, the fastball velocity has been good," Roberts said. "As I understand it, when he throws a 'pen, to kind of recover and be able to bounce back and do the same thing again (is a problem). ... I know we're not slow-playing him. I know that."

ALSO

Maeda rejoined the team Tuesday and was activated from the paternity list in advance of his scheduled start Wednesday. Lefty reliever Edward Paredes was optioned to Triple-A Oklahoma City. Paredes is 2-0 with a 5.87 ERA in 15 appearances for the Dodgers this season.

UP NEXT

Dodgers (RHP Kenta Maeda, 5-5, 3.24 ERA) at Padres (LHP Joey Lucchesi, 4-3, 3.27 ERA), Wednesday, 7:10 p.m., SportsNet LA (where available)

Dodgers shut down by Padres rookie left-hander Eric Lauer

By Bill Plunkett

SAN DIEGO — This is Eric Lauer's first season in the big leagues but he's already found something he must like about it – facing the Dodgers.

The rookie left-hander had not gone beyond six innings in any of his first 14 career starts. But he took a three-hit shutout into the ninth inning and came within one out of a complete-game shutout Tuesday night as the San Diego Padres handed the Dodgers a 4-1 defeat.

The Padres' first-round draft pick just two years ago, Lauer has made two starts against the Dodgers this season. They couldn't score against him until Max Muncy's solo home run with two outs in the ninth inning Tuesday. Lauer has pitched 14-2/3 innings against the Dodgers and allowed just that one run on 11 hits and three walks while striking out 13.

In 13 starts against the rest of the major leagues, Lauer has a 5.31 ERA and a 1.82 WHIP.

Asked why he's been so good against the Dodgers, Lauer told MLB.com's Katie Woo, "It's the Dodgers. Nobody likes the Dodgers."

"He pitched pretty good against us," said Matt Kemp, who was 2 for 3 against Lauer during the Mexico Series in May but struck out four times Tuesday (three against Lauer). "He did his job. We didn't do ours. That's pretty simple.

"But you know what – there's another game tomorrow."

In Tuesday's game, though, the Dodgers managed only a single by Austin Barnes and two walks through the first six innings and didn't get a runner past first base until the seventh inning. That's when Muncy singled and went to third on Cody Bellinger's two-out double. That's as far as he went.

"He has a (expletive) weird heater," Bellinger said of Lauer's fastball. "It's hard to hit. You see it. Then you swing and it's by you.

"I think it's a slow delivery and then it just jumps on you. He was also hitting his spots. There weren't a lot of pitches over the middle of the plate."

Center fielder Manuel Margot was Lauer's best friend, making two diving catches to keep the shutout going in the seventh and eighth innings. And Wil Myers ran Justin Turner's fly ball down on the warning track in left field for the second out in the ninth inning before Muncy broke up the shutout on Lauer's career-high 115th pitch of the game.

"He was beating us with the fastball, striking the breaking ball when he needed to," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said of Lauer. "I thought there were some well-hit balls tonight. Margot had a defensive-highlight game. Muncy put a good swing on it. But we didn't really threaten all night."

Even with a 14-hit night in the series opener at Petco Park on Monday, the Dodgers haven't been very threatening at all recently. A Dodgers offense that rolled through June is batting .195 over the past five games with just two home runs (both by Yasiel Puig, currently on the disabled list), 48 strikeouts and 17 walks. That has produced only 17 runs – and two victories in the five games.

Offensively, the Padres took a page out of the Dodgers' former playbook, getting all of their runs on two home runs against left-hander Rich Hill.

"It was just two pitches that they hit out," Hill said. "Complete frustration on my part right now. That's the way it is."

It was nearly three home runs but Bellinger robbed Eric Hosmer in the fourth inning, reaching over the wall in center to make a catch.

Nobody saved Hill in the fifth inning.

The left-hander walked the first batter (Jose Pirela) and gave up a single to Freddy Galvis. That brought up the No. 8 hitter, Austin Hedges.

Hill got ahead of Hedges 0-and-2. After a foul ball, Hill just missed with a curveball – or maybe he didn't.

“It could have gone either way,” Hill said, declining to criticize home plate umpire Vic Carapazza. “I mean, yeah, it could have gone either way.

“At first glance, it looked like a good strike. I don't usually second-guess the umpires too much. They have a tough job back there. It's just one of those pitches that, yeah, you would like to have gone your way.”

The next pitch did not. Hedges clubbed a fastball from Hill into the left-field seats for a three-run home run.

Two batters later, Myers also homered – his sixth in the past four games.

TRUE BLUE LA

Justin Verlander, the Dodgers and revisionist history

By Dustin Nosler

With the trade deadline three weeks from today, we are living in a world of non-stop rumors. Will the Dodgers get Manny Machado? What about the bullpen? And is Jacob deGrom a real possibility?

But with the deadline comes reminiscing of years past, and a lot of folks are thinking about last year's deadline. You remember, no? The Dodgers acquired Yu Darvish, Tony Watson and Tony Cingrani on deadline day, and all were key contributors to the Dodgers' run to the postseason and up through the World Series. Except for Darvish, who infamously got rocked in the Series.

With that came the natural question a hindsight revisionist would ask: Why didn't the Dodgers trade for Justin Verlander instead? You know, the guy who was rejuvenated after being traded to Houston and helped lead the Astros to the World Series title ... because everyone saw that coming. At least, everyone in my Twitter mentions.

Sure, he didn't actually win a game in the Fall Classic (actually left both his starts behind), but he was really good against the Dodgers. But that's not the issue here. The issue is folks saying

they knew Verlander was the right choice ... because of what he did after getting to Houston. You can see how this is problem.

When the Dodgers acquired Darvish, he was unquestionably the best starting pitcher available. It wasn't an issue of "Darvish or Verlander?" it was more, "Darvish or bust."

Through July 31, Darvish had a 4.01 ERA, 3.99 FIP, 18.3 K-BB% and a .224 batting average against. His ERA and FIP were inflated by a bit by a disastrous outing in Miami. In 3 2/3 innings, he allowed 10 runs, nine hits and two home runs. You can't exclude it, but it explains the higher than expected ERA and FIP. In the same time period, Verlander had a 4.29 ERA, 4.15 FIP, 11.6 K-BB% and a .249 BAA. His numbers weren't inflated close to the deadline, he just wasn't pitching particularly well. Certainly not well enough to justify adding that much money to the payroll.

Speaking of money, the contract statuses of the two pitchers also played into the Dodgers' thinking. Darvish was in the final year of his six-year contract and was owed roughly \$3.7 million for the remainder of the season. Verlander — four years Darvish's senior — was signed through 2019 at \$28 million per season, plus whatever the Astros had to pay of Verlander's salary after they acquired him. Detroit did send \$16 million to Houston in the deal, so the total outlay of money for Houston was roughly \$44.75 million for two years and a month of pitching. With the Dodgers' desire to get under the luxury tax in the winter, taking on that kind of money wouldn't have made it an easy task to accomplish.

But that's beside the point. Verlander was acquired by Houston at the waiver trade deadline (Aug. 31). Darvish had been a Dodger for a month by that time and there really wasn't room in the rotation or in the payroll. And the Astros didn't go after him until guys like Dallas Keuchel and Josh Reddick spoke up in the media. This was after their failed attempt to land the Orioles' Zach Britton at the non-waiver deadline. They also had their sights set on Sonny Gray or Jose Quintana, but Quintana had already been dealt to the Cubs a few weeks before the deadline and the Astros didn't want to meet the Athletics' asking price for Gray (which the Yankees did). So before you Captain Hindsight want to say Houston was smart for getting Verlander, well, consider he wasn't even their second- or third choice in terms of pitching acquisitions.

Everyone looks at what Verlander did after being traded to Houston and say, "The Dodgers should have traded for him instead of Darvish." This is exactly why hindsight is undefeated. If there were any inkling that Verlander would regain his dominant, Cy Young-form from early in his career and wouldn't suffer any major injuries, then yes, the Dodgers should have traded for him. And while Darvish was far from the perfect pitcher, the gamble on him made a lot more sense than trading for a 34-year-old who had an injury history, mediocre numbers and real sign of him turning things around at the end of July.

Could you imagine how insufferable Dodgers Twitter would be if they did acquire Verlander and he continued to pitch to a 4-plus FIP? There would be an angry mob storming Dodger Stadium with pitchforks.

Folks will continue to play the hindsight game because it's easy to do. They're always right. But it just isn't that simple. There is no amount of analysis that could have been done before July 31 that would have pointed to Verlander being the best pitcher to acquire.

There's no telling if the Dodgers would have won the World Series last year if they had traded for Verlander. There are far too many variables to consider. They might not have even made it (and the same could be said about the Astros). All I know is, I'm tired of reading/hearing, "The Dodgers should have traded for Verlander." It didn't happen for very obvious reasons. It's time to move on.

Dodgers have no answers for rookie Eric Lauer in 4-1 loss

By Ryan Walton

The Dodgers were done in by one big inning Monday night, handing out four runs to the Padres in the fifth inning. Catcher Austin Hedges produced the crushing blow with a three-run homer as the Dodgers went on to lose 4-1.

Rookie Eric Lauer turned in the best start of his young career, coming within an out of a complete-game shutout. With two outs in the ninth, Lauer gave up a solo homer to Max Muncy on his 115th pitch of the night and wouldn't be allowed to continue.

Kirby Yates came on from the Padre bullpen to strike out Matt Kemp to end the game.

It was the first time the lefty had pitched past the sixth inning, but not the only time he has had success against the Dodgers. Back on May 6 at Dodger Stadium, Lauer tossed six scoreless innings in a 3-0 Padres win.

Muncy's 21st homer of the season was only the fourth hit for Los Angeles all night.

Outside of the disaster fifth, Rich Hill pitched well thanks in large part to the defense behind him. The Padres hit the ball hard all night but usually at somebody. Eric Hosmer would've hit a home run in the fourth had it not been for Cody Bellinger reaching up to take it away.

Hill would last seven innings, giving up eight hits total with seven strikeouts and a walk. Four of those eight hits came in the fourth when Hedges muscled his homer out to the Western Metal Supply building in left.

Will Myers would add a solo shot for his fifth straight game with a long ball.

The best chance to score for the Dodgers came in the seventh with runners on second and third. Logan Forsythe would strikeout for the third time on the night to end the threat.

Forsythe is in some kind of slump, going 1-for-32 in his last 34 plate appearances.

Up Next

Kenta Maeda (5-5, 3.24) will take the ball for the Dodgers against Padres' lefty Joey Lucchesi (4-4, 3.27).

Tuesday particulars

Home runs: Austin Hedges (4), Wil Myers (8), Muncy (21)

WP - Eric Lauer (5-5): 8 2/3 IP, 4 hits, 2 walk, 8 strikeouts

LP - Rich Hill (2-4): 7 IP, 8 hits, 4 runs, 1 walk, 7 strikeouts

Quakes winning streak reach 15-straight with 6-1 win

By Craig Minami

Limited schedule with three of the four full-season affiliates off on Tuesday plus a rainout in the Dominican Summer League. But the three teams that did play, Rancho Cucamonga, Ogden and AZL Dodgers all won. Rancho Cucamonga has now won 15 straight games and the AZL Dodgers have an eight-game winning streak.

Player of the day

Over the last two weeks, it has been difficult not to pick a different Quake as the player of the day because the team has been playing so well. And that did not change on Tuesday night, with several good performances, it was hard to pick one but for this entry, it will be outfielder Logan Landon.

The 25-year old outfielder was a triple short of a cycle on Tuesday night, going 3-for-4 with a two-run homer. So far in July, Landon has hit .394/.487/.727 in 38 plate appearances.

Triple-A Oklahoma City

The Triple-A All-Star game will be played tomorrow at Huntington Park in Columbus, Ohio. Oklahoma City will return from their break on Thursday July 12th when they start a four-game series at the Round Rock Express (Rangers).

Double-A Tulsa

The Drillers were off on Tuesday. Starting tomorrow, they begin their series at the Northwest Arkansas Naturals (Royals).

Class-A Rancho Cucamonga

The Quakes jumped out to take a four-run lead and went on to win 6-1 over the Lancaster JetHawks (Rockies). The Quakes have now won 15 straight games.

On the mound, Tony Gonsolin started and pitched five strong innings. He gave up a run and three hits. Gonsolin also had 11 strikeouts while walking two. The two relievers Jason Richman and Connor Strain, each pitched two scoreless innings for the Quakes.

Both Logan Landon and Rylan Bannon fell one hit short of a cycle. Landon needed a triple and Bannon needed a home run. Landon did hit a two-run homer in the first inning to cap the Quakes four-run outburst. Also, Cody Thomas had two hits and Cristian Santana drove in a pair of runs.

Class-A Great Lakes

The Loons were also off on Tuesday. They will go on the road to start their series on Wednesday against the Clinton LumberKings (Mariners).

Rookie - Pioneer

The Raptors had leads of six and seven runs as they cruised to an 11-4 win against the Missoula Osprey (Diamondbacks). Ronny Brito had three hits and two runs batted in. Miguel Vargas went 2-for-4 to continue hitting .500 for the 2018 Raptors.

Joel Inoa pitched $4\frac{2}{3}$ innings in his start. Inoa gave up two runs (one earned) and five hits. Inoa also struck out five.

Connor Mitchell $2\frac{1}{3}$ innings, he gave up two unearned runs and he was awarded the win. Austin Drury finished the game for the Raptors and he pitched two scoreless innings.

Rookie - Arizona League

The AZL Dodgers had but one lead in this game but it was at the best time as they won 8-7 on a walk-off two-run homer against the AZL Brewers. Sauryn Lao hit his first home run for the AZL Dodgers and it was a game-winner.

Tim Locastro and Donovan Solano continued their rehab assignments with they each had two hits for the AZL Dodgers. Braydon Fisher made his third appearance on the mound for the AZL Dodgers.

Transactions

Triple-A: Los Angeles optioned left-handed pitcher Edward Paredes to Oklahoma City.

Class-A: Rancho Cucamonga activated right-handed pitcher Tony Gonsolin from the 7-day disabled list and placed left-handed pitcher Logan Salow on the 7-day disabled list.

Rookie: Catcher Tre Todd and left-handed pitcher Andrew Shaps assigned to AZL Dodgers.

Tuesday's scores

Rancho Cucamonga 6, Lancaster 1

Ogden 11, Missoula 4

AZL Dodgers 8, AZL Brewers 7

Wednesday's schedule

4:30 p.m. PT: Great Lakes (TBD) at Clinton [Mariners] (Scott Boches)

5:05 p.m.: Tulsa (TBD) at NW Arkansas [Royals] (Arnaldo Hernandez)

6:00 p.m.: Ogden (Joel Inoa) vs. Missoula (Edgar Martinez)

7:05 p.m.: Rancho Cucamonga (Isaac Anderson) vs. Lancaster (Ty Culbreth)

DODGER INSIDER

Dodgers announce signings of 32 of 40 selections from 2018 Draft

By Rowan Kavner

The Dodgers signed 32 of their 40 selections from the 2018 MLB First-Year Player Draft, the team officially announced Tuesday.

The deadline for clubs to sign their picks was last Friday. The Dodgers signed 12 of their first 13 picks in the draft, with the lone exception first-round pick pitcher J.T. Ginn, who announced his decision to go to Mississippi State. The Dodgers followed that pick by also selecting pitchers in Rounds 2–4 in Michael Grove, John Rooney and Braydon Fisher, who all signed.

In total, the Dodgers signed 14 pitchers and 18 position players. You can look back for a refresher on the draft selections, with commentary from director of amateur scouting Billy Gasparino.

Muncy gives last impression for Final Vote, but serves as lone offense

By Cary Osborne

In what turned out to be his last plate appearance before Wednesday's deadline for the All-Star Final Vote, Max Muncy clubbed a 95-mph fastball by San Diego starting pitcher Eric Lauer into the seats in left-center field for a home run in the ninth inning on Tuesday.

It was the lone run scored by the Dodgers in a game where they were flummoxed by the rookie left-hander in a 4–1 loss in San Diego on Tuesday night.

The Dodgers had one at-bat the entire game with a runner in scoring position. Cody Bellinger slapped a two-out double down the left-field line in the seventh inning, moving Muncy, who previously singled, to third base. However, Lauer struck out Logan Forsythe to end the threat.

The Dodgers couldn't get much going against Lauer, who changed speeds drastically with his fastball and cutter with an occasional curveball thrown in. Lauer pitched 8 2/3 shutout innings before Muncy's homer. It knocked Lauer out of the game in favor of Kirby Yates, who struck out Matt Kemp to end the game.

The Dodgers had a couple of hits taken away from them late by Padres center fielder Manuel Margot—on a Justin Turner liner in the seventh and a Chris Taylor sinking liner in the eighth.

“The fastball velo was up a couple ticks than it normally is,” said manager Dave Roberts of Lauer, who has now allowed one run in 14 2/3 innings against the Dodgers this year. “He was beating us with the fastball, striking the breaking ball when he needed to. I felt there were well-hit balls tonight. Margot had a defensive highlight game today.”

Muncy was a bright spot with a walk, single and homer. It was his team-leading 21st homer of the year. His average climbed to .272 and his OPS is up to 1.029. The All-Star candidate came into the game 2 for his last 18.

Dodgers starting pitcher Rich Hill worked through four shutout innings before the Padres unleashed some power in the bottom of the fifth inning.

Austin Hedges hit a three-run homer, the first three-run homer allowed by Hill as a Dodger and first since June 29, 2007 when he was a Chicago Cub. Wil Myers then followed with a solo home run.

“Ball came out of my hand really well,” Hill said. “They had one good inning—a couple of homers, and that was really the big difference, obviously.”

Hill recovered, though, and gave the Dodgers seven innings, allowing eight hits and a walk with seven strikeouts in total.

He got some help from Bellinger who took a home run away from Eric Hosmer in the fourth inning.

It's the 11th time in the last 15 games that a Dodger starter has completed at least six innings.

Notebook: Maeda off paternity leave, Roberts' All-Star staff, Muncy voting

By Rowan Kavner

Kenta Maeda rejoined the Dodgers on Tuesday in San Diego after celebrating the birth of his son this weekend.

Maeda, whose son was born Friday morning in Los Angeles, was activated Tuesday. Reliever Edward Paredes was optioned to Triple-A Oklahoma City before the Dodgers' second game of the series against the Padres.

Rich Hill starts Tuesday, as the Dodgers' rotation starts to more closely resemble the group that began the year. Manager Dave Roberts will have some decisions to make as the rotation continues to get healthier.

With Walker Buehler expected to return to start Friday, Ross Stripling's breakout season and Clayton Kershaw, Alex Wood, Maeda and Hill all healthy, Roberts said a temporary six-man rotation is a possibility after the break. If everyone stays healthy, in all likelihood one of those pitchers will eventually go to the bullpen—though that decision won't be an easy one.

Despite all the injuries to the Dodger rotation this year, Dodger starting pitchers have the best ERA (3.32) in the National League this year and the best strikeout-to-walk ratio (4.32) in all of baseball.

Kershaw started the San Diego series by holding the Padres scoreless through six innings Monday. Hill starts Tuesday coming off a five-inning performance against the Pirates, during which he allowed two runs in five innings and earned the win.

He's also contributed in recent starts to the Dodger starters' stellar K/9 ratio, striking out 26 batters with four walks in his last four starts since returning from the disabled list.

All-Star coaching

Roberts will take his coaching staff to Washington, D.C., next week for the All-Star Game.

Joining Roberts, bench coach Bob Geren, pitching coach Rick Honeycutt, first base coach George Lombard, third base coach Chris Woodward, hitting coach Turner Ward, assistant hitting coaches Brant Brown and Luis Ortiz and bullpen coach Mark Prior will be Washington manager Dave Martinez and Colorado manager Bud Black.

Paul Lessard, director of athletic training for the Nationals, Paul Navarro, assistant athletic trainer of the San Diego Padres, and Pete Prinzi, strength and conditioning coach of the St. Louis Cardinals, will also tend to the NL All-Stars.

Matt Kemp and Kenley Jansen have already been tabbed All-Stars. Max Muncy could join the duo, as he's currently one of five Final Vote candidates in the National League.

The Dodgers created the Max Muncy Campaigning Headquarters on Tuesday to help support the cause for Muncy. Fans can continue to place their Final Vote at dodgers.com/vote or mlb.com/vote until the voting period ends Wednesday at 1 p.m. PT.

NBC LOS ANGELES

Eric Lauer Just Misses a Complete Game Shutout as San Diego Stymies Dodgers Offense

By Michael Duarte

What a difference a day makes.

Austin Hedges and Wil Myers both homered, and the San Diego Padres defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers, 4-1, on Tuesday night at Petco Park.

Twenty-four little hours ago, the Dodgers brought the sun and the flowers, in a blowout victory backed by six shutout innings of Clayton Kershaw.

On Tuesday, came the rain; both literally and figuratively, as it sprinkled in San Diego throughout the day. As the water drops landed on fans late in the afternoon, it was the Padres who made it rain during the game at the plate.

Both teams took turns trading zeroes through the first four innings until San Diego broke the game open with a four-run fifth.

Austin Hedges hit a three-run homer off Rich Hill and Wil Myers followed with a solo shot, his sixth home run in his last four games.

"It was just two pitches that they hit out," said Hill. "Complete frustration on my part right now, and that's the way it is. The guy over there [Lauer] pitched really well. Tip your cap to him."

Earlier in the at-bat to Hedges, Hill thought he had struck out the Padres' catcher with an 0-2 curveball down in the zone. However, home plate umpire Vic Carapazza called it a ball and Hedges crushed a fastball into the upper-deck of the Western Metal Supply Co. building on the very next pitch.

"It could have went either way," said Hill of the pitch. "I'll have to go back and look at it. At first glance it looked like a strike. I don't usually second guess the umpires, but that's one of those pitches you wish would have gone the other way."

Outside of that one inning, Hill (2-4) was solid, allowing four runs on eight hits with one walk and seven strikeouts in a season-high seven innings of work.

"I'm just tired of losing. I hate losing," said Hill. "When you have good stuff and unfortunately things just don't go our way, obviously that's the game, but it just sucks to lose."

Just one day after Kershaw threw six scoreless innings against San Diego, it was a different left-hander's turn in 23-year-old Padres' rookie Eric Lauer.

Lauer (5-5) was lights out against Los Angeles, scattering just four hits with two walks and eight strikeouts in eight and 2/3 scoreless innings before surrendering a home run to Max Muncy on the final at-bat of the game.

"Muncy put a good swing on one late, but we really didn't threaten all night," said Dodgers' manager Dave Roberts of Lauer.

Entering the game, Lauer had never pitched into the seventh inning on the season, but was one out away from his first career complete-game shutout before the Muncy homer.

"He's got a f---ing weird heater," said Bellinger. "It's a slow delivery and then the ball just jumps and it's behind you. He was also hitting his spots too. Not a lot of balls were over the middle of the plate."

Despite the solo shot, Lauer has been dominant against the Dodgers in his two starts against them this season. The Ohio native has allowed just one run in 14 innings, recording just two walks and 13 strikeouts in two games this year.

"Both nights he pitched well against us," said Roberts. "Certain guys were getting some good swings off of him, but obviously he's had our number."

The lone bright spot for the Boys in Blue came on defense as center fielder Cody Bellinger robbed Eric Hosmer of a home run in the fourth inning.

"I just looked for the fence and jumped," said Bellinger of the play. "I didn't even know it was a homer until Kiké told me it was. That's the first one I've ever robbed, so that was pretty cool."

Up Next:

New father, Kenta Maeda, takes the mound on Wednesday against LHP Joey Lucchesi for San Diego. First pitch is scheduled for 7:10PM PST.