



**Minnesota Twins Daily Clips**  
**Sunday, June 3, 2018**

- Lynn keeps Tribe in check; Rosario hits 10th HR. MLB.com (Denney) p.1
- Twins preparing for all possibilities at Draft. MLB.com (Bollinger) p. 2
- Lance Lynn brushes off wildness, allows just one run in Twins victory over Cleveland. Star Tribune (Hine) p.3
- Pitcher Tyler Duffey returns to Twins, looking to turn a corner. Star Tribune (Hine) p. 4
- Twins' offensive awakening isn't out of bed just yet. Star Tribune (Scoggins) p.4
- Rosario continues hot hitting into June. Star Tribune (Hine) p.6
- Twins have 20th pick in draft; Torii Hunter and Denard Span were taken at that spot. Star Tribune (Miller) p. 6
- Saturday's Twins-Indians game recap. Star Tribune (Hine) p.8
- Ossie Bluege: Important but forgotten figure in Twins history. Star Tribune (Brown) p. 9
- Lance Lynn, Eddie Rosario help Twins to 7-1 win over Cleveland Indians. Pioneer Press (Berardino) p. 10
- Would Twins draft Oregon State lefty Luke Heimlich? Club isn't saying. Pioneer Press (Berardino) p. 11
- Preview: Twins vs. Indians. Fox Sports North (STATS) p.12
- Twins win second straight over Cleveland. Fox Sports North (AP) p.13
- Zulgad: No more Mauer or Dozier? Twins infield could have very different look in 2019. ESPN 1500 (Zulgad) p.14
- Cautious approach proves effective for Lance Lynn as Twins beat Indians again. The Athletic (Hayes) p.16

---

**Lynn keeps Tribe in check; Rosario hits 10th HR**  
**Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | June 2, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- Lance Lynn tallied a season-high 113 pitches as he put a couple of rough early innings behind him and delivered his third consecutive strong outing on Saturday.

Lynn held the Indians to a single run on two hits and worked around some command issues as he helped the Twins to a 7-1 win at Target Field that pulled them within 4 1/2 games of Cleveland for first place in the American League Central. After a disastrous start to the season, Lynn's ERA has been on a freefall since the start of May.

"I thought it was pretty gritty," Minnesota manager Paul Molitor said of Lynn's outing. "You look at the traffic that he created for himself between hit batsmen and a handful of walks, he gets pretty flustered out there at times whether it's a play or a pitch or a noncall. He made some close pitches that didn't go his way, but he just kept finding his way to grind through it."

Lynn now owns a 5.46 ERA and has shaved nearly three runs off of it since his last start of April, when the Blue Jays rocked him for six earned runs. Over his last six starts, Lynn has a 3.34 ERA.

After Lynn escaped a one-out jam in the fifth with a 5-4-3 double play, it appeared that his day was done. Molitor sent Lynn back out for the top of the sixth, and the righty rewarded the vote of confidence. Lynn struck out Yonder Alonso swinging, and Max Kepler followed by making a leaping catch in right field to take away a hit from Greg Allen. He then got Jason Kipnis to ground out and end the frame.

With 113 pitches under his belt, Lynn pounded his glove with his throwing hand as he walked back to the dugout. He has now thrown at least six innings and held opponents to two runs or fewer in each of his last three starts.

"It's great," Lynn said of Minnesota's defensive showing on Saturday. "You've just got to try to make pitches. They're scoring runs and playing defense. It's a lot of fun to play the game."

Minnesota's offense came to life in the third and had no problem backing Lynn from that point. Brian Dozier smashed an RBI triple off the top of the right-field wall to plate Ehire Adrianza to get Minnesota on the board, and Eddie Rosario followed with a two-run homer, his 10th, to make it 3-1.

"Trevor Bauer doesn't throw me many fastballs," Dozier said. "If he does, he likes to show it with two strikes up. So we did a good job of, I say it all the time, taking what the game gives you. I was sitting on a slider a couple at-bats, and he threw it."

In the fourth, The Twins threw four more runs on the board to blow the game open. Kepler and Ryan LaMarre delivered RBI singles to chase Bauer. He was replaced by Dan Otero, who threw just three pitches before Dozier smashed an RBI double to push the Twins' lead to 6-1.

Oliver Perez, who the Indians acquired Saturday morning, came on to replace Otero and make his season debut, and his first pitch slipped past Roberto Perez and allowed LaMarre to score from third.

Trevor Hildenberger, Ryan Pressly and Tyler Duffey threw scoreless innings in the seventh, eighth and ninth. Pressly's appearance was his 30th of the year.

#### HE SAID IT

"We debated a little bit about going back out there for the sixth, but he was still making some pitches when he had to. We had people ready just in case, but he got through that inning, which was helpful to us in the big picture." -- Molitor, on sticking with Lynn for the sixth

#### UP NEXT

The Twins will close out their four-game set with the Indians at 1:10 p.m. CT on Sunday. Following an outstanding start in Kansas City on Tuesday, Kyle Gibson will get the start for Minnesota. He threw seven scoreless and struck out eight against the Royals while producing 10 swinging strikes with his slider. Gibson will face off with Cleveland's Mike Clevinger (4-2, 3.14 ERA).

### **Escobar's 2 HRs, Rosario's defense lift Twins** **Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 1, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- With the 2018 MLB Draft two days away, Twins chief baseball officer Derek Falvey said Saturday the club has been busy preparing for possible scenarios for their first pick, which comes in at No. 20 overall after having the No. 1 overall selection last year.

Because the Twins are picking later in the Draft this year, Falvey said he hasn't seen any prospects in person, but has looked at video of more than 300 prospects. And at least eight people in the organization saw each of the club's top 150 players on their board.

This year, the Twins have a new technology with a digital draft board similar to the one the Vikings added last year. It's allowed them to run simulated mock drafts so they discuss what they'd do if certain players were still on the board when pick No. 20 comes around.

"If I was comparing Draft classes, I'd say this one seems a little deeper up top with the college crop, but it becomes less clear once you get to the teens range because it's mostly the high school crop," Falvey said. "This year, compared to previous years, it seems a little less certain what will be there at 20. We'll start to get there by Monday once we start to hear things from different rooms."

Falvey added that the club has no preference for a position player or a pitcher for that first selection, and they'll simply pick whoever is the best remaining player on their board.

"The way we look at it is we have to stack 20 names because the worst-case scenario is the 1-19 we have is the 1-19 the other teams have," Falvey said. "But it's atypical you get the 20th guy. You're probably going to get somebody higher than that. We don't look at need. We just get the best available player."

After the No. 20 pick, the Twins have another selection on Monday with the No. 59 overall selection in the second round. But Minnesota traded the No. 74 pick to the Padres as part of the trade that sent right-hander Phil Hughes to San Diego. The Twins essentially received \$7.25 million from the Padres for the pick, which they can use to spend on Major League talent instead of investing in the Draft.

"It's never easy to give up Draft picks," Falvey said. "But it's part of the equation. Looking for where we can best align assets and value. This was an opportunity to do that."

#### Injury updates

- Twins first baseman Joe Mauer is making better progress with his concussion-like symptoms and was able to take in a second straight game from the dugout on Friday. He hit in the cages before Saturday's game and is scheduled to hit on the field on Sunday. But Twins manager Paul Molitor said Mauer won't be activated from the 10-day disabled list Sunday.

- Twins catcher Jason Castro, who underwent season-ending left knee surgery on May 15, returned to Target Field on Saturday, as he'll do his

rehab at the ballpark to remain around the medical staff and his teammates. Castro underwent an operation to repair a torn meniscus and is expected to be able to go through a normal offseason leading up to next season.

### **Lance Lynn brushes off wildness, allows just one run in Twins victory over Cleveland**

**Chris Hine | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018**

The Lance Lynn experience has rarely been a smooth one, and his start Saturday against the Indians was Lynn on full display, warts and all.

He allowed only two hits but walked five hitters and plunked another. He threw 113 pitches, the most he has thrown all season, but only 65 for strikes.

“Pitch counts are pointless,” a taciturn Lynn said after the game. “It’s about how you’re doing.”

He did well enough. His customary wildness did not prevent him from defeating the Indians, as he pitched himself in and out of trouble while the Twins offense continued its resurrection in a 7-1 victory at Target Field.

Suddenly Lynn’s numbers are coming back to Earth after a rough April and early May. In his past three starts, Lynn (4-4) has allowed just three earned runs and his earned-run average is down to 5.46 while picking up three wins.

He just hasn’t made it look easy. Saturday was no exception.

“I thought it was pretty gritty,” manager Paul Molitor said. “You look at the traffic he created for himself ... he gets pretty flustered out there at times.

“He made some close pitches that didn’t go his way, but he just kept finding his way to grind through it.”

The third inning required a lot of that grinding. Lynn walked two hitters and hit Yonder Alonso to load the bases. He then went to 3-2 on right fielder Greg Allen, who fouled off a few pitches before flying out to Eddie Rosario to end the inning and allowing Target Field to exhale.

“What you saw earlier in the season versus now is him getting out of those and making big pitches,” second baseman Brian Dozier said.

It kept the Twins within a run and allowed them to get the lead in the bottom of the third. Dozier tripled on a high fly ball that scraped the wall in right field, and a similar towering shot from Rosario barely made it into the first row of seats over the wall.

The triple and home run had a hit probability of 11 and 16 percent, respectively, according to Statcast, but the Twins won’t complain about something like that going their way.

Lynn continued his escape act in the fifth inning. With two on, he induced the dangerous Edwin Encarnacion to hit into a 5-4-3 double play. Lynn pounded his glove and gave a roar after the outs went into the books.

Soon after the fifth the overcast sky that rained on Target Field earlier in the day gave way to afternoon sunshine.

It might have been stormy at times again for Lynn, but of late he has gotten through to the other side.

He was at 99 pitches after five innings, but Molitor sent him back out for the sixth. It turned out to be one of his easiest innings, one of two in which he retired the side in order.

The Twins capitalized on another bit of good fortune, scoring four unearned runs off Trevor Bauer (4-4) in the sixth after second baseman Jason Kipnis booted a potential double-play ball.

That came after Lynn stretched out his arm for his longest outing of the season.

“He’s never been what you would say a total command guy,” Molitor said. “He’s always had that issue to some degree. I think it’s been a little bit exaggerated here, at least early. But the last three starts have been trending in a good way.”

## **Pitcher Tyler Duffey returns to Twins, looking to turn a corner**

**Chris Hine | Star Tribune | June 23, 2018**

When pitcher Tyler Duffey strolled through the Twins clubhouse Friday, catcher Mitch Garver shouted, "Nice haircut."

Duffey, who got his sides shaved but left a little on top replied, "Thanks. Got to look the part."

That's what Duffey is hoping to accomplish now that he's back with the Twins for the second time this season. Duffey made his second appearance Saturday since rejoining the Twins from Class AAA Rochester after a trying start to his 2018 season.

He allowed seven earned runs in his first two outings and although he only gave up one run in his third appearance — a three-inning stint against the Reds on April 29 — the Twins sent Duffey down as they looked for fresh arms in the bullpen.

Duffey tried to take the reassignment in stride.

"When there's not room, there's not room," Duffey said. "All you can do at the end of that is go out and pitch and just keep throwing a lot. Once you lose that, that's when you get in trouble. I think I maintained it pretty well, stay focused and did what I was supposed to do."

Duffey was back to form Thursday in his first appearance since rejoining the Twins when he threw two innings without surrendering a hit. Saturday was a little shakier. He allowed two hits and required nice plays from first baseman Logan Morrison and center fielder Ryan LaMarre to get out of the ninth.

Duffey said he tried to mix in more four-seam fastballs into his repertoire while in Rochester.

"That's kind of the way things are going. Guys are trying to hit homers so you're trying to get it above their bats and get some strikes with that," Duffey said. "It helps the curveball play better, helps my sinker play better. It's not necessarily major tweaks, it's just usage of pitches."

One thing that's notable from Duffey's first few appearances in 2018 is his changeup velocity. Duffey's changeup is averaging of 87.8 miles per hour, according to Statcast. That's up from 83.9 a season ago. That was a purposeful adjustment Duffey made in spring training in consultation with pitching coach Garvin Alston.

"In the past I was told to take some off it, slow it down," Duffey said. "But as long as your arm speed is right, the changeup is a changeup. ... It's one of those things that as long as it's moving and it's not in the middle of the plate, it's going to have the same effect."

Added Alston: "Sometimes you want a harder changeup and sometimes you want a softer changeup. He can actually do both, which is good."

Keeping Bert at bay

Outfielder LaMarre had 90 plate appearances in the majors before Friday's game, but he had yet to secure an extra-base hit until Friday, when he doubled in a run in the fourth inning.

If nothing else, LaMarre said the double would keep broadcaster Bert Blyleven at bay.

"Bert has been busting my chops for about a week and a half now," LaMarre said. "To get him off my back was nice. I felt like I hit some balls kind of hard in the past, but it was nice to finally end up on second base."

Good day for Mauer

Manager Paul Molitor said Friday was a good day for first baseman Joe Mauer as Mauer took batting and fielding practice and was able to make it through the Twins' victory that night. Mauer has had issues with light sensitivity as he recovers from a concussion.

Because of rain, Molitor said Mauer was scheduled to hit in the cages before Saturday's game and would likely take batting practice again Sunday.

## **Twins' offensive awakening isn't out of bed just yet**

**Chip Scoggins | Star Tribune | June 3, 2018**

The Twins lineup combined to strike out 15 times on Saturday. Twice they had base-runners thrown out at home plate. And they still scored seven

runs.

That qualifies as ... progress?

In this case, yes. The feeble-hitting lineup has awakened from its slumber. It's a small sample size, but a 7-1 win over Cleveland marked the fifth time in six games that the Twins have scored at least seven runs.

Welcome to the party, guys.

"Any time you're hitting and scoring runs," first baseman Logan Morrison said, "it's going to be lively."

The offense has had the opposite effect before this stretch. Their lack of pop has been a real buzzkill and a big reason why the Twins find themselves in third place in the middling AL Central.

The Twins carry a 3-12 record in one-run games. Their season would look different right now if they had produced even a slight uptick in scoring.

Maybe this spark will lead to something reasonably sustainable that keeps them in the race and makes summer more than a painful slog of sub-.500 baseball.

"Some of the weight we've been carrying just trying to find ways to manufacture anything has been lifted somewhat," manager Paul Molitor said. "Better results breed confidence."

Their lineup should produce more than it has shown to date. They finished seventh in Major League Baseball in runs scored last season. On paper, this lineup looked as good, if not more potent.

Injuries and ineffectiveness have conspired to create a quagmire of ineptitude.

Miguel Sano spent a long stretch on the DL and continues to strike out at record pace. Joe Mauer has contributed 11 RBI. And Byron Buxton reached base only 17 times before joining Mauer on the disabled list.

And yet the Twins trail Cleveland by only 4½ games with a chance to narrow that gap even more in Sunday's finale of what feels like a pivotal series.

"It's a good sign that we're starting to come along a little bit," hitting coach James Rowson said. "The guys in this clubhouse feel good about the lineup. I feel good about the lineup. It's just a matter of getting it together."

That includes Sano, who would make the lineup more dangerous if he can improve his plate discipline and cut down on his whiffs. Molitor gave Sano the day off Saturday to rest but also noted "the matchup isn't great" against Cleveland starter Trevor Bauer and his wicked curveball.

On Friday, Cleveland intentionally walked Eddie Rosario twice to face Sano in key situations. Nothing paints a more damning picture than that.

Sano made them pay the first time, smoking an RBI double to left field. He flew out the second time.

"The credit in that situation goes to how hot Eddie is," Rowson said. "That's more about Eddie than it is about [Sano] right now."

Well, yes and no. Rosario certainly has earned that level of respect based on his production. Morrison called Rosario an All-Star after watching him hit another home run Saturday. Without question, Rosario been the team's best player through 54 games.

The Twins need their full lineup to produce if they are going to stay in the race, not just one or two guys getting hot.

Sano has provided some power since his return with two home runs and 10 RBI in eight games. But he also has 14 strikeouts in 37 plate appearances and been susceptible to pitches outside the zone.

"I try to change my mind-set," Sano said. "Try to concentrate on going opposite way. I try to have patience."

He should improve as he gets more at-bats after a long layoff. Brian Dozier is starting to look more like himself at the plate, too. The bottom of the order has generated some timely hits during this mini-surge. And Jorge Polanco should provide a boost when he returns from his suspension.

"The big thing is getting everybody clicking together," Dozier said. "The way this team is built offensively, we can do a lot of different things with our legs and power when everybody is going at least OK. You're starting to see that."

Now they must sustain it to stay relevant.

### **Rosario continues hot hitting into June**

**Chris Hine | Star Tribune | June 2, 2018**

A few thoughts after the Twins' 7-1 victory over the Indians.

Steady Eddie: Eddie Rosario has carried over his strong start to the season in June. Rosario homered and drew a pair of walks Sunday. In May, Rosario had an OPS (on-base plus slugging percentage) of 1.003, which ranked 12th in MLB among players who played in at least 20 games.

On Saturday, Rosario took a cutter from Trevor Bauer that was way off the plate and sent it into the first row over the right field wall to give the Twins a 3-1 lead in the third inning. It was the perfect example of Rosario aggressiveness to chase – and hit – pitches that are out of the zone.

“I remember the first couple of weeks of the season, he was hitting and he came up to me and he said he felt something that he felt in the second half last year, which is a really good sign,” second baseman Brian Dozier said. “He goes off feel a lot. He’s a guy that is very aggressive at the plate. I think on the basepaths or whatever, what’s impressed me the most is him taking that next step as far as drawing walks and getting on base and that kind of thing which is huge.”

Rosario finished fourth in batting average in May among all AL players (.368). Entering Friday, he was hitting .432 (19-for-44) when leading off an inning. That was the best mark in baseball.

Garver gets a stinger: During the last at bat of the game, Jose Ramirez fouled a pitch right off the knee of Twins catcher Mitch Garver. Garver writhed on the ground in pain for a moment before getting up and finishing the game.

“He’s had them and he just said that it takes a while for the feeling to return in the leg,” manager Paul Molitor said. “It kind of catches it in between the pad there. It got him good, there’s a question about that.”

The fact that Garver finished the game should bode well for his availability Sunday. It wasn't the only injury adventure in the ninth innings. Max Kepler fell awkwardly trying to catch a double off the wall in right centerfield off the bat of Francisco Lindor.

Then Ryan LaMarre got injured slipping as he threw the ball back to the infield. Molitor said LaMarre "rolled his ankle" a little bit but LaMarre looked fine sprinting to catch the final out from Ramirez.

### **Twins have 20th pick in draft; Torii Hunter and Denard Span were taken at that spot**

**Phil Miller | Star Tribune | June 2, 2018**

Some free advice for Derek Falvey: Take a center fielder.

The Twins have pick No. 20 in Monday's first round of the amateur draft, and it's the seventh time they'll choose from that spot. They've never chosen from another specific spot more than four times, so this is a weird habit.

It's a pretty successful one, though. No, they never took a pitcher who may make the Hall of Fame, like elite No. 20s Mike Mussina (1990 by Baltimore) or C.C. Sabathia (1998 by Cleveland). But if you rank (by career Wins Above Replacement) the 53 players chosen 20th since the draft began in 1965, the Twins have taken three of the top 10 (and traded for a fourth, Eric Milton). Trevor Plouffe, picked 20th in 2004, hit 96 homers in seven seasons with Minnesota. Eric Milton, chosen at 20 in 1996 by the Yankees but traded to the Twins as a minor leaguer in the Chuck Knoblauch trade, won 41 games in a three-year span with the Twins and made an All-Star team.

And the Twins hit the jackpot at No. 20 in 1993 and 2002, when they chose a couple of center fielders who manned the position for 17 seasons between them: Torii Hunter and Denard Span.

Sure, there have been misfires, too. Chris Parmelee, No. 20 in 2006, played parts of four seasons and had more strikeouts than hits, but at least he made the major leagues. The same can't be said for 20th-pick mistakes Bob Jones in 1966 or Johnny Ard in 1988.

Falvey, the Twins' chief baseball officer, won't say who the Twins will take 20th this year, mostly because he has no idea. “When you're picking

past the top five picks, it's really hard to know," Falvey said. "My understanding of this year's draft is that it might be even harder to know, because it seems like there are a few guys up at the top that you feel pretty good about going early, but after that, it gets unclear who goes next."

The Twins' scouting staff has been in Minneapolis for a week, sharing evaluations, trying to divine the intentions of teams picking ahead of them, and ranking the prospects.

They've compiled their own mock drafts a couple of times already, "scenario planning," Falvey said, for reacting to what happens in the first 19 picks. "We'll say, assume the board goes this way — these five guys go off, these are the three players available to us," Falvey said. "Are we good what who we'll select there? Do we have the order right?"

There are plenty of opinions about that, of course, including several from outside experts who have compiled their own scouting reports. Baseball America, for instance, expects the Twins to select lefthanded pitcher Ryan Rolison of Mississippi, saying he "has been solid more than spectacular, but college lefties get taken high." The Twins know that's true — they chose lefty Tyler Jay from Illinois in 2015 with the sixth overall pick.

MLB.com's mock draft has Rolison taken eight picks before the Twins', and asserts that Minnesota will chose a righthander, Logan Gilbert of Stetson, noting that his velocity "is starting to tick back up."

ESPN.com's draft board agrees with the Rolison pick, saying he "came into the year as a top-10 possibility, and while his results haven't backed that up, his stuff has. A decent showing at the SEC Tournament [which Ole Miss won with Rolison pitching two hitless innings in the championship game] likely helped his stock."

Falvey said the Twins won't be picking based on what their current team needs, or what they feel is a weakness of their farm system. Give them the best player available, he said. "When we were picking No. 1 [last June], there was a lot of conversation [about] pitching vs. hitting. But those players' impact is so many years away, that planning for need, based on the amateur draft, can lead you down the wrong path," he said.

But the Twins will definitely use every tool they can to find the right player — including some fancy new hardware. The days of stenciling each player's name on a magnet and keeping them on a giant metal board are over.

"We've installed a big electronic board in there, with matched screens that allow for a video wall. It fits well for what we need," Falvey bragged. "A lot was made of the fact that the Vikings have one [at their new headquarters in Eagan]. Ours is bigger."

## Central Intelligence

Can you name the highest paid player on each AL Central team? Some may surprise you, and like Joe Mauer with the return of concussion symptoms, all have made news recently.

Indians: In the middle season of his three-year contract, which pays \$17 million this season and \$20 million next, the 35-year-old slugger has gone on a hot streak that coincides with his team's. Edwin Encarnacion batted .400, hit four home runs and racked up nine RBI during Cleveland's six-game winning streak (through Thursday).

Royals: Kansas City chose to keep Alex Gordon, giving him a contract worth \$20 million this year and \$72 million total, rather than Lorenzo Cain or Eric Hosmer. Gordon responded by hitting .220 and .208 in the first two years of his big deal, but has somewhat rebounded in 2018. He's hitting .274 but has only eight extra-base hits.

Tigers: This one was easy. Miguel Cabrera is a two-time MVP and signed what was once baseball's biggest contract. Detroit will pay him \$30 each of the next four years, and \$32 for two more after that. Cabrera is hitting .323 with a .407 on-base, but he's also 35, has just three homers, and missed a month with a sore hamstring.

White Sox: James Shields has only one win and a 4.54 ERA in return for the \$16 million he earns in the final year of a \$75 million contract, but he improved in May, holding hitters to a .173 average and posting a 3.38 ERA. That gives Chicago hope it can find a trading partner interested in the free-agent-to-be.

## STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

No AL player has been better at collecting hits to the opposite field over the past five seasons than the Twins' Joe Mauer. The opposite-field leaders in hits from 2014-18:

More  
DJ LaMahieu, Col 317

Joe Mauer, Min 281

Eric Hosmer, KC/SD 271

Dee Gordon, LAD/Mia/Sea 258

Nick Markakis, Bal/Atl 249

Christian Yelich, Mia/Mil 242

Jose Abreu, CWS 240

Like most teams, Twins' pitchers are striking out more batters than ever before; through Friday, their 53-game total of 480 is 14.8 percent higher than their previous best (418 in 2016). But Minnesota is rising among their peers in strikeouts, too.

Twins pitching strikeouts through 53 games

Year Ks AL Rank

2018 480 5

2017 368 14

2016 418 8

2015 300 15

2014 321 15

2013 305 15

2012 295 15

2011 306 15

2010 340 10

### **Saturday's Twins-Indians game recap**

**Chris Hine | Star Tribune | June 2, 2018**

#### GAME RECAP

#### IMPACT PLAYER

Eddie Rosario, Twins

The left fielder kept up his hot hitting with a home run, his 10th, in the third inning that gave the Twins a 3-1 lead.

#### BY THE NUMBERS

113 Pitches thrown by Lance Lynn, the most he has thrown all season.

2 Times Robbie Grossman was thrown out at home on ground balls hit by catcher Mitch Garver.

7 consecutive scoreless appearances for reliever Trevor Hildenberger

On deck



Kyle Gibson, who didn't allow a run in seven innings during his last start, will face Mike Clevinger, who is 1-2 in his past three starts with a 4.42 ERA.

**Ossie Bluege: Important but forgotten figure in Twins history**  
**Curt Brown | Star Tribune | June 2, 2018**

He was a little-known architect of the deal that moved the Washington Senators baseball team to Minnesota in 1961. He discovered slugger Harmon Killebrew on a rainy night in Idaho in 1954.

Ossie Bluege might just be the most influential person in Twins history you've never heard of.

With the Chicago White Sox coming to Target Field this week, it's a good time to remember the hardscrabble third baseman from Chicago who endured the sharp spikes of a sliding Ty Cobb, won a World Series in the 1920s, was manager of the year in 1945 — but also picked up an accounting degree in case his iffy knee gave out.

Born in 1900, Oswald Louis Bluege was the eldest of three brothers. Their German-born dad, Adam, worked as a nailer at a Chicago box company but then grew ill when Ossie was in grade school.

So Ossie dropped out and went to work — squeezing in time to play semipro baseball. The 1920 census lists Bluege as a clerk at a Chicago plumbing company. Then a \$200 offer popped up to play minor league baseball in Peoria, Ill.

“Dad didn't like it, but I told him if I could not make the majors in three years I'd quit and go back to pushing a pencil,” he said in 1960. “But I made the majors.”

He anchored Washington's big-league team from 1922 to 1939, sucking up ground balls like a vacuum cleaner at third base.

“He had that smoothness that stood out,” recalled baseball's fifth commissioner, Bowie Kuhn, who earned \$1 a game as scoreboard operator as a kid in Washington. “He never seemed to strain at the position. ... I think Bluege was so quick, you never saw the rough edges. He was a natural.”

Never a drinker or smoker, the mild-mannered Bluege won three pennants and one World Series in Washington before becoming a manager. His responsibilities grew to include comptroller and scout.

When talks heated up in 1960 to relocate the Senators to Minnesota, Bluege was at the table.

“It is not generally known ... that he had a major part, perhaps a determining part, in influencing the Senators to become the Twins,” Minneapolis Tribune sports columnist Dick Cullum wrote in 1971. “He favored the move, with persuasive arguments, while others in the organization were hesitant or even reluctant.”

One possible factor fueling his push to relocate: Bluege's three daughters all attended St. Olaf College.

As the Senators' comptroller, Bluege drew up the relocation contract terms. Seven years before the team moved, Bluege discovered Killebrew.

An Idaho senator, with an office in Killebrew's hometown, gushed about the teenager whacking home runs in tiny Payette, Idaho. Calvin Griffith was team owner.

“I think more than anything else, just to keep Senator [Herman] Welker quiet, Mr. [Calvin] Griffith sent Ossie Bluege out to see me,” Killebrew said at his 1984 Hall of Fame ceremony. Bluege, 83, was in that crowd a year before his death.

Thirty years earlier, Bluege rented a car and drove through 60 miles of rain to get to Payette. During the long rain delay, young Killebrew sat in Bluege's car and they talked about the team's desire to get him to Washington. When skies suddenly cleared, Killebrew said townspeople poured gasoline on the field and lit it to dry off the moisture so the game could go on.

Killebrew promptly thumped a deep home run to left field — a rarity in a ballpark where the fence was more than 400 feet from home plate.

The next morning, Bluege paced off 435 feet, finding the ball in a beet field. He drew up a three-year contract — \$6,000 a year with \$4,000 annual bonuses.

Killebrew, a high school junior whose father had died, took the deal and went on to hit 573 home runs — mostly with the Twins.

Not all Bluege stories carry the aw-shucks sweetness of the Killebrew discovery.

In 1953, six years after Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier, Washington was one of the last teams without a black player.

Baseball researchers have unearthed a letter Bluege sent to the franchise's minor league team in Chattanooga about a Cuban prospect. In it, Bluege said Raul Lago's race would determine the team's interest. "If he's white all go and well, if not, he stays home. ..." Bluege said, adding: "If any colored blood want to know now."

For more on Ossie Bluege

Two of his daughters wrote a new book, "A Life in Baseball: Ossie Bluege, Grippd by the Game," [tinyurl.com/BluegeBook](http://tinyurl.com/BluegeBook).

A 90-minute video can be found here: [tinyurl.com/OssieBluege](http://tinyurl.com/OssieBluege)

Judging 1950s racial sensitivity through a modern lens can be tricky, but the letter lives on at [tinyurl.com/Bluege-letter](http://tinyurl.com/Bluege-letter).

"I've seen the letter and I was shocked," said Lynn Bluege-Rust, his daughter, from Grand Rapids, Minn. "All I can say is he never spoke ill of Cuban or black players and they were often guests in our home."

Bluege died in 1985, 10 days shy of his 85th birthday, in his Edina home. He'd just returned from Washington, where he was enshrined in the city's Hall of Stars. He's buried at Lakewood Cemetery in Minneapolis.

Two of his daughters recently compiled his biography at [tinyurl.com/BluegeBook](http://tinyurl.com/BluegeBook).

### **Lance Lynn, Eddie Rosario help Twins to 7-1 win over Cleveland Indians** **Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | June 2, 2018**

Maybe Lance Lynn should be saved for division games only.

The veteran right-hander reeled off his third straight quality start, all against American League Central competition, as the Twins rolled to a 7-1 win over the Cleveland Indians on Saturday afternoon at Target Field.

Including a May 5 win in Chicago, Lynn is now 4-0 with a 1.82 earned run average in four starts against the AL Central. In his other seven starts for the Twins, he is 0-4 with an 8.33 ERA.

For his career, including interleague play with the St. Louis Cardinals, Lynn is 7-2 with a 3.01 ERA in 15 tries against his current division. Not that he'd ever acknowledge his apparent mastery of AL Central foes.

"I don't pay any attention to that," Lynn said in his typically curt postgame monotone. "Every game is the same. I've pitched every game the same with the intent to get everybody out that's in the box."

Since falling behind 8-0 through four innings in the series opener on Thursday, the Twins have outscored the Indians 22-6. Improving to 3-2 in the season series, the Twins also pulled within 4 1/2 games of the first-place Indians after falling a season-high 6 1/2 back on Thursday.

At 113 pitches Lynn blew past the previous high for a Twins starter this season: Jake Odorizzi's 108 pitches on May 20 against the Milwaukee Brewers. Lynn walked five to retake the unwanted AL lead in that category from Chicago White Sox pitcher Lucas Giolito, but Lynn also limited the Indians to a pair of hits: Jason Kipnis' one-out single in the second and Francisco Lindor's leadoff single in the fifth.

Kipnis was part of a double steal in the second that saw speedy Greg Allen score from third when Mitch Garver threw down to second and Brian Dozier's return throw bounced wide of home, but Lynn left the bases loaded when Allen fled to left to end a nine-pitch duel.

The Indians left 11 on base and went hitless in nine at-bats with runners in scoring position.

Lynn, who threw 118 and 123 pitches last season for the St. Louis Cardinals in his first year back from Tommy John surgery, seemed to get stronger as the day went on. He entered 0-2 with a 10.29 earned run average in day games, but that figure improved considerably after he stuck around long enough to beat Trevor Bauer.

“Pitch counts are pointless,” Lynn said. “It’s about how you’re doing.”

Kipnis booted a routine double-play grounder in the sixth, opening the door for a four-run rally that chased Bauer despite 11 strikeouts. Max Kepler, Ryan LaMarre and Dozier had run-scoring hits in the sixth.

Dozier keyed a three-run third with an opposite-field triple off the right-field wall. Eddie Rosario followed with his 10th homer, a two-run shot on an inside cutter just over the flower pots in right.

Rosario, who also walked twice, is 12 for 30 with two homers off Bauer, who entered with a 2.61 ERA.

“Sometimes I feel I know what he’s going to throw me,” Rosario said. “He throws me a lot of curveballs, a lot of sinkers in. The last time I faced him, he got me for two outs with the cutter. I was thinking about that.”

Lynn, meanwhile, needed 31 pitches to get through the third inning alone, which he finished at 69 pitches with four walks and six three-ball counts. Over his final three innings, Lynn threw just 44 pitches (32 strikes) while starting six of his final 10 batters with strikes.

Since his ERA climbed back up to 7.47 with a three-inning clunker against the Cardinals, Lynn has knocked more than two runs off his ERA (now 5.46).

A blister on his pitching hand had been a nagging issue for Lynn since his second start of the season. He was given 11 days between starts after facing the Houston Astros on April 9, but command has remained a problem.

“I think it’s something that’s somewhat chronic for him,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said of the blister. “It’s something that we monitor in between starts, when he starts, how it looks in the fifth inning compared to the start of the game.”

Lynn, famous for his heavy fastball usage, had pushed that figure to 78.5 percent.

“He’s just got that little spot where it gets irritated,” Molitor said. “When it gets a little bit raw, it’s going to affect how he’s able to command and spin the ball. I don’t think there’s been a big correlation between his command, which he struggled with early, and the fact he’s starting to get better and maybe that thing is healing a little bit.”

### **Would Twins draft Oregon State lefty Luke Heimlich? Club isn’t saying** **Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | June 2, 2018**

A year ago, the Twins took controversial Oregon State left-hander Luke Heimlich off their draft board, along with rest of Major League Baseball, after news broke days before the draft that the pitcher had signed a plea agreement in 2012 as a teen in which he admitted to one count of sexually molesting his 6-year-old niece.

Saturday, asked specifically about Heimlich, who has since denied harming his niece while posting another standout season for Oregon State, Twins chief baseball officer Derek Falvey offered no clarity.

“We won’t talk about individual players pre-(draft),” Falvey said. “We’re certainly happy to address that post-draft, but at this point we’ll probably leave that alone.”

Texas Rangers general manager Jon Daniels recently told the Dallas Morning News his club had made an organizational decision not to draft Heimlich. Beavers coach Pat Casey criticized the Rangers for going public with their stance on Heimlich, who had gone 14-1 for the No. 3 overall seed in the NCAA tournament.

“I don’t think that anybody should be talking about who should or shouldn’t be drafted,” Casey told a Portland radio station on Friday. “I think every club has to make their own decision, and that’s certainly there. I feel like that’s not fair to anybody to come out and talk about who should be signing somebody or who should be drafting somebody.”

Entering Saturday night’s NCAA regional game against Louisiana State, Heimlich had gone 14-1 with a 2.49 earned-run average in 16 outings

this season. In 104 2/3 innings he had 139 strikeouts, 21 walks and a .208 opponents' batting average while hitting 12 batters.

With the Twins picking 20th and 59th overall on Monday, including a \$3.12 million slot value for their first-round selection, Falvey said personality makeup remains a "huge" consideration for his club.

"We're looking at every player on the board and assessing what kind of competitive makeup they have," Falvey said. "It's a combination of knowing a little bit about the player and their history and their background and who they are as a kid, but also what kind of competitor they are. Our scouts do a great job of that."

The strong makeup of high school shortstop Royce Lewis was a key factor in the Twins' decision to make him just the third No. 1 overall pick in Minnesota franchise history last June.

"I think in any draft there's a tradeoff," Falvey said. "Not every player is going to be exactly the same. I think we could walk through that (major league) clubhouse right there, and you're going to see a lot of different types of makeup: some a little more aggressive, some a little more reserved."

"It doesn't mean that the talent doesn't play a role at some point, certainly for all players. We weigh makeup pretty heavily because we want to make sure that mind-set, grittiness and things like that are a part of it. We know they're going to face failure at some point along the way. How are they going to persist through that failure?"

#### BRIEFLY

Joe Mauer was doing better with his concussion symptoms after watching the past two games in the Twins' dugout, Twins manager Paul Molitor said. The plan was for Mauer to hit on the field before Sunday's game, but Molitor downplayed any chance of Mauer being activated from the disabled list in time for the finale of a four-game series with the division-leading Cleveland Indians.

Miguel Sano was not in Saturday's starting lineup against curveball specialist Trevor Bauer, who has held him to 2 for 24 with 11 strikeouts. "The matchup isn't great," Molitor admitted.

Right-hander Brusdar Graterol was placed on the 7-day DL at Class A Cedar Rapids with a contusion on his pitching hand. That didn't stop Graterol, one of the Twins' top pitching prospects, from hitting 100-mph eight times in six innings in his last start.

Catcher Jason Castro returned to the clubhouse following May 15 surgery to repair torn meniscus in his right knee. He will have to use crutches for another 3 1/2 weeks but hopes to be around the team for the bulk of his rehab work the rest of the season.

#### **Preview: Twins vs. Indians**

**STATS | Fox Sports North | June 3, 2018**

Though not even halfway through the season yet, it's a good bet that neither American League wild-card spot will go to a team from the Central Division.

So if the Minnesota Twins hope to advance to the playoffs for a second straight year, they'll need to win their division, which means they need to knock off the teams ahead of them.

That makes Sunday's series finale with the Cleveland Indians at Target Field all the more important.

The Twins have won two straight against Cleveland after Lance Lynn pitched six solid innings and Eddie Rosario hit a two-run homer. With a victory Sunday, Minnesota would sit 3 1/2 games back of the two-time defending division winner.

Detroit still separates the Twins from Cleveland but the fact that they have yet to reach full strength is reason for optimism, even if it's hindering the team right now.

Byron Buxton is on the disabled list for the second time this season but Minnesota hopes that this stint will finally result in him returning healthy. Joe Mauer is rehabbing as he recovers from a strained neck and concussion-like symptoms.

"I don't think we've seen the full version of our club yet," manager Paul Molitor said.

After dropping the series opener in heartbreaking fashion, Molitor had a team meeting before Friday's game.

"Most of my meetings over the last three years have been relatively positive," Molitor said. "I try to find something to build on instead of tear down.

"Specifically, we talked about the way we've been losing games. "To me, it's not always about getting walked off, it's about something that happened in the third inning we screwed up that (lost) us a chance to score a run. So that was some of the things we talked about yesterday. The mindset of baserunning. There were some general things that were discussed."

The message apparently was received. Minnesota has responded with two straight victories, outscoring the Indians 14-5 in those contests.

Kyle Gibson will try to lock up a series victory and his first against Cleveland since September 30, 2015.

In six starts since, Gibson is 0-4 against the Indians and allowed three runs on seven hits over four innings in his last meeting with Cleveland on Aug. 17 of last season.

Gibson threw seven shutout innings in his last start but took a no-decision as the Twins fell to Kansas City. Prior to that, Gibson had posted a 4.66 ERA over a five-start stretch.

Despite the last two losses, Cleveland is 8-4 in its last 12 games. After Trevor Bauer allowed seven runs in 5 2/3 innings Saturday, Mike Clevinger will start the series finale.

Clevinger also performed well in his last outing. The right-hander held the White Sox to a run over 6 2/3 innings, striking out seven with only one walk to snap a two-game personal losing streak in Cleveland's 7-3 win on Tuesday.

"He's had those games where he's had trouble with three or four hitters in a sequence," Cleveland manager Terry Francona said after that outing. "Tonight he limited that to one or two and pitched really well."

He's 2-1 with a 1.61 ERA on the road this season

In three career appearances (two starts) at Target Field, Clevinger is 0-1 with a 3.38 ERA and has struck out 14 in 10 2/3 innings.

He is 1-2 with a 3.74 ERA in seven games (four starts) versus Minnesota.

### **Twins win second straight over Cleveland** **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | June 2, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS — Lance Lynn made this start harder on himself with five walks and one hit Cleveland batter.

The recently revived Minnesota lineup made it a lot easier.

Eddie Rosario hit a two-run homer and Brian Dozier drove in two runs to support Lynn's third straight victory, leading the Twins past the Indians 7-1 on Saturday.

"They're scoring runs and playing defense," Lynn said. "It's a lot of fun to play the game."

In his first season with the Twins after waiting a month into spring training to sign a one-year \$12 million contract, Lynn has looked miserable on the mound in much of his time with the new team. Part of that is his ultra-competitive nature, but he had an awful April and a couple of rough appearances in May, too. Over his last three starts, Lynn (4-4) has allowed only three runs over 18 2/3 innings to lower his ERA from 7.47 to 5.46.

"He gets pretty flustered out there at times whether it's a play or a pitch or a non-call. He made some close pitches that didn't go his way, but he just kept finding his way to grind through it," manager Paul Molitor said, adding: "I just think he's been trying to earn his weight around here as of late."

The same goes for the Twins offense, with 30 runs over the last four games. Rosario has been the steadiest of all, with a team-leading 36 RBI headlining a strong case to become a first-time All-Star. Dozier, who hit an RBI triple in the third inning right before Rosario's 10th homer of the

season and added an RBI double during a four-run sixth, has heated up this weekend, too.

“We we can do a lot of different things with our legs and power when everyone is kind of going at least OK,” Dozier said. “I think we’re starting to see that.”

Indians starter Trevor Bauer (4-4) struck out 11 batters, but he gave up six hits and three walks and didn’t finish the sixth inning. Four of the seven runs charged to him were unearned, because of an error on second baseman Jason Kipnis and a passed ball by catcher Roberto Perez. Max Kepler and Ryan LaMarre had RBI singles during the Twins rally after the fielding flub by Kipnis.

“I was just out there trying to do everything I could to help my team win,” Bauer said.

The Indians went 0 for 9 with runners in scoring position and 2 for 16 with runners on base. Lynn struck out five and allowed only two hits while throwing a season-high 113 pitches.

#### PEREZ PITCHES

Oliver Perez, who was signed to the roster before the game, was the second pitcher summoned from the MLB-worst bullpen by manager Terry Francona in the sixth, becoming the 15th reliever used by the Indians already this season. They used 17 different relief pitchers last year, including a one-inning mop-up appearance by position player Michael Martinez and a one-off relief outing by Bauer.

The 36-year-old Perez, who joined his eighth major league team, was pitching in Triple-A earlier this season for the New York Yankees affiliate. He struck out three and gave up one hit in 1 1/3 innings.

“There’s a lot to like,” Francona said. “We’ve seen him so much just because he’s been pitching for a long time, but his stuff is still there. As a matter of fact, it might be a tick or two above what it’s been.”

#### ALLEN’S HUSTLE

Greg Allen, who could be bound for Triple-A next week with the expected return of injured outfielders Lonnie Chisenhall and Brandon Guyer, gave the Indians the lead in the second inning with a delayed steal of home after Kipnis took off for second during a strikeout by Perez. That was the first time the Indians stole home since Francisco Lindor did so on June 28, 2016.

Allen played right field, while Bradley Zimmer was back in center field for the first time in 21 games after being out with a bruised left rib.

#### TRAINER’S ROOM

Indians: LHP Andrew Miller has been scheduled to throw a bullpen session on Sunday, Francona said before the game. He’s been out for the last eight games because of nagging right knee inflammation.

Twins: Catcher Mitch Garver painfully took a foul ball off the top of his knee in the ninth inning but stayed in the game. “He just said that it takes a while for the feeling to return in the leg,” Molitor said.

#### UP NEXT

Indians: RHP Mike Clevinger (4-2, 3.14 ERA) will start on Sunday afternoon. He was second in the American League, entering the game on Saturday, with a 1.61 ERA on the road among pitchers with more than one start.

Twins: RHP Kyle Gibson (1-3, 3.57 ERA) will take the mound for the series finale. Gibson, who has a 5.82 ERA in 13 career starts against the Indians, has taken three losses and seven no-decisions since winning his first turn of the season.

**Zulgad: No more Mauer or Dozier? Twins infield could have very different look in 2019**  
**Judd Zulgad | ESPN 1500 | June 2, 2018**

If you haven’t liked what the Twins have going in the infield so far this season, you will be happy to be know that those positions figure to have a very different look on Opening Day in 2019.

Expiring contracts and a prospect about ready to make the jump to the big leagues are the primary reasons for this.

Here's one guess about what Minnesota's infield might look like when next season gets underway.

First base

2018 Opening Day starter: Joe Mauer

Mauer has turned himself into a Gold Glove-caliber first baseman since moving from catcher, but he is in the final season of an eight-year, \$184 million contract that pays him \$23 million per season. Once one of the best hitters in baseball, Mauer got off to a solid start this year but again has been slowed by the concussion-like symptoms that caused him to be moved from catcher in 2014.

The most important thing for Mauer is to take care of himself and that could include a life outside of baseball. Mauer's health issues certainly will play a role in the Twins' decision-making process and if there was a temptation to sign the 35-year-old to a short-term contract extension that could be impacted by this latest injury.

The Twins also have played veteran Logan Morrison at first base after he signed this spring. Morrison, who hit 38 home runs last year with Tampa Bay, has been a disappointment at the plate so far. He is playing under a one-year, \$6.5 million contract that has a vesting option that could make it a two-year, \$16.5 million deal. It would not be surprising if LoMo's stay in Minnesota is a short one.

Likely for 2019: Miguel Sano

Sano has played a few games at first base since returning from the disabled list last weekend in Seattle and it appears that a full-time move from third base is going to have to happen given Sano's size. Long-term he could end up as a designated hitter, but the guess here is the Twins would like to keep him in the field.

Sano isn't going to give you near the glove that Mauer does at first base, but he does have the potential to hit plenty of home runs. Unfortunately, Sano already has proven he's more than capable of striking out far too frequently.

Either Sano is eventually going to cut down on the strikeouts and also keep himself in better shape or there's a chance he's going to go down as a big-time bust. The Twins might make an effort to move him before that day comes, but, for now, the guess is he remains in a Twins uniform playing at first.

Second base

2018 Opening Day starter: Brian Dozier

It's fair obvious the Twins have other plans at second base.

Dozier is playing in the final season of a four-year, \$20 million contract that is paying him \$9 million this season. That makes him a bargain, considering he hit 42 and 34 home runs the past two years. Nonetheless, the Twins reportedly have not approached the 31-year-old about a contract extension and it appears unlikely they will do so.

Dozier likely will be traded by the Twins at the deadline, assuming Minnesota is out of the race, or he will be allowed to walk as a free agent this offseason.

Likely for 2019: Nick Gordon

Gordon is a shortstop but the Twins also used him at second base in spring training. The guess here is that's where he winds up long term.

Drafted fifth-overall by the Twins in 2014, Gordon recently was moved from Double-A Chattanooga to Triple-A Rochester and it seems likely he will be playing at Target Field before the 2018 season comes to an end.

Gordon, whose brother, Dee, plays for the Mariners, is hitting .282 in 11 games with the Red Wings after batting .333 with five home runs and 20 runs batted in in 42 games with Chattanooga.

Shortstop

2018 Opening Day starter: Eduardo Escobar

Acquired in the Francisco Liriano trade with the White Sox in 2012, Escobar has turned into a valuable utility player on the left side of the infield. He started on Opening Day at shortstop in place of the suspended Jorge Polanco but then shifted to third base when Sano suffered a hamstring injury.

Escobar is the type of player the Twins would like back, but it's going to depend on the cost. He will be a free agent after this season — he's playing on a one-year, \$4.85 million contract — and it's possible a team could come along offering more years and money than the Twins would be willing to pay the 29-year-old.

Likely for 2019: Jorge Polanco

Polanco would have been the Opening Day starter this season after making real progress in 2017. However, he's serving an 80-game suspension after testing positive for performance enhancing drugs. He will return on July 2 and figures to keep the job into next season.

Here's the catch.

Polanco, who hit .256/.313/.410 with 13 home runs, 74 RBIs and 13 stolen bases in 133 games last season, will only have the job until the Twins feel that Royce Lewis is ready to play in the big leagues. The top-overall pick in the 2017 draft by Minnesota, Lewis is hitting .312 with three home runs, 26 RBIs and 15 stolen bases at low Single-A Cedar Rapids. He should soon be moving to high Single-A Fort Myers.

Depending on how he progresses, Lewis, who will turn 19 on Tuesday, could find his way to Target Field at some point in 2019.

Third base

2018 Opening Day starter: Miguel Sano

As stated above, Sano is simply not a third baseman for the long term. Especially when all estimates put his weight at far closer to 300 pounds than the 260 he often has been listed at during his career.

Likely for 2019: Unknown

If Escobar returns to the Twins, this could be his spot to open the season. That certainly wouldn't be the worst thing. Escobar has pop in his bat as evidenced by the 21 home runs he hit in 2017 and the 10 he already has in 2018.

Ideally, Escobar could continue to back up both at shortstop and third, but being assured a regular job might be one reason Escobar is tempted to leave. If the Twins really want to keep him, they might tell Escobar the third base job is his to lose.

### **Cautious approach proves effective for Lance Lynn as Twins beat Indians again**

**Dan Hayes | The Athletic | June 3, 2018**

Lance Lynn wanted to be cautious with some of the more dangerous hitters in the Cleveland Indians lineup on Saturday afternoon. The Twins pitcher's strategy led to a bunch of close misses and quite a bit of early traffic.

But it also worked.

Lynn pitched himself out of several tight spots and then got more aggressive once the offense provided him with some breathing room. The combination of it all led to a third straight productive start for Lynn and further distance from what the starting pitcher has previously described as a "really (crappy) month of April." Lynn's outing and an advantageous offense helped the Twins to their second straight victory over the Indians, a 7-1 win at Target Field. Lynn won a third straight start despite walking five Cleveland hitters in six innings.

"It was more trying to make sure certain guys didn't beat you and trying to set things up when you're in situations maybe for later in the game," Lynn said. "They were able to get one there and I was able to make some pitches where they couldn't get any. Then the offense came on and scored a bunch of runs at the end."

Lynn entered Saturday's start with a career-high 5.9 walks per nine innings this season. It unquestionably has played a role in his early struggles. The right-hander didn't appear to be trending in the right direction Saturday, either, as he threw strikes on only 33 of his first 69 pitches.

But the free passes didn't catch up with Lynn until the third inning. Lynn walked Michael Brantley with one out. After Jose Ramirez bounced into



a fielder's choice, Lynn walked Edwin Encarnacion before he hit Yonder Alonso to load the bases.

Despite the walks, manager Paul Molitor didn't see any wild misses in the bunch to worry about. He instead saw a pitcher working carefully in a game he trailed 1-0 courtesy of a botched double-steal of home in the first inning. With the bases loaded in the third, Lynn quickly got ahead of Greg Allen 0-2 in the count before the outfielder worked it full. But Lynn threw a fastball in and Allen flew out weakly to left field to leave the bases loaded.

Two innings later and leading 3-1 courtesy of an Eddie Rosario two-run homer, Lynn gave up a leadoff single to Francisco Lindor and walked Ramirez with one out. He escaped the jam when he induced a double play on a fastball in to Encarnacion, whom he mostly pitched away from in their previous encounter.

"I thought it was pretty gritty," Molitor said. "You look at the traffic that he created for himself between hit batsmen and a handful of walks, he gets pretty flustered out there at times, whether it's a play or a pitch or a non-call. He made some close pitches that didn't go his way, but he just kept finding his way to grind through it."

The outing and the two before are more representative of how Lynn has always performed. It's what the Twins thought they had received when Lynn signed a one-year, \$12.5-million deal in March.

He's never been afraid to walk batters, as evidenced by his career 3.4 per-nine inning average before this season. Despite the free passes, Lynn entered the season with a 3.38 career earned-run average.

Unlike previous seasons, Lynn hasn't had as much success stranding runners. Lynn has a career strand-rate of 76.1 percent, according to fangraphs.com. That figure stood at 70.6 percent this season until Saturday, when it increased to 72.1.

Once he had the lead, Lynn was far more aggressive in attacking Cleveland's lineup. His ball-to-strike ratio was 48 percent through three innings, but Lynn threw strikes on 32 of his final 44 offerings. That led to 1-2-3 innings in the fourth and sixth and allowed the Twins to pull away.

"I knew he was going to come around," first baseman Logan Morrison said. "He did a great job today. It's fun to play behind him because you know the ball is going to be moving. He keeps the defense on their toes. ... Once we get him some runs and get him a lead, he attacks more. It's good to get out in front with him."

Eddie Rosario

Eddie Rosario rounds the bases after his home run in Saturday's win. (Credit: Jesse Johnson/USA TODAY Sports)

Rosario continues to star

The Twins left fielder has unquestionably been the club's All-Star to date. He continued an impressive campaign with a two-run homer off Cleveland starter Trevor Bauer in the third inning that put the Twins ahead for good. Rosario — who is hitting .310/.347/.531 in 226 plate appearances — followed Brian Dozier's game-tying opposite-field triple by ripping a cut fastball from Bauer that was nearly a foot off the plate inside out for a towering home run to right field.

"I tried to make contact to get a fly ball and tie the game, but I did a good job with my hands and I stayed inside the ball," Rosario said. "I know Bauer throws me a lot inside."

Rosario's familiarity with Bauer resulted in another good day at the plate. He walked twice and homered in three trips off Bauer. Rosario is now 12-for-30 with two homers and nine RBIs off Bauer.

"Sometimes I feel I know what he's going to throw me," Rosario said. "He throws me a lot of curveballs, a lot of sinkers in. The last time I faced him, he got me two outs with the cutter. I was thinking about that."

"You see these pitchers in the same division a lot of times. You see (Corey) Kluber and Bauer a lot. I know what he throws. I've faced him a lot."

Offense on fire

Rosario, Dozier and Eduardo Escobar have all heated up at the plate. Along with the return of Miguel Sanó, the Twins offense has produced its best six-game stretch of the season, scoring 39 runs since Monday.

"It's picking up," Molitor said. "I think some of the weight we've been carrying about just trying to find a way to manufacture anything has been lifted somewhat. It's been a short spell here, but it's encouraging."

Morrison, who finished 2-for-4 on Saturday, agreed the uptick has been good. But he thinks the team's recent focus has been more important to its current and potentially future success.

“More than anything, it’s been continuing to focus on what’s ahead of us and the present,” Morrison said. “It’s great we’ve scored this many runs, but it’s not going to help us score runs (Sunday). Just kind of going with that approach. It’s good to get a win against a division rival and somebody who is ahead of us in the standings. Hopefully, we can win the series (Sunday).”