



## SF Giants Press Clips

**Tuesday, August 7, 2018**

**San Francisco Chronicle**

**Giants blow 9<sup>th</sup>-inning lead, fall 3-1 to Astros**

**John Shea**

The world champs came to town, though they weren't quite as recognizable as they were in October because of injuries to several front-line players.

In the end, it didn't matter. The Astros were still the Astros.

The Giants were one out from beating shorthanded Houston 1-0 in Monday night's opener of a quick two-game series, but closer Will Smith yielded a three-run homer to Marwin Gonzalez, permitting the Astros to celebrate a 3-1 victory.

For much of the evening, the story line for the Giants was Brandon Crawford's sixth-inning home run and seven spectacular innings by Rookie of the Year candidate Dereck Rodriguez, who has been a savior in a year the rotation has been undermined by injuries.

Smith walked Alex Bregman with one out and Yuli Gurriel with two away. Gonzalez crushed a 1-0, down-the-middle fastball, and the Giants were denied their sixth win in eight games.

"That's baseball," Rodriguez said. "Sometimes you're dominant, and sometimes it's just one bad pitch. Everybody's trying. The great thing about this sport is, tomorrow (Smith) is going to get the ball again when we have the lead in the ninth inning. That's part of the game, and that's why we play."

Afterward, in the quiet of the clubhouse, Smith and Rodriguez crossed paths. Smith told the rookie he pitched beautifully, and the rookie wanted it known he had Smith's back. They fist-bumped.

“He pitched his ass off,” Smith said. “We’re at that point of the season where we need to win games. When a starter goes that deep in a game like that and gives you a chance to win, it hurts giving it up.”

Rodriguez gave up three hits, struck out seven and walked nobody while lowering his ERA to 2.34 and WHIP to 1.05. After 94 pitches, he yielded to Reyes Moronta, who pitched the eighth.

Then came Smith, a big asset since taking over the closer’s role, having converted his previous seven save opportunities. He hadn’t given up a home run since 2016. But on this night, his command was missing with his fastball and breaking pitches.

“Just off a touch, he just made a mistake there,” manager Bruce Bochy said. “He’s been so good, so solid. You’re going to have an off night occasionally. It was a tough night to have it.”

The Giants faced the team that took the Dodgers to seven games before winning the World Series. Monday’s starting pitcher, Charlie Morton, threw four scoreless innings to close out Game 7, one inning short of Madison Bumgarner’s performance in Game 7 in 2014.

Like Rodriguez, Morton lasted seven innings and gave up three hits, including the one smoked by Crawford over the right-field wall, the shortstop turning on an inside breaking pitch for his 11th home run.

Crawford also made a dazzling defensive play in the fifth inning, short-hopping Martin Maldonado’s sizzler and easily throwing out the catcher. Also in the inning, center fielder Steven Duggar ranged well into right-center to rob Jake Marisnick.

“He was awesome,” Crawford said of Rodriguez. “He’s been such a big piece for us, coming out of nowhere, it seems like, and putting up good game after good game for us. He doesn’t back down or care who’s at the plate. He goes after guys. It’s fun to watch.”

On Smith, Crawford said, “Will’s been huge for us all year. Tonight, that was the first time I’ve seen him missing with his off-speed (pitches). Will’s been huge for us. That’s going to happen every once in a while.”

Gone from the Astros’ lineup were four significant up-the-middle players, all injured: second baseman Jose Altuve (knee), shortstop Carlos Correa (back), center fielder George Springer (thumb) and catcher Brian McCann (knee).

Plus, Evan Gattis was out of the lineup because the Astros can’t use a designated hitter in interleague play.

New Houston reliever Roberto Osuna, who served a 75-game domestic-violence suspension this season, pitched the eighth and received some boos as he took the mound. He needed five pitches to retire the side in his Astros debut.

Thanks to the three-run ninth, Osuna got the win.

## **San Francisco Chronicle**

### **Giants' Buster Posey behind the plate again after foul tip off mask**

**John Shea**

Buster Posey put his catcher's gear back on Monday night, which is standard operating procedure. But on this occasion, it was particularly good news for the Giants. Posey was the catcher three days after being removed from Friday's game in Arizona to be monitored by the medical staff for concussion symptoms. He had taken a Paul Goldschmidt foul tip off his mask.

Posey, who spent a week on the concussion list after getting beamed in last season's home opener, sat out Saturday's game and played first base Sunday.

"I think it was just feeling a little bit off and not wanting to risk it and potentially getting another one," Posey said. "I went through all the tests and protocol with (trainer Dave Groeschner) and was symptom free the next day. I was good to go, so I feel fortunate."

Manager Bruce Bochy was thrilled to write a lineup with Posey behind the plate.

"You're going to have concerns when he has to come out of the game," Bochy said. "He's been there before. We, to be honest, have not had a lot of luck with the concussion thing. You always want to stay optimistic, but how it's gone for us, once I hear concussion tests, it's, 'Oh, no.' But we got great news with Buster."

Posey has taken many foul tips off his mask, and the Giants have closely monitored the six-time All-Star. He initially stayed in Friday's game but exited after hitting a single and telling first-base coach Jose Alguacil he was lightheaded. Groeschner escorted Posey off the field.

"It's having body awareness, especially with your head. You've got to be careful with that," Posey said. "I've been fortunate, knock on wood, throughout my career to not really have to deal with it, so I feel kind of lucky. A lot has to do with (Groeschner) and the training staff taking the proper measures to make sure it stays that way."

Briefly: Pablo Sandoval will undergo his hamstring surgery Tuesday. ... Jeff Samardzija (shoulder) is on target to begin a rehab assignment next week. He threw 30 pitches Monday, will throw again Thursday and pitch in a simulated game next Monday. ... Brandon Belt (knee) is a week away from returning to the lineup, Bochy said. The first baseman has been hitting and taking grounders, and is expected to be cleared to run soon. The Giants are leaning against a rehab assignment. ... A fire at a concession stand in Section 121 on the Promenade level was put out before the gates opened. The game started on time.

## **San Jose Mercury News**

### **Rookie Dereck Rodriguez dazzles but Astros bullpen betrays Giants**

**Jeff Faraudo**

SAN FRANCISCO — Giants manager Bruce Bochy doesn't know all the candidates for National League Rookie of the Year.

He likes his guy, and 26-year-old right-hander Dereck Rodriguez delivered perhaps his best performance yet on Monday night, but the Giants couldn't cash it for a victory against the World Series champion Houston Astros.

Marwin Gonzalez spoiled the night for most of 40,251 fans at AT&T Park, crushing a three-home home run off reliever Will Smith with two outs in the top of the ninth, and the Astros escaped with a 3-1 win.

"No one feels worse than me right now," said Smith, who walked two batters to set up Gonzalez's home run. "Just didn't have it tonight."

But Rodriguez did. Again. He allowed three hits through seven scoreless innings — none of them after the third inning — to out-duel Astros 12-game winner Charlie Morton. He tied a career-high with seven strikeouts before sitting down after 94 pitches.

Brandon Crawford's two-out home run in the sixth inning positioned the Giants to win for the ninth time in Rodriguez's past 10 starts.

"He did awesome," Crawford said of Rodriguez, signed by the Giants in the offseason as a minor-league free agent. "He's been such a big piece for us, coming up out of nowhere it seems like, just putting good game after good game together."

Rodriguez, the son of Hall of Fame catcher Ivan Rodriguez, said it's his nature to keep his emotions in check, even against the reigning world champs.

"After every start, I enjoy it, I think about it. When I'm out there it's just me, Buster (Posey) and the hitter," he said. "I have all the confidence in the world. It's awesome being in the situation I'm in."

Rodriguez, whose 2.34 earned run average is the best of any NL rookie, has impressed manager Bochy since his May 29 debut.

While admitting he's not well-informed about the competition, Bochy suggested Rodriguez will be part of the NL Rookie of the Year conversation.

"He's right up there with any rookie pitcher," Bochy said. "We keep talking about what a great job he's done and he keeps getting better."

"It was a beautiful game he pitched. Couldn't be prouder of him."

The Rookie of the Year frontrunner is likely Nationals' 19-year-old outfielder Juan Soto, who is batting .310 with 13 home runs and 37 RBI in 66 games.

The Astros arrived in town for a two-game set without most of the big names that helped them become world champs a year ago.

Outfielder George Springer, MVP of the World Series, was placed on the disabled list with a dislocated thumb. He joins four other Houston players on the DL, including 2017 National

League MVP Jose Altuve (knee) and 2017 All-Star shortstop Carlos Correa (lower back soreness).

The Giants did little against Morton, who had a no-hitter until Evan Longoria blooper a single to right with two outs in the fourth. Morton allowed just three hits while striking out eight, but Crawford sent a 2-2 pitch onto the right-field landing in the sixth for his 11th homer of the season.

Morton had struck out the two previous hitters on fastballs, but Crawford connected on a curve.

“When somebody has a fastball like that you have to respect it and look for it,” he said. “That was just reaction.”

\* If former five-time All-Star Andrew McCutchen is worried about his future with the Giants, he isn't giving it away.

During his nine seasons with the Pirates, including a National League MVP campaign in 2013, McCutchen never had to ponder the possibility he would be traded. He was a Pittsburgh fixture.

As the Giants teeter between playoff contender or outsider in the final two months of the season, McCutchen's name has emerged as one who could be moved if the team fades. The 31-year-old is a free agent at season's end and he has value.

“It's not strange at all, that's baseball. It's just the way it goes,” McCutchen said of the uncertainty that looms over him. “At the end of the day you're still playing the game you love. I'm not focused on the future because that's not promised. I'm enjoying where I am now. It's been a fun run.”

\* Pablo Sandoval was scheduled to undergo season-ending surgery Tuesday morning to repair his injured right hamstring, manager Bruce Bochy confirmed.

Sandoval suffered the injury Sunday, ending a season where earned a roster spot in spring training, then batted .248 with nine home runs and 40 RBI while helping out at both third and first base.

“Just a bad break for him, bad break for us,” Bochy said. “This guy really did a terrific job in different roles for us. Was always in the same mood every day. He's a big part of this club, his energy, his passion. That we're going to miss.”

\* First baseman Brandon Belt (hyper-extended right knee) took ground balls before the game for the second straight day and said he's hoping to come off the disabled list sometime this week. Bochy projected likely another week before Belt is ready after being injured on July 25.

Belt was wearing a protective brace on his right knee, but said he's feeling no pain.

\* Right-hander Jeff Samardzija (shoulder inflammation), who last pitched on July 14 and is serving his third DL stint this season, threw 30 pitches on Monday, will throw again Thursday, then face batters in a simulated game early next week, Bochy reported.

**MLB.com**

## **Rodriguez stellar, but late HR sinks Giants**

**Chris Haft**

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Giants had a lot going for them Monday night, including Dereck Rodriguez's smooth seven-inning stint and Brandon Crawford's typically exceptional effort..

The Houston Astros countered with their World Series-winning vibe, which proved to be enough. Marwin Gonzalez launched a three-run homer off Giants closer Will Smith with two outs in the ninth inning to give Houston a 3-1 decision.

The outcome did nothing to spoil Rodriguez's outing. Displaying his characteristic precision, he allowed three hits, walked none and struck out seven as he strengthened his National League Rookie of the Year candidacy.

"I felt I didn't have my high-velocity fastball, 94-95 [mph]," he said. "So I was trying to move the ball more, throw my two-seam [fastball] more and my cutter."

Rodriguez has allowed two runs or fewer while pitching at least six innings in his last seven starts. His ERA in that span is 1.36.

"He just keeps getting better," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "That was a beautiful game he pitched."

This would have been a singular victory for the Giants. They were one out away from defeating Houston, which owned a Major League-best 39-18 road record. The Giants nursed a 1-0 lead into the ninth, resulting from Crawford's sixth-inning home run off Astros starter Charlie Morton. Though second baseman Jose Altuve, shortstop Carlos Correa and outfielder George Springer were injured and unavailable to Houston, the Giants were on the brink of a triumph that would have buoyed their confidence as they strive to remain in postseason contention.

But Smith walked Alex Bregman with one out and Yuli Gurriel on four pitches with two outs. The Giants remained calm, given Smith's statistical totals in his last 14 games, which included a 1.23 ERA, 22 strikeouts and no walks in 14 2/3 innings and seven saves in as many chances.

Up came Gonzalez, who hoisted a 1-0 pitch into the left-field seats.

"I just didn't have the control I usually have tonight," Smith said. "I just didn't have command of the fastball."

Asked to describe the Giants' collective mood swing after Gonzalez's long ball, Crawford said,

"It was about what you'd expect."

The Giants quickly tried to recover emotionally, as Rodriguez and Smith demonstrated by exchanging a fist-bump in a gesture of mutual encouragement. After all, the teams were to meet again Tuesday afternoon.

"Obviously losses like this are tough," Crawford said. "But we have another [game] in 14 hours. We have to play another one and forget this one."

#### MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Crawford provided Rodriguez with exceptional defensive support. The All-Star shortstop started a slick double play in the second inning and made a deft short-hop pickup of Martin Maldonado's fifth-inning grounder that led to an out.

Crawford reacted almost nonchalantly when asked about his play on Maldonado.

"You just kind of have an idea of where the ball's going to go and you put your glove there," Crawford said.

Entering Monday, Crawford had accumulated 10 defensive runs saved, including six in July.

#### SOUND SMART

The Giants endured their third loss of the season when leading after eight innings. They're 46-3 in such games. On a somewhat related subject, San Francisco leads the Major Leagues with 24 blown saves this season.

#### UP NEXT

Madison Bumgarner needs one more victory to move into sole possession of third place on the Giants' all-time San Francisco-era wins list, and he'll try to secure that triumph in Tuesday's 12:45 p.m. PT series finale against Houston at AT&T Park. Bumgarner, currently tied for third with Tim Lincecum (108 wins), is eclipsed only by Juan Marichal (238) and Gaylord Perry (134). Houston will counter with its own formidable left-hander, Dallas Keuchel.

#### **MLB.com**

#### **Shark on track to face hitters next week**

#### **Chris Haft**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Jeff Samardzija's final opportunity to make a positive impact on the 2018 Giants season could be at hand.

Samardzija entered the season as the Giants' No. 3 starter but has made only 10 appearances this season due to recurring shoulder issues. The right-hander has pitched twice since May 29 and is expected to throw off a bullpen mound Thursday, repeating the task he performed Monday.

Manager Bruce Bochy said if Samardzija emerges pain-free from his upcoming bullpen session, he'll likely throw a simulated game at Dodger Stadium next Monday, when San Francisco opens a three-game series against Los Angeles.

Ideally, Samardzija would rejoin the rotation soon afterward, though he might lack the durability that enabled him to exceed 200 innings in each of the previous five years.

At that point, the Giants will have 43 regular-season games remaining. Common sense dictates that if they still consider themselves postseason contenders, they won't be able to wait for Samardzija (1-5, 6.25 ERA) to take any detours in his physical recovery.

Bochy praises sidelined Sandoval

Bochy said he talked to Pablo Sandoval, who will undergo season-ending surgery on his right hamstring Tuesday, and tried his best to cheer up the popular third baseman.

"He's a big part of this club with his energy and his passion," said Bochy, who expressed hope that Sandoval will stick around the ballclub down the stretch to motivate and inspire teammates.

Bravo for Bart

Joey Bart, the Giants' first-round selection (second overall) in this year's MLB Draft, was named the Northwest League Player of the Month for July while playing for San Francisco's Class A Short-Season Salem-Keizer affiliate. Bart hit .333 and led the league in home runs (nine), RBIs (24), total bases (65), slugging percentage (.747) and OPS (1.126).

## **The Athletic**

**Dereck Rodriguez delivers another gem, but the Astros strike back late; Giants set to retire Barry Bonds' No. 25 jersey**

### **David Lombardi**

San Francisco bathed in a perfectly sunny Monday afternoon until about three hours before the first pitch. That's when smoke suddenly overtook AT&T Park.

A concession stand on the promenade level was burning, and the exhaust was billowing from the blaze toward the infield.

The fire department responded promptly and quickly restored normalcy, but the sequence of events served as a premonition of things to come later that evening.

For 26 outs, the Giants, back from a winning road trip and smelling opportunity as they faced a beleaguered Astros club to open a new homestand, cruised. Yet another sterling pitching performance from Dereck Rodríguez and a solo shot onto the arcade from Brandon Crawford combined to get the Giants within a step of the finish line.



All the ingredients for a particularly appealing win were there. But a different fire broke out before closer Will Smith could record out No. 27.

Marwin González yanked a mammoth three-run homer into the left-field bleachers. And just like that, the Astros, missing stars George Springer, José Altuve and Carlos Correa, turned a 1-0 deficit into a 3-1 win, dealing the Giants a gut punch that'll leave an especially nasty bruise.

"I mean, it was right down the middle," Smith lamented the fastball that González took deep. "And as a pitcher, you know that sound."

The sound might've been familiar to Smith, but his last memory of it was distant. That was the first home run that he had allowed while pitching for the Giants, a tenure that's stretched 63 appearances. Smith last allowed a home run in July 2016, when he was pitching for the Brewers.

His 54 2/3 innings without allowing a homer was the second-longest such streak in baseball, second only to Boston's Chris Sale, who's currently at 63 innings without giving one up.

Smith had also walked only seven batters in over 35 innings of work this year entering Monday, but he walked two Astros before González — waiting in the bushes for high velocity — unloaded on a pitch that was meant to go low and away.

It instead ended up on the median of Broadway.

"You're going to have an off night occasionally," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said of Smith. "That was a tough night to have it."

For many reasons.

For one, the Giants can't seem to shake the tractor beam of .500, which keeps yanking them back in. With 48 games left, the Giants are now 57-57, 5 1/2 games out of first place in their division and a full six games removed from the National League's second wild-card spot. Playoff contention in this scenario is like walking a flimsy tightrope, and a loss of this caliber feels like a brutally timed gust of wind.

Then there's the whole component of wasting another brilliant Rodríguez start.

Rodríguez acknowledged that he didn't have his four-seam fastball working with its usual zest — that pitch only averaged 90.5 mph on Monday night, though it normally checks in closer to the mid-90s — but the right-hander overwhelmed the Astros anyway, via other means.

"So I was trying to throw my two-seamer and my cutter more," Rodríguez said about how he compensated. "I was just trying to move the ball around. I know they're a good-hitting team. I know they attack the fastball. On first pitches, I tried to throw my changeup and the other off-speed stuff. I was feeling good about that."

It all added up to an unusually constructed gem: Rodríguez's 94 pitches, 66 of which were strikes, featured a nearly perfect distribution between his fastball, changeup, sinker (two-seamer), cutter and curveball. He struck out seven and walked none.

Rodríguez has now gone six or more innings and allowed two or fewer runs in seven consecutive starts, logging a 1.36 ERA in that span. His cumulative 2.34 ERA this year is third among all MLB rookie starters. Since this was only Rodríguez's 11th start, he doesn't qualify for overall league leads, but that ERA is higher than only the Mets' Jacob deGrom (1.85) and the Nationals' Max Scherzer (2.33) in the NL.

But excellence in this situation is a double-edged sword, and Rodríguez's torrid performance only intensified the sting of this loss in the morose Giants clubhouse.

"D-Rod pitched his ass off," Smith said. "No one feels worse than me right now."

Up until Houston's final successful gasp, Crawford's sixth-inning shot against Astros starter Charlie Morton looked like it could be the difference. Morton had just blown away Buster Posey and Evan Longoria with fastballs that reached 97 mph, but he left a hanging curve on the inside to Crawford, who hit his 11th homer of the season — and second against the Astros.

"That was all reaction," Crawford said. "He's throwing so hard, I had to respect the fastball, but I finally did a good job with my hands to get around on that and hit that out."

The Giants have managed just four total runs in three games against the Astros this season, and Crawford has driven in three of them with home runs, including one back in May off his brother-in-law Gerrit Cole in Houston. That shot landed in Minute Maid Park's aptly (and coincidentally) named Crawford boxes.

Before his homer Monday, Crawford also made a sensational defensive play on Martin Maldonado's one-hop grounder, while Giants center fielder Steven Duggar robbed Houston's Jake Marisnick of extra bases when he sprinted to seal the right-center field gap.

With the combination of a stellar start, excellent defense, and timely hitting, the Giants were primed to give the Astros, the defending World Series champions who have allowed 44 fewer runs than the next stingiest team in baseball, a taste of their own pitching-dominated medicine.

But that went awry when they tripped just inches away from the finish line.

"That's baseball," Rodríguez said. "Sometimes, you're dominant. Sometimes, it's one bad pitch. Tomorrow, (Smith) is going to get the ball again when we're in the lead, in the ninth inning. That's part of this game."

But Monday is one the Giants won't get back.

The Giants will retire Barry Bonds' No. 25 jersey in a pregame ceremony before Saturday's game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. Former Giants general managing partner Peter Magowan was in the clubhouse before Monday's game, and said that current CEO Larry Baer consulted him via phone this past offseason before the team decided to go ahead with the number retirement.

"Larry called, and I told him I think it's your move," said Magowan, who's always been in favor of a ceremony to honor Bonds. "He knew what I was going to say. We were very much together with Bonds, for good or for ill."

Magowan, who was in charge of the Giants when they first signed Bonds to a then-record six-year, \$43.8 million contract in 1993, reminisced on several details of the home run king's career Monday.

Perhaps most interestingly, Magowan remembered that he noticed some boos from the home crowd when Bonds first stepped up to the plate at Candlestick Park that year.

"He comes up in that first inning and there's a smattering of boos — mostly cheers — but a smattering of boos," Magowan said, "because I think they were resenting how much money he was getting."

Bonds responded by drilling one into the right-field stands, and the boos subsided.

Magowan emphasized that Bonds, who hit an MLB-record 762 career home runs, does not get enough credit for the team success that he brought the Giants.

"I always think about the performance that nobody seems to mention: He was a winning player," Magowan said. "Two of the last three years he was in Pittsburgh, they were in the playoffs. And then the first 11 years he was with us, we had the third-best record in baseball. So you take third-best record in baseball over 11 years — only the Yankees and the Braves were better — and three years in Pittsburgh, that's 14 years of winning baseball, and no one ever talks about that."

The conversation around Bonds, of course, has been dominated by his alleged use of performance-enhancing drugs and a debate regarding whether or not he should make the Hall of Fame. Bonds collected 56.4 percent of the vote during the most recent ballot in January; to make it, he'll need to reach 75 percent before his eligibility expires in 2022.

Magowan thinks that a continual influx of younger voters, who look more favorably on statistical prowess, will eventually help push Bonds over the top into the Hall of Fame.

"I think he deserves it," Magowan said. "He's the best player I ever saw short of (Willie) Mays. I don't know how you can argue with what he did before any talk of steroids ever occurred."

"And when you asked all the players around him, they might not have liked him very much, but they said he was the best player they ever saw. I don't know how many times I've heard that from various really good players."

#### Extra Innings

— Brandon Belt took early batting practice, launching one ball onto the arcade, and did some infield work on Monday. The first baseman has been on the disabled list since July 26 with a bone bruise in his knee.

"If I had to guess, he's probably a week away," Bochy said, saying that a minor rehab assignment for Belt is not likely. "He's already done some running on the treadmill."

— Jeff Samardzija threw 30 pitches in a bullpen session before Monday's game. He's scheduled to throw again on Thursday before facing hitters in a simulated game next Monday. If all goes

well, Samardzija will be able to begin his rehab assignment after that. He has made only 10 appearances this year due to recurring shoulder issues.

— Bochy revealed a new nickname: Chase d'Arnaud is "The Flying Frenchman," and he's also the Giants' emergency catcher now that Pablo Sandoval, who will have surgery on his torn hamstring, is done for the season.

## **The Athletic**

### **Down on the Farm: Giants promote three of their top pitching prospects**

#### **Melissa Lockard**

Three promising Giants pitching prospects were on the move this week. The Giants promoted right-hander Logan Webb from High-A San Jose to Double-A Richmond, left-hander John Gavin from Low-A Augusta to San Jose, and left-hander Seth Corry from the AZL Giants Orange to short-season Salem-Keizer.

Webb made his Double-A debut on Sunday. He allowed three runs in five innings, striking out four and walking three. Webb posted a 1.82 ERA in 74 innings with San Jose. He struck out 74 and walked 36, while holding opposing batters to a .207 average. The 21-year-old is in his first full season back after having Tommy John surgery partway through the 2016 season.

Gavin, a native of San Jose, takes Webb's spot in the Giants rotation. He made his California League debut on Saturday, allowing four runs on four hits and two walks in 5 2/3 innings. He struck out seven. Gavin thoroughly dominated the South Atlantic League this season, posting a 2.08 ERA and striking out 111 in 95 innings for the GreenJackets. He was the Giants' eighth-round pick in 2017 out of Cal State Fullerton.

Corry, the Giants' third-round pick last season out of Lone Peak HS in Utah, earned his promotion out of the Arizona Rookie League after posting a 2.61 ERA in 38 innings for the AZL Giants Orange. Corry struck out 42 and walked 17. The 19-year-old struggled with his command in his pro debut season but has made significant strides in that area this year. He will make his debut with the Volcanoes this week.

#### **Four Volcanoes named to Northwest League All-Star team**

Salem-Keizer will be well represented at the Northwest League-Pioneer League All-Star game on Tuesday. Joey Bart, Gregory Santos, Jesus Tona and Diego Rincones were all named to the Northwest League All-Star roster this week.

Bart, the Giants' top pick this year, has been arguably the league's most dangerous hitter since he joined the Volcanoes' roster on July 3. In 25 games, he's homered nine times and has a .346/.395/.750 line. It wouldn't be surprising to see Bart move up to full-season ball once the All-Star game passes.

Rincones, a 19-year-old outfielder, will join Bart in the Northwest League's starting lineup. Rincones was an Arizona Rookie League postseason All-Star last year when he hit .308 in 47

games. This year for Salem-Keizer, Rincones is batting .357/.380/.497 with four home runs in 38 games. He has only 18 strikeouts in 152 at-bats.

Santos, who was acquired from the Red Sox in the Eduardo Núñez deal last July, makes his first All-Star team. The 18-year-old right-hander has a 3.64 ERA and a 38:13 K:BB in 42 innings for the Volcanoes this year. He's allowed just one home run.

Tona, the Volcanoes closer, currently holds a 0.42 ERA in 21 1/3 innings. The 22-year-old right-hander has converted all eight of his save opportunities and has a 31:6 K:BB.

#### Extra Innings

— After being released by the Diamondbacks on Wednesday, veteran outfielder Cesar Puello quickly found a new home in the Giants' organization, signing as a free agent. Puello joined the Triple-A Sacramento River Cats on Friday. He is 1 for 8 in his first three games for Sacramento. Puello hit .317 with a .426 OBP for Triple-A Reno before his release. Puello is a career .290 hitter in 819 minor league games. He has 17 games of big league experience.

— Roberto Gómez was released off the Giants' 40-man roster earlier this year, but he was re-signed to a minor league deal and he returned to the Sacramento bullpen this week, throwing a scoreless inning on Thursday. Gómez made five appearances for the Giants earlier this year. He missed two months with an injury and was released on July 5 before being re-signed on July 9 to a minor league deal.

— After walking the only batter he faced on Monday, right-hander Tyler Beede landed on the River Cats' disabled list two days later. The former first-round pick has a 6.23 ERA in 21 2/3 innings since moving to the bullpen.

— Right-hander Shaun Anderson had a solid outing for the River Cats on Wednesday, allowing two runs on five hits in seven innings in a win over Memphis. Anderson has had two good starts and one bad start since joining the River Cats' rotation in mid-July.

— Third baseman Jonah Arenado had three multi-hit games this week for Richmond, including a 4-for-4 night on Tuesday. He drove in six runs for the week and is batting .308 over his last 10 games.

— The Giants released veteran right-hander Jose Flores off of the Richmond roster this week. Flores had a 7.22 ERA in 57 1/3 innings for Richmond and Sacramento this season. The Giants also released catcher Connor Sabanosh off of the San Jose roster. Sabanosh was an undrafted free agent signing out of Ohio State in 2016. In three seasons in the Giants system, he appeared in only 39 games.

— Outfielder Heliot Ramos is working his way through a bit of a hitting funk with Augusta. After batting .272 with a .336 OBP in June, Ramos hit only .219 with a .299 OBP in July. He's 3 for 15 to start August. Ramos has particularly struggled against left-handed pitchers this year, hitting only .196 in 112 at-bats. Given that he's a right-handed hitter, that split is likely to change as he matures and gains more experience versus southpaws.

— Since returning from a rehab assignment in the Arizona Rookie League, GreenJackets outfielder Malique Ziegler is batting .256 with a .318 OBP in 10 games.

— Giants second-round pick Sean Hjelle worked another scoreless two-inning outing for Salem-Keizer on Thursday. Hjelle has made seven short starts for the Volcanoes and has allowed runs in only two of them. He has 11 strikeouts and one walk in 11 2/3 innings to start his pro career.

— It was a solid week for AZL Giants Black outfielder Alexander Canario. The 18-year-old went 6 for 22 with a home run and seven RBIs. Canario has an .842 OPS in 29 games in the AZL this season.

— Right-hander Sam Coonrod made his first rehab appearance since undergoing Tommy John surgery late in the 2017 season. He was roughed up in a relief appearance with the AZL Giants Black, allowing three runs in two-thirds of an inning. He walked one and allowed two hits.

## **NBC Sports Bay Area**

### **Will Smith gives up first homer in two years, Giants lose heartbreaker**

**Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — Will Smith is not what we've come to expect from a Giants closer. There's no high-wire act. He doesn't need 27 pitches to get through the ninth inning. He doesn't have a signature celebration, or a pitch you'll remember a decade from now.

Smith, installed as closer after Hunter Strickland punched a door, has simply been drama-free. He has quick ninth innings, rarely putting any stress on his manager or the fanbase. He doesn't show any extra emotion after the final out, simply turning and waiting until Buster Posey comes out for a handshake.

Smith did end up seeking out a teammate late Monday night. But it wasn't Posey. He found Dereck Rodriguez in a quiet clubhouse and offered a fist pump to the rookie as he headed for the showers. Smith hadn't saved Rodriguez's win. He blew it, and the Giants lost 3-1 after Smith gave up three in the ninth.

"D-Rod pitched his ass off," Smith said. "Nobody feels worse than me."

Rodriguez grew up in this game, and he is as unflappable on the mound as any Giants rookie has been in recent memory. He was not stewing over the blown opportunity.

"That's baseball, you know? That's baseball," he said. "Sometimes you dominate and sometimes it's one bad pitch. Everybody is trying. The great thing about this sport is tomorrow he'll get the ball again if we have the lead in the ninth inning."

For the Giants, there was dominance AND that one bad pitch.

Rodriguez edged Charlie Morton, one of the better pitchers in the American League, with seven shutout innings, lowering his ERA to 2.34. Brandon Crawford's solo shot in the sixth gave the Giants a 1-0 lead, and Bruce Bochy turned to his best to shut it down. He went away from his

normal late-innings playbook, putting Reyes Moronta in the eighth instead of Tony Watson or Sam Dyson. Moronta got the ball to Smith, who had been perfect in seven save opportunities since June 29.

It was clear throughout the inning that Smith was not his normal self. He walked Alex Bregman with one out and then walked Yuli Gurriel on four pitches with two outs. The Astros were playing without their three best hitters, but they still feature plenty of firepower. Marwin Gonzalez hit 23 homers last year, and when Smith laid a 1-0 fastball right in the heart of the strike zone, Gonzalez hit a high shot that went several rows deep in left. It was his 10th of the year.

Several balls died in the thick air on this night. Smith had no such hopes when the ball left the bat.

“He got it good,” he said. “It was right down the middle. As a pitcher, you know that sound. Yeah ... homer.”

The home run was the first allowed by Smith since July 30, 2016. He had Tommy John surgery during that run, but his streak of 54 2/3 innings without a homer was still the second-longest in the Majors to Chris Sale of the Red Sox. The end of the streak sent the Giants right back to .500. They were an out away from a 58-56 record and a minor gain in the NL West. Instead, they fell right back to their level.

“He’s been so good, so solid,” Bochy said. “You’re going to have an off night occasionally. That’s a tough night to have it.”

## **NBC Sports Bay Area**

### **Giants notes: Dereck Rodriguez dominates, keeps special company in NL**

#### **Alex Pavlovic**

SAN FRANCISCO — With a six-week stretch of dominance, Dereck Rodriguez has thrown his name right near the top of the Rookie of the Year race. He’s also keeping some special company in the National League.

Rodriguez threw seven shutout innings before Will Smith blew it in the ninth inning of a 3-1 loss to the Astros, lowering his ERA to 2.34. There are only three NL starters who have thrown at least 70 innings and have an ERA below 2.35.

The list is Jacob deGrom, Max Scherzer and Dereck Rodriguez. The first two are duking it out for the Cy Young Award and will likely get MVP votes.

“We keep talking about what a great job he’s done,” manager Bruce Bochy said of his rookie right-hander, “And he just keeps getting better.”

Rodriguez broke in with Andrew Suarez, and while the right-hander continues to roll, Suarez has hit a rough patch. After Suarez gave up eight runs in Phoenix over the weekend, Bochy pumped the brakes on any panic, saying a skid is normal for a young starter. That’s true, of course. But Rodriguez has yet to find real trouble. He has given up four runs in four second-half

starts and hasn't allowed more than two runs since June 19. What has allowed him to keep rolling?

"He just has such great focus," Bochy said. "He has four pitches with command. He's got savvy. He knows what he's going and what he wants to do. He's got a good feel for pitching along with good stuff. He works the edges well and goes up and down. I just like how smart he is on the mound."

Rodriguez showed that Monday. His fastball was down a couple ticks and he realized it early, so he spread the wealth. Rodriguez threw 21 four-seamers, 21 two-seamers, 18 changeups, 17 curveballs and 17 cutters.

"I was trying to move the ball around more," he said.

The Astros had no answer for him. So far, nobody really has.

--- Bochy made a change in the eighth, going with Reyes Moronta while Tony Watson and Sam Dyson warmed up. He said he's going to use everyone in the eighth at this point. Ray Black was an option, too. Dyson later warmed up when Will Smith ran into trouble.

--- My original focus tonight was going to be the defense up the middle. There was a sequence in the fifth that showed how the Giants are as good as anyone in that respect right now. Brandon Crawford made a slick scoop to rob Martin Maldonado of a hit. Jake Marisnick then hit a long fly ball to center that would have been trouble for most recent Giants center fielders. Steven Duggar chased it down easily.

The play had a catch probability of just 37 percent, making it the fourth-toughest catch of the year for Giants outfielders. Duggar has been here 21 games and he has two of the top four and four of the top 10, according to catch probability.

--- Roberto Osuna, who just served a 75-game suspension for domestic abuse, was the winning pitcher in his Astros debut. Osuna heard a few scattered boos as he took the mound, but this was nowhere near the level of noise heard when Josh Hader was here on the last homestand.

Osuna's transgression was obviously much, much worse, but it didn't become anywhere near as public as Hader's tweets. It's an odd phenomenon. Hader went viral and got crushed. Osuna seems to have slipped a bit under the radar. Perhaps that will change as he gets around the league a bit more.

--- If you missed it earlier, the Power Rankings have updates on a bunch of former Giants, including Andrew Susac, Phil Bickford, Adalberto Mejia, George Kontos and Matt Moore.

**San Francisco Examiner**

**San Francisco Giants waste a gem by Dereck Rodriguez, lose to Houston Astros**

**Dan Bernstein**



AT&T Park — San Francisco Giants closer Will Smith said he knew he'd blown the game as soon as Houston Astros second baseman Marwin Gonzalez made contact.

With two outs in the top of the ninth inning Monday, Gonzalez took Smith deep for a go-ahead three-run home run. The blast doomed San Francisco to a 3-1 defeat and wasted rookie Dereck Rodriguez's best start of an already impressive season.

Rodriguez went seven scoreless innings and racked up seven strikeouts. After spoiling that effort, Smith screamed at himself as he walked off the mound.

"[Rodriguez] pitched his ass off," Smith said. "Nobody feels worse than me right now, giving that great start up."

Rodriguez entered the game with the best ERA for a rookie starting pitcher since the franchise moved to the West Coast — ahead of Tim Lincecum, Madison Bumgarner and Juan Marichal. He was even in front of Deadball Era legend Christy Mathewson.

Now, only three Deadball Era hurlers are between Rodriguez and the organization's top mark since its founding in 1883.

"He's right up there with them," manager Bruce Bochy said.

Through his first 11 MLB starts, Rodriguez is 5-1 with a 2.34 ERA. On Monday, he didn't allow a single three-ball count and gave up just three hits.

Rodriguez has seemingly improved with each start over the past couple of months. Since June 9, he hasn't given up more than three runs, and he's limited opponents to two runs or fewer in each of his past seven outings.

His latest performance came at a crucial time for the Giants (57-57), who are currently 5 1/2 games out of a postseason position.

"It was a beautiful game he pitched, and we needed it," Bochy said. "He's just been so solid every start out there, he just gets us deep into games."

After being signed by San Francisco last November as a minor league free agent, Rodriguez said he lets himself consider the magnitude of his recent success on the days he's not pitching. This wasn't the type of year anyone pegged him to have.

"I enjoy it. I think about it a lot of the time," Rodriguez said. "But when I'm out there, it's just me, [catcher Buster Posey] and the hitter. That's what's helped me get to where I'm at."

On Monday, Rodriguez received one run of support — a two-out Brandon Crawford home run in the sixth inning. Heading to the ninth, though, that seemed like enough.

But Smith, who has been reliable for most of the campaign, couldn't seal the win.

Smith was 6-for-6 in save opportunities since taking over the closer's role for injured right-hander Hunter Strickland. He entered the game with a 1.27 ERA and no home runs allowed. Then his fastball command let him down.

"That's a tough one," Smith said. "We need to win games, and when a starter goes that deep in a game like that and gives you a chance ... it hurts to give that up."

## **San Francisco Examiner**

### **Bruce Bochy laments loss of Pablo Sandoval, Brandon Belt on road to recovering from knee injury**

#### **Dan Bernstein**

AT&T Park — If there were negative sentiments festering within the San Francisco Giants organization after third baseman Pablo Sandoval signed with the Boston Red Sox in 2015 and took apparent shots at the team, there might not be anymore.

On Monday, manager Bruce Bochy reflected positively on Sandoval's contributions when asked about the 31-year-old's season-ending torn hamstring. It was perhaps San Francisco's most comprehensive show of support for Sandoval since he rejoined the Giants midway through last year.

Sandoval will undergo surgery Tuesday morning.

"He's a big part of this club," Bochy said. "His energy, his passion. So that we're gonna miss. Once he gets through the surgery tomorrow morning, hopefully he'll be around and just keep the guys upbeat."

Sandoval has acknowledged he never really fit in during his unsuccessful stint with the Red Sox. He played just 161 games in three years and was heavily criticized by people in and around Boston's organization for his weight and inability to stay healthy.

He's not received the same blowback since returning to San Francisco, even though he's been a below-average hitter and defender since coming back to the Giants. Sandoval has been worth -0.3 wins above replacement during that span and managed a .238 batting average.

"Coming to Boston was his choice," said former Red Sox manager John Farrell last year in response to Sandoval claiming he wasn't comfortable in Boston. "We went to many steps that took into account his needs on and off the field as best we could."

Bochy struck a different tone Monday, praising Sandoval's ability to adjust to any role he's been asked to fill with San Francisco, including a scoreless inning on the mound.

"First base, third base, even second base we had to play him there," Bochy said. "There were times when he sat on the bench and came off as a pinch-hitter. Never complained, was always in the same mood every day.

"He misses playing. This is what he loves to do, and now he can't do it for a while."

First baseman Brandon Belt (knee) took ground balls Monday and could return as early as next week. The Giants haven't yet decided if he'll need a rehab assignment.

Belt amassed 14 home runs and 43 RBIs before his July injury.

"He did some running on the treadmill, he's taking some swings, he's just doing more and more each day," Bochy said. "His progress is going well."

Starting pitcher Jeff Samardzija (shoulder) threw a 30-pitch bullpen Monday as he continues to work his way back from a recurring injury that's bothered him throughout the season.

Right now, the plan is for Samardzija to throw another bullpen Thursday before completing a simulated outing next Monday in Los Angeles. A rehab assignment could follow those steps if all goes well, though he's already had multiple setbacks in his recovery.

NOTABLE QUOTABLE: "We have to be honest, not had a lot of luck with the concussion thing, so you're always trying to stay optimistic, but with how it's gone for us, once I hear concussion tests it's like, 'Oh no.'" —Bochy on his initial reaction to catcher Buster Posey's head injury this past weekend, which Posey has since recovered from.