



MEDIA CLIPS – Aug. 9, 2018

Rockies' bats unable to back Marquez's effort
Dahl hits 2-run HR; Rox go 1-for-8 with runners in scoring position
By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb
Aug. 8th, 2018

DENVER -- **David Dahl's** body language suggested he was fishing for a home run in the fourth inning Wednesday, and sure enough it showed up -- 438 feet into the Coors Field home bullpen for two runs. The problem was the Rockies otherwise came home empty in the 4-3 loss to the Pirates in the rubber game.

For much of the season, strong starting pitching has carried the Rockies to National League West contention. But even that -- which included a slow beginning but otherwise solid six-inning, 10-strikeout performance from righty **German Marquez** (9-9) that included an **immaculate inning** -- hasn't been enough to prop up anemic offensive efforts as of late.

The Rockies have gone 7-9 in the last 16 games while batting .228 and averaging 3.125 runs. Wednesday, they were 1-for-8 with runners in scoring position, and the batting average in those situations over the last 16 games is .168, with 35 strikeouts in 119 at-bats. It's a bad time for a slump. The Rockies entered the game third in the NL West, 2 1/2 games behind the first-place Dodgers, and 2 1/2 out of the second Wild Card position. They've dropped three straight series.

"That's sort of been the theme lately -- lately meaning the last few weeks," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "We just haven't seemed to string the big hits in there with a couple of baserunners on base. We need that to turn around as we move forward."

After Dahl's fifth home run of the season came when **Chris Archer** (4-5) -- who went five innings and earned his first win since the Pirates acquired him from the Rays -- hung a changeup. Archer said it was the only time he shook off

catcher **Francisco Cervelli**. Dahl is 4-for-12 (.333) with two walks and two strikeouts in five games since returning from a right foot fracture -- he spent extra time at Triple-A Albuquerque to regain his swing.

"I was just trying to have a good at-bat, trying to help the team any way I could and he just happened to leave a changeup up right there," Dahl said.

After Dahl's homer, the Rockies had first and second with one out in the fourth, two on with two outs in the fifth and sixth, and first and third with no outs in the eighth. Yet, all they managed was **Ryan McMahon's** one-out RBI single in the eighth off **Kyle Crick**, who then struck out **Ian Desmond**.

Then, with lefty **Felipe Vazquez** pitching, pinch-hitter **Chris Iannetta** scorched a one-hopper -- 106.8 mph exit speed, according to **Statcast™** -- only to see Pirates second baseman **Adam Frazier** make a diving play to maintain the one-run lead. Vazquez pitched the ninth for his 26th save.

"I think you just keep rolling with it," Iannetta said. "Same thing as at the beginning of the year, when we were saying our offense was the problem. Just keep rolling along, and it's going to flip."

Marquez's first-inning struggles -- a common thread with the starting staff -- continued when he gave up four hits and two runs on **Gregory Polanco's** RBI double and **Colin Moran's** RBI single. But Marquez held the Pirates to one run the rest of his day, and tied a career high by getting third strikes on nine curveballs. The other strikeout -- **Josh Bell** to end the first -- came on a slider.

"My fastball was not the best this outing, but I was able to mix my curveball, slider and changeup pretty effectively," Marquez said in Spanish, with first-base coach Tony Diaz translating.

"[Marquez is] a stud -- I wish we could take back the first inning, but what can we do?" catcher **Tony Wolters** said. "He came back and shoved and kept us in the game."

The Pirates scored again in the eighth after Rockies reliever **Adam Ottavino** walked Bell, then watched standout third baseman **Nolan Arenado** boot away **Adeiny Hechavarria's** grounder for an error. **Corey Dickerson's** sacrifice fly would open a 4-2 lead.

IT'S IMMACULATE

Whenever the word "immaculate" is connected to a Pittsburgh sporting event, you think Franco Harris and a bunch of Steelers fans pouring into the field at Three Rivers Stadium (look it up, kids).

But this time it worked against a Steel City team.

Marquez, after overcoming early traffic, struck out Corey Dickerson, **Starling Marte** and Gregory Polanco on nine pitches in the fourth. A nine-pitch, three strikeout inning is known as an immaculate inning. It was the first such feat in Coors Field history, and just the second in Rockies history. Lefty reliever **Rex Brothers** did it at San Francisco on June 14, 2014, in the eighth.

SOUND SMART

The Rockies went 2-5 on a road trip to St. Louis and Milwaukee, but figured to gain traction at home. However, they dropped their first series at Coors since June 22-24 against the Marlins.

Charlie Blackmon (seeing some success after a 1-for-31 stretch), **DJ LeMahieu** (.207 in the last seven games), **Carlos Gonzalez** (7-for-30 in seven games), **Gerardo Parra** (5-for-21 since Aug. 1) and Desmond (4-for-26 in the last even) all have had days off, and Black pulled Arenado (2-for-9 for the series with the Pirates) for two innings of Tuesday's 10-2 loss to the Pirates.

"You look at the schedule," Black said. "You look to see how guys are physically, how they are swinging. It sort of all lines up for certain guys to get rest. It's hard at times, but it makes so much sense."

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Above-average arms can save runs. With Cervelli at first in the fifth, Frazier lashed a double to left-center, where Parra slid to make sure he blocked the ball and could make the incoming throw to shortstop **Trevor Story**, who threw a dart to Wolters easily beat Cervelli.

After scrambling to his feet, Parra managed an 80.8 mph throw to Story, whose relay zoomed home at 92.8 mph.

MITEL REPLAY OF THE DAY

Well, Blackmon thought he was out, anyhow.

The Rockies challenged an out call when Blackmon attempted to steal second with no outs in the seventh. Blackmon seemed so sure he was out that he immediately left the field. But replays on the scoreboard at least had fans convinced that Hechavarria's tag didn't touch him until after Blackmon's foot had touched the base. But after a lengthy review, the call stood.

UP NEXT

Like much of the rest of the rotation, Rockies lefty **Tyler Anderson** (6-4, 4.05 ERA) has struggled in the first inning. He hopes to avoid a repeat of his last start when he gave up six first-inning runs at Milwaukee. Anderson takes the ball at Coors Field Thursday against the Dodgers in the opener of an important National League West series starting a 6:40 p.m. MT. He is 2-1 with a 2.98 ERA in his last seven starts. **Ross Stripling** takes the mound for Los Angeles.

Marquez tosses immaculate inning vs. Bucs
Righty fires second such frame for Rockies, first at Coors Field
By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb
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DENVER -- Rockies right-hander **German Marquez** was too busy putting his outing back on the rails to realize he pulled off a rare immaculate inning. He accomplished three straight strikeouts -- on three pitches apiece for a total of nine -- in the fourth inning of Wednesday's **4-3 loss** to the Pirates.

Marquez was down, 3-0, at the time. He fanned the top of the Pirates' order -- **Corey Dickerson, Starling Marte** and **Gregory Polanco** -- all on curveballs. Marquez became the second pitcher in Rockies history -- and first at Coors Field -- to accomplish the feat. Lefty reliever **Rex Brothers** did it on June 14, 2014 at San Francisco, against **Michael Morse, Brandon Crawford** and **Gregor Blanco**.

"It's great," Marquez said in Spanish, with first-base coach Tony Diaz translating. "I wasn't aware of that. I'm glad to be on that list. It's exciting, and I'm glad that it worked out."

The feat came and went before catcher **Tony Wolters** knew it, as well.

"It was super quick," Wolters said. "I was like, dang, he threw a quick inning. That was nice. It was more like, 'Dude? I think of Marquez as a guy who punches guys out. I expect him to strike guys out.' But I didn't really realize he was doing that."

It was part of an odd day for Marquez, who gave up 10 hits in six innings, but also struck out 10. This occurred against a Pirates offense that entered with the fewest strikeouts in the National League. The result was Marquez allowed just three runs -- a winnable performance if not for the struggles of the Rockies' offense

"To look at that, you'd think that if a guy gives up that many hits, his stuff isn't that good because they're getting hits," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "And to strike out 10 in six innings, you're thinking, 'Wow. He must have great stuff.' It's one of those anomalies in baseball."

Such innings are rare and random. There were none from 1929-52, but there were eight occurrences alone in 2017. Marquez's was the third this season. **Kevin Gausman**, with the Orioles (before he was traded to the Braves) did it on April 23 against the Indians' **Yonder Alonso, Yan Gomes** and **Bradley Zimmer**, and the Nationals' **Max Scherzer** accomplished it against the Rays' **Johnny Field, Christian Arroyo** and **Daniel Robertson** on June 5.

But the curveball that fueled the anomaly might become more common. The put-away pitch on nine of of Marquez's 10 strikeouts Wednesday was the curveball. In his previous start, a win at Milwaukee when he went seven three-hit innings, all nine strikeouts were on curves.

"Mechanically, I'm staying tall more consistently, and therefore I create better angle so the hitters don't pick it up as soon," Marquez said. "With the deception it creates on the break, it's a lot more lethal."

Marquez entered his special inning with some momentum. In the bottom of the third, Marquez delivered the Rockies' first hit of the game, a single off the Pirates' **Chris Archer**. The hit brought Marquez's batting average to .357, which leads all pitchers, and was his ninth in his last 18 at-bats over eight games.

Marquez and Wolters didn't even have time to discuss strategy.

"I was like, 'Hey Marqy, let's focus on hitting and we'll talk after,'" Wolters said.

The way he pitched, no conversation was needed.

In the bottom of the fourth, **David Dahl**'s two-run homer off Archer cut the Rockies' deficit to 3-2, but the Rockies never gained the lead.

Shaw healthy, earning Black's trust again

Rusin nearing return; Senzatela set to throw off mound

By Thomas Harding MLB.com @harding_at_mlb

Aug. 8th, 2018

DENVER -- The Rockies signed righty **Bryan Shaw** for three years and \$27 million for innings other than a mop-up seventh in a 10-2 loss -- his role against the Pirates on Tuesday night.

After throwing a scoreless inning with a strikeout and one soft base hit, as part of solid work in his last eight appearances, it's possible manager Bud Black will move him back into a role protecting leads.

Recently, righties **Scott Oberg**, **Seunghwan Oh**, **Adam Ottavino** and **Wade Davis** have worked with the lead, but a stretch of close games could wear out that foursome. Shaw's ability to face right- and left-handed hitters when pitching well could be of use as the Rockies try to push into the postseason. A poor start to this season has left Shaw 3-5 with a 6.60 ERA and a career-high-tying eight homers against, but Shaw handled key innings in recent years for the Indians, and his experience will be needed for the Rockies.

Shaw missed 13 games in late June and early July with a right calf strain, and he took the time to correct some delivery issues, but in the eight games back he has a 2.25 ERA and .226 batting average against.

"Overall since he's been activated, the bigger picture for me is better quality pitches -- most of them are down in the zone," Black said. "If you look at the bigger scope, he's been much better than what we saw prior to going on the DL with his calf strain. We have to stay there."

After giving up his last run in a 3-1 victory over the Athletics on July 27, Shaw has made his last three appearances in losses by three or more runs.

"He's throwing the ball better, and depending on the usage of the other guys, I'm not opposed to throwing Bryan," Black said. "He's been there and done that. I know the pulse will be in the right spot. He's ready for that."

Rusin close to returning

After three outings at Triple-A Albuquerque to rehab from plantar fasciitis in his left foot, lefty **Chris Rusin** will be evaluated for a return as early as Thursday.

Rusin, after a standout season in 2017, went to the disabled list with a 6.81 ERA. As is the case with Shaw, the Rockies need him. With **Jake McGee** making location mistakes -- granted, with improved velocity -- the Rockies need a left-handed option in close games.

Even with his struggles, Rusin has held lefty hitters to a .219 batting average, with 22 strikeouts in 73 at-bats. In three games at Albuquerque, lefty hitters were 1-for-4 with a strikeout and a walk. Ideally, however, Rusin can fill a number of roles -- from one batter to multiple innings.

"The three games, even though statistically combined [5.40 ERA at Albuquerque] might not look great, we were encouraged by a lot of things we saw," Black said. "Chris' stuff plays both against left- and right-handed hitters. But if he's throwing his good cutter-slider down and away to the lefty and the moving fastball in on their hands, it's pretty good stuff."

Senzatela nearing the mound

Righty **Antonio Senzatela** (4-3, 4.56 ERA), who went on the disabled list over the weekend with right shoulder inflammation, played catch Wednesday for the second straight day, and said he plans to resume throwing off a mound Thursday or Friday if cleared by the training staff.

Senzatela reported higher-than-usual soreness after his last start, when he held the Cardinals to one run in six innings in a 3-2 Rockies loss at Busch Stadium last Thursday. But treatment has him feeling much better.

Chad Bettis struggled Tuesday in his return to the rotation, but if he finds his form there will be six starters on the roster (assuming no further injuries). Senzatela, who began the season in the bullpen, said there has been no discussion of his role when he returns.

Senzatela battled a blister on his right middle finger in early July, but in his last two starts he has given up two runs in 11 2/3 innings. In those games, he has 11 strikeouts and six walks. The improvement has been his ability to bounce back from a negative occurrence. A key bases-loaded strikeout after an error from catcher **Tony Wolters** is an example.

Sometimes Senzatela will react to a bad occurrence with a roll of the head or a stomp, but the composure returns quickly.

"I just try to get in my mind every time, 'Make a quality pitch and get out of the inning,'" Senzatela said. "Just compete, maintain the game close. I try to stay in the moment, I breathe real quick and move on to the next pitch."

Rockies lack clutch hits, lose rubber game against Pirates at Coors Field

German Marquez's afternoon was a curious combination of power pitching mixed with episodes of poor command

By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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The road ahead looks daunting for the Rockies. Or perhaps it presents a prime opportunity.

It all depends on the point of view, as well as the Rockies' batting average with runners in scoring position.

Manager Bud Black, of course, prefers to take the positive fork in the road as the Rockies open a crucial four-game series against the Dodgers on Thursday night at Coors Field.

"Isn't it great?" Black said. "This is what I want to see every year here, playing these big games that matter."

The problem is, the Rockies wasted a big opportunity Wednesday, losing 4-3 to Pittsburgh, the Rockies' seventh loss in 10 games. The Rockies' offense, again, failed to deliver in the clutch, going 1-for-8 with runners in scoring position.

Los Angeles moved three games ahead of Colorado in the National League West, pending the outcome of the Dodgers' game at Oakland late Wednesday night.

After the Dodgers series, the Rockies play two games at Houston against the defending World Series champion Astros, then four games at Atlanta vs. the Braves, who are in the hunt for the National League East title.

Black might be one of the most positive men on the planet, but even he knows his team can't afford to keep squandering opportunities against playoff-caliber teams.

"That's sort of been the theme lately, lately meaning the last few weeks," Black said. "We just haven't seen the string of big hits with a couple of baserunners on base. We need that to turn around as we move forward."

The statistics are sobering. Since July 22, the Rockies have hit .228 overall, with a .296 on-base percentage. Their batting average with runners in scoring position is .168, and they have whiffed 36 times in 119 at-bats with RISP (30 percent).

Wednesday, Ryan McMahon's single drove in Nolan Arenado to get Colorado within a run in the eighth inning with one out. But with Trevor Story perched on third base, pinch-hitter Ian Desmond struck out and Chris Iannetta hit a 106.8 mph scorching grounder that second baseman Adam Frazier gobbled up for the final out.

“I pretty much hit that as hard as I can, but we got nothing to show for it,” Iannetta said. “At that moment, I’m a spectator. It’s like, ‘I did my job with my bat.’ But then I watch like everyone else and you just feel down and disappointed it didn’t get through.”

Rockies starter German Marquez’s afternoon was a curious combination of power pitching mixed with episodes of poor command. In six innings, the right-hander gave up 10 hits, leading to three Pittsburgh runs. Yet Marquez also struck out the side in the fourth inning, needing only nine pitches to pull off the second “immaculate inning” in franchise history.

Marquez whiffed 10, but another rocky start put Colorado behind early. Pittsburgh scored two runs in the first inning on four hits, the key blows an RBI double by Gregory Polanco and an RBI single by Colin Moran. The Rockies have given up 100 runs in the first inning this season, the most in the majors, and have posted a 7.74 first-inning ERA, the highest in the majors. Marquez’s slow starts — his first-inning ERA is 10.17 — continue to haunt him.

The Pirates got to Marquez for two runs in the first inning and another in the third, but Colorado cut Pittsburgh’s lead to 3-2 on David Dahl’s two-run homer in the fourth off Pittsburgh starter Chris Archer.

Kiz vs. Saunders: What must Rockies' Nolan Arenado do to be named MVP of NL?

The mile-high stigma is tough to overcome

By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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Question: What must Rockies' Nolan Arenado do to be named MVP of NL?

Kiz: Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado is the best player in the National League. Period. Isn't that obvious to anyone who lives in Colorado and watches Arenado blast loud home runs and make jaw-dropping plays with his glove? But it's the rest of the country I worry about. What does Arenado have to do in order to overcome the bias against Coors Field and be crowned the most valuable player?

Saunders: I think the Rockies will have to win the National League West or, at the very least, stay in the race until the final week of the season. I do think a lot of voters have seen enough highlights to appreciate Arenado, but the mile-high stigma is tough to overcome. After all, Arenado's home OPS is 1.120 vs. .847 OPS on the road.

Kiz: A year ago, Arenado finished fourth in the MVP voting, in no small part because Charlie Blackmon enjoyed the best season of his career and split support with his Colorado teammate. So with Chicago Cubs infielder Javy Baez a legit MVP candidate in 2018 on a team not only bound for the playoffs but a fixture on television, should I begin to worry shortstop Trevor Story has played so well for the Rockies that he will "steal" votes from Arenado this season?

Saunders: I don't think so. Story has been the Rockies' best player since the all-star break, and he's coming off a fantastic series in Milwaukee, but he doesn't have the pedigree that Arenado does. When I travel to opposing ballparks, Arenado is usually the player the writers seek out, or the player they ask manager Bud Black about the most.

Kiz: While Arenado could lead the league in home runs, his detractors will shout that his .259 batting average on the road makes him a product of baseball at altitude. So there's only one way Arenado can prove his true value to skeptics. He must lead the Rockies to a playoff berth by hogging center stage during big victories in August and September. Anything less, and voters will find a reason to give somebody else the MVP.

Saunders: We are in agreement on this point, for sure, and there are 50 games left for this to play out. I think Arenado's prime competition will come from Atlanta first baseman Freddie Freeman, who is the ringleader for the resurgent Braves, and St. Louis' sizzling-hot Matt Carpenter. But you're right, voters are going to dock Arenado for his home/road splits (he has hit 16 home runs at Coors vs. 13 on the road), but I hope voters will consider his defense. It wins games — home and away.

German Marquez pitches rare “Immaculate Inning” for Rockies
By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post
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Nine pitches, all of them for strikes, resulting in three strikeouts. There has to be a special name for that, right?

Sure is. “Immaculate inning.”

Rockies right-hander German Marquez delivered one Wednesday in the fourth inning of Colorado’s 4-3 loss to Pittsburgh. It was only the second time it has happened in Rockies history. Rex Brothers accomplished the feat on June 14, 2014, at San Francisco. Marquez’s immaculate inning was the first at Coors Field.

“That’s great,” the 23-year-old right-hander said. “I wasn’t even aware of that, but I’m very glad to be on that list. It’s exciting.”

Marquez’s fastball command was off Thursday, as evidenced by the 10 hits he allowed over six innings, but the fourth inning showed just how dominant a pitcher Marquez can be. He whiffed the top of the Pirates’ order — Corey Dickerson, Starling Marte and Gregory Polanco — getting strike three on curveballs all three times.

“I thought my curveball was really sharp today, and I felt I could use it right there,” Marquez said.

Catcher Tony Wolters wasn’t aware that Marquez had thrown a 100 percent pure inning until later.

“It was super quick. I was like, ‘Dang, he threw a quick inning!’ ” Wolters said. “That was nice. It was more like, dude! I think of Marquez as a guy who punches guys out. I expect him to strike guys out. But I didn’t really realize he was doing that.”

Immaculate innings are indeed rare, but not as much as they used to be. There were none in the majors from 1929-52, but there were eight of them in 2017. Marquez’s was the third this season. Kevin Gausman did it with the Orioles on April 23 against Cleveland (before the Grandview High School alumnus was traded to Atlanta), and Washington ace Max Scherzer accomplished the feat against Tampa Bay on June 5.

Looking ahead

Dodgers RHP Ross Stripling (8-3, 2.68 ERA) at **Rockies LHP Tyler Anderson** (6-4, 4.05), 6:40 p.m. Thursday, ATTRM; 850 AM

Anderson is looking to rebound from his worst performance of the season. The left-hander lost at Milwaukee on Saturday, his first loss since June 23, giving up seven runs on seven hits, including three home runs. Anderson's location of pitches was poor. Still, Anderson has been one of the Rockies' best pitchers during the heat of the summer, going 2-1 with a 2.98 ERA over his past seven starts, with opponents hitting just .172 over those seven games. Anderson has a 3.50 ERA in 30 career starts at Coors Field. Stripling is coming off the disabled list to make this start, but he may be back in the bullpen soon after. He was a reliever for much of the 2017 season. The right-hander was excellent in May and June, but he struggled in July, posting a 4.73 ERA. The 28-year-old has already surpassed his career high by throwing 104 innings this season. Nolan Arenado has hit Stripling well, going 5-for-11 (.455) with a home run and one double. — *Patrick Saunders, The Denver Post*

Friday: Dodgers RHP Kenta Maeda (7-7, 3.73 ERA) at Rockies RHP Jon Gray (9-7, 4.73), 6:40 p.m., ATTRM

Saturday: Dodgers RHP Walker Buehler (5-4, 3.63) at Rockies LHP Kyle Freeland (10-7, 3.04), 6:10 p.m., ATTRM

Sunday: Dodgers LHP Rich Hill (5-4, 3.62) at Rockies RHP Chad Bettis (5-2, 5.67), 1:10 p.m., ATTRM

Kiszla: Is Rockies' offense so bad 38-year-old Matt Holliday should grab his bat and hop a plane to Denver?

The Rockies are 3-7 in the last 10 games

By **MARK KISZLA** | mkiszla@denverpost.com | *The Denver Post*

PUBLISHED: August 8, 2018 at 8:10 pm | UPDATED: August 8, 2018 at 9:46 pm

Anybody have the cell number for Matt Holliday? The Rockies need your bat, Big Daddy. And fast. With the playoff race heating up, the Colorado offense is outta gas.

Chew on this: The Rockies can't hit. Who would've thunk it?

"Baseball is a weird sport, man," shortstop Trevor Story said Wednesday, after Colorado lost 4-3 to Pittsburgh.

Well, weird is probably too nice a word for what's happening to the Rockies, whose bats are kind of like my car keys:

Right here, somewhere, but danged if I can find 'em. So Story obliged me with other terms for the game's current relationship with Colorado hitters.

"Cruel," Story said. "Tough."

If hitting is contagious, then so is frustration that can build when a batting order falls into a collective funk.

"Very contagious," Story said, "for sure."

Right now, a Colorado baserunner at third base is only 90 feet from home but might as well be standing on a planet in a galaxy far, far away.

In the bottom of the ninth, with the Rockies trailing by only a run and 35,702 spectators hanging around LoDo, waiting for a rally, the ballpark sound system might as well have played Jackson Browne's "Running on Empty."

From Charlie Blackmon to Nolan Arenado, there are big bats throughout the Colorado lineup, but during these dog days of summer, they sometimes appear too pooped to pop.

As the Rockies dropped the rubber match of a three-game series against the Pirates, Blackmon did contribute two hits, but Chuck Nazy might be showing the wear and tear of working long hours in the wide-open prairie that is center field at Coors Field, as he's batting an unNazy-like .206 since July 22.

On an otherwise beautiful summer afternoon, the lone way Arenado reached base was by taking a 95 mph fastball to his left shoulder, which maybe should earn him a day off to let the purple fade from that bruise, except those mean-and-nasty Dodgers are coming to town. So there's no rest for the weary.

Three is Colorado's tragic number. In the past 16 games, which have seen the team lose nine times, the good guys have averaged a paltry 3.1 runs per game. During that span, the Rockies are hitting .228. The most dangerous bat in the lineup Wednesday might've belonged to German Marquez (.357 average). And he's the pitcher.

Manager Bud Black diplomatically refers to this untimely slump as a "lull." If this weren't a family newspaper, I might suggest a more descriptive four-letter word. Truth be told, Colorado's offensive consistency has been an iffy proposition all season long.

"We need that to turn around," Black said.

Maybe Black should grab the phone in the Colorado dugout and give Holliday a holler. What could it hurt?

For those of you who have lived in Denver only long enough to turn the endless traffic snarl on Interstate 25 into our own little Hotel California ("You can check out anytime you like, but you can never leave"), teammates referred to Holliday as "Big Daddy" back in the day. It was a term of endearment for a slugger who hit .319 with 128 home runs in his stint with the Rockies from 2004-08.

When general manager Jeff Bridich signed Holliday to a minor-league deal late last month, it seemed like a good excuse to give to a 38-year-old, semi-retired ballplayer to skip mowing his lawn for a few weeks.

Even in his prime, Holliday was issued a glove primarily to conceal the fingerprints on his next misadventure in the outfield. So it would be a challenge for Black to squeeze him on a 25-man roster as a pinch hitter.

But watching a Rockies rally in the eighth inning die on the bats of Ian Desmond and Chris Iannetta gave me the urge to have Dinger pass a cap with an interlocking "C" and "R" among the crowd at Coors to see how long it would take to fund an airplane ticket to Denver from Albuquerque, where Holliday is shaking the rust off his swing for the Isotopes in the minors.

Could the bat of Holliday put a charge in the Rockies' offense? Maybe. Maybe not. But I do know this: The sight of Big Daddy digging in the batter's box would cause a delirious Coors crowd to blow the top off the party deck.

The Rockies are 3-7 in the last 10 games. It's too early to panic. But go 3-7 in the next 10 games, and they could go quietly in the race for the playoffs.

Put a bat in Holliday's hand and, at the very least, you know Big Daddy will go down swinging loudly.

Breaking down the incredibly rare feat by German Márquez — The Immaculate Inning **By Nick Groke Aug 9, 2018**

DENVER — German Márquez on Wednesday added his name to a short list that includes Sandy Koufax and Nolan Ryan, but he didn't even know it.

The Rockies' 23-year-old right-hander pulled off an immaculate inning at Coors Field against the Pirates when he threw nine strikes with nine pitches for three outs in the fourth.

It was just the 92nd immaculate inning in baseball's history. Márquez became the 86th pitcher to complete the feat — and the first to do it at Coors Field.

It is a mark considerably more rare than no-hitters and cycles. There have been more than 217,000 games played in baseball's professional history, and only 0.0004 percent of those games included an immaculate inning.

Márquez breezed through the top of the Pirates' order so quickly in the fourth inning that the moment escaped both him and his catcher.

"He did what?" Colorado catcher Tony Wolters said. "Oh yeah, yeah. The three Ks? Yeah, that was an awesome inning. I wish we did that every inning."

Well after his outing, a 4-3 Pirates victory that gave the Rockies their seventh loss in 10 games, Márquez needed his milestone explained. He knew he struck out 10 batters with a breaking ball mix that hid an ineffective fastball. He knew the Pirates pounced on him for two runs in the first before he settled in. And he knew he had nine Ks in his first four innings.

He just didn't know his fourth inning blew by on just nine pitches.

"I wasn't aware of that," Márquez said, "but I'm very glad to be on that list. It's exciting. I'm glad it worked out."

Only Max Scherzer, Randy Johnson, Lefty Grove, Koufax and Ryan have ever thrown two immaculate innings in their careers. Márquez got an early jump to join them, in just his second season as a starter.

The only other Rockies pitcher to throw an immaculate inning was lefty reliever Rex Brothers in 2014, at San Francisco. Former Rockies reliever LaTroy Hawkins did it for the Cubs in 2004. And three pitchers threw an immaculate inning against the Rockies — Houston's Mike Magnante, Orel Hershiser for San Francisco and Wade Miley with the Diamondbacks.

For comparison, there have been 15 unassisted triple plays since 1900, 23 perfect games and 299 no-hitters. The immaculate inning falls somewhere in the middle.

Márquez did it the hard way. The Pirates turned over their lineup to start the fourth, with leadoff Corey Dickerson at the top. Márquez threw him two fastballs that were fouled off, and then the strikeout curveball. Against Starling Marte, he threw a slider for a strike looking, then two swing-and-miss curveballs. With Gregory Polanco, it was fastball/changeup/curveball. Nine of his 10 strikeouts overall came on strike-three curveballs.

“It was super quick,” Wolters said. “I was like, ‘Dang, he threw a quick inning.’ That was nice. It was more like, ‘Dude?’ I think of Márquez as a guy who punches guys out. I expect him to strike guys out, but I didn’t really realize he was doing that.”

The Pirates, though, knocked Márquez for 10 hits to go with his 10 strikeouts over six innings. He left with a 3-2 deficit and was charged with a loss that dropped his record to 9-9.

“A weird pitching line, for sure, when you see that many hits and that many strikeouts,” manager Bud Black said. “One of those baseball anomalies.”

Defense wins championships: Our players to watch who will make a defensive difference for contenders **By Mark Simon 3h ago | The Athletic**

Yes, pitching and hitting will decide much of who goes on to the postseason and who goes home for the winter. But defense will play an important role, too.

Want proof? Take a look at the team leaderboards for Defensive Runs Saved.

The top four National League teams and four of the top six American League teams are all at least 10 games over .500. Defense might be harder to quantify than home runs or strikeouts, but it's still significant.

Who will be the key defensive player to watch for each contending team? Here are our picks.

National League

Arizona Diamondbacks: Ketel Marte, 2B

Marte has made a solid transition to second base in his second season with the Diamondbacks. Though he has been credited with saving only four runs there, his work in shifts (counted in team totals but not individual totals) has been invaluable in helping the Diamondbacks record a bevy of outs that they wouldn't have gotten in an unshifted alignment.

You could make a case that they get the most out of shifting of any team in baseball. Marte's job over the next seven weeks is to provide more of the same to allow Zack Greinke, Zack Godley and the rest of the staff to get key outs.

Atlanta Braves: Ronald Acuña Jr., OF

With the acquisition of Adam Duvall, the Braves have four outfielders for three spots. And it looks like Acuña will be moved to center field when the Braves face a lefty, allowing Duvall, a very good defensive outfielder, to play left (instead of Acuña). That means Gold Glove center fielder Ender Inciarte will begin those games on the bench.

Acuña isn't as good defensively as either Duvall or Inciarte. He's shown himself to be slightly above average so far. What the Braves need is for him to avoid any rookie mistakes early in games so Duvall and Inciarte can hold down the fort late. So far, so good.

Chicago Cubs: Willson Contreras, C

Contreras is a good defensive catcher in every aspect but one – getting extra strikes for his pitchers (pitch-framing). Over the last two seasons, he ranks next-to-last in our strike zone runs saved metric, though, in fairness, he ranks better when looked at on a rate basis rather than as a sum.

Still, the Cubs are going to need to get a few calls down the stretch to hold off the Brewers. It will be on Contreras to try to make a positive impact in that regard.

Colorado Rockies: Trevor Story, SS

It would be easy to pick Gold Glove winners DJ Lemahieu or Nolan Arenado here, but we'll go with the guy playing between them. It's a small sample, but Story has saved five runs since the All-Star Break, one shy of the lead at the position (he also homered in three straight games).

He's looked something more like the 2017 version of himself, the one whose 11 Defensive Runs Saved ranked among the leaders at shortstop.

Los Angeles Dodgers: Yasiel Puig, RF

Puig has dealt with multiple injuries and recently returned from a strained oblique, which raises the question if they're a cause of his Defensive Runs Saved dropping from 18 (last season) to 0 (this season).

Regardless, Puig is a player who can fix things pretty quickly, with a couple of nifty running catches or jaw-dropping throws. That there hasn't been more of those this season (his "Good Fielding Plays" dropped from 27 to 6), could partly explain why the NL West is a battle to begin with.

Milwaukee Brewers: Travis Shaw, INF

Shaw just had a three-game span in which he started at second base, third base and first base. He's going to be Mr. Versatility down the stretch and, hopefully, he'll always take the right glove out to the field with him.

The Brewers rate as one of baseball's top defensive teams this season. Shaw has been a big part of that with his work at third base, where he's saved eight runs. Now, he'll try to carry that over to further prove his worth and enhance the Brewers' postseason chances.

Philadelphia Phillies: Wilson Ramos, C

When Ramos returns from the disabled list, he'll help the Phillies in an area in which they very much need it – pitch blocking. Andrew Knapp and Jorge Alfaro rate as the two worst pitch-blockers in the game. And given the Phillies' poor defense, they can't afford to give up free bases at any point.

With Ramos, they get someone who has had ups and downs in this area, but his number is currently pointing up. Ramos has a 92 percent block rate, compared to Knapp's 87 percent and Alfaro's 86.

Washington Nationals: Bryce Harper, OF

Harper's defensive performance this season has been very un-Harper-like. He's cost his team 14 runs between center field and right field. That's not just from pulling up on balls and showing hesitancy to dive or go all-out into a fence; it's that the deterrent value of his arm is nil (he is allowing runners to take extra bases at the worst rate of his career).

If Harper can flip the switch in the field as he has at the plate the last 10 days, perhaps he can be a difference-maker with his defense the last six weeks.

Rockies are walking a thin line in this stretch run — it's now pitch or bust in Colorado
By Nick Groke Aug 8, 2018 | The Athletic

DENVER — Hope sprang from above Monday night when the skies opened on Coors Field like an overflowing bathtub and a downpour sent the Rockies sprinting for cover.

Nolan Arenado had just scored, when Gerardo Parra dribbled a grounder to the right side that Pittsburgh's Josh Harrison bobbled. Hardly an offensive explosion, but the Rockies grabbed a 1-0 lead in the fifth.

This was their best chance for victory in a week of spoiled outcomes. The game was past the point of no return, already in the books according to official rules. If the rain kept dumping, the umpire could call it a night and Colorado could skip the anxiety of a blown-up bullpen.

"We got word the delay wouldn't be that long," Rockies manager Bud Black said. So much for that idea.

Instead, 25-year-old left-hander Kyle Freeland pitched seven shutout innings and the Rockies eked out a 2-0 victory, falling into a pattern that has developed over several weeks, even months. And it crystallized over the past 14 days — Colorado over that span was among the worst hitting and best starting-pitching teams in baseball.

This is nothing new. With seven weeks remaining, a little less than a third of the season, the Rockies have established a firm baseline. Their identity is decidedly un-Colorado. They will pitch their way down the stretch and cross their fingers on the rest.

"I firmly believe you're only as good as your pitching," Colorado catcher Chris Iannetta said. "You can't out-slug the six or eight best teams in the game in the playoffs. You just cannot do it. You can't put up 10 runs in the playoffs. It's not possible. You have to do it on the pitching side."

The Rockies are constructed for the postseason — if they can get there.

"The teams that are good are the teams that pitch," Iannetta said. "When you watch games in the playoffs, how many blowouts do you see? Not many."

Here is how the Rockies rank among both leagues, by park-adjusted numbers that try to take Coors Field out of the equation, according to Fangraphs:

Rockies pitching	Stat	MLB rank
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fWAR	12.4	8th
xFIP	4.07	11th
ERA-	90	6th
Rockies hitting	Stat	MLB rank
fWAR	7.6	23rd
wRC+	85	26th
K%	22.8	21st

In a midwest roadie that went south last week, the Rockies finished 2-5 with series losses at St. Louis and Milwaukee.

The gut-punches included three walk-off losses, two on back-to-back nights charged to closer Wade Davis, Colorado's \$52 million closer.

Bullpens are easy to blame. It's a hot-plate job in a tight spotlight. But there was a deeper issue. In the past two weeks, the Rockies averaged just 3.1 runs per game, fourth-fewest in baseball. They were vulnerable to walk-offs because they never pulled away.

"Guys need to step up," Nolan Arenado said. "We need some of our guys in the bullpen to step up for us. But we need our offense as a team to be more consistent on the road and at home. We all need to pick it up. Including myself. I need to have better at-bats."

And yet, the Rockies entered Tuesday just two games back of both the National League West-leading Diamondbacks and the league's second wild-card spot. Freeland's seven shutout innings Monday, in a 2-0 victory, marked his third seven scoreless innings outing this season, and his second at Coors Field.

The Rockies have won four shutouts at altitude this season, with 11 shutout wins over the past two seasons at Coors Field. In the two seasons before that, they totaled just three shutout victories at home.

But on Tuesday, Chad Bettis returned to the Rockies rotation from a blister injury and promptly got rocked. The Pirates put a nine-spot on him through 4 2/3. He received no assistance. Pittsburgh had a 10-0 lead before the Rockies scored in the sixth.

This is the wire the Rockies will walk. They will pitch or bust.

“If you map out every hitter we have, and their little oscillations up and down throughout the season, when a bunch of guys match up on a downward swing, then you get road trips like we had last week,” Iannetta said, noting too that his team averaged 9.0 runs per in the nine games prior.

“It’s just the way baseball goes and wherever you’re at on that curve, you’re either up at night staring at walls or you’re sleeping really well,” he said.

Iannetta can point to precedent. As the Angels’ primary catcher in 2014, he saw his team catch fire at the plate, only to fizzle in the crunch. From the start of August through the third week of September, the Angels were the hottest hitting team in baseball that season. But they collectively spiraled down, in Iannetta’s words, and the Royals, who peaked late, bounced them from the postseason.

“You have to get hot at the right time,” Iannetta said.

Pitching, though, is no guarantee. The Rockies were among the best pitching teams in baseball in 2009 and ’10, but never won the West. They managed just one postseason victory in ’09, then finished third without a berth the next season. And the Rockies were pitching well in September last season before a wild 11-8 wild-card loss at Arizona.

But since June 28, before Tuesday’s blowout loss, the Rockies went 22-10 (the third-best mark in the NL) behind a 3.34 team ERA (best in the NL). A rotation led by Freeland, with Tyler Anderson and Jon Gray hitting stride, removed the pressure to hit from Arenado and crew.

“When you know you don’t have to score 10 runs to win, it’s awesome,” Iannetta said.

On back-to-back nights in Denver to start a seven-game homestand, the Rockies revealed the thin line between contender and also-ran. They twice scored two runs, in a hard-fought 2-0 victory and a blowout 10-2 loss. This is a precarious position for a team that plays half its games at Coors Field.

The Rockies have proved they can pitch. The rest is to be determined — they can only hope it’s in the postseason.

“You’re going to be facing the Dodgers, who have a great pitching staff,” Iannetta said. “You’ll be facing the D-Backs, possibly, good pitching staff. Cubs, great pitching staff. Astros, phenomenal pitching staff. Yankees, good pitching staff. Red Sox, good pitching staff. Indians, whoever it may be. The teams that are on top of each division all have great pitching staffs.

“There are no teams up there that don’t have good pitching staffs,” Iannetta said.

Archer gets victory as Pirates beat

By MICHAEL KELLY | Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Adam Frazier has been doing damage with his bat lately.

But it was his glove that helped Pittsburgh take a series in Colorado.

Frazier had three hits and made a run-saving play in the field, and the Pirates beat the Colorado Rockies 4-3 on Wednesday.

Chris Archer (4-5) was making his second start since being acquired from Tampa Bay before the July 31 trade deadline. He allowed two runs and five hits in five innings.

Felipe Vazquez got the last four outs for his 26th save.

Frazier had two doubles and a single, but made what might have been his biggest contribution on defense. With runners on the corners and two outs in the eighth inning, pinch-hitter Chris Iannetta hit a sharp grounder to the hole at second. Frazier made a diving stop and threw out Iannetta to end the inning and preserve the one-run lead.

"Flip's throwing 100 (mph) so I figured it was coming my way if he got inside of it and he did," Frazier said. "He smoked it and I reacted. I dove and luckily it stuck to my glove. It saved the game for us. I'm pretty happy I made that play."

His defense complemented a hot stretch at the plate. He got three hits in his first three at-bats and has raised his average 41 points to .280 over the past two weeks.

"He's been in a good place on both sides of the ball," manager Clint Hurdle said.

German Marquez (9-9) tied a career high with 10 strikeouts and David Dahl homered for the Rockies.

Colorado scored just six runs in the three-game series.

"That's sort of been the theme lately, lately meaning the last few weeks," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "We just haven't seemed to string a big hit in there with a couple baserunners on base. We need that to turn around as we move forward."

Archer retired the first eight batters before Marquez singled in the third. Colorado broke through in the fourth on Dahl's two run homer, his fifth of the season, to cut the deficit to 3-2.

"The homer I gave up was one of the only times I shook (catcher Francisco) Cervelli off," Archer said. "That was my bad. I should have listened to him. It's huge to get a series "W" going into San Francisco."

Pittsburgh led early on an RBI double by Gregory Polanco and a run-scoring single by Frazier in the first, and an RBI groundout in the third.

The Pirates added a run on Corey Dickerson's sacrifice fly in the eighth inning to make it 4-2. Ryan McMahon's RBI single made it close again.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Pirates: INF Josh Bell (left oblique strain) was activated from the 10-day DL and started at first base Wednesday. INF Jose Osuna was optioned to Triple-A Indianapolis.

Rockies: LHP Chris Rusin (plantar faciitis) pitched in a rehab assignment Tuesday night and was at Coors Field on Wednesday. Manager Bud Black said Rusin will be evaluated. "We're encouraged by a lot of things we saw in his three outings," Black said.

QUICK RECOVERY

Archer spent a lot of Tuesday in bed trying to shake off a bug that had Hurdle wondering if he would start Wednesday.

"We needed to come up with a plan B, and it was real," Hurdle said. "For him to go out and pitch the way he did, it was a really strong effort."

Archer said he wasn't sure what hit him, but suspected it was food poisoning. He said he felt a lot better when he woke up Wednesday morning.

"I felt good enough to pitch," he said. "I haven't eaten a whole lot the last couple of days but, again, laid it out there for the guys and they picked me up."

IMMACULATE INNING

Marquez had a rough start but settled down to register a rare feat. The righty struck out the side in the fourth on nine pitches. He is the third pitcher to do it this season. It is the first time it was done at Coors Field.

The only other Rockies pitcher to throw an immaculate inning was Rex Brothers in 2014.

"I wasn't aware of that but I'm glad to be on that list," Marquez said.

Marquez followed his perfect inning with a leadoff walk in the fifth to Cervelli.

UP NEXT

Pirates: RHP Ivan Nova (6-6, 4.49) takes the mound against the Giants in San Francisco on Thursday night.

Rockies: LHP Tyler Anderson (6-4, 4.05) will open a four-game home series against the Los Angeles Dodgers on Thursday.

Wednesday by Comparison: Blackmon Joins Rockies 1,000-Hit Club
TRACY RINGOLSBY - AUGUST 8, 2018 | InsideTheSeams.com

Charlie Blackmon had been in an August funk. When he struck out in the third inning on Tuesday his slump to open the month extended to 1-for-23. In the sixth inning, though, Blackmon began to revive his offense, and became the seventh player in franchise history to reach the 1,000-hit plateau.

Blackmon led off with a single to key a two-run rally that turned out to be the extent of the Rockies offense in a 10-2 loss. Blackmon added hit No. 1,001 in the eighth inning. Todd Helton is the franchise-record holder with 2,519 hits in 17 seasons followed by Larry Walker with 1,361, and current Rockies outfielder Carlos Gonzalez with 1,295.

Blackmon is right ahead of the two men who usually combine with him at the top of the Rockies lineup -- DJ LeMahieu, No. 8 with 953 hits, and Nolan Arenado with 925.

ROCKIES HIT KINGS

Player	Season	G	AB	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	AVG
Todd Helton	1997-2013(17)	2247	7962	2519	592	37	369	1406	1335	0.316
Larry Walker	1995-2004(10)	1170	4076	1361	297	44	258	848	584	0.334
Carlos Gonzalez	2009-2018(10)	1208	4447	1295	267	37	225	736	405	0.291
Dante Bichette	1993-1999(7)	1018	4050	1278	270	18	201	826	226	0.316
Vinny Castilla	1993-2006(9)	1098	4099	1206	208	20	239	745	273	0.294
Troy Tulowitzki	2006-2015(10)	1048	3897	1165	224	24	188	657	435	0.299
Charlie Blackmon	2011-2018(8)	871	3319	1001	171	37	132	404	241	0.302
DJ LeMahieu	2012-2018(7)	868	3178	953	152	29	42	317	265	0.3
Nolan Arenado	2013-2018(6)	827	3166	925	208	25	177	587	268	0.292

Source: Stats, Inc. | Matt Holliday | 2004-2008(5) | 698 | 2656 | 848 | 188 | 23 | 128 | 483 | 251 | 0.319 |

With the 10-2 loss on Tuesday night, the Rockies are 60-53 for the season, which is the third best record in franchise history after 113 games. It has the Rockies in third place in the NL West, two games behind the

Diamondbacks and 2 1/2 behind the Dodgers. The Rockies are in second place for the second NL wild-card spot, 2 1/2 games behind the Braves. The D-Backs are only a half-game behind Atlanta.

THE 113-GAME MARK

Tm	W	L	W-L%	RS	RA	Rdiff	Twl	Rank	Postseason
2017	64	49	0.566	594	547	47	87-75	3	Wildcard
2009	62	51	0.549	565	502	63	92-70	2	Wildcard
2018	60	53	0.531	531	547	-16	TBD	TBD	TBD
2010	59	54	0.522	543	499	44	83-79	3	
2007	59	54	0.522	576	534	42	90-73	2	NL Pennant
1995	58	55	0.513	614	632	-18	77-67	2	Wildcard
1996	58	55	0.513	680	686	-6	83-79	3	
2003	56	57	0.496	608	600	8	74-88	4	
2000	55	58	0.487	677	639	38	82-80	4	
2016	55	58	0.487	587	569	18	75-87	3	
2006	55	58	0.487	511	497	14	76-86	4	

Source: Baseball-reference.com

Rockies can't find the big hit, drop series to Pirates
By Drew Creasman - Posted on August 8, 2018 | BSN Denver

DENVER – It was a strange afternoon for Rockies starter German Marquez who surrendered seven hits and three runs in the first three innings. He was getting hit hard and often but also still piling up the swings and misses.

He pitched only the 86th immaculate inning in MLB history, striking out three batters on nine pitches in the fourth. It was the second in Rockies franchise history, the only other came courtesy of Rex Brothers on June 14, 2014 in San Francisco.

What looked early to be a short afternoon for Marquez turned into a quality start in which he tied his career high in strikeouts with 10.

Ultimately, he and the Rockies pitching staff were barely outdueled by Chris Archer and the Pittsburgh Pirates who edged out a 4-3 win.

The Pirates didn't waste any time picking up where they left off in the second game, finding the green with solid line drives against Marquez beginning with a one-single from Starling Marte. Gregory Polanco followed by smashing a double off the wall in deep left center, scoring the first run of the game.

Marquez then committed a throwing error on a pickoff attempt, allowing Polanco to reach third. He struck out the next batter but surrendered a two-out single to Colin Moran, plating another run.

They added one in the third on a single through the shift from Moran and a double to right by Adam Frazier. The run came in on a groundout to second off the bat of Josh Bell.

Somehow, after being so hittable, Marquez bounced back to strike out the side on nine pitches in the top of the fourth.

The Rockies had recorded only one hit against Archer going into the fourth, and that came from Marquez. But DJ LeMahieu opened the frame with a hard single back up the middle. He was able to jog around the bases when David Dahl won a battle with Archer, eventually launching a long home run over the high wall in right center, bringing some life into the park, getting the Rockies on the board and pulling them to within one.

After Nolan Arenado flew out, Story lined a double down the right-field line and Parra walked but Ryan McMahon struck out and Tony Wolters was robbed of extra-bases—potentially giving the Rockies the lead—on a nice play at first by Bell.

It looked like the Pirates were going to get one back after a leadoff walk from Francisco Cervelli and a one-out double from Frazier. But a pair of perfect throws from Gerardo Parra and Trevor Story combined to nail Cervelli at the plate.

Colorado threatened again in the sixth with a two-out double from McMahon and a Wolters walk that brought pinch-hitter Carlos Gonzalez to the plate. But CarGo struck out and the brief rally ended.

Charlie Blackmon led off the seventh with a base hit back up the middle, giving him two consecutive multi-hit days after getting a rest on Monday. But he was thrown out trying to steal second after a long look at the tape proved to be inconclusive and the call on the field stood. LeMahieu and Dahl struck out.

The Pirates picked up an insurance run in the top of the eighth after Adam Ottavino issued a leadoff walk to Bell and Arenado committed a remarkably rare error on a ball that might otherwise have been turned into a double play. Josh Harrison then reached on a perfectly placed bunt to load the bases with nobody out.

Corey Dickerson hit a deep drive to left that went for a sac fly but Otto was able to limit the damage to just that one run.

The Rockies got the leadoff runner aboard again in the eighth but in scary fashion. After getting ahead in the count 1-2, reliever Kyle Crick completely lost one up and in just barely making contact with the top of Arenado's helmet. Story followed with a single to deep right center that Marte cut off nicely to keep him from getting extra bases and make sure Arenado had to stop at third.

Parra popped out to shallow center, not deep enough to plate the run but McMahon came up with a line drive to center that scored Arenado and moved Story, the tying run to third. Ian Desmond came on to pinch-hit for Wolters and hit a 1-1 pitch in the air to right but it sliced out of play. He struck out on the next pitch.

That left it up to Chris Iannetta to come through with two outs, batting in the pitcher's spot. Iannetta hit one hard that seemed destined for right field but a ridiculous diving stop from Frazier at second kept the Pirates on top by a run.

The Rockies went down in order in the ninth, concluding a frustrating afternoon for the home team.

FINAL STATS:

German Marquez: 6 IP, 10 H, 3 ER, 2 BB, 10 K

Seunghwan Oh: 1 IP, 0 H, 0 ER, 1 BB

Adam Ottavino: 1 IP, 1 H, 1 R, 0 ER, 2 BB

David Dahl: 1-for-2, 1 R, 2 RBI, 1 BB (HR: 5)

DJ LeMahieu: 1-for-3, 1 R

WHAT'S NEXT:

The Colorado Rockies now prepare for a huge four-game set against the Los Angeles Dodgers at Coors Field. Tyler Anderson will face off against Ross Stripling in the first game. First pitch at 6:40 Thursday evening.

BSN Exclusive: The veteran helping David Dahl go from prospect to pro
By Patrick Lyons - Posted on August 8, 2018 | BSN Denver

DENVER – When David Dahl broke his right foot on a foul ball during a May 30 game against San Francisco, he was just beginning to respond to critics questioning his durability.

In 2017, he had missed the entirety of the season except for a mere 19 games in the minors during the summer.

To start the 2018 season, he had been healthy and productive, playing 36 games across a six-week span between Albuquerque and Colorado before his unfortunate injury.

The 2012 1st Rounder laughed off the odd occurrence when speaking to BSN Denver's Drew Creasman before Monday's game.

"What can I do about a foul ball breaking my foot? I just play hard and I've had some unfortunate injuries, but I always play hard."

Expected to miss nine weeks on the disabled list, Dahl returned to action ahead of schedule without any residual pain on July 19 for Triple-A Albuquerque before returning to Colorado.

"I don't think I'd be here if it was still bothering me, but my foot healed pretty quickly. It feels good."

Dahl was recalled by the Rockies on August 5 and got the start in center field the next day in place of friend and teammate Charlie Blackmon.

"I talk to him a lot about everything—hitting, defense. It's a tough place to play here. It's a big outfield, the ball flies. So, you know if you play deep, you can give up a lot of easy singles. If you play a little shallow, you'll give up extra-base hits. So, it's one of those things where you've got to take a lot of reads in (batting practice) and try to figure it out out there, and just kind of go from there."

On the offensive side, Dahl has typically contributed at the top of the order for the majority of his career, even utilizing his special combination of speed and power as the leadoff hitter. He's learned a few things from the Bearded One in that regard as well.

"Leading off, you get four or five or six (at-bats), depending on how we're hitting. And hopefully, I get a lot because that means we're swinging well. I just try to have good at-bats, try to be a catalyst, get the offense going. If I get on, I try to look to steal a bag. These are all the things that a lead-off bat can do."

With a talented 25-man roster at the major league level, as well as a 40-man roster comprised of several gifted players currently starring in Triple-A Albuquerque, Dahl understands he might not get these types of opportunities every day.

"Everyone wants to start, but you know, whatever the team needs me to do, I'll do it. We're in a playoff hunt, so it's not about me. It's about helping the team, so that's what I'm going to do."

With a challenging stretch of games for Colorado scheduled for the remainder of the season, manager Bud Black will need to push all the right buttons in order to ensure the best possible outcomes for his club.

Generally made at the mercy of matchups, this type of decision-making will undoubtedly dictate the playing time and opportunities for players like Dahl. If circumstances are such that his role will require him to come off the bench in a big spot, it may be an area of strength for the Alabama native.

"I feel like I'm really good at pinch-hitting actually. I was curious what I was hitting, and I'm actually hitting pretty well in my career pinch-hitting because I just go up there and try to have a good at-bat and not get frustrated to get out because it's hard. So, just got to go up there and just try to have a good AB."

When pressed about his approach while pinch-hitting, Dahl was eager to explain his thought process about what makes him so successful.

"I think in pinch-hitting, you've got to be aggressive because if you take a first pitch, it happens to get called a strike, second pitch you swing and you foul it off, you're 0-2. So, I feel like if you can at least get a pitch to hit and foul it off, you at least know what you have that day and can adjust from there. But you know, it's got to be a strike obviously. I just feel like, yeah, I'm aggressive no matter when I'm hitting, so I try to stay like that."

With his mindset on outfield defense and approach at the plate, pinch-hitting or otherwise, Dahl has ensured a key role for himself on a Rockies team looking to reach the playoffs in consecutive years for the first time in franchise history.

What is Matt Holliday going to do for the Colorado Rockies?

by Olivia Greene - 17 hours ago | RoxPile

On July 29th the Colorado Rockies signed MLB veteran Matt Holliday to a minor league deal. Many Rockies fans were very elated to see an old face be signed. Others were happy to see the Rockies just make a move as the trade deadline approached. Then there were people, like me, who were just plain confused.

Once hearing the news of this signing, I immediately thought back to the signing of **Chris Iannetta**, which I go into great detail [here](#). Matt Holliday isn't really the move that I was looking for the Colorado Rockies to make. The reason being, first and foremost, he's 38 years old and well out his prime. He's also missed a significant amount of time this season, so is there really an end goal here for how much playing time he's going to get?

Looking back at his stats, of course, I can see how the Rockies and their fans alike love this guy he put up monster numbers during his four years in Denver but, in reality, his last good years that mimic those numbers was back in 2012 and 2013.

His 2017 season wasn't that bad with the New York Yankees, but those are the stats I'd expect from a top prospect coming into the majors. Holiday had a slashline of .231/.316/.432 with 19 home runs and 64 RBI. For comparison, **Jordan Patterson** is putting up numbers better than in Triple-A right now (.274/.373/.530 in 95 games entering Wednesday). Let's not forget about the that high amount of strikeouts for Holliday too, 114 in 105 games to be exact. That's a **Trevor Story** level amount of K's.

If the Colorado Rockies front office was serious about this team going to the postseason, then this wasn't the correct move to make. It's, of course, wonderful to see Matt Holiday especially since this is the 25th anniversary, but that's about it. He's a throwback to a different era of the Colorado Rockies. They currently have so much depth in the outfield that not everyone has gotten an adequate amount of playing time. Last year, the Yankees used Holliday as a DH and he played eight games at first base. Is there truly space for him to have playing time?

The Rockies were smart for only signing Matt Holliday to a minor league so that if there is blow back from this decision it will only be minor. However, it does make me wonder what exactly was the point in signing him at all? It almost appears that the front office doesn't firmly believe in their prospects enough to be the outfield depth. As he plays in Triple-A, though, there are some seriously deserving players that should be called up before Holliday does get that call.

The NL West is in a highly competitive pennant race and the Colorado Rockies are right in the middle of it. Having a guy like Matt Holliday on the roster poses question marks especially about what his position will be. Along with that comes the very likely possibility that Holliday isn't the player he used to be and can't contribute the way the Rockies thought he would. Signing him may have been a low-risk move, but he could also be a threat to the Rockies getting to the postseason.

Colorado Rockies: Lineup construction with David Dahl available

by Aaron Hurt - 22 hours ago | RoxPile

David Dahl returned to the Colorado Rockies' roster on Sunday after breaking his foot on May 30. After drawing a late pinch-hit walk and stealing a base in the 5-4 win over the Milwaukee Brewers, Dahl gave the slumping Charlie Blackmon a much-needed day off Monday, getting the start in center field and batting leadoff. Dahl didn't disappoint, going 2-for-4 with a double and a walk while providing solid defense.

The addition of a healthy David Dahl has raised a few questions. Most importantly, how exactly does Dahl fit into the **Colorado Rockies'** current lineup?

Let's begin by stating that it was originally thought that Dahl would likely be slowly worked into the lineup. Considering his health history, it was thought that Bud Black would probably want to pick and choose his opportunities to start Dahl based on matchups until he has earned his trust to play every day. Also, factor in that Black has been known to stick with veterans rather than to give younger guys playing time.

However, Dahl was in the starting lineup for the third straight game in Wednesday's matinee against the Pittsburgh Pirates at Coors Field.

That said, general manager Jeff Bridich did not do **Bud Black** any favors when he constructed this Rockies' outfield, given that all four of the Rockies' current outfielders bat from the left side. To add to that, **Noel Cuevas** is the only righty on the Rockies' 40-man roster (not including **Ian Desmond** or **Matt Holliday**, the former Rockies star who hasn't made the 40-man roster ... yet). This makes it extremely hard for Black to mix and match his everyday lineup.

When Dahl is in the lineup, multiple questions arise. Where does Dahl hit? In **Monday night's 2-0 win over the Pittsburgh Pirates**, he was batting leadoff ... but keep in mind that Blackmon was out of the lineup. When both are in the lineup, who leads off? If Tuesday night can be used as a measuring stick, Blackmon stays in the leadoff spot and Dahl slides down to sixth. If Black ever decides to hit them one, two, where is DJ LeMahieu slotted? The lineup possibilities are endless.

Here are just a couple of examples on days that **Gerardo Parra** is not in the lineup (which I prefer):

Dahl Blackmon Blackmon LeMahieu

Blackmon	Dahl	LeMahieu	Blackmon
Arenado	Arenado	Dahl	Arenado
Gonzalez	Gonzalez	Arenado	Gonzalez
Story	Story	Gonzalez	Story
Desmond	Desmond	Story	Dahl
LeMahieu	LeMahieu	Desmond	Desmond
Catcher	Catcher	Catcher	Catcher
Pitcher	Pitcher	Pitcher	Pitcher

I love the idea of batting Dahl third because of the left-right-left up and down the lineup is tough on bullpens. What worries me is that this puts **Trevor Story** and his 79 RBI all way down in the sixth spot. I also like the idea of hitting Dahl in the sixth spot because it gives Story some much needed protection.

Bud Black will have some tough decisions to make ... but that is why he makes the big bucks. One thing is for sure, though. The Rockies are a much more dangerous team when a healthy David Dahl is in the lineup. It will be very interesting to see what Bud Black and Rockies do going forward.