



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips Saturday, September 8, 2018

- Gonsalves falters again, but bats bail him out. MLB.com (Bollinger) p.1
- Rosario's back, but Sano and Austin sit out. MLB.com (Bollinger) p.2
- Home heals bruises as Twins rally past Royals for 10-6 victory. Star Tribune (Miller) p.3
- Twins notes: Team's stolen-base output is in a downward trend. Star Tribune (Miller) p.3
- Friday's Twins-Kansas City game recap. Star Tribune (Miller) p.4
- Postgame: Gonsalves picks off another; Rosario healthy enough to homer. Star Tribune (Miller) p.5
- Mitch Garver's productive outs push Twins to 10-6 win over Royals. Pioneer Press (Berardino) p.5
- Twins' Miguel Sano (knee), Tyler Austin (back) remain out of lineup. Pioneer Press (Berardino) p.6
- Rosario, Adrianza power Twins to 10-6 win over Royals. Fox Sports North (AP) p.7
- Preview: Twins vs. Royals. Fox Sports North (Sports Xchange) p.9

Gonsalves falters again, but bats bail him out

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | September 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- It was another rough outing for rookie Stephen Gonsalves, who lasted 2 1/3 innings in his fourth career start, but the Twins continued their home success with strong showings by the offense and bullpen against the Royals.

Gonsalves, who was initially scheduled to have an "opener" pitch ahead of him, made the start instead, but struggled in a 10-6 win on Friday night at Target Field. Ehire Adrianza led the way by going 3-for-4 with three RBIs, while Logan Forsythe scored three runs to pace the offense and help the Twins improve to 40-29 at home this year compared with 24-47 on the road.

"It's nice to see us come back," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "Stephen's still having trouble showing enough command with his pitches to give him a chance to be a little bit more successful. The extra baserunners and some mistakes -- getting behind kind of caught up with him there, so we couldn't go too long. But the bullpen was outstanding."

Gonsalves, Minnesota's No. 5 prospect per MLB Pipeline, was handed an early 2-0 lead but the Royals scored six times in the third. He allowed five straight batters to reach, including a two-run double to Alex Gordon and an RBI single to Jorge Bonifacio and was pulled for Alan Busenitz despite having thrown only 52 pitches. Busenitz came in and promptly served up a three-run homer to Salvador Perez. Gonsalves was charged with five runs on five hits and three walks to see his ERA rise to 11.68 in 12 1/3 innings.

"I've been battling with my fastball," Gonsalves said. "It's just cutting on me and I've been inconsistent with it. I've been working with [pitching coach] Garvin [Alston] on something new every week. My mind has been more on mechanics than competing and I had that struggle early this year with my mechanics all out of whack. It's kind of revolving back to that a little bit and I'm kind of searching for myself."

But the Twins did enough offensively, getting to right-hander Heath Fillmyer for six runs in 2 1/3 innings. Minnesota loaded the bases with two outs in the second, scoring on a bloop two-run single from Adrianza.

"He's done a nice job overall," Molitor said of Adrianza. "Got a little lucky on the first one, but he also hit a bullet there to right field and dropped a bunt later in the game as well."

The Twins came back to tie it with a four-run third, keyed by an RBI single from Forsythe and an RBI double from Jake Cave. Mitch Garver brought home a run on an RBI groundout and Cave scored on a passed ball to knot it at 6.

Minnesota took the lead for good with a three-run fifth against reliever Glenn Sparkman. Forsythe reached on an error by third baseman Alcides Escobar to spark the rally with Cave following with a single. Garver provided another RBI groundout to give the Twins the lead before Max Kepler and Adrianza both brought home runs with RBI singles. Eddie Rosario provided an insurance run with a solo shot in the eighth off Willy

Peralta.

"I don't know if he was sitting on that slider that last at-bat," Molitor said. "But it went far."

The bullpen was impressive after the third with Gabriel Moya, Trevor May, Matt Magill, Taylor Rogers and Trevor Hildenberger combining for six scoreless frames. May was awarded the win with two shutout innings.

"The guys we brought in all did a nice job putting up zeros the last half of the ballgame," Molitor said. "Kind of a long affair, but it's good when you come back and win when you fall behind, giving up six runs in one particular inning."

SOUND SMART

With a scoreless eighth inning, Rogers extended his shutout streak to 16 1/3 innings, which is the third-longest active streak in the American League behind Chris Sale and Wade LeBlanc.

HE SAID IT

"I feel great right now. I feel strong. Knock on wood, my shoulder has held up after last year. I came into spring kind of nervous about it. Once I hit May and June, I've felt great and it's still right there. Hopefully, I'll get my starts in and keep going. Right now, I'm working with Garvin every day, fixing the little things." -- Gonsalves, on his health late in the season

UP NEXT

Right-hander Jose Berrios (11-10, 3.92 ERA) starts the second game of the series against the Royals on Saturday at 6:10 p.m. CT. Berrios has struggled recently, posting a 6.65 ERA over his last five outings. Right-hander Jorge Lopez (1-4, 4.24 ERA) starts for Kansas City.

Rosario's back, but Sano and Austin sit out **Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | September 7, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- Twins left fielder Eddie Rosario returned to the lineup on Friday after missing six games with a right quad strain, but third baseman Miguel Sano will undergo further testing on his left knee and first baseman Tyler Austin is dealing with back stiffness after slipping and falling near the dugout while tracking down a pop fly on Wednesday.

Sano injured himself while sliding into second base against the Astros on Tuesday, with initial fears being related to his surgically inserted titanium rod in his left shin. There was some hope he could return on Friday, but the discomfort is now more in the knee area.

"I was a little quick to speak about how he was the day after the injury," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "He's still a little sore. I was of the mindset it would be sooner than later, and I don't think it's still too far out there. We're just running a few more tests to make sure he's going to be OK and there's nothing that's going to linger that we might have missed from the initial diagnosis."

Molitor, though, believes it's a minor injury and they're just trying to be cautious.

"I think his knee's just a little sore," Molitor said. "You know how when you bend a joint quickly and past its normal range of motion, you get some stiffness and swelling in there? I'm hoping that's all it is."

Austin, meanwhile, had dealt with back issues this season, but it was worsened by his slip and fall on Wednesday. But like Sano, the Twins don't think it's a serious injury.

"His back is still feeling the symptoms there so we're trying to go slowly and be patient as far as when we're going to get him back out to play," Molitor said. "He's had some issues before. Nothing major that I know of. I just know he's been dealing with working on keeping that back as flexible as he can and as available on a day-to-day basis as he can."

Worth noting

- Molitor said he finally had the chance to talk with center fielder Byron Buxton after the Twins announced Saturday night that Buxton would not be a September callup.

"He's doing well," Molitor said. "All things considered."

- The Twins are still determining what kind of surgery right-hander Michael Pineda will undergo after being diagnosed with a torn meniscus in his right knee. There's a chance he could avoid an operation, but it's more likely he either undergoes a repair or a removal of his meniscus.

Home heals bruises as Twins rally past Royals for 10-6 victory

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | September 8, 2018

Their recent unfortunate foray to Texas thankfully behind them, the Twins returned home Friday to the baseball equivalent of a well-worn easy chair and their favorite home-cooked meal: a Target Field series with the Royals.

Those Astros pitchers who limited Minnesota to four runs in three games? Elsewhere. Those Rangers hitters who splattered Twins pitching for 32 runs over the weekend? A couple of time zones away.

And in their place came the Royals, a last-place team farther behind the Twins than the Twins are from first place. Best part about it? You can make mistakes, take some body blows, and still win. Minnesota surrendered a cannon shot of a three-run homer, gave up a six-run third inning, yet shrugged it off and ended its five-game losing streak with a 10-6 victory.

“It’s nice to see us come back,” said Twins manager Paul Molitor, after his bullpen shut out Kansas City for the final six innings. “I don’t know how many unanswered runs we ended up scoring there, but it was a good run.”

It was eight unanswered, against rookie pitcher Heath Fillmyer and Kansas City’s forlorn bullpen, enough to beat the Royals for the sixth time in seven home games and improve to 39-28 at Target Field this year.

And one of the best parts of the rally, according to Molitor? It all started with a bunt.

After Kansas City struck for six runs, three scoring on Salvador Perez’s 17th career Target Field homer, Minnesota tied the score before making two more outs. Jorge Polanco led off with a bunt single against a KC defense shifted toward right field, triggering a run of four straight hits.

“It was a long inning, but I went down the row [in the dugout] and said, ‘Remember how it started.’ Because I’m a big proponent of taking advantage, especially when you’re behind and you need baserunners,” Molitor said. “I flashed a little sign [meaning] ‘Look around,’ and he saw it and took advantage. And we kind of took off from there.”

They did, tying the score with a four-run third, with Logan Forsythe and Jake Cave driving in runs with timely hits off Fillmyer, and adding three more in the fifth off the bullpen, with Max Kepler and Ehire Adrianza driving home runs. Mitch Garver had RBI in both innings on grounders, a sign, Molitor said, that “he’s learning. He’s hit some balls to the third baseman in those situations, where you can’t score. When they’re playing back and in the middle of the field, there’s an opportunity. You’ve just got to change your approach a little bit.”

Stephen Gonsalves needs a change, too, after walking three and giving up five runs while recording only seven outs. The rookie lefthander’s ERA has ballooned to 11.68 after four big-league starts.

“I’ve been battling with my fastball. It’s just cutting on me,” Gonsalves said. “It’s just my hands. With my fastball, I’m getting a little jumpy and leaking toward the plate a little too much.”

It’s an adjustment he can make, Molitor said. “He’s capable. He’s had some stretches earlier this year, in particular [in the minors], where he was able to pitch around some of the command issues he had,” the manager said. “But up here, the margin of error’s a little different.”

Twins notes: Team's stolen-base output is in a downward trend

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | September 8, 2018

At their current sluggish pace, the Twins will finish the season with 45 stolen bases, or the same number Paul Molitor swiped by himself with Milwaukee in 1987. It’s a trend that clearly bothers the Twins manager.

“I don’t even know the last time we stole a base, to be honest,” Molitor said Friday. “Some of the guys we’re trying to get to develop that area, we haven’t done a good enough job to get them in position to understand all the concepts involved.”

For the record, Eddie Rosario stole second on Aug. 23, the Twins’ only steal in exactly a month. Unless the Twins run more over the season’s final three weeks, they will finish with the fewest successful steals since 1984, and almost certainly one of the 10 lowest totals in team history.

Part of the reason is the absence of speedster Byron Buxton, who has been successful on 29 consecutive steal attempts but added only five to his total in his 28 major league games this season. Yet Buxton still ranks third on the Twins in steals this year, trailing only Rosario and the departed Brian Dozier, with eight apiece.

Home runs are far more important today than they were in Molitor’s day, but he still would like the Twins to run more.

“There are other things that still work” besides home runs, he said. “Baserunning — you’ve heard me say it for years, how important it is to run the bases. If you run well, you can win a lot of games in that fashion over the course of a year. I don’t think we’ve taken advantage of our athleticism.”

Better prognosis

Ervin Santana won’t pitch again this season, but he got some peace of mind this week. Santana visited his surgeon, Dr. Thomas Melone, in New York, and now believes the lingering soreness in his fingers will recede as he continues to use his right hand.

“The fingers were [binded] in one position by my cast, and it’s like waking them up again,” Santana said of the soreness caused by an irritated nerve, which worried him because it wasn’t at the spot on his hand where Melone did the surgery to remove calcium deposits from the middle finger on Feb. 4. “It’s nothing unusual for regular people, because they don’t [put strain] on the fingers like a pitcher.”

The condition worsened with use, but Santana said the pain will be gone in plenty of time for him to resume regular workouts in the winter. Santana’s contract is up in November, however, so he doesn’t know if he will be in a Twins uniform next season.

Etc.

- Molitor said he reached Buxton by phone Thursday, but the manager revealed little about their conversation. “He’s doing well,” Molitor said. “All things considered.” Buxton was reportedly upset over not being called up to the majors when his minor league season ended Monday.
- Rosario, who missed a week because of a strained quad, returned to the lineup Friday and had two hits, including his 23rd home run of the season, an eighth-inning solo shot off Wily Peralta.
- Miguel Sano’s left knee, bruised during a hard slide into second base Tuesday at Texas, was still sore Friday, so the third baseman missed a second game. “I don’t think it’s too far out there,” Molitor said. “We’re just running a few more tests to make sure he’s going to be OK and there’s nothing that’s going to linger.”
- Tyler Austin, who turned 27 on Thursday, is bothered by an aching back. Molitor said he kept him out of the lineup in order to give him more res.
- Righthander Michael Pineda, whose comeback from elbow surgery was delayed by knee pain, is still consulting with doctors to determine the best course of action. His condition may include more than just a torn meniscus, Molitor said, though Pineda is expected to be ready for spring training next year.

Friday's Twins-Kansas City game recap **Phil Miller | Star Tribune | September 8, 2018**

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Ehire Adrianza, Twins

He had three hits, including a two-run bloop in the second inning and a run-scoring single in the fifth.

BY THE NUMBERS

23 Home runs by Eddie Rosario this year, 15 of them at home.

6 Shutout innings pitched by five Twins relievers.

ON DECK

Jose Berrios, whose last victory came on Aug. 4, will try to end that streak against Royals righthander Jorge Lopez.

Postgame: Gonsalves picks off another; Rosario healthy enough to homer
Phil Miller | Star Tribune | September 8, 2018

I'm impressed that there are still Royals fans showing up to Target Field, for a September game between two teams a combined 50 games out of first place. And especially that one of them cared enough to yell, "Balk! Balk!" when Stephen Gonsalves picked Jorge Bonifacio in the second inning.

For Gonsalves, it was a nice moment on a night that didn't have too many. It also was the result of an emphasis on limiting the running game.

"In the last month, I worked with Mike McCarthy [bullpen coach for Class AAA Rochester] a lot," Gonsalves said. "He showed me I can use it as a weapon. I think we've done good work, and we've got two [pickoffs] up here, so we're doing the right thing."

So, is it a balk? Does he stride too far toward home plate?

"They'll keep yelling it, but I'll tell them it's not a balk," Gonsalves said. "And I'm pretty sure the umpires won't call it one, either."

XXX

Eddie Rosario, who hadn't played in eight days due to a strained right quad, hit a grounder into the hole at shortstop in the first inning. He was going to be out anyway, but he didn't run at top speed, and his manager noticed.

"Seems like it always happens — a guy comes back from a leg injury, and he's got to try to leg one out the first ball he puts in play," Paul Molitor said. "I was concerned, and had talked to him. He said he was OK, he just didn't want to risk trying to max out there on the ground out."

Molitor kept his eye on Rosario, looking for indications he wasn't quite healed. He singled to left field in the third inning, went to second base on Logan Forsythe's single, and scored on a Jake Cave double.

"He was a little ginger on the base hit when he was going to second," Molitor said. "But he kept reassuring me that he'll let me know when he couldn't go."

So Rosario stayed in the game — and good thing. When he led off the eighth inning against Wily Peralta, Rosario pulled an inside slider deep down the right field line, his team-leading 23rd home run of the season, but first since Aug. 19 and only his fourth since the All-Star break.

"I don't know if he was sitting on that slider that last at-bat," Molitor said, "but it went far."

Mitch Garver's productive outs push Twins to 10-6 win over Royals
Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | September 8, 2018

Situational hitting has been a problem for the Twins in general and rookie catcher Mitch Garver in particular this season.

So a pair of run-scoring groundouts to shortstop in the early stages of Friday's 10-6 marathon victory over the Kansas City Royals stood out.

"I'm more than happy to give productive outs," Garver said. "Any chance I get to ground out to the shortstop and get a run in and move a guy over, I'll take that 100 times out of 100. I'm very happy with that."

Coming in, Garver had scored the runner from third with fewer than two outs just 30 percent of the time (6 of 20) this season. As a team the Twins had come through in such spots at a 46.7 percent clip, well below the major league average of 50.7 percent.

Among teammates with at least five such chances, only Ehire Adrianza (25 percent) had a lower rate of success than Garver. That changed, however, during a slow-moving first five frames that took two hours, 35 minutes to complete.

Amid a four-run third inning that got the Twins back to even, Garver pulled the Twins within one with his first groundout. Two innings later, he put them ahead in a three-run fifth with another two-strike groundout.

"I'm not striking out in those situations," he said. "Not tonight. Not with the score and the situation it was. Tie ballgame, I'm not striking out."

Garver's 22-percent strikeout rate is right at league average, but he's still figuring out how to score runners from third when only a productive out is needed. The traded Brian Dozier (62.5 percent) still leads Twins regulars in that department, followed by Miguel Sano (56.3), Joe Mauer (55.6) and Max Kepler (52.9).

While getting swept in Houston this week, Twins manager Paul Molitor lamented the fact Twins hitters rarely choke up on the bat with two strikes. Garver didn't choke up Friday, but he did switch to a 30 1/2-ounce bat that was an ounce and a half lighter than his usual model.

"Just felt good when I picked it up today," he said. "Just more balanced. It varies every day. I could come in feeling stronger one day and use a heavier bat."

Coming off a 2-7 road trip, the Twins won for just the third time in their past 13 games. Now 40-29 at home with a dozen games left at Target Field, the Twins scored eight unanswered runs to take a 7-6 lead in their season series with the Royals.

Since falling 40 games under .500 with a loss here on July 9, the Royals have gone 21-29. In that same span, the Twins have gone just 24-28.

Eddie Rosario, playing his first game in eight days after nursing a right quad injury, capped off a 12-hit attack with his team-leading 23rd homer in the ninth. Adrianza drove in three runs out of the No. 9 slot in the batting order.

Left-hander Stephen Gonsalves was staked to an early 2-0 lead on Adrianza's two-run bloop in the second, but the finesse-first rookie would retire just one more batter before exiting. Five straight Royals reached safely with one out against Gonsalves in the third, and Salvador Perez greeted Alan Busenitz with a three-run homer into the bullpen.

That gave Perez, out since Aug. 28 with a sprained left thumb, his 17th career homer at Target Field, tops among non-Twins. His 20 homers against the Twins are now the most for Perez against any opponent, and his .340 average here ranked second only to Victor Martinez (.356) among those with 200-plus plate appearances.

Gonsalves, who has averaged just over three innings through four big-league starts, walked three and saw his earned run average climb to 11.68.

"I've been working with (pitching coach Garvin Alston) on something new every week," Gonsalves said. "I think my mind's kind of on mechanics instead of competing. I had that struggle earlier this year when my mechanics were out of whack and I was walking five guys a game. It's kind of evolving back to that. I'm just searching."

If he stays in the Twins' six-man rotation, Gonsalves should get three more chances to notch his first big-league victory. A rematch with the Royals awaits next Thursday on the road.

Of the 587 pitchers who had thrown at least 10 innings this season coming in, just five had higher ERAs than Gonsalves. Three of them were released by the woeful Royals this season: Blaine Boyer (12.05), Enny Romero (12.60) and Justin Grimm (13.50).

Attendance was just 19,944, the Twins' lowest at home since May 31.

Twins' Miguel Sano (knee), Tyler Austin (back) remain out of lineup

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | September 7, 2018

Eddie Rosario returned to the Twins' lineup for the first time in eight days Friday against the Kansas City Royals, but Miguel Sano and Tyler Austin will need more time.

Sano's sore left knee will undergo "a few more tests," Twins manager Paul Molitor said, after an initial diagnosis was for a quick return after a bruised lower leg suffered Tuesday night in Houston.

"I was a little quick to speak about how he was the day after the injury," Molitor said. "He's still a little sore. You know how when you bend a joint quickly and past its normal range of motion, you get some stiffness and swelling in there? I'm hoping that's all it is."

Sano, who is in a 4-for-46 tailspin at the plate, suffered the injury on a hard slide into second base while trying to advance on a wild pitch by Justin Verlander.

"I think there was probably a jarring in there that has had some effects that have carried over a couple days," Molitor said. "We're going to monitor it and hopefully get him back on the field as quickly as we can."

Austin, meanwhile, is still dealing with a stiff back that caused him to leave Wednesday's game in Houston. Austin has been trying to play through a minor back condition, Molitor said, but that was aggravated while attempting a sliding catch of a foul pop near the first-base dugout.

"He's had some (back) issues before," Molitor said. "Nothing major that I know of. I just know he's been dealing with working on keeping that back as flexible as he can and as available on a day-to-day basis as he can. We're trying to go slowly and be patient."

Austin's former team, the New York Yankees, hit town Monday for a three-game series. Acquired in the Lance Lynn deal July 30, Austin has hit seven home runs in just 20 games (70 at-bats) since being recalled from Triple-A on Aug. 10.

"I like the makeup of the individual," Molitor said. "You can see what he's about. I think he's a guy who would try to play hurt or try to make the play, regardless of consequence to his body."

BUXTON CALL

With an off day Thursday, Molitor finally had a chance to call center fielder Byron Buxton. That call came several days after Molitor promised Sunday that he would have a "nice conversation" with Buxton after the reigning Platinum Glove Award winner was sent home for the year rather than given a September call-up.

"That's been done," Molitor said.

How did it go?

"That's been done," he repeated.

Asked if he could shed any light on Buxton's mood as rumors swirl of a potential grievance being filed on his behalf with the players' union, Molitor kept those comments brief as well.

"He's doing well," he said. "He's doing well, all things considered."

SANTANA AND PINEDA

Twins right-handers Ervin Santana and Michael Pineda are also likely done for the year as they gather further information on their ailing right middle finger and right knee, respectively.

Santana recently had another follow-up exam with Dr. Charles Melone in New York City and was told his surgically repaired knuckle wasn't the problem. Rather, it's an irritated nerve on the inner pad of his middle finger (near the base) that has hindered his pitching ability.

"Maybe that nerve was sleeping (before) and now it's working," said Santana, who has yet to throw a baseball since being shut down Aug. 19.

He is hopeful that with more rest he will be able to resume a throwing program before the season ends, but Twins doctors were still making their assessment. At worst, Santana believes he would be able to start throwing by December, a key point for a 35-year-old pitcher who could become a free agent if the Twins exercise their \$1 million buyout on his \$14 million option for 2019.

Pineda, meanwhile, is still gathering opinions on how to repair or remove the torn meniscus in his knee. He had hoped to face his former Yankees teammates next week, but his comeback from Tommy John surgery was sidetracked by knee pain.

"There's other things going on in there that might involve just a cleanup," Molitor said. "There's been multiple doctors that have been consulted."

Rosario, Adrianza power Twins to 10-6 win over Royals

Associated Press | Fox Sports North | September 8, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — Twins manager Paul Molitor is taking full advantage of expanded September rosters.

Eddie Rosario homered, Ehire Adrianza had three hits and three RBIs, and Minnesota used six relievers to overcome a short start and beat the Kansas City Royals 10-6, snapping a five-game skid Friday night.

Trevor May (4-1) picked up the win with two shutout innings in relief of Stephen Gonsalves, who lasted just 2 1/3 innings in his fourth major league start. With a day off Thursday and a 13-man bullpen, Molitor pulled Gonsalves after he'd thrown just 52 pitches.

"Thank God for September," Molitor said. "We've got a lot of fresh people coming off the off day and the amount of people that we have, that helps make your decisions a little easier to go ahead and turn it over a little bit more quickly than you might another time in the season."

After the Twins took the lead with three runs in the fifth, May, Matt Magill, Taylor Rogers and Trevor Hildenberger each kept the Royals off the board the rest of the way.

“The guys we brought in all did a nice job putting up the zeroes the last half of the ballgame,” Molitor said.

Salvador Perez homered and Jorge Bonifacio had three hits for the Royals, who have lost three straight after winning eight of nine.

“We just couldn’t find a way to get the ball hit at somebody,” said Royals manager Ned Yost, whose pitchers allowed 12 hits and walked seven batters in eight innings.

Minnesota broke a 6-6 tie with a three-run fifth. Max Kepler and Adrianza had RBI singles against Glenn Sparkman (0-3). Rosario tacked on his team-leading 23rd home run leading off the eighth.

GONSALVES STRUGGLES AGAIN

The Twins gave Gonsalves an early lead on Adrianza’s two-run single in the second, but the Royals knocked him out with a six-run outburst in the third. Gonsalves, one of Minnesota’s top pitching prospects, got through the first two innings without much trouble, but the second time through the order was a different story.

After No. 9 hitter Cam Gallagher flew out to start the third, the next five batters reached base against Gonsalves. Alex Gordon’s two-run double tied the score at 2-2, and two batters later Bonifacio singled home Gordon to end the left-hander’s night.

Gonsalves is now 0-2 with an 11.68 ERA in four starts since being called up Aug. 20. He walked three batters Friday, giving him 13 walks in 12 1/3 innings. He said it’s been hard to concentrate on getting batters out while also trying to make progress with the mechanical work he’s been doing with Twins pitching coach Garvin Alston.

“I’ve been working with Garvin on something new every week,” Gonsalves said, “and I think my mind’s on that — mechanics, instead of competing.”

Molitor thinks some of Gonsalves’ issues are a product of better competition.

“He’s had some stretches earlier this year in particular (in Triple-A) where he was able to pitch around some of the command issues that he had,” Molitor said. “But up here, the margin for error is a little different. You’ve got guys who are going to battle when they’ve got two strikes and they’re not going to expand as much as maybe down there. Some of those small differences play out differently up here.”

FILLMYER FLOPS

The Twins dealt Royals starter Heath Fillmyer a fate similar to Gonsalves’ in the bottom of the third, knocking him out as five of the first six batters reached base. Jake Cave hit an RBI double and scored on a wild pitch to tie it at 6.

“I didn’t work ahead of anybody. I didn’t execute as well as I should have,” Fillmyer said. “Some of those things end up happening when you don’t execute as fine as you want.”

ALMOST A HAT TRICK

Perez greeted reliever Alan Busenitz with a three-run homer into the bullpens in left-center. His 24th home run of the season gave the Royals a 6-2 lead in the third inning. Perez also hit two high fly balls that backed Twins left fielder Rosario to the wall before they came up just short of the fence.

Perez now has 17 career home runs at Target Field, the most of any Twins opponent.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Royals: OF Brett Phillips is day-to-day with a shoulder contusion he suffered running into the wall in Cleveland on Tuesday.

Twins: Rosario returned to the lineup after missing six games with sore quadriceps, but 3B Miguel Sano remained sidelined with a lower left leg bruise suffered on Tuesday in Houston.

UP NEXT

Royals: In the second game of the series Saturday evening, RHP Jorge Lopez (1-4, 2.24 ERA) makes his fifth start for the Royals since being acquired from Milwaukee in the Mike Moustakas deal. His last time out he held the Orioles to one run over seven innings while striking out eight in a 9-1 victory.

Twins: RHP Jose Berrios (11-10, 3.92), the Twins' lone 2018 All-Star, will try to turn it around against the Royals. In his last seven starts he's 1-3 with a 5.67 ERA.

Preview: Twins vs. Royals

The Sports Xchange | Fox Sports North | September 8, 2018

Eddie Rosario returned to the Minnesota Twins' lineup and homered in a 10-6 win Friday night but the team will need to wait at least a little bit longer before getting third baseman Miguel Sano back in action.

Sano will undergo "a few more tests" on his ailing left knee, according to manager Paul Molitor, whose team continues a three-game series with the Kansas City Royals on Saturday.

He's been out since bruising the leg while sliding into second Tuesday night in Houston. There was hope that he'd return for the series opener Friday but that plan was scratched when the pain hadn't subsided.

"I was a little quick to speak about how he was the day after the injury," Molitor told MLB.com Friday. "He's still a little sore. I was of the mindset it would be sooner than later, and I don't think it's still too far out there. We're just running a few more tests to make sure he's going to be OK and there's nothing that's going to linger that we might have missed from the initial diagnosis."

The Twins will also be without first baseman Tyler Austin on Saturday.

Austin's back has been bothering him since Wednesday when he slipped and fell near the dugout while chasing down a pop fly.

"His back is still feeling the symptoms there so we're trying to go slowly and be patient as far as when we're going to get him back out to play," Molitor said. "He's had some issues before. Nothing major that I know of. I just know he's been dealing with working on keeping that back as flexible as he can and as available on a day-to-day basis as he can."

Right-hander Jose Berrios gets the ball Saturday night, looking to break out of a late-season slump.

He hasn't worked past the fifth inning in any of his last five starts and has a 6.65 ERA during that stretch. Berrios lasted only four innings his last time out, allowing five runs on five hits — including three home runs — while walking three and striking out eight in a 7-4 Minnesota loss to the Rangers last Saturday.

"Realistically, he's fighting it a little bit," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I don't know if it's a combination of it getting late or a couple of other things, but it just hasn't been going very well."

Saturday will mark his eighth career start and third of the season against the Royals, who hand the ball to right-hander Jorge Lopez.

Lopez has been on a bit of a roller coaster since coming to the Royals as part of the trade that sent third baseman Mike Moustakas to Milwaukee at the deadline. Through four starts for Kansas City, he's gone 1-3 with a 5.66 ERA but while he's given up a combined 11 runs in two of those starts he's also spun a pair of one-run outings including his last time out when he held the Orioles to a run on five hits while striking out eight without a walk over seven innings of work.

"(His) command was good," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "But for me, he really utilized his fastball, pitched off his fastball, established his fastball. And he pitched off it with his slider, changeup and curveball. But the key was establishing his fastball first. He was filling up the zone and staying on the attack. Outstanding start for him."

Lopez will be facing the Twins for the first time in his career.