



Padres Press Clips

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Franchy Cordero's promise on full display in Padres' 3-0 win

Dennis Lin, The Athletic

MONTERREY, Mexico — In Franchy Cordero's 22 appearances this season, the Padres have seen the 6-foot-3 outfielder obliterate a baseball that would have traveled roughly 500 feet had it not collided with a center-field scoreboard. They have seen him launch that home run and several other balls in play with the same force occasionally generated by the Giancarlo Stanton and Aaron Judge of the league. They also have seen him strike out a third of the time.

In Sunday's 3-0 shutout of the Los Angeles Dodgers, the Padres saw Cordero compile three singles, extend his on-base streak to a career-high 10 games and finish a three-game series having reached in seven of 12 attempts. Fans at Estadio de Béisbol Monterrey who had never watched Cordero before might have mistaken him for one of San Diego's most polished hitters.

That, of course, remains far from the truth.

But Cordero has produced signs of getting closer.

"The ability's there," said first baseman Eric Hosmer, the Padres' most polished hitter. "Obviously, everybody can see how far he can hit a baseball, how hard he hits the baseball, but the work he's putting in every day and how open he is to the information that he's receiving, I think that's what's really going to separate him."

Over the weekend, thousands of fans came to see Major League Baseball's first regular-season games in Mexico in nearly two decades. They came to see Padres third baseman and Guadalajara native Christian Villanueva, who admitted he'd tried too hard to put on a show after going hitless and unleashing a number of wayward throws. They came to see established names such as Hosmer, who did not disappoint, cranking home runs in back-to-back games.

Most of all, they came to see the Los Angeles Dodgers, who, despite dropping the series, continue to dwarf the Padres as a worldwide brand.

Yet more than a few should remember a 23-year-old Padres player whose ceiling includes international appeal.

Cordero entered with six walks in 19 games. Then he walked twice Friday, one of the few non-embarrassments in a no-hit loss. He walked twice more in Saturday's bounceback victory.

Sunday brought his most impressive game log — Cordero went 3-for-4 — a fact confirmed by the eye test. After gazing at a third strike in his opening at-bat, he singled to center, bunted his way on and provided a key insurance run his final time up, redirecting a pitch on the outside corner for an opposite-field RBI. The last single easily scored Travis Jankowski, who was standing at third after his second triple in as many games.

"We needed contact," manager Andy Green said. "That's what you need in that situation for a guy who flies at third base and a guy who flies in the batter's box. We needed contact, and

he lined it through the left side. Those are really good at-bats, and he's done a heck of a job."

Cordero's 10-game on-base streak coincides with at least one other trend. Since April 24, he has batted either fourth or fifth in the lineup, depending on whether the opposing starters throws right- or left-handed. In that span, he is 11 for 34 with three extra-base hits and eight walks. He has raised his on-base percentage from .265 to .352, second-highest on the team (Hosmer's .403 leads the way).

"He's got the ability to move around in the batting order," Green said. "The way he's hitting offensively, we've settled him into a spot for the time being. I don't think the season started with us expecting him to hit cleanup for us, but he's doing a really nice job, so we don't intend to change it often at this point in time."

The Padres did start the season expecting to learn more about the capabilities of several young players. There have been promising developments, such as Villanueva's emergence, Joey Lucchesi's debut and Eric Lauer's performance Sunday (the left-hander overcame constant traffic on the bases to become the first Padres pitcher to throw at least six shutout innings in a start.) The number of underwhelming returns is greater, though, this early in the schedule, each grade is incomplete.

That certainly applies for Cordero, whose greatest challenge continues to be plate discipline. On that front, he has succeeded of late.

"I think he's shown so far this year the type of pop he has, the work that he puts in, the preparation he puts in," Hosmer said. "I think it's a lot of good things coming for him."

Padres finally feel at home in taking Mexico series from Dodgers

Kevin Acee

As it turned out, baseball in Mexico was very, very good to the Padres.

As fans sang and danced along to a band playing essentially just outside the door late Sunday afternoon, Padres manager Andy Green opened his postgame press conference with a thank you.

“What a great atmosphere,” the Padres manager said earnestly. “How much fun for our club to come down here to Monterrey to enjoy the fans and the city and play in such a great city.”

And later: “It was two really good days of baseball for us.”

Indeed, the Padres recovered nicely from being no-hit on Friday with victories the final two games here.

With a 3-0 win on Sunday powered by Eric Hosmer’s second two-run homer in two games, the Padres won just their second series in the last eight meetings with the Dodgers.

And with six magnificently resilient shutout innings, rookie Eric Lauer earned his first big-league victory.

“Today was a big game,” said Hosmer, who had spoken after Friday’s loss of the importance of a young team being able to move on. “Rubber match against a rival team in the division. Eric went out and threw the ball well. The sense of urgency was really there today. I’m really proud of that.”

That is what the Padres will try to carry on. They hustled to the airport less than an hour after the final out not just with fond memories but with the intention of learning from and building on what happened here the past two games, in which they got 20 hits.

Monday begins a nine-game homestand against the Nationals, Cardinals and Rockies.

“Obviously, we haven’t played a ton of winning baseball,” Green said. “Our record says that. I think we’re seeing a lot of good signs from our guys. Winning a series is the first step to winning consecutive series.”

That's something the Padres haven't done. This was the third time (of 11) they won a series and the first time in six tries that they won a series' deciding game.

Lauer got them started. With an increasingly creative blend of pitches, he got himself out of trouble in every inning. The Dodgers put runners in scoring position the first five times they were up, but all nine runners who reached against Lauer were stranded, as the Dodgers went 0-for-6 with runners in scoring position against the 22-year-old left-hander.

"We held them down when we needed to," said Lauer, who has thrown 10 scoreless innings in a row after allowing 10 runs (nine earned) in his first four big-league innings.

Green started veteran A.J. Ellis at catcher in part for his knowledge of the Dodgers, for whom he played from 2008-16, and with the thought that the veteran could help calm and guide Lauer. The rookie was appreciative.

"I definitely did a better job throwing different pitches in different counts and using them all the right way," Lauer said. "A.J. is very intelligent and knows the hitters really well. ... I could sit back and agree with every pitch he was putting down."

Lauer threw 102 pitches in getting through the six innings, the most that the 2016 first-round draft pick has made as a professional.

He left an inning after Hosmer had put him in position for the victory with a blast to center field that was surely gone as soon as he hit it. Right before the homer, Travis Jankowski had singled.

It was Jankowski who had led off the Padres' half of the first inning in Saturday's victory with a stand-up triple, with Hosmer homering on the next pitch.

Jankowski also reached third standing up on a hit down the right-field line to lead off the seventh inning Sunday. Franchy Cordero's third hit of the game drove in Jankowski to give the bullpen a 3-0 cushion.

Craig Stammen, Kirby Yates and Brad Hand, who all pitched Saturday, finished off the victory. Hand struck out all three batters he faced in the ninth inning for his ninth save and second of the weekend.

As the final batter came to the plate, a small contingent of fans along the third-base line chanted, "Beat L.A."

It was as much like home as it felt all weekend for the Padres, who were technically the home team.

Having given up three games at Petco Park to be part of MLB's international crusade, the Padres found themselves playing in a stadium full of Dodgers jerseys.

The cheers in Estadio de Beisbol Monterrey were generally slightly louder for the "visitors" in all three games, with the most noise for the Padres coming from fans who made the trip from San Diego. But it did seem as if appreciation for the only major league team with a Hispanic nickname grew over the weekend.

A "Padres, Padres" chant finally broke out when Hand's third strikeout ended the series.

"Especially since we know how much Mexican fans love the Dodgers," said Padres third baseman Christian Villanueva, the lone Mexico native to play this weekend. "To hear that word, to hear them chanting and congratulating us, it was unbelievable and impressive."

Travis Jankowski pushing Manuel Margot for job

Kevin Acee

A leadoff hitter is supposed to provide a spark.

The Padres have basically gotten a damp cloth from whoever is batting atop their lineup.

Until this weekend.

On Saturday, the day after the Padres were no-hit in their series opener here, Andy Green put Travis Jankowski in the leadoff spot and sat struggling Manuel Margot.

In the bottom of the first inning, Jankowski lined a ball that skipped across the turf to the wall in center field. The speedy Jankowski got to third base standing up.

“The hit that he got the first inning – that goes a lot farther than people realize,” said Eric Hosmer, who homered on the next pitch. “After the no-hitter, it was the anticipation of who was going to get the first hit. Him coming out and getting that triple, it was kind of a sigh of relief from the dugout. It felt from that point on we could relax and go play.”

Perhaps it would be a bit much to say Jankowski was the catalyst to the Padres getting 20 hits between their victories on Saturday and Sunday. But then, maybe not.

He walked immediately before another Hosmer home run on Sunday, and another stand-up triple in Sunday’s seventh inning put him in position to score on Franchy Cordero’s single.

In doing so, Jankowski earned himself another start in the top spot in the batting order Monday night against the Nationals and right-handed pitcher Stephen Strasburg.

“Travis is walking, he’s getting hits, he’s getting on base in front of Hos,” manager Andy Green said. “We haven’t had that consistently.”

No, they have not. Even with Jankowski going 3-for-7 with a walk and the three runs over the past two games, the Padres are getting (by far) the least production out of the leadoff spot of any major league team.

The eight players who batted first for the Padres this season have combined for a .172 batting average and .241, both league lows by a lot. That has led to them scoring a the fourth-fewest runs (15).

Manuel Margot, the player who has hit in the top spot most often and who the Padres embarked on the season believing would lock down the leadoff job, is hitting .153/.206 with 12 strikeouts in 14 games (59 at-bats) atop the order.

Jankowski started in center field Saturday. He was in nd right field Sunday with Margot in center. Margot was 0-for-3 with two strikeouts batting seventh.

Margot is down to .169/.219 on the season and has struck out 21 times in 92 plate appearances. Among players with at least 31 plate appearances in the leadoff spot, Margot ranks 49th in OBP and 48th in batting average.

Jankowski is batting .316/.381 in 19 total at-bats since his call-up and .364/.462 in three games (13 plate appearances) leading off. His two walks in that spot are one less than Margot has.

Jankowski has a ways to go, but if he keeps doing what he did this weekend he might hasten a decision the Padres could be facing about Margot's future – when just a short while ago it seemed Jankowski was almost certainly the one with his neck on the block.

Fact is, the franchise is using this season to determine much about some of the players it will keep or let go. One thing to consider is that the Padres must decide which players currently on the 40-man roster they can jettison in order to protect multiple prospects in this year's Rule 5 draft. With the ascension of Franchy Cordero, there may not be room for both Jankowski and Margot going forward.

(Certainly, with Cory Spangenberg, Alex Dickerson and Hunter Renfroe also in the mix, some drastic roster remodeling is ahead.)

Jankowski was recalled from Triple-A on April 29 to fill the roster spot of right fielder Wil Myers, who went on the disabled list with an oblique strain expected to keep him down perhaps through May.

When Jankowski arrived, Green said, “If this turns into Travis’ opportunity and he runs with it the way Christian (Villanueva) has, the way Franchy is running with it, you can cement yourself right into the mix really quickly.”

Jankowski hasn’t yet fixed his feet in the outfield, but he has laid down a foundation with his weekend here.

No rest for Padres shortstop Freddy Galvis

Kevin Acee

Freddy plays.

Andy Green was leaning toward giving Freddy Galvis, his every-inning shortstop, a game down this weekend.

That didn't happen.

"I don't think I need any innings off," Galvis said after a chuckle. "I've been able to take advantage of the days off we already have. I'm able to rest and recover well. I'm always trying to take care of my body. I don't think I need to take days off or innings off. I want to be out there."

Galvis is the only Padres player to participate in every inning this season. He was one of five major leaguers to play all 162 games last season and played an average of 157 the past three seasons for the Phillies. Galvis and Kansas City shortstop Alcides Escobar are the only players that played every game last season and have played every game this season.

Green, too, laughed at the mention of Galvis playing Sunday.

"The timing of this event with an off day the day before arriving and every Thursday off for three or four weeks, this isn't the time he's the most taxed. Freddy's games played is one of the least of my concerns right now."

Galvis tweaked his hamstring running to first base a two weeks ago and has briefly grabbed at it after at least a couple sprints to first recently. He doubled Saturday, his first extra-base hit since April 6, and his play at shortstop has remained exceptional.

Green and Galvis did speak this weekend about the possibility of Guerra filling in.

"Those conversations are always there," Galvis said. "Andy is always checking in – how are you feeling mentally, physically, all those things. To this point, it's the same answer. I've been feeling good. He checked in, and that's the answer I gave back. I'm feeling good. I don't need to take a day off tight now."

On Franchy, "Franimal" and Padres' droughts someday ending

Tom Krasovic

Here are the Padres again, doing Padres things that make them unique, and by unique I mean different from the other 29 teams in the big leagues.

Of course I'm talking about the no-hitter drought, which Tyson Ross threatened three weeks ago, only to crash and burn like all the others.

The Pads are the only active franchise to have never thrown a no-hitter. They're up to nearly 8,000 games without getting this done.

Why can't they get a lollipop like everyone else?

But the no-hitter drought isn't the only weird Pads drought that's on my mind.

In fact, the no-hitter drought recently intersected with an obscure Pads drought that probably interests only me. To my strange thinking, it's as bizarre as the no-hitter streak and also more significant.

This is the obscure Dominican Drought, as I've been calling it for a decade now.

The Pads, like all the ballclubs, have been signing prospective ballplayers out of the Dominican Republic for a number of decades. At the least, since the 1980s.

This decision required no measure of brilliance.

The D.R. produces more big leaguers than any other country outside of the United States.

What differentiates the Pads from everyone else, near as I can tell, is that they've never received what most folks would consider a decent big-league season from any of the many hundreds of Dominicans they've signed.

Franchy Cordero has a chance to break this drought. Can this happen, please. His name is Franchy. He hits home runs that get small fast, like the PGA drives at Torrey Pines. He's one of the fastest runners in baseball.

More on Franchy in a moment, but how is that the Pads are still waiting for one of their Dominican signees to pan out for them?

Answer: Beats me.

Slightly better answer: To some degree, they've probably been very unlucky, as with the no-hitter quest that dates to 1969.

Dominican prospects are younger than U.S. prospects who are drafted, making the projection more difficult. Their typical age range is 16 to 18, which means that teams are drawing upon scouting evaluations of players 13, 14, 15 years old.

Good luck with that.

Of course, many of the Pads signees from the D.R. went on to do exciting things in the minors.

There was Juan Melo Jr., back in the mid-1990s. The son of Pads coach, he excited some scouts not affiliated with San Diego.

As a 19-year-old shortstop in the Cal League, the switch-hitter Melo batted .304/.345/.429 with eight home runs. Baseball America rated him the sport's 36th prospect the following year. The higher he climbed, however, the more telling were his limitations.

After Melo came other touted prospects like Wascar Serrano, Simon Castro and Rymer Liriano. They made it onto the national rankings, too.

None blossomed in San Diego or, for that matter, elsewhere in the big leagues, although Liriano, 27, is pressing on with an Angels affiliate. He hit two home runs Saturday night.

Pitcher Dinelson Lamet succeeded Liriano as a potential drought-buster two years ago. Signed for \$100,000 as an older prospect at age 21, he made his way to the big leagues and started 21 games for the Pads last year.

If you said Lamet's performance qualified as a decent season, I wouldn't press you very hard on it. The righty logged 114 innings as a rookie. His strikeout rate was an exciting 10.9 per nine innings. Adjusted for ballpark and league, his ERA was worse than average, but

when Lamet came into this past spring training, he had a good chance to secure a starting job.

In his final outing, his elbow ailed him.

Now, he's recovering from Tommy John surgery.

So, how did the no-hitter drought cross paths with the Dominican drought?

Go to April 20, Phoenix's huge ballpark, and Ross nursing his no-hit bid, with two outs in the eighth inning.

When a Diamondbacks hitter smacked the righty's 127th pitch in the air toward Cordero in center field, it initially appeared Ross was only three outs away.

Unfortunately, Cordero made a false step or two toward the infield, allowing the flyball to sail beyond him for a double.

This was not an easy flyball to catch, but Cordero said he should've snagged it. While that was the right thing to say, it probably was also the truth. Baseball analytics being what there are in 2018, a statistic surfaced on the probability of that particular flyball being caught. The probability, per MLB.com and the data-crunchers at Statcast, was 99 percent.

As part of the no-hit weirdness with the Pads, it doesn't cut both ways with them. They seek their first no-hitter, yet when it comes to getting no-hit, they're good for one of those every five years. Fourteen days after the Ross bid evaporated in Arizona's desert air, the Pads were no-hit in Mexico this past Friday night by a quartet of Dodgers.

It was the 10th no-hitter against San Diego. One of those was thrown by a man on LSD. Another was thrown in the same Mission Valley stadium by a man who walked nine batters, in the same game.

For the Dodgers, it was their 23rd no-hitter thrown, most in the big leagues, but their first with more than one pitcher getting an out.

Now that I've again made a nuisance of myself, let's turn back to Cordero and the excitement he is providing.

When I first saw Cordero last year, he recalled slugging, swift outfielder Cliff Floyd when Floyd was coming up with the Expos.

Their lefty swings were similar, as were their raw power, footspeed and physiques. While this didn't lead me to think Cordero would have the same career as Floyd, it was something.

Don't be fooled by the outdated measurements of Cordero's physical dimensions that are still circulating in cyber space.

He has filled out since a trio of Pads scouts – Randy Smith, Felix Feliz and Martin Jose – signed him for \$170,000 as a 17-year-old free agent.

Back then, Cordero was a wiry shortstop who stood close to 6-foot-3.

The team listed him at 175 pounds for a number of years. He's now 220 pounds. The baggy uniform belies an NFL body.

Cordero probably didn't belong at shortstop. He made 123 errors in 165 games, and you wonder what the near-chronic miscues did to his confidence. The learning curve was steep as a hitter, too – a .293 on-base percentage and 121 strikeouts in his first full season.

When the Pads wisely moved him to the outfield in 2016, the Franchy glimmers of today began to emerge as the lefty showed good range, a strong throwing arm and much-improved defense while amassing 24 doubles, 16 triples, 11 home runs and 23 stolen bases in a season that took him from the Cal League to the Texas League to Pacific Coast League.

Climbing higher, he joined the Pads last year. There were impressive feats, Franching tonking home runs to center and the opposite gap. Then he got found out. Lefty pitchers gave him a hard time. Righties and lefties increasingly got him to chase breaking balls and high fastballs. He went back to the minors to apply hard-knocks lessons.

This time around, he has figured out a few things.

He is, encouragingly, drawing walks – 10 of them, several in the past week. Against lefties, he's having more success.

He has six home runs, and a slash line of .272/.352/.519.

There's a long way to go for Cordero. He's still an underdog.

It's not typical, to say the least, for hitters who exhibited subpar strike-zone judgment across most of a considerable minor league career to develop into disciplined big-league hitters.

Yet, it's been known to happen.

Let's dream a Franchy dream. I'll list Cordero's minor league career numbers. And below those, you'll see the minor league career numbers of Player X, a fellow Dominican who also began his professional career as a teenager.

Franchy in the minors

539 games, .282/.338/.435; 159 walks.

Player X in the minors

493 games, .278/.331/.425; 138 walks.

Player X is Robinson Cano.

This is not a forecast that Franchy will evolve into a perennial All-Star as Cano did with the Yankees. Cano was far less apt to strike out in the minors. Also, Cano is one of the exceptions to the rule that hitters generally don't become more successful in the big leagues at controlling the strike zone.

The numbers are pretty similar, though.

As Pads CEO Larry Lucchino used to say, all's well that ends.

At some point, the Pads will throw a no-hitter. And, at some point, their efforts in the Dominican will pay off in big-league successes.

Who knows, maybe things will balance out and not only Cordero but several other Dominican signees will become standouts the Pads.

Pads fans can hope with the best of them, or they wouldn't be Pads fans, and to that end, we give you Pads prospect Franmil Reyes turning the Pacific Coast League into his own slow-pitch softball circuit the past week.

His statistics over the six games:

Sixteen-for-23 (.696) with eight home runs.

You could put an adult in a junior T-ball league, and he or she may not hit .696 with eight home runs in six games.

Reyes' barrage led one hard-eyed witness, a Detroit Tigers and former Pads scout and development man, to take to Twitter last night. Here's his rather astounding context:

At 22, Reyes is a year younger than Cordero. He was 16 when the Pads signed him out of the Dominican for \$700,000 seven years ago, an investment that, as with the Cordero signing, came before reputed international scouting wizard A.J. Preller took over Pads baseball operations. Preller, salvaging the ill-advised signing of James Shields, would trade for Dominican prospect Fernando Tatis Jr, a \$700,000 signee of the White Sox who has become San Diego's top prospect.

At some 185 pounds when he signed, the right-fielder Reyes has grown into a 6-4, 240-pounder.

Is there a Franchy & "Franimal" Show on the horizon? A no-hitter?

Here's to the day when Pads uniqueness is defined not by bad luck — admittedly, bad outcomes aren't due entirely to bad luck -- but the astute decision to go to smartly designed, brown-trimmed uniforms.

Padres notes: Aside from the 0-fer, Christian Villanueva enjoys going home

Kevin Acee

Christian Villanueva's homecoming was not what he wanted, as April's National League Rookie of the Month cooled off just in time to return to his home country.

"I'm enjoying the fact we won," he said after the Padres beat the Dodgers 3-0 on Sunday. "I was enjoying the fans and the fact we won the series. I was happy I was playing in front of my family and my friends and all the Mexican people. That's the biggest thing I'm taking away from all this."

Villanueva, who entered the series with a .299/.384/.667 batting line and nine home runs, was 0-for-11 in the three games here and on Sunday made two errors at third base.

"Yeah, I think so," Villanueva said when asked if he was pressing. "I wanted to put on my show, I wanted to leave my mark. I think that came out with some ground balls. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to. But the biggest thing is we won."

Cordero learning fast

Right away after being activated from the disabled list on April 11, rookie outfielder Franchy Cordero hit the ball hard almost every single time he made contact.

But he struck out a lot and didn't get on base very often, with 11 hits and two walks in his first 50 plate appearances.

On Sunday, Cordero singled in his final three at-bats to continue a 10-game streak of reaching base safely. In those 10 games, he is 11-for-34 with eight walks. That's good for a .452 on-base percentage.

He still strikes out a fair amount – 13 times in the past 10 games compared to 19 times in his first 12 games – but his quick transition into a savvy batter has been remarkable.

"The ability is there," first baseman Eric Hosmer said. "The work he's putting in every day and how open he is to the information he is receiving, that's what is going to really separate

him. That's where we're going to see the player he can be and what he can do at a consistent level ... There's a lot of good things coming from him."

Notable

- With a home run and two walks on Sunday, Hosmer is batting .429/.565/.714 over the past 10 games. He is batting .394/.487/.848 in eight games since being moved to the No.2 spot in the lineup.
- Reliever Kirby Yates was uncharacteristically wild in his appearances over the weekend. He walked a batter and hit one in allowing an inherited runner to score Saturday. In working Sunday's eighth inning he walked another and allowed a hit. Yates, who has a 0.87 ERA in 10 1/3 innings this season, spent 10 days on the disabled list last month with right ankle tendinitis that has not entirely left. Said Green: "Kirby is tough. He's thrown the ball well. He made some big pitches when he had to. He's battling through that."
- Brad Hand earned his ninth save of the season and second in two nights by striking out all three batters he faced in Sunday's ninth inning. It was the second game in a row and the sixth time this season he has struck out at least three batters in an appearance.

Franmil Reyes homers in 5th straight game

Jeff Sanders

At 6-foot-5 and 240 pounds, Franmil Reyes possesses much raw power as anyone in the Padres system. And he's showing it off at the moment.

The 22-year-old outfielder homered in a fifth straight game in Triple-A El Paso's 14-12 loss to host Albuquerque on Sunday, giving Reyes a mind-boggling eight homers in that stretch.

The streak started with three straight two-homer games. Home runs during three-hit games on Saturday and Sunday lifted Reyes' batting line to .339/.419/.750 and upped his system-best total to 13, more than half the 25 he amassed in 135 games last year in the Texas League.

Of course, Reyes wasn't the only Chihuahua flexing his muscles on the losing end of a slugfest.

Shortstop Luis Urias (.305) hit his third homer, doubled twice and drove in two runs in a four-hit game and first baseman Diego Goris (.364) went 4-for-5 with his third homer and three RBIs. Left fielder Dusty Coleman (.192) hit a grand slam for his fourth homer.

Left-hander Kyle McGrath (1-1, 5.06) allowed four runs – three earned – in 1 1/3 innings in the loss after right-hander Kyle Lloyd (7.20) allowed seven runs in 3 2/3 innings in the start.

DOUBLE-A SAN ANTONIO (20-10)

- Missions 4, Corpus Christi 1: RHP Jesse Scholtens (4-1, 2.80) struck out eight and allowed one run on one hit and a walk in 6 1/3 innings as the Missions won their sixth in a row. LHP Jose Castillo (3.46) saved his third game with a scoreless ninth. LF Rod Boykin (.269) went 3-for-4 with an RBI and 1B Josh Naylor (.364) and 2B Peter Van Gansen (.290) each had two hits. SS Fernando Tatis Jr. (.218) went 0-for-3 with three strikeouts and a run scored.

HIGH SINGLE-A FORT WAYNE (12-19)

- Storm 8, Modesto 3: RHP Chris Paddack (0.00) remained unscored upon in his return from Tommy John, striking out nine and scattering three this and a walk over four scoreless innings. RHP Elliot Ashbeck (1-2, 2.14) earned the win with two scoreless innings. 3B Hudson Potts (.270) went 3-for-4 with two doubles, his seventh homer and two RBIs.

LOW SINGLE-A FORT WAYNE (13-17)

- Wisconsin 3, TinCaps 2: LHP Nick Margevicius (1-2, 2.81) struck out nine and allowed three runs – one earned – on eight hits and a walk in six innings in the start. 1B Carlos Belen (.273) hit his fourth homer and went 2-for-3 with a walk and two runs scored. 3B Reinaldo Ibarra (.185) went 2-for-3 with a double, an RBI, a walk and two steals.

Notable

- LHP MacKenzie Gore will come off the disabled list Tuesday for a start at Quad Cities. The 19-year-old Gore landed on Fort Wayne's disabled list with a blister after his first Midwest League start. He allowed two runs in three innings in that game.

Pair of Erics secure Mexico Series for Padres

Hosmer's homer, Lauer's 6 scoreless innings notch win for San Diego

AJ Cassavell MLB.com

MONTERREY, Mexico -- Eric Hosmer took a moment to savor his fifth-inning homer on Sunday afternoon. Even for an accomplished big leaguer like Hosmer, it's not everyday he gets to enjoy a moment like that in a setting like that.

And so, as Hosmer was halfway down the third-base line, he slowed his gait and broke into a grin. He pounded his chest twice as he crossed the plate before pointing toward the sky. The fans at Estadio de Beisbol in Monterrey echoed their approval.

Hosmer's go-ahead dinger was enough offense to back rookie left-hander Eric Lauer, who was excellent over six scoreless frames. Lauer picked up his first career win as the Padres clinched the Mexico Series with a 3-0 victory over the Dodgers in the rubber match.

"We realized this series was going to be special," Hosmer said. "We wanted to come here and put on a good show for 'em. I'm happy we were on top."

There aren't many hitters in baseball as red-hot as Hosmer these days. Over the past two weeks, he's reached base in 26 of his last 46 plate appearances, and his homer was his third in the past five games.

Ahead in the count, 3-1, Hosmer sat on a fastball from Dodgers left-hander Tony Cingrani. He crushed it 10 rows deep, just to the right of the batter's eye. Lauer, the Padres' No. 12 prospect, had the runs he needed.

Lauer worked his way into plenty of trouble on Sunday, putting men in scoring position in each of the first five innings. He also worked his way out of it. Time and again, the 22-year-old rookie made out pitches when he needed them. May 6th, 2018

"You just know you have to bear down in certain points and make pitches," Lauer said. "In those moments, you have to trust in your teammates a little more, because if you try to be too fine, you're going to end up walking guys, getting into worse situations."

After struggling in his first two outings, this was the performance the Padres had been waiting for. Lauer surrendered nine runs over his first four big league innings. In 10 frames since, he's held the opposition scoreless.

The Padres were desperate for a big-time effort from Lauer, too, after the bullpen was forced to eat 6 2/3 frames in a win over the Dodgers on Saturday. Sitting on 87 pitches, Lauer hit for himself in the fifth, then worked around an error for a scoreless sixth.

"We needed it," Padres manager Andy Green said. "I don't think a single inning came easy for him. ... But overall, he steps up and makes big pitches when he has to. That's a really encouraging thing to see."

Craig Stammen, Kirby Yates and Brad Hand each worked scoreless innings, cementing San Diego's first series victory in its last six. Hand ended the game by whiffing Cody Bellinger, as an airhorn blared in the stands. 6th, 2018

Hours after Hand's final pitch, the party raged on in the stadium's main concourse, where a local band played music. One large group of Padres fans spotted another, and they approached each other, cheering: "Vamos Padres." Clap, clap, clap clap clap.

"What a great atmosphere," Green said afterward. "For our club to come down here to Monterrey, enjoy the fans, enjoy the city. We were honored to be here, and it was a lot of fun for us."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Tacking on: It was Travis Jankowski whose one-out single set the stage for Hosmer's blast. Two innings later, Jankowski got things started once again. He chopped a triple into the right-field corner and scored three batters later on Franchy Cordero's opposite-field single. 7th, 2018

Since his callup, Jankowski has started three games in the leadoff spot. He's 4-for-11 (.364) with a pair of triples and two walks. He'll remain atop the Padres' order against right-handed pitching for the foreseeable future.

Eight's for Yates: Yates has battled right ankle soreness for most of the season, but he's gutted through it recently, and he's been as sharp as ever. The Padres' eighth-inning guy ran into a bit of trouble on Sunday, putting two men on base with one out. But Yates -- who had already whiffed Alex Verdugo -- struck out the next two hitters. In 66 innings with the Padres, Yates has now punched out 99 hitters -- a rate of a strikeout and a half per inning. May 6th, 2018

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Since the start of the 2017 season, no National League reliever has generated more swings and misses with a breaking pitch than Hand has with his slider. On Sunday, it was as nasty as it's ever been. Hand set down Chase Utley and Matt Kemp looking, before Bellinger went down swinging. At some point during their at-bats, all three Dodgers hitters had their knees buckled.

HE SAID IT

"I don't think our team has ever been impacted by a tough loss. I don't feel that from this group of guys, I don't feel a hangover effect. They always show up ready to play the next day. ... These were two days of high-quality baseball." -- Green on his team's bounceback efforts after Friday's Dodgers no-hitter

UP NEXT

Tyson Ross makes his long-awaited return to Petco Park for his first start there since April 13. Since then, he's flirted with a no-hitter in Arizona and dominated the Giants in San Francisco, cementing himself as an effective starter once again, following two years of injuries and struggles. Meanwhile, the Nationals send San Diego State product Stephen Strasburg to the hill on Monday with first pitch slated for 7:10 p.m. PT.

Villanueva a hit in Mexico homecoming

Third baseman was only Mexican-born player on either Monterrey series roster

AJ Cassavell MLB.com

MONTERREY, Mexico -- Christian Villanueva went hitless in this weekend's Mexico Series. He was a smash hit in his home country, nonetheless.

Villanueva, the only Mexican-born player on either roster, finished the series 0-for-11 with a walk. That didn't stop him from soaking in the sights and sounds of a festive weekend in Monterrey -- especially with Sunday's 3-0 victory over the Dodgers to secure the series.

"It wasn't really about me," Villanueva said. "I'm enjoying the wins, I'm enjoying the fact that we won the series, the fact that I got to play in front of my family, my friends and all the Mexican people."

A Guadalajara native, Villanueva had dozens of family members in attendance this weekend. He received the biggest ovation when rosters were formally introduced on Friday night, and he was feted loudly during all 12 of his plate appearances.

Yes, he later admitted, he was pressing.

"I definitely wanted to put on my show, wanted to leave my mark," Villanueva said. "Unfortunately I wasn't able to, but again, the biggest thing is that we were able to get the wins."h, 2018

Both clubs are steeped in tradition in Mexico. The Dodgers are arguably the country's most popular team, but the Padres feel as though they're starting to put a dent in that.

Villanueva is coming off a Rookie of the Month Award-winning April, and he's looking to entrench himself as the Padres' third baseman of the future. A callup for second baseman Luis Urias could be imminent, too. Urias, the club's No. 3 prospect and No. 35 overall, is also Mexican-born, as is fellow youngster Tirso Ornelas, an 18-year-old outfielder holding his own in the Midwest League.

"With Christian Villanueva on our club -- and I think it's only a matter of time before Luis Urias, maybe Tirso Ornelas [eventually] -- I think maybe that starts to shift in time, when you see really great Mexican-born position players play for the Padres," Padres manager Andy Green said. "The reception was warm for us."

It was especially warm for Villanueva, who was asked to describe his lasting image of the weekend.

"Seeing the fans, seeing the energy, seeing this stadium full of people and full of life and hearing everyone chanting 'Padres,'" Villanueva said. "We know how much Mexican fans love the Dodgers, so to hear [Padres] and hear everyone chanting and supporting us, it was unbelievable."

No planned off-days for durable Galvis

Shortstop has played every inning heading into Sunday's game; Mitchell's rotation spot in question

AJ Cassavell MLB.com

MONTERREY, Mexico -- Everyday Freddy is still playing every day. Every inning, in fact.

The Padres called up shortstop prospect Javy Guerra for the weekend's series in Monterrey, where both teams were afforded a 26th man because of the logistical challenges of getting another player into Mexico in case of an injury.

At the time, the Padres spoke to the possibility of giving Freddy Galvis a breather. He's played every inning this season. Instead, Galvis convinced the coaching staff he wouldn't need one.

"I don't need innings off," Galvis said. "I've been able to take advantage of the days off that we've already have scheduled in. I've been able to rest and recover well. I'm always trying to take care of my body, always trying to stay healthy. I don't need games or innings off. I want to be out there, and I take care of my body in a way that's going to let me do that."

Galvis is hitting .231/.314/.289, including just two hits in his last five games, entering play Sunday. But the Padres acquired Galvis in part because of his durability. They're going to take advantage of it. May 5th, 2018

"This isn't necessarily the time where he's the most taxed," Green said, noting Thursday's off-day. "Freddy's games played is probably one of the least of my concerns right now."

Guerra debuted as a pinch-hitter Friday night, and he struck out in his only at-bat.

Mitchell decision forthcoming

The Padres have yet to determine whether right-hander Bryan Mitchell will make his scheduled start Thursday against the Cardinals. Green, his staff and the front office will formally discuss that decision Monday upon their return to San Diego.

Mitchell lasted only 2 1/3 innings in his Saturday start, the latest in a series of struggles since he joined the Padres in the offseason. In seven starts, Mitchell owns a 6.47 ERA, and he's walked 26 hitters in 32 innings.

Consider the following quote Green offered when asked about his quick hook:

"You get to the point where you've got to make a decision for the sake of the team," he said. "We want some guys that are going to pound the strike zone."

That sentiment certainly seems to apply in the bigger picture as well.

Long relievers Robbie Erlin and Jordan Lyles are two candidates to replace Mitchell in the starting rotation, should the Padres choose to move him to the bullpen. Mitchell noted, "That's not something I'm even contemplating right now."

Ellis spells Lopez

Evidently, the Padres platoon of A.J. Ellis and Raffy Lopez isn't a strict one. Ellis started Sunday's game against the Dodgers, despite righty Ross Stripling on the hill for Los Angeles.

Green cited Lopez's workload, noting he generally hasn't been over-exerted behind the plate. Lopez, who homered on Saturday for his first hit as a Padre, has never played more than 95 games at catcher in his eight professional seasons.

Urias has big game for El Paso

Mike Rosenbaum MLB.com

- No. 35 overall prospect Luis Urias (Padres' No. 3) delivered three extra-base hits, hitting two doubles and a home run, and scored four runs in a big game for Triple-A El Paso. He went 4-for-5 in the contest -- snapping a skid that'd seen him go 1-for-12 in his previous four games -- as he improved his average from .278 to .305.
- Padres No. 16 prospect Hudson Potts stayed hot for Class A Advanced Lake Elsinore with a multihit performance that included two doubles and a home run, his seventh this season and fourth in the past six games. Storm starting pitcher Chris Paddack (No. 22) recorded nine of his 12 outs via the strikeouts in his second start back from Tommy John surgery. The 22-year-old righty yielded three hits and one walk while throwing 50 of his 78 pitches for strikes. What's more, Paddack has now posted 10 scoreless frames, with 16 strikeouts and one walk, between his first two starts, picking up where he left off in mid-2016.

Hosmer homers again, Padres top Dodgers 3-0 in Mexico finale

AP

MONTERREY, Mexico -- Eric Hosmer and the San Diego Padres enjoyed their visit to Estadio de Beisbol Monterrey.

Hosmer homered for the second straight day, Eric Lauer got his first big league win and the Padres beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 3-0 Sunday to take two of three in the majors' first regular-season games in Mexico since 1999.

"We all realize that this series was going to be special, it's being a long time," Hosmer said.

The series finale drew 21,789, raising the three-day total to 65,116.

Four Los Angeles pitchers combined to no-hit the Padres in Friday night's opener, thrilling local fans who became Dodgers fans in the 1980s when homegrown Fernando Valenzuela became a star. The Padres also had fans cheering for them this weekend.

"They were also rooting for us," Hosmer said.

The Dodgers finished a 4-7 road trip. They also put Clayton Kershaw on the disabled list before the game with left biceps tendinitis, and the defending NL champions said their ace had returned to Los Angeles to be examined.

Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said it had been a rough week-plus.

"Unpredictable. Disappointing," he said. "I could come up with some other superlatives, but that's probably it."

Hosmer broke a scoreless tie with a two-run homer in the fifth off Tony Cingrani (0-2), who had relieved Ross Stripling at the start of the inning. Hosmer has five home runs this season, including three in his last five games.

Franchy Cordero added an RBI single in the seventh off Pedro Baez as the last-place Padres improved to 13-22.

Lauer (1-1) pitched six shutout innings, giving up seven hits. He struck out five and walked one. The 22-year-old lefty lost at Colorado in his major league debut on April 24 and did not get a decision when he started six days later at San Francisco.

"I was excited to get my first win," Lauer said. "The best thing was to get the win under my belt and hopefully I can continue to build up from this."

Craig Stammen, Kirby Yates and Brad Hand followed, with Hand striking out three straight batters for his ninth save in 11 chances.

Los Angeles stranded 13 runners and went 0 for 9 with runners in scoring position.

KEMP

Matt Kemp had two hits and is 11 for 22 with three homers and nine RBI against the Padres this season.

NO LUCK AT HOME

Padres rookie Christian Villanueva, hoping to become the first Mexican to hit a major league home run in his country, was 0 for 12 with a walk in the series. San Diego manager Andy Green said Villanueva was trying to do too much to please the crowd.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Dodgers: RF Yasiel Puig (ankle) will start a rehabilitation assignment with Class A Rancho Cucamonga on Monday or Tuesday and will be ready to return to the Dodgers on Wednesday, Roberts said. ... 2B Logan Forsythe (shoulder) is expected to begin his rehabilitation with Triple-A Oklahoma City.

UP NEXT

Dodgers: LHP Rich Hill (1-1, 6.00), who has not pitched since April 14 because of inflammation of the middle finger in his pitching hand, is expected to be activated from the DL to start at home Tuesday against Arizona.

Padres: RHP Tyson Ross (2-2, 3.28) starts Monday's series opener at home against Washington.

Nationals hope to win Strasburg's homecoming to San Diego

Stats, FOX Sports

The Padres return to Petco Park Monday night fresh from winning two straight from the Dodgers to win the Mexico Series in Monterrey.

But that is not the homecoming that is drawing the most attention from Padres fans.

Stephen Strasburg will be making a rare Petco Park appearance Monday night in the first of three games between the Padres and Nationals.

Strasburg is still quite the celebrity in San Diego. A native San Diegan, Strasburg went from West Hills High in the suburb of Santee to San Diego State where he pitched three seasons for the late Tony Gwynn, who was the Aztecs coach.

In 2009, Strasburg went 13-1 for the Aztecs with a 1.32 earned run average. He was named the National Pitcher of the Year before being the first overall pick by the Nationals in the 2009 draft. A year later, Strasburg was in the major leagues and the 6-foot-4 right-hander remains a favorite of San Diego fans.

But Monday night will mark only Strasburg's fourth start in his hometown.

Injuries and rotation schedule have prevented Strasburg from pitching at Petco Park for most of Washington's annual visits to San Diego.

In his three previous starts at Petco Park, Strasburg is 2-1 with a 2.84 earned run average, yielding seven runs (six earned) on 12 hits and five walks with 19 strikeouts in 19 innings. The Padres have hit a robust .176 against Strasburg at Petco Park.

Overall, Strasburg has made eight starts against the Padres, going 6-2 with a 2.94 ERA. He has given up 17 runs (16 earned) on 38 hits and 13 walks with 66 strikeouts in 49 innings.

Strasburg is 3-3 this season with a 3.47 ERA in seven starts, a slow start since both 2016 and 2017 produced career-best 15-4 seasons with last year's 2.52 ERA also being his best mark for a full season. He struck out 11 Pirates in his most recent outing, picking up his first win in nearly a month.

Strasburg will be taking the mound as the Nationals attempt to get their eighth win in nine games. The Nationals took two of three from the Philadelphia Phillies and concluded the series with Sunday's 5-4 win when Max Scherzer struck out 15 in 6 1/3 innings and Wilmer Difo hit the game-winning single in the ninth.

"The team feels energized, they feel great," Difo said through a translator. "When you win like we did today, it just gives you more motivation to keep battling."

The Padres will counter Monday night with right-hander Tyson Ross, who is 2-2 with a 3.28 ERA in six starts. In his last start at San Francisco, Ross allowed one run on four hits and three walks with nine strikeouts over six innings.

Ross is 1-1 over his last four starts, allowing seven runs (six earned) on 18 hits and 10 walks with 31 strikeouts in 23 innings for a 2.35 ERA. On April 20, Ross pitched a no-hitter for 7 2/3 innings before the bid for the first no-hitter in Padres history ended on his 127th pitch.

Ross, 31, is known to have one of the best sliders in the National League. And he throws one of the highest percentage (46.5 percent) of sliders in the major leagues.

Ross is 2-1 with a 4.76 ERA in six appearances (three starts) against the Nationals. He has given up 15 runs (12 earned) on 21 hits and 11 walks with 25 strikeouts in 22 2/3 innings. Ross is at his best at Petco Park, where he is 14-17 with a 2.78 in 49 appearances (40 starts).

San Diego is attempting to win three straight for the second time this season. After being no-hit Friday, the Padres wrapped up their series with a 3-0 win on Sunday.

Eric Hosmer homered for the third time in the last five games while Eric Lauer pitched six strong innings.

"We realized this series was going to be special," Hosmer told reporters. "We wanted to come here and put on a good show for them. I'm happy we were on top."

Andy's Address, 5/6

Andy Addresses Lauer, Galvis, Margot, Saturday's bullpen

By Bill Center

Before Sunday's rubber match with the Dodgers in Monterrey, Mexico, Padres manager discussed a number of topics in his third international media session.

He started by discussing Sunday's starting pitcher Eric Lauer and how the slider is an element of his arsenal going into his third Major League start.

"The slider became much more effective for him in his second start than it was in the first game," said Andy Green. "I thought when A.J. (Ellis) came in, and he's catching Eric today, they had a nice mix and rhythm together and A.J. recognized where that pitch would be effective and called it. I think Eric experienced some success and knows it's one of the weapons in his arsenal that he needs to go to from time to time to be successful."

"I think the fastball is always going to be the featured pitch in his arsenal. How he gets to it, how he chooses to use it is predicated a lot on the matchups of the hitters. He has the type of pitch mix that he can attack hitters' weaknesses and be successful. Some guys are 'pitch to your strengths regardless' and some guys are going to attack weakness. Eric's the type of guy who is going to attack weakness and I think that four-pitch mix enables that."

Ellis took over in Lauer's last start when Austin Hedges departed early with the elbow tendinitis that landed him on the 10-day disabled list. Green discussed why he went with Ellis behind the plate Sunday over the left-handed-hitting Raffy Lopez with the Dodgers making a late change and starting right-hander Ross Stripling over left-hander Rich Hill.

"When you look at the catcher position and what Raffy is used to from a work-load perspective, you have to take that into account," said Green. "Obviously, we'd love to have Raffy's bat in there today especially when the Dodgers switch from the lefty to the righty. We have two righties the next two days plus a velocity righty in Stephen Strasburg the next day and also you've got a guy on the mound with strong reverse splits for the Dodgers. So a lot of things lineup-wise went into why A.J. today over Raffy."

When the Padres promoted shortstop Javy Guerra from Triple-A El Paso as the allowed 26th man for the Mexico trip, the thought was that Freddy Galvis might get his first game off over the weekend. But Galvis started all three games.

"We obviously talked about using Javy in a start to get Freddy off his feet," said Green. "The timing of this event with a day off before arriving and pretty much every Thursday off for three or four straight weeks, this isn't necessarily the time when he's most taxed. So we

chose to go with him again today. Freddy's games played is one of my least concerns right now."

With Lauer being a fly ball pitcher, Green said that was a factor in starting his three speedster outfield of Manuel Margot flanked by Franchy Cordero and Travis Jankowski.

"Lauer is probably a factor in the equation, but not the over-riding factor," said Green. "A lot of things line up as to why that outfield is out there today. Whenever you can do that for a guys who has balls hit in the air consistently, it's a huge plus and definitely a piece of the pie."

"I like their ability to cover the ground out there. That is huge in this setting. The other part of it is you have a righty on the mound Stripling who has had strong reverse splits. He has a legit four-pitch mix to lefties and much more relying on a two-pitch mix to righties. Margot's had success against him, albeit a limited sample. But righties in general have had as much if not more success against Stripling. So you're trying to get some righties out there. The choice between Jankowski and (Carlos) Asuaje is really what it comes down to and where you want the defensive advantage to be."

After Saturday's game, reliever Craig Stammen said it had something of a "game seven" feel to it the way the bullpen worked 6 2/3 innings in the win.

"You can't treat every game like game seven," said Green. "There were a whole bunch of things lined up. I liked the way we were taking our at-bats which gives me optimism about our ability to score runs. That factors into the equation. You look at how fresh your bullpen is. Can we make it through the day without going to Jordan Lyles because we need someone for coverage the next day. We rolled the dice and bet on those guys in the bullpen and they did a great job yesterday. And Craig was at the top of the list of great jobs. Those were two tough innings he covered with probably less than ideal matchups for him. But he doesn't scare very easily and he goes out and executes his pitches."

Green concluded by saying don't put too much into saying Christian Villanueva shouldn't be trying to do too much during his trip to his native land.

"That was probably a casual conversation around the cage," said Green. "That's not a called into the manager's office for a sit down to talk about it That's just a enjoy this, it's a great experience that you'll remember for the rest of your life. You don't have to do anything special here, you just have to go play baseball. And that's going to end up being special enough because you are talented there's not much more to the conversation than that."

This Day in Padres History—May 7

By Bill Center

May 7, 1970—First baseman Nate Colbert hits his eighth and ninth homers of the season in the Padres 8–2 win at Philadelphia.

May 7, 1973—Right-hander Bill Greif allows two hits with five strikeouts in a complete-game two-hitter as the Padres defeat the Cubs 4–1 at San Diego Stadium.

May 7, 2003—Mark Loretta sets a franchise record for second basemen with 13 assists in a 10-inning, 12–9 Padres loss at Montreal.

May 7, 2006—Shortstop Khalil Greene goes 4-for-4 with two doubles and four RBIs as the Padres defeat the Cubs 6–3 for their eighth straight win at Petco Park.

May 7, 2010—Mat Latos and Ryan Webb combine on a three-hit shutout as the Padres defeat the Astros 7–0 in Houston. Latos gives up two hits with no walks and nine strikeouts in eight innings.