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**Twins' lively offense halts Halos' winning streak**

**Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | June 10, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- Before Sunday's game, manager Paul Molitor said he is trying to "be creative without being foolish" when it comes to filling out his lineup card each day.

With the Twins hindered by a handful of injuries to everyday players, Molitor unveiled one of his most creative batting orders of the season on Sunday, and it paid major dividends. The Twins topped the Angels, 7-5, at Target Field to salvage a win after scoring just three runs in the first two games of the series.

"It feels good," Molitor said. "[Wins] have been hard to come by. As much as we've had a winning homestand, it kind of feels like a roller coaster. When you lose, it's been tough because the games have felt winnable. That's kind of been the theme. All of our losses feel like, 'Man, just so close and not finding ways.'"

In his second game back from Triple-A Rochester, Jake Cave went 3-for-4 and launched a 418-foot, two-run homer in the fifth inning. With Brian Dozier out of the lineup for a rest day, Eduardo Escobar made his first start at second base since August and Robbie Grossman batted leadoff for the third time this season.

The unconventional combination produced seven runs in the first six innings and helped alleviate some early struggles from Twins starter Fernando Romero.

Romero walked the Angels' first batter of the game, Ian Kinsler, on five pitches, and the outing nearly snowballed from there. He threw a wild pitch to Mike Trout and then Mitch Garver let another pitch by, allowing Kinsler to advance to third. Romero then intentionally walked Justin Upton after he ran him up to a 3-0 count, and Albert Pujols followed with an RBI single to center field.

In the fourth inning, Romero put on four of the first five batters he faced and had already surrendered two runs with the Angels' 2-3-4 hitters due up, but he worked his way out of the jam.

"I think he had Trout and Pujols coming up in the situation, where it could have turned into a big inning," Molitor said. "He did a nice job there. I was trying to give him an opportunity the best I could and it worked out today. It might not in the future, but sometimes you've got to give an opportunity to a guy to get out of his own mess."

In five innings, Romero struck out five, but threw two wild pitches, walked two batters and hit two more. Minnesota's offense came to his rescue immediately and didn't let up the rest of the afternoon.

Logan Morrison blasted a two-run homer in the bottom of the first to give the Twins the lead back. In the fifth inning, Garver doubled to right and Cave followed with a single to drive him home. Ehire Adrianza then drilled a triple to the right-field corner and later scored when Escobar smacked his 25th double of the season.

After drawing a walk in the sixth, Max Kepler stole his first base of the season. He didn't stay put long. Two batters later, Cave deposited Jim Johnson's 3-2 fastball into the Minnesota bullpen.

"It definitely made my job easier when I was coming up to bat with guys on second base or guys just drew walks," Cave said. "I could stand on deck and time up some pitches and that kind of thing. That's where hitters help each other out and where stuff gets kind of contagious."

A Minnesota bullpen quartet of Taylor Rogers, Addison Reed, Zach Duke and Fernando Rodney each threw an inning to finish off the last half of the game. Rodney allowed the first two runners he faced to reach base in the ninth, and later gave up a two-run single to Pujols. Rodney then walked Luis Valbuena to bring the go-ahead run to the plate. But he forced Zack Cozart to pop out and end the game.

The Twins are 26-13 this season in games in which they score four or more runs. They are 14-11 in games in which they score first.

#### HE SAID IT

"I didn't know, I just knew I hit it well. I put my head down and, obviously, I know who's out there in center field. I saw him kind of jump and I didn't see the ball, but I heard the crowd start cheering, so I was like, 'Oh, I think that ball got by him.' So that was cool. I know I'm probably not allowed to say this, but he's probably my favorite player. So to be able to hit some balls out there to him today and to be on the same field as him, it was an honor, really." -- Cave, on his eighth-inning double over the head of a leaping Trout

#### UP NEXT

The Twins will get a day off on Monday before traveling to Detroit for a three-game set with the Tigers. Jake Odorizzi will get the start for Minnesota in search of his fourth win of the season. He will square off with Detroit lefty Blaine Hardy (2-1, 3.66 ERA).

#### **Mauer to begin Triple-A rehab assignment**

**Jarrid Denney | MLB.com | June 10, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- Joe Mauer will begin a rehab assignment with Triple-A Rochester, Paul Molitor said after Sunday's 7-3 win over the Angels at Target Field.

"He is going to meet up with [Rochester] tomorrow," Molitor said. "Try to get him in games on Tuesday and Wednesday."

The Twins will monitor the progress of Mauer and while they are optimistic he could return to the Major League level soon, they also do not want to rush him back and risk triggering the concussion-like symptoms that have hindered him for the past three weeks.

"I'm hopeful," Molitor said. "We haven't checked all the boxes. One of them is including playing a nine-inning game. Probably DH the first game and see if we can get him out there the next day."

Mauer, who is working his way back from a cervical neck strain, took batting practice, fielded ground balls at first and ran the bases during a half-hour workout before Sunday's game.

Byron Buxton, who is recovering from a fractured toe, also ran the bases.

Buxton, now on his second stint on the DL this season, has been down since May 30 as he tries to mend the big toe on his left foot. That injury occurred on April 29 when he fouled a ball off his foot while playing a rehab game in Class A Advanced Fort Myers. He was there on a rehab assignment after battling migraines early in the season.

He ran on a non-weight bearing treadmill and did tee work on Saturday before progressing to his Sunday baserunning workout

"Byron is going to stay with us and continue his work as it's coming along," Molitor said. "Improvement the last couple of days. We're going to take him with us so he can do his work as well as continue advancing his hitting and see how it goes those first couple of days in Detroit."

**Twins beat Angels 7-5 to eke out a 6-5 homestand**  
**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 11, 2018**

Jake Cave faced the media 30 minutes after the Twins beat the Angels 7-5 on Sunday, lathered in perspiration.

No, it wasn't from sweating out Fernando Rodney's ninth inning, during which Rodney gave up two runs. Cave had just returned from a workout at Target Field.

That's how the outfielder celebrated his 3-for-4 performance against Los Angeles, one that included a two-run homer in the sixth inning that turned out to be the difference in the game. There was no postgame afterglow for the 25th man on the roster, just more work to stay in the majors after being called up Saturday for the second time since May 19.

No one likes being in the up-and-down mode — just up for good.

"It's tough, but you can't think about it like that," Cave said. "You just gotta stay mentally tough, and when my name is called, I gotta be ready to go."

After striking out as a pinch-hitter in the ninth inning Saturday, Cave powered a 10-hit attack for the Twins, who had lost four of their previous five games. They finished 6-5 on their homestand.

It doesn't seem like the Twins played winning ball over those 11 games. The offense disappeared in four games, and the Twins scored just three runs against Los Angeles while losing the first two games of the series. Cave and Co. then came to the rescue.

"I threw him in there [Saturday]. It was a tough spot for a young player to pinch-hit with the game on the line," Twins manager Paul Molitor said of Cave. "I think obviously just being familiar with the environment and knowing how it works. He knows the ballpark a little bit better. He's been taking good at-bats [at Rochester]. We know there's some pop in the bat."

With the Twins down 3-2 in the fifth, Cave delivered an RBI single to right on a changeup by Angels righthander Nick Tropeano. Ehire Adrianza followed with a shot down the right field line. When the ball scooted under outfielder's Chris Young's glove and rolled toward the corner, Cave scored the go-ahead run. Adrianza legged out a triple and scored on Eduardo Escobar's double to make it 5-3.

Cave batted again in the sixth with Max Kepler on second and crushed a fastball from reliever Jim Johnson into the bullpen in left-center to give the Twins a 7-3 lead.

"You go [opposite field] today, that was impressive," Molitor said.

Despite Rodney's issues in the ninth, righthander Fernando Romero (3-2) got the win after limiting the Angels to two runs over five innings.

Cave, 25, joined the Twins on March 16 when they sent minor league pitcher Luis Gil to the Yankees, who had designated Cave for assignment. He made his debut May 19, homering in his second at-bat.

He returned to Rochester a few days later but was called back up Saturday, and can thank Twins starting pitchers for that. They have posted a 3.92 ERA since May 12, making Molitor comfortable with 12 pitchers and an extra position player. Molitor indicated that he plans to go with a four-man bench as long as he can.

That gives Cave a chance to show he belongs. So far, he hasn't been overwhelmed by bigger stadiums and brighter lights.

"I can't control what the other pitcher is gonna throw at me," he said. "Can't control what happens after I hit the ball. All I can control is if I play hard and I compete. I think if you do that consistently you have some success, and I think that's what the great players have done."

**Joe Mauer to Rochester for rehab stint; top prospect Royce Lewis injures leg**  
**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 10, 2018**

Some interesting post game tidbits following the Twins' 7-5 victory over the Angels:

Joe Mauer could return to the Twins lineup by the end of the week.

Twins first baseman Joe Mauer on Monday will join Class AAA Rochester to begin a minor league rehabilitation assignment after having a stretch of workout days without any concussion symptoms.

Mauer will meet Rochester to play Tuesday and Wednesday during a series against Scranton-Wilkes Barre. Twins manager Paul Molitor said Mauer will be the designated hitter on Tuesday then play first base on Wednesday. If he gets through those games with no setbacks, Molitor indicated he would be ready to activate Mauer shortly thereafter.

"I'm hopeful," Molitor said. "We haven't checked all the boxes. One of them is including playing a nine inning game. Probably DH the first game and see if we can get him out there the next day."

Mauer, batting .283 with a home run 11 RBI and .404 on base percentage, has missed 22 games since landing on the DL because of a cervical strain. It was after that when Mauer began dealing with concussion symptoms. Recovering from those has taken longer than anticipated.

I wouldn't start inserting Mauer into fantasy lineups just yet. We all know he needs a few days longer to recover from injuries, and a concussion is nothing to take lightly. Let's see how he gets through the two games.

Royce Lewis injured his leg on Sunday

Royce Lewis, a shortstop at Class A Cedar Rapids and the Twins top prospect, left Sunday's game at Wisconsin after he was injured on the basepaths.

Lewis, the designated hitter on Sunday, flied out to left field in the first inning but took an awkward step while running to first base. Lewis was pulled from the game as a precaution and will be re-evaluated on Monday.

Wisconsin won the game 5-1. Lewis is batting .288 with 5 home runs and 32 RBI for the Kernels but is in a 7-for-40 slump.

I was unable to receive any more details. Not sure which leg it is, what type of exam he was put through. But, of course, it's concerning when someone takes an awkward step.

Hopefully, the only time Cap Anson makes this blog

Angels designated hitter Albert Pujols went 2-for-4 with 3 RBI on Sunday. He now has 1,954 career RBI, the sixth most all-time.

Or seventh.

BaseballReference.com lists Pujols seventh because it recognizes the 195 RBI the Cap Anson had in five seasons while playing in the National Association before the National League began play in 1876. That gives Anson 2075 career RBI. If you don't count the National Association, then Pujols is sixth and Anson falls to 12th.

Leave it to someone who played for the Cubs 140 years ago to create confusion about a stat.

### **Twins are being shortchanged in criticism, when compared with Wolves** **Patrick Reusse | Star Tribune | June 10, 2018**

The Twins completed the longest homestand of the season, 11 games, on Sunday, and went 6-5 against Cleveland (3-1), the White Sox (2-2) and the Angels (1-2). This put them at 28-34 and, for non-mathematicians, that leaves Paul Molitor's club with 100 games to rescue a season that largely has been excitement-free.

Considering the magnitude of this 10 ½-week failure, I've been surprised at the modest amount of angst directed at the Twins from the local sporting public. Indifference seems to be far more in vogue than vitriol.

Part of that can be traced to baseball's ongoing decline with the population in general. For sure, the craft beer-and-food truck crowd finds baseball to be the Sad Old Game, and those consumers are lost forever (or the next World Series in Minnesota, which might be the same thing).

They are not alone. I hear "baseball is boring" much more than I hear "the Twins are lousy" when out amongst 'em.

I've found this to be quite a contrast to the recent Timberwolves season, where large numbers of fans – meaning, those with a general interest in Minnesota sports – would inform me of their complaints over our NBA team.

It was neck-and-neck as to whether they were more unhappy with coach Tom Thibodeau or the young, faded star, Andrew Wiggins, but they were unhappy to be sure.

The Timberwolves improved by 16 wins, to 47-35, and reached the playoffs for the first time since 2004, and the reaction received in public postings and a fair share of Twin Cities media outlets bordered on the hostile.

Charles Barkley and Chris Webber were also over-the-top in their bashing of Thibodeau and the Wolves. Chuck declared them to be the “dumbest team in basketball,” although I think he offered that label to other units as the NBA playoffs worked their way to the inevitable Warriors’ championship.

The Twins aren’t getting much of that, maybe because the NBA is the “in” league with social media wizards and national sports commentators, and baseball is out.

Bottom line: I feel as though the 2018 Twins are being shortchanged in criticism.

First off, if you want to rip Wiggins for failing to come close to a satisfactory level of performance ... well, the Twins have a pair of Wiggins’: Miguel Sano and Byron Buxton.

There was an indication of pending greatness for Sano after his arrival on July 2, 2015 as a rookie. Three seasons later, Sano is mired in futility that threatens to make him the biggest bust in Minnesota’s nearly six decades as an official major league sports market.

We’re talking about biggest in expectations, and not any other area, so keep those jokes to yourselves.

Any such list would not be a competition of high draft choices that flopped for the Twins, Vikings, Timberwolves, etc. This would be players that received a phenomenal buildup, showed ability, and drifted into mediocrity while still young.

Christian Laettner comes to mind; decent numbers, no positive impact on the franchise. Charlie Coyle is threatening to be a different sort of a flop; a hockey player people thought would become extra-good, not great, and is now perceived as on the trade market while in his mid-20s.

It’s a short list – all-time flops – that were greeted with the anticipation of Sano. Miguel isn’t official yet, and he doesn’t have to wind up there, but he’s on the watch list ... along with Buxton and Wiggins.

There’s one large difference with Wiggins: He plays. The Timberwolves have played 333 games in his four seasons and he has played 332.

Sano has missed a bunch. So has Buxton, now on the disabled list with his .156 batting average.

Sano has a natural hitting ability that he is not close to tapping because of his wild, overamped swing. If he ever chooses to start staying on a breaking ball and bashing it to right-field gap, there is still hope.

Buxton has a tougher task of being on time with his multi-part swing, and with the game being taken over by the increased velocity from pitchers in general -- a future of solid hitting numbers seems increasingly iffy.

David Schoenfield had a piece on ESPN.com last week under the headline, “10 hyped players who are running out of time to become stars.”

Sano and Buxton were second and third on that list.

For five years, they were going to be the combination – power and speed – to put the excitement back in the Sad Old Game for baseball absentees. Instead, they have become a major reason to continue ignoring the Twins completely.

For audience building, that’s worse than the non-stop complaints aimed at Thibs and Wiggy.

### **Twins-Angels game recap**

**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 10, 2018**

#### GAME RECAP

#### IMPACT PLAYER

Jake Cave, Twins

The outfielder went 3-for-4 with a home run and three RBI.

#### BY THE NUMBERS

39 Extra-base hits for Eduardo Escobar, the most in baseball.

Minnesota Twins second baseman Eduardo Escobar grabs a pop fly by Los Angeles Angels third baseman Jefry Marte in the eighth inning on Sunday, June 10

6-5 The Twins' record during the homestand.

.091 Mike Trout's batting average in seven games against the Twins this season, his lowest against any opponent.

3.92 ERA for Twins starters since May 12.

ON DECK

The Twins will take a scheduled day off Monday, then will open a three-game series at Detroit on Tuesday.

**Paul Molitor says Byron Buxton 'pleased' with comeback from broken toe**  
**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | June 11, 2018**

Byron Buxton's broken left big toe is showing signs of coming around.

The center fielder ran the bases Sunday, evidence that he's feeling less discomfort. He also has been getting some swings in while he patiently waits for the hairline fracture he suffered on April 22 to heal.

"He did some tee and some flip drills yesterday," Molitor said. "I think he was excited to do that. I think he was pleased with how it went. Not a great gauge for us as far as where we are at. We will probably do a little bit more of the same."

The Twins were encouraged enough that Buxton will travel on the upcoming road trip to Detroit and Cleveland so he can continue his workouts under their watchful eyes.

Dozier rests

Second baseman Brian Dozier, who had appeared in all 61 games before Sunday, was given the day off.

"With Brian, I think that he has played in every game in some capacity at this point, so even though you don't like to do it after losing a few games, I think you look for time for him to recharge, so I thought today was a good day," Molitor said.

Dozier was 0-for-8 in the series.

Milestone for Pujols

Angels designated hitter Albert Pujols had three RBI on Sunday, giving him 1,954 for his career, the sixth most all-time.

Or seventh.

Baseball-Reference.com lists Pujols seventh because it recognizes the 195 RBI that Cap Anson had in five seasons while playing in the National Association before the NL began play in 1876. That gives Anson 2,075 RBI. If you don't count the National Association, then Pujols is sixth and Anson falls to 12th.

Mauer could return this week

Joe Mauer could return to the Twins lineup toward the end of the week.

Mauer on Monday will join Class AAA Rochester to begin a minor league rehabilitation assignment after having a stretch of workout days without any concussion symptoms.

Twins manager Paul Molitor said Mauer will be the designated hitter on Tuesday against Scranton-Wilkes Barre and will play first base Wednesday. If he gets through those games with no setbacks, he could be activated shortly thereafter.

"I'm hopeful," Molitor said. "We haven't checked all the boxes. One of them is including playing a nine-inning game. Probably DH the first game

and see if we can get him out there the next day.”

Mauer, batting .283 with a home run 11 RBI and .404 on-base percentage, has missed 22 games since landing on the DL because of a cervical strain. It was after that when he began dealing with concussion symptoms. Recovering from those has taken longer than anticipated.

Lewis injured

Royce Lewis, a shortstop at Class A Cedar Rapids and the Twins’ top prospect, left Sunday’s game at Wisconsin after he was injured on the basepaths.

Lewis, the designated hitter on Sunday, flied out to left field in the first inning but took an awkward step while running to first base. He was pulled from the game as a precaution and will be re-evaluated on Monday.

Lewis is batting .288 with five home runs and 32 RBI for the Kernels.

Etc.

Class AA Chattanooga outfielder Brent Rooker was named Twins minor league player of the week after batting .450 in six games last week.

### **Minnesota makes its mark on Forbes' list of highest-paid athletes**

**Mike Nelson | Star Tribune | June 10, 2018**

Sorry about that. It was supervisor-mandated. But I digress.

Last week Forbes released its list of the highest-paid athletes over the last 12 months. The evaluation included endorsements and salary from the athletes’ respective sports.

And yes, even though Minnesota is a “small market,” it left its mark on the list. Have a look:

New Vikings quarterback Kirk Cousins kicked things off at No. 55 with \$26.9 million in salary and \$1.5 million in endorsements. With his new three-year, \$84 million guaranteed contract from the Vikings, he’s in good shape to elevate his status further come this time next year.

Next up is old friend (too generous?) Kevin Love, who is tied at 60th with Jrue Holiday of the New Orleans Pelicans and Barcelona’s Luis Suarez. The former Timberwolf made \$26.9 million overall, \$22.9 million in salary and \$4 million in endorsements, and his base salary increases to \$25 million and change next year. It’s a raise he’ll especially want and need if he’s left in Cleveland without LeBron James this offseason.

Another former Minnesota athlete finds himself at No. 86: Sam Bradford. The ex-Vikings QB accumulated \$24.3 million overall, with \$24.1 million in salary and \$250,000 in endorsements. He just got \$20 million from the Arizona Cardinals in the offseason, so his status for next year on this list is in OK shape (the No. 100 athlete made \$22.9 million total).

Last but not least is Joe Mauer: The Twins first baseman landed in a tie for 86th at \$23.5 million with tennis star Novak Djokovic, Man City’s Sergio Aguero, Philadelphia 76ers sharpshooter J.J. Redick and Oklahoma City Thunder big man Steven Adams.

Mauer’s eight-year, \$184 million contract is up at the end of this season and if the 35-year-old chooses to continue playing, his next contract will take a bit of a haircut. His \$500,000 in endorsements won’t keep him on the next Forbes list.

Want to know more? Check out the whole list here.

### **Triple-A call-up Jake Cave homers as Twins beat Angels**

**Brian Hall | Pioneer Press | June 10, 2018**

Twins rookie outfielder Jake Cave knew rehabbing first baseman Joe Mauer would need a break during batting practice before Sunday’s game against the Angels. That was Cave’s opening.

Cave volunteered to take a few extra swings as Mauer took his time in the cage. The move paid off in a big way.

Making his first start since being recalled from Triple-A a day earlier, Cave had three hits, including a two-run home, and three runs batted in as the Twins held on to beat Los Angeles 7-5 at Target Field.

“I just knew I was in there today, and I had a travel day yesterday, didn’t get any BP or anything like that,” Cave said. “And Mauer needed some

breathers when he was swinging, so I was like, yeah, please, I'd love to do that ... Plus to hit with Joe Mauer, it would be pretty awesome."

Twins starter Fernando Romero (3-2) struggled with his command but went five innings and allowed three runs on five hits and two walks. He hit two batters and threw two wild pitches. Closer Fernando Rodney entered in the ninth in a non-save situation with a four-run lead. He gave up two runs on two hits but got Zack Cozart to pop out to end the game as the Twins finished out a 6-5 homestand.

"It feels good," manager Paul Molitor said. "They've been hard to come by. As much as we've had a winning homestand, it kind of feels like a roller coaster. When you lose, it's been tough because the games have felt winnable. That's kind of been the theme. All of our losses feel like, 'Man, just so close and not finding ways.' "

Cave singled in the fifth to tie the score as Minnesota put together four straight hits to take the lead. Cave hit a long, two-run homer to the bullpens in center field in the sixth and lined a double over the head of Mike Trout in center in the eighth.

"I put my head down, and obviously I know who's out there in center field," Cave said. "I saw him kind of jump and I didn't see the ball, but I heard the crowd start cheering, so I was like, 'Oh, I think that ball got by him.' So that was cool.

"I know I'm probably not allowed to say this, but he's probably my favorite player. So to be able to hit some balls out there to him today and to be on the same field as him, it was an honor, really."

Cave homered in his first major league game May 19 but didn't have another hit over nine at-bats in three games before being sent back to Triple-A Rochester. He hit .315 with four home runs and eight RBIs in 15 games for Rochester between his stints in the majors.

"I feel really comfortable, and I was really trying to transition it over up here, continue with my approach and my work early in the day, and just kind of whatever happens, happens," Cave said.

Regular center fielder Byron Buxton is traveling with the Twins as they depart for a road trip beginning with three games in Detroit, and Buxton could be nearing a return from a broken toe in his left foot after a good day running before the game. In the meantime, Cave is likely to see time in center field against right-handed pitching.

"He's been taking good at-bats down there (Rochester)," Molitor said. "We know there's some pop in the bat. You go oppo (opposite-field) today, that was impressive."

### **Twins to send Joe Mauer on Triple-A rehab assignment**

**Brian Hall | Pioneer Press | June 10, 2018**

After having another good day of workouts Sunday, Twins first baseman Joe Mauer will head to Triple-A for a rehab assignment as he works his way back from a neck strain and concussion-like symptoms.

Mauer, who last played in the minors in four rehab games in 2014, will join the Rochester Red Wings, who start a series at Scranton, Pa., on Monday. The plan is for Mauer to be the designated hitter Tuesday and play the field Wednesday.

If all goes well, Mauer could be activated and join Minnesota for the road trip, which begins with three games in Detroit on Tuesday.

"I'm hopeful," manager Paul Molitor said of the possibility of Mauer's rehab stint lasting just two games. "We haven't checked all the boxes. One of them is including playing a nine-inning game. Probably DH the first game and see if we can get him out there the next day."

Mauer, who has been out since May 18, had another round of running, fielding grounders and taking batting practice before the Twins' 7-5 win over the Los Angeles Angels on Sunday at Target Field. He hurt his neck diving for a ball on May 11 and played for the next few games but ended up complaining of balance issues and sensitivity to light. Mauer's recovery has been slow, and the Twins have been cautious.

"That's why it has been three weeks, because things have cropped up," Molitor said. "We have had to make sure we are paying attention to those things when they do. Trying to figure out what might be triggering them and what we can do better to prevent it going forward. Sometimes it is just time."

Mauer is batting .283 with one home run and 11 runs batted in in 38 games this season.

### **BUXTON RUNS**

Mauer had company in taking simulated swings at the plate and running to first base. Byron Buxton, on the disabled list with a fractured toe, ran before the game and was running with good speed in the outfield.



Buxton, who's been out since May 29, hit off a tee and did some hitting during flip drills Saturday. Molitor said Buxton will travel with the team to Detroit.

"Byron is going to stay with us and continue his work as it's coming along," Molitor said. "Improvement the last couple of days. We're going to take him with us so he can do his work as well as continue advancing his hitting and see how it goes those first couple of days in Detroit."

## DOZIER DAY OFF

Brian Dozier was out of the starting lineup, with Eduardo Escobar playing second base for the first time this season.

Dozier had played in every game this season and started all but two. He's hitting .239 with nine home runs and 26 RBIs.

"Even though you don't like to do it after losing a few games, I think you look for time for him to recharge, so I thought today was a good day," Molitor said.

Part of the challenge for Molitor has been moving Escobar because of the latter's success. Escobar started the season at shortstop with Jorge Polanco suspended before moving to third base when Miguel Sano was injured. Escobar had last played second base on Aug. 2 last season.

"As well as he has played, it is challenging for me that I do have to move him around positionally from time to time," Molitor said. "He kind of likes it, but he is earning a spot in the lineup every day. I don't want to move him around too much. He is doing a really nice job at third base."

## **Wetmore's 5 thoughts: How the Twins contained Mike Trout, avoided an Angels sweep**

**Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | June 10, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS — Fernando Romero and lady luck had a hand in the Minnesota Twins' successful effort to contain superstar Mike Trout on Sunday. Trout's 0-for-5 was an unusual sight for baseball fans, and it happened to come at a very good time for the Twins.

This column presents 5 thoughts on the Twins' 7-5 win Sunday.

1. The Twins held Mike Trout to an 0-for-5, which you don't see too often.

In the season series against the Angels, the Twins have held the world's best baseball player to 2-for-22. Fernando Romero struck out Trout twice Sunday, including an 11-pitch battle in the 4th inning that could have been the biggest out of the afternoon for Minnesota. After the count reached 2-2, five of his next six pitches the rookie Romero delivered were fastballs, including a 96 mph heater at the belt blown by Trout to put him away.

"Primarily fastballs, he fouled off some good ones," Twins manager Paul Molitor said of the Trout-Romero battle. "That might have been the peak of his velocity for the day, because he was kind of rearing back and challenging him, and [Romero] finally got one by him. It's nice to see that he didn't really feel like he had to trick him.

"Got ahead [in the count] ... and then the foul balls began before he finally got him to swing under one of those higher velocity fastballs," Molitor said.

The Angels had scored 2 runs that inning and had 2 more runners on base with only one out. It wouldn't be too hard to picture bad things happening in that spot for the Twins. Romero stood up and made sure that nothing bad did happen, which kept the 1-run game within reach.

Trout also struck out in the 1st inning and hit a scorching line drive into the glove of shifted first baseman Logan Morrison. He later flew out and grounded out into another shift to complete the 0-for-5. It's the first time Trout had 5 plate appearances without reaching base since opening day, March 29, against the A's in Oakland.

2. Eduardo Escobar had two more doubles.

The other day Escobar hit a single and a triple in his first two plate appearances. I'd joked at the time that we already were on "Cycle Watch" at that point, even though Escobar still needed two extra-base hits to get there. What's a couple knocks to Eduardo Escobar?

These days it doesn't seem like much. Sunday he was playing second base to give Brian Dozier a day off — and he's hit so well this year that Molitor actually said he felt bad that he had to move Escobar off his typical position at third base. This about a guy who came up as a utility infielder, about whom the word was that he could move around the diamond, but might not hit much and hardly had any power.

Well, now he's hitting .286/.340/.558 and his 39 extra-base hits are one behind Cleveland's star Jose Ramirez for the most in baseball. He's helping Eddie Rosario to carry the Twins. And Escobar has folks around Minnesota wondering: When would be the best time to offer a contract

extension?

3. Logan Morrison homered to put the Twins up early.

Fernando Romero seemed to have shaky control in the 1st inning and the Angels took a 1-0 lead looking to lock up a sweep. But Morrison unleashed a mighty swing and put a ball in the seats to jump back in front 2-1.

After Joey Gallo bunted for a base hit against an extreme shift the other day, I'm pretty curious to see if there will be a ripple effect around the league. Morrison — a lefty with pull power — gets shifted on about two-thirds of the pitches that he sees, so he's the guy I'm most curious about with the Twins. I talked to Morrison about that topic recently and I'm working on a column. Should Morrison square around to bunt more often? It's complicated, but I think it's worth noting that his 1st-inning homer is one argument against the idea of bunting all the time.

4. One hit-and-run attempt didn't work but it might have changed the game.

Max Kepler drew a leadoff walk in the 5th inning off Angels starter Nick Tropeano. He had retired 10 Twins hitters in a row between Morrison's homer and Kepler's walk. With a 2-1 count and Tropeano pitching out of the stretch, he threw to first base three times in a row to look at Kepler. Then Molitor called a hit-and-run, and Garver swung over the top of the pitch, and Kepler was thrown out at second base.

After that base runner was erased, Garver doubled, Jake Cave hit an RBI single, Ehire Adrianza hit a ball in the right-field corner that was misplayed and allowed another Twins run to score. Escobar drove in the final run of the inning with an RBI double. (Kepler later stole his first bag of the season and scored on Cave's home run.)

On one hand, it would have been nice to have Kepler's run still out there on the bases if you're the Twins. On the other, maybe there's something to be said for disrupting Tropeano's rhythm and shaking things up against a cruising Angels team. That's a time-tested baseball trope, I know, but it's just how it felt to me during Sunday's 5th inning.

In any case, the bottom of the order deserves props for the rally that eventually won the game for the Twins.

5. Catcher Mitch Garver chipped in offensively but...

I still feel like Garver leaves something to be desired behind the plate. What's with all the passed balls and wild pitches? Some of it has to be on Twins' pitchers, to be sure. But I don't think it would be asking too much if the Twins challenged Garver to be better in that area of the game.

Ian Kinsler walked to lead off the game. He took second base on a wild pitch, and later he took third base on a passed ball. Generally speaking, a wild pitch takes two people to pull off, while a passed ball can take just one. Two more Angels runners moved up on a "wild pitch" in the 2nd inning, but Romero and the Twins stranded them there.

Garver now has 4 passed balls and has had a hand in 14 wild pitches for the season in a little more than 250 innings as a catcher. That's not quite as bad as Gary Sanchez or Martin Maldonado. But the numbers look worse than guys like Wilson Ramos and James McCann.

Anyway, the point is to compare catchers head to head in a made-up stat combining wild pitches and passed balls. It's just to say that the Twins should strive to clean things up behind the plate, whether it's Garver or Bobby Wilson or somebody else. Little things can add up over time to real runs and real wins.

### **Joe Mauer ready to begin rehab assignment after about 3 weeks on the DL**

**Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | June 10, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS — Joe Mauer will head east to join the Rochester Red Wings, as the Twins' first baseman begins a rehab assignment at Triple-A.

Twins manager Paul Molitor said that Mauer will DH on Tuesday and play first base Wednesday, if all goes according to plan.

Mauer is working his way back from concussion symptoms, and he's been on the disabled list for about 3 weeks. He ran the bases and took pregame batting practice Sunday, with no apparent setbacks.

Mauer is hitting .283/.404/.355 for the season. Since he left the lineup, Logan Morrison has taken over primarily at first base, with Miguel Sano getting some looks at the position as well.

He dove for a ball in foul territory during the Twins' trip to Anaheim in the middle of May. He played a few more games and then sat out for a couple days before he was placed on the 10-day disabled list officially on May 19, the week after the dive.

Three weeks and a day later, there have been some good health days and some setbacks for Mauer, physically, as the Twins' first baseman progresses toward getting back on the field. Now we'll see how he responds physically after playing a 9-inning game on consecutive days.

### **Twins hold off Angels for 7-5 win**

**Associated Press | Fox Sports North | June 10, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) Minnesota's Jake Cave hit a ball deep into left-center in the eighth inning Sunday.

But one of baseball's best players was closing fast.

Fortunately for the Twins, the ball fell behind Mike Trout and Cave ended up with a double.

Cave had a career-high three hits, including a home run, and the Twins held on to beat the Los Angeles Angels 7-5.

"I saw him kind of jump and I didn't see the ball, but I heard the crowd start cheering, so I was like, 'Oh, I think that ball got by him.' So that was cool," Cave said.

"I know I'm probably not allowed to say this, but he's probably my favorite player. So to be able to hit some balls out there to him today and to be on the same field as him, it was an honor, really."

Cave, who made his major league debut May 19 and was 1-for-10 at the plate entering Sunday – the lone hit cleared the fence – also singled and homered.

Minnesota traded for Cave in March after he was designated for assignment by the Yankees.

"To be able to come up and show that I deserve to be here, it does feel really good," said Cave, who hit 20 home runs between Double-A and Triple-A last year.

Eduardo Escobar doubled twice to take over the major league lead with 26 and the Minnesota bullpen threw 3 2-3 shutout innings before a two-run single by Albert Pujols in the ninth.

Los Angeles had the go-ahead run at the plate against closer Fernando Rodney in a non-save situation, but Zack Cozart popped out.

"He's been pretty clean, but that one kind of had us a little anxious," Twins manager Paul Molitor said.

Pujols had three RBIs to pass Stan Musial for sixth-most in baseball history with 1,954. Ian Kinsler had three hits for Los Angeles, which lost for the first time in seven games.

Minnesota's Fernando Romero (3-2) had control issues from the outset, but managed to complete five innings to win for the first time in six starts. He allowed five hits and struck out five while throwing 94 pitches. Romero also hit two batters and threw two wild pitches.

Los Angeles starter Nick Tropeano (3-4) struggled for the second consecutive outing, allowing five earned runs in 4 1-3 innings. Tropeano allowed five earned runs in 4 2-3 innings last Monday against Kansas City.

Trailing 3-2 in the fifth, Mitch Garver doubled, Cave had an RBI single and Ehire Adrianza an RBI triple off Tropeano for a 4-3 Twins lead. Escobar had an RBI double two batters later against Cam Bedrosian.

After giving up a two-run home run to Logan Morrison in the first, Tropeano retired 10 straight Twins before the fifth.

"I just didn't execute pitches when I needed to," Tropeano said. "With runners in scoring position you got to make your pitches."

Los Angeles was 3-for-15 with runners in scoring position and left 10 men on base.

### **BOTTOM THREE COME THROUGH**

Garver, Cave and Adrianza were the bottom three hitters in the Twins lineup.

They combined for six of Minnesota's 10 hits.

### **FIRST FOR FERNANDEZ**

Los Angeles' Jose Miguel Fernandez got his first career RBI with a fourth-inning double. Called up from Triple-A Salt Lake before Friday's game, the 30-year-old first-baseman was 4-for-10 in the series.

## TRAINERS ROOM

Angels: C Martin Maldonado, who fouled a ball off his foot Friday, was back behind the plate. He was hit by a pitch in the second inning.

Twins: Brian Dozier got a day off with Escobar starting at 2B. ... CF Byron Buxton (broken left big toe) and 1B Joe Mauer (neck/concussion) did some pregame base-running Sunday. Mauer also took batting practice and did some fielding. After the game, the team announced Mauer will begin a rehab assignment Tuesday at Triple-A Rochester.

## UP NEXT

Angels: Open a three-game series Monday in Seattle with LHP Andrew Heaney (3-4, 3.12) scheduled to start against Mariners LHP Wade LeBlanc (1-0, 2.94).

Twins: RHP Jake Odorizzi (3-3, 4.24) is scheduled to get the ball Tuesday in Detroit to begin a six-game road trip. LHP Blaine Hardy (2-1, 3.66) is the scheduled Tigers starter.

### **Twins' Mauer headed to Triple-A Rochester for rehab assignment** **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | June 10, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS — The Minnesota Twins have sent first baseman Joe Mauer to Triple-A Rochester for a rehab assignment as he works his way back from a cervical neck strain and concussion-like symptoms.

Twins manager Paul Molitor said Mauer is expected to be the designated hitter Tuesday before seeing action at first base. If all goes well in the two games, Mauer could rejoin the Twins at some point in a six-game road trip that starts Tuesday in Detroit.

Out since leaving during a game on May 18, Mauer is hitting .283 with a .404 on-base percentage in 38 games with the Twins this season. He got his 2,000th career hit on April 13.

The injury occurred May 11 when the 35-year-old Mauer dove for a foul ball. He played a few more games while receiving treatment.

Mauer is in the final season of an eight-year, \$184 million contract. A six-time All-Star catcher, he moved to first base in 2014 because of previous concussions and concerns of more if he continued catching.

### **Power Rankings: Rivals stake their claims for Astros' throne** **Staff Writers | ESPN | June 11, 2018**

The voting is in, and what figures to be a season-long three-way wrestling match for top honors in our Power Rankings has a new champ. After reclaiming the highest perch for just two weeks, the Astros, defending world champs, have again been pushed down to No. 3 as the Yankees kept mashing and cinched their best record through 60 games (42-18) since 1998, when they won their first of three consecutive World Series titles. The Red Sox held steady in the No. 2 slot, ready to take their shot at reclaiming the lead in the American League East -- and the rankings.

But just as the Astros might have lost a few strides on the rest of the AL's top tier, they're threatened by the Mariners for dominance in their own division. Seattle made the biggest move within this week's top 10, moving up three rungs to No. 6 while also displacing the Astros by percentage points in the AL West. That wasn't the only significant change in the top 10, as the Angels made their return while the Cardinals slipped out of MLB's top third with a two-slot decline.

The biggest gain of the week, however, was made by the Giants. Call it the MadBum effect, but now that the Giants have one more good starting pitcher than they had before while bouncing around .500, their six-rung improvement could be a sign of things to come. They weren't the only National League West team to advance, as the Dodgers and D-backs both made gains as well. The biggest declines were from the reliably inconsistent Rays and Mets, who dropped five and four slots, respectively, in their latest decline during their season-long roller-coaster ride around the standings.

This week, our panel of voters is composed of David Schoenfield, Eric Karabell, Tim Kurkjian, Bradford Doolittle and Sarah Langs.

19. Minnesota Twins  
Record: 28-34

Week 9 ranking: 19

While the Twins are still struggling to put things together as a team and regain last season's status as contenders, at least Eddie Rosario and Eduardo Escobar are providing some good news. Both continue to be among the MLB's biggest surprises, and both are top-20 performers with OPS marks north of .900. -- Woolums

**Jake Cave, Ryan LaMarre and living on the line between Triple A and the bigs**  
**Nick Kelly | The Athletic | June 11, 2018**

The only way Jake Cave's major-league debut, back on May 19, could have gone better is if he hit a home run in his first at-bat, not the second.

Still, there was no lack of celebration for Cave and all of his family members who had scampered to get to Minnesota from the East Coast on about 12 hours' notice.

His dad called it the stuff you dream about in backyards. His mom described it as a dream come true.

"It's one of those things where you never think it could happen," Bryan Cave told The Athletic that day. "I am just grateful that he's here."

But Jake didn't have long to be grateful. The movie-like start turned out to be nothing more than a short film.

Two games and five days later, the sixth-year pro reported back to Triple-A Rochester.

As Cave found out, there's a difference between making a big-league appearance and sticking as a big-league player. It's a distinction many have to experience, but it doesn't make it any easier for young men trying to balance professional baseball careers with young families.

It's why he makes sure to not take any minute of his time in the Minnesota clubhouse for granted, sipping black coffee out of a white Styrofoam cup as he reclined in his locker chair hours before he would play in center field for the Twins in a 7-5 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Sunday in his second taste of the majors.

"It's a frustrating game," Cave said. "You bounce back and forth, you have your ups and downs, but it is just part of it. You have to be mentally tough and fight through it. There's no way to sugarcoat it."

The call Cave received to make his major-league debut was not much different from the call to send him back to Rochester. The Twins phoned late at night and told him to hop on a plane that they booked for him the next morning. Cave just had to show up in the early hours of the morning ready to play baseball once he arrived.

The difference, Cave said, is that he knows what he will be doing in Rochester. In Minnesota, he doesn't find out if he will even play until he gets to the clubhouse.

"I am just learning that it's different roles," Cave said. "Up here, we have four to five outfielders and there are going to be switches made toward the end of the game. That stuff doesn't really happen in Triple A."

In case he forgot that in his first stint with the Twins, Cave learned that quickly in his second. The Twins sent Cave into the game to pinch-hit in the bottom of the ninth of Saturday's 2-1 loss. He struck out to end the game.

Then on Sunday, Minnesota asked him to start in center field. Batting eighth, Cave went 3-for-4, which included a double and a 418-foot, two-run home run in the sixth.

"I feel really comfortable, and I was really trying to transition it over up here, continue with my approach and my work early in the day, and just kinda whatever happens, happens," Cave said afterward.

Anyone who saw Cave's production in Rochester at the plate should not be surprised by the home run. He hit three in 15 games after returning to Rochester on May 25.

"He seems to have the makeup for a guy who's hungry to find his way to become a big-league player," Twins manager Paul Molitor said Saturday. "I was happy to see that he went down there and responded, but not surprised by it."

Molitor said he and the Twins pay attention to not only how the players are hitting and playing defense but also how they go about their business and carry themselves.

“There is no time for moping or feeling sorry for yourself,” Molitor said.

Easier said than done. Just ask Ryan LaMarre, who has played nine games for Rochester this season.

“Once you have tasted what the game is like up here, how the lights are a little brighter, how the stadiums are obviously nicer, everything’s a little better ... you are disappointed (to go back down),” said LaMarre, who prior to this season with the Twins had played in just 29 big-league games for three teams in an eight-year career.

LaMarre described Triple A as a weird rung on the ladder — everyone knows just how close they are to playing in the big leagues. But it’s not all bad. He knows most of the players and coaches in Rochester and gets to see friends when Minnesota sends him down. That reconciliation, though, takes a back-burner to his focus on production.

“You really have to stay extra focused because if you’re not, you could easily get caught up in, ‘I shouldn’t be here. I should be there. I am playing well, so why haven’t they called me?’” LaMarre said. “It’s an easy trap to fall into.”

And there’s another reason for LaMarre — filling in for the injured Byron Buxton and sporting a .260 average in 33 games so far — to focus on the Twins and not Rochester. Whitney Taney, his wife and former Edina tennis star, lives in Minnesota.

LaMarre, who has spent time with Cincinnati, Boston and Oakland, has been apart from Taney before. It doesn’t make it any easier, though. It was even more difficult to see her when he was moving back and forth between the majors and minors.

It’s why he doesn’t take living in the same state as her for granted.

“It’s a little extra motivation,” he said.

Cave does not have the luxury of living with his girlfriend and his daughter, who will turn one next week. With Cave not having a home base other than his offseason home in Virginia, they live near Philadelphia during the season.

He sees them when he can and when it makes sense. With his daughter’s birthday this upcoming week, Cave hopes to fly them up to Detroit while the Twins face the Tigers.

Otherwise, he has to use FaceTime video chat to see his daughter. Cave said his daughter smiles and tries to say things when she sees him on the screen.

“You just have to navigate it any way you can, really,” Cave said. “But it’s tough. They understand. It’s just part of life.”

There’s no time to be discouraged about the time away. A negative attitude will only hurt a player’s chances.

“I have learned that in life the more positive I can be, I feel like better things tend to happen to you,” LaMarre said. “There’s no point in sulking or being disappointed. You just have to take care of business, keep your head down, keep working and be ready when they need you.”

Mauer update

Joe Mauer will join Rochester on a rehab assignment Monday, Molitor said postgame.

They want to get him game time Tuesday and Wednesday, where he will start at designated hitter and could see time at first base.

“We haven’t checked all the boxes,” Molitor said. “One of them is playing a nine-inning game.”

The 35-year-old Mauer was placed on the 10-day disabled list on May 19 for a cervical strain. He also faced concussion symptoms such as balance issues and sensitivity to light when he was placed on the DL.

### **Bowden: Who’ll be available at the trade deadline — and who may be a stretch—at every position**

**Jim Bowden | The Athletic | June 11, 2018**

As of Sunday, 51 days remained until the trade deadline, with a flurry of trades and player movement expected. The powerhouse teams have just as many needs as the teams contending to reach the postseason.

Some of the game’s best teams have glaring needs. The New York Yankees need another veteran top-of-rotation starting pitcher behind Luis Severino; the Houston Astros need a closer and a left-handed specialist; and the Cleveland Indians need set-up relief help in the worst way. Contending teams need to make trades just to get to October baseball — consider the Phillies and Cardinals, who each need another big bat for the

middle of their lineup — while the Rockies need to improve their lineup depth, and the Braves could use an upgrade in their bullpen.

So let the fun begin. Here is a list of trade targets for contending teams to consider. I've broken them down into two categories: realistic or dream targets. Realistic, of course, means these players will be available for the right return. Dream targets are players not presently on the market — trading for them would take a franchise-changing, lopsided package for their team to even consider such a move.

#### OTHER BULLPEN TARGETS

RHP Ryan Pressly, Minnesota Twins – The Twins will probably still be in the race at the deadline, but they might need to dangle their bullpen depth for a catcher like Wilson Ramos of the Rays.

#### SECOND BASE TARGETS

Brian Dozier, Minnesota Twins – Whether the Twins are in or out of the pennant race, he could finally get dealt to the Dodgers or Nationals. He's on his free-agent year and is not expected to re-sign with the Twins; trading for prospects now would be a better play than a draft pick.