



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Tuesday, August 7, 2018

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Twins blanked by Tribe in series opener

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND -- One of the reasons why Kyle Gibson has taken a major step forward over the last season has been his ability to limit homers.

Gibson had surrendered two homers in a game just one time over his 13 starts, but matched that on Monday in a rare subpar outing against the Indians in a 10-0 loss in the series opener at Progressive Field. Gibson went five innings, allowing six runs (four earned) on seven hits and three walks with three strikeouts to fall to 5-9 with a 3.60 ERA.

"It's frustrating for me when I give up homers because I have the ability to keep the ball in the park and I have the ability to make teams put three and four hits together to have a big inning," Gibson said. "When you put guys on and don't execute pitches and allow them to have a big inning, that's the frustrating part."

Gibson wasn't helped by his defense in a rocky first inning that saw him walk Francisco Lindor and give up a single to Michael Brantley to open the frame. They both advanced on an error by shortstop Jorge Polanco, who couldn't handle Gibson's throw on a pick-off attempt. Gibson then induced a popup from Jose Ramirez, but Logan Forsythe and Max Kepler collided as Forsythe made the catch, allowing Lindor to tag up. Edwin Encarnacion followed with an RBI groundout with both runs coming home unearned.

"We've had a lot better days," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "It was not pleasant to endure that beatdown. Not entirely on Kyle. First inning was disastrous, just the way it unfolded. Leadoff walks can always be problematic. We had a shot at the ball up the middle and couldn't quite get there. An errant pickoff throw and then the lack of communication on the ball to right field was disappointing, given the situation. A little unfortunate on the checked swing that got the second run in."

But Gibson was hurt by two long balls as part of a four-run fourth inning that broke the game open for Cleveland. Yonder Alonso led off the inning with a solo blast on a 1-1 fastball that caught too much of the plate. After walking Jason Kipnis, Gibson surrendered an RBI double to Roberto Perez before serving up a two-run homer to Brandon Guyer on a 1-1 slider down the middle.

"Bad location," Gibson said. "Alonso likes the ball up and over. I was trying to go to a hole up and in and it just ran over, up-and-armside miss. Guyer, I just left a slider right down the middle."

It was just the third time this season Gibson gave up multiple homers in a game and the first time since June 9. The last time Gibson gave up two homers in an inning was Aug. 2, 2016, which also came against the Indians (Mike Napoli and Carlos Santana).

Right-hander Matt Belisle struggled in relief of Gibson, surrendering a solo shot to Kipnis in the sixth and a three-run blast to Encarnacion in the seventh. It raised his ERA to 7.71 on the season.

Offensively, the Twins couldn't get anything going against right-hander Trevor Bauer, who struck out 11 over six scoreless innings with three hits and three walks allowed. Their best scoring chance came in the sixth when Polanco doubled and Miguel Sano drew his second walk of the game, but Kepler struck out looking to end the inning.

"He looked like he was angered that he didn't strike us out very much last week," Molitor said. "Early on, it seemed like two every inning just about. He was good. Got the pitch count up through six innings, but we just never got a big hit."

GARVER PITCHES THE EIGHTH

Catcher Mitch Garver, pitching for the first time in his career, threw a scoreless eighth inning, retiring three of the four batters he faced. He allowed a single to Lindor, but also induced a swing and a miss on Lindor on the first pitch that was classified as a 68.2 mph curveball. He threw 14 pitches, ranging from 61 mph to 81 mph, with his hardest pitch a two-strike fastball to Lindor that just missed low.

"I didn't throw any offspeed pitches," said Garver, who last pitched in high school. "Just changing speeds. I really wanted to strike out Lindor. Got to two strikes, and I said, 'This is my opportunity to do it.' I decided to gas one up a little bit."

SOUND SMART

It was the Twins' worst shutout loss since losing 10-0 to the Royals on Aug. 20, 2016. It was the 35th time in franchise history the club was held scoreless while allowing at least 10 runs.

HE SAID IT

"Really a couple of better pitches in the fourth inning and it's still a close game. I don't see it as being a game that defines this series. Hopefully the guys will come back and pick me up tomorrow and even the series and we'll be right back in it. Coming in here and taking three out of four, we'll see how it goes. Hopefully that's what we're looking at Thursday." -- Gibson

UP NEXT

Left-hander Adalberto Mejia (1-0, 2.60 ERA) is set to take the mound for the Twins in the second game of the series on Tuesday at 6:10 p.m. CT. Mejia threw five scoreless innings against Cleveland last time out, allowing only one hit, but came out after 74 pitches because his previous appearance came in relief. He'll be fully stretched out to start this time. The Indians will counter with right-hander Carlos Carrasco (13-5, 3.66), who is 1-2 with a 4.66 ERA in four starts against Minnesota this year.

Field called up, Grossman (hamstring) to DL **Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 6, 2018**

CLEVELAND -- After outfielder Robbie Grossman was placed on the 10-day disabled list with a right hamstring strain suffered in Sunday's game, outfielder Johnny Field was recalled from Triple-A Rochester before Monday's game against the Indians.

The Twins claimed Field off waivers from the Indians on Friday and he played two games with Rochester, going 2-for-8. The Red Wings had just finished a series in Pawtucket, R.I., when Field heard the news he was getting recalled and flew from Providence, R.I. to Cleveland on Sunday night.

"I'm the type of guy who's going to try and make something happen every day, whether it's with the bat or making a play on defense or pinch-running and scoring a run," Field said. "Be well-versed and try to help this team win some games."

It's Field's second stint in the Majors this season, after he hit .213/.253/.373 with six homers, nine doubles, 14 RBIs and four stolen bases in 62 games with the Rays. He was designated for assignment by Tampa Bay on July 20 and was claimed by the Indians on July 24, but was designated assignment for a second time on July 31 after the Indians traded for fellow outfielder Leonys Martin.

"It has been crazy," Field said. "This whole year, finally getting to the big leagues with the Rays and being with them for two to three months and going through the DFA process. I got DFA'd by them, kind of blindsided me. Then the Indians claimed me and I'm doing pretty well with them for about a week, and at the Deadline they made a move and DFA'd me again. Then the Twins claimed me and here I am now. Can't complain too much because I'm back here and it's a good opportunity."

Field, who hits and throws right-handed, has played all three outfield spots in his career, but manager Paul Molitor said his best positions, in order, are left field, right field and center field. The 5-foot-10, 180-pounder is hitting .333/.412/.467 in 17 games in Triple-A this year and is a career .272/.332/.445 hitter with 53 homers and 269 RBIs in 540 games in the Minors. Field is a solid runner, as his average sprint speed of 28.1 feet per second ranks in the 78th percentile among Major Leaguers, per Statcast™, and is above the league average of 27 feet per second.

"He's got a little power," Molitor said. "Hasn't done a great job as far as getting to the point of considering him a really good hitter, but he's a good mistake hitter. Obviously, better numbers against left-handed pitching. He runs probably a tick better than average."

Pineda makes rehab outing

Right-hander Michael Pineda, who is coming off Tommy John surgery last July, made his first rehab appearance with the Gulf Coast League Twins on Sunday, throwing two scoreless innings. He allowed one hit and walked one, while striking out three. His fastball velocity was at 94 mph and he'll continue to move his way up the Minor League system during his rehab assignment, which lasts 30 days. The Twins remain hopeful he'll be able to contribute in September out of the bullpen.

"I think that would be fantastic," Molitor said. "We'll see how he does, but today was another box to check."

Which players will be on the same team in 2025?

Will Leitch | MLB.com | August 6, 2018

How long is seven years in baseball? MLB's 2011 leaders in games played (Prince Fielder), at-bats (Ichiro Suzuki), Wins Above Replacement (Cliff Lee), hits (Adrian Gonzalez and Michael Young) and stolen bases (Michael Bourn) are all out of baseball. Your top home-run hitter was Jose Bautista; your best position player by WAR (Baseball-Reference) was Jacoby Ellsbury. It was a long time ago. Seven years is a lifetime.

MLB teams are always obsessed with team control over players, about having them wrapped up and secured on their club for as long as possible. But here's a fun factoid: Of the top 30 hitters by WAR (FanGraphs) in 2011, only eight are still with the same team now as they were then. (And two of those, Matt Kemp and Jose Reyes, played for other teams in between then and now before returning to the Dodgers and Mets, respectively.) Among the top 30 pitchers, there are only four. Continuity is, in many ways, an illusion.

Thus, this week at The Thirty, we flash forward seven years, to 2025, and attempt to predict, for each MLB team, the player most likely to still be playing for their current team in that season. Some players are simply signed for that long; the Phillies signed Scott Kingery potentially through '26 before this season even though he hadn't made his MLB debut yet. Some players are rookies or prospects who are the foundation of everything their team is trying to do over the next decade. And some are just icons who will end up with a statue by the ballpark someday. Here's a look at the players you should expect to see in the same uniform for the next seven years.

Twins

Jose Berrios, RHP, age 24

Level: MLB

It turns out that the answer here, alas, is probably not going to end up being Byron Buxton.

Twins drop 10 games back of Cleveland with 10-0 loss

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 7, 2018

CLEVELAND – The Twins have been a tough out for the Indians this season.

Now, these are two teams heading in different directions. And an Indians team trying to surge to the postseason looks too much for a Twins team down five players since the trade deadline.

After the Twins handed them a pair of runs in the first inning, Cleveland blasted two homers off Kyle Gibson and two more off Matt Belisle while cruising to a 10-0 victory at Progressive Field. Indians righthander Trevor Bauer struck out 11 over six innings as the Twins' winning streak ended at three. It was so lopsided that catcher Mitch Garver pitched the eighth inning, the third time this season the Twins have used a position player on the mound.

"Anybody else need Tums or anything before we start?" manager Paul Molitor said.

That was before the first question of his postgame news conference. The Twins still lead the season series 7-6, but that might change with more innings like the first one Monday.

With runners on first and second, Gibson attempted to pick off Francisco Lindor from second, but shortstop Jorge Polanco missed the throw for an error, enabling both runners to move up a base.

Jose Ramirez followed with a shallow fly ball down the right field line. Because of poor communication, right fielder Max Kepler and second baseman Logan Forsythe bumped and tumbled to the ground as Forsythe caught the ball in foul territory. Lindor scored and Michael Brantley moved to third. Brantley then scored on a grounder, and Cleveland led 2-0.

"The first inning was disastrous," Molitor said. "Just the way it unfolded."

Gibson (5-9) managed the game well before his night went haywire in the fourth. Yonder Alonzo led off with a home run into the bullpens. Roberto Perez hit an RBI double. Brandon Guyer, with six hits all season off righthanders, launched a Gibson pitch down the left field line for a two-run blast that made it 6-0. Gibson needed 38 pitches to get through the inning.

"It's frustrating for me when I give up homers because I have the ability to keep the ball in the park and I have the ability to make teams put three and four hits together to have a big inning," said Gibson, who has given up only 15 home runs this season. "When you put guys on and don't execute pitches and allow them to have a big inning, that's the frustrating part."

It was plenty of support for Bauer. He struck out Polanco in the first inning for his 197th strikeout of the season, a career high. He froze Bobby Wilson for strike three in the third, his 200th K on the season.

With two on and two out in the sixth, Bauer (11-6) fired a 95-mile-per-hour fastball on the inside corner to strike out Kepler looking. It was Bauer's 11th strikeout, and Kepler became the ninth Twin to strike out against him Monday.

Now the Twins are 10 games back of the Indians. Instead of daring to dream about a sweep to make things more interesting, this could be the week the Twins are given last rites. Carlos Carrasco, Mike Clevinger and Corey Kluber are waiting over the next three games, and the Twins offense is down one second baseman, Brian Dozier, who is now with the Dodgers, as well as a doubles-hitting third baseman, Eduardo Escobar, who is now with the Diamondbacks.

And it was there for all to see Monday how the Twins match up without them. "We've had a lot better days," Molitor said. "It was not pleasant to endure that beatdown."

Twins postgame: Mitch Garver takes the ball, and a roster move coming
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018

Bench coach Derek Shelton was looking for someone willing to pitch the eighth inning on Monday. Logan Morrison was interested. But then Mitch Garver mentioned to Shelton that he pitched until he reached college.

So Garver was sent out for the eighth and pitched and pitched a scoreless frame, giving up a single to Francisco Lindor.

"I pitched ever since I started playing the game basically and all the way through high school," he said. "Stopped in college. No college appearances that I remember."

Garver hit 68 to 81 on the gun, which was surprising because he probably throws 85-90 when he's trying to throw basestealers out. He did get Lindor to swing and miss at one of his offerings.

"I was just trying to go out there and find some part of the barrel my fielders could catch," he said.

These interviews can be tricky, because they come after a blowout loss. But Garver, Twins manager Paul Molitor and Kyle Gibson were fine talking about it. And position players pitching is no longer a rarity. It's become a strategical tool to save a reliever from usage.

"I was sitting in here watching," Gibson said. "Good form. Good mechanics. Executed a lot of pitches down in the zone. I don't know that he ever left the rubber. I think that's a balk most of the time. I'm sure he had fun out of there and tried to make light of it as much you can. It's a tough situation to be in. You want to enjoy yourself but every time you look at the scoreboard there's not much to smile at."

I asked Garver if he planned to call Chris Gimenez - the king of pitching position players - and tell him of his night.

"No," he said. "I'm going to call some other guys that I know, pitchers in particular."

That's O.K. I already tagged Gimenez on twitter about it. And I blamed him for bringing this maneuver to the league.

Garver joins Willians Astudillo and Ryan LaMarre as position players who have pitched for the Twins. And that could be a bad omen. The Twins were swept in the series that LaMarre and Astudillo pitched in.

"He threw it over," Molitor said. "Nobody got hurt. It was good."

XXX

The Twins did not announce a roster move after the game, but Matt Magill's uniform is hanging in the clubhouse, so they must plan to make room for him on Tuesday.

It will be very interesting to see who gets sent out - or away.

Gabe Moya deserves a shot to test himself on this lever. They just claimed Oliver Drake. Good grief, can they be that heartless.

As much as Matt Belisle is respected in that clubhouse, are the Twins ready to part ways with him? We'll see.

Joe Mauer has seen evolution of shifting in Twins career

Chris Hine | Star Tribune | August 7, 2018

Joe Mauer said he noticed defenses started to play him a little differently during his second or third year in the league. He would step into the batter's box, and gradually fielders changed in his sight line at the plate.

They were covering for Mauer's propensity to hit the ball back through the box.

"I'm not exactly sure when," Mauer said. "But that shortstop would go up the middle a little bit."

The shortstop has been drifting even farther up the middle for the past 15 years.

When Mauer established himself in his early 20s as a base-hitting wunderkind, there wasn't the kind of infield shifting that has become common in 2018. Mauer's strength as a hitter — put the ball in play, hit for high average — runs counter to where baseball is now: Hit as many home runs as you can, even if you strike out a bunch and hit for low average.

To stay true to his hitting style, Mauer has to combat not just pitchers who are throwing harder than ever, but also the computers spitting out information that has made infield positioning more sophisticated.

"Right now, it's probably tougher to be a hitter than any time at any point in my career," Mauer said.

As the 35-year-old Mauer finishes his back nine, he is fortifying his case for Cooperstown, a case that includes more than 2,000 hits. It's worth asking the question — would Mauer have even more hits if not for shifting, which players in previous generations never had to navigate?

One answer: Despite the common perception, shifting hasn't affected Mauer's numbers all that much.

"You just try to be consistent with your game plan and stick with it," Mauer said. "That's how I've operated, I guess."

Looking at the numbers

You can use two different sets of data to evaluate Mauer's hitting against the shift. One is from the website FanGraphs, which has shift data in games dating to 2010. The other is from MLB's official Statcast website, Baseballsavant.com, which has data from 2015 through now.

FanGraphs defines a shift not just as having three players on one side of second base, but also situations in which two players are "positioned significantly out of their normal position." The latter shift likely is what Mauer has faced through most of his career.

"It's not always just shift — it's the overall accuracy of positioning," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "I think as an industry we've gotten significantly better at trying to put people in the right spot given tendencies. Joe trusts himself and doesn't try to worry where they're defending. He's just going to try to put good swings on the ball consistently, which he's done."

The numbers bear that out.

Mauer didn't face shifts all that much from 2010 to '14. He put only 90 balls in play against shifts during that time frame, according to FanGraphs. The number has jumped to 347 from 2015 to '18.

But his average of balls in play didn't change much compared to standard alignments. Mauer's average is .341 on balls in play against standard alignment from 2010 to '18. That drops only to .337 against the shift.

According to Baseball Savant's data from 2015-18, which designates between "shifts" (three guys on one side of a base) and "strategic shifts" (when at least one defender is playing out of standard position), Mauer's batting average of balls in play against standard alignments is .316 and actually jumps to .341 combined against strategic and regular shifts.

By comparison, players across baseball have hit .291 on balls in play against both kinds of shifts since 2017 and .305 against standard alignments.

Strategic shifts have accounted for 16 percent of Mauer's plate appearances since 2015; full shifts account for only 3 percent.

You saw the strategic shift play out in a recent home game with the Indians. Shortstop Francisco Lindor moved close to second base but stayed on the left-field side of the bag while second baseman Erik Gonzalez moved farther into the hole on the right side. That's a typical shift against Mauer — protect the hole and protect the middle.

Attacking the defense

Mauer said when he first started to notice teams shifting with regularity, he tried to put the ball where they weren't. The amount of shifting has increased a lot in the past few years, Mauer said, and his approach to beating it has changed over time.

"Certain teams do it better than others," Mauer said. "Sometimes you try to get placing the ball instead of just having a good at-bat and hitting the ball hard somewhere going well. It's more of having a plan and trying to hit the ball hard than trying to force it to the left side or right side or what have you."

Mauer also said he tries to use the shift to his advantage when it comes to guessing what pitches may be coming. If a team is playing him a certain way, Mauer said he might know what's coming and where it will go.

"Some teams over-shift and you have an idea of what they're going to do with you but they have to execute it, too," Mauer said. "When they make mistakes, maybe not putting a pitch in a certain zone, they can be exposed a little bit."

Whether teams shift or not, Mauer has always been great at getting on base when he puts the ball in play — he has a high average of .340 in that category for his career, even as his production declined this decade.

"It just seems like he finds a way to hit two or three balls hard every day and sometimes he gets a hit, sometimes they catch them," Molitor said. "But the consistency is still there."

Mauer has been affected by various injuries throughout the second half of his career, and some fans may be upset that he didn't quite live up to the value of a eight-year, \$184 million deal that expires after this season.

But the numbers show the shift hasn't been a big hindrance to Mauer's career.

Monday's Twins-Cleveland game recap **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018**

IMPACT PLAYER

Trevor Bauer, Cleveland

He gave up only three hits and three walks while striking out 11 over six shutout innings.

BY THE NUMBERS

3 Twins position players who have pitched this season, with Mitch Garver the latest.

14 Times Cleveland has scored at least 10 runs in a game, tops in the AL.

38 Pitches thrown by Kyle Gibson in the fourth inning.

ON DECK

Indians righthander Carlos Carrasco has won his past five decisions while posting a 1.99 ERA. He faces Twins lefthander Adalberto Mejia in Game 2 of the series.

Andy Shea, a lawyer who helped keep the Twins in Minnesota, dies at 79
John Reinan | Star Tribune | August 7, 2018

Andrew J. Shea was a sailor and a grillmaster, a lively character who worked his way up from a rocky childhood to become the consummate political insider.

But he may be best remembered as the brilliant attorney who came up with the winning legal strategy that kept Major League Baseball from killing off the Twins.

Shea, 79, died July 8 in Edina after several years of failing health.

A lifelong Democrat, Shea was a strong believer in using government to help citizens and fought for the right of workers to be represented by unions, said his son, Andrew T. Shea of Minneapolis.

“In law school, he was a legislative analyst at the Library of Congress,” his son said. “Going through his papers, we found these analyses he had written back in 1963, 1964. He wrote about the need to invest in immigrants when they came to this country.

“He wrote about the need to provide vocational-style schools so we can always have a strong working population.”

Shea made his mark in politics at a young age — not as an elected official, but as a behind-the-scenes mover and shaker. Still in his 30s, he was selected to manage the 1976 Democratic National Convention in New York City. He spent an entire year planning and preparing for the convention, where Jimmy Carter was nominated on his way to winning the presidency.

His children remember spending a month in New York, where they rode a blimp, visited the circus and saw the original Broadway production of “The Wiz.” They had many other adventures with their father, who loved to travel and, especially, to sail.

“One thing we picked up from him is to travel and to see as many places as we possibly can,” said his daughter, Glynis Shea of Minneapolis. “We went on sailing trips to Madeline Island and as far away as Greece.”

Shea was born in Minneapolis. His mother died at a young age, and his father moved often from job to job. Shea attended Cretin High School and St. Thomas College in St. Paul, then got his law degree from George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Returning to Minneapolis, he entered law practice and eventually co-founded the firm now known as McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb. Among his clients was the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission, which owned and operated the Metrodome.

In 2001, baseball officials began making plans to eliminate two Major League teams, a process known as “contraction.” One of the candidates for contraction was the Twins. Shea led a group that fought to keep that from happening. And it was Shea who came up with the legal strategy that ultimately succeeded, said Bill Lester, who was the sports commission’s executive director at the time.

“The argument was Andy’s idea,” Lester recalled, explaining that if the Twins’ agreement with the sports commission were treated as a regular property lease, the team could end the lease simply by making a financial payment. “His idea was ‘specific performance.’ ”

Under Shea’s theory, the Twins, under terms of their contract with the sports commission, were obligated to play every game in the Metrodome through the end of that agreement. That argument won over Hennepin County District Judge Harry Crump, who issued a restraining order that kept the Twins from breaking the contract.

An Irish wake will be held in Shea’s honor on Aug. 7 from 4-8 p.m. at Kieran’s, 601 1st Av. N. in Minneapolis. The family requests memorials be made as a donation to the American Civil Liberties Union.

Johnny Field called up from Rochester by Twins
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND – Johnny Field was all smiles in the clubhouse Monday. It’s been quite a year for him.

He made his major league debut with the Rays and appeared in 62 games before being optioned to Class AAA Durham. While there, Wilson Ramos was injured, and the Rays needed a spot on the 40-man roster.

“They told me they were going to try to sneak me through waivers,” Field said.

He was designated for assignment — but claimed by Cleveland on July 24. But the Indians dealt for outfielder Oscar Mercado on July 31, and had to make room for him on the 40-man roster. Field was DFA’d again — and claimed by the Twins.

Field, an outfielder, went home to Las Vegas the first time he was designated for assignment, then flew out to Pawtucket to join Class AAA Columbus. When he was DFA’d the second time, he was in Columbus and just hung out there until he found out where he was headed next.

“It’s been a crazy two-week stretch, for sure,” Field said.

Now he’s with the Twins as bench help for the time being.

Letter from Falvey defends July deals

The Twins’ decision to trade five players before the July 31 nonwaiver trade deadline did not go over well with fans or players.

Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey is aware of that and has responded.

In a letter to Twins season-ticket holders on Monday, Falvey laid out his reasons for becoming a seller before the deadline. He said he felt that where the team was at in the standings with around 60 games to play, that it was time to extract as much value he could from the five players he traded — four of them under expiring contracts.

“I want to make one thing clear — our commitment will always be to invest in the now or in the future,” Falvey said in the letter. “It is our fervent belief that by doing neither, teams will run right past us. That is not an acceptable outcome and would represent a missed opportunity.”

That is what led to “a difficult decision,” Falvey said, and he added that he fully understood the short-term impact of trading popular players such as Brian Dozier and Eduardo Escobar.

In the days following the July 27 trade of Escobar to Arizona, Falvey and General Manager Thad Levine flew to Boston and made themselves available to the players. Some, like Joe Mauer, took them up on it.

Mauer said he wanted to make clear that he felt the team was good enough to get back in the AL Central race.

“And I think they expected that too,” Mauer said. “I think they still feel good about the guys who are still here. They know how important the guys who left were. They didn’t take that lightly. They still expect a lot out of us, and we do, too.”

Manager Paul Molitor said Falvey and Levine told him they wanted to be visible during the time they were making trades.

“From what I understand some guys took advantage of that,” Molitor said. “There were some really good conversations. I don’t know what the letter says that they sent out, but I’m sure it kind of outlines a little bit about the whole thought process about what you do at what time and when and for what reasons.”

Etc.

- Righthander Michael Pineda, in his first rehabilitation start on Monday, threw two scoreless innings, giving up one hit and one walk while reaching 94 miles per hour on the radar gun. There is hope he will pitch for the Twins before the season ends.
- Class A Fort Myers outfielder Alex Kirilloff was named the Florida State League player of the month for July, batting .396 with a 13-game hitting streak.

Twins boss Derek Falvey: 'A difficult decision had to be made'
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 6, 2018

A number of Twins fans were not happy when the team threw in the towel on the 2018 season by trading five veteran players before the Major League Baseball trade deadline.

As our columnists showed, opinions on the deals vary widely.

To answer those concerns, Twins Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey sent a letter to season ticket holders on Monday.

"Our offseason goal was to marry that core group from '17 with a targeted infusion of external talent — via free agency and trade — with a vision of taking steps toward competing for a Central Division crown," Falvey wrote.

"Unfortunately, as we all have witnessed so far, we have not tracked consistently enough this season to turn that vision into a reality... yet.

"A difficult decision had to be made," he continued, "and because our scouts, coaches, and baseball operations staff were prepared for all potential courses of action, we were able to put a plan into motion to infuse significant talent into our organization for the future."

The text of Falvey's letter to season ticket holders:

As part of a continued commitment to transparency and partnership with key stakeholders like you, I wanted to take a moment to share some of the internal perspective that contributed to our trade deadline decisions over the past couple weeks. It is not lost on me the emotional impact that comes along with changes of this magnitude and I commit to you that we will never take that for granted. My hope is that this brief insight will better allow you to understand the difficult steps we took aimed at achieving the only goal that matters — to give the Minnesota Twins organization the best chance to achieve sustainable championship-caliber baseball.

We began 2018 eager to build off of a memorable run to the American League Wild Card game. Much progress had been made in the second-half of last season, and with the bulk of that group returning, we believed there was momentum to build off of. Our offseason goal was to marry that core group from '17 with a targeted infusion of external talent — via free-agency and trade — with a vision of taking steps toward competing for a Central Division crown.

Unfortunately, as we all have witnessed so far, we have not tracked consistently enough this season to turn that vision into a reality... yet. We have weathered some injuries, dealt with a suspension, and collectively performed at a level short of expectations. It is no secret that as a team we have not yet clicked in a way that reflects what we believed this group could achieve on the field.

On July 27, less than a week out from the trade deadline, we sat at the 100-game mark. More than 60% of the season had passed and we were six games below .500, 7.5 games behind first place Cleveland, ranking 9th of the 15 teams in the AL. We were tasked with a difficult decision – to either invest more in 2019 and beyond, or to stay the course and hope for a significant rebound and improved health. I want to make one thing clear — our commitment will always be to invest in the now or in the future. It is our fervent belief that by doing neither, teams will run right past us. That is not an acceptable outcome and would represent a missed opportunity.

A difficult decision had to be made and because our scouts, coaches, and baseball operations staff were prepared for all potential courses of action, we were able to put a plan into motion to infuse significant talent into our organization for the future. With the support of ownership we completed five trades that netted us 12 players who will contribute to our future. These players supplemented an already strong farm system, the lifeblood of a winning organization.

While I believe deep in my heart that this was the right decision, I do not take it lightly that an investment in the future often comes with pain in the present. Whether they were recent additions to the Twins like Lance Lynn and Zach Duke or longtime members such as Ryan Pressly, Eduardo Escobar, and Brian Dozier, it is challenging to see players go who have been integral members of our Twins family. Nothing will replace the impact they have had on this franchise and in our community. We cannot thank them enough for their commitment to Minnesota and will always work to support them and their families. Much like those guys stepped up for the likes of Justin Morneau, Michael Cuddyer and Torii Hunter, so too must young players like Eddie Rosario, Kyle Gibson, Jose Berrios, Byron Buxton, Max Kepler, Miguel Sano, Jorge Polanco and so many others.

We believe in the players who are currently on this roster and so many others who are on the way. I am confident that great days are ahead for our baseball team. The adversity faced this season will only make our players better moving forward. Led by Paul Molitor and Joe Mauer, there is a great deal of talent and character in that clubhouse, and I know they appreciate your support each and every day. We should all look forward to a strong finish to this season and the continued growth of our players as we build toward sustained, championship-caliber baseball together.

Most importantly, thank you for your continued support!

Derek Falvey
Executive Vice President and Chief Baseball Officer
The Minnesota Twins

Field arrives

Johnny Field 26, was a fifth-round pick of the Rays who made his debut this April but was designated for assignment by Tampa Bay after batting .213 in 62 games. The Indians claimed him off waivers on July 24, then the Twins claimed him off waivers last Wednesday and sent him to Class

AAA Rochester, where he was 2-for-8 before the Twins needed his help.

So he's had a very interesting first season in the bigs. The Rays and Indians both attempted to sneak him through waivers to make room for player they needed to add to the 40-man roster. Both times he was claimed. But the Twins need his services now after placing Robbie Grossman (hamstring) on the disabled list Monday.

Zack Granite has had recurring shoulder problems since injuring himself during spring training. LaMonte Wade just landed on the DL with a hamstring strain. The Twins' options were limited as to whom they could call up.

They could have looked at Tyler Austin, who came over as part of the Lance Lynn trade last week. But he's more of a first baseman than an outfielder. With Joe Mauer at first and Logan Morrison around, there's no real room for Austin to play.

But Austin should eventually be up with the Twins. The Twins could call him up when rosters are expanded on Sept. 1. And they could call him up before that if they decide to reduce the .195-hitting Morrison's workload.

For now, they will have Field around, as he continues his strange baseball journey. He flied out as a pinch-hitter in Monday's 10-0 loss and played left field in the eighth inning.

Punchless Twins fall 10-0 to division-leading Cleveland Indians

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND — Twins manager Paul Molitor sewed up Understatement of the Month honors before Monday's 10-0 loss to the Cleveland Indians.

"Our personnel," Molitor allowed, "has changed somewhat the last 10 days or so."

Dropping their third straight to the division leaders, the Twins fell 10 games back in the American League Central. Sans Brian Dozier and Eduardo Escobar in their lineup, the Twins have been blanked in 21 straight innings by Indians pitching.

"We've had a lot better days," Molitor said. "It was not pleasant to endure that beatdown."

Since taking seven of the first 10 meetings between the teams, including a two-game split in Puerto Rico in April, the Twins have been outscored 18-2 by the Indians since capitulating at the non-waiver trade deadline.

Four Indians homers were more than enough support for Cleveland right-hander Trevor Bauer (11-6), who became the 11th different Indians pitcher to reach 200 strikeouts in a season. Bauer, who entered 5-7 with a 4.72 earned run average in 103 career innings against the Twins, gave up just three hits and three walks while fanning 11.

"He looked like he was angered he didn't strike us out very much last week," Molitor said.

Twins starter Kyle Gibson, meanwhile, gave up a pair of unearned runs in the first and needed a whopping 38 pitches to escape a fourth inning that included homers by Yonder Alonso and Brandon Guyer (two-run shot). Gibson, who also gave up a double in the fourth, had allowed just 36 extra-base hits through his first 138 innings this year.

It was just the third multi-homer game off Gibson in 23 starts this year. He had allowed one homer in his previous 36 1/3 innings, going back a month to his July 7 win over the Baltimore Orioles.

Gibson still managed to get through five innings on 95 pitches as his ERA ticked up to 3.60.

Jason Kipnis and Edwin Encarnacion (three-run homer) added blasts off Twins reliever Matt Belisle, who spent the first three months this season in the Indians organization.

Twins catcher Mitch Garver worked a scoreless eighth on 14 pitches (between 63 mph and 81 mph) to join Ryan LaMarre and Willians Astudillo as position players to serve as emergency pitchers for the Twins this year. Francisco Lindor nearly took Garver's head off with a line single through the box, but Garver survived his first outing since high school back in rural La Cueva, N.M.

Bench coach Derek Shelton approached Garver with one out in the home seventh and asked if he'd ever pitched.

"I said, 'Yes, of course,' because I wanted to get out there and I wanted to make my first appearance on mound," Garver said. "So I went in the cage and got in a few throws and I was ready to go. I mean, having a scoreless outing in your first pitching appearance is pretty cool."

Twins exec Derek Falvey tries to soothe 'emotional impact' deals had on fans
Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND — Now that the dust has settled after completing a five-player sell-off that included franchise stalwarts Brian Dozier and Eduardo Escobar, the Twins are in make-up mode.

In a letter emailed to season-ticket holders, a copy of which was obtained by the Pioneer Press on Monday, Twins chief baseball officer Derek Falvey set out to help the team's fans "understand the difficult steps we took aimed at achieving the only goal that matters ... to achieve sustainable championship-caliber baseball."

Among the highlights:

— "It is not lost on me the emotional impact that comes along with changes of this magnitude and I commit to you that we will never take that for granted."

— "On July 27, less than a week out from the trade deadline, we sat at the 100-game mark. More than 60 (percent) of the season had passed and we were six games below .500, 7.5 games behind first-place Cleveland, ranking (ninth) of the 15 games in the AL. We were tasked with a difficult decision — to either invest more in 2019 and beyond or to stay the course and hope for a significant rebound and improved health."

— "I want to make one thing clear — our commitment will always be to invest in the now or in the future. It is our fervent belief that by doing neither, teams will run right past us."

— "With the support of ownership, we completed five trades that netted us 12 players who will contribute to our future. While I believe deep in my heart that this was the right decision, I do not take it lightly that an investment in the future often comes with pain in the present."

— Listing the subtractions in the following order — Lance Lynn, Zach Duke, Ryan Pressly, Escobar and Dozier — Falvey added "it is challenging to see players go who have been integral members of our Twins family. Nothing will replace the impact they have had on this franchise and in our community."

— "We believe in the players who are currently on this roster and so many others who are on the way. I am confident that great days are ahead for our baseball team. ... Led by (manager) Paul Molitor and Joe Mauer, there is a great deal of talent and character in that clubhouse."

The Twins were actually 48-53, seven games behind the Indians, at the time of the July 27 trade that sent Escobar to the Arizona Diamondbacks for three Class A players, including a pair of top-20 prospects from the Arizona system.

That was the closest the Twins had been to first place since June 23 and the closest they had been to .500 since ending play on June 21 at 33-38. They had gone 18-5 since falling a season-high 13 games under .500 on July 4, shaving five full games off the Indians' divisional lead.

They also had 10 games remaining against the Indians after going 6-3 against the two-time defending division champs to that point.

Some of the confusion might be due to a report that the Twins initially had agreed to send Pressly to the Houston Astros on July 26, hours before Kyle Gibson pitched them to a 2-1 victory over the Boston Red Sox at Fenway Park. A reported concern about the medical records of one of the prospects the Astros were set to give up pushed the deal back until the middle innings of the Twins' game on Friday night, July 27.

Nowhere in the letter does Falvey mention this year's club-record, \$128.7 million Opening Day payroll nor any specifics about payroll targets for 2019. As currently constructed, the Twins have \$32.45 million in guaranteed obligations for next season, including buyouts and a salary offset for current San Diego Padres right-hander Phil Hughes, but that doesn't take into account a deep class of young core players who will be moving into the salary arbitration system for the first time.

Nor is there any mention of attempts to re-sign Dozier or Escobar to a contract extension before they were dealt.

"I wasn't aware of the letter that went out," Molitor said before Monday's game at Progressive Field. "I don't know what the letter says that they sent out, but I'm sure it kind of outlines a little bit about the whole thought process about what you do at what time and when and for what reasons."

In September 2016, as the Twins finished a 103-loss season that was the worst in franchise history, Molitor recorded a message to Twins fans just as Falvey was being hired to oversee baseball operations. To this point there has been no talk with Molitor of having him tape another such message.

“We have not talked about anything in that regard,” said Molitor, the 2017 AL Manager of the Year. “Whether that will be something they come up with between now and the offseason and winter, I don’t know.”

Source: Twins’ Joe Mauer, Logan Morrison clear waivers
Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND — Less than a week into August, the Twins already have passed first basemen Joe Mauer and Logan Morrison through waivers, according to a person with direct knowledge.

Had either player been claimed — and, in Mauer’s case, granted his approval — the team awarded the claim would have been responsible for the remaining salary on those players’ contracts. The Twins also would have had the option of either revoking the waiver placement or working out a trade with the team that was awarded the claim.

Because both players cleared waivers, the Twins now are able to discuss a potential trade with 29 other clubs, although only contenders would figure to hold interest. A trade would have to be worked out by 11:59 p.m. Eastern time on Aug. 31 for a player to be postseason-eligible.

Mauer, who has a full no-trade clause on his expiring eight-year, \$184 million deal as well as so-called 10-and-5 rights (10 years of service, including the last five with the same team), is still due \$6.92 million through season’s end.

The 35-year-old franchise icon said last week after the non-waiver trade deadline passed that he had not been approached by the Twins about waiving his no-trade provision, but the Twins could approach him at any point in the coming weeks if a potential deal shows promise.

Mauer entered Monday’s play hitting .275 with three home runs, a .357 on-base percentage that was the second-lowest of his career and a .367 slugging percentage that ranked last among his 15 big-league seasons.

Morrison, who turns 31 later this month, has \$1.66 million left on his 2018 contract plus a \$1 million club buyout on a 2019 option at no less than \$8 million. His base salary of \$5.5 million this season includes bonuses of \$500,000 each for reaching 450, 500 and 550 plate appearances.

His 2019 option value would increase to \$8.5 million with 500 plate appearances this season or \$9 million with a \$1.5 million buyout should he reach 550 plate appearances.

The 2019 option vests into a guarantee of \$9.5 million should he reach 600 plate appearances this season.

Eight of Morrison’s 15 home runs this season have come since June 23, in his past 86 at-bats, on either side of a 10-day stint on the disabled list with a hip impingement. Entering Monday’s opener of a four-game series against the Cleveland Indians, Morrison had 343 plate appearances.

He needed to average just 2.1 plate appearances over the Twins’ final 52 games to trigger the first \$500,000 bonus. Fully vesting his 2019 deal would require him to average 4.9 plate appearances the rest of the way, which appears highly unlikely.

During his recent power surge, Morrison was slugging .512 but his on-base percentage was .269 in his past 93 trips. For the season, the late February signee is batting just .195 with the worst park-adjusted OPS of his career.

Other Twins veterans who could draw trade interest this month include closer Fernando Rodney, right-handers Ervin Santana and Jake Odorizzi, setup man Addison Reed (signed through 2019) and newly acquired infielder Logan Forsythe. Any deal involving those proven commodities would require the same August waiver period steps listed above.

BRIEFLY

Right-hander Michael Pineda, not quite 55 weeks removed from Tommy John surgery, threw two scoreless innings with a walk, a hit and three strikeouts Monday in the Gulf Coast League. The ex-Yankee, who is signed through next season, touched 94 mph and pitched at 91-93 mph.

Class A Fort Myers right fielder Alex Kirilloff was named Florida State League player of the month for July. The 15th overall pick in the 2016 draft, Kirilloff hit .396 and slugged .614 last month for the Miracle after being promoted in June from low-A Cedar Rapids, where he was Midwest League player of the month in May.

Rookie outfielder Johnny Field, 26, was recalled to fill the roster spot of Robbie Grossman, who was placed on the 10-day disabled list with a strained hamstring. Field hit six homers in 169 at-bats for the Tampa Bay Rays before the Twins claimed him off waivers last week.

Second-round catcher Ryan Jeffers and recently acquired right-hander Jhoan Duran were named player and pitcher of the week in the Midwest League. Jeffers hit .538 with three homers in seven games, while Duran tossed 13 1/3 innings without allowing an earned run after being acquired from the Arizona Diamondbacks in the Eduardo Escobar deal.

Twins replace injured Robbie Grossman with recent waiver claim named Johnny Field
Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | August 6, 2018

The Twins have called up recent waiver claim Johnny Field to fill out the bench after losing a DH/outfielder during Sunday's game.

Robbie Grossman strained his right hamstring while running the bases and needed to be removed from Sunday's game. So to take his place on the roster while he spends some time on the disabled list, the Twins turned to Field.

Unfortunately for the Twins, Byron Buxton is on the disabled list in Triple-A (wrist), and so is LaMonte Wade. Zach Granite has had a bad season offensively, so the Twins passed over him, too. They also skipped the chance to call up Tyler Austin, a power-hitting first baseman with some outfield experience, whom they received from the Yankees in the Lance Lynn trade.

The Twins claimed Field on Friday to help restore some upper-level depth that was depleted when the club traded away 5 veteran players at the end of July.

Field, a 26-year-old outfielder, has hit .213/.253/.373 with 179 plate appearances with the Rays this year.

It'll be interesting to see if Mitch Garver plays any corner outfield with the opening, although with only one other catcher on the roster, that route seems unlikely. August and September could be audition time for Garver behind the plate for next season.

Twins blanked in series opener against Indians
Associated Press | Fox Sports North | August 6, 2018

CLEVELAND — Trevor Bauer reached a milestone Monday night.

Cleveland's right-hander struck out 11 in six innings — giving him 206 for the season — and the Indians routed the Minnesota Twins 10-0.

Bauer (11-6) is one strikeout behind Boston's Chris Sale for the AL lead. After striking out 196 last season — then a career high — reaching the 200-mark was a goal going into 2018.

“That's something I wanted to accomplish,” he said. “Next up is 300. Maybe not this year, but hopefully next year.”

Bauer, who held Minnesota to three hits, was given a standing ovation when he recorded he reached the 200-mark against Bobby Wilson in the third. He has 10 double-figure strikeout games, tying him with Sale for the league lead.

The Indians hit four home runs, led by Edwin Encarnacion, who had four RBIs, including a three-run homer in the seventh. Yonder Alonso, Brandon Guyer and Jason Kipnis also homered for Cleveland, which leads Minnesota by 10 games in the AL Central.

Bauer struck out every batter in the starting lineup and ended his night with a flourish in the sixth. Jorge Polanco doubled with one out and was at third when Miguel Sano drew a two-out walk but Bauer struck out Max Kepler on his 112th pitch.

“That's probably my last hitter, given that I had ran my pitch count up,” Bauer said. “I definitely wanted to finish my own inning. If I can't finish the game I like to finish my inning. I threw a good pitch. I was excited about both of those things.”

Manager Terry Francona knew Bauer, who leads the AL with 159 2/3 innings pitched, had a lot left but went to the bullpen. Adam Cimber, Oliver Perez and Dan Otero each pitched an inning to close Cleveland's AL-leading 12th shutout.

“He could have kept pitching and he wanted to,” Francona said. “That's enough. On a night like tonight that was plenty.”

Bauer hasn't lost since June 29 and is 4-0 in his last seven starts.

Alonso's home run started Cleveland's four-run fourth while Guyer added a two-run shot, both coming off Kyle Gibson (5-9). Matt Belisle gave up Kipnis' leadoff homer in the sixth and Encarnacion's blast.

Gibson allowed six runs — four earned — in five innings. Belisle gave up four runs in two innings. Catcher Mitch Garver worked the eighth, allowing only Francisco Lindor's one-out single.

The Indians scored two unearned runs in the first because Polanco didn't catch a pickoff throw for an error. Jose Ramirez's sacrifice fly that was caught in foul territory by second baseman Logan Forsythe to put Cleveland ahead.

“We’ve had a lot of better days,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “It was not pleasant to endure that beatdown. That first inning was disastrous.”

Garver’s first appearance on the mound in a major league game provided some levity for the Twins. He retired Guyer and Erik Gonzalez on groundouts and Rajai Davis on a fly ball to deep center.

“I wanted to strike out Lindor, so I turned the gas up,” Garver said, laughing. “He lined one right back at me and I had to get out of the way pretty fast.”

GOOD START

Kipnis took a hit away from Joe Mauer to begin the game. Kipnis went several steps to his left, dove on the outfield grass and made the throw to first. Mauer came into the game batting .302 (13 for 43) against Bauer, but was hitless with a strikeout in three at-bats.

ROSTER MOVE

Minnesota placed outfielder Robbie Grossman (strained right hamstring) on the 10-day disabled list and recalled outfielder Johnny Field from Triple-A Rochester. Grossman was injured running out a double Sunday. The Twins claimed Field last week after he was designated for assignment by the Indians.

DAY OFF

OF Melky Cabrera, who is 3 for 31 lifetime against Gibson, wasn’t in the lineup. Cabrera had a big day in the field Sunday against the Los Angeles Angels, making two diving catches and crashing into the wall to grab Shohei Ohtani’s drive.

Cabrera’s day off gave Guyer a rare start against a right-hander and he responded with a home run off Gibson.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Twins: RHP Michael Pineda pitched two scoreless innings in his first outing for the Gulf Coast Twins on Monday. He had Tommy John surgery in July of last year.

Indians: C Yan Gomes (right hamstring tendinitis) might return Tuesday. He’s missed the last four games.

UP NEXT

Twins LHP Adalberto Mejia (1-0, 2.60 ERA) takes on Indians RHP Carlos Carrasco (13-5, 3.66 ERA) in the second game of the series. Carrasco is 5-0 with a 1.99 ERA over his last six outings, pitching 7 1/3 scoreless innings against Minnesota on Aug. 1.

Preview: Twins at Indians

Associated Press | Fox Sports North | August 7, 2018

CLEVELAND — Manager Terry Francona is like a kid in a candy store with his new and improved Cleveland bullpen, which is back at full strength and ready if called upon Tuesday night when the Indians and Minnesota Twins meet in the second game of a four-game series.

The return of left-hander Andrew Miller from a long stay on the disabled list and a trade with San Diego that brought left-hander Brad Hand and right-hander Adam Cimber to Cleveland has helped the remodeling of a bullpen that needed an overhaul.

As a result, Francona has a bullpen with enviable flexibility. Miller, Hand and Cody Allen are all capable of closing games, and the bullpen also includes three left-handers: Miller, Hand and Oliver Perez.

“I don’t know if I’ve ever had three lefties in my bullpen. I love it,” Francona said. “That will help us a bunch the rest of the way.”

Miller has made two appearances since coming off the disabled list. He has pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings, allowing one hit with one strikeout, one walk and one hit batter. He has thrown 22 pitches in the two appearances.

“The more he pitches the better he’ll be, so we’re going to try to pitch him as much as we can without it being too much,” Francona said.

Francona may also have his starting catcher back for Tuesday’s game. All-Star Yan Gomes, who has missed the last three games with hamstring

tendinitis, “may start” Tuesday’s game, according to Francona.

The Twins tweaked their roster on Monday, placing outfielder Robbie Grossman on the 10-Day disabled list with a right hamstring strain. To replace him on the roster, outfielder Johnny Field was recalled from Triple-A Rochester. Field was claimed off waivers from Tampa Bay, where in 63 games he hit .213 with six homers and 14 RBIs.

Cleveland belted four home runs and won 10-0 on Monday night in the first game of the series. The Indians have won three in a row and the Twins have lost four in a row.

Tuesday’s pitching matchup will be Twins right-hander Adalberto Mejia (1-0, 2.60 ERA) vs. Indians right-hander Carlos Carrasco (13-5, 3.66). It’s the same matchup from Aug. 1 in Minnesota, when Carrasco and the Indians beat the Twins 2-0.

In that game, Mejia, who had no decision, pitched five scoreless innings and gave up one hit, with two strikeouts and three walks. He has also spent time this year at Triple-A Rochester, where in 14 games (11 starts) he was 5-3 with a 3.61 ERA. In four career appearances against the Indians, Mejia is 1-2 with a 1.96 ERA.

Carrasco’s performance in the Aug. 1 game in Minnesota was one of his best starts of the season. He pitched 7 1/3 scoreless innings and allowed four hits with 10 strikeouts and no walks.

While Corey Kluber and Trevor Bauer have gotten most of the attention in the Indians’ loaded rotation, Carrasco, who tied for the American League lead in wins last year with 18, is quietly having another outstanding year.

Carrasco hasn’t lost since June 16. Since then, he is 5-0 with a 1.99 ERA. Since June 6, he’s 7-1 with a 2.30 ERA. Tuesday will be Carrasco’s fifth start of the season against the Twins. In the first four, he was 1-2 with a 4.66 ERA. In 21 career appearances against Minnesota, Carrasco is 6-8 with a 3.98 ERA.

Twins place Grossman on 10-day DL, recall Field **Staff Report | Fox Sports North | August 6, 2018**

The Minnesota Twins placed outfielder Robbie Grossman on the 10-day disabled list Monday morning with a hamstring injury.

Grossman has appeared in 92 games for the Twins this season, hitting .253 with four home runs in 277 at-bats.

Fellow outfielder Johnny Field, claimed Friday off waivers from the Cleveland Indians, was recalled from Triple-A Rochester to replace Grossman on the 25-man roster.

A rookie, Field started the season with the Tampa Bay Rays, but was designated for assignment after 62 games, landing with the Indians, and eventually the Twins.

Originally drafted by the Rays in 2013, Field is hitting .213 with nine doubles and six home runs in 169 at-bats at the major-league level. Field has also spent 17 games with the Rays, Indians and Twins’ Triple-A affiliates this season, hitting .333 with five doubles and a home run.

Miguel Sanó shows more progress in Twins’ blowout loss in Cleveland **Dan Hayes | The Athletic | August 7, 2018**

CLEVELAND — He’s not all the way back to his All-Star form of 2017, but little by little Miguel Sanó has started to show signs he’s trending upward. On Monday night, Sanó’s resurgence took the form of two walks in three trips against Trevor Bauer, a pitcher who has dominated him throughout his career.

Two free passes ultimately in four trips to the plate made little impact in a 10-0 loss to the Cleveland Indians at Progressive Field. But it was yet another sign the “holistic” plan the Twins employed with Sanó during his minor-league trip has already begun to pay off.

Sanó hasn’t homered since he returned eight games ago. But given that the objective of a program that took an extreme approach was to reignite Sanó’s career, the Twins are more than happy with the progress they’ve seen to date.

“The goal was to send him down to get him to think about his long-term ability to help the organization and the ability to get himself in a good position to feel good about what he was doing,” hitting coach James Rowson said. “Early in the year he was scuffling a little bit. ... It wasn’t the Miggy that we’re all used to seeing and it wasn’t the Miggy that he’s used to being. The time he spent down in the minor leagues to get himself together both physically and mentally and get him on the right track is paying dividends now and it gives him a new insight as to where he needs to be from this point moving forward.”

Sanó knows exactly where he doesn't want to be. He's less than two months removed from June 14, when the Twins decided "drastic" measures were necessary to get him right, including sending him to Single-A Fort Myers. Upon returning last week, Sanó acknowledged it was a difficult time for him to handle.

Not only had his weight — gained after an offseason surgery left him immobile until shortly before spring training — caught up to him, Sanó routinely struck out as the result of his inability to identify off-speed pitches away. His 40.5-percent strikeout-rate through mid-June was nearly a five-percent increase over his career rate of 35.8.

The idea was to send Sanó to the team's facility in Fort Myers, Fla., to work on strengthening his legs, improving his diet, losing weight and regaining his form at the plate. They opted for Single A because they didn't want Sanó to go on a normal rehab assignment but rather one when he could focus on himself even more than worry about games. When he returned in Boston last Saturday, Sanó said he understood the Twins had his best interest at heart and was happy with the work he'd put in, an effort that included daily workouts of up to four hours.

"At the beginning of the season, I was coming off the injury and I had to deal with that," Sanó said. "Now, I've lost weight after I came back ... I'm feeling good right now."

Sanó's approach since he returned has given him plenty of positives to think about.

He went 0-for-7 with five strikeouts in his first two games back. But since then, Sanó is 8-for-22 with five walks in seven games. Manager Paul Molitor noted that Sanó has shown improvement staying back on breaking balls, which gives him a longer view and a better chance of avoiding swings and misses.

Sanó displayed those tendencies again on Monday against Bauer, who before last week had struck him out 11 times and only allowed two hits in 24 at-bats in their career meetings.

In a July 31 contest at Target Field, Sanó went 1-for-2 with a walk against Bauer. On Monday, he continued to see well against Bauer — who is having a Cy Young-type season. After Sanó struck out in his first at-bat, Bauer evened the count at 2-2 in the fourth inning before Sanó took a fastball just off the edge for ball three. He eventually drew a walk and would earn another in the sixth inning, taking two close pitches for balls.

Sanó also made a nice defensive play in the eighth inning, taking extra bases from Brandon Guyer with a diving stop.

"I think he feels good," Molitor said. "I think he knows what he's got to do. He's made some plays. He's missed a couple that were tougher plays. But I think as far as the at-bats go, you look at the last handful of games over the homestand, they were all pretty high quality. And then the results will start coming."

About the only thing missing so far from Sanó's comeback is the long ball, which has played a huge role in his early-career success. Sanó isn't concerned and is pleased with how much better he feels at the plate as a result of the weight loss, even if he's not totally at ease.

"Not comfortable 100 percent," Sanó said. "But I'm feeling good right now because I'm making adjustments."

"This is a game of adjustments and I've made a good adjustment since I came back."

Rowson would agree. The second-year hitting coach said he's almost pleasantly surprised by how strong Sanó has looked.

He took his phrasing back, noting that he shouldn't be surprised because of the slugger's past performance. But Rowson has been impressed with how well Sanó took to the program and the dedication he has shown after struggling earlier this season and putting himself in a position where a demotion was necessary.

Rowson noted that Sanó isn't swinging big on every pitch and has shortened up more often when he reaches two-strike counts. He also likes how Sanó's efforts have more often resulted in the hitter physically putting himself in a better position to hit. Knowing he might be antsy to homer, Rowson has tried to reassure Sanó the power will come as long as he's putting together a good approach.

"Physically, you can see the difference," Rowson said. "He's in better shape. He's able to keep his weight on his back side a lot better. He's able to get to good positions to hit more consistently, the things I saw in him early last year. Early this season he wasn't getting to those positions consistently enough. Definitely since he has come back he looks better, he feels better. You can tell he has some pep in his step, energy as far as the way he's moving around. He seems really excited to feel the way he feels, which is really good for us."

"His goal should be the best hitter he can be. Be a good hitter and let the pitchers throw you home runs. If they throw a ball you can hit out of the ballpark and you put a good swing on it, it's going to leave the ballpark. ... I want his mindset to be the best hitter he can be and trust the fact that

if he does that, because he has power the home runs will come.”

Gibson surrenders pair of home runs in blowout loss

Kyle Gibson’s defense did him no favors in the first inning as Jorge Polanco didn’t catch a near-perfect pickoff attempt and a miscommunication between Logan Forsythe and Max Kepler allowed a 214-foot fly ball to turn into a go-ahead sac fly. But the right-hander struggled with command — he only threw strikes on 50 of 95 pitches — and it caught up with him in the fourth inning when Yonder Alonso and Geyer homered off Gibson to break the game open. Gibson had only allowed 13 home runs in his previous 135 innings before Monday.

“It’s frustrating for me when I give up homers because I have the ability to keep the ball in the park, and I have the ability to make teams put three and four hits together to have a big inning. When you put guys on and don’t execute pitches and allow them to have a big inning, that’s the frustrating part.”

Molitor was blunt in his assessment of the team’s early defensive issues.

“We’ve had a lot better days,” Molitor said. “It was not pleasant to endure that beatdown. Not entirely on Kyle. First inning was disastrous, just the way it unfolded.”

Garver takes the mound for an inning

Catcher Mitch Garver became the third Twins position player to pitch in a game this season when he delivered a scoreless eighth inning. Garver worked at a brisk pace that most baseball enthusiasts would enjoy, featuring a clean delivery and mix of pitches that ranged between 62-to-70 mph. Garver yielded a single and a long fly ball but prevented Cleveland from adding on.

“Good form, good mechanics,” Gibson said. “Executed a lot of pitches down in the zone. I don’t know that he ever left the rubber. I think that’s a balk most of the time. I’m sure he had fun out of there and tried to make light of it as much you can. It’s a tough situation to be in. You want to enjoy yourself, but every time you look at the scoreboard there’s not much to smile at.”