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#### **Odorizzi cruises in 2nd straight dominant win**

**Tyler Fenwick | MLB.com | September 18, 2018**

DETROIT -- It's the middle of September, and Jake Odorizzi is settling into a groove on the mound. The 28-year-old righty delivered his second consecutive strong performance Tuesday night as the Twins beat the Tigers, 5-3, at Comerica Park.

The only hit Odorizzi allowed through six innings was a check-swing bloop single by Tigers rookie Christin Stewart in the first inning. Statcast™ tracked the ball at 75.4 mph off the bat. Odorizzi's start came on the heels of another stellar outing, when he no-hit the Yankees into the eighth inning last week.

"It's nice to have these mixed in," Odorizzi said of his last two starts. "It's not ideal to have them your last couple games of the season. You prefer to have it to build on during the season. Nevertheless, I'm not going to get too picky. I'm just glad it's happening now."

Odorizzi (7-10) assessed that his recent success has a lot to do with efficiency.

"Getting early-count outs, executing pitches early, that's the big thing," Odorizzi said. "Getting early-count outs, that's how you get deep in the game. Not trying to waste pitches. Just going after guys."

He threw 84 pitches (56 strikes) and thought he might have stayed in longer if he wasn't coming off 120 pitches thrown against the Yankees.

"He was rolling," manager Paul Molitor said. "His pitch count was really good. Maybe one of his best nights in terms of how deep he went and how few pitches he had to throw to get there."

The Tigers' second hit didn't come until Nicholas Castellanos led off the seventh inning with a single. It was the start of a big frame for the Tigers, who scored two on a one-out triple by Mikie Mahtook. Odorizzi gave way to Matt Magill, who stranded Mahtook at third base with two straight strikeouts.

The Twins' offense finally cracked Tigers starter Daniel Norris (0-5) and scored in back-to-back innings in the sixth and seventh. Jorge Polanco continued his hot streak on this road trip with a leadoff double in the sixth inning. Polanco is now 10-for-22 in the last six games. He scored on a one-out single by Tyler Austin. Later in the inning, Jake Cave's grounder hit off the glove of a diving Dawel Lugo at second base. The ball trickled into the outfield, allowing Robbie Grossman to score to give the Twins a 2-0 lead.

The Twins tacked on three more runs in the seventh inning to build a 5-0 lead, including a leadoff home run by Chris Gimenez, whose second home run of the season had an exit velocity of 105.3 mph, according to Statcast™.

"The sixth inning I thought was actually tougher than the seventh, just because it took me a little while to get loose," Odorizzi said. "But when you're scoring runs, you're not too upset about it."

Odorizzi doesn't have much to be upset about right now. His last two starts mark the first time this season he has gone at least six innings in back-to-back games.

"It's nice to have some starts like this to finish the year," he said. "Hopefully something to build on going into next year."

#### MOMENT THAT MATTERED

With two on and two outs in the seventh inning, Austin smoked a double down the left-field line, scoring both runners and giving the Twins a 5-0 lead. At the time, it appeared those runs were just providing some extra cushion. But with the Tigers scoring three unanswered runs, Austin's double ended up being the difference.

"[Sandy Baez] threw me a couple really good changeups, then left one up," Austin said. "When you get a pitch up in the zone, off a guy like him with such good stuff, it's always good when you get a pitch up in the zone."

Tuesday marked the seventh time in his career that Austin racked up at least three RBIs, and it was the first time he's done so with the Twins. Austin was traded from the Yankees on April 30.

#### SOUND SMART

Miguel Sano's four strikeouts mark the ninth time in his career he has struck out at least four times in a game. The last time Sano did that was April 1 against the Orioles. Sano's six games with at least four strikeouts since the start of last season is tied for fourth-most among American League hitters.

- Sano focused on shedding weight for 2019

#### UP NEXT

The Twins conclude their stay in Detroit with a 12:10 p.m. CT first pitch Wednesday at Comerica Park. Minnesota will use Gabriel Moya (3-1, 4.73 ERA) as the "opener" again. Moya opened with one inning pitched in the Twins' 6-1 win over the Tigers on Monday. Spencer Turnbull will make his first career start for the Tigers.

#### **Sano back, looking to shed weight for 2019**

**Tyler Fenwick | MLB.com | September 18, 2018**

DETROIT -- Miguel Sano was back in the Twins' lineup Tuesday night against the Tigers for the first time since Sept. 4, when he injured his lower left leg sliding into second base. Sano said that it's important for him to finish this season on a high note, but he also laid out some of what he'll be doing in the offseason to prepare his body for 2019.

Part of Sano's goal when he gets home to the Dominican Republic after the season is to drop some of the weight that has been plaguing him in 2018 and be in shape for Spring Training.

After being selected to the All-Star Game in 2017, Sano spent much of the offseason unable to condition himself following surgery on his left shin. As a result, the third baseman showed up to Spring Training this season overweight. In June, Sano was sent to Class A Advanced Fort Myers to condition, and to fix his swing.

Sano said the Twins haven't given him a diet or workout plan for the offseason yet.

"I've got my people to check out that stuff for me," Sano said. "For me next year, I'll be OK. I'll lose weight and get in better shape. I know who I am and what I can do."

Whether Sano's offseason includes playing winter ball is unclear. He said if he's in good enough shape by December, winter ball would be a possibility.

Either way, Sano will be working with his trainer to get his weight down to around 255 pounds. Sano even mentioned 245 pounds as a goal, prompting a chuckle from manager Paul Molitor.

"Was that in English or Spanish?" Molitor asked jokingly. "The actual number gets a lot of attention. Just do what you need to do to put yourself in a position to be successful. I'm not worried about coming in at [a certain weight]."

Sano spoke highly of his teammates and the Twins at every turn, but the long-term implications of good health are also personal for the 25-year-old.

"I want to spend my whole life at third," Sano said. "I want to play third base for a long time."

Rosario's 2018 may be over

Molitor couldn't say Tuesday whether Eddie Rosario will be shut down for the remainder of the season, but he won't push the left fielder to make a return to the field with so few games remaining.

"He's sore," Molitor said. "... I don't know about the chance of him playing again. I don't think it's anything that we want to push too far. If he gets well and he has a chance, we would consider it, but I'm certainly not going to push for it."

Rosario aggravated his right quad Monday night when fielding a single in left field in the Twins' 6-1 win over the Tigers. It was just his second game playing the field since coming back from the same injury on Sept. 7.

Molitor suggested there won't be any additions to the roster to replace Rosario. Johnny Field, who replaced Rosario on Monday, got the start in left field Tuesday.

Garver's timetable still unclear

Mitch Garver's possible return to the lineup hit a snag on Monday, according to Molitor, when his concussion-like symptoms were worse than the day before. But Molitor added that Tuesday was a better day for Garver, who has been out since taking a foul ball off the mask last Wednesday.

"It's kind of the unknown of good day, bad day when you're dealing with these things," Molitor said. "He's doing a little better today, but I don't see anything baseball-wise happening here, at least through the weekend. We're getting down to the end with him too, as far as what he's going to be able to do before [the end of the season]."

### **Jake Odorizzi strong again as Twins top Tigers 5-3 for third consecutive victory** **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 19, 2018**

DETROIT – Jake Odorizzi took a no-hitter into the eighth inning in his previous start against the Yankees. Tuesday, he showed that was less of an outlier during a struggling season and more of a surge.

Odorizzi carried a one-hitter into the seventh inning against the Tigers before giving up two runs. Still, he set the Twins up to beat Detroit 5-3, their third consecutive victory.

The Twins broke through in the sixth inning with back-to-back RBI singles from Tyler Austin and Jake Cave against Detroit starter Daniel Norris. They added three runs in the seventh, on a solo homer by Chris Gimenez and a two-run double by Austin.

Odorizzi entered the bottom of the seventh with a very manageable 74 pitches thrown, but gave up two runs on three hits and was pulled after 84 pitches. In 6½ innings, he gave up two runs on four hits and one walk with six strikeouts. He has a 1.98 ERA over his past two outings.

"He was rolling," manager Paul Molitor said. "His pitch count was really good. Maybe one of his best nights in terms of how deep he went and how few pitches he had to throw to get there."

Odorizzi snatched the spotlight from the return of Miguel Sano to the starting lineup. The Twins third baseman missed 12 games after injuring his surgically repaired left leg while sliding into second base Sept. 4 in Houston.

Sano's first game back was rough, as he struck out in all four at-bats — the first two looking, the last two swinging. It was his ninth four-strikeout game of his career, his second this season.

“Some big swings on pitches he had to hit that he fouled back,” Molitor said. “Then he got caught guessing a couple times with two strikes. Obviously some rust in the at-bats we saw.”

Sano is looking to salvage a season in which the 2017 All-Star is batting .199 with 13 homers and 41 RBI.

“For me, it is great to finish strong and try to win a couple more games and do as good as we can,” Sano said.

Sano reported to spring training weighing 293 pounds after having a rod inserted into his left leg to treat a stress reaction. He began the season in the majors but missed 24 games in May because of a strained left hamstring. When he returned, he hit .191 over 17 games, prompting the Twins to take the unusual approach of sending him to Class A Fort Myers on June 14.

There, Sano lost 20 pounds and worked on his swing. He returned July 28 lighter — but hit only .202 over 33 games when he injured his leg in Houston.

He plans to finish with a flourish, then head into an offseason during which he wants to lose even more weight.

He plans to train with Yon Soriano, a Dominican track star who participated in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil. Sano might play winter ball if things go well.

“As soon as everything is done here, I will go back to the Dominican,” he said. “I will travel between Fort Myers and the Dominican. Everything depends on how I feel and how my body is. If I get in good shape before December.”

How much lighter does he want to get?

“Maybe 260, 255, 245, that’s my goal,” Sano said. “I want to stay my whole life at third. I want to play third base for a long time.”

### **Eddie Rosario's season might be over for Twins**

**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 19, 2018**

DETROIT – Eddie Rosario walked through the clubhouse with a noticeable limp on Tuesday after aggravating his right quadriceps injury Monday as he fielded a ball hit to left field.

When asked how bad it felt, compared to the first time he was injured, the Twins left fielder replied: “It feels the same as last time.”

If that’s the case, Rosario likely will be unable to play in the outfield over the final two weeks of the season, and his ability to be a designated hitter could be in question.

Rosario initially was injured Aug. 30 in Cleveland while running the bases. Monday marked the first time he played in the field since then — 18 days later. This time, there are only 11 days left in the season. He was able to DH seven days after the injury, starting with a Sept. 7 game against Kansas City. If he follows the same recovery path, he could get some swings in next week during the season’s final homestand.

But there’s a chance that Rosario might have appeared in his final game for 2018.

“I don’t know about the chance of him playing again,” manager Paul Molitor said. “I don’t think it’s anything that we want to push too far. If he gets well and he has a chance, we would consider it, but I’m certainly not going to push for it.

“When he did this one originally, there was enough time to try to get him back out there, let him play, maybe even at less than 100 percent. There was enough games. But now, if he doesn’t do anything here at least through the weekend, then we’re looking down at the last week, I’m not sure what the odds are there.”

Rosario is batting .288 with 24 homers and 77 RBI. He has a chance to surpass his 2017 numbers of .290, 27 and 78, which were all career-highs.

Offseason tweaks

The approach to the annual offseason instructional league, in which teams spend a month having prospects work on skills while playing games against other teams, is changing. And the Twins are among the teams shifting how they treat baseball’s version of summer school.

Players used to begin the day working on skills, then finish up with games in the afternoon. The thinking used to be that's the best way to help them develop, by immediately trying to apply what they were working on in games. Twins Chief Baseball Officer Derek Falvey noted that more teams are moving away from playing a month's worth of games to focus on how prospects are being developed.

"Eventually, instructional league became an extension of the regular season for our youngest players," Falvey said. "Despite our best efforts, it can be hard to focus on a real change with a player in the morning while asking him to compete in a game in the afternoon."

The Twins' new plan is to arrange a series of offseason minicamps at the team facilities in Fort Myers, Fla. There will be fewer games in order to focus on skill development that will be tailored to fit individual players.

Over the course of the offseason, the Twins feel they can impact more of their minor-leaguers.

"For some guys that may mean a heavy focus on strength and conditioning," Falvey said. "For others, it may be defensive work and skill development; and for pitchers it could be the development of an individual pitch."

Garver improving

Catcher Mitch Garver felt better Tuesday after having a slight setback Monday, but he is still several days away from playing after suffering a concussion last week. He spent Tuesday doing cardio work.

"He's doing a little better today but I don't see anything baseball-wise happening here at least through the weekend," Molitor said. "We're getting down to the end with him, too, as far as what he's going to be able to do before we're done."

### **Twins postgame: Moya making a bid to become the permanent 'opener' perhaps?**

**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 19, 2018**

Here are three quick thoughts from LEN3 before we sleep fast and come back to Comerica to wrap up this three game series:

Moya, again: Gabriel Moya will be the opener on Wednesday as the Twins face the Tigers. It will be his fourth opening assignment, and he's had scoreless outings in each of his last two appearances in the role. He pitched a scoreless first inning in Monday's series opener before Kohl Stewart followed with six innings.

Twins manager Paul Molitor agreed that Moya might be taking to the role.

"I think he does," Molitor said. "I think he likes coming up here for the last eight innings." Lefthander Stephen Gonsalves is expected to follow Moya as the primary pitcher.

Odo mojo: Jake Odorizzi is finishing off his pitches better, he's around the plate and not bouncing balls in the dirt as much. And the Twins are seeing the type of pitcher they thought they traded for in spring training.

"Yeah, it's nice to have these mixed in," Odorizzi said. "It's not ideal to have them your last couple games of the season. You prefer to have it to build on during the season, whatever it may be. Nevertheless, I'm not going to get too picky. I'm just glad it's happening now. All the work that I've put in is starting to see some results. It's good for next year, going into it, knowing what sort of things I need to do to be ready."

After taking a no-hitter into the eighth inning against the Yankees in his previous outing last Wednesday, Odorizzi held the Tigers to one hit through six innings — the lone hit a first-inning, check-swing single by Christin Stewart — before giving up two runs on three hits in the seventh. Odorizzi has a 1.98 ERA over his past two outings.

Magill deals: Matt Magill followed Odorizzi with Mikie Mahtook on third following his two-run triple and one out. Magill struck out two batters to end the inning, protecting the Twins' 5-2 lead. He then pitched a scoreless eighth.

"I love it," Odorizzi said. "He left a run out there for me, so any time that happens, it's a big thing for a starting pitcher. I know he's been working on some off-speed pitches, and I think we saw a lot of them in that last inning. It's good to see him get the results he's wanted too. He's got great stuff, and I think we're going to rely on him a lot next year."

**Tuesday's Twins-Detroit game recap**  
**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 18, 2018**

IMPACT PLAYER: Tyler Austin, Twins

The designated hitter was 2-for-4 with an RBI single and a two-out, two-run double.

BY THE NUMBERS

4 Strikeouts for Miguel Sano in his first game since Sept. 4. It's the second time the third baseman has struck out four times in a game this season, but the first since April 1.

3 Walks by Robbie Grossman, tying a season high.

1.98 ERA for Jake Odorizzi over his past two outings.

ON DECK

Lefthander Gabriel Moya will be the opener for the second time in three days as the Twins and Tigers wrap up their three-game series. Fellow lefty Stephen Gonsalves is expected to follow him. Rookie righthander Spencer Turnbull will start for the Tigers.

**Miguel Sano returns to Twins lineup in Detroit**  
**La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | September 18, 2018**

Sano suffered a lower left leg contusion on a hard slide into second on Sept. 4 against the Astros.

UPDATES

One thing to watch for tonight is if Sano has to slide. He has not practicing sliding since the injury and isn't expected to try another style if he has to do so tonight. That looms as a big test as Sano returns from his injury.

"We talked a lot about it yesterday," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "And I know that's something he's concerned about. He knows how to slide one way which is on that leg. A little different than the old days when we had about 12 slides. I toyed with the idea of making him slide yesterday, but I think when you tell someone to practice sliding it's almost like they are going to overthink it. You don't run hard and you're worried more about the slide than doing it instinctively. There's something about being out there and just playing the game where I think his instincts will take over if he has to make a slide into a base, a double play or at home or whatever the situation might be."

Sano has not been told to take it easy. Instead he's being encouraged to play his normal game and trust his instincts. Molitor doesn't think that should factor into any decision third base coach Gene Glynn makes in regards to waiving him home,

"Nope, I said just play," Molitor said. "You're going to make the right choice at the right time. Hopefully no head first, don't want to see that. There's a little bit of a question around that but I don't think that going out there and sliding on the grass or anything is going to be something that is going to enable him to be more mentally free to go out and do what he needs to in a game."

Eddie Rosario is walking around the clubhouse with a noticeable limp after re-aggravating his strained right quadriceps last night. Rosario will likely be shut down for the remainder of the road trip, which ends Sunday in Oakland.

Rosario said he would like to play before the season ends, but he wasn't sure when that will be. And he's definitely not sure if he will play in the outfield again. Playing defense looks like a no-no, since he needed more than two weeks to recover from the initial injury. And Rosario said this injury feels as bad as the first one.

"He's sore," Molitor said. "Back him off of baseball here. I don't know about the chance of him playing again. I don't think it's anything that we want to push too far. If he gets well and he has a chance, we would consider it, but I'm certainly not going to push for it."

**Miguel Sano plans to train with Olympic sprinter Yon Soriano this offseason**  
**Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | September 18, 2018**

DETROIT — Shortly before returning to the Twins' lineup after a two-week absence caused by a sore left knee, Miguel Sano revealed plans on Tuesday to slim down even more this offseason.

The burly third baseman tossed out a weight goal of 245 pounds by the start of spring training. Considering the fact Sano reportedly has already lost 25 pounds or so after peaking at close to 290 back in mid-June, that might seem a bit drastic.

How does he plan to do that? With the help of an Olympic sprinter and fellow Dominican named Yon Soriano.

"He stays with me the whole year," Sano said before the Twins' 5-3 win over the Detroit Tigers. "He came here the second half of the season. Last year he came to spring training. He's a professional athlete. He's a runner. This year he came back and tried to help me and be with me in Fort Myers too."

Their sessions will resume in earnest soon after the season ends on Sept. 30.

"This year he told me, 'As soon as we get to the Dominican, we'll start working,' " Sano said before enduring the ninth four-strikeout game of his four-year career.

This news initially caused a bit of a stir as, according to multiple sources, Twins officials had no idea who Soriano was or what his role had been in the 25-year-old slugger's conditioning. After having a titanium rod surgically implanted last Nov. 13 to stabilize his lower left leg, Sano had to wait until January to resume workouts of even moderate intensity.

That sent him on a downward spiral that resulted in a 44-day exile to the minor leagues, where he went back to Class A and worked his way back up.

With the help of Soriano and a Cuban track coach Sano has yet to meet, the young Twins star plans to go back to his track-and-field roots this winter. Yes, back in his pre-teen beanpole days, before he got serious enough about baseball to spark an industry-wide bidding war at age 15, Sano was a sprinter as well as a shortstop.

That's how he came to know Soriano in their hometown.

"He's from San Pedro (de Macoris)," Sano said. "He's one of the first people I met when I started running track. I've known him for 12 years."

According to Wikipedia, Soriano, 31, represented the Dominican Republic in a half-dozen international competitions from 2014-16, including the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil.

A 400-meter specialist, Soriano was part of a 4-by-400-meter relay team that finished 10th in qualifying heats in Rio de Janeiro. Soriano's relay team finished second on that same track in June 2016 at the Ibero-American Championships, a test event for the Olympics.

Soriano also appears to have qualified for the London Olympics in 2012 and competed in World Championships in Beijing, China (2015), and Berlin (2009).

"He needs like two more competitions and he'll retire," Sano said. "He's been in the Olympics. He said he didn't go (to qualifiers this year) because he stayed with me."

Listed at 5 feet 7 and 150 pounds, Soriano must offer quite a contrast when he stands next to the 6-4 Sano, much less runs with him. But that sounds like the plan for much of this offseason, which may or may not include a turn in the Dominican Winter League.

"Everything depends on how I feel and how my body is and if I get in good shape before December," Sano said. "When I go back home, I want to lose some weight and get more in shape and try to come back ready for spring training. As soon as everything is done here, I will go back to the Dominican."

While Sano showed predictable rust in his return, according to Twins manager Paul Molitor, the plan is to give him more chances to end his season on a good note. Sano's batting average has plunged to .199 with a 4-for-50 slide that includes 23 strikeouts in his past 59 plate appearances.

"You have to start somewhere," Molitor said.

Adamant about remaining at third base for the rest of his career, Sano can't wait to resume offseason workouts with Soriano's help. Asked if the Twins would sketch out his next few months for him, Sano shook his head.

"No, no, no," he said. "I've got my own plan. I've got people that take care of that stuff for me. For me, next year, it will all be OK. I'll lose weight. I'm going to get in better shape. I know who I am and what I can do. It's not a big deal."

### **Even if Eddie Rosario is done, Twins won't seek outfield reinforcements**

**Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | September 18, 2018**

DETROIT — Even if Twins left fielder Eddie Rosario is shut down for the season after re-aggravating his strained right quadriceps, the team isn't likely to call up another outfielder to finish out the schedule.

"I think we're OK," Twins manager Paul Molitor said Tuesday. "We're not in great position, considering it's September, but we'll do it. We can get through. We've got enough versatility."

Had Byron Buxton been called up Tuesday, it would have been the last chance to get him the 13 service days he lacks to stay on track for free agency after the 2021 season. Instead, like fellow outfielder Zack Granite, Buxton apparently will be allowed to use the entire offseason to recuperate from an injury-marred 2018.

Outfield prospect LaMonte Wade Jr., who reached base at a .337 clip in 294 plate appearances at Triple-A Rochester, turns 25 on New Year's Day and must be added to the 40-man roster in November. The Twins still have some flexibility on their 40-man roster with Ervin Santana and Aaron Slegers both eligible to move to the 60-day disabled list, but they don't seem inclined to use it.

"(Rosario) is sore," Molitor said. "We'll back him off of baseball here. I don't know about the chance of him playing again. I don't think it's anything that we want to push too far. If he gets well and he has a chance, we would consider it, but I'm certainly not going to push for it."

Rosario initially strained his quad in Cleveland on Aug. 30 while making a long run in the outfield. He suffered a setback on Sept. 7 and then another on Monday night while attempting a plant-and-spin throw from the gap.

After posting a .930 on-base/slugging percentage with 18 home runs over the first three months, Rosario has slumped to a .642 OPS in 261 trips since July 1. He has just six home runs and eight doubles in that span along with 11 walks and 49 strikeouts.

Rosario's 24th homer came Monday against Detroit Tigers right-hander Jordan Zimmermann.

### **GARVER STILL OUT**

Backup catchers Willians Astudillo and Chris Gimenez are two of the Twins' fallback options in left field, but Molitor noted he must ignore that flexibility for now with starting catcher Mitch Garver still recovering from a Sept. 12 concussion.

Despite showing some improvement in his symptoms on Tuesday, Garver likely will continue to take things slowly through the rest of the road trip.

"It's kind of the unknown of good day/bad day when you're dealing with these things," Molitor said. "I don't see anything baseball-wise happening here at least through the weekend. We're getting down to the end with him as far as what he's going to be able to do before we're done."

### **REED PLAN**

Reliever Addison Reed, who had pitched just twice since Sept. 2, will not head west with the Twins after Wednesday's game. Instead, Reed is set to return to Canton, Ohio to be with his wife Cady, due Thursday with the couple's second child (both daughters).

Reed would then have until Sept. 25 to rejoin the team for the start of the Twins' final homestand. Armed with a 13-man September bullpen, including 10 right-handers, the Twins should be all right in Reed's absence.



After pitching 32 times in the Twins' first 64 games, Reed entered Tuesday with just 54 outings. His career-low is 55 outings in 2015, but he went on to make nine more appearances that October as the New York Mets reached the World Series.

Reed, who spent three weeks on the disabled list in July with an elbow impingement, had allowed a 6.91 earned run average since May 29.

## MOYA THE OPENER

Lefty Gabriel Moya, coming off two straight scoreless outings (three total innings) as the opener, is expected to serve in that capacity again Wednesday afternoon with fellow rookie lefty Stephen Gonsalves serving as the primary.

Moya needed just 20 pitches to get through the first inning on Monday before handing off to Kohl Stewart for six innings of one-run ball. Moya, who gave a two-run homer in Texas on Sept. 2 in his big-league opener debut, said the key is to treat the first inning as through it were the seventh.

"That's why I threw a slider (to Jeimer Candelario) on my first pitch," Moya said.

Moya then followed up with three straight changeups before freezing the Tigers' leadoff man with an 89-mph fastball for a seven-pitch strikeout.

## **Odorizzi impresses again, Twins win third straight** **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | September 19, 2018**

DETROIT — Jake Odorizzi loves the way he's pitching.

The Minnesota Twins rightly only wishes he could have discovered this form in April or May, not September.

In his first start after losing a no-hitter in the eighth inning against the New York Yankees, Odorizzi only allowed a check-swing single in the first six innings of a 6-3 victory over the Detroit Tigers.

"It is nice to get these good starts, but it isn't ideal to have them at the end of the season," he said. "You'd rather do this in midseason, but you also can't be picky. This is good going into next year."

Odorizzi didn't get out of the seventh, allowing two runs on three hits, but he's given up three runs on four hits in 13 2/3 innings in the two strong performances.

"I think I had better command tonight than I did the last time," he said.

Chris Gimenez homered and Tyler Austin drove in three runs for the Twins, who have won three straight.

"There are always things to play for, individually and collectively," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "You want to win as many games as possible as you wind down the last couple weeks."

The Tigers have lost seven of nine, including six straight at home.

Mikie Mahtook, who is hitting .288 with six homers and 14 RBIs in his last 20 games, drove in all of Detroit's runs. He was hitting .185 on Aug. 22.

"He made a great adjustment with his hands, and now he's making much better contact," Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire said.

Daniel Norris (0-5) pitched a season-high 5 1/3 innings, allowing two runs on five hits and three walks.

"I was really happy with my first five innings," he said. "I was locating the fastball and spinning the slider, and I had a curveball to change speeds. I even threw a few changeups.

"I just started leaving things up in the sixth, which is when I was getting tired."

Norris was making his fourth start after missing four months with a groin injury.

“This is basically a kid in his third week out of spring training, so he’s not ready to go deep,” Gardenhire said.

The game was scoreless in the sixth when Jorge Polanco led off with a double to left. Logan Forsythe followed with a groundout off Norris’ glove, allowing Polanco to take third. Robbie Grossman walked before Austin’s RBI single to center.

“(Norris) mixed his pitches well and was locating everything,” Austin said. “He threw me a couple good changeups, then left one up. With a guy like that, it is good when he misses up and I was able to put a good swing on it.”

Jake Cave made it 2-0 with a single off second baseman Dawel Lugo’s glove, ending Norris’ night. Drew VerHagen escaped the inning without further damage.

“That’s probably a double-play ball, but we’ve got a young second baseman who took a drop step instead of crossing over,” Gardenhire said of Cave’s base hit. “If we turn the double play, the inning is over and Norris comes out smelling like roses.”

Gimenez homered off Sandy Baez in the seventh to make it 3-0. Austin added a two-run double later in the inning to chase Baez.

Detroit’s offense finally got to Odorizzi in the seventh, with a pair of singles setting up Mahtook’s two-run triple. Reliever Matt Magill struck out next two hitters to end the threat.

Magill pitched a scoreless eighth and Trevor Hildenberg got the ninth for his seventh save, allowing Mahtook’s two-out RBI single.

Miguel Sano played for the first time since a leg injury on Sept. 5 and struck out in all four at-bats.

“He had some big swings and got caught guessing a couple times with two strikes,” Molitor said. “Obviously, there’s some rust.”

#### TRAINER’S ROOM

Twins: OF Eddie Rosario missed Tuesday’s game and could be out for the season after aggravating a right quad strain Monday against the Tigers. Rosario will be evaluated on Thursday, but Molitor said he will be very cautious when deciding if he will play again this year.

Tigers: 3B Jeimer Candelario left the game with back spasms and will be evaluated on Wednesday. Gardenhire said he expects Candelario to miss at least two games. ... RHP Michael Fulmer will meet with Dr. James Andrews on Wednesday to get a second opinion on his knee injury and could have surgery as soon as Thursday. If the examination confirms a torn meniscus, it will be the third time he’s had the same injury repaired since 2013.

#### UP NEXT

The teams finish their three-game series Wednesday afternoon, with Detroit’s Spencer Turnbull making his first major league start after making his big league debut in relief on Friday. Gabriel Moya (3-1, 4.73) will serve as the Twins’ opener for the second time in three days.

#### **Preview: Twins at Tigers**

**Sports Xchange | Fox Sports North | September 19, 2018**

Spencer Turnbull and Stephen Gonsalves spent most of the season moving their way through the minor league chain. With the season winding down, those young pitchers are scheduled to oppose each other at the highest level.

They will take the mound in a Wednesday matinee at Detroit’s Comerica Park as the Tigers and Minnesota Twins close out a three-game series.

Turnbull, a 26-year-old right-hander, made his major league debut at Cleveland on Friday when he pitched an inning of scoreless relief. That was a new experience in more ways than one for Turnbull, who started all 90 of career minor league appearances.

Turnbull admitted he was a bundle of nerves during that outing. His right hand was shaking when he returned to the dugout.

“I didn’t realize I was shaking that bad,” Turnbull told the Detroit News. “I was pretty nervous before my first start in Triple-A, but there were like four times as many people here. This was the most nervous I’ve been by far.”

Turnbull threw mainly fastballs during his spotless 11-pitch stint.

“My only thought in the bullpen was, just make sure I was as ready as I can be,” Turnbull said. “I knew I was going to be nervous. I just wanted to make sure I kept my breathing as slow as possible when I took the mound. I took one long look around, took a deep breath and just tried to throw it right down the middle.”

Turnbull pitched at four different levels this season before his call-up. He spent most of the year at Double-A Erie, where he posted a 4-7 record and 4.47 ERA in 19 starts. He made two starts for Triple-A Toledo, going 1-1 with a 2.03 ERA.

The Tigers, who have lost the first two games of the series, believe Turnbull could stick at the major league level next season.

“We’ve always said, this guy has some of the best stuff in this organization,” manager Ron Gardenhire said.

Gonsalves, 24, has struggled to find his footing in the majors since his call-up last month. He gave up 16 earned runs in 12 1/3 innings in four starts before a much-improved performance in relief Thursday. He held Kansas City hitless and only allowed an unearned run in three innings despite control issues, as he walked four batters.

“My changeup wasn’t there for the most part,” he told MLB.com. “When your best pitch isn’t there, you are kind of looking around and waiting for something to pop up.”

Gonsalves (0-2, 9.39 ERA) is considered the organization’s top pitching prospect. The left-hander had four strong starts in Double A before getting promoted to Triple-A Rochester, where he posted a 9-3 record and 2.96 ERA in 19 outings (18 starts).

The Twins may elect to start a reliever and bring in Gonsalves early in the game as they did Monday, when Kohl Stewart entered in the second and pitched the next six innings.

Minnesota could be without left fielder Eddie Rosario the rest of the season after he aggravated a quad injury in Monday’s opener.

Detroit has a new injury concern in third baseman Jeimer Candelario. He left Tuesday’s game early.

“His lower back tightened up on him,” Gardenhire said. “He took a swing and felt it. He stayed in the ballgame, said he was fine, and again, the last at-bat, same thing. So we got him out of the ballgame. He’s going to get checked out in the morning. Might be a couple days here. That would be the best case scenario.”

## **Meet Your New Favorite Player: Twins Utilityman Willians 'El Tortuga' Astudillo**

**Emma Baccellieri | SI.com | September 18, 2018**

A favorite player is meant to be specially individual—the most personal decision that a fan can make, if not the most sacred—but the methodology behind selecting him is the same for almost everyone. Oh, sure, the specifics differ, but there’s a clear through-line here; the core nearly always holds constant. A favorite player must be different. The easiest way for him to be different is to be very good. Maybe he’s very good in one particular area, or maybe he stands out the most among the “very good” on a favorite team, or maybe he’s just very good, period. Maybe he’s Mike Trout. This is the most obvious way to determine that a player is different enough to be deemed a favorite, and this is why there are thousands of kids wearing jerseys with Mookie Betts’ name on the back rather than Blake Swihart’s.

But there are other ways to be different. Maybe it’s his batting stance. Maybe it’s the way that he can occasionally be seen talking to himself alone in the outfield. Maybe it’s his haircut, or his high socks. There are infinite ways to be different. But there’s one player that’s more different than any other right now, and possibly more different than any in quite a long time: Minnesota Twins rookie Willians Astudillo, the weirdest player in baseball and the perfect favorite player.

You do not have to look far to see Astudillo’s most obvious difference, because all you have to do is look at him. His build can generously be described as “sturdy” and less generously described as “stubby,” all squat and densely packed. Astudillo is 5’ 9” and 225 pounds—or, at least, he’s listed as such—which means that he doesn’t look too much like a baseball player, let alone a professional one. Of the thousands and thousands of players with height and weight data listed on Baseball-Reference, there is just one other who ever came in at 5’ 9” and 225 pounds. (Alberto Callaspo.) By virtue of his body alone, then, Astudillo is noteworthy. When he runs the bases, he becomes a meme. “I just wanted to show that chubby people also run,” he says after the game. He’s a baseball player, performing an unremarkable baseball activity. And yet, because

it's him, in a body that would be utterly ordinary in any other setting—exactly what makes it so unordinary, here—it does feel like something remarkable. He's different.

Astudillo may not look much like your average baseball player, but to the extent that he does, he looks like a catcher (which he is—most of the time, but barely). A quick glance at his game log may leave you thinking that he's a prototypical utility player, with all the flexibility and sprightliness that usually entails. In 20 major league games, Astudillo has been behind the plate scarcely half the time. Otherwise? He's filled in at second base, third base, left field, and he's even done a brief stint in center. And, oh, yes, he made a pitching appearance, too. (Though being a position player on the mound didn't leave him looking quite as out of place as did being a 5' 9", 225-lb. guy in centerfield.)

The Twins are not being cute here, messing around in the desperate moments of a losing season. They're just using him as he's always been used. Astudillo played five different positions this year at Triple-A, just as he played five different positions in his first year in organized ball in 2009. Over nine seasons at various levels, he has played every single position on the diamond. That doesn't mean that he's played all of these positions exceptionally well, but the power of that fact does not depend on the quality of his defense. It depends on Willians Astudillo, who does not resemble any type of baseball player, earning the right to be trusted as every type of baseball player. He's different.

So—he's a chubby rookie with some surprising defensive versatility. A solid start for any round of build-a-favorite-player! But Astudillo has far more to offer. Start by looking at his statistics from the minor leagues. The first thing to notice about this record is that it is not the record of a prized prospect, or of any prospect. There's a jumble of clubs here—Phillies, Braves, Diamondbacks, Twins—passing him around as he slowly made his way from rookie ball on up. He took nine seasons to play his first game in the big leagues; Astudillo, 26, is nearly two years older than the average player who debuted this season. There is nothing remarkable about this path, trodden by countless young men who get stamped with the label of anonymous organizational filler. But there's something quite remarkable about what he's done on this path. Astudillo, at every single level, has maintained a weirdly intense approach to plate discipline. He does not walk, and he does not strike out. He has never wavered in that austerity. As baseball becomes increasingly centered on the three true outcomes, Astudillo seeks his truth elsewhere.

Over 220 plate appearances in his first year of organized ball, Astudillo walked eight times and struck out ten, with just one home run. Those figures were markedly low (3.8% walk percentage, 4.8% strikeout percentage) but it was rookie ball, and he was just a teenager. A weird profile might be nothing more than weird, a blip that could be smoothed out with coaching and experience in a season or two. But Astudillo's weird profile was not a blip—indeed, it was the opposite. He offered only a very slight variation on that performance for the next year, and the year after, and the year after. In his nine minor-league seasons, he never posted a walk or strikeout percentage above 6.8%. From 2,155 total plate appearances entering this year: 75 walks, 67 strikeouts, and 17 home runs. Those three outcomes are baseball's enlarging heart, at every level. In 92.6% of his plate appearances, Astudillo did something else.

Those numbers made him something of a cult darling among the corner of the baseball world that is inclined to notice the minor league plate discipline of a non-prospect. But that's just the minors, you might say; the show is something different. Sure! It is. Astudillo has gotten more extreme in his brief big-league exposure. In 61 plate appearances, he has walked once and struck out twice. That's it: 1.6% walk percentage and 3.3% strikeout percentage.

Just how much does he stand out? Here's every batter's season from the last decade:

Astudillo's highlighted in red here, but he was obvious, anyway. With 5,572 batter's seasons, thousands of them clustered in the same dense center, Astudillo's 2018 is an outlier unlike anything that baseball has seen in recent years.

The minimum number of plate appearances for the seasons in the plot above is fifty. That's a low cutoff, just a fraction of what's necessary to qualify for the batting title and nowhere near what's necessary for these statistics to stabilize. But Astudillo's time in the major leagues thus far has been so brief that it only makes sense to include other partial seasons in a comparison. If you wanted to throw those out, though—if you wanted to get rid of the small sample noise, and look at the context for a potential full season of Astudillo? It's not a perfect solution, but let's combine Astudillo's 2018 Triple-A and major-league numbers. That's not exactly rigorous, but his profile has only shown slight changes from one level to the next, and so it works well enough for getting a rough sketch of how the landscape might look here. Here's what that looks like, stacked against every major league batter's season from the past decade with at least 350 plate appearances:

Over the last ten years, no hitter has posted a strikeout and walk percentage below 5%. But Astudillo did that in seven of his nine minor league seasons, and he's doing it in his first major league one. He's different—radically, weirdly, delightfully different.

Astudillo's game has shown one key development this season. While his walks and strikeouts are as rare as ever, he's invested a bit more in the third true outcome—the home run. In Triple-A, he hit 12. (His previous high? 4.) In his brief big league stint so far, he's already hit three, which is, yes, as many walks and strikeouts as he's had combined. And beyond the long ball, he's been thriving in the majors. His .820 OPS is a head

above where it was in Triple-A, lately making him one of the most productive members of Minnesota's offense. He is, obviously, a free swinger—going on more than half of the pitches that he sees—but he connects on almost all of them. His 91.9% contact rate is one of the highest in baseball. Astudillo's approach, odd as it is, has always worked for him; now, he's proving that it can work in the majors, too.

He hasn't yet been in the major leagues long enough to make any definitive judgments on his talent here, and it's still unclear if there will be a space for him on the roster next year. But Astudillo is a marvel—right now, on his own merits, in this small sample size—whatever the future may hold. Beyond all this, his file holds plenty more favorite-player-fodder. There's his no-look pickoff move from this spring, and his hidden-ball trick from this summer. There's the fact that his brother, Wilfred, and cousin, Wilfran, are in organized ball, too. There are all the tiny habits and routines and details that make up a player's game. But, mostly, there is the fact that he's different—that he looks like, literally, no one else in baseball.

### **A 'holistic approach' via a trip to Single-A helps Twins' Miguel Sanó get on track** **Dan Hayes | The Athletic | September 18, 2018**

FORT MYERS, Fla. — When they made the difficult decision earlier this season to send him to Single-A, the Twins' desire was that Miguel Sanó would use it as motivation to turn around his career. They hoped Sanó would realize how tentative the situation had become and what it could mean for his future.

Sanó was in a bad way. He was out of shape after surgery in November effectively forced him to sit out the majority of an offseason. Combined with another month missed because of a hamstring injury, Sanó's playing skills had severely eroded. He was striking out at the worst rate of his career, unable to hit for power and had become a liability in the field.

The team picked Fort Myers as the destination for what chief baseball officer Derek Falvey described as a “holistic approach” to getting Sanó back in playing shape because it serves a one-stop shop for all he needed. The team's baseball complex not only has all the necessary facilities, it also had personnel in place that the Twins thought could keep Sanó — who returns to the Twins' lineup on Tuesday night after missing two weeks with another leg injury — pointed in the right direction.

Six weeks after he returned to the field, Sanó and the Twins are optimistic about his direction after a very trying period in his career. Sanó said he lost 30 pounds as the result of a concerted effort and looks forward to a full offseason ahead to prepare for the 2019 season.

“My whole life I've been working hard,” Sanó said last week. “I'm here because God gave me an opportunity. I put effort into stuff. I don't need my career to get down for stupid stuff. But like I (said), I've been working hard all season because I had my surgery and they put in a rod. It's been bothering me the whole year. That's a part of baseball. I hope that never happens again. I've got this offseason season to work hard and come back ready to do my job and try to help out team the most I can.”

Last month, Sanó said he normally begins his offseason workouts about 20 days after the season ends. He didn't have that option last winter after undergoing surgery to insert a metal rod into his left ankle that left him immobile for more than two months. While it ultimately found “insufficient evidence” to punish him, Major League Baseball also spent much of the offseason and spring training investigating Sanó for an alleged sexual assault.

When Sanó did return to the field, the Twins were pleased enough with his efforts to have him in the lineup by March 1, a month ahead of schedule. But they also knew physically he was on the borderline and that being sidelined from April 28-May 24 with a hamstring injury didn't help matters. Only 17 games after returning from the disabled list, which included 30 strikeouts in 73 plate appearances, it was evident that drastic measures were needed to get Sanó back on track. He was demoted to Fort Myers after sitting out a June 14 loss at Detroit.

That's where Fort Myers manager Ramon Borrego and the Twins' Fort Myers-based staff came into play.

Borrego — who earlier this month won a championship in his first season managing the Florida State League — has known Sanó since he signed with the Twins in October 2009. The two have an honest, open relationship that afforded Borrego some leeway in trying to motivate Sanó. Borrego said he pulled Sanó aside on the first day after Sanó wore gray shorts to batting practice instead of blue like the rest of the team's players.

“Tell me something — why are you here?” Borrego said. “Be honest with me so now you can give me your word that you're going to come here every day to work. If we can work together, that stay here is going to be short. Now, you need to lose weight. We know you're big-league.

We know you're a star. But now you're here and you are part of this group for some reason. Do you think I'm happy you're here? No. Not me and nobody in Minnesota is happy you're here because they expect a lot more of you. They don't want you here. ... They want you playing every day and hitting 40 homers and dropping 100 RBIs.”

When asked about Borrego last week, Sanó smiled also instantly. Only two nights before, Sanó saw highlights after Borrego's team clinched its title with an 8-5 victory over Daytona in Game 4 of the Florida State League championship series — “It's unbelievable,” Sanó said.

Sanó was happy for Borrego, who managed the Twins' Gulf Coast League team from 2010-17. Borrego managed Sanó for 41 games during the 2010 summer and they've been close since. Sanó trusts the Twins' former minor-league farmhand and knows he's only looking out for his best interest.

“He's known me for a long time (along with Eddie) Rosario and (Jorge) Polanco,” Sanó said. “He tries to help players like me. He's a good person. A good guy.”

“We talked like friends. Normal. Didn't talk too much. But we talked about life. He told me a couple things ... he's a good guy.”

And with that, Sanó went to work.

He rotated days. One day, Sanó would spend hours in the gym with the staff of minor-league strength and conditioning coordinator Ian Kadish. The next, Sanó would play for the Miracle. Included in both was work in the cage with Fort Myers hitting coach Steve Singleton and in the field with Borrego. On some of the days he didn't play, Sanó was tasked with helping Borrego with defensive positioning in the dugout.

Pitching coach Henry Bonilla saw the entire effort up close. Bonilla is not only impressed with how Sanó handled a tough situation, but with the way he managed it in front of an impressionable group of minor-league players.

“He lost a ton of weight,” Bonilla said. “To say he was happy is not true. He was pissed. But, he put his work in and he grinded and he's always had the personality where people gravitate to him. He's always been that guy. He's larger than life. He just went with it like they're his guys. He pulled for them. He congratulated them. They hung out. They laughed. He was a good mentor and more than anything, as hard as he worked, it was a controlled effort. It wasn't just go crazy for an hour, swing the bat a billion times. He took his swings and the way he approached his 0-for-4 and his 4-for-4s was really good for these kids.”

The Twins think the result of a program Sanó has described as the offseason he didn't get to have provides a good foundation for this offseason.

While Sanó was again struggling before he suffered a leg injury on Sept. 4 as the result of a hard slide into second base, they've seen plenty of other improvements. The energy has improved. The range in the field is better. The pitch recognition also has increased.

Those changes would suggest Sanó is trending upward and manager Paul Molitor has been sure to point that out while also suggesting to his player there's more work to be done.

“Throughout the last however many weeks he's been back we've all tried to acknowledge his embracing the whole program that was put forth with him,” manager Paul Molitor said. “Whether we can get into spring training next year and we all say, ‘Hey, this is the Miggy that we hoped would pick up on what he went through this summer’ and it continues through the winter months — and there's some talk about potential winter ball, too, in some small doses. We'll see, but obviously he understands that his responsibility gives him the best chance. It's going to be critical in how he approaches the next season.”

Falvey and the Twins have discussed a detailed offseason plan with Sanó. The Twins have coordinated with Sanó and his agent about what the offseason should look like. Falvey has described the relationship as a “partnership.”

While the Twins cannot host a camp for Sanó because of restrictions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, they plan to check in with him several times whether it's visiting him in the Dominican Republic or when he travels to Florida. Even though there's ground to cover, Falvey is optimistic that Sanó is in a good place.

“The vast majority of players hit a point in time where they face some serious adversity either from a performance standpoint or an injury standpoint,” Falvey said. “When we sent him down there, Miguel had a good attitude, he went about his work, he worked his way back here. I think there's more work to be done. He knows there's more work to be done. And I think this is a great offseason for this to happen.

“We saw that there were steps taken offensively and defensively that were commensurate with the improvements he made with body and his overall approach. We hope that taking additional steps in that direction will continue to improve the quality of the play on the field. We all believe that he's an immensely talented young man. I don't think there's any reason that, with more work put in, that he'll even be in a better place.”