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Mejia deals, but Twins drop tight one to Tribe

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 1, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The decision to trade right-hander Lance Lynn to the Yankees before Tuesday's non-waiver Trade Deadline created an opportunity for someone to seize a spot in the Twins' rotation over the final two months of the season.

Adalberto Mejia impressed in his first audition, throwing five scoreless innings against the Indians in a 2-0 loss in the series finale on Wednesday at Target Field. Mejia had previously thrown three scoreless frames against the Red Sox in relief on Sunday, so the Twins were cautious with the left-hander, removing him after 74 pitches despite having allowed just one hit.

"A good day for Mejia," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "A nice relief stint in Boston against a good lineup, and then today [to] go through five. It's a little different routine, coming off of two days' rest, and I didn't want to push it."

Over his past two appearances -- both against first-place teams -- Mejia has allowed a combined two hits and three walks over nine scoreless innings. Mejia didn't make the roster out of Spring Training and dealt with a blister early in the season at Triple-A Rochester, but now he has the chance to show he's improved since his rookie season last year and can be more efficient.

"I'm just going to give it my best," Mejia said through an interpreter. "I'm going to keep throwing strikes, and hopefully I'm able to stay up here and help the team get wins before the end of the season."

Reliever Matt Magill was saddled with the loss, as he gave up a run in the sixth after allowing back-to-back singles to Rajai Davis and Jose Ramirez with one out. The Indians tried to execute a double steal, as Ramirez was thrown out at second on the play, but Davis was able to score from third. It was ruled as a fielder's choice, and a challenge by the Indians proved unsuccessful with Ramirez out at second.

"We were going to throw through with one out, understanding they had speed over at third base at that stage of the game," Molitor said. "I wasn't going to give him a free base. We got the out, but we missed the guy at home."

Minnesota's offense had trouble against right-hander Carlos Carrasco, who threw 7 1/3 scoreless innings with 10 strikeouts. He scattered four hits, including a two-out triple to Joe Mauer in the sixth. But he struck out Eddie Rosario to get out of the jam.

The Indians added an insurance run in the ninth against reliever Fernando Rodney, who was hurt by shortstop Jorge Polanco missing a throw from Miguel Sano on a potential double play. Rodney gave up a run on an RBI single from Yan Gomes but otherwise limited the damage, including striking out Davis on a 3-2 fastball with the bases loaded to end the inning.

"They scored a couple runs on a couple plays that we missed," Molitor said. "That was the difference."

FORSYTHE MAKES TWINS DEBUT

Infielder Logan Forsythe, who was acquired from the Dodgers in the Brian Dozier trade, made his debut as a pinch-hitter in the eighth with two on and one out against lefty Brad Hand. Forsythe hit a 0-2 fastball hard with an exit velocity of 100.3 mph, but Lindor was able to range to his right and start an inning-ending double play. Forsythe is expected to be the regular at second in the absence of Dozier, but wasn't in the starting lineup after taking a red-eye flight from Los Angeles on Tuesday.

Good to see Logan get out there," Molitor said. "He hit the ball sharply and Lindor made a nice play."

SOUND SMART

The Twins hadn't lost a series to the Indians this year prior to Wednesday. The loss dropped them to 7-5 against Cleveland with 10 games remaining between the two clubs. Minnesota also trails Cleveland by 10 games in the AL Central.

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Right fielder Max Kepler was credited with a five-star catch for his diving grab to rob Yonder Alonso of a hit and help Mejia escape a jam by doubling off Edwin Encarnacion at second. The diving play had a catch probability of 18 percent, per Statcast™, as he had to cover 32 feet in 2.8 seconds. It was his third five-star catch of the year.

"I kind of got a late read on it," Kepler said. "I didn't think it was going to carry that much. But luckily I committed to it and made the play. I don't think Encarnacion knew what going on, because he went all the way. But good for us, right?"

HE SAID IT

"I think we're all putting it behind us pretty well. We're dealing with it. It's still weird coming in in the mornings, and you're used to sitting next to someone at breakfast or lunch, whatever it is what time, and he's not there. So that's what I'm personally dealing with, but once the game starts, it's just grind mode, trying to put together good at-bats and playing solid defense and giving the team a chance to win. I think it's going to take us some time to digest what happened, but when it comes to winning and losing we put it behind us right when the game's over." -- Kepler, on moving on from the Twins being sellers

UP NEXT

After an off-day on Thursday, the Twins host the Royals for a three-game series at Target Field beginning on Friday at 7:10 p.m. CT. Right-hander Jake Odorizzi (4-7, 4.58 ERA) starts for Minnesota, after he gave up five runs over five innings against the Red Sox last time out. Forsythe is also expected to make his first start with the Twins at second base after Tuesday's trade with the Dodgers. Right-hander Heath Fillmyer (0-1, 3.29 ERA) starts for Kansas City.

Molitor preaches focus after busy Deadline

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 1, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The dust has settled on what was one of the busier non-waiver Trade Deadlines for the Twins in recent seasons, as they ultimately traded away Eduardo Escobar, Ryan Pressly, Zach Duke, Lance Lynn and Brian Dozier for 11 Minor Leaguers and veteran infielder Logan Forsythe.

There was a sense of relief at Target Field with Tuesday's Trade Deadline in the rearview mirror, as the Twins are trying to find some normalcy after losing one-fifth of their clubhouse, including longtime leaders in Dozier and Escobar. Forsythe arrived before Wednesday's game against the Indians and is expected to be the club's regular second baseman in the short-term, but he wasn't in the lineup after taking a red-eye flight from Los Angeles.

"I think everybody probably looks at it little bit differently, in terms of how they digest the 20 percent turnover on the 25-man," manager Paul Molitor said. "You to try to help them return their focus to where it needs to be."

Much like last season, when the Twins traded away closer Brandon Kintzler and lefty Jaime Garcia before the Deadline, Molitor held a meeting with his players on Tuesday after the club were once again sellers. Last year, Minnesota responded to his message, going 20-10 in August en route to the American League Wild Card Game, and Molitor is hopeful his team will continue to play well down the stretch, despite losing five players.

"I thought I had to go out and give my perspective on what happened yesterday," Molitor said. "I think some guys embrace that, and I think some guys might not even hear it. You're never quite sure. We'll see how they react in the upcoming days."

Twins right-hander Kyle Gibson, who garnered interest from several clubs but wasn't traded because he remains under team control through next season, is now the second-longest tenured Twins player behind Joe Mauer. He took Molitor's message to heart.

"I don't think anybody in here is going to give up," Gibson said. "We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to the guys who got traded away. That was the one thing Dozier told me was, 'Hey, don't let these guys quit.'"

Realistically, after the trades, the Twins are longshots to catch the first-place Indians, but the front office believes the club can compete next season and beyond with the talent they received in the trades.

They acquired right-hander Jhoan Duran (Class A Cedar Rapids), center fielder Gabriel Maciel (Cedar Rapids), Ernie De La Trinidad (Class A Advanced Fort Myers) from Arizona for Escobar; center fielder Gilberto Celestino (Rookie-level Elizabethton) and right-hander Jorge Alcala (Double-A Chattanooga) from Houston for Pressly; right-hander Chase De Jong (Triple-A Rochester) and first baseman Ryan Costello (Class A) from Seattle for Duke; first baseman Tyler Austin (Triple-A) and right-hander Luis Rijo (Rookie-level) from the Yankees for Lynn; and outfielder Luke Raley (Double-A) and lefty Devin Smeltzer (Double-A) from the Dodgers for Forsythe.

Of that group, Alcala (No. 11), Celestino (No. 14), Maciel (No. 17), Raley (No. 19) and Duran (No. 23) now rank among the club's Top 30 prospects, per MLB Pipeline.

"It's a lot of bodies that came into the system, some higher rank than others, but I still prioritize the guys in Triple-A and Double-A," Molitor said. "Kinda get a feel of where these guys are gonna be slotted in, and as far as there's not only a potential for where they are going to be playing here in the short term."

More young players could see action for the Twins in the second half as the result of the trades, including top middle infield prospect Nick Gordon, who ranks as the club's No. 3 prospect and the No. 75 overall prospect, per MLB Pipeline. Gordon, though, has been struggling offensively and looks more likely to be a September callup than an imminent promotion, especially with Forsythe on the Major League roster.

"Adjusting to a new level," Molitor said. "Some good. Some days he's trying to figure out better pitching. It's not overly surprising. Sometimes guys make the transition and keep hitting like [Alex] Kirilloff at Fort Myers. But he's doing well. Just hasn't had the offensive numbers we saw in the first half at Double-A."

Fernando Rodney airtailed another pitch and Melky Cabrera was horrified

Matt Monagan | MLB.com | August 1, 2018

Fernando Rodney, a 41-year-old man with 322 career saves, is more than just a closer. He's a dancer. He's a performer. He's an avid bowman.

His appearances have become known as The Fernando Rodney Experience. A couple of days ago, in a game against the Indians, that Experience included a 66-mph "pitch" juuuust a bit outside to Francisco Lindor. And during Wednesday's 2-0 loss to the Indians, Rodney did nearly the same exact thing. Only this time, the ball was even slower and farther outside and Melky Cabrera was terrified.

@Cut4
The Fernando Rodney Experience™ goes juuuuuust a bit outside. pic.twitter.com/p80RNC6GP6

@Cut4
Juuuuuuust missed his spot. pic.twitter.com/NszpmWSwih

It's like Melky just saw how the world will end.

Maybe it's all just part of Rodney's plan? He eventually got Cabrera out, tallied a strikeout and gave up zero earned runs.

Every team's moves up to the Trade Deadline

Daniel Kramer, Manny Randhawa and Tyler Maher | MLB.com | August 1, 2018

Players, front office executives, reporters and fans all alike can settle back -- the non-waiver Trade Deadline has come and gone.

Once again, there was no shortage of surprises and last-minute drama. The dust is still settling, and MLB.com has a full team-by-team breakdown for all of the action during this Deadline season, looking at all the Major League transactions since the All-Star break.

TWINS

Players acquired: 2B Logan Forsythe (LAD), OF Luke Raley (LAD, No. 19 prospect), LHP Devin Smeltzer (LAD), LF Jeremy Hazelbaker (TB), RF Ernie De La Trinidad (ARI), RF Gabriel Maciel (ARI, No. 17 prospect), RHP Jhoan Duran (ARI, No. 23 prospect), CF Gilberto Celestino (HOU, No. 14 prospect), RHP Jorge Alcala (HOU, No. 11 prospect), RHP Chase De Jong (SEA), 1B Ryan Costello (SEA), 1B Tyler Austin (NYY), RHP Luis Rijo (NYY)

Players traded: 2B Brian Dozier (LAD), SS Eduardo Escobar (ARI), RHP Ryan Pressly (HOU), LHP Zach Duke (SEA), RHP Lance Lynn (NYY)
The rebuilding Twins were incredibly active after the All-Star break, stocking the farm system via six trades involving 18 players, including their most coveted asset (Dozier).

Carlos Carrasco, Cleveland shut down Twins 2-0 **La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 1, 2018**

Brian Dozier, as he said goodbye to his Twins teammates on Tuesday before joining a World Series quest in Los Angeles, left instructions.

“I made a point to tell each and every one of them to not let down their guard,” Dozier said. “It might be a long shot but try to fight back in it.”

The winning-to-spite-the-front-office-selloff approach is one way for a team that has had five players dealt away over a span of five days to move forward. Some of the remaining players have expressed their disappointment in the decision to harvest the roster.

That could be used as a rallying cry.

“We owe it to the guys who got traded away,” righthander Kyle Gibson said. “The one thing Dozier told me was, ‘Hey, don’t let these guys quit.’”

So the Twins battled with what they had on Wednesday, but lost 2-0 to Cleveland at Target Field to drop two of three games to the Indians, who will have no problem strolling to the AL Central title. Cleveland is 10 games ahead of the second-place Twins.

“Just not enough offense and a couple missed plays on the defensive side,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said.

There are two months left in the season, and the dog days of summer can arrive quickly for playoff non-contenders. Quit is a four-letter word that teams like to avoid, so Molitor felt it was necessary to speak to the club before Tuesday’s game about finishing the season strong.

“You do the best you can,” Molitor said. “Everybody probably looks at it little bit differently in terms of how they digest the 20 percent turnover on the 25-man. Yeah, you know, you try to help them return their focus to where it needs to be. They’re going to talk and have an influence on leadership and you walk down on that field and all you can is go out there. But that’s how it always is.”

The Twins, shut out for the fifth time this season, mustered only five hits against an electric Carlos Carrasco and Chaska’s own Brad Hand, a recent acquisition from the Padres, who got the save. Hand got newly acquired Logan Forsythe to ground into a double play nicely started by Francisco Lindor to end a threat in the eighth inning, then struck out Logan Morrison after Jorge Polanco’s two-out bunt single in the ninth to end the game.

The big man, however, struck out to end the three hour, three minute game. The Twins are 1-5 since the purge began, and the offense — minus Dozier and Escobar — has taken a hit.

Carrasco (13-5) was the main reason Wednesday. He piled up five 1-2-3 innings and left the game with one out in the eighth with 10 strikeouts. Cleveland wasn’t in total control because Twins lefthander Adalberto Mejia, who pitched three shutout innings Sunday, tossed five more Wednesday.

Joe Mauer’s two out triple in the sixth was the only time a Twins player got past second base.

The Indians scored a run in the sixth on a double steal attempt off losing pitcher Matt Magill, as Rajai Davis scored from third while Jose Ramirez was thrown out at second.

Cleveland added an unearned run in the ninth against Fernando Rodney. Leonys Martin singled off Miguel Sano’s glove, then Yonder Alonso reached when Polanco missed Sano’s throw at second during an attempted force play. Yan Gomes followed with a bloop single to left-center over a drawn-in infield.

The Twins have an off day Thursday, and Molitor hopes his talk helps and the team is focused on Friday following trade deadline anxiety.

"Sometimes it feels a little more heightened because of the recent transactions," Molitor said. "I thought I had to go out and give my perspective on what happened. I think some guys embrace that and I think some guys might not even hear it. You're never quite sure. We'll see how they react in the upcoming days."

Brian Dozier's busy Dodgers debut includes home run in extra-inning victory
News Services | Star Tribune | August 2, 2018

LOS ANGELES — Brian Dozier's first game with his new team certainly was an eventful one.

The second baseman, traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday after spending his entire career with the Twins, earned a curtain call with a tying home run in the fifth inning Wednesday night, one of his three hits in a 6-4, 10-inning victory over the Milwaukee Brewers at Dodger Stadium.

Dozier was in the on-deck circle when Los Angeles catcher Yasmani Grandal ended the game with his second home run of the night, a two-run, walkoff blast off Matt Albers.

"It was a fun game," he said, "especially after the home run and curtain call. That was pretty cool."

Dozier also was partially responsible for Milwaukee's first run. Lorenzo Cain led off the game with a triple, and in trying to throw Cain out at third, Dozier's relay throw bounced to third baseman Manny Machado and into the stands, enabling Cain to walk home.

Milwaukee righthander Chase Anderson threw four perfect innings, but the Dodgers tied the score 2-2 in the fifth on back-to-back homers by Grandal and Dozier, who drove a fastball over the center-field fence at Dodger Stadium. Dozier earned a curtain call after the blast.

In the seventh, Dozier led off with a single, advanced to second on a one-out walk to Chris Taylor and came around to score on an RBI single by Yasiel Puig, giving Los Angeles a 3-2 lead.

An inning later, after Milwaukee had tied the score 4-4, Dozier nearly was the hero again. But with two out and Grandal on first, Dozier's drive to left bounced into the stands, keeping Grandal at first. Two batters later, with the bases loaded, newly acquired Brewers third baseman Mike Moustakas made a diving stop and threw out Chris Taylor, keeping the score tied.

Dozier joins a Dodgers team in the thick of a tight NL playoff race. Los Angeles is battling Arizona and Colorado for the NL West title and a number of other clubs, including the Brewers, for one of two wild cards.

"Love the way he plays the game," Roberts said of Dozier. "He's a hard-nosed player. I think there's more of that to come."

Half the infielders in this game were acquired in late July from AL teams: Dozier and Machado on the Dodgers, Moustakas and Jonathan Schoop on the Brewers. Schoop, the second baseman making his Milwaukee debut after joining Machado as a veteran traded away by Baltimore, went hitless in five at-bats, including three strikeouts.

Dozier was traded at Tuesday's nonwaiver trade deadline, the fifth veteran player traded by the Twins over a span of four days. All but one are free agents after the season. Dozier, a 2015 All-Star who hit 42 home runs in 2016, was hitting .224 with 16 homers and 52 RBI in 104 games with the Twins.

Byron Buxton put on disabled list, season in jeopardy
La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 2, 2018

Twins center fielder Byron Buxton was placed on the disabled list at Class AAA Rochester on Wednesday because of a continuing issue with his left wrist — a development that could sideline Buxton for the remainder of the season.

"He's got a strain in that wrist," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "Nothing structural, so we are going to shut him down here and reevaluate in 7-10 days and see where he's at."

If that's the case, then Buxton is in a race against time to return to action in the minors with an eye on playing in the majors in September.

As fast as Buxton is, he might be unable to beat time.

The Red Wings' season ends Sept. 3. Even if Buxton is healed in 10 days, he will likely need a stretch of rehabilitation days before he resumes baseball-related activities. The Twins will have to decide if it is worth having Buxton go through all that work for only 10 games or so.

So it's not out of the question that the Twins could shut Buxton down for the remainder of 2018 if the issue doesn't quickly correct itself.

"We have to see how long it is before he gets an opportunity to see what we can salvage [of his season]," Molitor said.

Buxton suffered the wrist injury July 13 and, after a stint on the DL, aggravated it this week. An MRI revealed no substantial damage.

The 2017 AL Gold Glove winner has also missed time this year because of migraines and a broken left big toe.

Buxton, 24, played in 28 games for the Twins this season and hit .156. In 22 games at Rochester, he was hitting .215.

New face

Logan Forsythe looked as if he could crawl onto one of the sofas in the Twins clubhouse and take a nap, but he was present and ready for action after being part of the deal that sent Brian Dozier to the Dodgers at the Tuesday deadline.

"Red eye, last night," the second baseman said. "I think it was the only flight, or the first flight, that we could get on. I got in at 5 this morning. I got here about 6 and dropped off my bags, and then I got about an hour of sleep and came back over."

He got his chance when he pinch hit for Ehire Adrianza in the eighth inning, with one out and two on against Brad Hand. Forsythe hit a hard grounder on which All-Star shortstop Francisco Lindor made a splendid play to his right to rob Forsythe of a hit, then start a double play.

"Good to see Logan get out there," Molitor said. "He hit the ball sharply and Lindor made a nice play."

Helping with the transition for Forsythe is that he knows Bobby Wilson, Jake Odorizzi, Logan Morrison and bench coach Derek Shelton from his days with Tampa Bay. The roughest part might be that he dropped from being 10 games over .500 with the Dodgers to being nine games under .500 with the Twins.

"Yeah, it's tough," he said. "When you look at it from a standings perspective, yes, of course you want to be on a first-place team and be competitive and compete and go to the World Series. I mean, we did it last year. We went to Game 7 last year, but sometimes it might be better if you get to another club and kind of have a fresh start.

"It's never really in the player's control of where you go or how you're utilized on the team, so I just take it with a grain of salt and thank those guys for getting me over there in the first place and getting me an opportunity. I enjoyed my time over there, but I think it was time for me to start anew."

Staying put

The Twins and Class AAA Rochester officially announced a working agreement through the 2020 season. The Red Wings have served as the Twins' top minor league affiliate since 2003.

Twins' goal of making playoffs turns into rebuilding plan

Sid Hartman | Star Tribune | August 2, 2018

When the Twins left spring training, everyone seemed to think they were posed for a breakout season. The front office had made what they thought were smart moves by trading for Jake Odorizzi and signing Logan Morrison, Lance Lynn, Zach Duke, Addison Reed and Fernando Rodney to free-agent deals.

Paul Molitor, fresh off an AL Manager of the Year award, had signed a new three-year contract.

On top of that, breakout performance in 2017 by Byron Buxton, Miguel Sano, Eddie Rosario, Jorge Polanco and Max Kepler seemed to signal the future was now for the Twins.

But after their 2-0 loss to Cleveland on Wednesday, the Twins are 49-58 this season. And after trading off Lynn, Duke, Eduardo Escobar, Ryan Pressly and Brian Dozier, they are back in rebuilding mode.

The Twins had no chance of re-signing Dozier after this season. Escobar was interested in signing a contract, and it would cost them maybe \$10 million in a multiyear deal to bring him back. And I think that's the one thing the front office could have done to make the fans less upset about

their trade deadline deals.

And if they bring Escobar back in the offseason, they might win some fans back.

“I would imagine his ties here and the fact that his career really emerged as a Twin, you’d like to think that has some possibility,” Molitor said.

The contracts of Morrison, Joe Mauer, Ervin Santana and Matt Belisle come off the books at the end of the season, meaning the team’s payroll for 2019 is currently \$28.7 million.

The team will have a lot of money to spend on free agents, and Mauer’s future will be the talk of the town.

Molitor said several developments weren’t expected when the team broke spring training.

“There is always going to be changes. People are going to get hurt, some people perform, some guys maybe don’t have the best years,” Molitor said. “But we just had a large group of players and pitchers in a season where there was potential movement after the year and we got down to a situation where we put ourselves in a spot, being under .500 most of the year, and we had to make some tough decisions on some really good people.”

Does he think the team will continue to compete for the rest of the season?

“I think the guys are going to respond. You can’t predict what will happen over the last 55 or 56 games other than you expect good effort,” he said. “You want guys to enjoy the competition and still believe they can go out there and finish strongly.”

Stalled development

Maybe the toughest part of this year for the Twins has been the lack of progress for Buxton and Sano.

Buxton might be shelved for the season after another wrist injury and he could enter 2019 as a 25-year-old with a career .230 average in 306 major league games.

“He does have a strain,” Molitor said. “We can’t afford to let him try to play through that, so we’re going to shut him down here for the next seven to 10 days and reevaluate and see if we can get him back on the field.”

Meanwhile, Sano was so undisciplined he went to Fort Myers for a baseball and personal rehab.

Molitor is hoping Sano’s recent play — four hits, including two doubles, in the Cleveland series — shows he is on the right track.

The Twins will start 2019 in a much different place than they did in 2018. Instead of thinking playoffs, they’ll be thinking rebuild.

Brad Hand willing to take on any bullpen role to help his new team win

Patrick Reusse | Star Tribune | August 2, 2018

The Cleveland Indians traded two prospects in the days leading to the deadline and acquired three big-leaguers: relievers Brad Hand and Adam Cimber and center fielder Leonys Martin. The Twins traded five players off the roster and added one player to the big-league clubhouse: second baseman Logan Forsythe.

The Indians could add reliever Andrew Miller from a rehab assignment for the start of a three-game series against the Los Angeles Angels this weekend in Cleveland. Twins manager Paul Molitor was asked if there was a player at Class AAA Rochester that he wanted to see for an August look and said, “Not really.”

Meaning, there were substantially different vibes in the teams’ clubhouses on Wednesday morning at Target Field.

Forsythe took a redeye from Los Angeles and met with three reporters in the home clubhouse at 10 a.m. Catcher Bobby Wilson, once a teammate in Tampa Bay, exchanged a couple of quips, but that was it for byplay.

Down the hall, there were clusters of Indians in animated conversations, and long-haired starter Mike Clevenger using those giant rubber bands for exercise in a corridor, and even a former Cleveland front-office member — Derek Falvey — dropping in for a visit with his friend, manager Terry Francona.

As the Twins’ baseball boss, Falvey was the overseer of the Twins’ blood-letting that first sent away Eduardo Escobar and Ryan Pressly for

prospects who could be making an impact at Class AA Chattanooga by 2020. This was followed by progressively worse rewards for Lance Lynn and Zack Duke, and finally Brian Dozier was gift-wrapped to the Dodgers for Forsythe and two ho-hum minor leaguers.

The Twins were never going to be an object closer than it appeared for Cleveland this summer, and when the Indians fixed the bullpen on July 19 by trading top catching prospect Francisco Mejia for Hand and Cimber, it was all over but the waving goodbye — to both Cleveland and to veteran teammates.

Hand, 28, is the lefthander from Chaska who went from being released by Miami in 2016 to become a two-time All-Star (2017-18) with San Diego.

Carl Willis, Cleveland's pitching coach, said: "I called Darren Balsley, the San Diego pitching coach, after the trade and he said, 'The great thing about Hand is he can do anything you want him to do. He can close, he can set up, and he can pitch earlier in the game, and you're going to get his best stuff in every situation. He doesn't care when in a game; he just wants to pitch and get outs.'"

Hand is married with two kids. They were settled in San Diego for the season, a very nice place when not in the middle of a heat wave, and he was pitching in a big ballpark.

"The San Diego ballpark isn't as big as you might think; the ball carries," Hand said. "There were a lot of rumors that I was going to be traded last summer, and nothing happened, so I wasn't expecting it this time.

"As a competitor, this is what you want: a first-place club that can reach the playoffs and make a run. The talent is outstanding. I haven't been here long, but I've seen enough to know this has to be the best left side of the infield in baseball with Jose [Ramirez] at third and Francisco [Lindor] at shortstop."

Hand verified the Balsley scouting report in Cleveland's victories in Games 2 and 3 of the Target Field series:

He came on with one out in the seventh and got four outs without giving up a run Tuesday. He came in with one out in the eighth and got the last five outs in Wednesday's 2-0 victory.

Hand was Miami's second-rounder in 2008. The Marlins used him as a starter, a middle reliever, a long reliever and finally put him on waivers to start the 2016 season. San Diego claimed him on April 8, started using him late, and found an All-Star.

"Miami didn't really try me as a one-inning guy," Hand said. "The big thing, though, was I started throwing a slider more often. It was sort of a self-taught slider, and it became a better pitch for me than the curveball."

Presuming Miller arrives Friday, Andrew will bring the most notorious, sweeping slider in baseball. "I know Andrew from Miami," Hand said. "It will be great to have him in our bullpen."

Not so great for lefty hitters ... a bullpen with sliders from Hand and Miller. The Twins are in Cleveland next week. Logan Morrison and the fellas might want to borrow an oar from P.J. Fleck.

Wednesday's Twins-Cleveland game recap

La Velle E. Neal III | Star Tribune | August 2, 2018

IMPACT PLAYER: Carlos Carrasco, Cleveland

He earned his 13th victory with 7⅓ shutout innings, scattering four hits while recording his fourth 10-strikeout game of the season.

BY THE NUMBERS

5 Times the Twins have been shut out this season.

30 Career triples for Joe Mauer, who hit his first of the season but was stranded at third.

14-11 The Indians' road record against AL Central opponents.

ON DECK

The Royals, who swept the Twins at Kansas City two weeks ago, visit Target Field beginning this weekend.

Twins' Jorge Polanco offers no excuses after 2-0 loss to Indians
Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 1, 2018

Twins shortstop Jorge Polanco offered no alibis for the two simple mistakes that led to the only runs of a frustrating Wednesday afternoon at Target Field.

“No excuses,” Polanco said through a team-issued translator after a 2-0 loss to the Cleveland Indians. “On two different occasions, I felt like I had the ball. The ball was there. I thought I had it in my glove, and it wasn’t there.”

In fairness to Polanco, the 25-year-old switch-hitter also provided two of the Twins’ five hits. He ripped a two-out single to right in the fourth off Carlos Carrasco to give the Twins’ their first base-runner, and he added a bunt single with two outs in the ninth off closer Brad Hand to bring Logan Morrison to the plate as the potential tying run.

Morrison, who made three loud outs at 105 mph-plus against Carrasco, struck out to end the game.

The teams might have headed for extra innings at that point had Polanco been able to squeeze Rajai Davis’ one-out liner in the sixth or Miguel Sano’s double-play feed in the ninth. Instead, Matt Magill took the loss after Jose Ramirez, who had seven hits and two walks in the three-game series, singled Davis to third.

With Edwin Encarnacion batting and one out, the Indians executed a double steal against Twins catcher Mitch Garver, who threw to second as instructed to get Ramirez for the second out. The return throw home from Ehire Adrianza was too late to get the speedy Davis, who snapped the scoreless tie.

Yan Gomes singled over a shallow infield in the ninth to drive home Leonys Martin with an insurance run. Yonder Alonso had bounced into an apparent double play, but Polanco whiffed on Sano’s throw from third and the ball wound up in right field.

Polanco, who added another highlight play ranging to his left to get Melky Cabrera on a fifth-inning grounder, was charged with his third error in 26 games since returning from an 80-game steroid suspension.

“The first one, I don’t know if it fooled him,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “Sometimes those line drives can either knuckle or hook, and it just looked like he didn’t get extended as far as he needed to.”

Minnesota Twins’ Logan Forsythe bats against the Cleveland Indians in the eighth inning of a baseball game Wednesday, Aug. 1, 2018, in Minneapolis. The Indians won 2-0. (AP Photo/Bruce Kluckhohn)

On the play in the ninth, Molitor said it looked like Polanco might have lost the ball in the shirt sleeves of the fans sitting behind third.

“The third baseman’s closing on you and you have to really focus,” Molitor said. “It’s coming out of the crowd. There’s daylight. And he just didn’t handle it. I couldn’t see exactly how it hit off his glove. I just know that you’ve got to catch the ball.”

Hitting it would be helpful, too, but the Twins were unable to make it three straight shellings of Carrasco (13-5). Back in June, they had pinned 10 earned runs on him in five combined innings over two starts.

This time, with Brian Dozier and Eduardo Escobar traded into the National League West, the Indians rode their sturdy right-hander to 10-game lead in the American League Central. Blessed with a mid-90s fastball and an assortment of offspeed pitches, Carrasco struck out 10 and walked none in 7 1/3 innings of four-hit ball.

Sano had a leadoff single on a full-count curveball in the fifth, and Joe Mauer hustled around for his first triple this year with two down in the sixth. But Carrasco got Eddie Rosario to chase a curveball in the dirt.

Max Kepler pulled a changeup to right to start the eighth, and Robbie Grossman worked a 10-pitch walk off Hand (Chaska High), but newly acquired Logan Forsythe hit a bullet to shortstop that Francisco Lindor turned into a double play.

That dropped Forsythe’s career-low batting average on balls in play to .254.

Twins lefty Adalberto Mejia matched Carrasco with zeroes through the first five innings. Despite walking three and striking out just two, Mejia allowed just one hit: No. 9 hitter Erik Gonzalez’s one-out single to left in the third.

Mejia, who threw strike one to just half his 18 batters, was pulled at 74 pitches after two trips through the lineup. He hadn’t started in nine days but threw 39 pitches in a three-inning relief outing on Sunday at Boston’s Fenway Park.

Sano and Kepler added standout plays behind Mejia, but Polanco's temporary blips proved costly.

"I set my mind positive," Polanco said. "My mindset is to work hard every day. I've been working hard on my defense. It's a very important part of my game."

Logan Forsythe hopes to turn his season around with the Twins

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 1, 2018

Logan Forsythe was working on one hour's sleep after taking the four-hour redeye flight from Los Angeles, so he tried not to yawn Wednesday morning.

Included to balance out the salaries in Tuesday's deal that sent Brian Dozier to the Dodgers for a pair of Double-A prospects, and Forsythe didn't plan on taking a nap before the noon start.

"Got to get ready," the veteran infielder said.

Like Dozier, Forsythe is a 31-year-old second baseman making \$9 million in the final year of his contract. Also like Dozier, he is struggling through a down year that has shrouded his future value with some level of uncertainty.

It helps that Forsythe can play third base, as well, but it may have been the differing arm angles in bouncing around the diamond that led to the right shoulder weakness that landed him on the disabled list for a month in mid-April. He says his shoulder was fine once the inflammation was chased out and that he doesn't mind providing versatility.

"The past few years I've been versatile," he said. "If I find myself in one position, I'm not going to be mad either way. It's just kind of nice to get back out there and get more of an everyday routine and get the body back into that. It might take a week or two to get in shape for that."

Shipped from Tampa Bay to the Dodgers in January 2017 after Dozier talks with the Twins broke down, Forsythe reached base at a .435 clip last October (46 plate appearances) in the Dodgers' run to Game 7 of the World Series. Drafted by the San Diego Padres 46th overall in 2008 out of the University of Arkansas, he didn't see his Dodgers time as being pressure-laden despite seeing his production decline in both seasons.

According to Fangraphs.com, his minus-0.6 Wins Above Replacement ranks him in the bottom 15 of major leaguers with at least 200 plate appearances. Batting .207 overall this season, he has seen that figure drop to .148 with a no extra-base hits and a .224 on-base percentage in part-time duty since June 20 (67 plate appearances).

Ehire Adrianza figures to share playing time at second with Forsythe, who had Twins bench coach Derek Shelton as his hitting coach on a 2016 Rays team that is now well represented with the Twins. Forsythe joins former Rays teammates Logan Morrison, Jake Odorizzi and Bobby Wilson on the 25-man roster, with Taylor Motter down in Triple-A.

Forsythe pinch hit in the eighth inning against Brad Hand on Wednesday but hit sharply into a double play.

MAY DAY

Before Trevor May took the mound for his first big-league appearance in nearly two years (Sept. 11, 2016), he made sure to walk down memory lane. A 17-month rehab from Tommy John surgery left the 28-year-old right-hander in a contemplative mood.

Among those he thought about: former Twins assistant athletic trainer and rehab coordinator Lanning Tucker, who left the organization last fall after 26 seasons.

"I walked around the field and kind of had flashbacks to working with Lanning," May said. "Running in the pool and my knee was sore. Throwing out on a line before everybody else. It all came back. I tried to look around a little bit and say, 'Hey, pat yourself on the back.' There have been some dark days."

May gave up a run in Tuesday's ninth inning on a pair of soft singles. The plan is to keep him in the bullpen for now.

OVER-DU(K)E

Veteran lefty reliever Zach Duke, traded to Seattle on Monday, made 45 outings for the Twins without allowing a homer. So what happened in his first outing with the Mariners on Tuesday? Houston outfielder Josh Reddick took him deep for a two-run shot in the ninth inning of the Astros' 5-2 win.

It was just the second homer off Duke by a lefty since Aug. 3, 2015. Cincinnati's Scott Schebler got him last September.

Should the Mariners reach the postseason, it would end another streak for Duke. His 514 career outings lead all active pitchers yet to appear in the postseason. Steve Cishek of the Chicago Cubs is second at 474 outings.

BRIEFLY

Byron Buxton (strained left wrist) was placed on the DL at Triple-A. ... Former Twins closer Glen Perkins called Wednesday's game on Facebook Live along with former big-league outfielder Jody Gerut and play-by-play man Scott Braun of MLB Network. ... Despite Thursday's off day, the Twins will stay in their normal rotation (minus the traded Lance Lynn) this weekend against the Kansas City Royals. Jake Odorizzi will start Friday, followed by Jose Berrios and Ervin Santana. ... The Twins extended their player-development contract with Triple-A Rochester for another two years through 2020. That will mark 18 seasons of the relationship.

Bob Sansevere: St. Paul's Wally Wescott saw three Hall of Fame careers from the start

Bob Sansevere | Pioneer Press | August 1, 2018

Wally Wescott was in Cooperstown, N.Y., Sunday for Jack Morris' enshrinement into the National Baseball Hall of Fame, smiling and holding a sign that celebrated Morris' teenage days as an American Legion ballplayer on the St. Paul-Christie de Parcq team.

Wescott coached that team in the early 1970s, and Morris' induction was an event he didn't want to miss.

"It was simply amazing, especially the fact he was a St. Paul kid," Wescott said. "And he definitely deserved it."

Wescott, 83, is a rarity among youth coaches. He was a coach to two Hall of Famer players — Morris in American Legion ball and Paul Molitor in grade school — while coaching against a third, Dave Winfield, in Legion ball.

The Pioneer Press interviewed Wescott about his time as Morris' coach.

Was this trip something where you said, "If (Morris) ever gets in, I'm going?"

Oh, yeah. Even if I had to bicycle out there, I would have gone. At the Hall of Fame, they have that parade with all the ballplayers. I had that Christie de Parcq sign. Jack was pointing at it, and clapping at it. It was great to see.

You also coached Paul Molitor. Were you at his enshrinement as well?

Oh, yeah. I went to Paul Molitor's, too. If I would recommend to parents where to take their kids, it would be the Hall of Fame. Hopefully, next year Tony Oliva will get in.

Were Paul and Jack on the same team?

I had Paul on St. Luke's grade school team. I didn't coach him in American Legion ball. I had him when he was in the sixth grade. He was the best player on the eighth grade team.

Were you hoping Jack would mention his time playing American Legion ball during his enshrinement speech?

No, actually, I didn't expect it. I thought he did a good job with his speech.

Was American Legion ball a bigger deal when Morris and Molitor played than high school baseball?

It was better baseball. You'd get kids on your team from three or four high schools. Often times, people ask me, "What's your definition of a competitor?" I say, "Kirby Puckett hits the home run in Game 6 (of the 1991 World Series) and Jack is going to pitch in Game 7 on three days rest and Jack says, 'Let's get it on.'" I use that as a great example of competitiveness.

How good was Morris when he pitched for you?

He was extremely wild. The umpires would say, 'Wes, could you get him out? He's killing us back here.' Bobby Wasko was a great pitching coach in St. Paul and I sent Jack to him because he was so wild. Bobby said he had wonderful form and can throw extremely hard but he has one problem: He can't throw strikes.

Obviously, he straightened that out.

He'd hit a kid, maybe walk two and then strike out the side. He was very consistent or erratic. I coached him for two years. He got better but still was wild. People say, "What was it like to coach Jack Morris?" And I'd say, "The only time he'd get in my face is when he wasn't pitching, he

wanted to catch. I didn't want him to split a finger or hurt his hand catching, so I put him at shortstop. He never missed a practice in two years.

Did he have that edge back then?

When I'd have to take him out sometimes, he was not real happy with that. He'd say, "What do you mean? Why?" Most of the time, I'd let him finish the games. I didn't have many pitchers, and the hitters feared him. He finished a lot of games but he wasn't real consistent.

Not many youth coaches can say they coached two Hall of Famers. Do people ever ask who was better?

Molitor was what I call a natural athlete. As far as better, I know Dennis Denning was our phys ed teacher at St. Luke. He came to me and said, "I have a kid in my class who will be in the major leagues." I said, "What's his name?" He said, "Paul Molitor." He was in the fourth grade.

Did either Morris or Molitor surprise you with the success they had?

No. Molitor was such a natural and great athlete. And Jack Morris, I was the one who wanted scouts to sign him when he was a senior in high school. I never had a kid that threw that hard — with us or against us.

When did you stop coaching and do you miss it?

I stopped coaching in the late '70s. I miss it when I go by playgrounds. I don't see any kids out there taking hits. You just don't see it. I think it'd still be fun to coach.

Wetmore's 5 thoughts: Which Twins players could be candidates to be traded in August?

Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | August 2, 2018

The Minnesota Twins completed their pre-trade deadline sequence of moves by dealing Brian Dozier to the Los Angeles Dodgers for Logan Forsythe and a couple of prospects that didn't exactly inspire Twins fans. Sending a popular guy like Dozier to SoCal would have been a much bigger gut punch — to the clubhouse and to fans of the team — had it not been preceded by the first of a series of body blows, when the Twins traded Eduardo Escobar to the Arizona Diamondbacks for a few intriguing players that many baseball fans have not yet heard of.

We don't have a grade for the Twins at the trade deadline because report cards aren't due just yet. And as every good educator or writer knows, there's little point in doing something right now that would be better held for another day in the future.

This column is about August trades. The ones that require waivers, and that historically have been much rarer than the non-waiver trades that tend to happen late in July. Last season's August trade period was bananas, and most famously swung the World Series to the Houston Astros when long-time Tigers ace Justin Verlander was dealt with minutes to go before the waiver trade "deadline."

So, if we have anywhere close to a repeat of last year's active August on the trade market, will the Twins get involved? Which players could be candidates to get dealt? Let's take a look at a few candidates.

Logan Morrison

Morrison has not been what Twins fans were hoping for when their favorite team landed a 38-homer breakout slugger during spring training. He was expected to get a bulk of the plate appearances at DH and spell Joe Mauer from time to time at first base, all while delivering on the improved power he showcased in Tampa Bay last season.

Instead, he's hitting .193/.290/.383 with 14 home runs as a DH and part-time first baseman. Even if his batted-ball profile and expected Weighted On-Base Average would suggest there's some bad luck working against him, those are not the offensive numbers he would hope to see roughly two-thirds of the way through the season. He's owed roughly \$1.8 million the rest of the year with an \$8 million option for next year, or a \$1 million buyout. There are also some plate-appearance-based incentives that he could reach. So the August question becomes: Would a team claim him at about \$2.8 million for two months of a lefty power threat? And what would the Twins do with the roster spot if he was no longer on the team?

Logan Forsythe

Forsythe was just acquired in the Dozier trade and made his Twins debut Wednesday. He's being paid about \$2.9 million the rest of the season, and frankly this year hasn't been up to his previous standards offensively. A free agent at the end of the year, Forsythe is hitting just .207/.270/.290, and had worked his way out of regular playing time at Chavez Ravine in Southern California.

Even an August hot stretch at the plate might not help his market fully recover in time for the winter's contract hunt. But it could possibly have some team looking to pay for his services down the stretch. More likely, in my opinion, is that he would clear waivers and then the Twins would be free to trade him to any interested party. I think I would only go this route if I was really curious to see somebody else — Ehre Adrianza, Nick

Gordon — at second base for the final 6-8 weeks of the season.

Fernando Rodney

The Fernando Rodney Experience has been mostly good for the Twins but it's had its frustrating moments. The first month in particular was lousy, which probably sticks around in the minds of followers longer because it takes a while for even a good reliever's numbers to recover.

Since May 1, Rodney has pitched 32 innings with a 37:13 strikeout-to-walk ratio (27.8% strikeout rate) and a 2.81 ERA. At just \$1.4 million the rest of the way — plus a \$4.25 million option next year or a quarter-million-dollar buyout — the ageless closer is also relatively affordable. The trouble with trying to trade Rodney, I guess, is that every contender already appears to have a stacked bullpen. Rodney could slide into the 7th or 8th inning if a contender was looking to lengthen its list of relief options this August. Maybe in the event of an injury. Short of that, would the Twins be better off just keeping Rodney, making the call on the option this November, and if they bring him back, assigning him to the 7th or 8th inning next year? The prospect return in a trade likely would be minimal.

Ervin Santana

Santana's odyssey back to the big leagues is well-documented. He's back now, and appears to be pitching with a diminished fastball from what we saw out of Erv last year. He's got a couple of starts under his belt, and that would have to be enough for a team to want to take a risk on him, since the post-surgery body of work isn't extensive.

He's owed about \$4.6 million the rest of this year and has a team option for \$14 million next year. I'd probably turn down that 2019 option if I was the Twins, so let's assume he's in a free-agent walk year for any club interested in the services of the veteran former rotation rock. If he makes 10 starts the rest of the way, is that worth the money to some team out there? Or, would that contract allow Santana to slip through waivers and become a tradeable commodity again?

Addison Reed

Reed has had his own troubles this year, and they include performance plus a period in which he was held out of games for an extended stretch and then a triceps injury that landed him on the disabled list. The veteran reliever just recently returned to action, and he's owed roughly \$2.8 million the rest of this season and \$8.5 million more next year. That ought to get Reed and his 4.71 ERA through waivers, but I also wonder about the personal side here. Reed took a lesser offer than I expected he'd get last winter when he inked a two-year contract with the Twins — I'd heard it's because he wanted to pitch in the Midwest for family reasons.

On one hand, do the Twins "owe" anything to Reed beyond the terms of his contract? On the other, is four rocky months enough to want to crumple up that agreement?

Honorable mentions

Matt Belisle

A Cleveland Indians team that was in desperate need of bullpen reinforcements cut him loose, and the Twins picked him up at that point and plugged him into their bullpen. Belisle is very highly regarded in the clubhouse, and my sense is that the Twins could use that type of selfless player for the final two months of a trying season.

I don't know that he will stick around for the rest of the year, especially as it gets into audition time for next year. But I do know that he's a pro who has earned a lot of respect and even on a minimal salary, there is not likely to be much trade value for his services.

Joe Mauer

Mauer still owns the no-move clause in his contract and could veto anything the Twins presented. If the comfort of finishing out 2018 in a Twins uniform — and then figuring out the rest later — means more to Mauer than a chance to chase a championship at age 35, then why wouldn't he just stay put?

He's owed roughly \$7.8 million the rest of the season, and any suitor would need to be looking primarily for a good defensive first baseman that can get on base. If Mauer reaches base 56 more times in a Twins uniform, he'll pass Harmon Killebrew for the most times on base in Twins history.

Another setback: Byron Buxton hits the DL in the minor leagues after wrist injury returns **Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | August 1, 2018**

Byron Buxton apparently took a few awkward swings during a Rochester Red Wings game this week and it led to being pulled from the lineup.

And after MRI's were taken, Twins manager Paul Molitor said there was no damage to the hamate bone in Buxton's hand — often a concern that can really hinder how a player swings a bat.

But now Buxton is going back on the disabled list in Triple-A, according to multiple reports Wednesday, with a left wrist strain that the Twins will re-evaluate in a week or so.

Just the latest in a string of bad news for one of the most important players in the Twins organization.

The 2018 season has been a rough one for the former top prospect in all of baseball. He's had his struggles at the plate and a series of injuries has wiped out an awful lot of development time, which has happened in the past for the speedy centerfielder. This year alone Buxton has dealt with migraines that landed him on the DL, a fractured big toe that he tried to play through and eventually could not, and more recently a wrist injury that now has the Twins giving him a break from International League play.

Buxton is currently hitting .156/.183/.200 in the big leagues this year, and despite Gold Glove play in centerfielder, he appears to have taken a significant step backwards at the plate from the superstar-caliber play the Twins saw from him in the final two months last season. Perhaps the original toe injury hampered his swing at times earlier this year.

In any case, Buxton figures to be a significant part of the Twins' immediate future if he can get healthy and get his production back to the neighborhood it lived in the final two months last season.

At just 24 years old, it's too early to give up on a player as gifted and game-changing as Buxton. At the same time, in his fourth season in the big leagues it's getting too late to merely ignore the concerns.

Zulgad: Twins' divorce from Brian Dozier had become inevitable
Judd Zulgad | ESPN 1500 | August 1, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — The decision to deal Brian Dozier before Tuesday's non-waiver trade deadline seemed to be the final straw for some Twins' faithful. The affable second baseman had become a fan favorite and his second-half power surges overshadowed the fact that he was an incredibly streaky player.

“How could the Twins trade Dozier?!” was the refrain of a few.

The issue is if you were surprised by Dozier being the fifth Twin dealt in a five-day sale, you weren't paying attention. If there was to be a divorce certificate filed in this separation it would read, like so many do, “irreconcilable differences.”

This break up was put into place the day the day that Derek Falvey was named the Twins' chief baseball officer and Thad Levine came aboard as the general manager after the 2016 season.

The official split — which saw Dozier shipped to the Los Angeles Dodgers for minor league outfielder Luke Raley, minor league lefthander Devin Smeltzer and second baseman Logan Forsythe — became inevitable this spring when it was made clear that Dozier, entering the final season of his contract, wasn't going to get an extension.

There was only one way to read this: Falvey and Levine were comfortable with the fact that Dozier wouldn't return. Was that because of Dozier's penchant for having one great half or because they were expecting prospect Nick Gordon to take the second base job in 2019? That's not exactly clear.

The truth was that Falvey and Levine would have ended this relationship during their first offseason in charge, and before Dozier ever played a game under their leadership, if the brass had been able to get more than just pitching prospect Jose DeLeon from the Dodgers.

“You can only say you want to be here so much, and nothing gets done,” Dozier told Star Tribune columnist Jim Souhan during spring training. “That's just the way it is. I understand everything. At the same time, you're six months away from free agency. That's intriguing.”

Dozier was coming off a season in which he hit 34 home runs and drove in 93 runs. The previous season, Dozier had hit 42 home runs, a record for an American League second baseman, and drove in 99. Those are impressive totals but both followed a poor first half. In 2016, Dozier hit 29 home runs and had 61 RBIs after July 1. Last season, he had 21 home runs and 58 RBIs after that date.

It didn't help Dozier that there was no prolonged hot stretch this season. He departed the Twins with 16 home runs and 52 RBIs and was hitting .224/.305/.402. It also didn't help that for a second consecutive year the Twins' self-appointed spokesman bristled about deals made as the deadline approached.

A year ago, after seeing starter Jaime Garcia and closer Brandon Kintzler moved during a rough stretch, Dozier expressed his disappointment and the Twins rebounded to make the American League wild card game.

This time, though, Dozier's comments rang hollow considering how poorly the Twins had played for much of this year. Not once did he put the blame on himself and his teammates for the Twins being in their current predicament.

Dozier now gets the opportunity to join a Dodgers team that made it to the World Series last year and entered Wednesday a half-game back in the NL Central race. He will hit the free-agent market this fall and have an opportunity to explore his options and find a place where he's appreciated.

Dozier undoubtedly will have teams pursuing him, but he shouldn't expect his ex-team to be one of them. Falvey and Levine long ago sent a message that they were moving on.

Carrasco, Indians top Twins 2-0 to push lead to 10 games **Associated Press | ESPN | August 1, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS -- The Cleveland Indians have turned this division race into a late-summer cruise, with the Minnesota Twins already in future-planning mode.

Carlos Carrasco struck out 10 while taking a shutout into the eighth inning, winning his fourth straight start since returning from the disabled list to carry the Indians to a 2-0 victory over the Twins on Wednesday.

Brad Hand recorded the last five outs for his second save in as many attempts with the Indians, who stretched their lead over the Twins in the AL Central to 10 games and improved to 32-15 in intra-division games this season.

"It's fun," Hand said. "We've played some good baseball, so just try to keep things going and ride it out."

After the Indians acquired Hand and fellow reliever Adam Cimber from San Diego during the All-Star break, the Twins front office formally surrendered 2018 by trading five regulars in separate trades that fetched 12 players and only one current major leaguer.

Carrasco (13-5), who missed three weeks with a bruised elbow before his reinstatement on July 6, has 63 strikeouts in his last eight starts. This was his fourth turn with double-digit strikeouts, and he won his fifth straight decision. Carrasco picked up a victory with one inning of relief on July 15, right before the All-Star break.

"That's part of how we feel we can be a good team," manager Terry Francona said. "Every time we send a starter out there, we feel like we've got a chance."

The Indians, who won a series against the Twins for the first time in four tries this year, have allowed only 13 runs over their last six games. Their ERA against AL Central teams is 2.70 this season, the best intra-division mark in MLB. The Indians also led the major leagues in July in runs, steals and batting average.

The bullpen that has been their biggest concern? Over the past nine games, Indians relievers have a collective 1.08 ERA. Hand, the two-time All-Star and Minnesota native, had 24 saves in 29 opportunities with the Padres.

Jorge Polanco, who had two of Minnesota's five hits, singled in the fourth after Carrasco retired the first 11 batters. Joe Mauer hit his first triple of the year after an eight-pitch, two-out at-bat in the sixth, but Carrasco struck out the side.

"It's pretty scary if you've got a guy like that," shortstop Francisco Lindor said.

The Twins agreed.

"His changeup was on. His slider was on," left fielder Max Kepler said. "He was getting sneaky fastballs by people because he was using so much off-speed."

THROWING THROUGH

Adalberto Mejia gave the Twins five scoreless innings to start with only one hit allowed, but reliever Matt Magill allowed a run in the sixth when Rajai Davis came home during catcher Mitch Garver's throw to second base to catch Jose Ramirez stealing. Davis, who was not credited with a stolen base, started the rally with a single.

The Twins directed Garver to throw rather than hold the ball.

"I wasn't going to give him a free base," manager Paul Molitor said.

MARTIN ON BOARD

Leonys Martin, who was acquired to bolster the injury-depleted outfield in an intra-division trade with the Detroit Tigers to beat the deadline on Tuesday, made his Cleveland debut as a pinch-hitter in the sixth inning and singled in the ninth. Greg Allen, who had three runs and three hits on Tuesday, was sent back to Triple-A Columbus after two games.

FORSYTHE FORSAKES SLEEP

Logan Forsythe, who came to Minnesota with two minor league players from the Dodgers in the trade for Brian Dozier, made his first appearance for the Twins by sharply grounding into a double play as a pinch-hitter in the eighth. Lindor made a slick scoop and pivot to start the play.

After boarding a red-eye flight from Los Angeles, Forsythe was at the ballpark for the matinee with minimal rest.

"It's a new way to kind of mesh in with a new clubhouse and a core group of veterans," said Forsythe, who'll take most of the games at second base to fill in for Dozier. "It's just exciting, man. It's a new chapter."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Miller could rejoin the bullpen on Friday, Francona said, or he might be asked to stay on his rehab assignment and pitch more than one inning. Miller has been out for more than two months with right knee trouble.

UP NEXT

Indians: There's no game scheduled on Thursday, before the team returns home to host Los Angeles in a three-game series. RHP Mike Clevinger (7-7, 3.43 ERA) starts for the Indians, and RHP Jaime Barria (6-7, 3.74 ERA) pitches for the Angels.

Twins: Following a day off, RHP Jake Odorizzi (4-7, 4.58 ERA) takes the mound on Friday night to start a three-game series against Kansas City. RHP Heath Fillmyer (0-1, 3.29 ERA) pitches for the Royals.

Olney: What trade deadline? These 12 players could move in August **Buster Olney | ESPN | August 2, 2018**

As the final hours before the trade deadline ticked down this week, an executive for one contender spoke confidently about opportunities to come. "There will be a lot of deals [in August]," he said, "because guys will get through waivers and teams will want to save money."

The Mets' trade of Jay Bruce to the Indians a year ago was a classic example of this. Bruce was in the midst of an excellent season in which he would hit 36 homers, with a .275 batting average, and he passed through waivers without anyone placing a claim. The Mets could've kept him through the end of the season, but in an effort to save about \$4 million, they basically gave him away to Cleveland, taking a player in return to dress up the deal -- minor-league pitcher Ryder Ryan, a 30th-round draft pick currently in Double-A.

You could make an argument that the Mets, who have a thin farm system, should have used the moment to add a better prospect by assuming more of Bruce's contract. But there is nothing wrong with this: In the midst of a lost season, it's good business for a non-contender to save some money.

We loosely referred to July 31 as the trade deadline, but rest assured, the real deadline is Aug. 31, by which contenders must add players to make them eligible to play in the postseason.

Here are some players who could move this month, either by getting claimed on waivers or by passing through and then being traded

5. Logan Forsythe, Minnesota Twins

He'll make about \$3 million for the next two months and in a year in which he's batting .206, he'd presumably clear waivers. When -- and not if -- a contender loses an infielder to an injury, Forsythe will be available.

August MLB trade candidates: Josh Donaldson, Matt Harvey, Andrew McCutchen and more **Mike Axisa | CBS Sports | August 2, 2018**

The 2018 non-waiver trade deadline has come and gone. Many players who were expected to be traded were indeed traded. And, as always, there were some surprise trades as well. Here is our trade tracker.

It is important to note trades can still happen after July 31. They just require trade waivers. Here's a quick primer on how trade waivers work:

All players on the 40-man roster must go through trade waivers to be traded after July 31. Non-40-man roster players can be traded at any time.

Players who pass through trade waivers unclaimed can be traded anywhere. Players who are claimed can only be traded to the claiming team. The two sides have 48 hours to work out a deal.

If a player is claimed on trade waivers, his team can pull him back and keep him. Trade waivers are completely revocable.

Most post-July 31 trades are minor deals, though significant August trades do occasionally happen. Justin Verlander was traded in August last year, for example. The blockbuster trade that sent Adrian Gonzalez and Carl Crawford from the Red Sox to the Dodgers way back when also went down in August.

As always, several players who were on the trade market prior to July 31 will remain on the market in August, especially impending free agents on non-contending teams. Here are five players who could on the move via an August waiver trade.

Ervin Santana

Offseason finger surgery sidelined Twins righty Ervin Santana the entire first half. He returned last week and has made just two starts so far, during which he's allowed seven runs in 101/3 innings. Santana does have a strong track record though, one that includes nearly 400 innings with a 3.32 ERA from 2016-17. That matters.

The Twins traded away several players at the deadline, including Brian Dozier, Ryan Pressly, and Lance Lynn. Santana could be next. This is the final guaranteed of his contract, though his deal includes a \$14 million club option for 2019. Minnesota could hang on to him rather than sell low following the finger injury, pick up the option, and see what the trade market looks like in the offseason.

Or, once Santana makes a few more starts to show he's healthy, the Twins could put him on the trade block and market him as a low-risk player who could be a rental if you're not looking for a long-term commitment, or someone who can help you this season and next. That club option equals flexibility.

MLB trade deadline grades: Blue Jays, Padres, Royals get top marks among sellers

Mike Axisa | CBS Sports | August 2, 2018

The non-waiver trade deadline is freshly behind us, and indeed a bevy of deals went down before time ran out on Tuesday. At this point, the baseball onlooker is probably trying to make sense of everything. Because we are of, for, and by the people, we're here to help you do just that.

For this particular piece of hot content, we'll hand out grades for each rebuilding club that traded roster players for help down the road -- i.e., the sellers. The criterion is simple: The extent to which they helped their greater goals in 2019 and beyond. You can find our grades for buyers here.

Baseball ops professionals, prepare to proudly present and or forge the following report cards. For these purposes, we're counting the July 18 Manny Machado blockbuster as the beginning of the trade deadline season for 2018, so trades since that point will be considered for grades ...

Minnesota Twins: B

Received: 2B Logan Forsythe, OF Luke Raley, LHP Devin Smeltzer, RHP Chase De Jong, 1B Ryan Costello, 1B Tyler Austin, RHP Luis Rijo, OF Ernie De La Trinidad, OF Gabriel Maciel, RHP Jhoan Duran, OF Gilberto Celestino, RHP Jorge Alcala, cash
Traded: 2B Brian Dozier, UTL Eduardo Escobar, RHP Ryan Pressly, RHP Lance Lynn, LHP Zach Duke, OF Jeremy Hazelbaker
Kept: RHP Kyle Gibson, RHP Ervin Santana, RHP Fernando Rodney, 1B Logan Morrison, RHP Jake Odorizzi

Dozier's down season crushed his trade value, so the Twins did not have that one stud to trade, someone who could net them an elite prospect. Instead, they added gobs of organizational depth. Outfielders of all shapes and sizes and pitchers both close to MLB (De Jong) and very far away (19-year-old Rijo). Forsythe came over in the Dozier trade to offset salary and could be flipped in August, even if for nothing but salary relief.

Morrison and Rodney, two impending free agents, probably didn't have much of a market at the deadline. Santana missed most of the season following offseason finger surgery and teams probably weren't eager to trade for someone who's made just one start back. Odorizzi and especially Gibson were of interest around the league, though both are under control next season, and it's not crazy to think Minnesota could be in contention in 2019. The Twins traded the guys they had to trade and did well in the Escobar and Pressly trades, in particular.