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Wednesday, August 29, 2018**

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Gibson, offense struggle in loss to Tribe

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 28, 2018

CLEVELAND -- On Tuesday night, Kyle Gibson couldn't find any luck and the offense couldn't get anything going against Carlos Carrasco.

Gibson, making his fifth start against the Indians this year, went 5 1/3 innings, giving up five runs on eight hits in an 8-1 loss at Progressive Field. He finishes with a 4.66 ERA against Cleveland this year, but has a 3.60 ERA against all other opponents. He's also struggled in August with a 5.28 ERA in five outings.

"That was about as good as I've felt in a long time, really," Gibson said. "Executing pitches, physically, mentally. I think other than the runs, the results kind of showed. I had those couple walks when I lost control there for two hitters, but 11 ground-ball outs, one fly-ball out all day. No extra-base hits to a team that's pretty good. Unfortunately, sometimes, they just didn't hit the ground balls at a guy or hard enough at a guy."

Gibson didn't surrender any extra-base hits but didn't help himself with three walks. The Indians took the lead in the third after a pair of singles from Francisco Lindor and Michael Brantley sparked a rally. Jose Ramirez scored Lindor with a sacrifice fly, while Brantley came home on a two-out RBI single from Edwin Encarnacion.

Gibson issued two walks to open the fourth, when Greg Allen plated a run on an RBI groundout. The Indians broke the game open in the sixth, when Jason Kipnis reached on a bunt single and Yan Gomes flared a single to right. After an RBI fielder's choice from Allen, Gibson was removed for lefty Gabriel Moya. Moya struggled, giving up a two-run double to Ramirez and then an RBI single to Encarnacion.

"The thing about Gibby's outing, I thought we cost him some pitches by not making some plays early, both on a double-play opportunity and a missed relay," manager Paul Molitor said. "Those are costly when your pitcher has to burn pitches. And obviously, the couple of walks cost him, too."

Carrasco, meanwhile, threw 7 2/3 scoreless innings, scattering four hits and two walks with 11 strikeouts. Joe Mauer singled and doubled against him but remains stuck at 999 career runs, as he hasn't scored since Aug. 21 despite seven hits and a walk over that span.

The Twins didn't score until the ninth on a solo homer from Jake Cave off Dan Otero. It was Cave's seventh of the year.

"The game looks flat when you don't swing the bats particularly well and you're striking out," Molitor said. "It was nice to see Cave hit one out at the end. But they pretty much outplayed us. Their starter was a little better, their defense was a little better and they swung the bats better."

SOUND SMART

Reliever Oliver Drake, who struck out the side in a scoreless seventh, had his game-worn hat donated to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. Drake broke a Major League record for most teams pitched for in a single season. The Twins are the fifth club he's played for this year.

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Ehire Adrianza nearly struck Carrasco with a line drive in the fifth inning. Adrianza drove a first-pitch fastball back to the mound with a 99.8-mph exit velocity. As Carrasco moved to avoid being hit, the baseball struck the heel of his glove. He was tended to briefly on the mound, but he was unharmed.

The close call was reminiscent of June 16, when Mauer drilled Carrasco in the right elbow with a comebacker, sending the Indians pitcher to the disabled list.

HE SAID IT

"If I'm being honest, this might've been some of the best stuff I've had against them all year. Unfortunately, it just didn't work out. I thought I executed about as well as I have against them all year. You look up and shake your head with eight singles. Shoot, man, it always sets up for an interesting postgame interview. You want to try to be realistic and understand we got beat, 8-1, so it's just one of those weird games." -- Gibson

UP NEXT

Right-hander Kohl Stewart (0-1, 6.94 ERA) will make his fourth career start in the second game of the Twins' series vs. the Indians on Wednesday at 6:10 p.m. CT. Stewart gave up three runs and struck out six batters over 4 2/3 innings against the A's on Thursday. Right-hander Adam Plutko (4-4, 5.09) will take the mound for Cleveland.

Pineda, Mejia out for rest of 2018 season

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 28, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- Twins manager Paul Molitor announced on Tuesday that the club will lose two starting pitchers for the remainder of the season, as right-hander Michael Pineda was diagnosed with a slight meniscus tear in his right knee and lefty Adalberto Mejia is still dealing with a nerve issue near his left wrist.

Pineda, who is coming off Tommy John surgery in July of 2017, was nearing a return to the Majors but felt discomfort in his knee while throwing a bullpen session with Triple-A Rochester last week. He returned from his rehab assignment to see team doctors in Minnesota over the weekend and underwent an MRI exam that revealed the injury.

"There's speculation, at least in the early stages, that it's an old injury that has begun to show up symptomatically in terms of pushing off that back leg," Molitor said. "Hopefully, over the next couple of days, our doctors and other people will be involved in decisions about options he has in terms of trying to overcome that. Obviously, some of them require procedures."

The Twins are hopeful Pineda will avoid surgery, but he'll miss the rest of the season either way. The 29-year-old had made four rehab appearances with the Gulf Coast League Twins, Class A Advanced Fort Myers and Triple-A Rochester, posting a 1.50 ERA with nine strikeouts and three walks in 12 innings. He was scheduled to start on Sunday with Rochester before the injury.

Pineda was signed to a two-year, \$10 million deal before the season with the Twins knowing he'd only be able to contribute in September and focusing more on 2019, when he'll earn \$8 million. The good news is it's not an injury related to his Tommy John rehab.

"It's been a productive year in his coming back from his surgery," Molitor said. "The biggest goal will be to try to figure out how to give him as much of the offseason as we can to be somewhat normal in preparing for next spring. Because we have pretty high confidence that we'll be in good shape. But in the short term here, find out what we need to do and start getting after it."

Mejia, meanwhile, has been out since Aug. 7 with what was originally diagnosed as a wrist strain before further tests revealed the nerve issue. He wasn't likely to return, and Molitor confirmed it on Tuesday. He finished his 2018 campaign with a 2.01 ERA in five appearances (four starts), throwing 13 straight scoreless innings to end his season.

"We're going to monitor his progress," Molitor said. "But they think with that nerve traction that it's going to take more time than what we have left to let the thing get calmed to the point where we feel confident to have the ball in his hand."

Molitor said he's currently planning how the rotation will look the rest of the way, and it's likely the Twins will go to a six-man rotation in September, especially to ease the workload of young pitchers such as Stephen Gonsalves and Kohl Stewart. They're also still considering tinkering with an opener, a reliever used to start a game before handing it over to a traditional starter, like the Rays have done this season.

"We've mapped out a few ways we're thinking about going in September in terms of trying to not only see more people and keep some of these

guys in here who've had a couple of starts," Molitor said. "We haven't inked it in, but we're looking at different scenarios on how to proceed. Pineda being taken out of the equation has changed it a little bit."

Polanco out, expected back Wednesday

Shortstop Jorge Polanco, who left Sunday's game with general cramping in both legs, was held out of the starting lineup on Tuesday for precautionary reasons. Ehire Adrianza started at shortstop in his absence, but Polanco expected to return Wednesday.

"He's doing a lot better," Molitor said. "We kind of stuck with our original plan coming out of Sunday, to plan for an extra day just to make sure we can get him back to not having to worry about any tightness or cramping or whatever it was that kind of was affecting him on Sunday. I'm not sure what was the source of it, other than the fact he was having trouble keeping his legs loose. The last thing you want to do is put yourself in position to push it too far, and you end up pulling something and you lose a lot of time."

Carlos Carrasco guides Indians to 8-1 victory over Twins

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 29, 2018

CLEVELAND – The Twins took their annual team picture at Target Field last week. For accuracy's sake, they should Photoshop Carlos Carrasco in there somewhere.

Carrasco, who has started more Twins games in 2018 — a record-tying six, three in August alone — than seven actual Twins starters, used familiarity to breed zeros Tuesday, holding the Twins scoreless during his 7 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings and handing them their fourth consecutive loss, 8-1 at Progressive Field.

"How many [Carrasco starts] has it been? Feels like a lot," Twins manager Paul Molitor said. "When you see a guy multiple times, you build up résumés and knowledge, hopefully. But the good pitchers make adjustments."

He might be adjusting, but the results are the same: Tuesday was the third time this year that Carrasco pitched seven or more innings against the Twins and didn't give up a run. In those three starts, in fact, totaling 22 innings, he's allowed only one Twins player to even reach third base.

This time, the 31-year-old Venezuelan gave up a single to Joe Mauer in the first inning, a double to Mauer in the third and a pair of meaningless singles after that. The sum total of the Twins' offense against him: Four hits, two walks, and zero baserunners advancing even a single base.

No wonder Carrasco left to a loud standing ovation from the 19,194 in the house with two outs in the eighth inning.

"He was sharp. The game looks flat when you don't swing the bats particularly well, and you're striking out," Molitor said. "His fastball was good, and we all know his slider/changeup combination is tough, especially to those righties."

The Twins did manage to avoid being shut out for the seventh time this season, when Jake Cave connected off Dan Otero in the ninth inning, lining his seventh home run of the season into the fifth row in right field.

Kyle Gibson has to fight the same see-you-next-week battle as Carrasco, and Tuesday's start was the fifth he's made against the Indians this year. His numbers look bad — five runs in only 5 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings — but they didn't reflect the way he pitched. Only one of the 27 batters he faced put the ball in the air; 20 hit the ball on the ground. But eight of those grounders got through for singles, four turned into runs, and though he forced six potential double-play balls, none resulted in two outs.

All of which left him shrugging over his worst (statistically) start of the five. "That was about as good as I've felt in a long time, really," Gibson said. "Eleven ground-ball outs, one fly ball. No extra-base hits to a team that's pretty good. Unfortunately, man, sometimes they just don't hit the grounders at a [fielder], or hit it hard enough [to turn two]. That's going to happen sometimes."

The Twins' defense didn't always help. Third baseman Miguel Sano — forced, because of an extreme shift, to make the pivot at second base on a potential double play — threw the ball wide of first base for an error that extended one inning.

"We cost [Gibson] some pitches by not making some plays early, both on the double-play opportunity and the missed relay. Those are costly when your pitcher has to burn pitches," Molitor said. "The way [Carrasco] was pitching, I don't know how much difference it would have made. ... They pretty much outplayed us. Their starter was a little better, their defense was a little better and they swung the bats better."

Michael Pineda, Adalberto Mejia won't pitch for Twins in September

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 29, 2018

CLEVELAND – So much for seeing Michael Pineda in a Twins uniform in September.

The righthander — whose last major league appearance was July 5, 2017, with the Yankees — has been diagnosed with a slight tear of the meniscus in his right knee, a setback that “pretty much eliminates” any chance of pitching again in 2018, Twins manager Paul Molitor said Tuesday.

Pineda isn't the franchise's only pitcher with such a prognosis. Adalberto Mejia's treatment for a nerve-traction condition above his left elbow will take more than five weeks to complete, so he's being shut down for the season, too.

Pineda had Tommy John elbow-ligament surgery 13 months ago and has been rehabbing his injury ever since. The 29-year-old righthander, who signed a two-year, \$10 million contract with Minnesota last winter, has made five minor league appearances in the past two months. He had hoped to pitch a couple of times for the Twins in September in order to reacclimate himself with facing major league hitters.

That won't happen now, “which is fine,” Molitor said. “It's been a productive year in his coming back from his surgery. The biggest goal will be to try to figure out how to give him as much of the offseason as we can to be somewhat normal in preparing for next spring. Because we have pretty high confidence that we'll be in good shape.”

Pineda reported an irritation in his right knee while throwing a bullpen session for Class AAA Rochester last week, and the Twins immediately canceled his Sunday start for the Red Wings and flew him back to Minneapolis. A magnetic resonance imaging test Monday revealed the tear in his cartilage, and Molitor said doctors believe the injury might be an old condition that began bothering Pineda once he ramped up his rehab and began pushing off his right leg again.

Pineda

The Twins medical staff still is gathering information before presenting Pineda with his options about treatment.

“Obviously, some of them require [surgical] procedures,” Molitor said, though the team is confident Pineda can be ready by spring training.

Mejia, meanwhile, is done after pitching five major league games, posting a 2.01 ERA in 22⅓ innings. The 25-year-old lefthander also made 15 appearances for Rochester, posting a 3.27 ERA in 63⅓ innings, with 62 strikeouts.

“We're going to monitor his progress,” Molitor said. “But it's going to take more time than what we have left to get the [nerve] called to the point where we feel confident to have the ball in his hand.”

Shooting for .500

At 61-69 entering this nine-day road trip, the Twins need to go 20-12 to finish at .500 for the season. Coincidentally, they have 20 games remaining with teams with worse records than them and 12 games with teams that have better records.

Is an 81-81 season still a realistic goal?

“I still think about it. I have for a while,” Molitor said. “Trying to close that gap would be a nice way to try to finish. It's good to still have goals, having somewhere you're trying to get to. I think .500 sounds pretty good.”

Keeping the booth intact

The Twins have handed out a couple of multiyear contracts, but not for their roster. Corey Provus revealed at a Minnesota State Fair appearance Monday that he has signed a new three-year contract to remain the radio voice of the Twins through 2021.

“It's great. It means I love it here,” said Provus, who will have completed a decade of calling Twins games by the time the contract expires. “My wife loves it. This is where our kids were born. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.”

Provus' partner, former Twin Dan Gladden — a fixture on Twins broadcasts since 2000 — is also signed through 2021.

Etc.

- The National Baseball Hall of Fame contacted the Twins to ask for an artifact from Oliver Drake, who set a major league record this month by pitching for his fifth team in one season. The Twins obliged by sending the cap Drake wore Tuesday night, when he struck out the side in the seventh inning, to Cooperstown.

Tuesday's Twins-Indians game recap
Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 29, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Carlos Carrasco, Cleveland

His third scoreless start against the Twins this season included 11 strikeouts and only four hits

BY THE NUMBERS

35 Career doubles by Joe Mauer at Progressive Field, most by any opponent in the stadium's history

3 Strikeouts by Twins reliever Oliver Drake in the eighth.

UP NEXT

Kohl Stewart, who has given up three runs in each of his three career starts, faces fellow rookie Adam Plutko.

Twins fall for sixth time in past seven games against Indians
Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 28, 2018

CLEVELAND — Before opening the fifth three-city road trip on this year's grueling Twins schedule, manager Paul Molitor was asked about a potential push to finish .500.

"I still think about it," Molitor said before Tuesday's 8-1 loss to the first-place Cleveland Indians. "I have for awhile."

Absorbing another beatdown on the banks of Lake Erie didn't make such a scenario seem any more realistic than it did while the Oakland A's took three out of four at Target Field over the weekend. Falling for the sixth time in their past seven tries against the Indians, the Twins now trail the season series 9-8 with two games remaining here this week.

"They pretty much outplayed us," Molitor said afterward. "Their starter was a little better, their defense was a little better and they swung the bats better. The game looks flat when you don't swing the bats particularly well and you're striking out."

Now minus-44 in season run differential, the Twins entered Tuesday with identical expected and actual win-loss records. They still must face the reigning World Series champions in Houston for three games early next week, and there's a home series with the New York Yankees and a three-game visit to Oakland still left.

In order to avoid their sixth losing season out of the past eight, the Twins will need to finish 20-11. That doesn't seem all that likely, but Molitor isn't about to let go of that idea.

"I think .500 sounds pretty good," he said. "Just keep pecking away. I think it's good to still have goals ... having somewhere you're trying to get to."

Only Jake Cave's ninth-inning homer saved the Twins from their seventh blanking of the season. They also took a 10-0 shellacking here three weeks ago.

Joe Mauer banged out two more hits — half the Twins' total through 7 2/3 innings against Indians right-hander Carlos Carrasco (16-7)— but was unable to end his weeklong wait for career run No. 1,000. Mauer's third-inning double past first did tie him with Joe Judge (421) for second all-time in Senators/Twins history.

Hall of Famer Sam Rice, who finished up with the 1934 Indians, remains 58 doubles clear for the combined franchise mark.

With two more singles, Mauer will have 1,500 for his career, third-most in Twins history. He needs four more extra-base hits to tie Tony Oliva for fourth on the Twins list.

Carrasco, meanwhile, struck out 11 and walked just two in running his home scoreless streak to 19 innings. He finished the year 2-3 with 40 strikeouts in six starts against the Twins.

Twins starter Kyle Gibson, meanwhile, managed to keep the ball in the park after giving up three homers last week at the Chicago White Sox. All eight hits off him were singles, several of them the seeing-eye variety.

“That was about as good as I’ve felt in a long time: executing pitches, physically, mentally,” Gibson said after falling to 7-11. “I think other than the runs, the results kind of showed. Eleven groundball outs, one fly-ball out all day. No extra-base hits to a team that’s pretty good.”

Command, however, remained a recent issue for the right-hander, who was charged with five earned runs for the fourth time this year, tying a season high. After reaching three-ball counts to just two of his first 14 batters, Gibson was extended by the first four batters he faced in the fourth.

Lifted after 103 pitches with one out in the fifth, Gibson saw his earned run average climb to 3.79 as he went back-to-back outings without a quality start for the first time since July 2.

He also fell to 3-9 with a 5.46 ERA in 18 career starts against the Indians. That includes an 0-6 mark and a 6.22 ERA in nine starts against them at Target Field.

Michael Pineda’s 2018 season likely over due to right knee injury

Mike Berardino | Pioneer Press | August 28, 2018

CLEVELAND — Michael Pineda’s hopes of pitching in big-league games this September appear dead.

Monday’s magnetic resonance imaging exam revealed a small tear in the meniscus of his right knee. Pineda, who had been on track to be activated early next week, reported discomfort in his knee after his most recent bullpen session last week at Triple-A Rochester.

Twins medical staff will huddle with Pineda in the coming days to determine whether surgery is necessary or the condition, which may be left over from a previous injury, can be remedied through rest and rehabilitation.

Either way, it no longer makes much sense to put Pineda on the mound as he works back from Tommy John surgery he had July 18, 2017, while with the New York Yankees.

“I think it pretty much eliminates that, which is fine,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “It’s been a productive year. The biggest goal will be trying to figure out how to give him as much of the offseason as we can to be somewhat normal in preparing for next spring.”

Pineda is under contract for \$8 million plus incentives in 2019, which he will pitch at age 30. Molitor wouldn’t rule out a stint in the Dominican Winter League for Pineda, who last faced big-league hitters on July 5, 2017.

While Pineda also overcame shoulder surgery in 2012, he isn’t believed to have undergone any knee procedures, Molitor said. Pineda posted a 1.50 earned-run average and nine strikeouts in 12 rehab innings, working his way up from the Gulf Coast League to Triple-A.

RADIO STABILITY

The Twins and WCCO-AM have locked up their popular radio team of Cory Provus and two-time World Series winner Dan Gladden through 2021.

With their current deals set to expire at season’s end, Provus and Gladden announced their three-year extensions on Monday during a joint appearance at the Minnesota State Fair.

“It was really positive; it was really nice,” Provus said of the fans’ reaction. “We’ve had really good feedback. The best compliment that we ever get, and I hear it on (winter) caravan a lot, is, ‘It sounds like you guys are having fun.’ That’s my favorite one. That sticks with me every time. I love it.”

Provus, 40, followed Twins Hall of Famer John Gordon as the team’s radio play-by-play voice, starting with the 2012 season. Gladden, 61, is in his 19th year in the Twins’ radio booth and his 15th as a full-time analyst.

As part of his new contract, Provus will take six regular-season games off each year while scaling back his spring training workload from 20 games to 13. Provus and wife Dana have two young children — Cooper, 5, and Mia, 2.

A rabid fan of the rock band Pearl Jam, Provus joked that this would give him more time to follow Eddie Vedder and Co. on tour.

“That’s what I’m working around,” he said. “I’m trying to get an advance copy of their ’19 European schedule, so I may swing out to Rome and catch a show.”

BRIEFLY

Lefty Adalberto Mejia (nerve traction issue) will not start again this year. “It’s going to take more time than what we have left to let the thing get calmed down,” Molitor said. Mejia said recently he’d like to pitch in winter ball again after making five starts with a 3.43 ERA for Gigantes del Cibao in the Dominican last offseason.

Shortstop Jorge Polanco (general cramping) was doing “a lot better” on Tuesday, Molitor said, and was available off the bench. He’s expected back in the lineup Wednesday after leaving Sunday’s game because of “trouble keeping his legs loose,” Molitor said.

According to USA Today, Molitor is tied for 13th among the 30 big-league managers with a \$1.5 million salary this season. Molitor, who signed a three-year extension after leading the Twins to the second American League wild-card berth last season, is tied with former Twins manager Ron Gardenhire (Detroit Tigers), Craig Counsell (Milwaukee Brewers) and Bud Black (Colorado Rockies).

Class A Cedar Rapids, under first-year manager Toby Gardenhire, has now qualified for the Midwest League playoffs in all six seasons it has been affiliated with the Twins. The Kernels overcame the midseason promotions of former first-rounders Alex Kirilloff and Royce Lewis, and fast-rising pitching prospect Brusdar Graterol, to claim a second-half title, due in part to the arrival of the Twins’ first two picks this June: right fielder Trevor Larnach and catcher/DH Ryan Jeffers.

Byron Buxton finally puts together hot stretch (albeit in minors) in miserable season

Judd Zulgad | ESPN 1500 | August 28, 2018

The Twins have made no commitment when it comes to whether Byron Buxton will be called up from Triple-A Rochester on Saturday when big-league rosters can expand to 40.

Manager Paul Molitor, asked about Buxton last weekend, said: “We’re just kind of holding off having to consider some of the September things we might do until we get to that point. So we still have a few days to work with.”

Buxton is doing his best to make the most of those few days.

The center fielder finally appears to be putting things together in what has been a miserable season that has included a variety of ailments (migraines, broken toe, wrist injuries) and plenty of struggles at the plate.

Phil Miller of the Star Tribune had the latest on Buxton’s production for the Red Wings.

@MillerStrib

Another multi-hit game for Byron Buxton in Rochester today, his 3rd straight. Buxton is 8-for-13 with 4 doubles and a triple the past 3 games, and has his average up to .273. Since being activated two weeks ago today, he's 17-44 (.386) with 9 extra-base hits.

This was supposed to be the season that Buxton finally emerged at the plate and became a finished product. Buxton, the second-overall pick in the 2012 draft, already established himself as an elite center fielder, having won a Gold Glove in 2017.

But after hitting .298/.342/.521 with 11 home runs and 35 RBIs in his final 56 games of 2017 with Minnesota, Buxton’s numbers plummeted to .156/.183/.200 with no home runs and four RBIs in only 28 games with the Twins this season. He also struck out 28 times in 90 at-bats after fanning 150 times in 462 at-bat last season.

Buxton, who has dealt with wrist injuries in the second half of the season, was activated from the disabled list at Rochester on Aug. 14 after missing two weeks. He did not begin playing consecutive games again at Rochester until last Friday.

The Red Wings’ season will end on Sept. 3 so unless the Twins want to shut down Buxton he will be called up in the coming days. Considering the Twins’ season already is lost and all focus is on 2019, there is no reason not to recall Buxton. The fact he has started to hit the ball certainly won’t hurt his case.

Twins shut down Michael Pineda because of knee injury

Judd Zulgad | ESPN 1500 | August 29, 2018

Michael Pineda won’t pitch for the Twins this season because of an injury suffered during his minor-league rehab stint. That’s the bad news. The good news is the setback has nothing to do with the Tommy John elbow-ligament surgery the righthander underwent in July 2017.

Pineda reportedly has been diagnosed with a slight tear of the meniscus in his right knee. Twins manager Paul Molitor told reporters on Tuesday in Cleveland that the injury “pretty much eliminates” the chance that Pineda will pitch again this season.

The Twins had been hoping to get a look at Pineda in September. He had made five appearances in minor-league games over the past two months. Pineda, 29, signed a two-year, \$10 million contract with the Twins last offseason with the plan for him to spend much of 2018 rehabbing and then be part of the big-league rotation in 2019.

Considering Pineda’s latest issue has nothing to do with his pitching arm, this isn’t cause for much concern. Surgery on Pineda’s knee will be an option. Pineda began his major-league career with Seattle in 2011. He was traded to the Yankees in 2012 and pitched for New York from 2014-17.

The Twins also reportedly will shut down starting pitcher Adalberto Mejia because the treatment he is undergoing for a nerve-traction injury above his left elbow is going to take more than five weeks to complete. Mejia was 2-0 with a 2.01 ERA with the Twins in four starts and five games this season. He was 5-3 with a 3.27 ERA in 12 starts and 15 games at Triple-A Rochester.

Cleveland roughs up Gibson, Twins lose 8-1 **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | August 29, 2018**

CLEVELAND — Carlos Carrasco dusted himself off, climbed back on the mound and smiled after dealing with another scary moment against the Minnesota Twins.

Carrasco struck out 11 and withstood taking a liner off his glove in pitching the Cleveland Indians past the Twins 8-1 on Tuesday night.

“I’m glad nothing happened,” he said. “Everything’s fine. It’s part of the game.”

Francisco Lindor matched a career high with four hits while Jose Ramirez drove in three runs for the AL Central leaders.

Carrasco (16-7) allowed four hits in 7 2/3 innings. He is tied for second in the majors in wins, one behind Luis Severino of the Yankees.

In the fifth, Carrasco was hit in the glove by Ehire Adrianza’s liner. The force of the blow knocked Carrasco to the ground, but the right-hander immediately got to his feet. The ball rolled toward second baseman Jason Kipnis, who had no play at first.

Indians manager Terry Francona and a team trainer went to the mound, and Carrasco signaled he wasn’t injured. The pitcher smiled as the trainer wiped dirt off his left hand and wrist with a towel.

Francona admitted he was concerned when he headed on the field.

“It didn’t sound good,” he said. “I was so relieved when it was his glove. He turned around and told us right away that it hit his glove, but I had my momentum going that direction so I kept going just to check on him.”

On June 16 at Progressive Field, Carrasco was struck on the right elbow by a line drive from Twins star Joe Mauer. Carrasco sustained a bruise and missed three weeks — he is 8-2 in 11 starts since returning July 6.

Carrasco admitted his mind flashed back to what occurred over two months ago.

“That was when I thought about the last time I was facing those guys,” he said. “I was thinking about that. That’s why I started laughing.”

Kyle Gibson (7-11) allowed five runs in 5 1/3 innings. Jake Cave hit a solo homer in the ninth.

Ramirez had a sacrifice fly in the third and a two-run double in the sixth, driving in his first run since Aug. 17. Lindor and Ramirez were a combined 9 for 58 on Cleveland’s seven-game road trip.

“You know they’re going to hit, but it’s still nice to see,” Francona said. “Frankie stayed in the middle of the field. Josey hit one ball good, another ball he got a hit because he beat it out.”

Edwin Encarnacion and Greg Allen each drove in two runs for the Indians, who have dominated the AL Central but are 9-8 against the Twins. Cleveland is 31-11 against the rest of the division and leads second-place Minnesota by 14 games.

“The game looks flat when you’re not swinging the bats well and are striking out,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “We didn’t get much going. They were better tonight.”

STILL THROWING

Indians RHP Trevor Bauer (stress fracture in right leg) threw off the mound and played catch up to 320 feet without a walking boot. He is still frustrated that his potential AL Cy Young Award season was derailed when he was struck on the leg by a line drive on Aug. 11.

“I’m just sitting here and all of my personal season goals are slowly drifting away because I took a line drive off the ankle,” he said.

Francona hopes Bauer will make two or three appearances for the Indians before the regular season ends, but no timeline for his return has been established.

SEASON OVER

Twins RHP Michael Pineda (right knee) and LHP Adalberto Mejia (left wrist) will miss the remainder of the season. Pineda had Tommy John surgery in July of last year and was on a rehab assignment with Triple-A Rochester. He has a slight meniscus tear that could require surgery. Mejia is experiencing nerve problems in his strained wrist.

COOPERSTOWN CALLING

The cap worn by Twins RHP Oliver Drake on Tuesday will be sent to the baseball Hall of Fame, which requested a souvenir from his major league record fifth team of the season. He pitched for the Brewers, Indians, Angels and Blue Jays before being claimed by Minnesota off waivers on Aug. 3. Drake struck out the side in the seventh.

TRAINER’S ROOM

Twins: SS Jorge Polanco was not in the lineup after experiencing leg cramps Sunday.

UP NEXT

Twins RHP Kohl Stewart (0-1, 6.94 ERA) takes on Indians RHP Adam Plutko (4-4, 5.09 ERA) in the second game of the series.

Revived at home, Indians continue series vs. Twins **The Sports Xchange | Fox Sports North | August 29, 2018**

CLEVELAND — The Cleveland Indians, invigorated by a rare off day at home on Monday, will host the Minnesota Twins on Wednesday night at Progressive Field in the second game of a three-game series.

Following their 8-1 win Tuesday, the Indians have a 14-game lead over the Twins in the American League’s Central Division. The Indians came into Tuesday’s game having lost four of their last five games, with their two most important hitters, Francisco Lindor and Jose Ramirez, in slumps.

Lindor came into Tuesday’s game hitting .194, with no home runs and four RBIs in his last 14 games. Ramirez was hitting .128 with one homer and two RBIs in his last 11 games.

However, in Tuesday’s win, Lindor was 4-for-5 and Ramirez 2-for-4 with three RBIs.

The Indians’ huge lead in baseball’s worst division probably contributed to the team’s recent malaise. Part of it is the time of the season. There will be no race for the division title in September for the Indians, who haven’t been challenged by any team in the AL Central since midseason.

The Indians have also spent a lot of time on the road recently. Prior to Tuesday’s game, they had played 13 of their last 16 games away from home.

“It felt like we were gone for a long time,” Cleveland manager Terry Francona said. “We had a day off at home (Monday), which is rare, and now we’re home for 10 days. The weather is going to start cooling off a little bit. That should help a little bit, because I thought our guys had gotten a little raggedy.”

The Indians seem to have emerged from their funk in their last two games, beating Kansas City and Minnesota by a combined score of 20-6.

The Twins, who have lost four in a row, are already looking toward next year, and one of the pitchers they’d like to think will be a part of their future will be on the mound Tuesday: 23-year-old right-hander Kohl Stewart.

The Twins selected Stewart with the fourth overall pick in the first round of the June 2013 draft. Stewart (0-1, 6.94 ERA) will be making his fourth major league start on Wednesday. His last start came on Aug. 23 when he received no decision in the Twins' 6-4 win over Oakland. Stewart pitched 4 2/3 innings, allowing three runs and seven hits, with six strikeouts and two walks.

Stewart spent the first half of the season in the minor leagues. In a combined 21 appearances (19 starts) at Triple-A Rochester and Double-A Chattanooga, he was 3-7 with a 4.47 ERA.

Cleveland's starter on Tuesday will be rookie right-hander Adam Plutko (4-4, 5.09). Plutko's last start did not go well, a 7-0 loss to Boston on Aug. 23. He pitched 4 1/3 innings, giving up five runs and five hits, with five walks and four strikeouts.

Plutko hasn't won since June 24. In five appearances since then (three starts), he is 0-3 with a 5.73 ERA. In his first three starts this season, Plutko was 3-0 with a 3.93 ERA. He has pitched in eight games (five starts) since and is 1-4 with a 5.71 ERA.

His only career appearance against the Twins came on June 16, when he pitched two innings in relief, allowing one run and two hits.

Plutko started this season at Triple-A Columbus, where in 14 starts he was 7-3 with a 1.70 ERA.