



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Friday, June 8, 2018

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Eddie, Eduardo power Twins; Berrios throws CG
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 7, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- After a sloppy loss on Wednesday that seemed to halt the momentum from their strong series against the Indians, Twins manager Paul Molitor looked for his players to step up in the series finale on Thursday afternoon.

Jose Berrios, Eduardo Escobar and Eddie Rosario did just that, as Berrios threw his second complete game of the season, while Escobar and Rosario stayed hot and stole the show offensively for the Twins to salvage a series split with the White Sox in a 7-2 win at Target Field.

"I don't know if I can aptly describe how much of a pick-me-up it is for your bullpen when you can get a nine-inning performance," Molitor said. "Little bit of a lackluster series overall, but we ended up finding a way to split it. There have been a lot of superlatives going in Esco and Rosie's direction as of late, because they've been a huge part of what we've done offensively."

Escobar crushed a two-run homer in the first off veteran James Shields, while Rosario smacked a three-run shot as part of a four-run rally in the fourth to mark the first time they both homered in a game this season. Rosario now leads the Majors with five homers in June, while Escobar is second with four. Escobar went 2-for-4 and is hitting .458 with four homers and 12 RBIs in seven games this month, while Rosario went 2-for-3 and is batting .360 with five homers and 11 RBIs in June.

"You can tell especially with Esco, with his streakiness at times," Molitor said. "He had a little bit of a lull there for awhile, after a great start, but he's turned it back on. From a guy who wasn't penciled in to be an everyday player, he's been essential to our offense, and Rosie's pretty much been going well from the beginning. I feel like he's going to put a good swing on the ball every time he's up there."

Berrios was efficient -- taking a perfect game into the fifth -- and allowed two runs on six hits, while striking out 10 and not issuing a walk for the first time since April 18. He came out for the ninth despite having thrown 101 pitches, but recorded a 1-2-3 inning for his second career complete game. He gave up both runs in the sixth after giving up a leadoff single to Charlie Tilson. Yoan Moncada doubled home Tilson and scored on a two-out double from Jose Abreu.

"I felt healthy," said Berrios, who has a 2.63 ERA over his last five starts. "I got quite of few pitches -- fastball, curveball, changeup working.

That's what I used the whole game. I know in the sixth they scored two runs, but it's my fault. I missed."

Shields struggled, allowing seven runs on eight hits, including three homers. Escobar was the first to go deep with his two-run shot in the first after Rosario doubled with one out. Ehire Adrianza, who doubled twice on Wednesday, added a solo homer in the second.

"Every game, you try to fight," Escobar said. "Today it was something special. Got a quick two runs in the first inning. We had Berrios on the mound so we had to bring the runs for him."

They scored four runs in the fourth with a two-out rally that started with a walk to Adrianza before Bobby Wilson singled down the right-field line and was sparked by a softly hit RBI single from Brian Dozier on a 3-2 cutter from Shields. Dozier's hit had an exit velocity of 56.4 mph and hit percentage of just nine percent, per Statcast™.

It set the stage for Rosario's towering three-run blast down the right-field line on an inside 0-1 cutter. It left the bat at 105.8 mph at a launch angle of 36 degrees, giving it a hit percentage of 73 percent.

"I'm gonna swing," Rosario said. "I want to try to attack the pitcher, make it not easy for him, and I want to try to make good contact every time. I selected a good pitch to hit."

MOMENT THAT MATTERED

Sherriff Rosario: Rosario also helped the Twins with his arm in the fifth, when Omar Narvaez broke up Berrios' no-hit bid with a double and tried to score on a single to left from Jose Rondon. But Rosario threw out Narvaez at home to end the inning, getting his fourth outfield assist of the year.

"When the ball's hit, I didn't think we were going to have a chance," Molitor said. "But as it unfolded, he saw the play, he saw the distance, he made an accurate throw. If he throws it high or throws it wide, and the trail runner gets to second, you're going to wonder why he did it. But he threw it on the money."

SOUND SMART

The Twins have done well against Shields at Target Field, as he's given up 13 homers at the ballpark, which is the most by an opposing starter, passing the 11 served up by former White Sox lefty John Danks.

HE SAID IT

"I love Eddie Rosario, man. Every time he comes to home plate, he's going to swing. I'm so happy to play with him." -- Escobar

UP NEXT

Right-hander Lance Lynn will take the mound on Friday at 7:10 p.m. CT, when the Twins open a three-game series against the Angels at Target Field. Lynn (4-4, 5.46 ERA) has been pitching much better recently, posting a 3.34 ERA over his last six starts. He held the Indians to one run on two hits over six innings last time out. The Angels will start right-hander Garrett Richards (4-4, 3.25 ERA), and Miguel Sano is expected back in the lineup for Minnesota.

May activated from 60-day DL, sent to Triple-A

Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 7, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The Twins activated right-hander Trevor May from the 60-day disabled list on Thursday, but optioned him to Triple-A Rochester to allow him to continue to work on his command as he returns from Tommy John surgery. Additionally, catcher Jason Castro, who is out for the year after right knee surgery, was moved to the 60-day DL to make room for May on the 40-man roster.

May, who had the operation in March 2017, made six rehab appearances with Class A Advanced Fort Myers and Triple-A Rochester, posting a combined 5.50 ERA with 20 strikeouts and 12 walks in 18 innings.

He's been stretched out to start, but pitched in relief his last two outings with Rochester. He threw three scoreless innings on Friday and went 1 1/3 innings on Tuesday, allowing one run on four hits. He threw 37 pitches on Friday and 32 on Tuesday.

May, 28, has a career 5.14 ERA with 214 strikeouts and 65 walks in 203 innings with the Twins. He's had more success as a reliever with a 4.36 ERA and 99 strikeouts in 76 1/3 innings, but dealt with back issues in '16.

May gives Minnesota pitching depth and could be an intriguing option as a reliever, but the Twins want him to cut down on his walk rate in the Minors before he's recalled

Surprise All-Star candidates in the AL Central
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | June 7, 2018

The All-Star Game is a special event that brings together the best players in the world on one stage, but sometimes those players aren't household names just yet.

Every club has at least one under-the-radar All-Star candidate, and it's no different in the American League Central. Here's a look at stealth candidates for each AL Central club for the 2018 All-Star Game, which will be held at Washington's Nationals Park on July 17.

Indians: Trevor Bauer

The case for him: On the position-player side, there is nothing surprising about what Jose Ramirez, Francisco Lindor or Michael Brantley are doing at this point. The intriguing All-Star cases for the Indians are on the pitching front, and Bauer is at the top of that list. Heading into Thursday's off-day, Bauer ranked in the top five in the AL in Fielding Independent Pitching, strikeouts per nine innings and homers allowed per nine innings. He is also in the top 10 in the AL in a variety of other categories. Bauer has been Cleveland's most consistent starter behind ace Corey Kluber.

Royals: Whit Merrifield

The case for him: Merrifield has emerged as one of the most dynamic offensive players in the league. Merrifield led the AL in stolen bases in 2017, and he has already swiped 14 bags this season. After a slow start, Merrifield has a .289 average with a .368 on-base percentage and a .418 slugging percentage, entering Thursday. He can beat you with his speed and his power. Merrifield has also emerged as perhaps the top super utility player in the league -- he can play all outfield and infield positions. He's a smart player who is aggressive on the basepaths.

Tigers: Jeimer Candelario

The case for him: Candelario, acquired in the trade that sent reliever Justin Wilson and catcher Alex Avila to the Cubs at last year's non-waiver Trade Deadline, got a taste of the Majors in 2016 and '17, but he has really put it together offensively this season. The 24-year-old has shown an impressive blend of power and patience at the plate, hitting .267/.361/.513 with nine homers and 26 RBIs through his first 50 games this season.

Twins: Eduardo Escobar

The case for him: Escobar has played well in the absence of starting shortstop Jorge Polanco, who is serving an 80-game suspension. Escobar's 24 doubles lead the Majors. Escobar has filled in capably at third and shortstop, but it's his surprising power -- despite his small stature -- that makes him an intriguing All-Star candidate. Escobar set a career-high with 21 homers last year, and already has 11 this season. He is having a breakout season in the last year of his contract with the Twins.

White Sox: Reynaldo Lopez

The case for him: Remember when Jose Quintana consistently put up quality starts for the White Sox but had a .500 individual career record to show for it? Well, this season Lopez has taken over that harsh role. Despite posting a 3.42 ERA over 12 starts and 71 innings pitched, Lopez has a record of 1-4. His ERA also is skewed by 13 runs given up over 4 2/3 innings in starts against the Pirates and Indians. He has held opposing hitters to a .212 average with 54 hits yielded, and beyond Jose Abreu, Lopez is the most deserving All-Star candidate on the White Sox.

Jose Berrios, Twins roll past White Sox 7-2

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | June 8, 2018

To kill the bad taste from a mistake-filled Wednesday loss, the Twins relied on a familiar face on the pitcher's mound Thursday. A couple of them, actually.

Jose Berrios pitched the second complete game of his career, while his teammates faced their most frequent Target Field foe — and foil — and the combination turned into a satisfying 7-2 drubbing of the White Sox.

Eduardo Escobar, Ehire Adrianza and Eddie Rosario all homered off Chicago starter James Shields, who has now started more games — and given up more homers — in Target Field's nine-year history than any other visiting pitcher. Escobar's shot staked the Twins to a 2-0 first-inning lead, Adrianza's home run off the facing of the upper deck in right field made it 3-0 in the second, and Rosario's blast, his fifth of the home-stand, nearly reached the plaza beyond right field and capped a three-run, two-out uprising in the fourth inning to give the Twins their biggest lead in more than a month.

Berrios earned his seventh victory of the season by dominating Chicago for the third time this year, carrying a perfect game into the fifth inning and limiting the Sox to six hits and two runs while striking out 10. It was enough to make him ... furious. Absolutely furious.

“I was angry at myself, not at nobody else,” Berrios said after stalking around the mound, snapping the ball in his glove when receiving it from the catcher, and generally scowling at hitters before mowing them down in disgust. “When they scored two runs, I got mad at myself.”

Berrios channeled it well, considering he faced the minimum nine hitters over the final three innings and dispatched them in a ruthlessly efficient 28 pitches. He is the only Twins starter to record outs in the eighth or ninth innings this season, and he has 17 of them now.

So go ahead, poke him with a stick — or two sixth-inning RBI doubles, whatever. Because payback, as Yoan Moncada, Jose Abreu and the White Sox learned, is painful.

“He was upset,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said admiringly of Berrios’ demeanor during that inning. “Moncada got a hit and I think [Berrios] was second-guessing that he probably should have thrown him a breaking ball instead of a fastball. ... Abreu has been hunting sliders with men in scoring position, and he got him. That’s what I was seeing.”

Molitor was also seeing a bullpen in repose, feet up and enjoying the sunny afternoon. After a doubleheader Tuesday and a busy bullpen day Wednesday, the manager was particularly happy Berrios could handle all nine innings himself.

“I don’t know if he’s overly conscious of the fact that I’m hoping he goes nine [Thursday]. But he kind of pitched like that, like he was on a mission to try to find a way to complete the game,” Molitor said. “And that’s what you want to see. That’s how you build young people up into guys that eventually emerge on the top of your rotation.”

The term for that is “ace,” a word Molitor is reluctant to bestow too early on a 24-year-old, but he certainly looked the part early on. Not only did the first 14 White Sox batters go hitless, but the first 13 didn’t even get the ball out of the infield. The thought of a no-hitter began to occur to some people in the matinee Target Field crowd — and on the pitcher’s mound, too.

Yes, Berrios said, he was thinking about perfection, because “I’m always thinking no-hitter,” he said. “But I know it’s baseball. They’re going to make adjustments.”

Sure enough, catcher Omar Narvaez, batting only .170 entering the game, ended those thoughts by slugging a two-out double into the gap in left-center in the fifth and igniting Berrios’ temper. He got his revenge, oddly enough, when Jose Rondon followed with a single into the left field corner, because Narvaez slowed around third base then tried to score, a miscalculation Rosario exploited by nailing him with a long throw.

Berrios got a nice ovation when he took the mound for the ninth inning, and again when he finished off the complete game, earning his fourth victory in five starts.

“He’s been on a really good roll here,” Molitor said of his curveball specialist, who relied more on his fastball and changeup Thursday. “You feel good about getting deep and having a chance to win. And you can tell his confidence is developing. He’s putting it together pretty consistently right now.”

Eddie Rosario and Eduardo Escobar are hot, but Twins don't follow suit **Phil Miller | Star Tribune | June 8, 2018**

Eddie Rosario has done this before, so he’s not proclaiming his five-week-old torrid streak as anything special. Maybe people don’t remember his scorching August performance last summer, but he does.

“It was a good month. Nothing different,” Rosario said of those everyday heroics of 2017, when he collected seven doubles, nine homers and 25 RBI in August. “But now I want to try and focus. Every day is a new day.”

One thing is different. The blazing Rosario of a year ago helped lead the Twins to a 20-10 month and a charge up the wild-card standings. This year, the 26-year-old might be even more locked in — in 35 games since May 1, Rosario has piled up 52 hits, including 12 doubles, 11 homers and 31 RBI, and has batted .364 — but his team has yet to follow. The Twins are 18-17 since Rosario went ballistic at the plate.

“It’s getting better. He’s hitting, and we’re starting to follow,” said the Twins’ other hot hitter, Eduardo Escobar. “I love Eddie Rosario, man. Every time he comes to home plate, he’s going to swing. I’m so happy to play with him. Most importantly, everybody plays together and make a win for the team.”

Rosario did so with a first-inning double, then scored on Escobar’s home run. In the fourth inning, Rosario hit a three-run homer, and Escobar followed with a single.

“He’s just, from a guy who wasn’t penciled in to be an everyday player, [Escobar] has been essential to our offense,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “And I feel like [Rosario] is going to put a good swing on the ball every time he’s up there.”

Reinstated, demoted

Trevor May’s 15-month return from elbow surgery officially ended Thursday, but not the way he hoped. May, who missed the entire 2017 season after undergoing Tommy John surgery to replace a ligament in his pitching elbow, was activated from the 60-day disabled list and placed on the Twins’ 40-man roster — but he was simultaneously optioned to Class AAA Rochester, where he has been pitching since mid-May.

With his 30-day rehab assignment due to expire Monday, the Twins made the decision that the righthander — who has appeared in 102 Twins games, including 25 starts from 2014 to ’16 — is not ready to return to the majors. May had a 5.50 ERA in six rehab appearances in Class AA and AAA totaling 18 innings, and a 6.60 ERA with Rochester, to go along with an 0-3 record.

To make room on their respective rosters, the Twins moved catcher Jason Castro to the 60-day disabled list — he is out for the year after undergoing knee surgery last month — and the Red Wings transferred righthander Omar Bencomo back to Class AA Chattanooga.

Etc.

- Logan Morrison returned to the lineup Thursday after missing three games because of back pain, and the Twins made sure he returned to first base, too. “With backs, you always monitor it, just because of the fact that it was nothing structural, it was just a spasm,” bench coach Derek Shelton said. “It’s one of the reasons we wanted to have him in the field, just to keep him moving the whole game instead of having him DH, where he would have downtime during the game.” Morrison, batting cleanup, doubled in four at-bats.

- First baseman Joe Mauer emphasized baserunning in his pregame workout, doing a series of sprints around the bases and trying to simulate game action. He also took ground balls as he prepares for a return from his cervical strain.

- Miguel Sano and Max Kepler were out of the Twins lineup, but Shelton said it had more to do with keeping them fresh and the bench players involved than their slow starts to June. Kepler is 3-for-21 (.143) in the new month, while Sano is 2-for-18 (.111) with nine strikeouts.

Postgame: Twins threw adventurous catcher out on the bases – twice **Phil Miller | Star Tribune | June 7, 2018**

Two extras after the Twins salvaged a split of their four-game series:

As if he hasn’t done enough lately, Eddie Rosario, just one day after dropping a fly ball, made the defensive play of the game on Thursday.

With two outs and White Sox catcher Omar Narvaez on second base in the fifth inning, Jose Rondon belted a line drive near the left field line. As Rosario raced over to cut it off, Narvaez slowed near third base, then saw coach Daryl Boston waving him home.

Big mistake.

“The play developed slowly, and when the ball [was] hit, I didn’t think we were going to have a chance,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “But as it unfolded, [Rosario] saw the play, he saw the distance, he made an accurate throw. If he throws it high or throws it wide, and the trail runner gets to second, your’e going to wonder why he did it. But he threw it on the money.”

He did, and he did it by telling himself to calm down, slow down, keep your mechanics in order.

“I don’t try to do too much,” Rosario said. “I want to try to catch the ball first, then get in good position to throw to home plate.”

The out ended the inning and preserved Jose Berrios’ shutout for one more inning.

Narvaez, a catcher without much speed, didn’t learn his lesson, though. When he singled near the right field line in the seventh inning, he decided to make it a double, even though the White Sox trailed by five runs. Robbie Grossman got to the ball quickly and made a strong throw to get him at second.

Narvaez’s adventures marked the ninth and 10th runners thrown out by Twins outfielders this season — and the seventh in just the past 14 games.

XXX

James Shields made his 12th start at Target Field on Thursday, tying him with Rick Porcello for the most by a visiting pitcher in the stadium's nine-year history. Shields, who has pitched for the Rays, Royals, Padres and White Sox over a 13-year career, has started 26 games overall against Minnesota. Though he lasted six innings in order to save the Chicago bullpen, he's now 8-10 against the Twins, becoming the 51st pitcher to lose 10 against the franchise, though that's only half of Frank Tanana's 20 losses.

Shields allowed three home runs on Thursday, to Eddie Rosario, Eduardo Escobar and Ehire Adrianza, none of whom were among the six current Twins who have homered against him before. They also ballooned Shields' total to 12 home runs allowed in Target Field, passing John Danks (11) for most in the ballpark's history.

Do the Twins have an advantage in seeing a pitcher so many times? "It depends on the person," Molitor said. "If you have a track record against people and you have a good idea what he's going to do, it's probably going to work to your advantage."

Inflatable purple guitars, fireworks highlight Friday's 'Prince Night' at Twins game **Paul Walsh | Star Tribune | June 8, 2018**

Prince will bat leadoff at Target Field on Friday, when the Twins roll out the proverbial purple carpet for festivities celebrating his 60th birthday.

This is the second Prince Night at the Twins' home stadium for the Minnesota music legend, who died in April 2016 from a drug overdose. His birthday was June 7.

The bright spot of the night is scheduled for the seventh inning. The Twins will hand out inflatable Prince-like guitars to the first 10,000 fans who enter the ballpark. Those fans will be asked to remain standing during the seventh-inning stretch and illuminate those purple replicas for a moment of remembrance.

Among the other special touches:

- Twins players and staff will wear Prince-themed T-shirts during batting practice. The shirts will be auctioned off at twinsbaseball.com to fund music grants for the Minneapolis Public Schools.
- A Prince Model C guitar will be on display on the Home Run Porch in left field in the high-tech Digital Clubhouse.

These shirts will be worn by the Twins during batting practice Friday.

These shirts will be worn by the Twins during batting practice Friday.

- Omarr Baker, Prince's younger brother, will throw out a ceremonial first pitch before the Twins play the Los Angeles Angels.
- Prince collaborator J.D. Steele of "The Steeles" and Olivia Gorden of Rochester, Minn., will perform the national anthem.
- Postgame Prince-themed fireworks.

Last season's Prince Night giveaway was a hit with fans. Some of the 10,000 umbrellas given away were listed on eBay for more than \$100.

Twins-L.A. Angels series preview **Phil Miller | Star Tribune | June 8, 2018**

Friday, 7:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM: RHP Lance Lynn (4-4, 5.46 ERA) vs. RHP Garrett Richards (4-4, 3.25)

Saturday, 1:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM: RHP Kyle Gibson (1-3, 3.54) vs. LHP Tyler Skaggs (4-4, 3.27)

Sunday, 1:10 p.m. • FSN, 830-AM: RHP Fernando Romero (2-2, 3.96) vs. RHP Nick Tropeano (3-3, 4.35)

Twins update

The Twins are 15-14 at Target Field and 5-3 on the current homestand. ... They are 5-8 vs. AL West teams, but 3-3 at home. They split a four-game series in Anaheim in May. ... They have won the season series in each of the past two seasons, but are 175-187 against the Angels all-time and 13-13 at Target Field. ... They are 3-12 in one-run games this season, while the Angels are 11-7. Of their past 18 games, 16 have been decided by three runs or fewer; the Twins are 6-10 in those close games. ... The Twins' 132 doubles are third-most in the AL, but their five triples are the fewest. Their 64 home runs rank 12th. ... They have been hit by only 11 pitches all season, by far the least in the AL; no other team has been hit fewer than 21 times. ... 1B/3B Miguel Sano is 2-for-18 (.111) in June, while 3B/SS Eduardo Escobar is 11-for-26 (.423) with nine extra-base hits this month. ... Fernando Rodney saved 17 games in 28 opportunities with the Angels in 2010-11. C Bobby Wilson was drafted by the Angels in 2002 and spent the first five seasons of his major league career with them. IF Gregorio Petit played 89 games with the Angels in 2016.

Angels update

Los Angeles has won four games in a row and trails Seattle by 4½ games in the AL West. At 35-28, they haven't had a better start to a season since 2008. ... They are 18-10 on the road, and though they have lost four of their past five games outside Anaheim, they still average 5.4 runs per road game, second-best in the AL. ... With 5.5 wins above replacement barely a third of the way through the season, CF Mike Trout, a two-time AL MVP, is on pace for one of the greatest seasons in major league history. Trout's 52 runs scored, 52 walks and .444 on-base percentage all lead the league, and his current 1.106 OPS represents a career best. He has also stolen 13 bases without being caught. The Twins held Trout to one hit, a single, in 10 at-bats during the four-game series in California last month, although they also walked him five times. Trout didn't play against the Twins last year, missing all seven games after tearing a ligament in his left thumb. ... The Angels are without RF Kole Calhoun (oblique), SS Andrelton Simmons (ankle), RHP Alex Meyer (shoulder) and C Rene Rivera (knee).

Angels' pitching/hitting star Shohei Ohtani might only bat in games at Target Field this weekend

Staff Writer | Star Tribune | June 7, 2018

OHTANI'S ARRIVAL

Shohei Ohtani, signed by the Angels after starring in the Japanese league, could make his Target Field debut this weekend, albeit as a hitter only. The 23-year-old is the first major leaguer since Babe Ruth in 1917 to regularly pitch and hit — but he left his start Wednesday against Kansas City because of a finger blister, and his availability as a hitter is uncertain. He does not play on days before and after his starts, which are once a week.

- In nine starts, righthander Ohtani is 4-1 with a 3.10 ERA and 61 strikeouts in 49⅓ innings. He has hit 101.1 mph on the radar gun, and has given up only two hits on his “out” pitch, a split-fingered fastball.
- Before Wednesday, his average fastball velocity (96.9 miles per hour) was second in MLB behind the Yankees' Luis Severino (97.6); Ohtani homered off a 97.2-mph fastball from Severino this season.
- As a lefthanded designated hitter, Ohtani has a .289 batting average and six home runs — all at home. He is slugging .535 and his OPS is .907.
- In a May 13 victory over the Twins, Ohtani struck out 11 in 6⅓ innings.
- Ruth had two monster years pitching for the Red Sox (1916-17). He was a combined 47-25 those years, but pitched only 37 games the next two seasons before Boston sold him to the Yankees for \$100,000. He pitched in five games the rest of his career, and is baseball's all-time leader in WAR, slugging percentage (.690) and OPS (1.164).

Thursday's Twins-White Sox game recap

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | June 7, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Jose Berrios, Twins

The righthander faced three batters in seven of his nine innings, striking out 10 and walking none.

BY THE NUMBERS

109 Pitches thrown by Berrios, a career high.

5 Homers hit by Eddie Rosario in the first eight games of the current Twins homestand.

36 Extra-base hits by Eduardo Escobar, fourth-most in the AL.

Miguel Sano sits while Logan Morrison and both catchers are in Twins lineup **Star Tribune | Star Tribune | June 7, 2018**

Miguel Sano, 2-for-his-past-18, will not be in the starting lineup today as the Twins take on the White Sox at 12:10 at Target Field. Max Kepler is also sitting out.

Logan Morrison returns to the Twins' lineup, and he returns to first base, too. Morrison's back stiffened up during Sunday's game, and grew so painful, he had to miss Tuesday's doubleheader. He's OK again, but the Twins don't want to take any chances of a recurrence during today's game.

"With backs, you always monitor it, just because of the fact that it was nothing structural, it was just a spasm," said Twins bench coach Derek Shelton. "It's one of the reasons we wanted to have him in the field, just to keep him moving the whole game instead of having him DH, where he would have downtime during the game."

Shelton filled in for manager Paul Molitor with all the pregame duties — lineup cards, injury reports, media sessions — because Molitor is attending the middle school graduation of his son Ben. The manager plans to be in the dugout by first pitch of this series finale.

Both Twins catchers are in the lineup, but not Sano, who is suffering through a 2-for-18 (.111) start to June. The slump is only a small part of the reason, Shelton said. The busy schedule this week — two games on Tuesday night, another one Wednesday and then a quick turnaround to today's early game — played a role, too.

"This didn't set up great for us," Shelton said. "So it's just a matter of picking the right guys today and then going with it, not only for our lineup today and the matchup, but also for the workload."

That matchup is against White Sox starter James Shields, who probably isn't someone that gives Twins fans a feeling of "Him again?" Yet today is the right-hander's 12th start at Target Field, which ties him with Rick Porcello for most by a visitor in the stadium's history. Jose Berrios is on the mound for the Twins, and the timing couldn't be better, Shelton said.

"We're really excited to have Jose pitching. As well as he's pitched, especially recently, and the repertoire he runs out there, it's a good guy to have, especially coming off last night's game," a mistake-filled 5-2 loss to Chicago, Shelton said. "They're very aware we played sloppy last night."

Mitch Garver (DH) and Bobby Wilson (catching) will be in the lineup with Jose Berrios pitching.

The Twins also activated pitcher Trevor May, who had Tommy John surgery 14 months ago, and sent him to Class AAA Rochester. Catcher Jason Castro (knee surgery) was moved to the 60-day disabled list to make room for May on the 40-man roster.

Twins get much-needed 'pick-me-up' from Jose Berrios to beat White Sox 7-2 **Brian Murphy | Pioneer Press | June 7, 2018**

Jose Berrios the perfectionist was angry after the White Sox ruined his perfect game and shutout Thursday afternoon.

The right-handed starter was only halfway to making Twins history when Omar Narvaez doubled and Jose Rondon singled with two outs in the fifth inning.

Eddie Rosario's rifle right arm ensured Chicago would come up empty handed when he cut down Narvaez at the plate. But in the sixth, the White Sox leveraged three hits, including a pair of doubles, to score two runs.

"I was angry, at myself, not at nobody else," Berrios said. "I'm always thinking no-hitter. But I know it's baseball. They're going to make adjustments."

More determined than ever to finish what he started, Berrios retired eight of the final nine batters he faced for a complete-game 7-2 victory over Chicago that allowed the Twins to preserve their bullpen and salvage a four-game series split against the lowly White Sox.

Berrios was brilliant, striking out 10 and allowing just six hits over 109 pitches, which included 78 strikes. He did not issue any walks to win for the fourth time in five starts.

"I don't know if I can aptly describe how much of a pick-me-up it is for your bullpen when you can get a nine-inning performance," manager Paul Molitor said. "You could tell early on he was really locating his pitches well."

It was Berrios' second complete game of the season after debuting with a shutout win April 1 at Baltimore. He is heating up just as the Twins were cooling down.

Molitor called out his team following Wednesday night's sloppy 5-2 loss, the Twins' eighth in their past 12 games. Poor baserunning and indecisive defense stained the lackluster effort.

They responded Thursday with sterling performances on the mound, at the plate and in the field to pull within 4 1/2 games of idle Cleveland in the American League Central Division.

"Last night was a little disturbing just in the fact that in a matter of about 10 minutes, we did about 10 things wrong, and it was in a critical part of the game," Molitor said. "We followed up on some of those things again today. I thought it was a good answer. Made some nice throws from the outfield, some good plays all around.

"Our pitching was outstanding, and some clutch hitting."

Eduardo Escobar ignited the blowout with a two-run homer in the first inning. Ehire Adrianza added a solo shot in the second, and red-hot Eddie Rosario did the rest.

Rosario, who slugged three homes runs including a walk-off shot Sunday against Cleveland, continued his productive homestand with a double and three-run homer and turned in a defensive gem as Minnesota tagged veteran White Sox starter James Shields for all seven runs on eight hits.

"I love Eddie Rosario, man," said Escobar, who is hitting .441 with five home runs and 15 RBI in his past nine games. "Every time he comes to home plate, he's going to swing. I'm so happy to play with him. Most importantly, everybody plays together and makes a win for the team. It's awesome."

The Twins were anxious to rebound and reward Berrios with run support. He was locked in right away, striking out six of the first 14 hitters he retired.

Berrios improved to 7-5 and lowered his earned-run average to 3.66. His team-high seventh quality start also was his third outing with 10-plus strikeouts.

"Yeah, it feels good to go deep today," he said. "I felt healthy. I got quite a few of my pitches working — fastball, changeup. I know in the sixth they scored two runs, but it's my fault."

After inducing Daniel Palka to fly out to Robbie Grossman for the final out, Berrios pointed to the stands where his wife and two children were watching, just as he did during his other complete game against the Orioles.

"They mean everything," said Berrios, who was asked whether he will bring his family to every start the rest of the season.

"I'll try," he said with a smile. "But it's tough bringing them to every game."

Twins' Eddie Rosario stays hot at the plate and in the field
Brian Murphy | Pioneer Press | June 7, 2018

Eddie Rosario remains hot at the plate and in left field.

Rosario's three-run homer Thursday was the big blow in a four-run fourth inning against Chicago White Sox starter James Shields in the Twins' easy 7-2 victory at Target Field.

Rosario finished 2-for-3 with a double, his 23rd multi-hit game of the season. Since May 1, Rosario is hitting .364 with 12 doubles, 11 home runs, 31 RBI and 27 runs scored. He homered three times including the walk-off in Sunday's victory over Cleveland.

"(I got) hot last year in August; was a good month," Rosario said. "I want to try and focus. Every day is a new day. Nothing different."

Nothing new about Rosario hacking early and often either. He pounced on Shields' 2-0 cutter and bashed it into the right-field plaza.

"Yeah, yeah. I'm gonna swing," he said. "I want to try to attack the pitcher, not easy for him, and I want to try to make good contact every time. I select good pitch to hit."

Meanwhile, Rosario the fielder threw out his second runner in as many games, cutting down Omar Narvaez at the plate to end the fifth inning.

Narvaez doubled with two outs to spoil Jose Berrios' perfect game. The damage, however, was minimized. Jose Rondon blooped a single into left, Rosario charged, fielded it on one hop and fired to catcher Bobby Wilson to nail Narvaez with about five feet to spare.

"I don't try too much; I want to try to catch the ball first, and be in a good position to throw to home plate," Rosario said. "I throw good, I see the home plate, everything."

Manager Paul Molitor did not think Rosario would have a chance to get the out at the plate because of how slow the play developed.

"If he throws it high or throws it wide, and the trail runner gets to second, you're going to wonder why he did it," Molitor said. "But he threw it on the money. Rosie's going to always look for chances to throw people out."

Right fielder Robbie Grossman also earned an assist to victimize Narvaez again in the seventh. He fielded Narvaez's drive off the right-field wall and threw the catcher out at second to snuff any White Sox threat.

LINEUP SHUFFLE

Struggling Twins slugger Miguel Sano took a seat when first baseman Logan Morrison returned to the lineup after missing three games because of back spasms.

Bench coach Derek Shelton, addressing the media pregame while Molitor attended his son's elementary-school graduation, said the move was more about giving Sano a rest and letting him avoid a tough matchup against Shields than anything punitive.

Sano was 0-for-4 with a pair of strikeouts in Wednesday night's 5-2 loss and is hitting a paltry .202. He is 1-for-8 with a home run and five strikeouts against Shields.

"No, when you have a noon game, after you play a doubleheader (Tuesday), ideally this didn't set up great for us," Shelton said. "So it's just a matter of picking the right guys today and then going with it, not only for our lineup today and the matchup, but also for the workload."

Right fielder Max Kepler, who is 2-for-16 against Shields, also had the day off, which Shelton said the Twins had been planning for him.

With catcher Mitch Garver as designated hitter and Wilson catching, the Twins risked losing one of their two catchers to injury Thursday. Infielder Gregorio Petit was the emergency catcher.

Both stayed healthy.

"I think there's a little bit of nervousness that somebody's going to take a foul tip and somebody else is going to have to put the gear on," Shelton said. "But it's one of those things when you have a three-man bench, and you're trying to run other guys out there, to give other guys a day off, it's just something we have to live with."

MAY UPDATE

Pitcher Trevor May took another step in his recovery from 2017 Tommy John surgery when he was taken off the disabled list and optioned to Triple-A Rochester following a rehabilitation assignment.

The right-hander started four of six games for Single-A Fort Myers and Rochester this season, going 0-3 with a 5.50 earned-run average, 12 walks and 20 strikeouts in 18 innings pitched.

Catcher Jason Castro, who had season-ending knee surgery last month, replaced May on the disabled list to make room for May on the 40-man roster.

BRIEFLY

The Twins improved to 13-8 against American League Central teams this season and have won 15 of their past 22 games against the White Sox.

Twins top White Sox 7-2 behind Berrios' complete game **Associated Press | Fox Sports North | June 7, 2018**

MINNEAPOLIS — The day after one of their ugliest losses of the season, the Minnesota Twins turned to ace-in-training Jose Berrios for a quick turnaround.

Eduardo Escobar and Eddie Rosario added yet another pick-me-up dose of hustle and muscle, too.

Berrios pitched a six-hitter for his second complete game this season, and the Twins hit three home runs against James Shields in a 7-2 victory over the Chicago White Sox on Thursday afternoon.

Berrios (7-5) retired his first 14 batters before Omar Narvarez's double. By that time, the 23-year-old right-hander already had a 7-0 lead. He used 10 strikeouts to win for the fourth time in five starts. Berrios has 44 strikeouts and four walks in 37 2/3 innings over that span, and he has logged a career-best five straight starts of six innings or more.

"Everyone knows when he's pitching. He's been on a really good roll here. You feel good about getting deep and having a chance to win, and all those things," manager Paul Molitor said. "You can tell his confidence is developing."

With seven games in a six-day stretch this week, the break for the bullpen was a welcomed bonus.

"I don't know if he's overly conscious of the fact that I'm hoping he goes nine today, but he kind of pitched like that," Molitor said, "like he was on a mission to try to find a way to complete the game if he could. And that's what you want to see. That's how you build young people up into guys that eventually emerge on the top of your rotation."

Escobar hit a two-run homer after a double by Rosario in the first against Shields (1-7), who has not won in 12 starts since opening day. Ehire Adrianza added a solo shot in the second inning. Then right after Brian Dozier's two-out RBI single in the fourth through a shift-created hole at second base, Rosario turned on an 86 mph cut fastball on the inside corner from Shields for a three-run drive just inside the right-field foul pole.

WATCH: Twins' Rosario stars at the plate, in the field

"It was right down the middle, up in the zone," Shields said, shaking his head about the gopher balls. "They're good hitters over there, and they took advantage of it. I've got to minimize those pitches right there and kind of know the situation a little bit better."

Rosario leads the Twins with 14 homers and 43 RBIs, and Escobar is close behind with 12 home runs and 38 RBIs. With most of their counted-on colleagues in the lineup either injured or underperforming, the Eddie and Eddie show this year has not only been entertaining but essential.

"Escobar's offense? It's awesome," Rosario said.

Escobar leads the major leagues with 24 doubles. Rosario moved into a tie for third in the American League with his 23rd multi-hit game.

"I love Eddie Rosario, man. Every time he comes to home plate, he's going to swing," Escobar said. "I'm so happy to play with him."

They're both elated to be playing behind Berrios, who helped the Twins split the four-game series after a 5-2 loss on Wednesday night lowlighted by a number of baserunning, fielding and hitting mistakes.

Yoan Moncada, who struck out four times on Tuesday, hit an RBI double with one out in the sixth inning before Jose Abreu did the same with two outs. That made Berrios mad, but the walk-less start was a bigger deal.

“Trying to control that, to get more deep into the game,” he said. “That’s what I tried to do.”

TAKE COVER

Shields gave up all seven runs, matching a season high, and eight hits in six innings. He struck out six and walked two. Shields is 0-5 with a 6.60 ERA in his last five starts at Target Field, where he has allowed 13 home runs in 12 starts, the most by a visitor since the ballpark opened nine seasons ago.

“I know he got into trouble,” manager Rick Renteria said. “But boy, I tell you what, he kept grinding, ate up some innings, saved our pen.”

TESTING, TESTING

Narvarez was thrown out at home by Rosario from left field ending the fifth when he tried to score on Jose Rondon’s single. The backup catcher was thrown out in the seventh by right fielder Robbie Grossman trying to stretch a single to a double. The Twins have seven outfield assists in their last 14 games.

CEDENO ARRIVES

The White Sox sent LHP Aaron Bummer to Triple-A Charlotte so he could get more work and promoted LHP Xavier Cedeno to take his spot in the bullpen. The 31-year-old Cedeno joined his fourth major league team, pitching a scoreless seventh.

TRAINER’S ROOM

White Sox: SS Tim Anderson, hitting .295 with eight extra-base hits and 13 RBIs in his last 12 games, had the day off so Rondon could see some action.

Twins: 1B Logan Morrison returned to the lineup after back stiffness kept him on the bench for three straight games. He doubled in the first inning.

UP NEXT

White Sox: RHP Dylan Covey (1-1, 2.82 ERA) pitches on Friday night to start a three-game series in Boston against former teammate LHP Chris Sale (5-3, 3.00 ERA) and the Red Sox. LHP Carlos Rodon is expected to come off the DL to make his season debut on Saturday, but Renteria declined again to confirm that.

Twins: RHP Lance Lynn (4-4, 5.46 ERA) starts on Friday night in the lid-lifter on a three-game series with the Los Angeles Angels, who will send RHP Garrett Richards (4-4, 3.25 ERA) to the mound.

Preview: Twins vs. Angels

Associated Press | Fox Sports North | June 8, 2018

Andrelton Simmons won’t be available Friday night when the Los Angeles Angels open a three-game weekend series against the Minnesota Twins at Target Field.

The shortstop was placed on the 10-day disabled list after spraining his ankle when he slipped on the dugout steps moments before the Angels took the field against Kansas City on Wednesday afternoon.

He played two innings before having to leave the game and an MRI revealed “some damage,” Simmons told reporters after the Angels’ 1-0 victory.

He didn’t know how long he’d be out but was hopeful he’d miss no more than the required 10 games.

“I’m planning to be back on my feet, moving around, as soon as possible,” Simmons said. “But got to play it smart. We’ll see. I’m just (mad) I’m going to miss a couple games. That’s the only thing that’s really bothering me right now.”

The 28-year old was batting .330 with an .860 on-base-plus-slugging percentage this season.

“He’s an important guy to us,” manager Mike Scioscia said Wednesday. “The way it happened is probably tougher to stomach than anything, just coming down the steps. But it happens, and we’ll get back out there.”

Simmons will remain in Los Angeles during the team’s nine-game road swing. Utility man Kaleb Cozart was recalled from Triple-A Salt Lake to fill Simmons’ place on the roster while Zack Cozart is expected to see most of the action at shortstop.

“He’s an incredible shortstop,” Scioscia said of Cozart. “For us to have that luxury to be able to slide him over there is something that a lot of teams wouldn’t be able to do.”

Albert Pujols should be back in the lineup after missing two games with a sore left knee. Combined with an off-day Thursday, he’ll have had three full days of rest.

Scioscia said the injury wasn’t serious.

“We’re going to manage it,” Scioscia said. “I don’t think it’s anything that we can’t take care of with a little bit of rest or there. We want Albert to obviously get his looks in the batter’s box. He’s starting to really feel good and comfortable swinging the bat.”

Right-hander Garrett Richards (4-4, 3.25 ERA) will open the series for Los Angeles. He didn’t take a decision in his last outing despite holding the Rangers to an unearned run over a season-high seven innings.

Richards has been doing some good work of late, going 1-3 with a 1.89 ERA over his last six starts.

Minnesota starter Lance Lynn (4-4, 5.46) has shown improvement over his last six outings, posting a 3.34 ERA during that stretch. He limited Cleveland to a run on two hits over six innings in his last start to earn his third consecutive victory.

Lynn has been battling a nagging blister on his pitching hand for much of the season, which has had an impact on his command at times and pushed his traditionally-high fastball usage rate to 78.5 percent on the season.

“When it gets a little bit raw, it’s going to affect how he’s able to command and spin the ball,” Twins manager Paul Molitor said. “I don’t think there’s been a big correlation between his command, which he struggled with early, and the fact he’s starting to get better and maybe that thing is healing a little bit.”

Lynn gave up four runs on eight hits to the Angles on May 11 and is 0-1 with a 7.59 ERA in two previous starts against Los Angeles.

Richards is 2-1 with a 2.97 ERA in six career outings (five starts) against the Twins, who tagged him for three runs over 5 1/3 innings in a no-decision May 10.

Pitcher Trevor May reinstated by Twins, assigned to Triple-A following Tommy John rehab
Associated Press | ESPN | June 7, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The Minnesota Twins have reinstated right-handed pitcher Trevor May from the disabled list and assigned him to Triple-A, a little less than 15 months after Tommy John elbow surgery.

May had the ligament replacement procedure on March 22 last year after he got hurt during a spring training game. He has a 5.50 ERA in 18 innings with 12 walks and 20 strikeouts in six rehab appearances, including four starts.

The Twins made the move on Thursday, transferring catcher Jason Castro from the 10-day disabled list to the 60-day DL to clear room on their 40-man roster. Castro is out for the rest of the season with a torn meniscus in his right knee.

José Berríos turns the Twins' mood around with a complete-game gem
Dan Hayes | The Athletic | June 7, 2018

Only 12 hours earlier, the Twins left the clubhouse in a bad mood having played a horrid game. As manager Paul Molitor described it on Thursday afternoon, the Twins unraveled in Wednesday night's loss to the White Sox in a span of 10 minutes.

But with José Berríos on the mound, there was a sense of calm surrounding the Twins when they returned to Target Field on Thursday morning that wasn't present the night before. Berríos then proceeded to display exactly why his teammates have so much belief in him. He continued an outstanding month-long run with a complete game and the Twins rolled over the Chicago White Sox 7-2 at Target Field to salvage a four-game split. Berríos allowed two runs and six hits while striking out 10 batters and walking none in a 109-pitch effort.

"Everybody's comfortable (with Berríos on the mound)," said outfielder Eddie Rosario, who doubled, homered, walked, drove in three runs and threw out a runner at home. "The offense is comfortable. The defense is comfortable. Family is comfortable. When you see that, you have a good game."

He's not ready to be anointed an ace just yet. Berríos has still proven to be too inconsistent at times to reach the upper echelon of major-league pitchers. His four starts from late April to early May represents one of those erratic stretches as Berríos posted an 8.84 ERA in that span.

Berríos described his slump as getting away from himself and what he's about. His command wasn't as sharp and hitters weren't offering at his curveball.

Berríos was certain following his May 10 turn in Anaheim that a mechanical adjustment made in the bullpen would help him rediscover his groove. Since then, Berríos has returned to the elite level he displayed earlier this season.

On Thursday, Berríos retired the first 14 batters he faced as the Twins opened up a seven-run lead. While the White Sox ended his perfect game in the fifth and scored twice in the sixth, Berríos then retired nine of the last 10 he faced — and the only one of the bunch to get a hit was thrown out at second trying to stretch to a double.

Over his last five starts, Berríos is 4-1 with a 2.63 ERA, 44 strikeouts and five walks in 37 2/3 innings.

"Everyone knows when he's pitching, he's been on a really good roll here," Molitor said. "You feel good about getting deep and having a chance to win, and all those things. And you can tell his confidence is developing. He's had a few hiccups along the way. Talk about his youth early in the year and getting too far out there too soon on a guy, but he's putting it together pretty consistently right now."

The effort couldn't have come at a better time for the Twins bullpen.

With several relievers having worked a heavy load, any day off is a good one. Aside from Zach Duke getting hot in the ninth inning, Berríos afforded everyone else a breather with an efficient performance. He threw strikes on 78 of 109 pitches and worked at a quick pace.

Still, whether or not Berríos could go the entire way came into question in the sixth inning. Yoán Moncada ended Berríos' bid for a shutout with a one-out RBI double and Jose Abreu later doubled on a slider to drive in a run and make it a 7-2 game.

Molitor saw his pitcher get a little flustered by the sequence of events. But Berríos bounced back to strike out Daniel Palka to strand a runner and rebounded from there, facing the minimum over his final 3 1/3 innings.

"Any time he takes the mound there's a chance of something special happening that day," Duke said. "It's one of those things where as he continues to mature, those special days will be more numerous and more consistent. But he's already pretty good."

What made Berríos particularly effective Thursday was good command of his fastball and curveball. He induced seven swings and misses with the curve but also spotted it for 10 called strikes. Berríos also got eight whiffs between his two- and four-seam fastballs and spotted 15 for strikes. Though he was briefly upset with himself in the sixth, Berríos said he felt confident from the outset.

His teammates were too.

"I don't know if I can aptly describe how much of a pick-me-up it is for your bullpen when you can get a nine-inning performance," Molitor said. "I don't know if he's overly conscious of the fact that I'm hoping he goes nine today. But he kind of pitched like that, like he was on a mission to try to find a way to complete the game if he could. And that's what you want to see, that's how you build young people up into guys that eventually emerge on the top of your rotation."