



MEDIA CLIPS –April 11, 2018

Story's 2-run HR not enough in loss to Padres

By Daniel Kramer MLB.com @DKramer_

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DENVER -- Another underwhelming offensive output hurt the Rockies in a 5-2 loss to the Padres on Tuesday, as they lost for the fourth time in five games on their first homestand of the season.

While left-hander **Tyler Anderson** turned in a strong start, the Rockies were held to just five hits. Their lone runs came in the first inning via **Trevor Story**, their one bright spot this homestand, who launched his third homer since Friday -- a two-run shot that narrowly cleared the right-field wall.

Hunter Renfroe pushed the Padres ahead with a two-out, three-run homer in the seventh for the first runs allowed by prized Rockies offseason acquisition **Bryan Shaw**, and Colorado's quiet bats failed to manufacture a run against San Diego's bullpen.

"We just haven't been doing what we're capable of doing throughout the whole game," Story said. "It's hard to say what that is, but it's very early, and we feel like we'll get it clicking."

"It's a collective thing," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "We talked about it a lot. This happens across the landscape of the game, where if your offense is going, you have maybe five, six, seven guys swinging the bat well out of your 12 or 13 position players. We have maybe a couple. So with that, there's not going to be a lot of production. That's what we're seeing -- the limited number of guys swinging the bat well."

Padres starter **Joey Lucchesi** didn't make things easy, as he allowed two unearned runs over six-plus innings. Utilizing a back-facing windup, the deceptive left-hander mixed his two-seam fastball and curveball en route to his first career win.

He now has 15 strikeouts in 11 innings against Colorado dating back to last Thursday, when he pitched five scoreless innings against the Rockies.

Anderson limited the Padres to two runs, despite allowing seven hits and two walks. He also struck out eight, his most since May 13, 2017, and he did it with a diverse range of pitches, turning to his cutter more early in counts as the game went on.

"I would say, other than those two walks, most of the time I was in the strike zone a lot, which is always good," Anderson said. "Changeup was better tonight. I still gave up a few hits on it. ... It's nice if you're getting strikeouts with any of your pitches. But if you can get them with all of them, it's even better."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Hosmer reaches on backhand bobble: With two outs in the top of the seventh, **Pat Valaika** muffed a grounder hit by **Eric Hosmer** at first, resulting in an infield single that set up Renfro's homer on the next pitch. It was the second night in a row in which the Rockies could not escape a minor jam and it turned into a major factor in defeat. On Monday, **Jon Gray** gave up five runs in the third inning after inducing consecutive groundouts.

Opportunity gets away: The Rockies appeared to be on the verge of an immediate rally in the seventh inning. They had runners on second and third with no outs and chased Lucchesi. But the middle of the lineup couldn't get a hit against Padres reliever **Kazuhisa Makita**. **Ian Desmond** flied out, **Gerardo Parra** struck out and Valaika popped out. The Rockies are 1-for-9 with runners in scoring position this series and 17-for-70 (.242) this season.

QUOTABLE

"I'm just trying to have good at-bats for the team, really. If I get a pitch that I can really put a good swing on, I think good things will happen. The results haven't always been there, but I feel good, and I feel like I'm having good at-bats." -- *Story, on recent success at the plate*

WHAT'S NEXT

German Marquez is looking to overcome a cold start in the Rockies' frigid home opener against the Braves, as Colorado wraps up the series against San Diego at 1:10 p.m. MT on Wednesday. The high-velocity right-hander gave up seven earned runs, one shy of a career high, while walking six, three more than his previous career high, last time out. In five career outings against the Padres, including three starts, Marquez is 2-1 with a 6.30 ERA.

Blackmon day to day with right quad tightness

Rockies center fielder scratched from Tuesday's lineup vs. Padres

By Daniel Kramer MLB.com @DKramer_

Apr. 10th, 2018

DENVER -- **Charlie Blackmon** dodged the disabled list over the weekend after leaving Saturday's game against the Braves with back tightness and missing Sunday's game. After playing Monday's opener against the Padres, the Rockies center fielder was scratched from Tuesday's lineup due to right quad tightness that flared up before batting practice, manager Bud Black said.

"We felt it was best to take him out of the lineup," Black said. "We'll see how he is tomorrow. Hopefully it's day to day."

Mike Tauchman started in place of Blackmon in center and batted eighth, while **DJ LeMahieu** moved to the leadoff spot, as he did in Blackmon's stead over the weekend. It wasn't immediately clear how Blackmon sustained his latest injury. He did not take on-field batting practice with the Rockies' first group, as he normally does.

Blackmon was pulled ahead of the 10th inning of Saturday's game against the Braves with the back issue, but the Rockies said Sunday that sitting the slugging center fielder was more of a precaution than a concern. He went 1-for-3 in Monday's 7-6 loss to the Padres.

Blackmon, who signed a six-year, \$108 million contract last Wednesday, is hitting .282/.391/.641 with four homers and six RBIs in 46 plate appearances through 10 games. His presence atop a formidable Colorado lineup that has struggled through its first 11 games has been valuable, particularly given that the Rockies' primary bench players -- Tauchman, first baseman **Ryan McMahon**, catcher **Tony Wolters** and infielder **Pat Valaika** -- are a combined 3-for-55 after McMahon, Valaika and Tauchman went 0-for-7 in Tuesday's 5-2 loss to the Padres.

Tauchman made the Rockies' Opening Day roster after an impressive spring, during which he hit .333/.397/.567 in 60 at-bats. He is 0-for-11 with six strikeouts.

The Morning After: Through early struggles, Rockies' Ryan McMahon "rolling with whatever role" he's given

After being called up to the big leagues late last year, McMahon has made one start in 2018 while mostly appearing as a pinch hitter

By KYLE NEWMAN | knewman@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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Ryan McMahon isn't off to the start he wanted at the plate this year — 0-for-13 with seven strikeouts — but the franchise's potential first baseman of the future knows enough to not let April adversity divert his course.

"There's so much baseball left to be played, so I don't dwell on (early struggles)," McMahon said. "Plus it's different not playing every day and being a bench guy, so I'm trying to get used to that role. It's taken some at-bats, but I've just got to keep working at it."

McMahon, who hit .158 in 19 at-bats last year after being called up from Triple-A Albuquerque in August, has made one start this season as the Rockies have also rotated Ian Desmond and Pat Valaika at first base.

The 23-year-old acknowledged he's "probably hitting too much" in the tunnel in preparation for pinch hitting appearances this season, and also said nothing's been conveyed to him in terms of the team's overall strategy at first base for 2018.

For the meantime, as he waits for a more consistent role in the lineup, McMahon's focused on improving on the tasks he's been given.

So far, that's meant coming to the plate in late innings to try to spark a Rockies' offense that's been inconsistent through the first dozen games.

"I'm just rolling with whatever role they want me in, but I tell you what — striking out a ton doesn't feel good when your team's out there in close ballgames," McMahon said. "I'm going to keep going up there, trying to get a good pitch to hit, and hit it."

Ks piling up: McMahon isn't the only Colorado player struggling to put the ball in play. Following Tuesday's loss to the Padres in which the Rockies struck out 10 times, the team is now tied for the third-most Ks in the National League with 101.

Quotable: Manager Bud Black on the issue with a Rockies' offense that has scored three runs or less in five of the last six games: "Collectively, we have a number of guys not swinging the bat like they're capable. But they will in time — this is too good of an offense to be down for too long."

Rockies' offense a no-show again at Coors Field in loss to Padres

Tyler Anderson gave the Rockies the start they needed

By **PATRICK SAUNDERS** | psaunders@denverpost.com | **The Denver Post**

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Perhaps someone should let the Rockies' offense know that winter is officially over, so it's OK to come out of hibernation.

The Rockies managed just five hits and struck out 10 times in a 5-2 loss to San Diego on Tuesday night at Coors Field, where they have begun their home slate 1-4.

"It's a collective thing," manager Bud Black said. "You see this a lot across the landscape of this game, where, when your offense is going (well), you have five, six, seven guys swinging the bat well. ... We have maybe a couple."

Playing without power-hitting leadoff man Charlie Blackmon, who was a late scratch because of tightness in his right quadriceps, and getting no production from its role players, Colorado's offense was limited to a two-run homer by Trevor Story.

The part-time trio of Michael Tauchman, Pat Valaika and Ryan McMahon is a combined 1-for-45 with 19 strikeouts to begin the season. Tauchman started in center Tuesday night, while Valaika manned first base.

San Diego clinched the game in the seventh when Hunter Renfroe drilled reliever Bryan Shaw's first-pitch, two-out fastball into the right-field seats for a three-run homer. They were the first runs surrendered by Shaw this season.

"(Renfroe) stayed on a pitch up and away," said Shaw, who signed a three-year, \$27 million deal to come to Colorado.

"Yesterday, he tried to pull the ball. Tonight he just went with it. It happens. I'll just have to adjust my approach next time."

Tyler Anderson gave the Rockies the start they needed: two runs allowed on seven hits with eight strikeouts and only two walks.

"'Andy' threw well," Black said. "I like the fact that he used all of his pitches again, like he did last week. The fastball played, the changeup was good — down and away — and he got a number of punchouts with it."

The left-hander's biggest pitch of the game arrived in the fifth. A leadoff, first-pitch homer by Austin Hedges tied the game 2-2, and then the Padres had two on after a single by Jose Pirela and a walk to Eric Hosmer. On a 1-2 count, Anderson pulled the string on a gorgeous 81 mph changeup to strike out Renfroe.

"Other than two walks, my changeup was in the zone tonight. So it was better tonight," Anderson said.

The Rockies began the evening in optimistic fashion. Anderson struck out three in the first inning, though he did walk Hosmer. Then Story, batting cleanup, lofted his two-run, pop-fly homer to right off starter Joey Lucchesi to give Colorado the early lead.

Lucchesi, a rookie left-hander, pitched six strong innings, allowing four hits, striking out eight and walking one. He became just the seventh pitcher in Padres history to allow zero earned runs while pitching at least six innings at Coors Field.

A revised stride, more strikes, and a new, varied breaking pitch: Inside reliever Adam Ottavino's dominant start to 2018

After an errant 2017, the righty is tied for the MLB lead with 14 strikeouts in addition to boasting a 0.00 ERA and 0.29 WHIP

By KYLE NEWMAN | knewman@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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Rockies reliever Adam Ottavino was religious in his ritual during the offseason and into spring training.

The 32-year-old right-hander would head to an indoor batting cage, and using either a piece of tape or the batter's box line, he'd go through "dry" delivery drills, simulating a pitch, in an attempt to correct a stride that went askew and led to an errant 2017 when he posted a career high walk total.

"It was obvious to me from Opening Day last year that my stride was messed up — my balance was off, my landing foot was off, my head was moving, I couldn't clearly focus on the target," Ottavino said. "I was terrible; I walked everybody. I can live with getting hit, but when you're beating yourself, that's bad."

Ottavino walked 39 batters in 53 innings a season ago, a big reason for his 5.06 ERA.

His diligence to get his stride back — "it's across my body but not as extreme as before," he said — is paying dividends. He's tied for the major league lead among relievers with 14 strikeouts and has yet to allow a run in seven innings. And his control is back as he's issued just one walk.

Ottavino wowed again in the Rockies' 7-6 loss to San Diego on Monday night, when he struck out the side for the third time this season while displaying command of an increasingly varied arsenal.

"It's a combination of the fastball in the strike zone with velocity, and then with the breaking ball, he has the confidence to throw it in any count," manager Bud Black said. "The opposition doesn't know what's coming. Could be a fastball, could be a breaking ball, could be a variance of the breaking ball, could be a fastball with some movement."

Ottavino invested in an innovative high-speed camera during the offseason as part of his efforts to film himself and look closely at his delivery and grip to figure out a pitch that would complement his fastball and his regular slider.

"I'm getting ahead in the count more this year, and throwing more strikes," Ottavino said. "If you look at my swing rate on my pitches, last year I was second lowest in the whole league (at 35.0 percent) — they were just standing there — and it's even lower this year (at 31.6 percent) but in a good way."

This year, instead of throwing balls, he's throwing a breaking pitch that has hitters off-balance and hitting a collective .050 against him heading into Tuesday night's game against San Diego.

“He’s got the ability to make it sweeping, he’s got the ability to make it go down,” Rockies reliever Mike Dunn explained. “So in a sense, it’s almost two completely different pitches coming at you from the same spot.”

To continue his torrid start, Ottavino said his focus is not necessarily on painting pitches, but on filling up the strike zone.

“Last year, I walked so many guys that at some point in the year, hitters decided to start waiting me out to get a good count or a walk,” he said. “That was the report coming into this year, and the only thing you can do as a pitcher in that spot is flip that on its head and throw a lot of strikes.”

Looking ahead

Padres RHP Luis Perdomo (1-1, 6.00 ERA) vs. Rockies RHP German Marquez (0-1, 6.52), 1:10 p.m Wednesday; ATTRM, 850 AM

There are some within the organization who believe Marquez has the best “stuff” on the staff, as well as the chance to be the Rockies’ best starting pitcher. He’s shown flashes of that talent, but his last start was the worst of his budding career. Facing Atlanta in the home opener, the 23-year-old gave up seven runs on seven hits with six walks (two intentional) in 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings. In two career games vs. the Padres at Coors Field, Marquez is 1-0 with a 3.52 ERA. Perdomo has a victory over the Astros this season, pitching five innings and allowing one run in a 4-1 victory. He has not fared well against Colorado, going 0-4 with a 6.68 ERA in eight games (six starts). Trevor Story has lit up Perdomo, batting 6-for-11 with two doubles and four RBIs.

Thursday: Rockies RHP Chad Bettis (1-0, 2.53) at Nationals LHP Gio Gonzalez (1-0, 1.59), 5 p.m., ATTRM

Friday: Rockies LHP Kyle Freeland (0-2, 5.56) at Nationals RHP Tanner Roark (1-0, 4.50), 5 p.m., ATTRM

Saturday: Rockies RHP Jon Gray (1-2, 5.63) at Nationals RHP (2-1, 0.90), 11 a.m., ATTRM

— *Patrick Saunders, The Denver Post*

Charlie Blackmon scratched from Rockies lineup due to quad tightness

All-star outfielder recently signed new \$108 million contract

By PATRICK SAUNDERS | psaunders@denverpost.com | The Denver Post

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Charlie Blackmon, the Rockies' all-star center fielder, was scratched from Tuesday night's game against San Diego because of a tight right quadriceps, the club announced.

It will be the second game this season that Blackmon was pulled out of the starting lineup because of injury. Blackmon missed Sunday's game against Atlanta after suffering through increasing back tightness during Saturday night's extra-inning win over the Braves. Blackmon was back in the starting lineup on Monday.

Last week, Blackmon signed a \$108 million contract that could potentially keep him in a Rockies uniform through 2023.

Lucchesi gets first win as Padres beat Rockies 5-2

Associated Press

DENVER -- One bad pitch at Coors Field could have rattled Padres rookie Joey Lucchesi. It didn't, and he settled down to pitch a gem for his first major league win.

Lucchesi overcame an early error and home run to dominate until the seventh inning, Hunter Renfroe hit a go-ahead homer and San Diego beat the Colorado Rockies 5-2 on Tuesday night.

Renfroe's three-run shot in the seventh backed Lucchesi's strong outing and gave the Padres their first series victory of the season.

"It feels awesome," said Lucchesi, who was given a beer shower by his teammates after the game. "It feels great."

Lucchesi (1-0) shut down Colorado in his third career start. He struck out eight and allowed two unearned runs before leaving two batters into the seventh.

"It was fun to watch that kid pitch. He was really good," San Diego manager Andy Green said. "I was hoping to get him through the seventh inning. Up to that point he hadn't shown any signs of wearing down at all. He looked strong. All day very good after that blip in the first inning."

Austin Hedges also homered, Jose Pirela had three hits and Brad Hand pitched the ninth for his fourth save.

Padres outfielder Manuel Margot left in the ninth inning after getting hit in the ribs by Scott Oberg's fastball. Green said he was getting checked out but there was no immediate update on his status.

"Obviously caught him flush in the ribs and stung him pretty good," Green said. "We're hopeful he's feeling a little bit better pretty soon."

Renfroe hit the first pitch from reliever Brian Shaw (1-1) with two out in the seventh. It was his first homer of the season and came after a pair of two-out singles. It also gave the outfielder a little payback after Shaw struck him out on a cutter in a seven-pitch at-bat Monday.

"Same pitch he swung through yesterday," Shaw said. "Obviously, today he got it."

Trevor Story's two-run homer in the first -- his third of the season -- came one out after Chris Iannetta reached on an error by Lucchesi. The rookie left-hander found a groove after that, retiring 16 of the next 18 batters and erasing the two runners with double plays. He left after Nolan Arenado led off the seventh with a triple off the scoreboard in right and Story walked.

"Went out in the first inning and felt great, felt loose, as I should be," Lucchesi said. "I had one bad pitch and recuperated and was able to get the job done."

Kazuhisa Makita came on and stranded both runners with a flyout, a strikeout and a foul out.

Colorado has lost three straight despite another strong outing from Tyler Anderson. The left-hander was effective over six innings but remains without a decision through three starts. He pitched six shutout innings last week in San Diego, and the Padres managed just two runs off him Tuesday before he left for a pinch-hitter.

"Other than those two walks, for the most part I was in the strike zone a lot, which is always good," Anderson said.

Pirela had an RBI double in the third and Hedges hit a leadoff homer in the fifth that tied it at 2.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Padres: 1B Wil Myers (right arm issue) is not expected to return from the 10-day DL when he is eligible Friday. Green said Myers will have to swing a bat for a few days and may go on a rehab assignment before returning.

Rockies: CF Charlie Blackmon was scratched from the lineup with tightness in his right quad. Blackmon left Saturday's game in the 10th inning with a back issue and sat out Sunday's game as a precaution. Mike Tauchman played center field in Blackmon's absence.

SCORING DROUGHT

Arenado has averaged 131 RBI over the last three seasons but has just six after 12 games. Manager Bud Black said he isn't worried about his star player's production.

"I know at the end of the year the number's will be there," Black said. "They are pitching him tough for sure. I saw that from Day One. The opposing pitching has been stingy with giving him pitches to hit."

Arenado has been productive still. He singled and tripled Tuesday and is hitting .318 in the first 12 games.

GOING ROGUE

When Makita came on in the seventh, Green's plan was to concede the run from third and get a double play to limit the damage.

"I had the interpreter come to the mound and basically told him, 'Hey, that guy at third, let him score,' Green said. "'Let's get everyone else out.' He didn't listen to me."

Makita tried to follow Green's orders but instead got out of the frame unscathed.

"I tried to get the double play but it is what it is," Makita said.

UP NEXT

The Padres will send RHP Luis Perdomo (1-1, 6.00 ERA) against Colorado RHP German Marquez (0-1, 6.52) in the series finale Wednesday. Perdomo will make his eighth career start against the Rockies while Marquez will face San Diego for the first time.

Prized Rockies prospect Ryan McMahon has that left-out feeling

By Nick Groke 2h ago | The Athletic

DENVER — Ryan McMahon's day in the sun arrived without a swing of the bat in a four-pitch, game-breaking walk at San Diego last week. He was ready to hit but never needed to — and that might be the problem.

"It felt great because I helped the team, finally," he said. Padres closer Brad Hand threw four balls low and away with the bases loaded and McMahon started trotting to first before looking back at the umpire to make sure. Yes, he walked.

"I think I'm getting better," McMahon said. "Only time will tell."

But the Rockies' 23-year-old prized prospect remains hitless this season in 13 at-bats, stuck in a tangle of left-handed hitters that has stranded him on the bench. He had started just one game this season, an 0-for-3 day last week in a loss, before an expected get-away start this afternoon Wednesday against the Padres.

This is not what McMahon expected when Colorado manager Bud Black shook his hand in congratulations on the final day of spring for making the opening-day roster. This is not the soaring start to a career that was hinted when *Baseball America* ranked him the club's No. 2 prospect.

"I don't know if it's frustrating, as much as something I'm trying to get used to," McMahon said. "My whole career, I've been somebody who plays every day. So I'm trying to figure out a way to be the best player I can without four or five at-bats every day."

But for now, he will wait. The Rockies have a conundrum. They are loaded with left-handed hitters but playing in a lefty-dominated pitching division. Half of their 12 hitters swing from the left.

On Tuesday, in a 5-2 loss to the Padres, Black stacked his lineup with as many right-handed bats as he could muster against Padres southpaw starter Joey Lucchesi. All four of Colorado's bench players were lefties, including McMahon, who struck out to lead off the sixth.

Through 12 games, the Rockies' pinch-hitters have combined to go 0-for-21 with 11 strikeouts.

"We're trying to put as many right-handed bats as we can against left-handed starters," Black said. "But the opposing team knows we have a left-handed bench."

Indeed, the division is loaded with lefty starters. The Dodgers have four. The Giants have two, not counting the injured Madison Bumgarner. The Diamondbacks have two. The Padres have two. Colorado has faced more lefty starters this

season than righties. This is why Arizona gave up three prospects in a midseason trade last year for J.D. Martinez. He crushes lefties.

Colorado saw 48 southpaw starters last season and compiled the second-most at-bats against lefties in baseball. But they don't have a J.D. Martinez. So Black is leaning on veteran Ian Desmond, a righthanded bat and the starting first baseman ahead of McMahon. And when the team faces a lefty starter, Black has moved Desmond to left field to sit lefty Gerardo Parra and started righty Pat Valaika instead at first base.

The Rockies are struggling at the plate with no easy way out. After 10 more whiffs on Tuesday, their 111 strikeouts are second-most in the NL behind the Padres. And their 62 against lefties is, by far, the most in the majors. They cannot simply call up outfield prospects David Dahl (another lefty) or Raimel Tapia (lefty) or Jordan Patterson (take a wild guess) as reinforcements. Only right-swinging Noel Cuevas might fit the bill.

Nevermind the musical chairs. It means McMahon is stalled in a lineup issue.

"Right now he's a guy we're utilizing off the bench," Black said. "But there might be more spots for him going forward."

So McMahon instead is trying to figure out one of the toughest jobs in baseball: pinch-hitter. That means irregular at-bats for a young player who desperately needs them to improve.

"Dude, it's so different. I honestly had no idea it would be something so tough for me," McMahon said.

But he played his way onto the major-league roster with a stellar spring, when he slashed .319/.365/.522. McMahon forced the Rockies' hand. It was just the wrong hand.

"I don't really have a say in what happens. I'm just here and I'm trying to make the most of the situation and help the team win ballgames. If this is what they're asking me to do, I've got to do it."

How the Rockies can shake things up on offense

Let's throw some ideas out there to get the bats going

By Hayden Kane@hwkane Apr 11, 2018, 8:00am MDT | Purple Row

The **Colorado Rockies** have scored 14 runs so far in five home games. That measly showing has come against the **Atlanta Braves** and the **San Diego Padres**. On the one hand, both of those teams have decent pitchers. On the other hand, this is supposed to be a soft portion of the schedule for a team with playoff aspirations.

There have been lots of strikeouts, a lack of opportunities to rally, and a tendency to squander those opportunities when they arise. It feels similar to last year in that the offense is quite top heavy with **Nolan Arenado**, **Charlie Blackmon**, and **DJ LeMahieu** carrying an otherwise inconsistent lineup. If one of those three is struggling or is hurt, as Blackmon has been for a few games in 2018, the offense feels even more punchless.

History tells us the Rockies will hit, they say. This team is going to score runs, they remind you. Those things might be true (they also might not, but that's another conversation for another day). But for now, let's remember that a sustained cold stretch by the 2017 offense nearly cost the Rockies their playoff spot. The way things are going, we might be staring at that kind of stretch right now.

We know the Rockies have talent and they have options to jolt their offense. Let's think about some ideas of how they can shake things up to score more runs and avoid an early-season lull.

*Call up **Raimel Tapia***

This offense needs some swagger. It also needs some help in the middle of the lineup. So while we might assume **Tapia** would bat leadoff, I'm thinking the Rockies could use him in the fifth or sixth spot. For what it's worth, he is driving the ball so far in Triple-A action with three early home runs.

It gets a little tricky to find a spot for Tapia because, in case you somehow didn't know this by now, the Rockies have a lot of outfielders. They also have starts going to **Pat Valaika** and Mike Tauchman. The most obvious move would be to send Tauchman down and call Tapia up, or if you tried to add another bat (more on this shortly) it might take carrying a fifth bench player and leaning on the versatility of bullpen guys like **Chris Rusin** and Antonio Senzatela. It doesn't have to be complicated, though, and Tapia should be up with the Rockies.

Why not **David Dahl**, you ask? He was just **placed on the seven-day disabled list**. If the Rockies haven't made a move in a week, you can swap him in for Tapia if that's your thing. And if we reach that point, let's just hope the Rockies aren't coming off a series in Washington in which they literally scored zero runs.

*Call up **Tom Murphy***

The Rockies have a lot to like about **Tony Wolters**, and they might not want to upset their battery situations with a young starting rotation that's trying to get on track. Then again, **Wolters** has just two hits so far in 12 at-bats, and Murphy is doing his thing again where he smashes minor league pitching (just a .571 average (!) with a couple home runs through five games).

It's early, so those stats are not that useful. But it's also no secret that Murphy is a better hitter than Wolters. Chris Iannetta is playing well and taking most of the time behind the dish, so this would be a marginal change. It doesn't mean the Rockies shouldn't consider it.

*Let **Ryan McMahon** play against lefties*

Word is that McMahon will get some starts once the Rockies **face more right-handed pitching**. The suggestion would be that he will struggle against left-handed pitching, even as the team trots Carlos González and **Gerardo Parra** out in those situations.

I think about that late win in San Diego over the weekend. Facing wicked left-handed closer **Brad Hand**, CarGo struck out and looked helpless doing so, waving at sliders out of the zone. McMahon, also in that tough left-on-left spot, stayed off those pitches and drew a bases loaded walk. The Rockies should at least give him the chance with regular at-bats to see if he can find more of a rhythm in those left-on-left spots.

*Bat **DJ LeMahieu** leadoff*

And do it even when Charlie Blackmon is in the lineup. Double plays are never good but they are especially bad when your team is starved for offense. It's a small thing and ultimately lineup debates are probably overblown, but this **swap could still help**. It would also free the Rockies up to do other creative things with **Blackmon in other spots** in the lineup.

Stop starting Pat Valaika

National League benches call for versatile players. If you have a guy who is also good as a pinch hitter, fleeting as those successes can be in such a tough role, it's all the better. Valaika shined in those spots last year. The Rockies should use him in that role and stop with this silly non-platoon where he's starting at first base, because it's just not working.

Check in on those free agents

Mark Reynolds seems like a good guy. Not the vindictive type. Certainly not the type to laugh at his former team after they decided not to sign him to instead proceed with a left-handed heavy roster that arguably doesn't have an actual first baseman. If he was that kind of guy, though, he probably had a lot of fun **last night**.

Anyhow, Reynolds is a free agent. Old friend **Matt Holliday** is a free agent, doing radio while he waits to see if a team wants him. Joey Bautista fended off rumors of his retirement this winter and is still available. The team seems to want right-handed bats for those games against lefties. There are more options than Pat Valaika out there.

None of those guys would fix the Rockies, and maybe it doesn't make sense to add them. But aren't we already at the point where the team should at least keep all their options open to breath life into an offense that was a problem last year and looks like it might be a problem again this year?

After today's finale against the Padres, the Rockies go on a seven-game trip where they face the **Nationals** for four games and the hot-start **Pittsburgh Pirates** for three games. Going into that trip with a struggling offense could spell big trouble. Even if we know better than to panic in April, the Rockies shouldn't wait too long to shake up their offense or it might be time to panic sooner than later.

BSN Exclusive: Adam Ottavino explains the small change that made a huge difference
By Drew Creasman - Posted on April 11, 2018 | BSN Denver

DENVER – How good is your good?

Some professional athletes find longevity by remaining steady in an industry where millions of dollars are spent in an effort to figure you out. Others manage to weather the ebbs-and-flows that come from making and re-making adjustments. For these athletes, their highs tend to outweigh their lows, but the latter can be awfully frustrating.

Of course, there is the final category. We know these people by name. Sometimes just one name. Trout. Lebron. Brady. Kershaw.

Colorado Rockies reliever Adam Ottavino, when he is at his best, looks an awful lot like one of those guys. The problem is that his career has been disjointed by Tommy John surgery and a bout with his command in 2017 that saw his walk rate double and his dominant-self disappear like a distant memory.

So, he decided to give us all a refresher course.

Way back in April 2015, Otto became the Rockies closer after an injury to Latroy Hawkins. He picked up 10.1 innings, striking out 13 batters, walking just two, and did not allow a single run before succumbing to the dreaded elbow injury.

He would not see the field again until the final stretch of 2016 when the Rockies were out of contention. But he picked up right where he left off, tossing 27 innings with 35 strikeouts and seven walks. He gave up eight earned runs for an ERA of 2.67.

With an offseason and spring training to get back to full strength, Ottavino was still rightly seen as a potential closer for Colorado entering last season, despite the club's acquisition of Greg Holland. He settled into a set-up role and things went well at first as he led the National League in holds through the first month of the season.

But astute observers could see he wasn't the same. The command wasn't as sharp. The free passes were starting to rise. Eventually, hitters stopped flailing at the slider and forced Otto to prove he could consistently throw his pitches for strikes. He couldn't do it, especially with his two-seam fastball that seemed to either miss wildly outside the zone or float right back over the heart of the plate.

His 6.58 BB/9 ratio led directly to a 5.06 ERA, Ottavino telling BSN Denver that it was just a few small things but he couldn't get himself right.

"It's the same mechanics I've always had, it's just that last year they were messed up. This is the way I've always thrown. My direction is a little better, my timing is good, that's it."

Sounds so simple, I say.

"It sounds simple," he replies. "But things take practice. I couldn't fix it last year. Tried, tried-tried-tired; couldn't fix it. I was able to get it to happen in the offseason, practice it throughout spring, and I feel good with [my delivery] right now. Gotta try to stay in that groove and not get in any bad habits for the next five-and-a-half months. At the moment, it feels comfortable."

Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of this has been the return of that tailing fastball as a legitimate and frightening weapon in his arsenal.

"I'm throwing a lot of them, so you can tell [it's working] by the pitch-mix numbers," he says, fighting back a smile. "I felt like it was a good pitch for me years ago. Last year, I was uncomfortable with it and suffered for it. So, I made that a priority and I've just been trusting it. I've always wanted to throw it a lot because I think just intuitively I know that if one pitch goes one way and one goes the other, it's probably a good thing."

For video evidence of just how silly guys have looked against the pitch this season, check out **this Rockies Film Room**. For any pitcher, though, mechanics, trusting your pitches and having a nearly unhittable slider all amount to very little if your head isn't on straight. And Ottavino is determined to play the long game in 2018.

"[I'm] definitely confident," he says. "But aware that things can change in a hurry. There's so much baseball to play. I'm just trying to focus on one day at a time and not get ahead of myself."

We saw in 2015 and 2016 just how good Adam Ottavino's good can be. And we saw in 2017 what can happen with even the slightest wrench in the system. Now in 2018, he aims to do something he never has; be at, or at least near, his best from spring to fall.

With seven scoreless innings pitched featuring 14 strikeouts and just one walk... he's off to a pretty good start.

Rox offense leaves Anderson's excellent performance out to dry
By Drew Creasman - Posted on April 10, 2018 | BSN Denver

DENVER – The Colorado Rockies got a fantastic performance out of starting pitcher Tyler Anderson, but a mistake from a reliever and a lack of a sustained offensive effort led to another home loss to the San Diego Padres by a score of 5-2. They are now 1-4 at Coors Field to start the season.

Colorado got on the board with a Trevor Story two-run home run over the high scoreboard in right field in the first. It was the only time in the game they would score.

Anderson didn't allow a baserunner until he had two outs in the third. Manuel Margot took the extra base on a grounder that died in the outfield grass and it paid off on a double to left for Jose Pirela. That made it a one-run game.

Eric Hosmer then hit a hard single to left but Ian Desmond was able to throw out Pirela at the plate with some help on a fantastic tag by Chris Iannetta, preserving the narrow lead.

Austin Hedges launched a no-doubt home run on the first pitch he saw in the fifth but Anderson recorded two more strikeouts in preventing any more damage in the inning.

The Rockies lefty cruised through the sixth but with the game still tied at two runs apiece, manager Bud Black went to his bench, calling upon rookie Ryan McMahon who continued his early-season struggles by striking out.

Bryan Shaw entered the game in the seventh and recorded two quick outs but a pair of seeing-eye-singles from Jose Pirela and Eric Hosmer—the latter of which could easily have been ruled an error on part-time first baseman Pat Valaika—set the stage for the backbreaker; a three-run shot to right off the bat of Hunter Renfroe, who had looked lost against Anderson earlier in the contest.

Those were the first runs Shaw has given up so far this season.

The only other chance for some scoring for the home club came in the bottom of the seventh when Nolan Arenado lined a triple off the wall in right. Story followed with a walk and would even steal second base. But a flyout from Desmond, strikeout from Gerardo Parra, and pop up from Valaika stranded both runners.

FINAL STATS:**Rockies:**

Tyler Anderson: 7 H, 2 ER, 2 BB, 8 K

Bryan Shaw: 1 IP, 3 H, 3 ER, 0 BB, 0 K

Mike Dunn: 1 IP, 0 H, 0 R 1 BB, 0 K

Trevor Story: 1-for-2, 1 R, 2 RBI, HR (3) SB (2)

Nolan Arenado: 2-for-3, 3B

Padres:

Joey Lucchesi: 6 IP, 4 H, 2 R, 0 ER, 1 BB, 8 K

Jose Pirela: 3-for-4, 1 R, 1 RBI

Hunter Renfroe: 1-for-4, 1 R, 3 RBI, HR

WHAT'S NEXT:

Colorado will try to salvage the final game in the series tomorrow afternoon. German Marquez will look to bounce back from his rough outing in the Home Opener against Luis Perdomo. First pitch is at 1:10 Mountain Time.