



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips
Sunday, August 5, 2018

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Berrios goes 7 strong as Twins rout Royals
Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 4, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- The Twins haven't had a true ace since Johan Santana left the club after the 2007 season, but they're hopeful 24-year-old Jose Berrios can develop into a top-of-the-rotation starter.

So it was fitting that on the same night Santana was inducted into the Twins Hall of Fame that Berrios took the mound and threw seven strong innings in leading Minnesota to an 8-2 win over the Royals on Saturday night at Target Field. Berrios, an All-Star for the first time this season, allowed two runs on five hits and three walks with six strikeouts to improve to 11-8 with a 3.51 ERA.

"I was happy to see that out there, the Twins honoring a great player and putting him in the Twins Hall of Fame -- it's inspiring," Berrios said through an interpreter. "So I went out there and did my thing."

Berrios had one rough inning -- issuing three walks to load the bases in the third -- and he gave up a two-run single to Alex Gordon before escaping the jam. Otherwise, Berrios was efficient, getting through seven innings on 106 pitches, with 70 going for strikes.

"He told me after the game, the way things are, he wanted a complete game tonight," manager Paul Molitor said. "I think he wants one every time he's out there. And the way he started, it looked like it might be feasible. He ran into trouble there. A couple close calls could have gone either way."

Eddie Rosario, Max Kepler and Logan Morrison homered to lead the offense with Rosario connecting on a solo shot off Burch Smith in the first and Kepler smacking a two-run shot off Smith in the fourth inning. It was homer No. 20 for Rosario and No. 14 for Kepler. Kepler went 3-for-3 in his first three-hit game since April 30.

"We don't want guys to try to step up and be Superman," Molitor said. "It's just understand that you go out there and bring what you can bring. It's just about the energy and showing up each day. Rosie got us started and Kep had a really nice night all around the field."

The Twins kept tacking on runs, scoring in the fifth on a sacrifice fly from Rosario, twice more in the sixth on an RBI double from Logan Forsythe and an RBI groundout from Bobby Wilson before Morrison crushed a two-run homer in the seventh. Morrison's blast off reliever Glenn

Sparkman had an exit velocity of 110.9 mph and traveled a projected 442 feet, according to Statcast™, to right field. It was the second-longest homer of the Twins season, trailing only a 443-foot homer by Eduardo Escobar on June 1.

"Logan's was probably the best ball we've seen him hit this year," Molitor said. "He turned around good velocity there."

JOHAN HONORED

Santana, who won two American League Cy Young Awards during his eight years in Minnesota, became the 31st member of the Twins Hall of Fame during a pregame ceremony. It featured speeches by Torii Hunter and Santana, while several of Santana's former teammates were in attendance such as Justin Morneau, Michael Cuddyer, Brad Radke, Juan Rincon, Luis Rivas, J.C. Romero and Cristian Guzman. In a memorable moment, Santana was scheduled to throw out the ceremonial first pitch to his son, Johan Jr., but said it would mean more to him with his son throwing the pitch to him instead.

"It was a very nice ceremony," Molitor said. "It's always nice to see the group that joins him out on the field, have so many of his former teammates come back. And then to honor Johan in that fashion -- you could tell the passion that he had, talking through his lists of people he wanted to express gratitude for."

DRAKE MAKES HISTORY

Right-handed reliever Oliver Drake made his Twins debut in the ninth, which marked the fifth team he's played for this season to set a Major League record. Drake threw a 1-2-3 inning, including a strikeout of Brett Phillips looking on a splitter. More >

"It's nice just get back to playing baseball," Drake said. "That's been the toughest thing this year. I've had so much time just kind of in limbo where you can't do anything. I think my catch partner for the whole time has been a fence back home. So like it's just nice to get back out there and playing baseball, throwing to hitters and competing. Then to come in, get a win with the team and be able to throw up a zero in my first outing tonight. It's a good first step."

HE SAID IT

"It's definitely cool having all the jerseys. That's going to be something that, looking back, will be a cool collection. I don't know if it'll be something I brag about. It'll definitely be a neat story, especially down the line after the baseball career with kids, grandkids or anything, and they'll see six jerseys I have know that are framed. My wife keeps joking that we should have them put up year-by-year and we should have one year with all five jerseys." -- Drake, on his record

UP NEXT

Twins right-hander Ervin Santana (0-0, 6.10 ERA) will start the series finale against the Royals at 1:10 p.m. CT on Sunday at Target Field. Santana is making his third start of the season after undergoing surgery on his right middle finger in early February. He's working to regain his velocity, as his average velocity is down roughly 3 mph compared to last year. Lefty Danny Duffy (7-9, 4.50) starts for Kansas City. on Friday.

New Twins Hall of Famer Johan Santana flipped the script by catching the ceremonial first pitch from his son Andrew Mearns | MLB.com | August 4, 2018

Before the Twins hosted the Royals on Saturday night, they took some time to celebrate one of the greatest pitchers to ever put on a Twins uniform -- Johan Santana. The southpaw with an unhittable changeup won two American League Cy Young Awards during a dominant stretch with the Twins from 2000-07, and he was inducted into the team's Hall of Fame during a pregame ceremony.

Santana was also invited to toss the Twins' ceremonial first pitch, but he couldn't resist adding a different kind of changeup to the proceedings. He swapped positions in the battery and caught the first pitch, giving the throwing honors to his son, Johan Jr.:

This perfect moment just made the day that much better for the Santana family.

The photo of their hug afterward is, without a doubt, one for the scrapbook.

Drake makes MLB history with debut for Twins Rhett Bollinger | MLB.com | August 4, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS -- Right-handed reliever Oliver Drake officially joined the Twins on Saturday, and he made history with his first appearance in an 8-2 win over the Royals at Target Field. He worked a 1-2-3 ninth inning in pitching for his fifth team this season, which is a Major League record.

Drake, who was claimed off waivers from the Blue Jays on Friday, has pitched for the Brewers, Indians, Angels and Blue Jays this season after beginning the year in the Orioles' system. The 31-year-old posted a 7.57 ERA with 29 strikeouts, 10 walks and two homers in 27 1/3 innings prior to Saturday's game against the Royals at Target Field.

"It's definitely been a long year," Drake said with a laugh. "It's always a good thing to be wanted in this game. My wife definitely would appreciate being a little more settled. She's been moving around a lot with me, and it's kind of chaos. But it's all part of it, it's the lifestyle we live, and we're just making the best of it."

Drake said he's learned to pack light this season because of his travels, crediting his wife, Shannon, for helping him move from city to city. He said the toughest part has been the waiting periods after getting designated for assignment because it's hard to know where you're going to land, and you're not a part of any club so it's difficult to keep a regular throwing routine.

"It feels like when you're grounded and you're watching all your friends play outside, and you can't go play," Drake said. "I'll turn on games, and watch buddies, guys, now there are numerous teams I've played with, so I know a lot of guys. I just want to play, so those days you can't do anything, it feels like you're in timeout. Those are the worst."

Drake, who attended U.S. Naval Academy, has prior Major League experience, posting a career 5.00 ERA with 129 strikeouts, 51 walks and 11 homers allowed in 117 innings over the past four seasons. But this season, he's incorporated a curveball into his mix, to go along with his fastball and splitter.

"Our guys like his stuff," manager Paul Molitor said. "A little bit of a cut fastball with low to mid 90s velocity and the split finger has been the pitch for him for a while, and he's also mixed in a curveball that they say for the first year of using the pitch he's been effective. We will get a good look at him."

Drake said he hopes to stick with the Twins, but given the way this season has gone, he's trying to take it day by day. For now, he's keeping his sense of humor about this season and said he'll have some souvenirs from his record-setting journey.

"I do have jerseys from all of them," Drake said. "So the man cave will have a lot of jerseys. It'll be a heck of a story."

Worth noting

- The Twins held a pregame ceremony before Saturday's game to honor two-time American League Cy Young Award winner Johan Santana, who was officially inducted into the Twins Hall of Fame. Santana is joining rare company as only the 21st Twins player to be inducted. There have been 827 players in club history, so roughly only 2.5 percent make the club's Hall of Fame.

"A lot of our guys, it's good to know our club's history, but I think when you get into the environment of a Hall of Fame ceremony and you see all the faces, it's meaningful," Molitor said. "It's a good way for our organization to bridge generation to generation. Our Hall of Fame has done a really nice job of putting it together the last few years."

- Right-hander Michael Pineda, who is recovering from Tommy John surgery in July 2017, will officially begin his rehab assignment with the Gulf Coast League Twins on Monday. Pineda, who signed a two-year deal before the season, remains on track to be ready to join the Twins as a September callup.

- Right-hander Aaron Slegers, on the 10-day disabled list with right shoulder inflammation, made his first rehab start with Triple-A Rochester on Saturday. He's expected to make at least one more rehab outing before being activated. He's likely to be optioned to Rochester once healthy.

Max Kepler provides all the power Jose Berrios, Twins need in rout of Royals

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 5, 2018

He didn't care about the history he was making, or the lead he was protecting, or the look of yet another new home ballpark. When the bullpen door opened and he jogged to the mound on Saturday, Oliver Drake was just glad he wasn't grounded anymore.

"The hardest part [of his bizarre 2018 season] has been the days in between [teams]," Drake said after pitching the ninth inning of the Twins' 8-2 victory over Kansas City, making him the first player ever to play for five MLB teams in one season. "It feels like when you're grounded and you're watching all your friends play outside, and you're not allowed. Like you're in timeout."

Timeout is over for the righthanded reliever, and perhaps for a couple of Twins hitters who showed signs of ramping up their offense on Saturday. Max Kepler and Logan Morrison, each of whom is trying to put together a late-season surge, both homered, Eddie Rosario did as well, and Jose Berrios allowed only five hits, all singles, over seven innings to collect his 11th win.

And with the lead safe and history in the wind, manager Paul Molitor called upon the 31-year-old righthander from Massachusetts, claimed off waivers a day earlier. Drake broke camp with the Brewers in March, was traded to the Indians in May, and was claimed and waived by both the Angels and Blue Jays during the past couple of months. The Twins, Molitor said, like his low-90s cut fastball and the curve he taught himself last winter, and believe that his rough season (a 7.57 ERA) is partly because "he hasn't had a chance to settle into any one place."

To which Drake says: You think?

“It’s definitely been a long year. My wife [Shannon] would appreciate being a little more settled,” Drake said. When he arrived in Cleveland, for instance, he rented the apartment that Matt Belisle, now his teammate, had just vacated. On the day that Shannon unpacked all their belongings, Drake came home with bad news: He got designated for assignment. Pack up.

“So we haven’t had an apartment in a little while. It’s been a lot of hotels. A lot of what we packed originally to start the year was sent home. We’re packing a lot lighter now,” Drake said. “She’s been moving around with me, and it’s kind of chaos.”

It was nothing but calm when he pitched for the Twins on Saturday, retiring all three batters he faced on 19 pitches. An assignment carried out by the first U.S. Naval Academy grad to make the big leagues since 1921, a guy who arrived, suitcases in hand, just three hours before game time.

“It’s hard to get into a rhythm. A lot of guys are grinding, and I feel like my season hasn’t really even started. Every month, I’ve had an All-Star break,” Drake said. “My catch partner on a lot of days is a fence. So it’s really hard to stay sharp, and then try to get major league hitters out. I’m just glad to go out and compete again.”

The Twins are glad to see Berrios stay so sharp, outside of his first three-walk inning since his rookie year. And to see Kepler, who had not had a three-hit game since a trio of them in April, connect on two singles, a walk and the long two-run fourth-inning home run that put the Twins in front for good.

Logan Morrison’s homer was his sixth in 15 games. “Probably the best ball we’ve seen him hit all season,” Molitor said.

Twins front office did what it had to do
Jim Souhan | Star Tribune | August 4, 2018

The Twins on Saturday inducted Johan Santana into their Hall of Fame. During his speech, he thanked former general managers Terry Ryan and Bill Smith, the alpha and omega of his Twins career, who made him their poster pitcher for team building and rebuilding.

Santana’s induction arrived 18 years after they traded for him in the Rule 5 draft, a clearinghouse for disappointing minor leaguers.

And 17 years after he posted a 6.49 ERA in his first big-league season, 14 years after he won his first Cy Young, and 10 years after trading him for a spotty slew of prospects.

Santana embodies the traditional and ongoing Twins philosophy: Trade for undeveloped prospects, slowly develop them, then trade the developed player to restart the cycle.

Twins fans seemed shocked when Derek Falvey and Thad Levine traded big-leaguers for prospects in each of their first two seasons. To be shocked is to ignore history, and the state of the current farm system.

Andy MacPhail won two World Series as Twins GM. If his philosophy were a shoe slogan, it would be: Just Do It ... Or Don’t Even Bother Trying.

Ryan built a team that produced six playoff appearances in nine seasons, with Smith running the team for the last two of those. Ryan, like MacPhail, believed in pouring gasoline on the franchise when champagne wasn’t earned.

Falvey and Levine traded for help last summer, then traded away players when the team slumped before the deadline. They traded for help this spring, then traded away a fifth of the big-league roster this summer.

They are unintentionally paying homage to MacPhail and Ryan, who believed that if you can’t win this year, you start working on your three-year plan.

At the time Ryan traded for him, Santana wasn’t even a decent prospect. Ryan had already traded Chuck Knoblauch for Cristian Guzman and Eric Milton. While the Twins were losing enough to tempt baseball to eliminate the franchise, Ryan was slowly building.

He had learned under MacPhail, who won a World Series in 1987, then traded his Cy Young-winning, changeup-throwing lefty, Frank Viola, for two young pitchers in 1989. The Twins would not have won in 1991 without Kevin Tapani and Rick Aguilera.

When Ryan stepped down, Smith immediately faced a nasty task — trading the great Santana, who was a year away from free agency and whose representatives had given the Twins no hope of being able to re-sign him. Smith dealt Santana to the Mets for outfielder Carlos Gomez and

pitchers Phil Humber, Kevin Mulvey and Deolis Guerra. Gomez would emerge as a star... after the Twins traded him. The pitchers would not help.

Smith had confirmed the risks of trading for unestablished players. There are risks associated with inaction, as well. Had Falvey and Levine decided not to trade players away, most likely this year's team would have missed the playoffs anyway, and the Twins would be without 11 prospects they received in their five July deals.

Want to blame someone for this year's failure? Instead of picking on a front office that added players with strong track records this winter, how about blaming Miguel Sano, Brian Dozier, Jorge Polanco and Max Kepler for failures and absences? Or blame injuries to Ervin Santana, Byron Buxton, Jason Castro, Addison Reed. Or all of the above.

Falvey and Levine were hired because the franchise required a reboot and the farm system lacked depth. Trading for prospects gives the Twins a puncher's chance at building a sustainable winner.

For those who think Falvey and Levine should be selling out to try to win immediately, consider this:

If Twins ownership thought the team was ready to win in the latter years of this decade, Ryan would still be here.

So Falvey and Levine continue to do what is logical and, in the Twins' organization, traditional: trading players who are about to leave before they leave, trying to find the next Santana while understanding that they're bound to get stuck with a few Humbers.

Moves take Twins from deep to disastrous **Patrick Reusse | Star Tribune | August 4, 2018**

The Twins had a foundation when the 2017 season ended with a wild-card loss at Yankee Stadium. Assuming the return of Miguel Sano, the infield was deep enough to have the excellent Eduardo Escobar as an extra piece. The outfield was young and often described on FSN telecasts as having "three center fielders."

There were three notable starters in Ervin Santana, Jose Berrios and Kyle Gibson, and the threesome of Trevor Hildenberger, Taylor Rogers and Ryan Pressly to lead the bullpen.

The Twins added a half-dozen veterans — relievers Fernando Rodney, Addison Reed and Zach Duke, starters Jake Odorizzi and Lance Lynn and designated hitter Logan Morrison — to supplement that foundation.

This pushed the Twins to an all-time-high payroll of \$130 million in the second year of Derek Falvey's baseball operation. Lynn was the last of those signings, and it became official March 13.

Twenty weeks later, the nonwaiver trade deadline was reached in major league baseball and the result was in on the Twins' 2018 roster manipulation:

Disaster.

Escobar and Brian Dozier were foundation infielders and traded — Escobar for three suspects in the low minors and Dozier in a complete giveaway. Joe Mauer might retire, and Sano could again decide over the winter that the low 270s is too lean.

Eddie Rosario is the only foundation outfielder remaining, with Max Kepler unable to hit in the big leagues, and Byron Buxton unable to hit or stay healthy at any level.

Berrios is good and so is Gibson, and Big Ery soon will be gone after a wasted season, and Pressly is gone for a couple more suspects.

There has been bad luck and, more so, wretched roster decisions. Escobar would have signed for \$10-\$11 million per on a multiyear deal, and Dozier would have been worth more if the Twins hadn't overplayed their hand earlier, and Sano should not have left spring training in that shape.

There's also a bullpen that now includes 31-year-old Oliver Drake, when J.T. Chargois (Dodgers) and Randy Rosario (a lefthander with a 1.97 ERA when pitching for the Cubs) were waived for no good reason.

Ninety losses are back in the picture, and a foundation remains that wouldn't support a mud hut.

Nice work, fellas.

Johan Santana and 'The Equalizer' enter Twins Hall of Fame
Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 4, 2018

After striking out against a no-name rookie during a spring training game in 2000, Ken Griffey Jr. asked Torii Hunter what that pitch that got him was. So Hunter asked the rookie, Johan Santana, who told him it was “The Equalizer.”

“For eight years, I played behind Johan Santana,” Hunter said Saturday in introducing the newest member of the Twins Hall of Fame, “and I saw The Equalizer equalize a lot of hitters.”

Santana, who went 93-44 during his eight seasons with the Twins, averaged a franchise-record 9.50 strikeouts per nine innings, mostly by using that pitch, more conventionally known as a changeup. Add that to his two Cy Young Awards, and his franchise-record 17-strikeout game, and Santana was an easy choice for the Twins’ highest honor once he became eligible.

Santana took care of that eligibility immediately upon taking the podium Saturday. “People ask me, ‘When are you going to retire?’ ” Santana said of his multiple attempts to come back from a series of late-career shoulder injuries. “I am now officially retired.”

He thanked his wife, children, parents and several important contributors to his career during the half-hour ceremony, including his longtime catcher and still-active teammate, Joe Mauer. Plenty of other former teammates returned to Target Field — where Santana never pitched — to pay tribute: J.C. Romero, Justin Morneau, Glen Perkins, and a trio of fellow Venezuelans: Luis Rivas, Juan Rincon and Carlos Silva.

He paid special tribute to longtime Twins coach Rick Stelmazek, who died in November. “He taught me a lot. One of the things he told me was, ‘Control the situation; don’t let the situation control you,’ ” Santana said. “It took me some time, but I figured it out. You know what I figured out? Nothing happened, absolutely nothing happened, until I threw the ball. So make sure you’re ready before you throw.”

Santana’s .679 winning percentage is the highest in Twins’ history among pitchers with 100 decisions, and over his last five seasons in Minnesota, he led the American League in wins (82), strikeouts (1,152) and ERA (2.92).

Hunter recalled the night in 2007 when Santana struck out 17 Rangers in eight innings: “I didn’t get a single ball in center field,” Hunter said. “I was bored. I could have brought a lawn chair.”

After thanking the fans, Santana, the 31st member of the Twins Hall of Fame, chose to catch, not throw, a ceremonial first pitch, which was thrown by his son, Johan Jr.

Etc.

- Aaron Slegers’ first rehab appearance for Class AAA Rochester had a good start but a rough finish Saturday. The righthander, placed on the disabled list in mid-July with inflammation in his right shoulder, got five outs, two by strikeout, against Pawtucket, but then gave up two singles and a triple before reaching his pitch limit. Slegers was charged with three runs over 1½ innings.
- Michael Pineda will pitch a Gulf Coast League game Monday in Fort Myers, Fla., and if all goes well, Twins manager Paul Molitor said, the Twins will formally start his rehabilitation assignment, with the goal of reaching Rochester for the final two weeks of the minor league season. The Twins will then evaluate whether to give him major league work in September.
- Matt Magill’s wife, Melissa, gave birth to a baby boy, the couple’s first child, in southern California on Saturday. Maverick Magill was born at 3:05 p.m., the Twins said, and baby and mother are doing well.

Saturday's Twins-Kansas City game recap
Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 4, 2018

GAME RECAP

IMPACT PLAYER

Max Kepler, Twins

His two-run homer provided a lead that didn’t escape, and he also contributed two singles and a walk. He hadn’t driven in a run in 10 days.

BY THE NUMBERS

5 Singles allowed by Jose Berrios, all the damage he endured in seven innings.

5 Teams for which reliever Oliver Drake has played this season, a major league record.

ON DECK

Ervin Santana and mph-challenged repertoire, an issue since his return from injury, will give it a go against the Royals on Sunday afternoon.

Twins postgame: Jose Berrios developing ability to put bad innings behind him

Phil Miller | Star Tribune | August 4, 2018

Three extras from a big night for two All-Star Twins pitchers, Johan Santana and Jose Berrios:

Jose Berrios told Paul Molitor that he wanted to pitch a complete game on Saturday. After needing 29 pitches to get through the third inning — he walked three batters, a couple of them on borderline pitches that home plate ump Todd Tichenor called balls — it wasn't going to happen.

But the Twins' manager was impressed by the way that Berrios was able to put that two-run inning behind him immediately. Berrios pitched four more innings, and retired eight of the final nine hitters he faced.

"The good thing is I know that he goes back when he gets in the dugout and resets," Molitor said. "He goes out there and says, 'Hey, you can't control what's done. I'm going to move forward.' Seven innings didn't look very likely after he gave up those couple [runs], but he got it done."

Moving forward is a skill that takes time for young players to develop, Molitor said. "I've seen him a couple times this year where it's cost him some runs. It took him an inning or a pitch or a batter" to forget about the past, Molitor said. "But that's something you just improve upon, because when you look at learning experiences in a game, a lot of time, it's about overcoming adversity, and sometimes things you can't control."

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Oliver Drake is only the second Naval Academy graduate to make the major leagues — the other was lefthander Nemo Gaines, who pitched four games for the Washington Senators in 1921 — and that's an identity that gives him a lot of pride.

"My time at the Naval Academy was truly special. Just those two years there, the people you meet, the experiences you have, they're unlike anything else," he said after making history by pitching for his fifth major-league team in 2018. "It's such a special place. The coolest thing is, I'm able to get publicity for the place. Every time I go to a new place which this year has been a lot everyone likes to talk about me attending the Naval Academy. I don't think there's any place I could speak higher of. I truly love it."

He's not crazy about changing teams every few weeks, but he realizes that it's an opportunity anyway, one that he'll never forget. In fact, he has framed a jersey from every stop in his career.

"That's going to be something that, looking back, will be a cool collection. I don't know if it'll be something I brag about, but it'll definitely be a neat story, especially down the line after the baseball career with kids, grandkids," he said. "My wife keeps joking that we should have them put up year-by-year, and we should have one wall with all five jerseys" for 2018.

He and his wife, Shannon, have been married for a year. "So it's been exciting and memorable," Drake joked. "She said she wants to travel, so I'm just helping her with that."

XXX

Matt Magill's wife Melissa gave birth to a baby boy, the couple's first child, in southern California on Saturday. Maverick Magill was born at 3:05 p.m., the Twins said, and baby and mother are doing well.

Magill is currently on paternity leave. With the Twins leaving town after Sunday's game, Magill figures to rejoin the team in Cleveland. That will necessitate moving someone out of the current bullpen.

Twins owner Jim Pohlad on board with team's decisionmaking

Sid Hartman | Star Tribune | August 4, 2018

Twins owner Jim Pohlad said that he is 100 percent behind Derek Falvey and Thad Levine, whom the team brought in to revamp the organization following the 2016 season.

Pohlad knows fans might have questioned the moves Falvey, Twins chief baseball officer, and Levine, general manager, made at the July 31

nonwaiver trade deadline, as the Twins dealt away five players from the major league roster. But more important to Pohlad than what happens on the field is what is happening behind the scenes.

“So much of [bringing in Falvey and Levine] was about building out the organization under them,” Pohlad said. “Obviously the team is part of that responsibility, too, but so much of their job was to really build a great front office that could provide the data and all of the other systems that we felt we needed to improve in.”

Does Pohlad feel like the technological part of the front office has vastly improved? “I’m not some young tech person,” he said. “But I think it was definitely necessary and it has been useful and used.”

When asked if he understands fans being upset about a playoff team from last season selling at the trade deadline, Pohlad said sometimes you have to give up players to get prospects.

“If you want to go out and get something, you have to give something up. The days of trying to outsmart another general manager, they don’t exist anymore,” Pohlad said. “There’s two valuable players, there’s no question, mainly [Brian] Dozier and [Eduardo] Escobar. The other two players we had just gotten this year [Lance Lynn and Zach Duke], so it’s hard to say how valuable [they are]. But we know how valuable Escobar and Dozier have been to this team over the years.”

Now one of the big questions for the Twins front office will be whether to bring back Joe Mauer next season on a new contract.

Pohlad believes a big part of that decision depends on what Mauer wants. “I think we would all agree that that decision is up to the Mauer family, first,” he said. “They have to make whatever decision they’re going to make. We’re willing to work with them in whatever they decide.”

Expectations fell short

It goes without saying that the Twins’ season has been disappointing.

“Clearly, everybody had high expectations for the year after coming off of last year, and at least in the first half we didn’t meet those expectations,” Pohlad said. “We clearly thought we were making the team better. Probably at best it was a mixed result.”

Asked how he feels about manager Paul Molitor, Pohlad said: “I think it’s tough for Paul, too. He came off of great success. He was Manager of the Year last year. So he’s got to be disappointed, and his job is tough, especially at this time of year.”

When asked if he thinks the front office is building things the right way, Pohlad said that the new front office fits his philosophy.

“You could look at it as even a blind squirrel find an acorn from time to time, or you can believe in the analytics that there’s some really valuable players here,” he said. “I believe in the latter.”

Twins blast Royals as Jose Berrios does his best Johan Santana impersonation **Dane Mizutani | Pioneer Press | August 4, 2018**

On a night when former ace Johan Santana took his rightful place in the Twins Hall of Fame during a lengthy pregame ceremony, current ace Jose Berrios kept the party going with outstanding performance on the mound, perhaps campaigning for his placement in the exclusive club at some point down the road.

“He thinks about those things,” manager Paul Molitor said before the game. “He has high aspirations for what he can do.”

More performances like the one he poured in on Saturday night at Target Field, and the 24-year-old star will be well on his way to taking his place alongside some of the other Twins legends.

While he was far from perfect on this particular night, Berrios was rather dominant in seven innings of solid work, as the Twins earned an 8-2 win over the Kansas City Royals.

“He told me after the game that he wanted a complete game tonight,” Molitor said. “He wants one every time he’s out there.”

Berrios said he drew a lot of confidence from watching Santana pregame, something that was clear as he seemed to find an extra gear as the game wore on.

“I was happy to see that our there, the Twins honoring a great player,” Berrios said. “It was inspiring and I went out there and did my thing.”

As good as Berrios was, striking out six batters in total, he certainly got a lot of help from his offense, namely home runs from Eddie Rosario, Max Kepler, and Logan Morrison.

That run support was needed after Berrios dug himself a hole early in the game, walking a trio of runners in the third inning before allowing a two-run single to Royals left fielder Alex Gordon.

Luckily for Berrios, he got himself out of the jam relatively unscathed, and his teammates picked him up after that.

“They scored two runs (in the third inning) and they came out swinging (in the fourth inning) as well,” Berrios said. “Those were the two tough innings for me. I regrouped and my teammates kept me there and we got the win.”

Molitor was especially impressed with how Berrios showed enough mental toughness to bounce back after momentarily letting things go off the rails.

“He gets in the dugout and resets,” Molitor said. “He got it done, and thankfully, the bats came alive.”

Besides the game from Berrios, Kepler was a secondary star for the Twins, finishing 3 for 3 with a pair of runs batted in, while Morrison finished 2 for 4 with pair of runs batted in.

Addison Reed and the newly acquired Oliver Drake took over out of the bullpen, holding up their end of the bargain as the Twins coasted to their second straight win.

Now the Twins will shift their focus to completing the series sweep of the Royals on Sunday afternoon at Target Field.

“We are trying to take those three back from the last road trip,” Berrios said, referencing how the Twins were swept by the Royals last month. “They beat us over there. We want to win tomorrow and do the same thing to them.”

Twins pitcher Trevor May ready for bright future after ‘some pretty dark days’
Dan Mizutani | Pioneer Press | August 4, 2018

There were times over the past 18 months that Twins pitcher Trevor May let doubt creep in. He was recovering from Tommy John surgery, and while he tirelessly attacked the rehab process, it wasn’t always easy to stay positive.

“It was really tough,” May said. “There were a lot of late nights with no sleep. Some long conversations with my wife (Kate). There were some pretty dark days and some doubts about my future and whether I wanted to continue to choose this path or not. I’m glad to come out on the other side of it.”

May, 28, pitched a clean inning on Friday night at Target Field, striking out the side in only his second appearance since returning to the majors earlier this week.

“We needed a shutdown inning, and he got the job done,” manager Paul Molitor said. “I thought the velocity was good. His fastball played really well.”

May counted the performance “a confidence booster” for himself, something that proved he can still pitch at a high level.

“It was nice to see the light at the end of the tunnel and finally get there,” said May, a fourth-round pick in the 2008 MLB draft that the Twins acquired via trade nearly six years ago. “I’ve been seeing improvements on a day to day basis, and to actually get out on the mound was kind of the last step.”

“Now It’s really, really important to me that I take it on a case-by-case basis and really work within that process. It’s something I can control, and I think it’s going to lead to success if I’m able to do that.”

As of right now, the plan is to keep May in the bullpen with the possibility that he could return to the starting rotation at some point.

“I’m trying to really focus on determining what my job is on a given day and getting that job done,” May said. “That’s my No. 1 goal whenever I’m out there.”

“I’ve been checking off the boxes one at a time, and this is obviously a little bit bigger of a box,” May added. “Now it’s about starting to get the job done on a nightly basis.”

MAJOR LEAGUE RECORD

After being claimed off waivers by the Twins on Friday afternoon, reliever Oliver Drake made history on Saturday night at Target Field. He dressed for the game against the Kansas City Royals, making him the only player in major league history to dress for five teams in a single season.

@morsecode

DID YOU KNOW: When Oliver Drake makes an appearance for the @Twins he will become the only player ever to wear a big league uniform for 5 teams in the same season. #Elias #MNTwins

Besides the Twins, he has dressed for the Milwaukee Brewers, Cleveland Indians, Los Angeles Angels and, most recently, the Toronto Blue Jays.

“Our guys like his stuff,” Molitor said. “He’s got a little bit of a cut fastball with low to mid 90s velocity, and the split finger has been the pitch for him for awhile. And he’s also mixed in a curveball that they say for the first year of using the pitch he’s been effective. We will get a good look at him. We will see how it goes when he gets in here and see how we can slot him in.”

PINEDA GETTING CLOSE

Michael Pineda signed a two-year \$10 million contract with the Twins this offseason, essentially gifting the 29-year-old a redshirt season as he recovers from Tommy John surgery.

A top prospect earlier in his career, Pineda appears to be getting close to returning to action. He is scheduled to pitch “a couple of innings” in the Gulf Coast League on Monday, according to Molitor, and could be an option when September call-ups roll around.

“They have it mapped out as far as his advancement through the system, making his way up to (Triple-A) in a couple of weeks,” Molitor said. “If things go well, we will see where he is at when we have the opportunity to go larger (with our roster).”

Derek Falvey discusses Byron Buxton’s swing, plan for Trevor May

Jake Depue | ESPN 1500 | August 4, 2018

Byron Buxton’s difficult 2018 season has been well-chronicled.

Migraine headaches, a broken toe, and a recurring wrist issue have kept him on the DL for much of the season. After spending two weeks on the DL in Rochester with the wrist problem in July, he made just two starts before returning to the DL again on August 1.

Buxton’s been tinkering with his mechanics for much of the season. He’s added a leg kick at times, which he says gives him more power but less contact. Buxton had the leg kick in 2016 and the start of 2017, but abandoned it midway through last year, after which he experienced a great deal of success at the plate. After not having it at the start of this season, he used it briefly after getting sent down to Rochester, stopped, then added it again before his most recent trip to the DL.

Twins CBO Derek Falvey said the leg kick is going to stay, at least for now.

“I think maybe he was overthinking the leg kick vs. not,” said Falvey. “I think at this stage it’s part of it, for him, so he feels he can get in good position in his load. Ultimately he’s going to continue to develop, learn what works for him. You see guys at the big league level continue to tweak things. Maybe less notable than seeing a massive leg kick. I think he’s going to find the right balance of getting that kind of load with some leg kick.”

Buxton’s a hard worker who buys into the system and tries to incorporate the advice he gets into his approach. Is there too much advice, from too many voices, that’s causing more harm than good?

“I’ve thought about that to some degree,” said Falvey. “I’ll tell you that, I think that Byron is certainly thoughtful and listens to coaches, but Byron knows what’s good for him in his career. That’s what we want to train all players to do—take all the information in, process it, and then do what’s right for you. Coaches’ jobs are to support the functions of a player. In Byron’s case, he feels good about his plan, so I don’t think it’s a matter of having too many voices, I think it’s always one message, and the message is to continue to do what feels good for him.”

“Byron, through the course of this, he’s talked a lot with James [Rowson], Chad [Allen], Rudy [Hernandez], Rick [Eckstein], so many hitting guys that I think one of the things we impressed upon Byron is we want you to be athletic, we want you to be yourself, get in a comfort zone,” he added. “The key for him has been health. If we can get him a consistent run of plate appearances, whatever his mechanics are, I think they’ll solidify and we’ll see the upside we’re expecting.”

May’s plan

Trevor May made his return to the majors Tuesday, nearly two years after last taking the hill in the big leagues. Friday, he struck out three batters

in a scoreless inning. It's been a long road back for the hard-throwing righty, who underwent Tommy John surgery in spring 2017.

The original plan for May was to come back as a starter. He was a starter as he came through the system in the minors, and saw success in that role in the big leagues in 2015 before being converted to a reliever. He was excellent out of the bullpen in 2015, and though he had a high ERA in 2016, his strike out rate (32.1%) was very strong, suggesting he could have a future as a late-inning power arm.

Pitching in relief, though, contributed to back issues in 2016, according to May, and he said this spring he wanted to return as a starter. After starting in the first four games of his rehab stint this season in the minors, he was converted back to a reliever, making ten appearances out of the 'pen for Rochester. (He technically started one game as an "opener," pitching the first inning only, as the Twins continue to experiment with that approach in the minors. It's possible that could be a role for him in the big leagues at some point as well, given his experience in both the rotation and bullpen).

The decision to transition back to a reliever was May's, according to Falvey.

"Trevor, when he came back, even going back to last year, his desire was to start," said Falvey. "As we started the rehab program, he expressed to us that maybe the best fit for him was out of the 'pen, to take advantage of his pitches. We talk about partnering with players on plans. We said if you feel that's the right fit, we see it, now let's maximize your ability out of the 'pen."

Paul Molitor said Tuesday, before May's debut, that his role was "a little bit undefined," and that he may work multiple innings this season. The door isn't shut on May starting down the road, perhaps even next season. For now, though, it appears he'll work out of the 'pen.

"It doesn't rule anything out in the future," said Falvey. "We can always have another conversation. I do believe you can build guys up in different ways, but I think for him right now, he thought this was a good fit and we agreed with him."

Wetmore: Evaluating the Twins at the trade deadline — one year later
Derek Wetmore | ESPN 1500 | August 4, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS — Report cards are due?

I would have to know a lot more about prospects and have a lot more certainty about the future to be able to grade this year's Twins trade deadline maneuvers. All five trades make sense in theory — trading mostly expiring contracts for players with a chance to offer value in the future — but it's just impossible to say what's going to happen in the coming years. So if we're grading right now we're guessing.

We've had a little more time since the 2017 non-waiver trade deadline. Reasonable people can argue until we're blue in the face and one simple truth remains about the Twins last July: Derek Falvey's group got it wrong.

I take that stance because it's an argument that can't be lost. Sure, the odds of the postseason were remote and we can't ever know the counterfactual. There's also the case to be made that the Twins were never going to catch the Indians and a Wild Card game is a coin-flip proposition at best.

But the team made the postseason — despite the new front office's first trade deadline turning into a sell-off. That club could have used a lot of things, and instead the Twins played for the future.

With that judgmental frame of reference, let's write out a report card.

Trade 1:

Gave up: Pitching prospect Huascar Ynoa

Received: Jaime Garcia and minor league catcher Anthony Recker

Ynoa is still just 21 years old and pitching in A-ball, so even with a year of future knowledge we don't really have a good idea of what this guy will contribute to his future Braves teams. For what it's worth, he was just promoted to High-A in the Florida State League and posted a 3.63 ERA and a 100:42 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 92 1/3 innings as a starting pitcher in low-A. MLB.com rates him as Atlanta's No. 21 prospect.

Verdict

Garcia made one start for the Twins before he was flipped to the Yankees, and Recker chose free agency and wound up in the Diamondbacks organization. So let's consider this trade in the context of the next trade.

Trade 2:

Gave up: Jaime Garcia (and paid a chunk of his remaining salary)

Received: Zack Littell and Dietrich Enns

Garcia was a free agent at the end of the year, so the Twins didn't lose a ton of value by giving him up (and paying cash is ostensibly a renewable resource). So getting rid of him was basically an admission that they'd rather have a weaker 2017 club and a couple of prospects than the reverse.

Littell looks like a decent prospect, the high-floor, low-ceiling type that help fill out an organization's pitching. Enns was DFA'd earlier this year and is currently starting for Double-A Chattanooga. MLB.com currently ranks Littell as Minnesota's No. 20 prospect, for what it's worth. Littell is closer to the big leagues than Ynoa — he's already pitched there. So if the Twins can capitalize on the Buxton-Sano-Rosario-Berrios-Polanco wave of talent and become a postseason-caliber club, Littell fits the timeline as depth.

Verdict

I'd have to know more about the prospects to hold a strong opinion about choosing to become a seller and essentially trading Ynoa for Littell. It looks to me like they used the Garcia flip and "bought" a little more certainty in the form of a pitching prospect closer to the big leagues.

Trade 3:

Gave up: Catcher John Ryan Murphy

Received: Reliever Gabriel Moya

After a hot start to the season in the power department, Murphy has split time as Arizona's catcher — on a club that's going blow-for-blow with the juggernaut Dodgers. He's hitting .213/.258/.408 with 9 home runs in 187 plate appearances, which still is not great but it's a lot better than what Twins fans came to expect at the plate during his relatively short time in the organization. Giving up a starting catcher looks worse when you lose your starting catcher (Jason Castro) for almost a full season, and the Twins are currently trying to learn if Mitch Garver can handle the role behind the plate in the big leagues.

Moya, on the other hand, has pitched just 15 innings in the big leagues. He's one of the pitchers that has been on the fresh-arm shuttle this season between the Twin Cities and Triple-A Rochester. With the Red Wings, he's posted a 1.90 ERA in 42 2/3 innings, with a 28.9% strikeout rate and 6.9% walk rate. His minor league numbers — including those posted in Double-A in his previous organization — make it look like he'll be a big league bullpen contributor from the left side.

Verdict: Incomplete

Trade 4:

Gave up: Closer Brandon Kintzler

Received: Pitching prospect Tyler Watson and \$500,000 in international draft bonus pool money

Garcia's quick flip was one thing, but dealing the closer in particular didn't seem to sit well in the Twins' clubhouse. There are a few things to look at with this one:

Kintzler's onto his second team after the trade. The Nats are ostensibly going for it and they still gave up the reliever in a trade this month.

Watson is 21 years old and has pitched in low-A and high-A this year, mostly as a starter. Between the two levels he has a 4.92 ERA and a 70:31 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 78 2/3 innings.

The third component is the international money, which I think could have been acquired with an eye towards the eventual posting of Shohei Ohtani. Unfortunately for the Twins, they do not train in Arizona and weren't on Ohtani's list of preferred teams. So all that international money then was not quite as valuable, and they spun it to the Angels and Mariners in separate trades, adding two prospects and making the best of a tough situation.

Verdict

This is the one that irked people. If Watson turns into a solid contributor, then all will be forgiven. If not, the Twins front office in its first year gave up too early on a postseason-bound club, and Kintzler was the foremost symbol of that.

Berrios goes 7 as Twins beat Royals 8-2
Associated Press | Fox Sports North | August 5, 2018

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Max Kepler saw a lot of pitches Friday night, and it paid off Saturday night.

Kepler had three hits, including a two-run homer that put Minnesota ahead to stay, and Jose Berrios threw seven sharp innings to help the Twins to an 8-2 victory over the Kansas City Royals.

Kepler went 3 for 3 with a walk and scored twice. He walked three times in Minnesota's 6-4 victory in the series opener.

OH-my! Shohei Ohtani whacks first-career multi-home run game!

"The more pitches you see in an at-bat, the better you start to see the ball with time, and I think we're doing that pretty well as a team right now," he said. "I hit some line drives and ground balls that some nights can be caught. Today, luckily they find holes."

Eddie Rosario and Logan Morrison also homered as the Twins won their second straight against the Royals.

"We don't want guys to try to step up and be supermen," manager Paul Molitor said of his offense coming alive. "It's just understand that you go out there and bring what you can bring."

Berrios (11-8) retired his first six batters, but had trouble throwing strikes in his middle innings and allowed the Royals to take a 2-1 lead after walking the bases loaded in the third. The All-Star right-hander settled down and remained unbeaten against AL Central opponents this season.

"Seven innings didn't look very likely after he gave up those couple, but he got it done," Molitor said. "And thankfully, the bats came alive."

The Twins regained the lead on Kepler's homer off Burch Smith (1-3) in the fourth. Rosario added a sacrifice fly in the fifth, and Logan Forsythe and Bobby Wilson each drove in a run in the sixth.

"I still felt pretty good," Smith said. "They just capitalized on mistakes. I didn't make a pitch, and they hit it. It's a good-hitting team."

Morrison added his 15th homer in seventh, a towering two-run shot off Glenn Sparkman that traveled an estimated 442 feet before landing in the right-field concourse.

SMITH'S START

Smith was charged with a season-high six runs in five-plus innings in his fifth start of the year. Manager Ned Yost still said Smith threw the ball well.

"He started laboring in the sixth inning after about the 80-pitch mark, 85-pitch mark. Up until that point, I thought he did a good job of keeping us in the game and throwing strikes," Yost said.

DRAKE THE JOURNEYMAN

Minnesota's Addison Reed and Oliver Drake combined for two innings of scoreless relief. Drake, claimed off waivers from Toronto on Friday, set a major league record by pitching for his fifth team this season. He arrived at the ballpark on Saturday afternoon and said he appreciated the chance to get right to work.

"I think my catch partner though the whole time has been a fence post back home, so it's just nice to get back out there playing baseball, throwing to hitters, competing," Drake said.

And the record?

"It's definitely cool having all the jerseys," he said smiling. "That's going to be something that looking back it's going to be a cool collection. I don't know if this is something I'll brag about, but it'll definitely be a neat story."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Twins: Molitor said RHP Aaron Slegers (shoulder) would begin a rehab assignment with Triple-A Rochester on Saturday night. ... RHP Michael Pineda is scheduled to begin his recovery from Tommy John surgery when he starts his rehab assignment with the Florida Gulf Coast on Monday.

JOHAN'S CALL

The Twins inducted former ace Johan Santana into the franchise's hall of fame in a pregame ceremony. Santana, who won two AL Cy Young Awards during his eight seasons in Minnesota, became the 31st member of the Twins Hall of Fame. For five seasons, from 2003-07, he led the AL in wins (82), strikeouts (1,152), ERA (2.92) and opponent batting average (.212).

Surrounded by family and former teammates, Santana was introduced by former teammate Torii Hunter before being presented with a Twins blazer by Rod Carew.

"Go chase your dreams, work hard, be passionate about what you do. Have fun and never give up, and good things will happen to you," Santana told the crowd.

UP NEXT

Royals: LHP Danny Duffy (7-9) will make his 24th start of the season Sunday. After posting a 6.88 ERA in his first 10 starts, he has a 3.00 ERA since May 24, the fourth-lowest in the AL in that stretch.

Twins: RHP Ervin Santana (0-0) looks to return to his ace form when makes his third start since returning from the 60-day DL after being sidelined by an injured finger. He has allowed a combined eight earned runs in 10 1/3 innings with six strikeouts this season.

Johan Santana gets a Minnesota curtain call as he enters Twins Hall of Fame **Nick Kelly | The Athletic | August 5, 2018**

A 21-year-old pitcher stepped onto the mound from the bullpen moments before Ken Griffey Jr. stepped to the plate to face him.

Former Twins outfielder Torii Hunter did not give the young pitcher much of a chance in the 2000 spring training game between Minnesota and Cincinnati.

"I was in the outfield like, 'Oh man, this sucks,'" Hunter said in front of a Target Field crowd 18 years later.

The rookie pitcher threw a fastball down the middle for the first strike. Griffey fouled off the next. Then Griffey swung and missed the third.

Griffey later asked Hunter who this rookie pitcher was who threw what he called the nastiest pitch he had ever seen.

"That's Johan Santana," Hunter recalled telling Griffey.

It was the first of many pitches and strikeouts by which Santana would shock his opponents and any fan watching over the course of his Twins career. In eight years in Minnesota, he struck out 1,381 batters, fourth-most in Twins history since the franchise moved from Washington in 1961.

That career Santana put together while playing for Minnesota is why Hunter stood behind a tan lectern next to the mound and spoke about Santana in front of fans, former teammates and family for a ceremony before the Twins, Royals game Saturday. They were the same family members, teammates and many of the same fans who saw Santana win two Cy Young awards, one Gold Glove and earn three All-Star appearances with the Twins.

That career is why Santana became the 31st member in the Minnesota Twins Hall of Fame on Saturday. Many of his fellow members in the exclusive club sat in black folding chairs next to the mound wearing matching navy sport coats.

Twins Hall of Famers such as Bert Blyleven and Tom Kelly hugged Santana then watched as he removed a light blue jacket to make room for his new navy jacket, which Rod Carew placed on his shoulders. Then Santana stepped up to the microphone and began his acceptance speech.

This moment is why Marvin Tody bought tickets for this game in the lower deck to the left of home plate where he sat wearing a navy Santana jersey, almost a straight line from where Santana stood.

"To see him on the ball field again will be great," Tody said about 10 minutes before the ceremony.

As a former Metrodome season ticket holder, Tody always looked forward to watching Santana pitch because of Santana's consistency as Minnesota's ace for much of Santana's time with the Twins.

"Nobody could touch him," Tody said.

Never more so than June 1, 2012 — more than four years after he left the Twins and in what would be his final major-league season — when

Santana threw the first no-hitter in Mets' history.

Santana, traded to New York in 2008, walked five batters but did not allow a hit that night while striking out eight St. Louis batters.

That performance is one reason why 10-year-old Manny Rakhmanov of St. Paul is a proud Santana fan. He sat alongside his father, Sergei Rakhmanov, down the left field line Saturday wearing a New York Santana jersey and a Mets cap. His father bought the jersey for him specifically for Saturday's Hall of Fame ceremony.

Sergei Rakhmanov, who grew up in New York, passed along a love for the Mets and Twins to his son.

And a love for Santana, whose bobblehead given to fans at Saturday's game will now sit in Manny's room next to his Eduardo Escobar signed ball.

@_NickKelly

The Johan Santana bobble head given out to fans at tonight's Twins, Royals game

"He was a tremendous pitcher," Sergei Rakhmanov said. "He was a real craftsman on the mound."

Santana made sure to spend most of his acceptance speech thanking numerous individuals who helped him become that tremendous pitcher. That list included his wife, children, parents, baseball executives, coaches and a special thank you to Andres Reiner, the scout who discovered him in Venezuela in 1994.

Santana also thanked former teammates in attendance such as Hunter, Brad Radke and Justin Morneau.

Morneau was one of multiple former Twins to speak in a video tribute to Santana that played on the big screen before Santana gave his acceptance speech.

"Any time he took the mound, there was a chance that something special was going to happen," Morneau said in the video.

On Saturday, that proved to be true one last time.

Once the Target Field crowd finished applauding Santana after his speech, another Santana in a white No. 57 Twins jersey walked to the mound. It wasn't Johan — he never pitched at Target Field, and that did not change Saturday. Instead, he walked to the edge of the home plate dirt.

There, he waited for the pitch from his son, Johan Santana Jr.

After senior caught the pitch from junior, senior walked back to the mound to embrace his son. Santana wrapped his arms around him, pulling him close.

Santana Jr. then pressed his head against the navy blue Hall of Fame jacket on the chest of his father, the newest Twins Hall of Fame member.