



# ***Press Clips***

**(September 4, 2018)**

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**FROM THE OC REGISTER****Matt Shoemaker tosses five scoreless innings in return to Angels rotation**

By Jeff Fletcher

ARLINGTON, Texas — After Matt Shoemaker had enjoyed the success of being back on a major league mound for the first time in five months, he retreated to the clubhouse and got another reward.

His cellphone was full of congratulatory texts from so many people who had helped him through what he called a “frustrating” two seasons of injuries.

“That’s what gets you through these adversities,” Shoemaker said after throwing five scoreless innings in the Angels’ 3-1 victory over the Texas Rangers on Monday. “You have that support staff around you, teammates, staff, family and friends. the whole package. That support staff makes everything flow better.”

Shoemaker didn’t get a victory out of his return — the game was scoreless when he left, before Taylor Ward’s two-run homer gave the Angels a lead in the seventh — but he still did plenty.

He gave up two hits, including an infield hit, and he walked one. Shoemaker gave up both hits in a 20-pitch first inning, which he escaped by striking out Adrian Beltre with two runners on. After that, he faced the minimum 12 hitters in the next four innings, ending his night at 62 pitches.

“Matt looked like he didn’t skip a beat from what we saw when he was pitching well throughout his career,” Manager Mike Scioscia said. “His stamina isn’t quite there, but he maintained his stuff, maintained his velocity. He was a pitch-efficient and effective against a team that if you’re missing spots they’ll let you know.”

Shoemaker said it was “exciting” to be back on the a mound, and physically he “felt great.”

That had been a long time coming.

Since his breakthrough season in 2014 — a 16-4 record and a 3.04 ERA — he’s struggled with inconsistency and injuries. Just when he was pitching well again in the second half of 2016, he was hit in the head by a line drive and ended up needing emergency brain surgery.

Then the last two years have been spoiled by forearm issues. He had surgery to release compression on his radial nerve in 2017. The symptoms returned after his first start of 2018, on March 31, and further exploratory surgery in May finally revealed a split pronator tendon, which Shoemaker believes was the actual issue all along.

“Frustrating is the best way to describe it,” he said.

He had several times rehabbing from the injury when he’d feel good up until about 30 or 40 pitches, but then the symptoms would return. He has now thrown 59 and 62 in his last two games, including a rehab outing, and he has had no problems.

If Shoemaker can return to form, or at least be a healthy pitcher capable of soaking up innings, he could be a valuable addition to a rotation that's been ravaged by injuries.

Shoemaker fits somewhere in a 2019 depth chart that currently includes Shohei Ohtani, Tyler Skaggs, Andrew Heaney, Jaime Barría, Felix Peña and Nick Tropeano. JC Ramírez could be back from Tommy John surgery sometime in the second half, and Griffin Canning and José Suarez could also be up from the minors sometime next year.

Shoemaker, who turns 27 this month, is arbitration-eligible for the next three seasons.

As he neared his return, he said he has always believed he could once again be the guy he was in 2014.

"I always feel that way," he said. "Mentally and physically, I feel that way. Mentally I'm there. Physically I'm there. I feel like I'm there. I just have to go out and put those things together."

When he left Monday's game, it was still scoreless. Ward's homer in the seventh gave the Angels a lead, and David Fletcher added an RBI single later in the inning.

Justin Anderson got the bullpen's biggest out, striking out Ronald Guzmán to leave the bases loaded in the seventh.

## **Shohei Ohtani reports all is normal a day after his return to pitch for the Angels**

By Jeff Fletcher

ARLINGTON, Texas — A day after the radar gun readings heard 'round the world, there was still no indication of anything seriously wrong with Shohei Ohtani.

Ohtani's first pitching appearance in nearly three months was marked by a dramatic drop in velocity, but Manager Mike Scioscia and Ohtani both reiterated on Monday what he they'd said after the game Sunday.

Ohtani's elbow is healthy.

"It is a little sore because I threw yesterday in a live game situation, but it's nothing out of the norm," Ohtani said through his interpreter on Monday. "I'll see from here and try to prepare for the next start."

Ohtani's next turn on the mound would be on Sunday in Chicago, assuming all goes as planned.

Scioscia also didn't seem concerned.

"I think the most important thing is his elbow felt great," Scioscia said Monday. "He felt nothing in his elbow, which is the most important thing. His back was a little stiff. He took the ball off his ring finger, which was a little sore after the game."

Ohtani said his back and finger — which was hurt when he reflexively tried to barehand a comebacker — both felt “fine.” He also said that he felt neither would prevent him from being able to hit. He was not in the lineup to hit on Monday, which is standard procedure for the day after he pitches.

After missing much of the summer rehabbing a grade 2 sprain of his ulnar collateral ligament, Ohtani returned to the mound on Sunday and threw 49 pitches. He had been scheduled for 55 to 60, but the back and finger issues ended his outing a little early.

Ohtani was throwing 95-99 mph in the first two innings, but 91-92 mph in the third, which set off alarms that maybe his elbow was not sound. His velocity dropped slightly in the last two innings of his June 6 outing, and afterward he reported the tightness that led to the MRI that led to the diagnosis.

“Naturally a red flag goes up (with a drop in velocity), especially with what happened last time,” Scioscia said Monday. “But Shohei said he felt great. He had no apprehension about what was happening in his elbow.”

Aside from the back and finger issues, Scioscia added another explanation for the drop in the velocity.

“He said his delivery was a little out of whack and he wanted to make sure he could get the ball into decent zones, so he wasn’t really jumping on it,” Scioscia said.

#### **NEW PITCHER**

The Angels claimed right-hander Luke Farrell on waivers from the Chicago Cubs. Farrell was optioned to rookie-level Orem, because all the other Angels’ minor league seasons ended on Monday. If the Angels choose to bring Farrell to the majors, the soonest it could be is Friday, after Orem’s season ends.

Farrell, the son of former Boston Red Sox manager John Farrell, has a career 5.28 ERA in 30 games over the past two seasons, with the Kansas City Royals, Cincinnati Reds and Cubs. He has started three games.

This season Farrell started in all 12 of his games with the Cubs’ Triple-A team, posting a 3.64 ERA with 10.1 strikeouts per nine innings.

#### **ALSO**

Justin Upton was out of the lineup for a second straight day after suffering a concussion on Saturday. Scioscia said Upton was “better, but not quite cleared to go out and play yet.”...

Tyler Skaggs (groin) had a bullpen session on Monday in Arizona. Skaggs said last week he was aiming to be able to rejoin the rotation around the start of the upcoming homestand, on Sept. 10, and then make three starts. ...

Nick Tropeano (shoulder) is throwing, but still has not progressed enough to be throwing off a mound, Scioscia said. ...

The Angels are expected to recall another batch of players on Tuesday, following the end of Salt Lake's season Monday. ...

The Angels moved Albert Pujols to the 60-day disabled list and designated Osmer Morales for assignment. They needed to create two spots on the 40-man roster, one for Farrell and one for Matt Shoemaker, who was activated from the 60-day disabled list.

#### UP NEXT

Angels (LHP Andrew Heaney, 8-8, 4.09) at Rangers (LHP Mike Minor, 10-7, 4.33), 5 p.m., Tuesday, Fox Sports West, KLAA (830 AM).

**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## Shoemaker sharp in return as Halos take opener

*Righty throws five shutout innings; Ward hits two-run homer in 7<sup>th</sup>*

By Maria Guardado

ARLINGTON -- After losing more than five months to a vexing right forearm injury, Matt Shoemaker returned the mound Monday night and took a significant step toward putting his health issues behind him, firing five scoreless innings in the Angels' 3-1 win over the Rangers at Globe Life Park.

"Exciting," Shoemaker said. "It's good to be back. I felt really good."

Shoemaker allowed only two hits -- none after the first inning -- while walking one, striking out three and throwing 62 pitches in his first start for the Angels since March 31.

"Matty looked like he didn't skip a beat from what we saw when he was pitching well throughout his career," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "The stamina is not quite there, but he maintained his stuff, maintained his velocity. He was pitch efficient, effective and that's a great five innings against a team that, obviously, if you're missing spots, they're going to let you know."

Rookie third baseman Taylor Ward made sure Shoemaker's effort didn't go to waste, crushing a two-run home run off reliever Zac Curtis to break a scoreless tie in the seventh inning. David Fletcher added an insurance run with a two-out RBI single later in the seventh.

Shoemaker didn't pitch after June 14 last year because of a right forearm strain that ultimately led to season-ending surgery to release the radial nerve. He arrived at Spring Training healthy and opened the season as the Angels' No. 3 starter, giving up three runs over 5 2/3 innings in his 2018 debut against the A's.

Three days later, Shoemaker landed back on the disabled list after the discomfort in his forearm resurfaced. For two months, the Angels struggled to identify the source of Shoemaker's discomfort, as a

battery of tests and MRIs came back clean. On May 29, Shoemaker underwent a second surgery to decompress a nerve in his right forearm, leading to the discovery of a split pronator teres tendon.

Angels doctors repaired the damaged tendon -- which didn't show up on images -- during the procedure, allowing Shoemaker to finally rehab his right arm without setbacks. After throwing four hitless innings in a rehab start with Class A Advanced Inland Empire, Shoemaker was finally cleared to return to the Angels' rotation.

Facing the Rangers for the first time since April 30, 2016, Shoemaker opened his outing by giving up a leadoff single to Shin-Soo Choo. After striking out Rougned Odor, Shoemaker yielded an infield single to Elvis Andrus to put runners on first and second. Choo then advanced to third on a flyout by Nomar Mazara, but Shoemaker struck out Adrian Beltre looking to leave him stranded.

It proved to be the Rangers' best opportunity of the night against Shoemaker, who went on to retire 13 of the final 14 batters he faced. He issued a one-out walk to Choo in the third, but promptly induced a 6-3 double play from Odor to end the inning.

"I still want to clean up a few things," Shoemaker said. "Obviously, as players, we always want to be perfect, but we're not going to be. There are always some more things I want to clean up and get better at, but overall, I felt great. I thought we executed the game plan really well."

A flood of text messages from well-wishers awaited Shoemaker at his locker following the game, adding an extra level of satisfaction to his successful comeback.

"There's quite a few," Shoemaker said. "Not as many as your debut, but once the game was over, I checked my phone and there was a lot. That's what gets you through this adversity."

#### **MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

**Angels strike for three:** Jeffrey Springs and Ariel Jurado combined to blank the Angels through the first six innings, but they finally got on the board in the seventh against Curtis. After Jose Fernandez reached on a leadoff single, Ward hammered a first-pitch slider to left-center field for his third home run of the season. Curtis then struck out Jose Briceno for the second out, but the ball got away from catcher Robinson Chirinos for a wild pitch, allowing Briceno to reach first. Rangers manager Jeff Banister replaced Curtis with Connor Sadzeck, who retired Eric Young Jr. on a groundout before issuing a two-out walk to Kole Calhoun. Fletcher followed with a single to left field, scoring Briceno from second and giving the Angels a 3-0 lead.

**Anderson escapes jam:** The Rangers came back to threaten in the bottom of the seventh after Andrus singled and Mazara walked to put runners on first and second with no outs. Texas pulled within two on Joey Gallo's two-out RBI double off left-hander Jose Alvarez, prompting Scioscia to summon Justin Anderson to face Chirinos. Anderson walked Chirinos to load the bases, but he rebounded by striking out pinch-hitter Ronald Guzman on a slider to end the inning and preserve the Angels' lead.

"The 'pen did a great job," Scioscia said. "Jose Alvarez came in and got a big strikeout on Profar, and Gallo hit a missile. Luckily for us, that ball fell about three, four feet from going out. And then a big out from Justin Anderson to strike out Guzman pinch-hitting."

**SOUND SMART**

The Angels improved to 24-23 all-time on Labor Day. They have won six of their last seven games on the holiday.

**HE SAID IT**

"It's an important first step. Hopefully, he blew through one of those ceilings. Now we're just going to see how he comes back from it, how he responds and how he feels ready to make his next start. You couldn't ask for more from Matty tonight." -- *Scioscia, on Shoemaker's encouraging results*

**UP NEXT**

Left-handers Andrew Heaney (8-8, 4.09 ERA) and Mike Minor (10-7, 4.33 ERA) will face off on Tuesday night as the Angels play the second of three games against the Rangers at 5:05 p.m. PT at Globe Life Park. Heaney tossed six scoreless innings in his last start on Thursday against the Astros to pick up his first road win since Sept. 2, 2015. He is 1-2 with a 7.88 ERA in five career starts against the Rangers.

**Clemente Award nominees announced**

By Daniel Kramer

Throughout his distinguished Hall of Fame career, Roberto Clemente was perhaps just as known for his prowess on the baseball diamond as he was for his philanthropical efforts off it. And today, the award recognizing the player who best represents the game through extraordinary character, community involvement, philanthropy and positive contributions bears Clemente's name.

Every year, each club nominates a player to be considered for the Roberto Clemente Award, and the 30 nominees were announced by Major League Baseball on Tuesday. Many of this year's nominees have been actively involved in their local community and abroad with initiatives that have focused on awareness and fundraising for the fight against childhood cancer and other illnesses, education for young people and Hurricane Maria relief among other efforts.

Each of the 30 nominees will be honored by their respective clubs, including many on Wednesday as part of Roberto Clemente Day ceremonies, a league-wide initiative that has been in place since 2002. As part of the celebrations, the Roberto Clemente Day logo will appear on the bases and official dugout lineup cards, and a special tribute video will play. Clubs that are on the road will recognize their nominee on a subsequent homestand. The league-wide winner of the Clemente Award will be announced during the World Series.

Here are the 30 nominees:

Arizona Diamondbacks -- Paul Goldschmidt  
Atlanta Braves -- Kurt Suzuki  
Baltimore Orioles -- Chris Davis  
Boston Red Sox -- Brock Holt  
Chicago Cubs -- Jon Lester  
Chicago White Sox -- Jose Abreu



Cincinnati Reds -- Tucker Barnhart  
Cleveland Indians -- Carlos Carrasco  
Colorado Rockies -- Ian Desmond  
Detroit Tigers -- Michael Fulmer  
Houston Astros -- Charlie Morton  
Kansas City Royals -- Danny Duffy  
Los Angeles Angels -- Andrew Heaney  
Los Angeles Dodgers -- Justin Turner  
Miami Marlins -- Martin Prado  
Milwaukee Brewers -- Corey Knebel  
Minnesota Twins -- Joe Mauer  
New York Mets -- Steven Matz  
New York Yankees -- CC Sabathia  
Oakland Athletics -- Chad Pinder  
Philadelphia Phillies -- Rhys Hoskins  
Pittsburgh Pirates -- Jameson Taillon  
St. Louis Cardinals -- Yadier Molina  
San Diego Padres -- Clayton Richard  
San Francisco Giants -- Buster Posey  
Seattle Mariners -- Nelson Cruz  
Tampa Bay Rays -- Mallex Smith  
Texas Rangers -- Cole Hamels\*  
Toronto Blue Jays -- Kevin Pillar  
Washington Nationals -- Ryan Zimmerman

*\*Hamels remains the Rangers' nominee despite being traded to the Cubs on July 27.*

The league-wide winner of the Clemente Award will be selected by a blue ribbon panel that includes Commissioner Rob Manfred, Clemente's late wife and current MLB Goodwill Ambassador, Vera Clemente, as well as representatives from MLB-affiliated networks and MLB.com. Fans can also vote for the winner at [mlb.com/clemente21](http://mlb.com/clemente21), with the winner of that tally counting as one vote among those cast by the blue-ribbon panel.

"I am very proud of the great philanthropic efforts of our players," Manfred said in a statement. "Through wide-ranging work and actions, these 30 nominees honor Roberto Clemente's legacy of being exemplary community ambassadors. Roberto's unwavering humanitarian spirit continues to inspire our players and fans and serves as a positive example for future generations."

The Clemente Award was renamed in 1973 to honor the 15-time All-Star shortly after his tragic death on New Year's Eve months prior during a plane crash while attempting to deliver supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. The award was previously called the "Commissioner's Award" and was established in 1971.

## Ohtani reiterates elbow feels fine after start

By Maria Guardado

ARLINGTON -- One day after showing an abrupt drop in velocity during his first pitching appearance in nearly three months, Shohei Ohtani reaffirmed his confidence in the health of his prized right elbow.

"It is sore because I threw obviously yesterday in a real-game situation," Ohtani said through interpreter Ipppei Mizuhara. "But it's nothing out of the norm."

Ohtani gave up two runs over 2 1/3 innings against the Astros on Sunday, but his fastball velocity dipped from 96-97 mph in the first inning to 91-92 mph in the third, sowing concern that the two-way phenom wasn't past the Grade 2 sprain of the ulnar collateral ligament that had kept him off the mound since June 6.

The Angels said afterward that Ohtani was dealing with some back stiffness and a sore finger after attempting to barehand a comebacker, leading to the dip in velocity. Manager Mike Scioscia said Monday that Ohtani did not require any additional tests, such as X-rays or an MRI, for the ailments.

"Naturally, a red flag goes up, especially with what happened last time," Scioscia said. "But Shohei said he felt great. He had no apprehension about what was happening in his elbow. His delivery was a little out of whack. He wanted to make sure he could get the ball into decent zones, so he wasn't really jumping on it."

Ohtani said his back and finger both feel fine and that he'll "hopefully" be able to make his next scheduled start on the mound on Sunday against the White Sox. He is scheduled to throw a bullpen session on Friday, which will give him an opportunity to once again test his elbow.

Ohtani is also considered day to day as a hitter, though he said he believes he could pinch-hit against the Rangers on Monday if needed. The Angels have stayed away from using Ohtani as a hitter on the days before and after his starts, so he likely won't be available to hit until Tuesday at the earliest.

### Monday's transactions

The Angels announced Monday that they've claimed right-hander Luke Farrell off waivers from the Cubs and optioned him to Rookie-level Orem. Farrell, the son of former Red Sox manager John Farrell, posted a 5.17 ERA over 31 1/3 innings with the Cubs this season. Right-hander Osmer Morales was designated for assignment to create a vacancy on the 40-man roster for the 27-year-old Farrell.

Albert Pujols (knee surgery) was also transferred to the 60-day disabled list to clear a spot on the 40-man roster for right-hander Matt Shoemaker, who was activated on Monday and started against the Rangers.

### Injury updates

- Justin Upton was out of the Angels' lineup for the second consecutive day with a concussion, though Scioscia said he is feeling better.

- Left-hander Tyler Skaggs (left adductor strain) is slated to throw a bullpen session at the club's training complex in Arizona for the first time since landing on the disabled list on Aug. 12.
- Right-hander Nick Tropeano (shoulder inflammation) has not yet been cleared to throw off the mound and is still in a throwing progression.

### **FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS**

## **Shoemaker returns with 5 scoreless, Angels beat Rangers 3-1**

By Stephen Hawkins

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Matt Shoemaker was excited to be back on the mound for the Los Angeles Angels, and the right-hander was rather effective in his return.

Shoemaker threw five scoreless innings in his first start for the Angels in more than five months, since the opening weekend of the season after also missing the final 3 1/2 months last year with a right forearm strain, to get them started in a 3-1 victory over the Texas Rangers on Monday night.

“Matty looked like he didn’t skip a beat from what we saw when he was pitching well throughout his career,” manager Mike Scioscia said. “His stamina is not quite there, but he maintained his stuff, maintained his velocity.”

After singles by two of the first three batters he faced, Shoemaker retired 13 of his last 14. He walked Shin-Soo Choo with two outs in the third before Rougned Odor grounded into a double play — the MLB-best 148th turned by the Angels this season.

“You don’t really call it nerves. I guess it’s partly that, partly adrenaline, especially having this long of a layoff,” Shoemaker said. “Best way to sum it up, excited, ready to go, get out there, step up on the mound and just go out there and pitch. A lot of fun.”

Shoemaker said he felt great physically after he struck out three and threw 42 of 62 pitches for strikes. He missed 134 games after going on the disabled list following his March 31 start. His final game in 2017 came in mid-June of that season.

Rangers third baseman Jurickson Profar said Shoemaker was mixing his pitches well to keep hitters off balance.

“He had a good fastball and a good split finger,” Profar said.

Taylor Ward snapped a scoreless tie with his seventh-inning homer, a two-run shot that helped make rookie reliever Taylor Cole (1-2) a first-time winner. Cole went 1 1/3 innings after relieving Shoemaker.

Blake Parker, the sixth Angels pitcher, worked the ninth for his 14th save.

All of the Los Angeles runs came off Zac Curtis (0-1), the third pitcher for the Rangers on a night they started the game with two scoreless innings by reliever Jeffrey Springs before fellow rookie Ariel Jurado's four innings.

"Those two kids threw the ball extremely well," manager Jeff Banister said. "Put six zeroes on the board to get you to the seventh, that's about the best you can ask for."

Jose Fernandez led off the Angels seventh against Curtis with a single and Ward, their 2015 first-round draft pick in his 18th big league game, lined a shot into the left field seats for his third homer. Curtis then struck out Jose Briceno, but the Los Angeles catcher reached on a wild pitch and later scored on David Fletcher's single .

Joey Gallo had an RBI double that ricocheted off the right field wall in the bottom of the inning, and Texas had the bases loaded with two outs when Justin Anderson struck out pinch-hitter Ronald Guzman .

#### SHORT HOPS

Adrian Beltre, baseball's active career hits leader, led off the Texas ninth with his 3,145th career hit. ... Elvis Andrus had three of the Rangers five hits. ... The Rangers (60-78) were officially eliminated from AL West contention with the loss.

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Angels: OF Justin Upton was held out of his second game since a mild concussion Saturday. "Better but he's not quite ready," Scioscia said. "There's a protocol when there's a concussion that you have to follow." ... RHP Shohei Ohtani was evaluated after coming out of his pitching return early Sunday, and Scioscia is hopeful the two-way rookie will be good to make his next scheduled start Sunday. Scioscia said Ohtani's elbow feels great.

Rangers: Utility infielder Hanser Alberto is expected to be activated off the DL on Tuesday. He has been out since Aug. 25, a day after a right hamstring strain on the same day he was recalled from Triple-A Round Rock.

#### UP NEXT

A matchup of lefty starters when Andrew Heaney (8-8) pitches for the Angels and Mike Minor (10-7) goes for the Rangers. Heaney, 0-3 with a 10.38 in three previous starts at Texas, threw six scoreless innings in a win Thursday at AL West-leading Houston. Minor will make his 25th start after missing all of 2015-16 (torn labrum left shoulder) and pitching exclusively in relief for Kansas City last year.

## Ohtani's elbow 'great,' Angels hope he'll start next Sunday

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Shohei Ohtani has been evaluated after coming out of his pitching return early, and Los Angeles Angels manager Mike Scioscia is hopeful the right-hander will be good to make his next scheduled start Sunday.

Scioscia said Monday that Ohtani had no apprehension about his elbow when his velocity dropped drastically the previous night. The two-way player lasted only 2 1/3 innings at Houston on Sunday night in his first game on the mound since June 6 because of an elbow strain. He was dealing with tightness in his back and a sore right ring finger after a ball deflected off of it in the second inning, but neither issue should cause him to miss more time.

"The most important thing is his elbow feels great," Scioscia said.

Ohtani wasn't in the lineup as a hitter for the Angels in their series opener at Texas, which is normal the game after he pitches.

As a hitter, Scioscia said Ohtani was day to day.

**FROM FORBES.COM**

## Can Ohtani Copy Ichiro's Exemplary Example?

By Dan Schlossberg

This summer, Vladimir Guerrero became the first Dominican position player enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Five years from now, Ichiro Suzuki will become the first Japanese.

Ichiro started this season where he started his career: with the Seattle Mariners. He retired as an active player at age 44 to accept a position in the team's front office.

But he'll be accepting a position in Cooperstown in the not-too-distant future.

Combining his Japanese and American stats, he had more hits as a professional baseball player than anyone else. He had the most hits in a single season, 262; hit the only inside-the-park home run in the All-Star Game; and was the second man (after Fred Lynn) to be Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player in the same season.

Not bad for a guy whose first U.S. contract was a three-year deal for \$14 million, a relative pittance compared to the sums paid per annum to the likes of Mike Trout and Clayton Kershaw.

Often referred to only by his first name, Ichiro was a 10-time All-Star who won 10 Gold Gloves, won two batting crowns, and had the most hits by a foreign-born player in Major League Baseball at the time of his retirement on May 3 (Adrian Beltre later passed him).

In 18 big-league seasons, he had a .311 batting average, .355 on-base percentage, and .757 OBP (on-base plus slugging). He also had 509 stolen bases and almost as many triples (96) as home runs (117). The key stat, however, was hits: 3,089 in the U.S. and 1,278 in Japan for a total of 4,367. Pete Rose, the American hit king, had 4,256.

Ichiro's name always tops the list of Japanese players who excelled in the American majors.

Hideki Matsui, the 2009 World Series MVP, was a stud for the Yankees, collecting 100 RBI in each of his first three seasons.

Hideo Nomo pitched no-hitters in both leagues, including the only one in hitter-friendly Coors Field, after seizing a Rookie of the Year Award that should have gone to Chipper Jones.

Though he's proved brittle in recent seasons, Yu Darvish was a strikeout king as a steady starter for the Texas Rangers before bouncing around to other clubs. He hasn't looked the same since his early knockout in Game 7 of the 2017 World Series.

Daisuke Matsuzaka, erstwhile star pitcher for the Seibu Lions, won 33 games in his first two years as a starter for the Boston Red Sox, who laid out \$51.1 million in posting fees and \$52 million to sign him for six seasons. But injuries intervened, pushing the investment to the negative side of the ledger.

Hiroki Kuroda, though less spectacular, proved more reliable. Signed as a free agent before the 2008 season, he made more than 30 starts for the Dodgers three times before moving to the Yankees and enjoying several solid seasons.

The best of a handful of Japanese imports who prospered as relievers was Koji Uehara, winner of the 2013 MVP award for the triumphant Red Sox in the 2013 American League Championship Series. He saved seven of Boston's 11 wins in postseason play that year.

Boston also struck gold in Tomo Ohka, who pitched for five teams in his 10 major-league seasons, throwing 1,070 total innings and collecting 51 wins.

Shigetoshi Hasegawa, the first player traded from a Japanese team to an American team, joined the Angels before the 1977 season. The Halos sent \$1 million to the Orix Blue Wave and paid another \$350,000 to Hasegawa, a starter in Japan. He lasted nine seasons in the U.S. as a reliever.

Takashi Saito had a shorter tenure – mainly because he was 36 by the time he reached American shores. But he led the Dodgers with 24 saves in 2006 and was an All-Star a year later.

Since Seattle is the closest American city to Japan, the Mariners have imported a slew of players from the country. The list includes pitchers Hisashi Iwakuma, Kazuhiro Sasaki, and Hasegawa, all American League All-Stars, and catcher Kenji Johjima, the first backstop in modern baseball history to belt home

runs in each of his first two games. Iwakuma pitched a no-hitter in 2013 and won at least 14 games in three different seasons for the M's.

Where does this leave Shohei Ohtani, the two-way star who broke into baseball with the Los Angeles Angels this season?

He's already proven he can hit and pitch – as Babe Ruth did a century before him – but missed so much time with a strained elbow that he probably won't be a factor in the Rookie of the Year voting. Yankee teammates Miguel Andujar and Gleyber Torres remain the front-runners, though much depends upon what Ohtani can do in September.

Barred from pitching for virtually all of June, July, and August, he still did something nobody else has done since Ruth himself in 1919: he threw 50 innings and hit 15 home runs in the same season.

Signed for \$545,000 after the Angels won a bidding war for his rights, Ohtani burst onto the big-league scene with bravado, winning AL Rookie of the Month honors in April. But the injury was painful both to his elbow and his bottom line.

Entering play Tuesday, the 6'4" lefthander had appeared in 58 games as a designated hitter and 10 (all starts) as a pitcher. He had a .267 batting average, .357 on-base percentage, and .540 slugging percentage, plus six stolen bases to boot. As a pitcher, his 3.31 ERA and 63 strikeouts in 51 1/3 innings was equally impressive. He won four of his first six decisions in the majors.

In less than one season, Ohtani already rates as one of the best Japanese imports to reach the American majors. How long he can follow in Ichiro's footsteps, however, remains to be seen.