



# ***Press Clips***

**(April 7, 2018)**

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**FROM THE OC REGISTER****Shohei Ohtani homers for 3<sup>rd</sup> straight game as Angels rally past A's 13-9**

By Joey Kaufman

ANAHEIM — The baseball was belted with enough power that it traveled well into the rock fountain that sits beyond the left-center field wall of Angel Stadium and splashed in the water as it landed.

In the bottom of the second inning of the Angels' 13-9 comeback win against the Oakland A's on Friday night, Shohei Ohtani took hold of a 94 mph fastball thrown by Daniel Gossett and whacked it in the opposite direction.

It continued a remarkable home debut for Ohtani, the 23-year-old Japanese rookie who has spent much of the past year drawing comparisons to the last prominent two-way major-leaguer.

Billed as the "Babe Ruth of Japan," Ohtani hit his third home run this week, coming in his first at-bat Friday, a solo shot traveling 449 feet to the roar of the announced crowd of 36,023. It was his furthest and hardest-hit homer, according to Statcast, reaching an exit velocity of 112 mph.

"He has big power," shortstop Andrelton Simmons said, "and he's showing it."

It was Ohtani's third home run in as many games at Angel Stadium, where he is batting .462 (6 for 13) with six RBIs. No other rookie in the club's 58-season history had homered in his first three home games. Ohtani, a right-handed starting pitcher, continued to bat eighth as the designated hitter.

It was also an early spark for the Angels in a game that tilted heavily in favor of the visitors early on.

"Any time you're down six and you get one of them back really quick, that deficit starts to get smaller and smaller," left fielder Justin Upton said. "That kind of started it."

The Angels trailed 6-0 before Ohtani first stepped to the plate, and the home run precipitated an offensive onslaught that allowed them to overcome the early deficit. Their hitters ultimately banged out a season-high 14 hits against Oakland.

While Ohtani might have been a starting point in the innings-long rally, another home run pushed the Angels ahead for good.

Amid a five-run seventh inning, Upton hit a three-run home run the opposite way over the newly shortened right-field wall, breaking a 9-9 tie. Upton at first did not realize it had cleared the wall for a home run and stood on second base as if he had simply doubled. The Angels had evened the score earlier in the inning when Oakland third baseman Matt Chapman short-hopped a throw to first base for an error, allowing two runs to score.

"You gotta try really, really hard to keep this lineup quiet," Simmons said.

The teams combined for 21 runs and 27 hits and used 13 pitchers between them.

The Angels improved to 6-2 with their third consecutive win.

“Those guys kept playing baseball,” Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. “You’re not going to come back often in games like that.”

Throughout the comeback, the attention at Angel Stadium surrounded the excitement of Ohtani. Midway through his second plate appearance in the fourth inning, fans began to chant, “OH-TA-NI! OH-TA-NI!” before he popped up to center field for the first out in the four-run inning. Most were already standing by his third appearance in the fifth inning, when he drew a bases-loaded walk.

Ohtani finished 1 for 4 with a home run and two RBIs.

The comparisons to Ruth didn’t appear far off. Ruth was the last two-way player to also hit a home run in three consecutive games, and Ruth similarly homered three times in his first week as a position player in 1918.

Asked what it was like to watch Ohtani homer in three consecutive games, Simmons laughed.

“It’s getting old,” he said, smiling.

Reporters laughed as well.

“Nah, it’s really cool to see him swing the bat that well,” Simmons said. “I’m happy for him. I think we all are.”

The barrage of runs helped the Angels overcome a rough start by Parker Bridwell, who was pulled in the top of the second inning after surrendering four consecutive hits, including back-to-back home runs to Oakland lead-off hitter Matt Joyce and Marcus Semien amid a growing chorus of boos. Over 1-2/3 innings, Bridwell allowed seven hits and six runs.

Bridwell was recalled from Triple-A Salt Lake to take Matt Shoemaker’s spot in the starting rotation after Shoemaker was placed on the 10-day disabled list because of a strained right forearm. Bridwell was a breakout star in 2017 when the Angels were faced with a barrage of injuries in 2017.

They used six relief pitchers after Bridwell exited the game.

“Our team fights,” Bridwell said, “but six runs is a lot of runs. I’ve got to do better.”

## **Angels’ Matt Shoemaker awaits more tests for injured forearm**

By Joey Kaufman

ANAHEIM — The potential length of Matt Shoemaker’s absence with a strained right forearm remains unclear.

Results of Shoemaker's MRI returned clean, without showing acute elbow trauma, the club announced Thursday, but the right-hander is scheduled to undergo additional tests next week, including an electromyography and nerve condition study Monday in Los Angeles.

"The tests will help us narrow down if we think it's this, or we think it's this," Shoemaker said Friday. "And we got to find a way to treat it."

When asked if he thought the MRI represented good news or bad news, he wasn't sure.

"I don't know, because I think we're trying to figure out what news is what," said Shoemaker, who was placed on the 10-day disabled list earlier this week. "I think this test is going to help us narrow it down. It's good the MRI has come back clean, that's awesome."

Before becoming the Angels' second starter to begin this season on the disabled list, Shoemaker made his first regular-season start since June last Saturday at Oakland, where he allowed three runs and four hits in 5-2/3 innings. But toward the end of the start, Shoemaker described feeling pain in his arm.

Shoemaker missed the second half of last season after surgery to release the radial nerve in his right forearm, and he reiterated Friday his injured forearm felt similar.

He underwent the season-ending surgery last year following an EMG test.

"That's what told us last year the way to fix this," Shoemaker said. "I had something push down on my nerve previously. That's why I required surgery to cut that off. Everything felt great. Now something is going on. It might be something similar, reoccurring. That's what I'm trying to figure out."

Shoemaker was 6-3 with a 4.52 ERA prior in 2017 before the setback. His previous season ended early as well because of a fractured skull when a 105 mph line drive off the bat of Seattle Mariners' Kyle Seager hit the right side of his head.

Andrew Heaney, who was making a rehabilitation start for Class-A Inland Empire on Friday night, has also been on the disabled list with arm soreness.

Parker Bridwell started in place of Shoemaker on Friday night. Last season, the Angels' pitching rotation, snake-bitten by injuries, was forced to use 13 starters.

Manager Mike Scioscia said Friday the club was awaiting additional information about Shoemaker's health status and potential nerve issue.

"We're still trying to wrap our heads around exactly what's happening," Scioscia said.

**UP IN THE ORDER?**

Shohei Ohtani's hitting debut at Angel Stadium has made an impression.

In two games against the Cleveland Indians earlier this week, Ohtani had five hits in his nine at-bats, including a pair of home runs. He added a third – a 449-foot blast to center field – in his first at-bat Friday night.

The Japanese two-way standout, who will take the mound again Sunday, has been in the lineup as the designated hitter and batted eighth in all three games this week.

So, considering the early success, would the Angels move him up higher in the batting order?

Scioscia did not rule out the possibility noting "there's always opportunities to adjust our lineup."

"We're still seven games into this," Scioscia said, speaking with reporters in the dugout before Friday's game against Oakland. "We'll evaluate things as we start to get underway, but with the way he's swinging the bat and where he's hitting, that just shows we have a good plan and that's what he'll need."

#### **ALSO**

In his rehab start Friday night, Heaney carried a no-hitter into the sixth inning. The left-hander gave up two hits and one run in 6 1/3 innings, with six strikeouts and a walk, throwing 87 pitches. ... Second baseman Ian Kinsler, on the 10-day disabled list with a groin injury, has resumed baseball activities, but Scioscia did not say if a rehab assignment was near. "He's got some things to do before he's ready for a rehab game, so we're going to take everything one step at a time."

#### **UP NEXT**

A's (RHP Andrew Triggs, 0-0, 1.80 ERA) at Angels (RHP JC Ramirez, 0-1, 7.71), Saturday, 6 p.m., Fox Sports West, 830 AM

## **Hoffarth: MLB on Facebook – not in our wildest streams**

By Tom Hoffarth

Faced with a futuristic prospect of having Facebook, YouTube, Amazon and/or Twitter on board as a new revenue stream and distribution partner. Major League Baseball experienced a whole bunch of post-Easter egg all over its interface last week.

Maybe not everyone was able to watch the entire hard-boiled humiliation. It's a shell game that's still buffering.

We're all for healthy competition when it comes to the traditional media platforms producing live games – it's our expectation that someday sooner than later in your lifetime, you'll experience a Super Bowl on some sort of service you know best nowadays as a way to order inflatable palm trees and sturdy tiki torches to decorate a patio for a summer luau without running to Costco.

But in the first exclusive Facebook Watch episode Wednesday – a Phillies-Mets game from New York that would have otherwise gone unnoticed to the local TV markets as well as the MLB.tv out-of-market package – it got caught in the dragnet of a current tarnished, maybe-soon-outdated Internet social media company still trying to explain how millions of its customers had personal data improperly shared with political ads during the 2016 presidential election.

Things were bound to act like an Uncle Charlie Hough knuckleball, starting with the fact the game had a 90-minute rain delay, graphics that blocked the screen and comments that scrolled too fast to even read at times.

In 2017, MLB and Facebook did a trial run, borrowing 20 games from local rights holders for a Friday national simulcast on the social media platform. Assured all would work well enough, Facebook decided it was worth bribing the MLB folks with a reported \$35 million – about \$1 mil in extra walking-around-money per team – to lock in a 25-game exclusive rights fee to have a weekday, otherwise non-descript contest taken away from two teams and put on its service.

What could go stupid wrong with this?

### **Strange bedfellows**

First, many have recently dropped Facebook, fearing their information was being compromised. But for those who participated, Facebook was in a position to mine data from this MLB relationship and sell it off to third-party advertisers about where one was viewing a game, and what kind of comments were being made. Beautiful.

Next, those who paid up to \$120 a year for all out-of-market game access on MLB.tv were now told that, no, this one is now not part of that promise. Complain if you wish.

Doug McIntyre did.

The L.A.-based morning host of his own KABC-AM (790) news talk show, a Daily News columnist, and a home-grown Mets fan took to his Thursday morning program to amplify his disgust in the whole process.

He even registered a complaint online at MLB.com, but the tone-deaf result was that MLB.tv agreed to credit his account for that lost game and then cancel the service – neither of which McIntyre demanded. He was then forced to go through another half-hour-plus process of re-registering.

“Facebook has done nothing wrong in trying to grow its business with livestreaming,” McIntyre said. “Even though it was sloppy and the feed crashed, those things happen, and they’ll work on the technology.”

“The problem is that the MLB sold out their fans. Their slog is ‘every out-of-market game all season long.’ They violated the contract, and violated our trust in having a package that promised all out-of-market games. That’s the great frustration in all this. So week after week, another two teams’ fans will have the same issue, and there’ll be complaints, but not enough to make a large difference.”

“We live in bizarre times where people are now asking for government regulation on digital use, going against what the free market usually does to regulate itself.”

As McIntyre also connected dots, this isn’t all that different from how the Dodgers, with the MLB’s blessing, have used fans as collateral damage in their distribution struggles. If enough people disconnected their DirecTV service in Southern California over the Dodgers/SportsNet LA issue over the past five years, parent company AT&T would have seen enough in a cost benefit analysis that its brand and customer base had been damaged. Neither things happened.

So we continue to take one for the team, the league and the suspect social media platform, and slog forward.

### **Who’s up next?**

The Dodgers, Angels and every MLB team go into each season knowing they could have as many as nine games lifted from their local schedule and taken by ESPN, Fox or TBS. That’s one thing. The exposure is pretty good, and the teams are compensated well.

Games on Facebook are announced at the start of each month, so we know that only Milwaukee-St. Louis (April 11), Kansas City-Toronto (April 18) and Arizona-Philadelphia (April 26) are locked in for more fun and games.

Yet those three national networks would probably fight harder to keep a Dodgers or Angels game for themselves at some point in this six-month season rather than have Facebook snatch it away, so the odds aren’t as likely that Southern Californians will suffer this layer of confusion and anxiety just witnessed by many in the Philly and N.Y. markets not prepared for this inconvenience.

The Dodgers are one of seven teams, along with the Blue Jays, Pirates, Astros, Rockies, Orioles and Nationals, whose games are available on either an RSN or, when lucky enough, a national broadcast, so cord cutters don’t always do well surviving this situation.



The other somewhat ironic part to this is some Dodgers followers have already figured out some end-arounds to the SportsNet LA access — Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) or a Virtual Private Network (VPN), watching on Chromecast or Roku, hiding their L.A. location from MLB.tv through Unlocator.com, which unblocks streaming services.

But Facebook has also been a cyber-communal gathering spot for not-so-secret society of those who transmit their SportsNet LA feeds onto their FB accounts. It has created a group-watch experience, complete with commentary, that some rather enjoy.

There is some merit to this way in which people are going to use Facebook and MLB feeds, one that behooves both companies to get ahead of it. But ultimately, if MLB thinks it is tapping into a younger demo by having a Facebook relationship, someone there must know that, while there are plenty in the 18-to-34 range among the 2.2 billion monthly active users, the average age skews at 40 and older.

The numbers that came out of the Wednesday experiment also show there were 1.1 million engagements and 4.3 million views of at least three seconds, along with 68,000 comments. Not at all a threat to the main delivery of games over TV sets.

As Michael Mulvihill, the Fox Sports guru of research, strategy and analytics, explained on Twitter on Thursday, the average length of a view on the Facebook game was just a little more than three minutes as people likely popped in and out.

“The audience for Facebook’s game supports the idea that streaming is only a complement to TV for sports, not a replacement,” Mulvihill said. “When your audience is (more than) 90 percent lower than the lowest-rated broadcast game ever, that’s not much of a case for replacement.”

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Tony Petitti, the deputy commissioner of business and media for the MLB, said earlier in the week to New York Newsday that “we are just trying to figure out ways to bring our content to as many platforms where fans aggregate as possible ... Obviously it might be a little tricky, but we want to be respectful of our fans. There’s always going to be, when you test new things, a little bit of disruption.”

As to how that disruption measures out, we’ll leave it for Cambridge Analytica to crunch the numbers for its Facebook friends.

## **Measuring media mayhem**

### **What smokes**

\* HBO’s presentation (Tuesday, 10 p.m.) of the documentary “Andre The Giant” comes primarily from the Bill Simmons Media Group and WWE, one of the original “30 for 30” pieces that Simmons had

lobbied for almost 10 years ago when he was at ESPN. The narrative of André René Roussimoff, who died at 46 in 1993, was how a man 7-feet-4 and almost 500 pounds survived as an athlete and actor at a time when he really wasn't in on the joke.

\* ESPN has a "SportsCenter All-Access" real-time look into "what it takes to create the iconic sports news and information program" on Tuesday at 7 p.m., following the Yankees-Red Sox telecast, and continuing until 9 p.m. Steve Levy and transplanted Fox Sports West guy Michael Eaves anchor with Elle Duncan and Marty Smith to go around the studios, control room and highlight-editing work spaces. Sounds slightly intriguing as much as it can be self-serving.

### **What chokes**

\* The L.A. market wasn't much help in getting a viewership push behind Monday's NCAA men's basketball national championship game that featured a one-sided Villanova victory over Michigan. With the game on TBS predictably drawing fewer eyes than it would on CBS – it did an all-time low 10.3 overnight — L.A. came in at 8.0, 49th out of the 56 markets. L.A. was even less robust for Saturday's Final Four, also on TBS, with a 5.7 rating (47th nationally).

\* As part of the new ESPN+ over-the-top, \$4.95 service that ESPN will launch starting Thursday, a 15-episode "basketball analysis show" called "Detail," created and hosted by Kobe Bryant, will be available through the NBA playoffs, the parties announced this week. Otherwise, the "exclusive content" for this on-demand platform for the redesigned ESPN app isn't all that impressive — limited live MLB, NHL, PGA, tennis, MLS and boxing events, but no NFL. There is also access to a documentary on the volatile life and times of former Indiana basketball coach Bob Knight (who ESPN then decided to hire as a college hoops analyst), and the "30 for 30" doc library. If you want to be an "early adapter" to this service, knock yourself out.

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***FROM THE LOS ANGELES TIMES***

## **Shohei Ohtani flashes his power on hard-hitting Angels lineup**

By Mike Digiovanna

Maybe he was exhausted after a 3-hour, 35-minute marathon that featured 23 runs, 27 hits, seven homers and 14 pitchers, but Angels shortstop Andrelton Simmons kept a straight face and monotone voice when he was asked about two-way phenom Shohei Ohtani hitting a home run in his third consecutive game.

"It's getting old," Simmons said late Friday night, his deadpan delivery causing reporters to break out in laughter. "No, it's really cool to see him swing the bat that well. I'm happy for him. I think we all are."

Majestic as it was, Ohtani's second-inning blast, a towering solo shot that traveled 449 feet and splashed into the water in the rock formation beyond the center field wall, merely turned a six-run deficit into five.

But it may have provided just the spark the Angels needed to mount a massive comeback for a 13-9 victory over the Oakland Athletics in a game they trailed 6-0 going into the bottom of the second inning.

"Yeah," left fielder Justin Upton said, when asked if Ohtani's homer put a charge into the team. "Any time you're down six and you get one back pretty quick, that deficit gets smaller and smaller. He started it."

Upton finished it, capping a five-run, seventh-inning rally with a three-run homer to center, a laser that cleared the fence just as A's center fielder Boog Powell ran face-first, at full speed, into the wall, the defender either disregarding or missing the "warning" in the term warning track.

In between was Luis Valbuena's two-run single to highlight a four-run fourth, Simmons' RBI single and Ohtani's bases-loaded walk in a two-run fifth, and a throwing error by Oakland third baseman and usual defensive whiz Matt Chapman that allowed the Angels to score two of their five unearned runs in the seventh.

The Angels banged out 14 hits and kept constant pressure on the A's, the victory a testament to the lineup depth general manager Billy Eppler added this winter when he re-signed Upton and acquired Ohtani, Zack Cozart and Ian Kinsler.

"You gotta try really, really hard to keep this lineup quiet," Simmons said. "Give us any room, and we can bounce back. They scored a couple of runs to keep the lead, but we kept coming at them, kept having good at-bats. They made a mistake that tied the game, and then Upton got a big hit after that. It shows how deep the lineup is and how many runs we're capable of scoring."

Ohtani struggled to make any contact, let alone consistent hard contact, in spring training, but he has shown phenomenal power in his last three games, becoming the second player in Angels history to hit a home run in each of his first three home games of a season. The other was Bobby Bonds in 1977.

"He smoked that ball, huh?" Simmons said of Ohtani's homer. "The center fielder ran after it like he had a chance for a second, and scared everybody. It wasn't even close. Ohtani has big power, and he's showing it."

## **Down 6-0, Angels' bats awaken with homer by Ohtani and beat the Athletics 13-9**

By Jeff Miller

The Shohei Ohtani of Japan is now the Shohei Ohtani of the United States.

And of the Angels, the team's prized two-way sensation officially cementing himself in franchise lore by homering for the third consecutive game — this one a launched laser that came down 449 feet away.

That was just the first blow in a game during which the Angels never stopped swinging, overcoming an early six-run deficit to beat Oakland on Friday, 13-9. The biggest punch was a Justin Upton three-run homer in the seventh, putting the Angels up for the first time and for good.

But, even more notably, the madness being produced by Ohtani marched on as, barely a week into his career, he continues to captivate this sport upon which he has been unleashed.

No Angels rookie had hit home runs in each of his first three home games. The most recent player to homer in three straight during a season in which he also started a game as a pitcher was Babe Ruth in 1930.

Does that sound old? Well, Ohtani just became the first American Leaguer with at least one home run and two RBIs in each of his first three home games since the run batted in was invented as an official statistic. That's old.

His latest moment came in the second inning, against Daniel Gossett, Ohtani homering for the third time in his first 10 at-bats at Angel Stadium.

Know who else has three home runs this year? The Dodgers. All of them. Combined.

Ohtani has more homers at the moment than the Detroit Tigers, Kansas City Royals and Miami Marlins.

Now, just imagine if the guy did this full-time. Ohtani's workday began in the afternoon by throwing a bullpen session in preparation for his second pitching start, Sunday in the finale of this series.

Because of his schedule, Ohtani won't be the designated hitter Saturday, despite his roll.

"At some point, he has to become a pitcher," manager Mike Scioscia said. "We have to get him ready to pitch."

A few hours after throwing, Ohtani and his teammates rebounding from that early 6-0 hole, he came up in the fourth, representing the tying run.

It was 6-4 and with Luis Valbuena on second, for the first time in his major-league career, Ohtani heard his name being chanted during a game.

"Oh-TAH-nee" was the serenade as he took another mighty cut. This time his bat shattered and the ball died as a harmless fly to center.

No worries, there was more drama waiting just an inning away. With the bases loaded and the Angels trailing 8-6, Ohtani walked to the plate and the A's countered with a pitching change.

Reliever Liam Hendriks was summoned and responded by walking Ohtani — he heard those same chants again as the stadium came to life — on four pitches, none of which was particularly close.

The walk forced in a run, giving Ohtani seven RBIs, which tied for the lead among the Angels and are roughly six more than most No. 8 hitters have after only four games.

Friday afternoon, Scioscia faced his first question about moving Ohtani up in the order. He has batted eighth in each game he has started as designated hitter.

Scioscia downplayed the possibility but acknowledged it could happen in the future, a future that might be approaching faster than almost anyone had anticipated.

One thing is certain: The adjustments made over the past few weeks by Ohtani — most noticeably replacing an exaggerated front leg kick with a subtle toe tap — have produced results.

"It's not like he's changing his mechanics drastically," Scioscia said. "He's just modified it a little bit to where he's closer to the ground and can work a consistent approach."

A consistent and damaging approach, the Shohei Ohtani of the Angels feeling right at home.

## **Angels' bullpen by committee outperforming every other AL team's**

By Jeff Miller

With flexible roles and no named closer, the Angels' bullpen is a community effort.

That couldn't have been more true than it was on Wednesday when, as the game stretched into extra innings, all eight relievers contributed to shut down a highly regarded Cleveland lineup. They limited the Indians to two singles over 8 1/3 scoreless innings, striking out nine.



"Each one of our guys know when they come into a game there's a lot riding on it," manager Mike Scioscia said. "Those guys did a terrific job. They've really done the job, outside of maybe one game this year."

Entering Friday, the Angels' bullpen led the American League in earned run average and was holding hitters to the lowest batting average and on-base-plus-slugging percentage.

No set of relievers in the AL had more strikeouts. The Angels also were the only AL bullpen that had not permitted a home run, until Friday night when Cam Bedrosian gave up a two-run shot to Oakland's Matt Chapman and Jim Johnson allowed Matt Olson's solo shot.

They were put to the test early Friday when Parker Bridwell was lifted after getting just five outs while giving up three home runs. Despite the two long balls the bullpen allowed, those were the only runs they gave up in 7 1/3 innings as the Angels rallied for a 13-9 win.

### **Shoemaker update**

Matt Shoemaker called his MRI results "very encouraging," but the right-hander knows his future remains cloudy until further testing.

He is scheduled to undergo an electromyography and nerve conduction study Monday to determine the cause of his right forearm strain.

The Angels' No. 3 starter, Shoemaker was placed on the 10-day disabled list Tuesday. His MRI revealed no "acute trauma," according to a team statement.

Shoemaker didn't pitch after mid-June last season because of a nerve condition in his right forearm. He eventually had surgery but reported no issues through spring training.

### **Kinsler update**

Second baseman Ian Kinsler worked out on the field before Friday's game, his first baseball activity since aggravating his sore left adductor during the season-opening series in Oakland.

Kinsler will be re-evaluated Saturday before increasing the pace of his rehabilitation. He is eligible to return Tuesday, although it remains unclear if he'll be ready.

### **Short hops**

The Angels lost pitcher Troy Scribner when the right-hander was claimed off waivers by Arizona. He appeared in 10 games last season and was in spring training with the team. ... Andrew Heaney (elbow inflammation) gave up one run and two hits in 6 1/3 innings during a rehab start for single-A Inland

Empire. The left-hander threw 87 pitches, 61 for strikes. The Angels are likely to add a sixth starter to their rotation next week during their series in Kansas City.

**FROM ANGELS.COM**

## **Halos stun A's on bookend HRs by Ohtani, J-Up**

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- The Angels focused on improving their offense this offseason, re-signing Justin Upton, landing Shohei Ohtani and adding Zack Cozart and Ian Kinsler. On Friday night, the club's revamped lineup showed exactly how unrelenting it can be.

Upton's three-run homer off Blake Treinen capped a wild five-run seventh inning that sent the Angels a 13-9 win after trailing the A's by six runs in their series opener at Angel Stadium.

"We've got a lot of guys here who have seen a lot of baseball, played a lot of baseball, and we know if we can keep putting together good at-bats, we can put up runs," Upton said. "That's what we'll continue to do."

The A's built a 6-0 lead by launching three home runs off Parker Bridwell, who lasted just 1 2/3 innings, but the Angels (6-2) clawed back as the game wore on. Ohtani's third home run in as many games put the Halos on the board in the second inning, and Luis Valbuena's two-run single keyed a four-run fourth.

The A's took a 9-7 lead into the bottom of the seventh after Matt Olson launched the club's fifth home run of the night, but the Angels immediately threatened again. Andrelton Simmons led off the inning with a single and advanced to third on a double by Jefry Marte. The Angels seemed snakebitten after lacing two balls off reliever Ryan Buchter -- a 110-mph groundout to first from Ohtani and an 104-mph lineout to third from Martin Maldonado -- only to see two outs recorded without a runner moving.

A's manager Bob Melvin then brought in Treinen to face Cozart, who chopped a slow grounder to third base. Matt Chapman fielded the ball, but he short-hopped his throw to first base, allowing a pair of runs to score to tie the game at 9.

"You've got to try really hard to keep this lineup quiet," said Simmons, who went 3-for-5 to extend his hitting streak to eight games. "Give us any room and we can bounce back. They scored a couple runs, but we kept coming at them. Kept putting together good at-bats, kept threatening and putting pressure on them."

Treinen intentionally walked Mike Trout to bring up Upton, who launched a 3-2 sinker off the out-of-town scoreboard in right-center field to give the Angels their first lead of the night. It was Upton's second home run of the season.

The A's and Angels combined for 27 hits and deployed 14 pitchers to cover a combined 12 innings after Bridwell and A's starter Daniel Gossett were knocked out of the game early.

"Those guys just kept playing baseball," manager Mike Scioscia said. "We're not going to come back very often in games like that, but you certainly want to give yourself a chance."

### **MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

**Ohtani ignites rally:** Ohtani put the Angels on the board in the second inning after launching a home run off Gossett to cut Oakland's lead to 6-1. Ohtani's third home run of the season flew off his bat at 112.4 mph and traveled an estimated 449 feet, according to Statcast™. Ohtani, who finished 1-for-4 with two RBIs in his fourth start as the designated hitter, is the first Angels rookie to homer in each of his first three home games.

"Anytime you go down six and you get one of them back pretty quick, that deficit starts to get smaller and smaller," Upton said. "He kind of started it. It was great for us to get that one back."

**Angels chase Gossett:** Down 6-1, the Angels began the fourth with four straight hits -- singles by Albert Pujols and Kole Calhoun, an RBI ground-rule double by Simmons and a two-run single by Valbuena -- to cut the deficit to 6-4. Gossett retired Ohtani on a broken-bat flyout before he was replaced by A's reliever Yusmeiro Petit, who gave up an RBI single to Maldonado that made it 6-5.

### **SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

In three career starts against the A's, Bridwell has allowed 19 runs over 7 2/3 innings (22.30 ERA).

"It's just one of those things where I think they caught me on the right day every time," said Bridwell, who started Friday in place of the injured Matt Shoemaker. "Baseball is hard, in general, and when you come in and you face the same teams over and over again, it's going to get a little more difficult. Regardless of the circumstance, I've got to be a lot better than that."

### **WHAT'S NEXT**

JC Ramirez will start Saturday as the Angels play the middle game of their three-game series against the A's at 6:07 p.m. PT at Angel Stadium. Ramirez will look to rebound from his rough season debut, when he allowed five runs (four earned) over 4 2/3 innings in Monday's loss to the Indians. He has a 2.95 ERA over 18 1/3 innings in 10 career appearances against the A's, including one start.

## Ohtani homers in third straight, helps Halos rally

By Maria Guardado

**ANAHEIM** -- The Shohei Ohtani show continued to rage here on Friday night, as the two-way phenom launched his third home run in as many games, helping spark an improbable comeback that propelled the Angels to a wild 13-9 win over the A's in their series opener at Angel Stadium.

After the Angels fell into an early 6-0 hole, Ohtani crushed a 2-0 fastball from A's right-hander Daniel Gossett to straightaway center field to put his club on the board in the second inning. The ball flew off his bat at 112.4 mph and traveled an estimated 449 feet, according to Statcast™, splashing into one of the fountains nestled within the stadium's signature rock formation. The blast stands as the hardest-hit and longest home run for the Angels in 2018.

"I wanted to get on base and bring in a run to compete later in the game," Ohtani said. "As a result, it became a home run, so I'm glad."

Ohtani, who homered off the Indians' Josh Tomlin on Tuesday and reigning American League Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber on Wednesday, is the first Angels rookie to homer in each of his first three home games.

"It's getting old," shortstop Andrelton Simmons joked. "No, but it's really cool to see him swing the bat that well. I'm happy for him. I think we all are. He has big power, and he's showing it."

Ohtani's prowess as a two-way player earned him a reputation as the "Babe Ruth of Japan," and he's lived up to his moniker over his first week in the Majors. The 23-year-old left-handed slugger (and right-handed pitcher) is the first AL player to homer in three straight games in the same season that he started a game as a pitcher since Ruth in 1930. He now has more home runs than the Tigers, Royals and Marlins.

His historic exploits have captivated the baseball world, turning each of his at-bats into must-watch television. When Ohtani came up to bat in the fifth inning with the bases loaded and the Angels trailing, 8-6, the crowd of 36,023 got to its feet and started chanting, "Oh-tah-ni! Oh-tah-ni!"

A's manager Bob Melvin summoned reliever Liam Hendriks to face Ohtani, who worked a four-pitch walk to force in a run, bringing the Angels within one. Ohtani, who finished 1-for-4 with two RBIs, is now 7-for-18 (.389) with three homers and seven RBIs in four starts as the Angels' designated hitter. Since RBI became an official statistic in 1920, Ohtani is the first AL player to collect a home run and at least two RBIs in each of his first three home games.

Ironically, the only thing preventing Ohtani the hitter from staying in the Angels' lineup is Ohtani the pitcher. Ohtani will rest Saturday as he prepares for his second start on the mound, Sunday against the A's, the team he beat in his pitching debut last week at the Coliseum.

"There's no doubt that you have to have some separation and get him ready to pitch," manager Mike Scioscia said. "We'll let him recover and get ready to go."

## **Shohei Ohtani has homered in his first three home games, so let's rank them**

By Adrian Garro

Shohei Ohtani arrived in the Majors with next-level expectations -- and all he's done in his first week with the Angels is exceed them.

On the pitching side, Ohtani dazzled in his first career start, beating the A's in Oakland and throwing some totally unfair pitches. And in addition to hitting a single in his first at-bat with the Angels, he saved his most emphatic moments for his first homestand at Angel Stadium.

His second-inning blast in Friday's 13-9 win over the A's was Ohtani's third in three home games thus far this season, making him the first Angels rookie to accomplish that feat. That's an impressive kind of hot streak, and it's done a lot to convince folks that yes, he's definitely ready for the Show. He's even made a mechanical adjustment at the plate, too.

Each home run came with its own unique element, so let's take a deeper look by ranking the three (of many more to come).

### **3. No. 1, off Josh Tomlin**

Ohtani's introduction to his hometown fans couldn't have been any sweeter, considering he blasted a 397-foot homer to right-center that cleared the Angels' new lowered outfield wall and made a father and son very happy. It was a *moment*:

### **2. No. 2, off Corey Kluber**

In his next game, Ohtani faced the reigning AL Cy Young Award winner, Corey Kluber. Cleveland's ace struck out Ohtani in his first at-bat, but the 23-year-old phenom had his revenge the next time up with this 400-foot shot off the rock formation in center field:

### **1. No. 3, off Daniel Gossett**

Ohtani's latest, though, was his most well-struck so far, squaring up a 2-0 offering from Daniel Gossett and sending it 449 feet, again laying pepper with the rock formation. And check out that crisp, sweet sound off the bat:

He's made this all look impossibly easy so far, hasn't he?

## Ohtani raking after simplifying swing

*Angels' two-way star homers in third straight game at DH*

By Maria Guardado

ANAHEIM -- Shohei Ohtani, who homered in his third straight game as DH on Friday night against the A's, has shown a propensity for making adjustments during his brief time in the Majors.

During Spring Training, Ohtani made a noticeable modification to his batting stance, scrapping his high leg kick for a subtler toe tap.

"If you look at some video, he's had a smaller leg kick out there where he's kind of working on not the big kick, which is more sensitive to timing," manager Mike Scioscia said before Friday's series opener. "It's not like he's changing his mechanics drastically. This is very much in line with a lot of the swings that we saw that he took in Japan. It's just modified a little bit to where he's closer to the ground and can have a more consistent approach to the ball."

Ohtani, 23, said he made the change in consultation with the Angels' hitting coaches, though he feels the adjustment hasn't altered his swing much.

"It may look as though it has changed a lot, but I don't feel it has changed much," Ohtani said in Japanese. "I've omitted the process when I go to the top, [but] the swing itself hasn't changed that much. There are a lot of pitchers that throw differently, so I think I can adjust easier to that."

"I'll keep on trying out different things like I have been doing every year. I have changed my batting form during the season in the past. I think everybody does that. I'll try out different things to get or find the right feel."

After going 4-for-32 (.125) with no extra-base hits during exhibition play, Ohtani went 6-for-14 (.429) with two home runs -- including a two-run shot off reigning American League Cy Young Award winner Corey Kluber on Wednesday -- in his first three regular-season starts as the Angels' designated hitter. Ohtani had his third consecutive start out of the eight-hole on Friday.

Despite Ohtani's hot start, Scioscia said it's still too early to consider moving the left-handed slugger up in the Angels' lineup.

"I think we're still seven games into this," Scioscia said. "We'll evaluate things as we start to get underway. I think the way he's swinging the bat and where he's hitting shows that we have a deep lineup, and that's what we're going to need. But, obviously, as we start to get more information, as we start to get through this, there's always opportunities to adjust the lineup."

Shoemaker still searching for answers

Matt Shoemaker, on the disabled list with a right forearm strain, underwent an MRI exam on Wednesday that showed no acute trauma to his elbow, but he is slated to undergo more tests on Monday, including an EMG and a nerve conduction study in Los Angeles.

Shoemaker said he had the same test done last year, which revealed that the radial nerve in his forearm was being compressed and led to season-ending surgery to release the nerve. He still isn't sure if the issue is the same, but he's hoping the results from Monday's tests will clarify the situation and yield a specific diagnosis.

"We did an EMG, and that's what told us the information last year," Shoemaker said. "I had something pushing down on my nerve previously, and that's why it required surgery to cut that off and everything felt great. Now something is going on. It might be something similar, recurring. That's what we're trying to figure out."

Parker Bridwell started against the A's on Friday in Shoemaker's place.

#### **Worth noting**

- Ian Kinsler (left adductor strain) took batting practice on the field on Friday and could resume taking grounders on Saturday, according to Scioscia.
- Andrew Heaney (left elbow inflammation) made a rehab start for Class A Advanced Inland Empire on Friday night, allowing one run on two hits over 6 1/3 innings. He walked one, struck out six and threw 87 pitches, 61 for strikes.
- Right-hander Troy Scribner was claimed by the D-backs on Friday after being designated for assignment by the Angels earlier this week. Scribner, 26, posted a 4.18 ERA over 23 2/3 innings for the Angels in 2017.

**FROM THE ATHLETIC****Blast off: Shohei Ohtani has instantly become a regular sensation in Orange County**

By Steve Dilbeck

Can greatness become repetitive?

Shohei Ohtani seems determined to find out, which is just one in an apparent series of new adventures the two-way Japanese star appears headed.

Ohtani did it again on Friday night, did what would have unthinkable a week ago when he was this great unknown coming off a less than inspiring spring, and now somehow his success has become almost expected.

He hit his third home run in as many games, this one a stunning shot that rocketed out to dead center, above the green canopy covering a TV cameraman and into the waterfall in Angel Stadium's faded fake rock formation.

"It's getting old," deadpanned shortstop Andrelton Simmons.

Of Ohtani's three home runs, this was easily the most impressive. The 23-year-old's smooth swing seems effortless, concealing tremendous power. His home run on Friday exploded off his bat at an estimated 112.4 mph and traveled 449 feet. Some jets don't take off the fast.

On his first two homers, he initially sprinted down the line, uncertain if his drives would go off the wall. No one had any doubt this time, including Ohtani, whose 6-foot-4, square-shoulder frame almost obscures his boyish face.

"It felt really good today, and was able to connect the ball really well," Ohtani said through an interpreter. "I thought I was able to hit it really good."

On a night the Angels fell behind 6-0 to the A's—who hit five home runs—and rallied to win 13-9 capped by Justin Upton's three-run homer in the seventh, it was still the Ohtani blast off Oakland's Daniel Gossett that seemed to defy belief, or at least anything approaching conventional wisdom.

"He smoked that ball," Simmons said. "He has big power and showing it."

Ohtani has instantly become a thing in Orange County, yesterday's question mark, today's sensation. After hitting his home run in the second, most of the crowd rose to its feet in his subsequent at-bats.



They chanted "Oh-tah-nee." When he walked on four pitches with the bases loaded to force in a run in the fifth, the crowd seemed almost disappointed.

With every Ohtani at-bat, there is now anticipation, and however early, it only seems to be swelling.

He is the first Angels rookie to homer in his first three home games. On a team with Mike Trout and Albert Pujols, he leads in home runs in half as many at-bats. He appears headed toward plenty of firsts.

And naturally, there is another Babe Ruth comparison. He is the first AL player to start the season as a pitcher and then homer in three consecutive games since Ruth in 1930.

His early success could force Angels manager Mike Scioscia to re-evaluate the way he is using Ohtani. He currently is batting eighth, though such a powerful bat almost cries to me moved up somewhere in the middle of the order.

"You're always considering things to do, but we're talking about the first week of the season and we want everyone to get settled and get comfortable," Scioscia said. "Right now it points to a deep lineup. Not that you aren't going to move guys around as they get productive and maybe look like they're ready for another spot. But right now I think we're good where we are."

Ohtani is scheduled to return to the mound on Sunday against the A's, so he will not hit again until Tuesday. The Angels' current plan is not to use him as a designated hitter the day before or after he starts, though that, too, could change.

"Our medical staff is very connected with him, and there has to be a point where he becomes a pitcher," Scioscia said. "Not to say at some time during the season he won't be able to do a little bit more, the day before he pitches or the day after. But certainly right now we're going to err on the side of caution and make sure he's ready to pitch on Sunday."

Ohtani ended his Friday night 1 for 4, with a walk and two RBI. The game featured 22 runs on seven homers and 27 hits and used 14 pitchers, but it was still the kid who enjoyed the biggest night.

"It's really cool to see him swing the bat that well," Simmons said. "I'm happy for him. I think we all are."

## **Rosenthal: Which managers are in real jeopardy? The hot seat is here earlier than usual**

By Ken Rosenthal

In past years, the hot seat for managers generally started to sizzle with the season about one-fourth complete, a reality I came to understand after my oldest child, Samuel Joseph, was born.

Longtime readers might recall the story. Sam was born on May 21, 1991. On each of the first three days of his life, a manager was fired—in order, Don Zimmer with the Chicago Cubs, John Wathan with the Kansas City Royals and Frank Robinson with the Baltimore Orioles, the team I was covering at the time.

The late, great Jerome Holtzman of the *Chicago Tribune*, linking my son's birth to the sudden rash of dismissals, wrote a column proclaiming "The Curse of Samuel Joseph." As the years passed, I entered a state of heightened awareness whenever Sam's birthday approached, not because I might forget to buy him a present, but because news of a firing might break at any time.

Only now, with the season starting a week earlier under the new collective bargaining agreement, Sam will need to change the timing of his curse. The old calendar no longer applies. The season will be about one-fourth complete around mid-May. And who knows, some itchy team might act even sooner.

Another new dynamic exists in 2018, one even more powerful than Sam's curse. Three managers fired at the end of last season—Joe Girardi, John Farrell and Brad Ausmus—are likely on the radar of several clubs. Two other big names—the Baltimore Orioles' Buck Showalter and Los Angeles Angels' Mike Scioscia—are in the final years of contracts and might become available at the end of the season, though the best guess is that both will stay with their present teams.

Without further ado, then, here is my list of managers on the hot seat. We begin with the rarest of occurrences—a first-time manager at the top of the list. Say this for the Philadelphia Phillies' Gabe Kapler, though: He already has made it through six games, so he will not beat the record for fastest firing from the start of a season—Cal Ripken Sr. in his second year with the Orioles in 1988. The O's started 0-6, dumped Ripken, then proceeded to lose their next 15 games under Robinson.

Yep, I covered that team, too.

**\*Gabe Kapler, Philadelphia Phillies:** A full accounting of his early miscues would crash our website. Kapler created his own hot seat, all but placing a blowtorch under his office chair, becoming part of the story in each of the Phillies' first five games. He finally managed in peace on Thursday in a 5-0 home victory over the Miami Marlins—or should I say relative peace, considering that fans booed him first in pre-game introductions and booed him even louder when he removed starting pitcher Nick Pivetta from a shutout after 5 2/3 innings.

Some in the sabermetric community might perceive the criticism of Kapler to be simply a reaction to his extreme reliance on data, and to an extent that might be true. But the real problem for Kapler is that his lack of feel might cause him to lose the clubhouse, if he hasn't already. Kapler did not arrive with the credibility of say, a Joe Maddon. He needs to earn his players' trust, and his questionable decision-

making—not to mention his failure to execute a proper pitching change—unsettled at least some of his players, as reported by *The Athletic's* Matt Gelb.

Kapler has shown a measure of humility and accountability in his public comments—a good sign. Still, none of that will matter unless he starts using better judgment. And if he flops—as many in the industry suspect he will—then the scrutiny will fall on the man who hired him, general manager Matt Klentak. As one rival official put it, “You had all these managers available—Aaron Boone, Alex Cora, Mickey Callaway, Dave Martinez. You had Joe Girardi and John Farrell out there as well. And you hired the train wreck?”

Such an assessment might be overly harsh this early in the season. But many if not most in the sport believe Kapler in his first week was indeed off the rails.

**\*Bryan Price, Cincinnati Reds.** The first warning sign came when the Reds only picked up Price's option for 2018 rather than sign him to an extension, indicating they were not sold on him long-term. It's possible the team will show enough progress for Price to keep his job—most of the Reds' position players are back, and their young pitchers seem ready to take a step forward. But an in-season change is not out of the question if the club sputters again after four straight losing seasons.

Farrell joined the Reds in March to scout the pitching in the organization. Hall of Famer Barry Larkin, an all-time Reds great, told reporters in January he only wants to manage his former team. Neither, however, is necessarily the manager in waiting. According to sources, the Reds told Farrell they would not hire him if his intent was to replace Price. Some club officials, meanwhile, are exasperated with Larkin, believing he is campaigning for the job.

Bench coach Jim Riggleman or Triple A manager Pat Kelly likely would be the interim manager if the Reds made an in-season change, and the team then would conduct a wide-ranging search at the end of the season. Farrell, who is free to leave the organization for a managing position at any time, ultimately might prefer a team that is closer to contention.

**\*Brian Snitker, Atlanta Braves.** New GM, manager in the final year of his contract, classic fire-the-manager scenario. *The Athletic's* Jim Bowden predicted Snitker would be the first manager fired in a recent column, but I'll disagree with Jim on this one. While a change at the end of the season certainly is possible, an in-season move seems unlikely.

Alex Anthopoulos, who became GM in November, is emphasizing stability and continuity, at least so far. He did not replace Snitker coming off a 72-90 season. He also kept intact the team's scouting and player development departments. The Braves, remember, are still rebuilding. An in-season managerial change would seem almost pointless, particularly when Snitker is popular with his players, easy for a front office to work with and in his 42nd year with the organization. A decision on his status would be more appropriate at the end of the season.

**\*Mike Matheny, St. Louis Cardinals.** The last time the Cardinals missed the post-season three consecutive years was from 1997 to '99. Former manager Tony La Russa survived that run, but Matheny might not be so lucky if he misses the playoffs a third straight time.

The Cardinals should be improved with the additions of outfielder Marcell Ozuna, right-hander Miles Mikolas and relievers Greg Holland, Luke Gregerson and Bud Norris. They also transformed their coaching staff with the return of third-base coach Jose Oquendo and the hirings of pitching coach Mike Maddux, assistant coach Willie McGee and bullpen coach Bryan Eversgerd.

Matheny is under contract through 2020, but the Cardinals won 83 games last season, their fewest since '07. And while most players like and respect Matheny, some grew frustrated with him as the team's postseason chances dwindled, sources say; in the view of those players, Matheny's communication was lacking and at times he grew defensive.

The solution, of course, is for Matheny to lead the Cardinals back to the postseason, which will be no easy task in the competitive NL Central. Neither owner Bill DeWitt Jr. nor GM John Mozeliak has wavered on their manager, who is a frequent target of fan and media criticism. An in-season change probably is out of the question, but another disappointing season might force the Cardinals' hand.

**\*Scott Servais, Mariners.** Not an easy manager to judge. Injuries wrecked the Mariners last season, when the team followed a surprising 86-win season in 2016 with a deflating 78-win campaign. Injuries are again an issue this season—already—and the quality of the team's starting rotation is an open question.

Servais and GM Jerry Dipoto are close, but both are in the last years of contracts, according to Jon Heyman of FanRag Sports. If the M's stumble, some in the industry believe Dipoto might change managers in an attempt for self-preservation. The team replaced bench coach Tim Bogar and first base coach Casey Candaele at the end of last season, and also hired new coaches in two other positions.

Bench coach Manny Acta, who previously managed the Montreal Expos and Cleveland Indians, would be the obvious interim choice.

**\*John Gibbons, Blue Jays.** You've got to love Gibby's survival skills. His days seemed numbered when the Jays named Mark Shapiro as president and CEO in August 2015. They seemed even more numbered when Shapiro named Eric Wedge, his former manager with the Cleveland Indians, as a player development advisor in February 2016. But Shapiro and GM Ross Atkins awarded Gibbons a two-year extension at the start of the '17 season, and who knows? The Jays might surprise this season, ensuring that Gibbons completes his current deal.

Here's the catch: The Jays soon figure to transition to a younger club featuring two of the game's top prospects, infielders Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Bo Bichette. Shapiro and Atkins could justify a change in

managers at that point, saying they want a fresh voice. The New York Yankees used the same rationale when they swapped out Girardi for Boone.

**\*Buck Showalter, Baltimore Orioles/Mike Scioscia, Los Angeles Angels.** Bovada, an on-line gambling site, said on Thursday that Showalter was the favorite to be the first manager fired, setting the odds at 3-2.

Uh, no.

I seriously doubt Orioles GM Dan Duquette would have the authority to fire Showalter even if he wanted to make such a move. Both Showalter and Duquette are in the final years of their contracts. Their relationship remains uneasy. Unless the Orioles reach the postseason—unlikely—the best guess is that only Showalter will survive, perhaps as manager, perhaps in a front-office role.

Scioscia, meanwhile, is in the final year of a 10-year contract. His partnership with GM Billy Eppler has gone far more smoothly than his previous one with Dipoto. An in-season change appears out of the question, and a return to the postseason for only the second time since 2009 likely would earn Scioscia another deal, assuming he wants to stay in the job.

The possible successors to Scioscia would include Ausmus, who joined the club as a special advisor last November; former major-league third baseman Eric Chavez, who has been a special assistant under Eppler since 2015; and new bench coach Josh Paul, whom Eppler hired away from his former club, the Yankees.

**\*Managers with expiring contracts after 2019.** In theory, the members of this group are safe. In reality, few earn high enough salaries to be truly secure, particularly with Girardi and others available. Scioscia, the Chicago Cubs' Maddon and San Francisco Giants' Bruce Bochy are the highest-paid managers, each at \$6 million per year.

The list of managers signed for an additional season after this one includes Gibbons, the Texas Rangers' Jeff Banister, Tampa Bay Rays' Kevin Cash, Miami Marlins' Don Mattingly, Oakland Athletics' Bob Melvin and Chicago White Sox's Rick Renteria.

Good luck trying to handicap any of this; teams are fickle, the sport is unpredictable. Three postseason clubs fired their managers after last season—the Yankees, Boston Red Sox and Washington Nationals. Only two last-place teams did—the Phillies and Detroit Tigers.

It's April, and still cold in certain parts of the country. No matter. In baseball, the hot seat is always simmering, and a new game of musical chairs is never far off.

## **Dilbeck: Matt Shoemaker's trip to the DL will put the Angels' depth to the test**

By Steve Dilbeck

Matt Shoemaker raised an eyebrow, gave a half-smile, the slightest of shrugs.

What could he say? There he was again, dealing with the same apparent arm injury that had cost him over half of his season in 2017. This after his previous season ended with a skull fractured by a Kyle Seager comebacker.

But one start into the new season and Shoemaker has already been sent to the disabled list, the forearm again flaring up after his start Saturday against the A's. Already on the DL was Andrew Heaney, whose debut had been put off because of arm soreness.

"I'm more frustrated than anything," Shoemaker said.

It's hardly an unfamiliar feeling with the Angels, who last season used 13 different starting pitchers. By May 24, four of their five projected starting pitchers were on the disabled list — Garrett Richards, Tyler Skaggs, Nick Tropeano and Heaney.

And on it continued — Alex Meyer, Shoemaker, JC Ramírez, all going down. Rookies who weren't ready for the majors were called up. Relievers converted to starters. The only pitcher who made at least 25 starts last season was Ricky Nolasco (6-15, 4.92 ERA), who wasn't brought back and is now out of baseball. And it wasn't much better the previous season.

Bad fortune seemed to surround their rotation, and now once again, it is beginning to look uncertain.

"Why would you even bring that up?" said manager Mike Scioscia. "I mean, now you've jinxed us."

A little late for that. The Angels are hoping that that wealth of depth forcibly created last year will serve them well this season.

"You're always trying to get eight or nine deep in your organization," Scioscia said. "You're always tapping into it. We've never had a year with five starters that never got hurt. The Seattle Mariners maybe eight years ago had five starters that went the whole season, but it's very rare. You can't really bank on that.

"On the other side of the coin, I've never been around what's happened the last two years here. It wiped out, not only periodically — from the first month of the season, where we were going into our whole rotation. You get to 10 [starters] trying to shore things up. Depth in an organization is critical."

The rotation remains the team's great uncertainty coming into this season. The Angels have a solid lineup and play excellent defense, but a rotation filled with pitchers all coming off some form of injury.

The Angels failed to address rotation concerns in the offseason, instead counting on health to return. Yet less than a week into 2018, they are already calling up reserves from within their system.

“We’ve peeled the paint off of everything you could possibly do, from the medical side to training to seeing how these guys’ strength are and their recovery,” said Scioscia.

“Sometimes these things still crop up. You never really have a team that goes through anything less than six to nine starters at some point throughout a season. Hopefully we’ll get guys healthy and throwing the ball the way they can.”

The only new starter this season is Japanese two-way star Shohei Ohtani, who is only scheduled to pitch every six or seven days.

No one has had a more challenging past few seasons than the 31-year-old Shoemaker. Undrafted out of Eastern Michigan University, he spent six seasons in the Angels system before finally getting a chance in the majors.

He pitched surprisingly well for three seasons, until the Seager comebacker started the wrong kind of momentum. The arm flared up last June and he never returned, ultimately having surgery to relieve nerve pressure.

In the spring, he appeared fully healed. In his first start, he shut the A’s out for five innings before the arm hinted at trouble in the sixth.

“A little bit of achiness, but nothing that was a red flag,” Shoemaker said. “Less than mild. I wasn’t even concerned with it. But later that night and the next day, it definitely felt worse.”

Shoemaker had an MRI Wednesday and the Angels have yet to release its results. Although the pain is similar to last year, he is hoping it is just a scar tissue issue.

The way things have gone for their rotation the past two years, though, it’s a challenge for the Angels to remain optimistic when injury arises. They hope the depth created last season will serve them well. If nothing else, they’ve had plenty of experience dealing with rotation setbacks.

“I think we’re deep in that area to shore some things that will come up,” Scioscia said. “We’ve had two tough years with our starting pitching. Hopefully it’s something we can absorb this year.”

FROM MLB.COM

## 10 'small sample' starts to believe in

*Ohtani, Bogaerts, others have potential to build on early efforts*

By Jim Duquette

While it's usually wise to disregard Spring Training statistics, both good and bad, performances in the opening weeks of the regular season should not be dismissed as quickly. Although the sample size is still incredibly small, below are some examples of early-season success stories that could be harbingers of what's to come.

**Shohei Ohtani, SP/DH, Angels:** Questions about Ohtani's readiness for the Majors stemmed from the fact that the 23-year-old went 4-for-32 with 10 strikeouts and no extra-base hits at the plate and posted a 27.00 ERA over two starts during Spring Training. But after simplifying his leg raise, Ohtani broke out with a three-hit performance against Cleveland in his first game at Angel Stadium and followed that up by taking two-time American League Cy Young Award winner **Corey Kluber** deep to the opposite field the next day. Then, on Friday, he hit **his third homer in as many games**. Before all that, he also tossed six strong innings vs. the A's in his pitching debut. While Ohtani continues to figure out how to shorten his swing against high-velocity pitchers, there are plenty of back-end starters with average fastballs on which the slugger should feast. And with the elite stuff he showed on the mound in Oakland, the righty has the potential to dominate this year.

**Matt Harvey, starter, Mets:** Harvey has struggled with injuries and effectiveness in the past two seasons, posting a 5.78 ERA over 185 1/3 innings in that span and undergoing Thoracic outlet syndrome surgery in 2016, before dealing with further shoulder woes in '17. But the right-hander handled the Phillies in his first start of 2018, allowing only one hit over five scoreless innings while walking one and striking out five. Harvey used his slider and changeup effectively and attacked the strike zone with excellent command of his four- and two-seam fastballs, this despite working with reduced velocity at a chilly Citi Field. Likely to see his velocity tick upward as the temperature rises, Harvey could be on the verge of a major rebound campaign.

**Gerrit Cole, starter, Astros:** Cole took a step backward after a breakout 2015 campaign in which he went 19-8 with a 2.60 ERA, posting a 4.12 ERA across the past two seasons. But following an offseason trade to the Astros, Cole seems poised to regain the ace-level form he showed three seasons ago. The right-hander was outstanding in his first start with Houston, striking out 11 batters over seven innings and allowing one run on only two hits against the Rangers. He generated swinging strikes on 20.6 percent of his pitches in that start (his 2017 rate was 8.7 percent), as he used his slider more than 26 percent of the time -- up from 17.24 percent a year ago. With increased reliance on that pitch, the hard-throwing Cole could reach new heights in 2018.



**Gregory Polanco, outfielder, Pirates:** Polanco bulked up prior to the 2017 season, but according to the outfielder, the increased muscle mass led to slower bat speed and contributed to the nagging hamstring injuries he battled throughout the year. Playing just 108 games, Polanco hit .251 with only 11 homers and a .695 OPS. After adjusting his training regimen over the offseason, Polanco is swinging a hot bat in the early going (1.147 OPS). He's also shown improved plate discipline, posting a 8-to-6 BB/K ratio in 25 plate appearances. Still just 26 years old, Polanco could continue this success and enjoy the best campaign of his career.

**Miguel Cabrera, first baseman, Tigers:** New Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire recently told me that his biggest challenge in his first season with the team is to help Cabrera stay healthy for the entire season by managing the slugger's playing time. Dealing with a nagging back injury, the veteran produced career lows in many offensive categories when he slashed .249/.329/.399 with 16 homers in 130 games last year. He's looking like his old self so far, posting a .318/.400/.591 line with four extra-base hits (one homer) in six games. If Cabrera continues at this pace and the **hip injury he sustained Thursday** does not linger, it may be difficult for Gardenhire to remove the 34-year-old from the lineup.

**Joe Panik, second baseman, Giants:** Panik has shown surprising power early this season, hitting three homers in his first six games. Two of those came against lefties (**Clayton Kershaw** and **Marco Gonzales**), matching his career total vs. southpaws prior to 2018. The 27-year-old is unlikely to suddenly become a 30-homer threat, especially because he doesn't seem to have altered his approach much, but he could be on his way toward career highs in every power category.

**Zack Cozart, 2B/3B/SS, Angels:** Cozart was best known for his defense prior to 2017, producing a lifetime .674 OPS with an 80 wRC+ over his first six seasons. But the veteran flourished while making adjustments to his swing and plate approach last season, posting a .933 OPS with a 141 wRC+ for the Reds. Cozart has continued to shine in his first season with the Angels, settling in as the club's leadoff hitter and starting second baseman in place of the injured **Ian Kinsler** and posting a .841 OPS with more extra-base hits (six) than strikeouts (four) in his first seven games.

**Xander Bogaerts, shortstop, Red Sox:** Bogaerts was one of the most productive shortstops in the game during 2016, and he was seemingly on pace to retain that stature last season, before being hit in the right hand by a pitch on July 6. After that happened, Bogaerts hit .232 with four homers, a .661 OPS and a 74 wRC+ the rest of the way (.308, six homers, .818 OPS, 114 wRC+ through July 6). Now back to full health, the 25-year-old has produced three barrels and posted an average exit velocity of 92.7 mph so far, according to **Statcast™** (six barrels, 87.3 mph in 2017). As a result, he's recorded a .344 average with a .989 OPS through seven games, tallying seven extra-base hits (six doubles, one homer) along the way.

**Jose Martinez, 1B/OF, Cardinals:** A veteran of 11 Minor League seasons, Martinez finally received his first extended big league trial last year and opened eyes with an .897 OPS and a 135 wRC+ over 307 plate appearances. The 29-year-old started on Opening Day this season and had no problem handling the impressive repertoire of the Mets' **Noah Syndergaard**, collecting three hits (including a homer) off the ace. So far, he's produced three multihit efforts and whiffed just twice, recording a .872 OPS. **Matt**

**Carpenter** was expected to be the Cardinals' everyday first baseman, but he's made four of his seven starts at third base and the other at second to open up a regular lineup spot for Martinez.

**Felix Hernandez, starter, Mariners:** Formerly one of the game's premier aces, Hernandez has battled a series of injuries over the past two seasons and watched his performance decline (4.01 ERA, 1.31 WHIP). Manager Scott Servais told me recently that Hernandez has accepted that he's now working with diminished stuff and needs to attack hitters differently. The right-hander battled some mechanical problems in his second start, when he walked five and allowed eight runs at San Francisco, but he was sharp while blanking the Indians over 5 1/3 innings on Opening Day. Although Hernandez clearly has less margin for error than he did in his heyday, he should be able to turn in more starts like his 2018 debut, once he finds a groove with his new approach.

### *FROM THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

## **Ohtani homers 3<sup>rd</sup> game in a row, Angels rally past A's 13-9**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Rookie sensation Shohei Ohtani is making himself at home in the Big A.

Ohtani hit a home run for the third straight game and the Los Angeles Angels rallied from an early six-run deficit to beat the Oakland Athletics 13-9 on Friday night.

The two-way star from Japan connected for a long, solo drive in the second inning against Daniel Gossett. The ball landed in the rocks beyond the center field wall after traveling 449 feet and was measured with a 112.3 mph exit velocity according to Statcast, the hardest-hit and longest of Ohtani's three major league homers.

"Smoked that ball, huh?" Angels shortstop Andrelton Simmons said. "The center fielder ran after it like he had a chance for a second, scared everybody. Wasn't even close."

Ohtani, who is batting .462 (6 for 13) at home, drew a walk on four pitches with the bases loaded to pull the Angels within 8-7 in the fifth.

All seven of his RBI through his first four games have come in home games.

"It's very impressive, yeah. You don't see too many guys do that on the mound and at the plate. Any," Athletics manager Bob Melvin said.

Ohtani is scheduled to pitch Sunday -- the 23-year-old won his first big league start last weekend against the A's.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia does not plan to use Ohtani as the designated hitter on Saturday and have him get a chance to extend his homer streak. But Scioscia said he would be open to letting Ohtani hit before or after a start later this season.

"There has to be point where he becomes a pitcher, not to say sometime during the season he won't be available to do a little bit more the day before he pitches or a day after. But certainly right now we're going to err on the side of caution," Scioscia said.

The Angels trailed 6-0 in the second. Boosted by five home runs, the A's still led 9-7 in the seventh before third baseman Matt Chapman's throwing error on a grounder by Zack Cozart allowed two runs. Justin Upton then broke the tie with a three-run homer.

"You got to really, really try to keep this lineup quiet," Simmons said. "You just give us any room, we can bounce back. We kept coming at them, kept putting good at-bats and kept threatening them and putting pressure. They made a mistake to tie the game, and then Upton got the big hit after that. The lineup really shows how deep it is."

Jim Johnson (1-0) got the win as the Angels took their third in a row and won for the sixth time in seven games. Simmons and Luis Valbuena each had two RBI.

Matt Joyce and Marcus Semien hit back-to-back homers as part of a five-run second inning, and the Athletics sent Parker Bridwell to the dugout after 1 2/3 innings. Joyce's two-run shot to right was his first of the season, and Semien followed it up with a solo homer to center for his first to put the Athletics ahead 6-0.

The Athletics also hit consecutive home runs against the Angels in the season opener on March 29.

Chapman had a two-run homer in the fifth, and Matt Olson added a solo shot in the seventh. Jed Lowrie hit a solo home run in the first -- he singled with two outs in the ninth, but was caught taking a wide turn around first for the final out.

"When they came back on us, we swung the bat well again and got a little more distance," Melvin said. "Just couldn't hold it."

Blake Treinen (0-1) took the loss.

#### TRAINER'S ROOM

Athletics: OF Trayce Thompson will join the team on Saturday. The younger brother of Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson was claimed off waivers from the Yankees on Thursday.

Angels: LHP Andrew Heaney (elbow inflammation) gave up one run and two hits while striking out six in 6 1/3 innings in a rehab assignment at Single-A Inland Empire.

YO, SHO!

Ohtani is the first American League player with a home run and at least two RBI in each of his first three home games since RBI became an official statistic in 1920, according to STATS.

Babe Ruth was the last American League player prior to Ohtani to homer in three straight games in the same season he started a game as a pitcher. Ruth did it five times, starting in four consecutive seasons from 1918-21 and again in 1930.

#### SHORT STARTS

Gossett was pulled after five runs in 3 1/3 innings. He gave up five hits and one walk while striking out three. Bridwell finds himself with an ERA of 32.40 after giving up six runs and seven hits.

#### UP NEXT

Athletics: RHP Andrew Triggs (0-0, 1.80) was not involved in the decision in his first start of the season, allowing one run and four hits in five innings at Texas on Monday.

Angels: RHP JC Ramirez (0-1, 7.71) allowed four earned runs in 4 2/3 innings against Cleveland on Monday.

**FROM ESPN.COM**

## **Shohei Ohtani goes 449 feet for third straight game with HR**

By Tim Keown

Los Angeles Angels rookie Shohei Ohtani hit his third homer of the season Friday night in his first at-bat against the Oakland Athletics.

The two-way star from Japan crushed a 93 mph, two-seam fastball from A's starter Daniel Gossett to left-center, a 449-foot solo shot onto the fake rocks up by the camera well.

"Smoked that ball, huh?" Angels shortstop Andrelton Simmons said. "The center fielder ran after it like he had a chance for a second, scared everybody. Wasn't even close."

It marked Ohtani's third straight game with a home run, which the Angels won 13-9.

"It's very impressive, yeah. You don't see too many guys do that on the mound and at the plate. Any," Athletics manager Bob Melvin said.

Ohtani, who is batting .462 (6 for 13) with six RBIs at home, drew a walk on four pitches with the bases loaded to pull the Angels within 8-7 in the fifth.

Ohtani, 23, will be on the mound Sunday, getting his first home start against the Athletics. The right-hander beat them in Oakland on Sunday, giving up three runs and three hits in six innings, with one walk and six strikeouts.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia does not plan to use Ohtani as the designated hitter on Saturday and have him get a chance to extend his homer streak. But Scioscia said he would be open to letting Ohtani hit before or after a start later this season.

"There has to be point where he becomes a pitcher, not to say sometime during the season he won't be available to do a little bit more the day before he pitches or a day after. But certainly right now we're going to err on the side of caution," Scioscia said.

## **FROM NBC SPORTS**

### **Shohei Ohtani blasts a home run in his third straight game**

By Ashley Varela

We can hold off on the GOAT labels for the time being, but there's no denying that Shohei Ohtani has made quite the impression this spring. The Angels' DH/starting pitcher enjoyed a hit in his first-ever MLB at-bat on Opening Day, followed by a quality start against the Athletics and home runs off of Josh Tomlin and Corey Kluber. On Friday night, he added to his list of accomplishments with another blast, this one off of A's right-hander Daniel Gossett.

The Angels were down 6-0 in the second inning when Ohtani located a 2-0 fastball from Gossett, driving it over the center field wall to put the Angels on the board. It's the first home run Gossett has given up this season.

In case you were wondering, the last rookie to hit at least three home runs in his first four career games was Orioles outfielder Trey Mancini, who clubbed three home runs against the Red Sox and Diamondbacks in the fall of 2016 (though he wasn't talked about nearly as much as Rockies shortstop Trevor Story, who racked up six homers in his first four games earlier that year).

Ohtani's heroic home run wasn't the be-all and end-all of the Angels' offense, however. They rallied again in the fourth inning on Andrelton Simmons' ground-rule double and couple of RBI base hits from Luis Valbuena and Martin Maldonado and currently trail the Athletics 6-5 in the fifth.

**FROM THE JAPAN TIMES****Shohei Ohtani goes deep again in Angels' win over Athletics**

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA – Rookie sensation Shohei Ohtani is making himself at home in the Big A.

Ohtani hit a home run for the third straight game and the Los Angeles Angels rallied from an early six-run deficit to beat the Oakland Athletics 13-9 on Friday night.

The two-way star connected for a long, solo drive in the second inning against Daniel Gossett. The ball landed in the rocks beyond the center-field wall after traveling 136.8 meters.

Ohtani, who is batting .462 (6-for-13) at home, drew a walk on four pitches with the bases loaded to pull the Angels within 8-7 in the fifth.

All seven of his RBIs through his first four games have come in home games.

“My goal was to reach base so that we could score as many runs as we could and make a game of it in the second half,” Ohtani said. “I’m glad it was a home run.

“Whatever happens in each at-bat — the good and the bad — I want to build from that the next time.”

Ohtani is the second Japanese to homer in three straight major league games following Hideki Matsui, who did it in 2004 and 2007 with the New York Yankees.

Ohtani is scheduled to pitch Sunday — the 23-year-old won his first big league start last weekend against the A’s.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia does not plan to use Ohtani as the designated hitter on Saturday and have him get a chance to extend his homer streak.

“There has to be point where he becomes a pitcher, not to say sometime during the season he won’t be available to do a little bit more the day before he pitches or a day after,” Scioscia said. “But certainly right now we’re going to err on the side of caution.”

Anaheim trailed 6-0 in the second. Boosted by five home runs, Oakland still led 9-7 in the seventh before third baseman Matt Chapman’s throwing error on a grounder by Zack Cozart allowed two runs. Justin Upton then broke the tie with a three-run homer.

Jim Johnson (1-0) got the win as the Angels took their third in a row and won for the sixth time in seven games. Simmons and Luis Valbuena each had two RBIs.

**Orioles 7, Yankees 3 (14)**

In New York, Pedro Alvarez hit a grand slam in the 14th inning, Manny Machado homered twice and Baltimore beat the Yankees after New York saw four players forced to make early exits.

Yankees starter CC Sabathia left with hip soreness, star catcher Gary Sanchez limped off with a possible leg cramp right before Alvarez struck, third baseman Brandon Drury was lifted for migraines and second baseman Tyler Wade was removed because of flu-like symptoms.

### **Braves 8, Rockies 3**

In Denver, it was -2.7 C at game time, and Brandon McCarthy used his arm and bat to help Atlanta win in Colorado's home opener.

### **Indians 3, Royals 2**

In Cleveland, Michael Brantley singled home two runs in his first at-bat this season and Carlos Carrasco worked out of a bases-loaded jam in the sixth for the Indians in their chilly home opener.

### **Pirates 14, Reds 3**

In Pittsburgh, rookie Colin Moran had four hits and three RBIs, Starling Marte hit a bases-loaded triple and the Pirates improved to 6-1.

### **Brewers 5, Cubs 4**

In Milwaukee, Orlando Arcia hit a game-ending single with one out in the ninth.

### **Padres 4, Astros 1**

In Houston, Jose Pirela had three hits, including a tiebreaking, two-run double as San Diego stopped the Astros' five-game winning streak.

### **Blue Jays 8, Rangers 5**

In Arlington, Texas, Russell Martin homered and hit a pair of RBI singles to back six solid innings from Marco Estrada for Toronto.

### **Dodgers at Giants — ppd.**

**FROM SB NATION****Shohei Ohtani had an insane first week in the majors**

*In Saturday's Say Hey, Baseball, we look at Ohtani's impressive first week, the dirty business of MLBAM, and Aaron Judge's mad defensive skills*

By Liz Roscher

Remember a few weeks ago, when there were lots and lots of questions about Shohei Ohtani being ready for the majors? That's all over now. After just over a week in the majors, Ohtani has shown that he was more than ready. He was beyond ready. He was readier than anyone could have hoped for.

It started a week ago during Ohtani's first MLB start on the mound for the Angels. After a difficult spring which saw him struggle at the plate and at the rubber, his debut was a relief for everyone. He allowed three runs over six innings against the Athletics, and showed a lot of poise and potential. He walked just one batter and struck out six while allowing only three hits — and one was a three-run home run. Those were the only runs he gave up.

But then comes the really exciting stuff. In his very first home game, Ohtani was starting as the designated hitter. And in his very first home at-bat, he smacked a ball out to the stands in right center field for a home run. That's the stuff that magic is made of. He also collected two more hits. But it didn't stop there! In his second home game, he hit *another* home run. And that time it was off of Corey Kluber, the pitching machine! He collected another single in that game, too. (The Japanese call of that homer is truly a feast for the ears.)

But this tale of Ohtani's awesomenes STILL isn't over. On Friday night while DHing against the Athletics, he hit his most impressive homer yet: a bullet to straight away center field. He's hit homers in three straight games! And what's more, the Angels were down 6-0, and Ohtani's homer woke up the rest of the bats and led to a 13-9 win.

A few weeks ago, there were legitmate reasons to be worried. But we should have remembered what we tell ourselves every year: spring stats are for suckers. If you get taken by them, you only have yourself to blame. But in this case, there's no blame, because Ohtani is somehow even more exciting than we thought he'd be.

- You ready for this? MLBAM has been accused of doing dirty business, including stealing trade secrets and stealing an employee who might have given them those trade secrets. It's totally shocking, right? Oh wait, it's definitely not. But it sure is juicy.
- People forget sometimes: Aaron Judge doesn't just hit home runs, the guy has some insane defensive skills. He showed them off Friday night when he straight up robbed a homer from Caleb Joseph of the Orioles.



- The Red Sox got some bad news on Friday: their best prospect, Michael Chavis, has been suspended 80 games for testing positive for PEDs.
- The impending retirement of Chief Wahoo of course inspired protests by both sides at Progressive Field opening day, but one side was much angrier than the other. Guess which one! Here's a hint — it wasn't the people defending the honor of their ethnic heritage.
- The Rockies had a cold opening day on Friday, but there have been colder ones.
- You may not know that you wanted to read about the Saratoga Phillies today, but trust me, you really do. Do yourself a favor and read this article.
- It took a long time, but Bryce Harper is finally older than all of the prospects. That's just bonkers.
- Speaking of Bryce, apparently a friend of his thinks the Braves would be a good fit for him, which even the folks at Talking Chop thought was pretty freaking ridiculous.

### **FROM DEADSPIN**

## **Shohei Ohtani's Third Dinger was a mighty bomb**

By Chris Thompson

The Angels opened a home series against the Athletics Friday night, in a game in which 14 total pitchers were used, and neither starter made it past the fourth inning. Wait, hang on, 15 total pitchers were used—Shohei Ohtani, a pitcher, started at designated hitter for the Angels, and smoked this here 449-foot mega-dinger in the second inning:

The bomb—Ohtani's third of the season—got the Angels on the board; they added another five runs against Oakland starter Daniel Gossett, and came all the way back from a 6-0 deficit to win 13-9. Ohtani's season is off to a promising start: he's got seven hits, three dingers, and a walk in his first 19 MLB plate appearances, for a sparkling 1.310 OPS. Pretty good player!

### **FROM FANSIDED**

## **Shohei Ohtani's Babe Ruth impression is getting better**

By Zach Houle

***Japanese phenom Shohei Ohtani had plenty of doubters, but after a week in the majors he's looking as good as advertised.***

The Los Angeles Angels were ecstatic when they signed two-way star Shohei Ohtani. He's been called the Japanese Babe Ruth, but he struggled in spring training, leading some to question whether he was worth the hype. He served up home runs left and right, and many scouts thought he couldn't handle big-league pitching. He's proven them all wrong so far in the regular season.

On the mound, the righty flashed elite fastball velocity and a nasty splitter. Ohtani has also mashed at the plate. Last night, he bashed a homer for the third game in a row.

Ohtani has adapted to MLB pitching quickly and looks like a bona fide star. With that said, it will be interesting to see him play over a full season. Will he last as a hitter? Will he be able to hold up physically under his current work rate? The Angels may want to develop him as a full-time ace of the staff, and worry about hitting less.

Ohtani's going to pitch only once a week, which will save his arm in the long run. With that said, his stuff may be even sharper considering he gets more rest between starts. The Angels will definitely let him hit as long as he continues to be productive. This is a great storyline not just for LA, but for baseball as a whole. Ohtani is a once-in-a-generation player, just like Mike Trout. It'll be extremely important for the Halos to make the most out of this window of contention with these players.

The slugger is hitting .389 with three home runs and seven RBIs in only 19 plate appearances. If that doesn't get your attention, nothing will. Granted, it's a very small sample size, but it still showcases the tools he has at the plate. Just like on the mound, he has shown what type of player he can be: a superstar. It's going to be a really intriguing storyline to watch throughout the season.

Overall, the Angels are getting everything they asked for when they signed Ohtani. He's revitalized this franchise, and has put them on the map. LA has nabbed a superstar in the making, and there is nothing that can stop him. The play and the ability of this guy was well worth the hype. The Japanese Babe Ruth indeed.

***FROM THE WASHINGTON POST***

## **Leading off: Ohtani HR streak, icy Target Field, Yanks hurt**

A look at what's happening all around baseball today:

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WELCOME TO THE SHO

Shohei Ohtani isn't scheduled to be in the starting lineup for the Los Angeles Angels, a day after the two-way sensation from Japan hit a home run for the third straight game. He is set to make his second major league start on Sunday vs. the Athletics — he pitched against them last weekend and earned the win.

Ohtani homered at home Friday night against Oakland, launching a shot estimated at 449 feet. The 23-year-old connected his first time up, batting eighth as the designated hitter.

#### BUNDLE UP

In a season already full of frigid weather, the gametime temperature at Target Field was supposed to be around 26 degrees when Minnesota hosted Seattle. And the forecast called for snow on Sunday.

The coldest record temperature for the first pitch of a major league game was 23 degrees in 2013 when Atlanta played at Colorado. Those same teams met Friday at Coors Field and, after a one-hour delay because of snow and sleet, it was 27 degrees at the start.

Ozzie Albies, who's from Curacao, homered for Atlanta in an 8-3 win.

"It was my first time seeing snow. I was excited," he said. "I was acting like a little kid out there. I put the barrel on the ball. That was awesome."

#### YANKED

The Yankees will see how everyone is feeling after four players were forced to make early exits Friday. Starter CC Sabathia left with hip soreness, star catcher Gary Sanchez limped off with a leg cramp, third baseman Brandon Drury was lifted for migraines and second baseman Tyler Wade was removed because of flu-like symptoms.

#### BACK TO WORK

The Nationals have lost three in a row, including losses by aces Max Scherzer and Stephen Strasburg, and have been outscored by a combined 28-9 during the slide. Gio Gonzalez and the NL East champs will try to break the skid when they host Steven Matz and the Mets.

Washington, which opened 4-0, was off Friday. That was fine by rookie manager Dave Martinez.

"Last three games, not so good. First four games, really good," Martinez said. "They get a day off, they get refreshed, and then there's a whole lot more baseball left."

#### NAP TIME

Mike Napoli hit a grand slam in his first game of the season, playing for Triple-A Columbus on Friday. At 36, the slugger rejoined Cleveland in spring training, signing as a free agent. The Indians like his positive

influence on the Indians' young players and, maybe, might provide a power bat in the majors later this year.

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### **FROM PRESS OF ATLANTIC CITY**

## **Mike Trout scores 699<sup>th</sup> career run in Angels' win over A's**

*Mike Trout, 26, a center fielder with the Los Angeles Angels and a 2009 Millville High School graduate, was the 2014 and 2016 American League Most Valuable Player.*

**Thursday:** The Angels were off.

**Friday:** Went 0 for 4 with a walk and a run scored in a 13-9 win over the visiting Oakland Athletics. He batted second and played center field.

**Saturday:** The teams will play at 9:07 p.m. Andrew Triggs will start for Oakland. Trout is 2 for 5, including a solo home run, against him.

**Stats:** Trout is hitting .206 (7 for 34) with two home runs, five RBIs and seven runs scored in eight games. He had stolen one base.

**Notes:** He needs to score one run to reach 700 for his career. ... The Angels are 6-2.