



Padres Press Clips

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Luis Perdomo makes promising start, but A's sweep Padres

[Kevin Acee](#)

Games keep being decided on big hits by the other team and the [Padres'](#) lack of such hits.

It leaves a manager, the one guy who has to talk about the same thing day after day, to state the obvious.

"It's a tough stretch for us," Andy Green said.

[Athletics](#) right fielder [Stephen Piscotty](#)'s team-record tying third double of Wednesday afternoon's game broke a tie by sending home two runs in the eighth inning. The Padres followed with their 16th scoreless inning in the two-game series.

The A's won 4-2.

It was the 33rd time this season the Padres lost a game in which they scored two or fewer runs. The 35 games in which they have scored zero (eight), one (10) or two (14) runs are second-most in the majors.

They have lost six straight series and 13 of their past 16 games.

Four of the Padres' 13 defeats since June 16 came against Oakland, which swept the interleague series between the two teams.

In that stretch, the Padres are averaging 2.6 runs a game, second-lowest in the majors. They are batting .228 (27th) with a .294 on-base percentage (25th). They were hitless in four at-bats with runners in scoring position Wednesday, and over the past 16 games their .204 average in those instances is fourth-worst in the majors.

“It happens to teams,” first baseman [Eric Hosmer](#), who has 11 hits in 61 at-bats during the 16-game stretch, said prior to Tuesday’s game in regard to what is essentially a team-wide slump. “What the good teams do is limit these stretches.”

Exactly.

The Padres, who had won 12 of 15 prior to this stretch, have sunk back into a funk. Funk may, in fact, be their default setting.

Green’s comments Wednesday were reminiscent of many postgame addresses in the season’s first month-and-a-half.

“Not having the best at-bats they can possibly have,” he said. “... Sometimes what you really need is that one swing in the gap with two guys on that plates a couple runs and you feel like the floodgates open and everybody breathes a sigh of relief. We haven’t had that one big swing that kind of eases the tension in the last couple weeks. Guys are giving it everything they have. It’s just not happening right now.”

The Padres’ 34 extra-base hits since June 16 are second fewest in the majors. Just four Padres have at least 24 at-bats and an on-base percentage over .295, and Cory Spangenberg is the only such player with a batting average above .282 during this 16-game run

The loss detracted from a promising start by [Luis Perdomo](#) in his return to the big leagues after a 2½-month exile to Triple-A.

Perdomo exhibited just a smidge of his usual flightiness, as both runs he allowed were scored by batters he walked. But he also worked himself out of trouble and got through 5 2/3 innings, his longest outing in five major league starts this season.

“Overall, it was a quality outing that gave us an opportunity to win,” Green said. “They scored in two different innings – one run each inning. What his issue has been in the past is that one-run inning turns into a five-run inning. He battled back in both those innings.”

The Padres staked Perdomo to a 2-0 lead on Christian Villanueva's home run in the second inning, but they had just five hits the rest of the way. Oakland starter [Sean Manaea](#) retired 16 of the final 18 batters he faced in spreading four hits over seven innings.

Three A's relievers finished the game, including Lou Trivino (7-1), who got the final two outs in the eighth inning.

That squelched one of the two scoring opportunities the Padres had over the last seven innings.

[Freddy Galvis](#) led off the eighth with a double. [Travis Jankowski](#) popped out behind the plate on a bunt attempt. Trivino came in and got Manuel Margot to hit a fly ball out to center before intentionally walking Hosmer and loading the bases on a walk to Wil Myers. Trivino then got Hunter Renfroe on a fly ball to left field to end the inning.

Pinch-hitter Carlos Asuaje hit a one-out single in the ninth, and Galvis singled with two outs before Jankowski grounded out to end the game.

The A's halved the 2-0 lead right away in the bottom of the second, a one-out walk to [Matt Olson](#) turning into a run when Piscotty followed with a double to the gap in left-center field.

The game was tied an inning later when Perdomo again struggled with control, walking Josh Phegley to start the third, giving up a flared single to left to Dustin Fowler and walking [Jed Lowrie](#) to load the bases with one out.

Khris Davis' hard single through the hole brought home Phegley before Perdomo escaped with a double play grounder.

Jose Castillo (1-2), who had gotten the final two outs of the seventh inning, allowed a lead-off walk to start the eighth.

With eighth-inning specialist Kirby Yates on paternity leave until tomorrow, Andy Green called on [Craig Stammen](#), who gave up a double to Davis to put runners at second and third. Stammen intentionally walked Matt Olson before Piscotty's double.

MacKenzie Gore collects first professional win

Jeff Sanders

At last, **MacKenzie Gore** has his first professional win.

The **Padres'** top pitching prospect on Wednesday turned in a career-high six innings, struck out six and didn't allow a **low Single-A Fort Wayne's 7-0 win** over visiting Great Lakes.

ADVERTISING

The win was Fort Wayne's third in a row and 10th of 12 and moved the TinCaps (10-4, 42-41) over .500 for the first time this season.

The 19-year-old Gore, last year's No. 3 overall pick and the top left-handed pitching prospect in the game, won the first time ever.

Largely because he'd yet to pitch deep enough into games to earn victories as he built up stamina.

On Wednesday, Gore scattered four hits and two walks in his best start of a season that had been interrupted by two DL stints because of blisters.

Gore is 1-2 with a 4.15 ERA, 32 strikeouts, a 1.31 WHIP and a .262 opponent average in 26 innings thus far with Fort Wayne.

Second baseman **Justin Lopez** (.224) hit his sixth homer and left fielder Robbie **Podorsky** (.357) drove in three runs on two hits, including a triple, and stole his 18th base.

Designated hitter **Esteury Ruiz** (.259) went 1-for-2 with a walk, a run scored and two steals, giving him 30 on the season.

TRIPLE-A EL PASO (46-40)

- **Chihuahuas 11, Salt Lake 10 (11):** SS **Luis Urias** (.279) went 4-for-5 with a triple, two RBIs, a walk and three runs scored and LF **Forrestt Allday** (.271) went 3-for-5, hit his second homer and finished a triple shy of the cycle while driving in two runs. RF **Franmil Reyes** (.330), DH **Raffy Lopez** (.265) and 1B **Allen Craig** (.298) all drove in two runs. RHP **Walker Lockett** (5.20) allowed five runs in five innings in the start.

HIGH SINGLE-A LAKE ELSINORE (5-9, 39-45)

- **Storm 3, Visalia 2 (11):** 3B **Hudson Potts** (.264) went 3-for-5 and logged the walk-off, run-scoring single in extra innings. 1B **Brad Zunica** (.246) and LF **Nate Easley** (.256) each had two hits and Easley stole two bases (7). RHP **Ronald Bolanos** (4.88) struck out five and allowed only two hits and a walk over six shutout innings in the start. RHP **Carter Capps** (2.45) allowed an unearned run in two innings.

SHORT-SEASON TRI-CITY (9-11)

- **Spokane 5, Dust Devils 2:** RF **Aldemar Burgos** (.306) drove in two runs on his second homer and CF **Grant Little** (.400) went 2-for-4 and stole his second base. RHP **Adrian Martinez** (0-1, 7.90) allowed three runs on four hits and two walks in 2/3 of an inning. LHP **Dan Dallas** (0.71) struck out five over two perfect innings in relief.

ROOKIE AZL PADRES 1 (5-8)

- **Royals 5, Padres 4:** RHP **Efrain Contreras** (1.13) struck out seven and allowed one run on two hits and a hit batter in five innings. RHP **Starlin Cordero** (0-2, 11.81) allowed three runs in 1 1/3 innings in relief. DH **Nick Gatewood** (.321) went 4-for-5 with a double and 1B **Greg Lambert** (.400) went 2-for-5 with a double and a run scored.

ROOKIE AZL PADRES 2 (6-7)

- **Dodgers 9, Padres 8 (11):** SS **Jordy Barley** (.222) went 4-for-6 with two doubles, his second homer, three RBIs, three runs scored and his third steal of the season. RF **Yordi Francisco** (.341) drove in two runs on two hits and 2B **Tucupita Marcano** (.375) and 1B **Jason Pineda** (.400) each had two hits. LHP **Hazahel Quijada** (1-1, 7.11) allowed three runs – two – earned in the 11th inning. RHP **Michell Miliano** allowed a run in four innings in the start.

ROOKIE DSL PADRES (16-12)

- **Padres 8, Blue Jays 7:** C **Matias Polanco** (.316) went 4-for-5 with three RBIs, 2B **Bryan Torres** (.173) and SS **Yeison Santana** (.258) each had two hits and CF **Adrian Antunez** (.172) drove in two runs. RHP **Jorge Leo** (2-1, 0.00) struck out two over two perfect innings in relief for the win.

Transaction

- RHP **Colten Brewer** was optioned from San Diego to El Paso as RHP **Luis Perdomo** was recalled.

Padres 'pen burned after Perdomo's solid start

Righty has best start of season in first MLB appearance since April 18

By AJ Cassavell MLB.com

OAKLAND -- [Luis Perdomo](#) earned his way back into the Padres' rotation with an impressive of couple months at Triple-A El Paso. He may have earned his right to stay in the rotation on Wednesday afternoon.

In a 4-2 loss to Oakland, Perdomo -- making his first big league appearance since April 18 -- put forth his best start of the season. He worked 5 2/3 innings and allowed two runs on four hits, while recording nine outs via the ground ball.

"For the first time back, we're pleased with that," said Padres manager Andy Green. "There's definitely stuff to grow with. We're glad to have him back. ... I have every expectation he takes the ball again in five days."

In a tense ballgame, the A's finally broke through against the San Diego bullpen in the eighth. [Stephen Piscotty](#)'s two-run double off [Craig Stammen](#) plated the go-ahead runs, and closer [Blake Treinen](#) slammed the door. San Diego got the entirety of its offense on a two-run shot from [Christian Villanueva](#) in the second.

As for Perdomo, he was still plagued by a handful of the same issues that forced him to the Minor Leagues. He walked four, and he found himself with too many baserunners. The difference Wednesday: he made quality pitches when he had to, and he managed to escape those jams.

"When guys got on with those walks, I was able to bear down, get some ground balls, get some double plays," Perdomo said.

"They scored in two different innings, one run in each," Green said. "What his issue has been for us in the past is that a one-run inning turns into a five-run inning. ... He had to battle back in both of those innings."

Perdomo was demoted in late April, having posted an 8.36 ERA across his first four starts. But he was excellent in 11 outings for El Paso, earning a callup Wednesday in place of the injured [Jordan Lyles](#).

Upon his return, Perdomo showcased some subtle differences in his pitch mix. He threw as many four-seam fastballs as two-seam fastballs. In the past, Perdomo had relied heavily on his two-seamer to induce ground balls. But on Wednesday, his changeup did the trick. He recorded five of his groundouts and allowed no hits with the pitch.

"It was something I was working on," Perdomo said of his changeup. "I went down there [and] put a lot of focus on that pitch -- all my pitches, really, but the changeup was something I was really focused on."

The Padres insist there's a place for Perdomo in their future rotation plans. But he has yet to build on his solid rookie campaign in 2016. He was solid on Wednesday, but the slumping San Diego offense did him no favors. The Padres have now dropped six straight series and are 4-14 in that stretch.

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Renfroe robbed: [Wil Myers](#) drew a one-out walk in the sixth, and [Hunter Renfroe](#) followed by hitting a 105-mph laser down the third-base line. If not for [Matt Chapman](#), it probably would've scored Myers. At the very least, the Padres would've had two men in scoring position for Villanueva. But Chapman made a fantastic sliding stop, and he sprung to his feet to start an inning-ending double play.

Left stranded: San Diego's best chance at a late lead came in the eighth when [Freddy Galvis](#) led off with a double. With a tough left-on-left matchup against former Padres pitcher [Ryan Buchter](#), Green called for a [Travis Jankowski](#) bunt. Jankowski popped it up. Galvis likely would've scored from third on [Manuel Margot](#)'s ensuing flyout to center. Instead, after [Eric Hosmer](#) and Myers walked, Galvis was stranded when Renfroe flied out.

'ALL AROUND, ONE OF THE BEST GAMES HE'S PLAYED'

For the most part, the Padres' offensive struggles continued on Wednesday. Villanueva's did not. He went 2-for-4, and his second-inning blast brought his team-leading home run total to 17. It was his first homer in July -- matching his total for the entirety of June.

Perhaps as notable: Villanueva was tested defensively with the ground-ball-heavy Perdomo on the mound. He made every play. The rookie third baseman has shown remarkable growth from his early-season struggles at the hot corner. His best play came in the fourth when he ranged to his right and picked a short-hop with his backhand, before throwing perfectly on the run to nail Piscotty.

"All around, one of the best games he's played," Green said. "From start to finish, he was outstanding."

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Galvis has a tendency to make very difficult plays look very easy at shortstop. With one out and a man on third in the second inning, the Padres brought the infield in against Chapman, who sent a high pop into shallow left. At normal depth, it would've been an easy play for Galvis. But he was on the infield grass when Chapman made contact. Galvis retreated backward and made a brilliant over-the-shoulder basket catch, holding the tying run at third.

HE SAID IT

"Guys are grinding. Guys are going out and giving everything they've got every single day, and that frustration carries over into the box sometimes, because they haven't come through very often lately. Guys feel that. Sometimes the best thing you can do is relax and go play baseball. Enjoy what you're doing, and the hits will start coming." -- *Green*

UP NEXT

The Padres head to Arizona, where they'll open a four-game series against the division-leading D-backs on Thursday at 6:40 p.m. PT. Left-hander [Eric Lauer](#) gets the ball after an excellent June in which he posted a 2.76 ERA and lowered his overall mark from 7.67 to 5.08. He's seen

an uptick in his fastball velocity, while adding some bite to his slider. Arizona counters with right-hander [Shelby Miller](#).

Gore picks up first professional win

By Mike Rosenbaum

Here's [MLB Pipeline's](#) roundup of the top prospect performances in the Minor Leagues on Wednesday.

MacKenzie Gore provided his own Fourth of July fireworks, recording his first professional win in what was the longest and arguably best start of his career.

The [Padres' No. 2](#) prospect ([No. 13 overall](#)) completed a career-high six scoreless innings, allowing four hits with two walks and six strikeouts as Class A Fort Wayne blanked Great Lakes, 7-0. He threw 86 pitches in the outing, 52 for strikes.

Gore's start was his fifth since June 10, when he was activated from a nearly month-long stint on the disabled list for a blister on his left middle finger that also cost him time earlier in the season. The 19-year-old left-hander has pitched to a 1.50 ERA during that stretch, recording 22 strikeouts and five walks in 18 innings.

Selected with the No. 3 overall pick in 2017 Draft and signed for \$6.7 million, Gore logged a 1.27 ERA and 0.98 WHIP with a 34-to-7 strikeout-to-walk ratio in 21 1/3 innings (seven starts) last summer during his pro debut in the Rookie-level Arizona League.

- [Padres No. 30 prospect](#) Jordy Barley stuffed the stat sheet with a home run, two doubles and a stolen base as part of a four-hit game in the Rookie-level Arizona League. The 18-year-old shortstop also tallied three runs scored and RBIs apiece, finishing the game 4-for-6 in his second straight multihit effort.

Minor League Matters: Six middle infielders who are making an impact

By Emily Waldon and Jared Wyllys

Over the past two weeks, Emily and Jared have focused on standout players at different spots on the diamond. This week, they zero in on the defensive positions that can garner the most excitement: shortstop and second base.

Emily focused on the second basemen, and Jared highlights the shortstops. Here, they both agree that the Padres have the most cause for excitement up the middle.

(Reports by Emily Waldon)

2B Luis Urias

Current Assignment: Triple-A El Paso (Padres)

Ht/Wt:5-9/185 lbs. **B/T:** R/R **DOB:** June 3, 1997

Season Stats: 296 AB, .270/.380/.399, 80H, 48 R, 16 2B, 6 HR, 30 RBI

Rated as the Padres' No. 3 prospect by MLB Pipeline, Luis Urias has booked an almost unbelievable number of hours for someone still just 21 years old.

Signed in 2013 out of Magdalena de Kino in Sonora, Mexico, Urias has a plate discipline that is often able to force the hand of opposing pitchers. Urias has found the same success in forcing the hand of the Padres' front office.

Since making his U.S. debut in 2014, Urias has conquered and climbed through the minor-league system. Urias can slow the game to a pace he can control at the plate, using advanced pitch recognition and bat-to-ball skills.

Working all fields, Urias produces a deceptive level of raw power, enough so that he's on pace for a career-high in both home runs and RBIs, backed by a career-high .132 ISO. Urias has seen Triple-A before, courtesy of a three-game cameo in 2016 during which he logged four hits, including a home run. With his physical development, his raw power is beginning to flourish.

With the contact comes a touch of swing-and-miss, seen in his 20.2 strikeout percentage. But Urias' hand-eye coordination suggests that number will improve as he progresses.

Urias has an effortless defensive profile with an above-average arm and a plus set of instincts across the board as a middle infielder. The 5'9" right-hander boasts an eye-popping vertical leap, giving him the ability to rob opposing hitters. With clean hands and exceptional footwork, he projects as a plus-plus defender. Now 79 games in, Urias' success could land him with San Diego later this year.

Luis Urias home run during the 2017 Arizona Fall League Fall Stars Game

SS Fernando Tatis Jr.

Current assignment: Double-A San Antonio (Padres)

Ht/Wt: 6-3/185 lbs. **B/T:** R/R **DOB:** January 2, 1999

Season Stats: 318 AB, .283/.358/.516, 90 H, 72 R, 21 2B, 15 HR, 39 RBI

If the Padres' system is a volcano of hot-talent lava, as Scott Boras is fond of saying, then Tatis is the most molten. The White Sox wisely signed him in July 2015, but they might come to regret trading him for James Shields in June 2016 before he had even played a single minor-league game in their system. Still only 19, Tatis was already in Double-A last year. He skipped the Class A Advanced California League, going right from Class-A Fort Wayne to San Antonio on Aug. 21 of last season. In that short stint, he hit only .255, but it's been a different story this season.

Tatis has improved his average by 30 points, but he's also hitting for power. This is no surprise, but it's encouraging to see him cut his strikeout rate and improve his walk rate. Tatis has always had a solid plate approach, but seeing him walk at only a 3.5 percent clip in Double-A last year was eyebrow-raising.

Tatis has the athleticism to stick at shortstop despite his height. He is likely to fill out some, but he is a steady fielder with a plus arm, and if he does move, it will be to second or third. Tatis has already spent time at both positions in his professional career, but he has been used exclusively as a shortstop this season.

Tatis progressed to Double-A quickly, but he's very young and has hardly two seasons' worth of professional at-bats. Though he has the pedigree — his father

played in the majors from 1997 to 2010 — the Padres might be wise to give him a full season in the Texas League this year.

This Day in Padres History— July 5

By Bill Center

July 5, 1973—**Steve Arlin** allows two hits and a walk in a complete-game shutout as the Padres score a 3–0 victory over the Dodgers in Dodger Stadium.

July 5, 1985—Shortstop **Garry Templeton** ties a Major League record set by **Roger Maris** in 1962 by being intentionally walked four times in a 12-inning, 5–4 loss in Pittsburgh.

July 5, 1998—Left fielder **Greg Vaughn** hits two homers and a double for three RBIs in a 7–2 Padres win over Colorado at Qualcomm Stadium.

July 5, 2004—**Brian Lawrence** becomes the first Padre pitcher since 1998 and the 13th in franchise history to pick up his 10th win before the All-Star break in a 2–1 win over the Astros at Petco Park.

Piscotty's 3 doubles lead A's past Padres 4-2

AP

OAKLAND, Calif. -- [Stephen Piscotty](#) was perfectly fine with Andy Green's decision to walk [Matt Olson](#) to load the bases ahead of him with no outs in the eighth inning. He liked Green's move even more after hitting a go-ahead double to keep the plucky Athletics rolling along.

Piscotty doubled three times and had three RBI, helping Oakland beat San Diego 4-2 on Wednesday.

"We know we have a really good offense and if we keep that game close anything can happen in any inning," Piscotty said. "We've been doing it all year. It's a great testament to this team, how well we battle late."

[Khris Davis](#) added an RBI single for the A's, who have won 14 of 17 to move a season-high nine games over .500.

"We have a young group that's played together that expects to win," manager Bob Melvin said. "There's a lot more to go before we consider it special, but here recently we've been playing really well."

Piscotty doubled in Olson in the second, and then had another two-base hit in the sixth. He snapped a 2-all tie in the eighth with a two-run double off [Craig Stammen](#). Green opted to pitch to Piscotty in the eighth. [Jed Lowrie](#) drew a leadoff walk off [Jose Castillo](#) (1-2) and Davis doubled before Olson was walked.

Chapman said the intentional walk was the smart play, even though it backfired on the Padres.

"Olson's a power guy and he's a left-hander and there's a base open and it's a tie ballgame. It made a lot of sense," Piscotty said. "I was ready as soon as guys were on second and third."

[Lou Trivino](#) (7-1) retired two batters for the win. [Blake Treinen](#) pitched the ninth for his 22nd save.

[Christian Villanueva](#) hit his 17th home run for San Diego. The Padres lost all four games against the A's this season.

"We're not getting hits with runners in scoring position," said Green, who is in his third year managing the Padres. "Sometimes the best thing you can do is relax, go play baseball and enjoy what you're doing and then the hits start coming."

OH SO SMOOTH

Oakland third baseman [Matt Chapman](#) was hitless in three at-bats, but helped with a pair of sparkling defensive plays. The A's rookie made a diving stop on [A.J. Ellis'](#) grounder in the fourth, and then made a spinning backhand grab of [Hunter Renfroe's](#) sharp grounder down the third-base line to begin a 5-4-3 double play in the sixth.

"You look at the box score and it shows oh-for, but for us he drove in like three runs," Melvin said. "There's two plays there that are going to lead to some runs probably for sure."

STRONG STARTS, NO DECISIONS

Neither starting pitcher figured in the decision.

San Diego's Luis Perdomo, who was called up from the minors before the game, allowed two runs over 5 2/3 innings in his first start since April 15.

Oakland's [Sean Manaea](#) gave up two runs in seven innings.
TRAINER'S ROOM

Padres: Closer [Brad Hand](#) rejoined the team after missing Tuesday's game for personal reasons.
Athletics: A day after getting spiked on the side of his leg while covering first base, [Chris Bassitt](#) was still noticeably sore, but isn't expected to miss his turn in the rotation. ... RHP [Daniel Mengden](#) (sprained right foot) will make a rehab start with Triple-A Nashville on Friday.
UP NEXT

Padres: LHP [Eric Lauer](#) (3-5, 5.08 ERA) faces the Diamondbacks for the first time in his career Thursday in the opener of a four-game series in Arizona. Lauer had a 2.76 ERA in six June starts.

Athletics: RHP [Paul Blackburn](#) (2-2, 6.46) pitches Friday in Cleveland, seeking a second consecutive win over the Indians.

Diamondbacks host slumping Padres in series opener

FSSD

PHOENIX — Right-hander [Yoshihisa Hirano](#) has been spectacularly efficient in his first season in Arizona, part of the reason the [Diamondbacks](#) will enter their four-game series against the [San Diego Padres](#) with the best bullpen ERA in the majors.

Hirano may be a major league rookie, but his work the last five seasons as a closer with the Orix Buffaloes in Japan has translated well.

Hirano, 34, had a franchise-record 26-game scoreless streak broken in an 8-4 loss to St. Louis on Wednesday, when he finished one scoreless appearance short of tying former Red Sox right-hander Koji Uehara for the longest such streak by a Japanese-born pitcher in major league history. Even that loss could not diminish the value Hirano has had this season.

Arizona right-hander [Shelby Miller](#) is scheduled to face San Diego left-hander [Eric Lauer](#) in the first game of the series Thursday.

Arizona manager Torey Lovullo was Boston's bench coach when Uehara set the record in 2013, so he can provide a comparison of Uehara and Hirano.

"They have the same work habits, which is pretty impressive," Lovullo said. "They both come in and get their work done pregame. They come in and get their work done postgame. They find themselves healthy and strong and prepared for every single one of their outings.

"They both have a fearlessness to their game and an approach to understanding what needs to happen during each at-bat. They are not afraid to put the ball on the plate with two different pitches. They go out and expect to get outs. Very similar mind-set. Very similar makeup. Very similar confidence."

Hirano is 2-0 with a 1.43 ERA in 42 appearances. He has 19 holds, fourth in the majors, and he has permitted only one of his 16 inherited runners to score while being primarily used in the seventh inning. Eighth-inning reliever [Archie Bradley](#) leads the majors with 22 holds and closer [Brad Boxberger](#) has 20 saves.

Uehara began the 2013 season in a similar setup role in the Boston bullpen before advancing to the closer's role after injuries thinned the relief corps. He finished with 21 saves, a 1.09 ERA and an 0.57 WHIP.

"As soon as he became the closer, he gave off a certain edge and a certain confidence that was noticeable," Lovullo said.

“It’s as close to a slam dunk, shut-down ninth-inning save as I’ve ever seen. He had this ability to collect outs and get through innings in 12 pitches or less. It was so quick, the ninth inning was over before it even started. It was a very comfortable setting for all of us. You played the Boston Red Sox in 2013 for eight innings because the ninth inning was over. That’s what I remember.”

Hirano has a 1.01 WHIP, fourth among major league relievers with at least 40 appearances.

“He’s been very versatile,” Lovullo said. “He’s unfazed by any role we have asked him to do. He can pitch in traffic. He can start clean innings. He can get left-handers and right-handers out.”

The Diamondbacks lost two of three to St. Louis and have dropped five of their past six games overall. They took two out of three games in their only other series against the Padres this season, also at Chase Field.

San Diego has slumped over the last 2 1/2 weeks. The Padres have lost three in a row and are 3-13 since beating Atlanta 9-3 behind left-hander [Clayton Richard](#) on June 15. They have scored 30 runs in their last 10 games.

“We’re not getting hits with runners in scoring position,” San Diego manager Andy Green told reporters after a two-game sweep in Oakland.

“Sometimes the best thing you can do is relax, go play baseball and enjoy what you’re doing. Then the hits start coming.”

[Christian Villanueva](#) hit his 17th homer for the Padres in a 4-2 loss to the A’s Wednesday.

Miller is 0-2 with an 11.42 ERA in two starts this season after returning from a 14-month absence following Tommy John surgery in last May, 2017. He has given up 15 hits and 11 runs in 8 2/3 innings.

Miller is 2-2 with a 4.54 ERA in eight career appearances, including seven starts, against the Padres. He had a strong outing against them early last season, giving up four hits and one run in 7 1/3 innings in the third of his four starts before suffering the elbow injury.

Rookie Lauer joined the Padres’ rotation in late April and is 3-5 with a 5.08 ERA in 13 starts this season. He was 2-2 with a 2.76 ERA in six June starts and is 1-2 with a 5.09 ERA in seven road starts.

He has never faced the Diamondbacks.