

Daily Clips



May 16, 2018

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Turner logs 1st hit, starts DP in return from DL

By Glenn Sattell

MIAMI -- Justin Turner made his presence felt in his return to action on Tuesday night. And though it wasn't enough for a win, the Dodgers were certainly happy to have their star third baseman, as well as second baseman Logan Forsythe, back from the disabled list.

The club activated Turner and Forsythe off the disabled list prior to Tuesday's 4-2 loss in the series opener against the Marlins. In corresponding moves, the club optioned infielder/catcher Kyle Farmer and infielder/outfielder Tim Locastro to Triple-A Oklahoma City.

In his first at-bat of the season, Turner flied out deep to center field. He dropped a single into right field in his second plate appearance for his first hit of the season.

Turner wasted little time getting involved on the defensive side as well, turning a nifty double play to end the second inning. With runners at first and third and one out, Turner fielded a chopper down the third-base line that caught runner Cameron Maybin off the bag.

Turner alertly tagged Maybin and made the throw across the diamond to first base to complete the double play and end the Marlins' threat.

It was like Opening Day for Turner, who was making his first appearance of the season after being hit by a pitch and sustaining a fractured left wrist in a Spring Training game.

"It was exciting to wake up this morning and come to the field, and get back into the routine of getting ready to play a game; definitely excited to be back," Turner said.

Despite his propensity for being hit by pitches, Turner said he doesn't plan to change his batting style.

"I do get hit a lot," he said. "It's part of the game. Obviously, I'm comfortable with it. Unfortunately the last one got me in a bad spot."

Through the entire rehab process, Turner said he didn't have one uncomfortable swing of the bat.

"That's obviously pretty good for peace of mind," Turner said of his return.

While getting back to hopefully put a charge in the lineup, Turner was quick to point out that this isn't and never has been a one-man team.

"One guy can't come in and drive in 100 runs in one game and hit a bunch of homers," he said. "It's about taking good at-bats and stacking those good at-bats throughout the lineup. It's going to take all 25 of us and win one pitch at a time."

However, injecting both Turner and Forsythe into the lineup can certainly help fuel team chemistry.

"With us being back, it's similar to what the chemistry was last year," said Forsythe, who hasn't played since April 14, when right shoulder inflammation took him out of the lineup. He was hitting .174 with one homer and four RBIs before going on the 10-day DL on April 15.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said he also plans to start Turner and Forsythe on Wednesday, but not to push it beyond that. The club finishes the three-game series against the Marlins with a Thursday afternoon game before heading to Washington for a three-game series against the Nationals.

"I don't feel real comfortable having them play six straight," Roberts said. "But it sure is nice to have them both back in the lineup."

Puig, Bellinger homers aren't enough for LA

By Glenn Sattell

MIAMI -- A change of scenery did not end the Dodgers' recent skid as they opened a six-game road trip with a 4-2 loss to the Marlins on Tuesday night.

Blanked by Wei-Yin Chen for 4 1/3 innings, Yasiel Puig finally got the Dodgers on the scoreboard in the seventh with one swing of the bat, belting a 1-1 pitch from reliever Tayron Guerrero over the left-field fence. The projected 400-foot blast, according to Statcast™, left the park with an exit velocity of 104 mph and a 32-degree launch angle. It cut the Marlins' lead to 2-1.

Cody Bellinger homered in the ninth inning for the Dodgers' other run. The blast -- his sixth of the season -- traveled a projected 443 feet with an exit velocity of 108.3 mph and a 24-degree launch angle, according to Statcast™.

"It's been a while since I've hit one to center like that. Just trying to slow everything down at the plate," said Bellinger, who is as puzzled about the Dodgers' season so far as anyone. "It's crazy that we're losing, but the feeling in the clubhouse is we're still fine."

The Marlins answered Puig's homer with two runs in the bottom of the seventh on an RBI double by J.T. Realmuto (3-for-4), who later scored on a single to make it 4-1.

Dodgers starter Alex Wood (0-4) did his job, but after his ninth start of the season, he still doesn't have a win. The lefty went six innings, and although he scattered nine hits, he gave up just one earned run. Wood struck out five and did not walk a batter in his 93-pitch (63 strikes) outing.

"I've never bought much into wins as a starting pitcher, it's a team game," Wood said. "We play together. We win together. We lose together. It's one of those things where I'm just hoping that every time I can give us a chance to win.

"Overall, we just haven't gotten any momentum or started clicking. One night we'll hit well and pitch bad, or one night we'll pitch good and play bad defense. It's never getting two of the three categories -- offense, defense, pitching -- together. Everybody's grinding hard and trying to figure it out."

His 17 1/3-inning scoreless streak was snapped in the first inning when Miami scored an unearned run.

Justin Turner, making his first appearance this season, got the Dodgers' first hit of the game, leading off the fourth inning with a single. He went 1-for-4.

Turner sustained a fractured left wrist after being hit by a pitch during a Spring Training game, and along with Logan Forsythe, he was reinstated from the disabled list prior to the series opener for Los Angeles, which was coming off a recent 1-5 homestand.

"This is testing every bit of fight you have," manager Dave Roberts said. "This is a stretch that a lot of these guys haven't gone through. Right now, we're not swinging the bats. It's up to every single one of us [to turn it around]."

YOU GOTTA SEE THIS

Puig isn't shy about using his speed and baseball intuition on the bases, especially with his team struggling. In the third inning on Tuesday, Puig attempted to make something happen by going from first to third on a bunt by Dodgers starting pitcher Alex Wood.

Puig moved up to second on Wood's bunt, which rolled down the first-base line. Marlins first baseman Justin Bour let it roll for a while hoping for it to go foul, but he ran out of time, picking up the bunt and throwing to first for the out. Alertly taking advantage, Puig didn't stop at second and continued on to third where he slid in ahead of the throw. The Dodgers, however, stranded him there and the Marlins maintained a 1-0 lead.

SOUND SMART

The Dodgers' 16-25 start is their worst since 1958, the inaugural season in Los Angeles. That team started out 15-26.

HE SAID IT

"Makes me a better manager when he's in the lineup, I do know that." -- Roberts, on the return of Turner

UP NEXT

Right-hander Walker Buehler (2-1, 1.64 ERA) will take the mound for the Dodgers when they take on the Marlins at 4:10 p.m. PT on Wednesday in the middle game of this series at Marlins Park. Los Angeles will face a lefty for the second consecutive game as Caleb Smith (2-4, 3.63) starts for Miami.

LA TIMES

Dodgers' Clayton Kershaw making progress, but still far from return to majors

By Andy McCullough

In what has become a ritual for the woebegone Dodgers, Clayton Kershaw played catch Tuesday afternoon.

He has not pitched in a game since May 1, sidelined by biceps tendinitis, but he has been able to play catch up to 60 feet for several days.

Manager Dave Roberts observed Kershaw's latest session and said he was happy with the progress of the left-hander's rehabilitation. The team has not set a date for Kershaw's return.

Roberts said he expected Kershaw to continue on a progression that would require him to throw from a distance of 150 feet before he could be cleared to throw a bullpen session. Roberts does not expect Kershaw to pitch off a mound during the team's trip to Miami and Washington.

"I'm hopeful that it continues to progress the way it should," Roberts said.

Kershaw has spent time on the disabled list in each of the last three seasons. He suffered a herniated disk in his lower back in 2016 and dealt with a back muscle strain in 2017. This is his first significant arm injury. An MRI exam revealed no structural damage to his shoulder, the team said. Kershaw has suggested errors in his mechanics may have caused the discomfort.

The Dodgers have not discussed with Kershaw the prospect of making a rehabilitation start. Kershaw prefers to pitch in the majors, but he required rehab outings in 2016 and 2017. The team will broach the subject once Kershaw gets closer to returning.

"Obviously we're leaving it in his hands to see how aggressive we want to be," Roberts said. "But I think this weather, with the heat, is conducive to that. I'm encouraged right now. Hopefully it continues to get better."

Short hops

The Dodgers optioned infielder-catcher Kyle Farmer and outfielder Tim Lincecum to the minors to make room for the activation of third baseman Justin Turner and second baseman Logan Forsythe from the disabled list. Farmer hit .230 in 30 games; Lincecum hit .182 in 14 plate appearances. ... Turner is expected to get a day off Thursday, Roberts said.

Justin Turner and Logan Forsythe return to lineup, but Dodgers still fall to Marlins

By Andy McCullough

The cavalry arrived Tuesday. And nothing changed.

Inside a distressing Dodgers season, it was just another day. The Dodgers played a fellow bad team. They lost again, for the fifth game in a row, this time 4-2 to the Miami Marlins, who were unimpressed by the return of Justin Turner and Logan Forsythe to the Dodgers lineup.

Onward the Dodgers slouch toward last place, performing as if hell-bent on evicting the San Diego Padres from the basement of the National League West. The Padres remained in last Tuesday, but perhaps they should not buy real estate. The Dodgers are racing to the bottom at an alarming speed. After winning 104 games in 2017, they are on pace for 99 losses in 2018.

Tuesday's game felt like so many before. The starting pitcher was useful but far from dominant. The bullpen leaked like a sieve. The offense was absent. The manager offered no answers.

"This is testing every bit of fight you have," manager Dave Roberts said. "This is a stretch that I'm sure a lot of these guys haven't gone through."

Alex Wood (0-4) pitched well enough to win, which meant, as a member of the 2018 Dodgers (16-25), he was saddled with a loss. He gave up two runs in six innings, scattering nine singles and striking out five batters. One of the runs was unearned, the product of an error by Forsythe. In the seventh inning, Adam Liberatore and J.T. Chargois teamed up to surrender two runs.

Before the game, Turner insisted he could not serve as this season's savior. He was right. He was one for four in his first game back from a fractured wrist as the lineup failed to solve Wei-Yin Chen, a starting pitcher who carted a double-digit earned-run average to the mound. Home runs by Yasiel Puig and Cody Bellinger provided the only offense. The team was hitless in seven at-bats with runners in scoring position.

"Overall, we just haven't gotten any momentum or started clicking," Wood said. "Losing's not much fun."

It is an outcome to which this team has grown accustomed, though. The Dodgers traveled to Miami on Monday after their worst weekend of the season. They were swept by the lowly Cincinnati Reds in four games at Dodger Stadium. The Dodgers have reached the level of ineptitude where they cannot even defeat opponents actively engaged in tanking.

Perhaps, the hope went inside the clubhouse, the tide would turn with the activation of Turner and Forsythe. Turner made his 2018 debut Tuesday. Forsythe was playing for the first time since injuring a shoulder April 14. He went 0 for 4.

"We've hit a little lull the past week," Forsythe said. "We've discussed what we need to do to turn it around. We've got a long season to go. We hit a lull last year, and we still got to Game 7."

At this point, the Dodgers will require a serious reversal to even sniff October. The team received help Tuesday when Arizona Diamondbacks star outfielder A.J. Pollock was diagnosed with a broken thumb. Arizona had lost six games in a row before winning Tuesday. Even with the Dodgers at a low ebb, the division is still up for grabs.

The Dodgers will need to win a series before they can dream about winning a division. The return of Turner allowed the players to hope. Turner tamped that down before the game.

"It's just about understanding that one guy can't come in and drive in 100 runs in one game and hit a bunch of homers," Turner said. "It's about taking good at-bats and stacking those good at-bats throughout the lineup."

Wood gave up hits to the first two batters he faced. The fourth was outfielder Brian Anderson. Playing at shortstop, Chris Taylor scooped a grounder off Anderson's bat and fed Forsythe for one out at second base. Forsythe bounced a throw to first base and a run scored on the error.

A one-run deficit feels like a mountain these days for the Dodgers. Over the weekend, the hitters were mystified by the Cincinnati quartet of Tyler Mahle, Matt Harvey, Homer Bailey and Luis Castillo. None of those men are expected to contend for the National League Cy Young Award. Neither is Chen, who entered Tuesday with a 10.22 ERA in three starts.

Chen did not yield a hit in the first three innings. The Dodgers could not even capitalize on Miami's ineptitude in the third inning, when Puig raced from first to third as first baseman Justin Bour watched a

bunt attempt by Wood roll in the dirt. Puig remained at third as Taylor swung through a 3-and-0 fastball and failed to do damage on another fastball. Enrique Hernandez struck out to end the inning.

"That one took the wind out of our sails, when we didn't execute," Roberts said.

Turner became the first Dodger to collect against Chen with a fourth-inning single. A one-out single by catcher Austin Barnes added to Chen's stress. Chen did not need to worry. Bellinger and Forsythe flied out to end the threat.

Miami added a run in the fourth. After singles by Anderson and Bour, former Dodger Miguel Rojas provided a sacrifice fly. The act of a productive out looked foreign to the Dodgers offense.

Two more Dodgers were stranded in the fifth. Puig led off with a walk. Taylor singled. But Turner hit a soft liner into the glove of third baseman Martin Prado to extend the team's woes with runners in scoring position.

Turner was the team's most productive hitter in 2017. He led the offense throughout the team's sprint to the World Series. Even so, his return to the lineup cannot heal Corey Seager's surgically repaired left elbow or end Bellinger's regression. He cannot fix the bullpen. He cannot show an entire roster how to execute with men on base.

The cavalry arrived for the Dodgers on Tuesday. And it might not be enough.

"These are our guys," Roberts said. "We've got to keep going."

OC REGISTER

Dodgers welcome Justin Turner, Logan Forsythe back from DL

By Bill Plunkett

MIAMI — Off to their worst 40-game start in 60 years, the Dodgers are pinning their hopes on players with .000 and .174 batting averages going into Tuesday's game.

Batting averages notwithstanding, the news that Justin Turner and Logan Forsythe had been activated from the DL gave the Dodgers "added energy" as they started a six-game trip, Dave Roberts said.

"There is a little bit of a resurgence," the Dodgers manager said. "There's a lot of baseball still to be played. We've all talked about it. We've just got to play better baseball and obviously with Justin and Logan back that'll help things."

Turner was hitless in six at-bats for Class-A Rancho Cucamonga in two rehab games over the weekend but said he is "feeling pretty confident" about his readiness to jump back into the Dodgers lineup.

"My two days down in Rancho I felt my timing was good, my pitch recognition was good," Turner said. "The swing feels good. Through the whole process starting with dry swings with a fungo moving to dry swings with a regular bat then going to the tee and soft toss, I haven't had one swing throughout the whole process where it felt uncomfortable. That's pretty good for peace of mind going into tonight."

Forsythe said the sore shoulder that landed him on the DL in mid-April has recovered and now “hopefully it maintains and we can get things rolling.” He was 1 for 10 with a double in three games for Rancho Cucamonga over the weekend.

“When I went to Rancho, the last box to check was timing and pitch recognition and I felt pretty good,” he said.

Turner had one of the Dodgers’ five hits in a loss to the Marlins, going 1 for 4 in his season debut and making a nice play on defense to turn a double play. Forsythe was hitless in four at-bats and was guilty of a throwing error that allowed the Marlins’ first run to score.

Roberts said he will not ask Turner or Forsythe to play all six games on this trip. Turner will get Thursday’s day game off and Forsythe probably will sit out Friday in Washington. Roberts said he has also emphasized that no one is asking the two returnees to turn the Dodgers’ dreadful season around single-handedly.

“It’s a constant topic of conversation between me and him (Turner), just understanding that you are in our lineup but you can’t put it on yourself,” Roberts said. “He’s aware of it. When he gets in the box, when he gets in the game, how is he going to respond? He’s aware of it.”

Both Turner and Forsythe acknowledged the helpless feeling of watching the Dodgers sink to 16-24 knowing there was nothing they could do about it. But there is still only so much they can do if the rest of the team doesn’t improve as well.

“I just think it’s understanding one guy can’t come in and drive in 100 runs in one game and hit a bunch of homers,” Turner said. “It’s about taking good at-bats and stacking those good at-bats throughout the lineup.”

Forsythe emphasized the ample time left to make the 40-game start just a small part of the overall narrative this season.

“I think we’ve hit a little lull,” he said. “We’ve got a long season still to go. We hit a little lull last year too (losing 16 of 17 in late August and early September) and still made it to Game 7.”

KERSHAW CONTINUES

Left-hander Clayton Kershaw continued his daily throwing program in the outfield at Marlins Park on Tuesday afternoon and has reported no recurrence of discomfort from the biceps tendinitis that landed him on the DL a little over a week ago. Roberts called it “really encouraging, the progress he’s made.”

“He threw again today and in talking to Clayton he felt even better today than he felt yesterday,” Roberts said. “He’s recovered well.”

Kershaw will have to progress to throwing greater distances before he is cleared to throw off a mound. Roberts said he didn’t see that step happening during this trip to Miami and Washington.

As for an eventual rehab assignment. Kershaw has been a reluctant participant in the past.

“I know Clayton doesn’t love the rehab,” Roberts acknowledged. “We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it.”

ALSO

In order to clear spots on the active roster for Turner and Forsythe, the Dodgers sent Kyle Farmer and Tim Llocastro down to Triple-A Oklahoma City.

UP NEXT

Dodgers (RHP Walker Buehler, 2-1, 1.64 ERA) at Marlins (LHP Caleb Smith, 2-4, 3.63 ERA), Wednesday, 4:10 p.m., SportsNet LA (where available)

Dodgers' bats go limp again in another loss to Marlins

By Bill Plunkett

MIAMI — If the Dodgers have indeed hit rock bottom over the past week, it is the only thing they seem to be able to hit with any consistency.

Facing the team with the highest ERA in the National League and the worst starting pitcher in the league, the Dodgers managed just five hits in a 4-2 loss to the Miami Marlins on Tuesday night.

The loss was the Dodgers' fifth in a row, eighth in their past nine games and 16th in their last 20 games.

"I can't explain it really. We've just gotta get better," Dodgers veteran Matt Kemp said. "It ain't because guys aren't trying. It ain't because guys aren't working their asses off. It ain't because guys aren't coming in here, getting extra hitting, doing whatever they can do. It's just not happening right now. It's just one of those really bad stretches.

"We're certainly our own worst critics. Fans can say — certain things. We know. We've already said it to ourselves. This is a really bad stretch."

That might not quite cover it.

The Dodgers are 1-9 against the Marlins, San Diego Padres and Cincinnati Reds — three teams accused of tanking their seasons — during that 20-game stretch. Marlins starter Wei-Yin Chen came into the game with a 10.22 ERA after his first three starts (highest among NL starters) and left with a 7.66 ERA after 4-1/3 scoreless innings.

It was the 13th time the opposing starting pitcher entered a game against the Dodgers with an ERA of 5.00 or higher. The Dodgers have lost 11 of those games.

"This is testing every bit of fight you have. This is a stretch a lot of these guys haven't gone through," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "I don't think it's about whether you're facing (Max) Scherzer or Chen. It doesn't really matter. We've still got to go out there and approach each guy the same and try to put some hits together.

"Right now we're not swinging the bats. But we've said it — no one's going to feel sorry for you. You have to be proactive and make your own breaks. It's up to every single one of us."

Marlins manager Don Mattingly certainly didn't sound sorry for his former team.

“It ends sometime,” Mattingly said of the Dodgers’ struggles. “Those things end, and then they win a bunch in a row. I don’t know the situation over there. We’ve got enough problems of our own to deal with and what we’re trying to build to worry about that. Obviously, they’re a talented club.”

Tuesday was a prime time for it to end.

Opposing batters had hit .327 against Chen in his first three starts. But he didn’t give up a hit until the fourth inning and the Dodgers didn’t fare much better against the Marlins bullpen. They had just two hits over the final 4-2/3 innings against four Marlins relievers. Both were home runs – solo shots by Yasiel Puig in the seventh and Cody Bellinger in the ninth – and their only baserunners after the fifth.

At least that kept them from stranding any more in scoring position. They went 0 for 7 with runners in scoring position Tuesday, stranding six runners on base (five in scoring position) all in the first five innings. Over their past 16 games, the Dodgers are batting .163 with runners in scoring position.

The litany of wasted opportunities Tuesday was topped by stranding Puig at third base with one out in the third inning after he had gone first to third on a sacrifice bunt.

“Right now – for quite some time – they’re just not falling,” Roberts said. “All I can say is we’re going to keep going.”

Runners weren’t the only ones stranded by the Dodgers’ hitters. Alex Wood was hung out to dry again.

He allowed just two runs (one earned) in six innings against the Marlins. But Puig’s seventh-inning home run was only the 12th run the Dodgers have scored while Wood was in the game during his nine starts.

That did make it a one-run game, 2-1. But the Dodgers’ bullpen has been as much of an issue as the offense during this freefall. Adam Liberatore and J.T. Chargois couldn’t keep it a one-run game, giving up two runs in the seventh.

Over the past 21 games, the Dodgers’ bullpen has a 5.35 ERA and 1.58 WHIP.

“Nobody expects a great team like that to have one this bad,” said Marlins catcher J.T. Realmuto, who went 3 for 4 with an RBI double and a run scored. “But that’s just part of the game. They’ll get back on track, especially when they get their guys healthy.”

Justin Turner and Logan Forsythe did return to the Dodgers’ lineup Tuesday and Turner had one of the Dodgers’ five hits.

“We feel it. Everybody does,” Wood said. “One night we’ll hit but we won’t pitch that well. Another night we’ll get the pitching but won’t hit as well. It’s never two of the three categories – pitching, hitting and defense – clicking together.

“Everybody’s grinding, trying to figure it out.”

TRUE BLUE LA

Dodgers leave themselves no margin for error in latest loss

By Eric Stephen

Wei-Yin Chen was the latest struggling pitcher to get right against the Dodgers, whose offense and bullpen continued to underwhelm in a fifth consecutive loss, this one 4-2 to the Marlins in the opener of a three-game series in Miami.

Chen entered Tuesday with a 10.22 ERA in his three starts in 2018, and allowed runners in scoring position in four of the five innings he started. None of them scored, which lowered Chen's ERA to 7.56.

The Dodgers have lost 11 of 13 games started by opposing pitchers with a 5.00 or higher ERA this season, including each of their last four games. Los Angeles is now a half-game out of last place in the National League West.

Yasiel Puig homered in the seventh inning for the Dodgers' first run. The club was 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position.

Cody Bellinger added a solo shot in the ninth inning but the Dodgers were down three runs at the time. The team's last 12 home runs have come with nobody on base.

Justin Turner singled in four at-bats in his first game of the season, and Logan Forsythe was 0-for-4 in his first game back of the disabled list as well.

The Dodgers have scored 3.08 runs per game in May, during which they are 4-9. They have scored three or fewer runs in each game of this five-game losing streak.

On a night when Turner made his 2018 debut after missing 40 games, it was the Marlins who got the best of a J.T. vs. J.T. battle late in the game. Neither team had a hit with a runner in scoring position until the seventh inning, when J.T. Realmuto doubled with two outs to drive home Yadiel Rivera, who also doubled against J.T. Chargois.

Brian Anderson added a two-out RBI single of his own against Chargois, who has permitted multiple runs in each of his last three outings.

Alex Wood was just fine over his six innings, allowing nine singles but no walks, and he struck out five. The Marlins tallied just two runs against him, one earned.

Wood has started nine games this season. The Dodgers have scored 12 total runs before he was replaced on the mound in those games, including one Tuesday night. That goes a long way of explaining why the left-hander has a 3.35 ERA, a 2.53 FIP, 47 strikeouts and just eight walks in 51 innings yet is 0-4.

Wood has more losses this season than he did all of last year, when he was 16-3.

The way the Dodgers offense is going right now, other mistakes get amplified. That was the case in the first inning when Forsythe, in his first major league game in a month, skipping a throw to first base that Bellinger couldn't dig out. A surefire inning-ending double play turned into a run for Miami when the ball got away from Bellinger.

Another gift came in the second inning when Kiké Hernandez threw off line to third base, allowing a second runner into scoring position with one out. But that run didn't score, thanks to some nifty defense by Turner on a bizarre play.

Chen grounded a ball up the third base line which Turner fielded and immediately tagged Cameron Maybin for one out, then threw around him to first base to finish the inning.

The play was even more odd with third base umpire Vic Carapazza calling the ball foul, but since the ball was in front of third base it wasn't his call to make. Jerry Layne, the home plate umpire, called the ball fair.

That was one of the few things that went the Dodgers' way on Tuesday.

Up next

Walker Buehler starts the middle game of the series for the Dodgers, his fifth major league start and second this season against the Marlins. Miami will start another left-hander, with Caleb Smith getting the call for the 4:10 p.m. PT game.

Tuesday particulars

Home runs: Yasiel Puig (2), Cody Bellinger (6)

WP - Nick Wittgren (2-0): 1 $\frac{2}{3}$ IP, zeroes

LP - Alex Wood (0-4): 6 IP, 9 hits, 2 runs (1 earned), 5 strikeouts

Sv - Brad Ziegler (6): 1 IP, 1 hit, 1 run, 1 strikeout

Keibert Ruiz homers in Tulsa's win

By Eric Stephen

Home runs and rain were the name of the game on Tuesday for Dodgers minor league affiliates. Of the three games that were played, Dodgers teams won two.

Player of the day

Keibert Ruiz hit a three-run home run in Tulsa's win, his first home run in three weeks. Ruiz was 1-for-3 with a walk on the night and extended his hitting streak to six games. He's 9-for-23 (.391) with five extra-base hits during the run, and on the season is hitting .284/.341/.422 as a 19-year-old in the Texas League.

Triple-A Oklahoma City

Steady rain and even occasional hail for two hours leading up to the scheduled start ultimately postponed Oklahoma City's road game against the Colorado Springs Sky Sox (Brewers). These two teams will make up Tuesday's game with a doubleheader at some point during the final series of the regular season, from Aug. 31-Sept. 3.

This is what things looked like before the postponement:

Double-A Tulsa

Third baseman Connor Joe hit a walk-off single in the ninth inning to cap a three-hit night to give Tulsa an 8-7 win over Springfield (Cardinals). Joe's single scored Zach Reks for his second RBI of the night and swept under the rug the three runs in the top of the inning that Springfield used to tie the game, including Corey Copping surrendering his first home run of the year.

Outfielder Luke Raley also had three hits in the win, including his eighth home run. Minor league Rule 5 pick Angelo Mora also homered for Tulsa.

Starter Caleb Ferguson gave up two home runs of his own, and with four runs allowed in his 5⅔ innings his ERA ballooned ... to 1.38.

Advanced Class-A Rancho Cucamonga

The Quakes fell short in a 5-4 road loss to the Stockton Ports (A's). Catcher Connor Wong had two hits in the loss and is hitting .300/.359/.592 on the season.

Second baseman Omar Estevez doubled and singled for Rancho Cucamonga and Cody Thomas hit a two-run triple.

Class-A Great Lakes

The Loons got home runs from outfielders Carlos Rincon and Starling Heredia (his second in as many days), and third baseman Jared Walker in a 10-5 win over the Bowling Green Hot Rods (Rays).

Walker, the Dodgers' fifth-round pick out of high school in Georgia in 2014, also doubled on Tuesday to extend his hitting streak to five games and on the season is hitting .261/.396/.534. Walker, 22, leads Great Lakes in home runs (six, tied with Nick Yarnall), RBI (20), walks (18), runs scored (16, tied with Brayan Morales), on-base percentage, slugging and OPS.

Transactions

Triple-A: Catcher Alex Burg was placed on the seven-day disabled list.

Double-A: Outfielder Yusniel Diaz was placed on the seven-day disabled list; Infielder Mike Ahmed was sent from OKC back to Tulsa; pitcher Frank Duncan was assigned to extended spring training.

Class-A: The Loons activated pitcher Dan Jagiello from the temporary inactive list, and he pitched 2⅓ scoreless, hitless innings of relief with three strikeouts; pitcher Austin Hamilton was placed on the seven-day DL.

Tuesday scores

Oklahoma City at Colorado Springs, ppd.

Tulsa 8, Springfield 7

Stockton 5, Rancho Cucamonga 4

Great Lakes 10, Bowling Green 5

Wednesday schedule

9:05 a.m. PT: Tulsa (Logan Bawcom) vs. Springfield (Ryan Helsley)

4:05 p.m.: Great Lakes (Jesus Vargas) vs. Bowling Green (Austin Franklin)

7:10 p.m.: Rancho Cucamonga (Dean Kremer) at Stockton (Zack Erwin)

Logan Bawcom was drafted by the Dodgers in 2010 and traded to Seattle in the Brandon League deal in 2012, then rejoined the organization in 2016. He is back for a third stint, having signed on this week after pitching for the independent Sugarland Skeeters.

Oklahoma City is off on Wednesday.

DODGER INSIDER

Justin Turner shows the same hard-nosed play in his 2018 debut

By Cary Osborne

Justin Turner stood in the batter's box, his hands hovering over the chalk. He loaded up, his hands crossing the plane.

Miami reliever Nick Wittgren delivered a 93-mph fastball in on Turner's hands. In his first game of the year after missing 40 with a left wrist fracture from being hit by a pitch in a Spring Training game on March 19, Turner wouldn't change a thing about his approach in the batter's box.

Turner checked his swing ever-so slightly and the ball came dangerously close to his top hand, shooting off the upper handle.

Turner didn't even breathe a sigh. He passed that test.

In the bottom half of the fifth, Miami's J.T. Realmuto lined a shot that left the bat at 101 mph down the third base line. Turner dove hard on his hands and snagged it. He threw to first base off line where Cody Bellinger caught it and tried to record the out at first base, but Realmuto beat him to the bag.

Another test passed.

The Dodgers lost 4–2 to the Marlins in Miami on Tuesday — their fifth straight loss. But Turner's presence and aggressiveness was a positive.

Turner went 1-for-4 in the game. He flew out to deep center field in the first inning, popped a single on an easy swing to right field in the fourth, lined out in the fifth and grounded out in the eighth.

He also turned a double play in the second inning that saved a run.

Logan Forsythe, playing his first game since April 14 due to right-shoulder inflammation, started at second base and went 0-for-4.

The Dodger offense struggled in their return. Turner's single was the Dodgers' first hit of the game. Yasiel Puig homered in the seventh inning (his second straight game with a homer) and Cody Bellinger homered in the ninth. However, the Dodgers were 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position.

During this five-game losing streak, the Dodgers have scored 11 runs. The Dodgers are batting .216 this month and have averaged 3.1 runs per game.

Wood not getting the breaks

Alex Wood lowered his ERA to 3.35 and now has a 1.06 WHIP.

He is also an unlucky 0–4.

Wood went six innings, allowed nine hits (all singles), no walks, one earned run and struck out five.

The Dodgers have now scored one run or less while Wood has been in the game five times this year — including each of the last three games.

“I’ve never really bought much into wins as a starting pitcher. It’s a team game — we come to the park, we win together, we lose together,” Wood said. “It’s one of those things where I just hope every time I (pitch) I can give us a chance to win. Overall we just haven’t gotten any momentum.”

The much awaited re-Turner

By Rowan Kavner

The Dodgers’ All-Star third baseman is back.

Half of the infield the Dodgers envisioned when assembling their 2018 roster returned Tuesday, as third baseman Justin Turner (left wrist fracture) and second baseman Logan Forsythe (right shoulder inflammation) were reinstated from the 10-day disabled list following a brief rehab assignment this weekend at Single-A Rancho Cucamonga.

“I haven’t had one swing throughout the entire process where it felt uncomfortable,” Turner told reporters Tuesday in Miami, his excitement building for his 2018 debut. “That’s obviously pretty good for peace of mind going into tonight.”

Infielder/catcher Kyle Farmer and infielder/outfielder Tim Lincecum were optioned to Triple-A Oklahoma City to make room on the active roster for Turner and Forsythe.

The Dodgers have played nearly the first quarter of the season without Turner, one of their top leaders and their everyday three-hole hitter, after he fractured his wrist when hit by a pitch March 19 in a spring game.

They stayed afloat early, beginning the year with an 11–10 record, but have since gone 5–14, as they start their road trip Tuesday in Miami with a 16–24 record overall. Manager Dave Roberts said last week no one player can be expected to flip a magic switch, but the returns could provide some stability to the lineup and more disciplined at-bats.

With Turner, the Dodgers return a player who slashed .322/.415/.530 last season. Forsythe missed 25 games since his last start on April 14. While the Dodgers will need him to raise his .507 OPS prior to his shoulder injury, no Dodger position player has swung at a fewer percentage of pitches outside the zone this year than Forsythe.

“It’ll be a boost just to see those guys active in the lineup, in the clubhouse,” Roberts said after last week’s homestand. “We’re excited to get them back with us.”

The Dodgers’ lack of patience at the plate to start the year may actually be somewhat overstated, though. They’re still the best in the league in O-Swing percentage (lowest percentage of swings at pitches outside the zone), though they also have the lowest overall swing percentage and the fifth-lowest Z-swing percentage (swings at pitches inside the zone).

Essentially, they don't swing at bad pitches as often as other teams, but they also don't swing in general as often as other teams. And while the Dodgers are in the bottom half of baseball in each slash line category, on-base percentage is actually the best of those three statistics.

Turner should continue to help raise the Dodgers' batting average and provide consistent defensive play. His return also allows Forsythe to shift back to his more normal second base spot, which can only help the shoulder that was bothering him.

Perhaps most importantly, the National League Championship Series walk-off hero should immediately boost the club's power and ability to hit in clutch situations.

The Dodgers are 27th in OPS with runners on base. With runners in scoring position in high leverage situations, the Dodgers are hitting .172 (28th in MLB). Last year with runners in scoring position, Turner had a .300 batting average and .902 OPS.

And for a team 26th in baseball in home runs, in Turner the Dodgers return one of their six players with at least 20 home runs from last season. Turner went hitless in two rehab games but hit .333 this spring.

And statistics aside, there's the undeniable morale jolt the returns must provide.

"When you see their names in your lineup, it makes your lineup look better," Roberts said.

Farmer appeared in 30 games this season, batting .230 with six RBI and going 5-for-14 as a pinch-hitter. Locastro appeared in eight games with the Dodgers, going 2-for-11 with a stolen base.

NBC LOS ANGELES

Dodgers Continue to Reel After Loss to the Fish

By Michael Duarte

New scenery. Same Dodgers.

Los Angeles did not record a hit with runners in scoring position and the Dodgers dropped their fifth game in a row, 4-1, to the Miami Marlins on Tuesday night at Marlins Park.

The Dodgers went 0-for-7 in the game with runners in scoring position and left a total of six runners on base.

Situational hitting, or lack thereof, is nothing new for the boys in blue this season as the Dodgers have gone 21 for 129 with RISP (.163 batting average) since April 28th.

Alex Wood was the hard-luck loser for Los Angeles as the left-hander allowed just two runs (one earned) on nine hits with no walks and five strikeouts in six strong innings.

Wood (0-4) remained winless on the season and deserved better in this one after the only runs surrendered came on an error and a sacrifice fly.

In nine starts this season, the Dodgers offense has scored just a total of 12 runs while he's been on the mound.

The lone bright spot for the Dodgers came on a solo shot by Yasiel Puig in the top of the seventh inning.

After not hitting a homer through the first 39 games of the season, Puig has now homered in back-to-back games

Cody Bellinger also homered in the top of the ninth, but by then it was too little, too late for the Dodgers.

Miami starting pitcher Wei-Yin Chen entered the game with a 10.22 ERA, but like many struggling pitchers before him, he shutout the Dodgers in 4 and 1/3 innings, lowering his ERA to 7.56 on the season.

The Dodgers are now 2-11 when facing an opposing pitcher with an ERA above 5.00 this season.

Veteran infielders Justin Turner and Logan Forsythe were both activated off the disabled list before the game and many hoped they would stop the bleeding.

Turner made his first start of the season after fracturing his left wrist in spring training and finished 1-for-4 with a single and made some spectacular plays on defense.

Forsythe has not played since April 15 with right shoulder inflammation and finished the game 0-for-4.

Los Angeles has lost eight of their last nine games and 15 of their last 20 overall. They are last in wins in the National League West.

Up Next

Rookie Walker Buehler will take the mound on Wednesday against LHP Caleb Smith for Miami. First pitch is scheduled for 4:10PM PST.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Reeling Dodgers struggling against NL's worst teams

AP

MIAMI (AP) Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts leaned back in his chair and it did not collapse, which is surprising given the way the season has gone.

The defending NL champions had just endured their fifth defeat in a row, all against last-place teams. The latest loss came in Miami, and Roberts contemplated his team's place in the universe, including a mere one-game lead over the Marlins, baseball's perennial punch line.

"I need a Presidente," he said, before pausing to reconsider. "I need more than one."

Here's a toast to one of the most surprising teams in the majors, although not in a good way. The Dodgers began the season with expectations to match their high payroll, but they've been bad and getting worse. Since May 5, they are 0-7 against the Marlins, Reds and Padres, the NL's cellar-dwellers.

On Tuesday the Dodgers failed to score against Miami starter Wei-Yin Chen, who entered with a 10.22 ERA. The 4-2 defeat left them at 16-25, putting Roberts' team on pace for 99 losses.

"This is testing every bit of fight you have," he said. "This is a stretch I'm sure a lot of these guys haven't gone through."

Actually, the Dodgers had an awful stretch just last summer, when they lost 16 of 17. But that felt different because they were 91-36 when the swoon began.

They regrouped to reach Game 7 of the World Series, and with most of their roster back, expected to be one win better in 2018. Instead, too many injuries and sickly swings threaten to derail the season.

"It's not fun," catcher Austin Barnes said. "Every day it seems like there's something not clicking. It is absolutely frustrating."

Offense is the biggest disappointment. Yasiel Puig hit his first home run Sunday after clubbing 28 last year. Cody Bellinger has six homers after hitting 39 in 2017. Leadoff batter Chris Taylor's average has fallen to .234 from .288 a year ago.

Against the Reds last week, the Dodgers totaled nine runs while being swept in a four-game series at home. Clutch hits have proved elusive and the bullpen has been wobbly, which explains why Los Angeles is 4-13 in games decided by one or two runs.

The Dodgers are accustomed to coming up short – they haven't won the World Series since 1988. But sub-.500 is something different for a franchise that has won five consecutive NL West titles.

"It's baseball; it's a tough game," All-Star third baseman Justin Turner said. "It doesn't matter what it says on paper. You've got to show up and play nine innings and 27 outs, and anything can happen. Any team on any given day can go out and win a game. That's the beauty of it. It's not the NBA, where the best team on paper wins all the games."

Turner returned this week after breaking his left wrist during spring training. But two-time All-Star shortstop Corey Seager is out for the season with an elbow injury, and three-time NL Cy Young Award winner Clayton Kershaw likely will be sidelined until at least June with biceps tendinitis.

Kershaw is 1-4 with a 2.86 ERA. Left-hander Alex Wood fell to 0-4 Tuesday despite a 3.35 ERA.

"We just haven't gotten any momentum or started clicking," Wood said. "We feel it; everyone does. Everybody is grinding hard, and we're trying to figure it out and get on the right track."

The only Los Angeles Dodgers team to start worse was the first one, in 1958. That club had Walter Alston, Johnny Roseboro, Gil Hodges, Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, Pee Wee Reese, Frank Howard, Johnny Podres, Sandy Koufax, Don Drysdale, Carl Erskine, Don Newcombe and Roger Craig, and they finished seventh anyway.

Thanks to realignment, the worst the 2018 Dodgers can do is fifth. But if they can't beat teams in last place, they might wind up there themselves.