

Daily Clips



August 30, 2017

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**LOS ANGELES DODGERS
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Hill stumbles in encore to 9 no-hit innings

By Barry M. Bloom

PHOENIX -- Baseball can be a fickle profession, and nobody knows that better than Rich Hill. The Dodgers left-hander has bounced back from shoulder surgery, Tommy John surgery and reinvented himself as a starter after his career seemed finished as a reliever.

Hill has had more lives in the sport than a cat.

"You keep moving forward, you have to just keep moving forward," Hill said on Tuesday night after he and the Dodgers lost, 7-6, at Chase Field to the suddenly resurging D-backs, who have won eight of their past nine. "Just keep going no matter what. Keep working. That's it."

In Hill's first start since losing a no-hitter, 1-0, in the bottom of the 10th inning to the Pirates at Pittsburgh on a Josh Harrison walk-off home run, he allowed six hits and five runs in the first inning. During the middle of a five hits in a row, Hill was struck by a 105-mph liner off the bat of D-backs first baseman Paul Goldschmidt.

The shot smashed Hill on his left hip, and after tumbling to the ground in an effort to chase down the ball, he shook it off and pitched into the fourth inning. Both Hill and manager Dave Roberts said it was just a contusion and he should be ready for his next start.

If anything, Hill, 37, has been nothing but resilient in his career. There's no looking back. Not at his near perfect performance last Wednesday night at PNC Park. Not at his 70-pitch outing on Tuesday as the Dodgers lost three in a row for the first time since June 6. They still lead the National League West by 18 games over Arizona.

As the late Commissioner Bart Giamatti once so aptly wrote about baseball: "It breaks your heart. It's designed to break your heart."

"It was just a bad night," Hill said about his outing against the D-backs. "I was terrible tonight. Everybody else did their job. That's the way I look at it. I have to do better next time, make better pitches. It doesn't matter that I was able hang in there. I still look at it as a pretty poor performance. I'm not giving myself any slack."

Hill has had two shots at perfection in the 13 months since the A's traded him to the Dodgers: Last Sept. 10 at Miami when he pitched seven perfect innings but was pulled because of a recurring blister, and eight innings against the Pirates. Hill lost that one on an error by third baseman Logan Forsythe to open the ninth of a scoreless tie. The no-hitter and the game ended on the fourth pitch of the 10th.

Both were tough decisions by Roberts, a manager in only his second season, who had to balance the desires of the pitcher with the good of the team.

"You have to think about it when you're extending a pitcher in that situation and not put him in a spot that would be harmful to him," Roberts said. "For me, at that point last week, I thought for Rich to go out there for the 10th at 95 pitches would be fine. There were no stressful innings. He was throwing the baseball well. I wanted to give him a chance to throw a quick inning and be ready to go out there for a potential 11th. I thought that was only fair.

"Last year, when I took him out of the perfect game, that's when the medical staff comes in. There's the blister issue and the potential cost to our ballclub. For me, I saw no downside in pulling him out." Hill missed a lot of the 2016 season because of the blister issue. Again, this season he spent two stints on the disabled list in April trying to negotiate the same problem on the same middle finger.

Hill said it was just toughening up the skin and making adjustments in his mechanics so he wouldn't repeat the motion of ball spinning out of his hand that caused the repetitive injury.

What Hill has done has worked. Even with the loss on Tuesday night, he is 9-6 with a 3.71 ERA and a 1.18 WHIP in 20 starts. Before losing to the Pirates, Hill had won five consecutive decisions, four of them in July when he was named the NL's Pitcher of the Month. Perhaps even more importantly, the Dodgers have won seven of his past 10 starts.

"He's done a great job cleaning up the delivery, simplifying it," Roberts said. "And he's throwing the way he was throwing last year, spotting the fastball, the breaking ball. Rick [Honeycutt] is as good a pitching coach as I've ever been around and has a way of communicating things to his pitchers. They make the right adjustments."

Hill will dig back in, and as he says, go back to work. He'll have a few days to make even more adjustments and get his timing back.

"This stinks," Hill said. "Now I have to sit on this for the next four days and get ready for the next one. I mean, you want to go out there and actually contribute."

But that's the vagaries of baseball. A near no-hitter one start, a near wipeout the next.

Ryu faces D-backs' Ray in battle of lefties

By Jarrid Denney

Robbie Ray will take the mound for the D-backs when they face Hyun-Jin Ryu and the Dodgers on Wednesday at Chase Field.

Despite missing nearly a month after sustaining a concussion on July 28, Ray is on pace from some impressive strikeout numbers. The lefty ranks eighth in the National League with 160 K's, even though he ranks 39th in innings pitched with 123 2/3. His season strikeout tally is already the 29th-best in club history, and he's on pace to become the 10th D-backs pitcher to reach the coveted 200-K mark.

Ryu has been sensational of late. The Dodgers' lefty has posted a 3-0 record with a 2.13 ERA and 49 strikeouts over his last nine starts. On Thursday in Pittsburgh, he held the Pirates to one run on four hits over six innings in a Dodgers win.

Things to know about this game

- Ray picked up a 3-2 win over the Mets on Thursday in his return from the disabled list. He allowed one run over five innings and struck out nine.
- Ray has an expected batting average of just .216 against him this season. Statcast calculates xBA based on a pitcher's strikeouts and the hit probabilities of the batted balls he allows, and Ray's is the fifth-lowest among left-handed starters.
- A.J. Pollock is 6-for-22 in his career against Ryu, good for a .316 batting average. Two of those hits went for extra bases.

No. 5 prospect Diaz leads Dodgers' AFL squad

By Ken Gurnick

PHOENIX -- Eight Dodgers farmhands, led by outfielder Yusniel Diaz, are set to play for the Glendale Desert Dogs in the upcoming Arizona Fall League. Initial rosters were released by Major League Baseball on Tuesday.

The Arizona Fall League, which begins play on Oct. 10, is a "finishing school" for prospects who are close to the Majors. Generally speaking, if a team sends a player to the Fall League, it's an indication that the club thinks he has the chance to contribute in the big leagues in the near future. In other words, it's generally a short leap from the AFL to MLB.

The 20-year-old Diaz is ranked by MLB Pipeline.com as the Dodgers' No. 5 prospect and No. 85 in MLB. He was signed out of Cuba and is hitting .283 with nine homers and 46 RBIs this season while splitting time between Class A Advanced Rancho Cucamonga and Double-A Tulsa.

In addition to Diaz, the Dodgers' prospects listed are pitchers Isaac Anderson, Michael Boyle, Andrew Sopko and Shea Spitzbarth; catcher Will Smith and outfielders Matt Beaty and D.J. Peters (taxi squad). Anderson, 23, is 0-9 with an 8.85 ERA pitching at three levels this year. Boyle, 23, is 5-6 with a 5.06 ERA at Rancho Cucamonga. Sopko, 23, is 4-6 with a 4.09 ERA at Tulsa. Spitzbarth, 22, is 4-4 with a 2.57 ERA splitting time between Rancho Cucamonga and Tulsa. Smith, 22, is ranked the club's No. 8 prospect. He is hitting .232 with 11 homers and 43 RBIs at Rancho Cucamonga, having returned from a broken hand. Beaty, 24, is ranked the club's No. 30 prospect and is hitting .324 with 14 homers and 65 RBIs at Tulsa.

Peters, 21, is ranked the club's No. 17 prospect. He is hitting .275 with 24 homers and 76 RBIs at Rancho Cucamonga.

Connor McGuiness, pitching coach for the Dodgers' Class A Great Lakes affiliate, will be the Desert Dogs' pitching coach.

"The 30 Major League organizations have assigned an array of promising prospects to the Arizona Fall League as always," AFL director Steve Cobb said. "Approximately 60 percent of them will reach the Major Leagues. Fans can enjoy watching the next big leaguers from the comfort of six of Arizona's state-of-the-art Spring Training stadiums."

Hundreds of future Major League All-Stars have come through the Fall League since its inception, including Mike Piazza, the first AFL alum to get enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. There have been 27 Rookie of the Year Award winners and 16 MVP Award winners who put the finishing touches on their Minor League development in Arizona over the two and a half decades of the league's existence.

The AFL is owned and operated by MLB and plays a Monday-Saturday schedule. The championship game will be played on Saturday, Nov. 18, at Scottsdale Stadium. The 12th Fall Stars Game is scheduled for Saturday, Nov. 4, at Salt River Fields. Game times are 12:35 p.m. and 6:35 p.m. MST, with some noted exceptions in the schedule.

The Fall League's six venues remain Camelback Ranch-Glendale (Glendale Desert Dogs), Peoria Sports Complex (Peoria Javelinas), Salt River Fields (Salt River Rafters), Scottsdale Stadium (Scottsdale Scorpions), Sloan Park (Mesa Solar Sox) and Surprise Stadium (Surprise Saguaros).

Seager limited to pinch-hit duty by sore elbow

By Ken Gurnick

PHOENIX -- With Cody Bellinger about to return to the Dodgers' lineup, Corey Seager is now out of it.

Seager has a sore right elbow, manager Dave Roberts said, which is why Seager didn't start on Tuesday night against the D-backs and has either sat or been the DH in three of the Dodgers' last 10 games. He pinch-hit in the ninth inning of the Dodgers' 7-6 loss, grounding out.

"Can't recall what incident led to it, but it's something he's been managing, and [he's sitting] just to get ahead of it. It's a day-to-day thing," Roberts said. "It doesn't bother him hitting, so he's available to hit. When he gets back to the starting lineup is contingent on his symptoms. It's been a couple weeks. One throw lit him up a little bit. If we manage it, it should be fine."

Roberts said Seager has been trying to manage the elbow tenderness since the club's last trip. Since Seager can pinch-hit and rosters expanding Friday, the decision was made not to place Seager on the disabled list, but Roberts wouldn't speculate how long he will be out of the lineup.

News of Seager's sore elbow came as Bellinger was heading out of Chase Field to play one rehab game in the Arizona League Tuesday night before his Wednesday activation from the DL with a sprained right ankle.

Roberts reiterated that Bellinger would return as the first baseman and Curtis Granderson in left field, with Bellinger occasionally moving to left field when Adrian Gonzalez starts at first base. Roberts also suggested a possible alignment of Granderson in left field and Bellinger in right or center. He said he wouldn't avoid putting Bellinger back in the outfield just because he suffered his ankle injury making a catch in right field.

Meanwhile, Roberts said Clayton Kershaw's back is healed and he will start Friday night in San Diego. Alex Wood has recovered from his sternum inflammation and will start Sunday. Andre Ethier continues his rehab assignment with Triple-A Oklahoma City and will be activated Saturday. Brandon McCarthy had a bullpen session at Chase Field after a shaky rehab start over the weekend.

Dodgers can't quite pick up Hill vs. D-backs

By Steve Gilbert and Ken Gurnick

PHOENIX -- After a five-run first inning, it seemed the D-backs might cruise to an easy victory, but the Dodgers made them sweat until closer Fernando Rodney recorded the final out with the tying run on second to preserve a 7-6 win Tuesday night at Chase Field.

Dodgers lefty Rich Hill was coming off a start that saw him take a no-hitter into the 10th inning, but there would be no-hit drama this time, as the D-backs touched Hill for five runs on six hits in the first.

"I was terrible," said Hill, who allowed six runs on eight hits over 3 2/3 innings and fell to 9-6. "Everybody did what we were supposed to do, and I was terrible."

The win was the fifth in a row for the D-backs, who maintained their two-game lead over the Rockies for the top National League Wild Card spot. The Dodgers, meanwhile, matched their season-high losing streak of three games but still lead the NL West by 18 games.

"We're very happy with how we're playing," D-backs manager Torey Lovullo said. "We're swinging the bats very, very well. We're getting some timely hits, and the pitching has been stepping up. It's a nice combination for all of us to watch."

The Dodgers fought back against D-backs starter Zack Godley, with Yasiel Puig hitting a Statcast™-projected 443-foot solo homer in the second and Chris Taylor hitting a two-run shot in a three-run third, but the D-backs got some needed insurance on Paul Goldschmidt's homer in the fourth and David Peralta's RBI triple in the fifth.

Godley (6-7) allowed four runs over six innings and rode all the support to a win, but it was a bit dicey in the ninth as Rodney allowed a double and an RBI infield hit, threw two wild pitches and hit a batter.

"I know there was a little bit of anxiety in the ninth inning," Lovullo said, "but you know what, that's what it's all about. You've got to be able to ramp up, stay in the moment and collect your thoughts enough to execute and get the job done. And we did, and I was very happy with that."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED

Got him early: A.J. Pollock's two-run homer with one out in the first inning kick-started the D-backs, and things went downhill fast for the Dodgers. Goldschmidt lined a 104.9 mph drive off Hill's hip for a single, J.D. Martinez doubled and Brandon Drury scored them both with a double of his own. Jake Lamb capped the inning with an RBI single to center.

"I feel like we had a really good game plan against Rich Hill, and we scored several runs early," Lovullo said. "We impacted the ball very well, and A.J. Pollock with the two-run home run got us playing downhill baseball."

Playing the percentages: The Dodgers had a chance to jump back into the game in the seventh. With two outs and a runner on second and Curtis Granderson coming up, Lovullo took out right-hander David Hernandez in favor of lefty Jorge De La Rosa. Granderson was 1-for-12 in his career against De La Rosa, and those numbers got even worse when he struck out, his third of four strikeouts in the game.

QUOTABLE

"I think they play everybody tough. ... I wouldn't be surprised if we see them in the playoffs." -- Taylor, who celebrated his 27th birthday on Tuesday

SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS

Arizona starting pitchers are 6-1 with a 2.01 ERA over the last eight games.

UPON FURTHER REVIEW

The Dodgers challenged a foul-ball call on Chase Utley in the ninth inning. The call was confirmed after a brief review, but Utley reached base anyway with a leadoff double off Rodney. Utley took third on a wild pitch and scored to make it 7-6 on Taylor's one-out infield single.

WHAT'S NEXT

Dodgers: Hyun-Jin Ryu enters Wednesday night's 6:40 p.m. PT start having gone 3-0 with a 2.13 ERA in nine starts since June 13. This will be his first start against the D-backs since Sept. 6, 2014.

D-backs: Robbie Ray gets the call for the D-backs on Wednesday at 6:40 p.m. MST, making his second start since being struck in the head by a line drive on July 28. Ray allowed just one run over five hits and struck out nine Mets Thursday in his return from the disabled list.

Rare skid testing Dodgers' mettle

By Ken Gurnick

PHOENIX -- Rookie savior Cody Bellinger, already credited by many for turning around the season in April, can help halt the Dodgers' longest losing streak since June when he returns to the lineup Wednesday night.

After Rich Hill spotted the D-backs five runs in the first inning, the Dodgers rallied but fell short Tuesday night, 7-6, giving them a season-high three-game losing streak for the fourth time and first time since June 4-6.

Manager Dave Roberts offered a positive spin afterward, noting that the Dodgers had pulled within a run against Arizona closer Fernando Rodney in the ninth inning and had the go-ahead run on first base when the game ended on a broken-bat groundout from Yasmani Grandal, who had three hits after going 1-for-12 on the homestand.

"I thought that the bats coming alive tonight was a good thing," Roberts said after Yasiel Puig slugged his 24th home run and Chris Taylor hit his 18th while driving in three.

"After the first inning, we played a very good baseball game. We've run into some good pitching and the bats sort of went sour, but they're back," Roberts said. "Cody hit a homer tonight and sac fly [in a rehab game] and will be back in the lineup tomorrow. To get Yasmani going again, Yasiel the entire second half, C.T. and I thought J.T. [Justin Turner, who had an RBI double] looked a lot better in the batter's box. Even though there was a loss there, there were some encouraging things on the offensive side."

There almost was enough offense to counter the Jekyll/Hyde pitching of Hill, who followed up his near no-hitter in Pittsburgh with a five-run, 35-pitch first inning that left the Dodgers playing catchup the rest of the night.

Included in that inning was Paul Goldschmidt's 104.9-mph line drive off Hill's left hip for an infield single. Hill, who threw three 90-plus-mph fastballs in that at-bat, never threw another. That hip on the push-off leg tightened up and Roberts said Hill was favoring it, although both indicated no concern about the lefty making his next start.

Hill joked that getting hit in the hip is better than getting hit in the neck, and he should know. Hill was hit there by a Clayton Richard pitch on Aug. 11 while attempting to bunt. He pitched two more innings that night, too.

Hill's contrasting outings are a lot like a team with an 18-game lead struggling through a three-game losing streak.

"It's baseball. It's going to happen," said Taylor, who celebrated his 27th birthday on Tuesday. "We're going to continue going about our business the way we have, come to the park looking to get a win tomorrow. I think we ran into good teams that have played us tough and we lost a couple of close games."

LA TIMES

Dodgers shortstop Corey Seager sits out because of elbow injury

By Andy McCullough

Sidelined because of soreness in his throwing elbow, Dodgers shortstop Corey Seager will not play the field during the three-game series against Arizona, manager Dave Roberts said before Tuesday's game. Seager will be available to pinch-hit.

Seager has been dealing with discomfort for the last two weeks, Roberts said. He wore a compression sleeve on his right arm during pregame workouts with the training staff before being the designated hitter during a game at Detroit on Aug. 18. Seager said that his arm felt fine.

Roberts said Tuesday that the elbow was an issue. Seager was not available to comment before the game.

"As a shortstop, there's different arm angles, sometimes you have to throw with velocity," Roberts said. "You never want to put your arm in a position to potentially cause more damage. So I think that symptomatically there's an acute pain or soreness. So we wanted to try to nip it."

The injury to Seager occurred just as the team prepared to reinstate rookie Cody Bellinger from the 10-day disabled list. Bellinger suffered a sprained ankle Aug. 19 and has not played since. He was scheduled to take at-bats in an Arizona League game Tuesday evening. He is scheduled to be activated Wednesday.

Bellinger will be the primary first baseman when he returns. Adrian Gonzalez will start “at times” against right-handed pitchers, Roberts said. Bellinger may play left field on those occasions, with Curtis Granderson spelling Yasiel Puig in right. Bellinger rolled his ankle while making a catch at the warning track in right field.

“I’m not going to think too much about not putting him in the outfield out of fear that he rolls his ankle,” Roberts said.

Scott Kazmir provides relief

Scott Kazmir, a Houston native, said he has made a series of charitable donations to his hometown as Hurricane Harvey continues to ravage the city and surrounding area. Kazmir donated \$10,000 to the Houston SPCA, \$10,000 to the Houston Food Bank, \$10,000 to the Houston Coalition to the Homeless and \$100,000 to the Bayou City Fellowship.

The donation to the Bayou City Fellowship was made in conjunction with the Dodgers Foundation, Kazmir said.

“It’s a tough time,” Kazmir said. “I’m getting videos and text messages of what’s going, everything that’s ruined. The whole city is just completely shut down. It’s unbelievable.”

Kazmir owns a home near Buffalo Bayou, a creek that overflowed during the storm. He said his property was fine, but the devastation nearby was hard to fathom.

“We’re fine, but not even the next street over is completely underwater,” he said.

Short hops

The Dodgers have filled three of the four starting pitching spots for this weekend’s series against the Padres at San Diego. Clayton Kershaw will start Friday, pitching for the first time since suffering a strained back July 23. Yu Darvish will start in the night game of Saturday’s doubleheader, with the day game’s starter not yet named. Alex Wood will return from the disabled list Sunday, after missing a start because of inflammation in a chest joint.

Dodgers' Rich Hill looks vulnerable in loss to Diamondbacks

By Andy McCullough

A few minutes before 8 p.m. on Tuesday, in the fourth inning of a 7-6 defeat to the Arizona Diamondbacks, Dodgers manager Dave Roberts walked to the mound at Chase Field. He had not needed to make this walk once during Rich Hill’s last outing, an overpowering but ultimately painful performance in Pittsburgh. Hill toiled by himself that night, unimpeded until the 10th inning.

Tuesday was different. There were no historical implications, no dalliances with perfection. There was only a slew of extra-base hits from the Diamondbacks, who taxed Hill for six runs in 32/3 innings. Six days after appearing untouchable, Hill looked vulnerable against a team the Dodgers could face in the National League division series.

“I fell way short of what I was supposed to do,” Hill said.

It will be up to Arizona to book that date in October. The Diamondbacks lead the NL wild-card race, and probably will need to defeat the Colorado Rockies in the wild-card game in order to qualify to face the Dodgers. Arizona presents a formidable challenge, including a lineup featuring sluggers like Paul Goldschmidt, A.J. Pollock, J.D. Martinez and Jake Lamb. The group ambushed Hill for five runs in Tuesday’s first inning, and the Dodgers (91-39) could not recover, losing three in a row for the first time since June.

The lineup made the final score look respectable. Yasiel Puig and Chris Taylor homered early. Adrian Gonzalez provided an RBI double in the eighth. The offense mounted a final charge in the ninth, with Chase Utley leading off with a double and scoring on an infield single by Taylor, but Diamondbacks closer Fernando Rodney induced a groundout by Yasmani Grandal with a pair of runners aboard to end the night.

“That’s a tough team,” Taylor said. “I wouldn’t be surprised if we saw them again down the road.”

The group could not climb out of the ditch dug by Hill. The outing delivered some unfortunate symmetry for the left-hander. After his seven innings of perfection in Miami last September, he took the mound five days later at Chase Field, where the Diamondbacks tagged him for four runs in 51/3 innings. Tuesday was worse.

The first inning featured more hardship than the entirety of Hill’s last outing. Last week in Pittsburgh, Hill threw nine innings of no-hit ball. Only his teammates could prevent him from recording a no-hitter, as the offense could not score. Hill took the loss after yielding a solo home run in the 10th.

On Tuesday, Hill gave up five runs before recording two outs. The flurry started with a leadoff single by outfielder David Peralta — Hill would not flirt, in any way, with perfection. Two batters later, a 90-mph fastball cut over the plate. Pollock lined it into the left-field seats.

“They got to him early,” Roberts said.

The two-run shot stung. So did the next hit Hill allowed. It was a line drive off the bat of Goldschmidt. The ball connected with Hill’s left hip. Hill scrambled to make a throw to first but stumbled into the grass. Roberts noticed Hill “favoring” the hip as the night continued.

One batter later, Martinez cracked a ground-rule double. There were two runners in scoring position, and Hill could not strand them. When he hung a first-pitch curveball, second baseman Brandon Drury

doubled. Hill then left a fastball at the belt of Lamb, who contributed an RBI single to push Arizona's lead to five.

The Dodgers had scored only five runs over the weekend, losing two of three to Milwaukee and dropping a series for the first time since the first week of June. On Tuesday they were without a pair of All-Stars: Corey Seager was resting a sore elbow (although he pinch-hit and grounded out in the ninth), while Cody Bellinger was playing a game in the rookie-level Arizona League as preparation for activation from the disabled list Wednesday.

Despite the absences, the Dodgers cut into the deficit. In the second at-bat of the second inning, Puig hammered a 92-mph fastball from Arizona starter Zack Godley. The solo shot smashed off the batter's eye in center field.

An inning later, Hill sparked the offense. He is not a deft hitter, but he compensates for his lack of skill with a level of effort that borders on the comedic. He dropped a bunt down the third-base line. Lamb fielded it, but skipped a throw to first base. Hill received credit for a hit, which set the table for Taylor.

Godley fed Taylor a waist-high sinker. Taylor unloaded on the pitch for a two-run homer. Soon after, Justin Turner doubled and scored on a single by Grandal. The Dodgers had cut the lead to one. "It was a battle," Roberts said. "We got put behind the 8-ball."

Hill had one more wobble left in his night. He issued a leadoff walk to Lamb, who entered the game with a .146 batting average against left-handed pitchers like Hill, in the fourth. Up came Peralta with two outs. Another curveball from Hill came over the plate, on a tee for Peralta. He bashed an RBI triple off the wall in center to pad Arizona's advantage. Hill's night was over.

"Richie's had a very good season for us," Roberts said. "Today just wasn't a good day for him."

OC REGISTER

Dodgers Notes: For Ross Stripling and Scott Kazmir, Hurricane Harvey is hitting home

By Bill Plunkett

PHOENIX — The photos and videos coming out of Texas in the wake of Tropical Storm Harvey are jarring. If you know the roads and neighborhoods now under water, it only makes it more so.

"It's insane," Dodgers right-hander Ross Stripling said of his seeing his battered hometown. "A lot of those pictures they're showing, there will be a building that you recognize – then there are boats going past. It's crazy."

Stripling said an aunt and uncle had to be rescued by boat from their home in Memorial City when water flooded the first floor of their house. His grandparents tried to stick it out in their home but family came to get them when water reached the first step outside their door.

“I’m glad I’m not there,” Stripling said of the drama playing out in flooded neighborhoods throughout the Houston area. “I mean, I’d like to be there to help. But I don’t know what I could do.”

Stripling said he and his fiancée, Shelby Gassiott, have no idea the state of their apartment in Texas. His mother offered to go check on it – but there is no way for her to get there with many roads flooded.

Dodgers left-hander Scott Kazmir is a Houston native. He said his family is fine and his home remains above the floodwaters as of Monday. A second house on a lake in the area hasn’t fared as well.

Kazmir has pledged \$130,000 to recovery efforts in his hometown – \$10,000 each to the Coalition for Homeless, the Houston Food Bank and the Houston SPCA plus \$100,000 to the Bayou City Fellowship in Cypress, Texas.

SEAGER’S ELBOW

Shortstop Corey Seager has been nursing a sore elbow for “a couple weeks,” according to Dodgers manager Dave Roberts, and will not play in the field for at least a few days to rest his throwing arm.

Seager was not in the starting lineup on Tuesday. Over the past two weeks, Roberts has given Seager two days off and played him at DH for one game in Detroit. The Dodgers also had two off days in that stretch.

The discomfort is from throwing and Seager will be available to hit. But Roberts said “when he gets back in the lineup” depends on how long the symptoms persist.

“I can’t recall what throw or event led to it,” Roberts said. “But one throw kind of lit him up a little bit. ... We want to try to nip it.”

Seager took a 15-game hitting streak into Tuesday’s game. He was 23 for 66 (.348) during the streak and had hits in 20 of 21 games since August 3.

WEEKEND PLANS

Left-hander Clayton Kershaw threw a 40-pitch bullpen session Tuesday and is on track to start Friday in San Diego. It will be Kershaw’s first start since suffering lower back strain on July 23.

Left-hander Alex Wood said a cortisone injection relieved the inflammation in his sternoclavicular joint. He plans to throw bullpens on Wednesday and Friday then come off the DL and start Sunday in San Diego.

Roberts said right-hander Yu Darvish will start the night game in Saturday's doubleheader. A starter for the day game has not been announced yet.

ALSO

Cody Bellinger was scheduled to play for the Dodgers' team in the Arizona Summer League Tuesday night. He will be activated from the DL on Wednesday and Roberts said he will be in the lineup against the Diamondbacks.

Right-hander Brandon McCarthy joined the Dodgers at Chase Field and threw a bullpen session Tuesday afternoon. He was scheduled to make a second rehab start for Class-A Rancho Cucamonga on Wednesday, but that has been pushed back now and McCarthy's next start is to be determined. He has been on the DL since July 20.

Outfielder Andre Ethier will join the Dodgers when rosters expand on Friday, Roberts said. Ethier has gone 7 for 32 (.219) with two doubles and six RBI in 10 combined rehab games in Class-A, Double-A and Triple-A.

Rich Hill roughed up early and Dodgers' skid hits three with 7-6 loss in Arizona

By Bill Plunkett

PHOENIX – You might be feeling things you haven't felt in a long time. This is natural. But do not panic.

Left-hander Rich Hill followed up his near-perfect game with a thoroughly imperfect effort, allowing five runs in the first inning Tuesday night. The Dodgers never fully recovered and lost to the Arizona Diamondbacks, 7-6.

The loss was the Dodgers' third in a row, the first time they have had anything worthy of being called a losing streak since they also lost three consecutive games June 4-6. In the 67 games between three-game losing streaks, the Dodgers went 56-11 and lost so much as consecutive games only once.

"It's baseball. It's going to happen," Chris Taylor said, adopting the universal explanation for all things baseball. "We ran into some good teams who played us tough and we lost a couple close games."

Indeed, the three games meant more to the wild-card contending Milwaukee Brewers and Diamondbacks than they did to the Dodgers, whose lead in the NL West shrank to 18 games. Still, dare we call this a ... slump? The Dodgers have gone 4-5 over their past nine games, a stretch that coincides with rookie Cody Bellinger's trip to the DL with a mild ankle sprain. Bellinger is expected back Wednesday (after hitting a home run in an Arizona Summer League game Tuesday night).

“I thought that the bats coming alive tonight was a good thing,” Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. “Outside of that first inning, I thought we played a good baseball game. We’ve run into some good pitching. The bats sort of went silent for a little bit, but I think they’re back.

“It’s a long season. We played very good baseball for a long time and I’m sure we’ll get on track again.”

It will help to get Bellinger (who hit a home run and drove in four runs in an Arizona Summer League game Tuesday night) back Wednesday.

But Tuesday’s loss falls on Hill – something he tried to claim last week in Pittsburgh when he took a perfect game into the ninth inning and a no-hitter into the 10th before giving up a walk-off home run in a 1-0 loss.

It was much more accurate this time.

“Just a bad night. I was terrible tonight,” Hill said, dismissing a first-inning shot to the leg as any kind of factor. “Everybody did what they were supposed to do. We hit the ball. We played good defense. And I was terrible.”

Hill was battered for five runs on six hits in the first inning Tuesday. He retired just one of the first seven Diamondbacks batters he faced and gave up a lot of hard contact – including a line drive off the side of his left leg. That probably didn’t pain him as much as the two-run home run he served up to A.J. Pollack or the two-run double to Brandon Drury.

Hill settled down after the first inning but couldn’t get through four, departing after David Peralta’s RBI triple completed a team cycle for the Diamondbacks.

“He just wasn’t sharp,” Roberts said. “All of the hits, the slug, seemed like they were given up on the breaking ball. It was up and just didn’t have the finish it normally has.

“They were taking a lot of good swings off him. Even the outs were hard.”

As Roberts acknowledged, the Dodgers’ offense has cooled in Bellinger’s absence. But it came to life early Tuesday.

Yasiel Puig blasted his 24th home run of the season off the batter’s eye in straightaway center field. That 443-foot blast was matched by Chris Taylor, who hit a two-run homer in the third inning. Yasmani Grandal also drove in a run with an RBI single that inning, briefly making it a one-run game.

The comeback lost steam until Adrian Gonzalez’s two-out RBI double in the eighth inning. Chase Utley led off the ninth with a double off the Diamondbacks’ shaky closer, Fernando Rodney. He scored on Taylor’s infield single to make it a one-run game again.

A wild pitch put the tying run in scoring position before Rodney got Curtis Granderson on a called third strike (the second of two questionable strike calls in the at-bat). He hit Justin Turner with a pitch to put the go-ahead run on base before getting Yasmani Grandal to ground out and end the game.

ESPN

Dodgers getting back Clayton Kershaw, Cody Bellinger this week

By ESPN.com news services

Los Angeles Dodgers rookie slugger Cody Bellinger hit a three-run home run Tuesday night in a rehab start and is expected to be activated to play Wednesday night in Phoenix against the Arizona Diamondbacks.

Bellinger, who has been on the disabled list with a right ankle sprain, served as the designated hitter Tuesday for the Dodgers' rookie club in the Arizona League.

Manager Dave Roberts said when Bellinger returns, he will go back to first base. Curtis Granderson, whom the team acquired in Bellinger's absence, will continue to play in the outfield.

Bellinger, who is one home run shy of Mike Piazza's franchise rookie record of 35, is hitting .274 with 79 RBIs.

The Dodgers also announced that ace Clayton Kershaw, as expected, will start Friday for the first time since going on the disabled list July 24 with back issues.

Kershaw is 15-2 with a 2.04 ERA and 168 strikeouts in 141⅓ innings.

Diamondbacks rough up Rich Hill in 7-6 win over Dodgers

By Associated Press

PHOENIX -- The Arizona Diamondbacks roughed up a pitcher who almost threw a no-hitter last time out, then had to hold on as the best team in baseball rallied.

To finish it off, despite some tense moments from their closer, was a good sign that the Diamondbacks are back to playing the way they did early in the season.

A.J. Pollock hit a two-run homer and Arizona roughed up Rich Hill in his follow-up to a near no-hitter for a 7-6 win over the Los Angeles Dodgers on Tuesday night.

"They are the runaway team in major league baseball and they were coming after us with everything they had, and we held on," Diamondbacks manager Torey Lovullo said. "Those are the team moments that push you on to the next day."

Hill (9-6) pitched nine hitless innings against Pittsburgh on Wednesday, losing the no-hitter and the game on Josh Harrison's walk-off homer in the 10th.

The Diamondbacks scored 11 runs to complete a three-game sweep of San Francisco on Sunday and kept hitting after a day off, knocking around Hill in a five-run first inning. He allowed six runs on eight hits in 3 1/3 innings, his shortest outing since April 16.

"Everybody did what they were supposed to do," Hill said. "We hit the ball. We played good defense, and I was terrible."

Paul Goldschmidt homered and Brandon Drury hit a two-run double off Hill for Arizona.

The wild card-leading Diamondbacks have won five straight, though this one came with some ninth-inning drama.

Fernando Rodney allowed a run-scoring single by Chris Taylor, threw two wild pitches and hit a batter with a pitch to put two on with two outs. With the crowd buzzing, Rodney closed out his 33rd save by getting Yasmani Grandal to ground out to first.

"It's all we were looking for, compete with the Dodgers," Rodney said. "They are our enemies in the division."

Taylor also hit a two-run homer and Yasiel Puig a solo shot off Zack Godley (6-7) for the NL West leaders, who have lost three in a row for the first time since early June.

Los Angeles, which leads the division by 18 games, lost for the first time in 41 games when scoring four or more runs.

"It is a long season," manager Dave Roberts said. "We played very good baseball for a long time and I am sure we will get on track again."

Hill was nearly perfect on Wednesday and became the first pitcher in major league history to have a no-hitter end with a walk-off homer.

The left-hander was hit hard from the start by the Diamondbacks, including a line drive by Goldschmidt that drilled him in the left hip in the first.

Godley wasn't exactly sharp, either, allowing four runs and six hits in six innings.

BRADLEY HITS 100 MPH

Right-hander Archie Bradley was bumped from the rotation when the Diamondbacks acquired Taijuan Walker during the offseason. Bradley has thrived in his role as the setup man for Rodney this year -- a 1.22 ERA -- and passed a new benchmark by hitting 100 mph on the radar gun for the first time.

"That's what we expect out of him," Lovullo said. "It was nice to see and I think the crowd enjoyed it as well."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Dodgers: SS Corey Seager, who had a 15-game hitting streak, was limited to pinch-hitting duties due to a sore left elbow. He came off the bench in the ninth and grounded out. ... 1B-LF Cody Bellinger (ankle) is expected to be activated from the DL on Wednesday.

Diamondbacks: Lovullo would not rule out a return by Nick Ahmed this season even though the shortstop fractured his wrist on the same hand he broke earlier this season. Ahmed was set to return to the Diamondbacks on Tuesday, but broke his wrist Sunday during a rehab game with Triple-A Reno after being struck on the right hand again.

UP NEXT

Dodgers: LHP Hyun-Jin Ryu has gone 3-0 with a 2.13 ERA in nine starts since June 17.

Diamondbacks: LHP Robbie Ray will make his second start since returning from the disabled list after being hit in the head by a line drive. He allowed a run in five innings of a 3-2 win over the New York Mets in his return last week.

TRUE BLUE LA

Seager sits with sore elbow, Kiké starts at SS

By David Young

The Los Angeles Dodgers open a three-game series in Phoenix against the Arizona Diamondbacks tonight that does not include Corey Seager who is resting a sore right elbow per reports from Chase Field.

The Dodgers shortstop has a currently active 15-game hitting streak during which he has collected exactly one extra-base hit, a double, leading to a slash line of .348/.362/.364.

Seager's last hitless game was on August 9 in Chase Field.

In the reigning National League Rookie of the Year's place, Kiké Hernández gets the call at shortstop, making his 13th start of the year at that position.

Hernández is currently batting .173/.258/.278 against right-handed pitching this season and has never faced Diamondbacks starter Zack Godley before in his career.

Notes

While the Dodgers take on the Diamondbacks in Chase Field, Cody Bellinger will be playing a rehab game at nearby Camelback Ranch.

For at least the first game back, Bellinger will play first base rather than Adrian Gonzalez.

Manager Dave Roberts disclosed the upcoming planned starting pitchers through the weekend with one exception.

Saturday is September 2, after the active roster can be expanded to include anyone on the 40-man roster, so there may be several potential candidates for that start.

Catcher Chris Iannetta starts in the second spot of the Arizona batting order for only the 11th time in his career, and the eighth time this season. Five of those those previous times occurred in August. The Diamondbacks must be catching lightning in a bottle because Iannetta's slash line as a number-two hitter this year is .345/.387/.621 in 31 PA.

Diamondbacks high five in the first, beat the Dodgers 7-6

By Craig Minami

The Dodgers were beaten 7-6 by the Arizona Diamondbacks at Chase Field on Tuesday night. Fernando Rodney got the save when Yasmani Grandal grounded out with tying and go-ahead runs on base in the ninth.

Rich Hill was perfect for eight innings in his last start, in this one he faced nine hitters in the first inning and gave up five runs. A.J. Pollock hit a two-run homer and then Brandon Drury hit a two-run double to highlight that inning.

Trailing by five, the Dodgers mounted a comeback. Yasiel Puig hit a solo home run in the second inning. And in the third, Chris Taylor celebrated his birthday with a two-run home run. The Dodgers would score one more when Yasmani Grandal singled home Justin Turner.

But then Rich Hill gave up a booming RBI triple to David Peralta, which ended his night. Overall, Hill pitched $3\frac{2}{3}$ innings and gave up 6 runs. Hill struck out four and walked one.

Later, Paul Goldschmidt would hit a solo home run off Ross Stripling to make it a three-run game.

Adrian Gonzalez made it a little closer when he doubled home Puig in the eighth to make it a two-run game.

In the ninth, Chase Utley led off with a double and he would score on Taylor's infield single. With two out, Rodney hit Turner with a pitch to put two runners on base. But after Grandal fouled off some tough pitches, he would ground out to give the Diamondbacks the first game of the series.

Fourth three-game losing streak

This loss extended their losing streak to three games. That matches their season long losing streak, which they had done three other times.

he last time they lost three straight was June 4th through June 6th, when they lost their last game in Milwaukee and then the first two games to the Nationals at Dodger Stadium.

And another streak ends, score four but no more winning streak

The Dodgers had won 40 straight games where they scored four or more runs. According Stats LLC, there were only two longer streaks in Major League Baseball history, the 1954 Indians had a 42-game streak and the 1906 New York Giants had a 41-game streak.

Up next

The Dodgers will try to win and keep hope alive for a series win. Two lefthanders, Hyun-jin Ryu and Robbie Ray will match up in the middle game of this series. First pitch is scheduled for 6:40 p.m. PT.

Tuesday particulars

Home runs: A.J. Pollock (8), Yasiel Puig (24), Chris Taylor (18), Paul Goldschmidt (32)

WP - Zack Godley (6-7): 6 IP, 6 hits, 4 runs, 1 walk, 5 strikeouts

LP - Rich Hill (9-6): 3⅓ IP, 8 hits, 6 runs, 1 walk, 4 strikeouts

Sv - Fernando Rodney (33): 1 IP, 2 hits, 1 run, 1 strikeout

Yusniel Diaz gets 4 hits in Tulsa win

By Craig Minami

Oklahoma City and Rancho Cucamonga lost, but Tulsa, Ogden and the AZL Dodgers each won to move into or stay in first place. Both Dominican Summer League teams had their postseason games suspended, with hopes to conclude those on Wednesday and see where it goes from there.

Player of the day

Earlier on Monday, Yusniel Diaz was named as part of the Dodgers contingent in the Arizona Fall League. Then Diaz had four hits in Tulsa's win. The 20-year old is hitting .333/.398/.464 in 93 plate appearances in the Texas League.

I should note that Cody Bellinger played a rehab game on Monday night and he was a close second in this competition.

Triple-A Oklahoma City

The Dodgers lost 8-1 to the New Orleans Baby Cakes (Marlins). David Hale took the loss, he pitched 5½ innings and he gave up 6 runs and 12 hits. Hale also struck out seven.

Walker Buehler, who had not pitched since August 24th, pitched one scoreless inning in relief. Buehler gave up a hit and struck out two.

Tim Locastro and Charlie Culberson each had two hits. Joc Pederson had a double in four at-bats.

Double-A Tulsa

The Drillers scored single runs in the first three innings and then scored four in the fourth. That set the pace for a 9-3 win over the NW Arkansas Naturals (Royals). Andrew Sopko got the win for pitching five innings and giving up just a run.

The win was the Drillers 14th straight at home which matched the all-time streak for the history of professional baseball in Tulsa.

Yusniel Diaz had four hits, including two doubles, scored a run and drove in a run. Kyle Garlick had two hits including a home run. Erick Mejia had three hits with a run scored and an RBI.

That win also put the Drillers back in a first place tie with the Springfield Cardinals. The Drillers have six more games left in the regular season, all at home, and the last three are against the Cardinals.

Class-A Rancho Cucamonga

The Quakes lost their third straight, this time a 5-4 loss in ten innings to the Lancaster JetHawks (Rockies). The loss gave the JetHawks a two-game lead in overall standings and left both teams in a tie for first place in the second half.

Without going into all the details, the Quakes need just a combination of three Quakes win or Inland Empire 66ers losses to clinch a playoff spot.

The Quakes trailed 4-2 but then DJ Peters hit a sacrifice fly to drive in a run. Down by a run in the ninth, DJ Peters singled in Ariel Sandoval with the tying run.

But in the tenth, Parker Curry gave up a singled to Yonathan Daza, a stolen base and a sacrifice move Daza to third. That is where he scored the winning run from on a Roberto Ramos walk-off single.

Adam Bray pitched five innings, gave up six hits and four runs. Parker Curry took the loss.

Luke Raley had three hits, and Zach Reks had two hits in the loss.

Class-A Great Lakes

The Loons were off on Tuesday.

Rookie-Pioneer Ogden

The Raptors trailed 4-0 to the Idaho Falls Chukars (Royals) but then they came back all the way to win 9-7. The Raptors scored four runs in the third to tie the game.

Idaho Falls would score three runs in the top of the fifth but then the Raptors tied it again with three runs in the bottom of the fifth.

Single runs in the sixth and seventh for the Raptors sealed the win.

Romar Cuadrado had two hits, scored three runs and had two RBI. Mitchell Hansen homered and scored twice. Bryan Morales and Gersel Pitre each had three hits.

Rookie-AZL Dodgers

The AZL Dodgers had a rehab assignment player on the team and he alone drove in four runs against the AZL Brewers on Tuesday. Cody Bellinger hit a three-run homer in the fourth and a sacrifice fly.

That all helped the AZL Dodgers beat the AZL Brewers 5-3.

After Trevor Oaks completed two innings of scoreless work, James Marinar won his second game of the season. Marinar pitched $3\frac{2}{3}$ innings and he gave up one hit, two walks and struck out three.

Transactions

Triple-A: Los Angeles sent left-handed pitcher Adam Liberatore on a rehab assignment to Oklahoma City.

Class-A: Rancho Cucamonga placed right-handed pitcher Jordan Sheffield on the 7-day disabled list retroactive to August 27, 2017; Rancho Cucamonga activated right-handed pitcher Adam Bray and infielder Brandon Montgomery from the 7-day disabled list.

Rookie: Oklahoma City sent right-handed pitcher Trevor Oaks on a rehab assignment to AZL Dodgers; shortstop Cristian Gomez assigned to Ogden from Rancho Cucamonga; Los Angeles sent first baseman Cody Bellinger on a rehab assignment to AZL Dodgers.

Tuesday's scores

New Orleans 8, Oklahoma City 1

Tulsa 9, NW Arkansas 3

Lancaster 5, Rancho Cucamonga 4 (10)

Ogden 9, Idaho Falls 7

AZL Dodgers 5, AZL Brewers 3

DSL Dodgers 1 2, DSL Red Sox 2 (Suspended)

DSL Dodgers 2 0, DSL Blue Jays 0 (Suspended)

Wednesday's schedule

4:05 p.m. PT: Great Lakes (Marshall Kasowski) at Fort Wayne TinCaps [Padres] (Reggie Lawson)

5:05 p.m.: Oklahoma City (Justin Marks) vs. New Orleans (William Cuevas)

5:05 p.m.: Tulsa (Mitchell White) vs. NW Arkansas (Corey Ray)

5:35 p.m.: Ogden (Gregorio Sequera) vs. Orem Owlz [Angels] (Mayky Perez)

6:35 p.m.: Rancho Cucamonga (Brandon McCarthy) at Lancaster (Peter Lambert)

Where do Hyun-jin Ryu & Kenta Maeda fit on the Dodgers' postseason roster?

By Eric Stephen

After dropping the opener on Tuesday night in Phoenix, the Dodgers will send Hyun-jin Ryu and Kenta Maeda to the mound in the final two games of their series against the Diamondbacks. Both have overcome early-season foibles and thrived in 2017, but the question is where do they fit in come playoff time for the Dodgers.

Ryu gets the call on Wednesday night, having allowed just 12 runs over his previous nine starts, and four total runs in his last five starts. The Dodgers have won nine of his last 10 starts, including six in a row.

Maeda starts the series finale on Thursday afternoon, closing out an August that has seen him post a 2.76 ERA so far, with 34 strikeouts against only five walks.

Both were odd men out in the starting rotation earlier in the season, each moved to the bullpen for a brief spell. Both recorded a four-inning save — Ryu with four scoreless innings against the Cardinals on May 25, and Maeda with six strikeouts in his four innings against the Reds on June 9.

Since their saves, Ryu has a 2.76 ERA in 12 starts while Maeda has a 2.66 ERA in 12 games, including 11 starts and one brief one-inning relief stint.

“Those guys are two very good competitors. They were put in a tough spot earlier in the season, but they have responded,” manager Dave Roberts said Friday. “When you look at how far they have come and what they have done, it’s pretty stark.”

Roberts has preached aggression with both pitchers, imploring them to attack the strike zone after their rocky starts to 2017, and so far that message was received. Maeda has stayed down in the zone, relying less on his fastball while also adding a cutter to keep hitters off balance.

Ryu, who made just one start in two seasons after surgery to repair a torn labrum in his shoulder and had arthroscopic elbow surgery after last season, has rounded into the form that made him one of the National League’s best starting pitchers in 2013-2014.

Ryu’s average fastball this season is 90.66 mph, per Brooks Baseball, just a tick below his numbers in 2013 (91.11 mph) and 2014 (91.56). As the season has progressed, the fastball velocity has increased, from 90.10 mph in April and May combined to 91.17 mph since the beginning of June.

His strikeout rate of 22.2 percent is a career high, right in line with his 2014 mark (22.0 percent) and ahead of his 20.7-percent rate before 2017. Ryu has allowed a career-high 16 home runs, but just one has come in his last six starts.

Both Ryu and Maeda have valid arguments for making a postseason starting rotation, but they will likely be squeezed out of a starting role given the Dodgers’ depth. Clayton Kershaw returns Friday from the disabled list, and Alex Wood returns Sunday. Those two, if healthy, join Yu Darvish and Rich Hill ahead of Maeda and Ryu on the Dodgers’ rotation depth chart.

That leaves a bullpen role as the most likely option for Maeda or Ryu, or both, to make the Dodgers’ postseason roster.

A lot can happen between now and Oct. 6 — the start date of the National League Division Series -- but as it stands I see four roster locks in the Dodgers’ October bullpen — Kenley Jansen, Brandon Morrow, Pedro Baez, and Luis Avilan. That leaves three, maybe four relief spots remaining, depending on whether the Dodgers decide to carry a four-man bench or a five-man bench.

A lot will be based on matchups, and the roster can be changed before each series. But I would imagine there will be at least one more left-handed pitcher in the Dodgers’ bullpen come October, with Tony Watson, Tony Cingrani and perhaps a recuperated Adam Liberatore among the candidates. The September competition for spots will be robust.

“Where we’re at, you have to have a reason to be here, because we have a lot of different players,” Roberts said. “It’s not a tryout.”

The southpaw Ryu thus far this season has reverse splits, with left-handed batters hitting .315/.374/.550 against him, with six home runs in 123 plate appearances, compared to .238/.298/.399 against right-handers.

First time through the batting order, batters are hitting .248/.306/.436 against Ryu.

Perhaps Ryu or Maeda might be suited by a long-man role in the bullpen, a spot filled by Ross Stripling for the bulk of this season. The Dodgers have used a bullpen spot for such a role in recent Octobers, with Chris Capuano and his three-inning performance in Game 3 of the 2013 NLDS coming to mind. Stripling filled that role in the 2016 NLDS and NLCS.

Maeda this season has been death on right-handers, holding them to just .214/.252/.368, with 76 strikeouts — a 31.9-percent strikeout rate — and just 11 walks. First time through the batting order, batters are hitting .191/.259/.365 with a 28-percent strikeout rate.

Maybe he could fill a short-inning role in relief.

We are dealing with small sample size theater here, but in Maeda's fastball did play up in his one-inning appearance on June 23. His eight fastballs averaged 94.73 mph on that day, compared to 92.29 mph on the season. During his four-inning save on June 9, the fastball was at 92.84 mph, his fourth-highest appearance this season.

There are still 32 games left in the regular season to sort this all out, but if Ryu and Maeda continue to pitch like they have been it will be a difficult choice to keep one or both off the playoff roster.

DODGER INSIDER

Five Takeaways: Dodgers nearly get to Rodney again before comeback falls short

By Rowan Kavner

The Dodgers nearly made up the five-run deficit they found themselves in after an inning but came up just short in a 7–6 loss to start the series Tuesday at Arizona.

Here are five takeaways from the Dodgers' loss.

- 1) Dodgers nearly get to Rodney again — Fernando Rodney's last blown save occurred nearly two months ago, when he faced the Dodgers at Dodger Stadium on July 6. Fast-forward to Tuesday night at Chase Field — after a Chase Utley ninth-inning double and a Chris Taylor RBI infield single, with Taylor getting to second base soon after on a wild pitch representing the tying run — and it looked promising for the Dodgers to potentially hand Rodney his first blown save of the month.

It wasn't to be, though, as the Dodgers, who had chipped away all night at an early 5–0 deficit, fell just short from finishing off the comeback. Rodney struck out Curtis Granderson on a couple close calls before hitting Justin Turner and getting Yasmani Grandal on a bat-breaking groundout to strand the potential game-tying and game-winning Dodger runners, handing the Dodgers a three-game losing streak for the first time since June 4–6.

2) An unbelievable 40-game streak comes to an end — According to Stats, LLC, only three teams have ever won at least 40 consecutive games in which they scored four or more runs — the 1954 Indians, the 1906 Giants and the 2017 Dodgers. That streak came to an end Tuesday for the Dodgers, who suffered their first loss when scoring at least four runs since June 15 at Cleveland.

That speaks to the kind of pitching they've gotten this season from top to bottom with a group that leads the Majors in ERA, WHIP and opponents' batting average. One of those pitchers the Dodgers have relied on most, particularly since the All-Star break, has been Rich Hill. He was coming off one of the finest performances for any pitcher this season, throwing eight perfect innings and nine no-hit innings, and entered Tuesday with the second best WHIP in the National League since the All-Star break (1.00), but the Diamondbacks got to him early Tuesday.

Arizona hit a home run, two doubles and three singles in the first inning off Hill, who started to settle in afterward. But by then, the Dodgers dug themselves a sizable early hole. Hill allowed six runs in 3 2/3 innings.

"He's very resilient, very tough," said manager Dave Roberts. "I know that his next turn he'll be ready to go and put up some zeroes."

3) Two 443-foot shots, as offense awakens — On the bright side, the Dodgers scored more runs Tuesday (six) than they had the entire three-game weekend series against Milwaukee (five), led by Yasmani Grandal's three hits, Chris Taylor's two-run home run and Yasiel Puig's home run. The two homers both went 443 feet, according to Statcast.

For Puig, he continued to add to his career high with his 24th homer of the year, giving the Dodgers their first run of the game in the second inning. Taylor, who was celebrating his 27th birthday, followed an inning later with a homer as part of a three-run inning that already cut the Dodger deficit to one run. Taylor's homer to center field was his longest of the year, and he's now 20-for-50 with four home runs and four doubles in his career against Arizona.

"The bats to come alive tonight was a good thing," Roberts said. "Outside of that first inning, I thought we played a very good baseball game."

4) Seager able to hit, but dealing with elbow soreness — Right elbow soreness kept Corey Seager out of Tuesday's starting lineup. Manager Dave Roberts said the injury doesn't bother Seager when he's at the plate, and he was able to pinch hit in the ninth inning Tuesday.

But the Dodgers want to get ahead of and manage what's bothering Seager, so he might be held out of the field for a couple of days. Roberts said Seager won't be heading to the disabled list. Seager's lone plate appearance Friday was a groundout, snapping a 15-game hitting streak.

5) Significant reinforcement coming — As the Dodgers' offense starts to kick into gear, they'll be adding some substantial firepower in Game 2 of their series against Arizona. As the Dodgers were finishing up Tuesday night, Cody Bellinger was launching a three-run homer in his rehab game. Bellinger is expected to be activated Wednesday and back in the lineup. In addition, Clayton Kershaw is slated to return to the Dodger rotation to start Friday.

NBC LA

Dodgers Can't Complete Comeback in Desert, Lose to D-Backs 7-6

By Michael Duarte

Snake-bit.

Rich Hill surrendered five runs in the first inning and the Los Angeles Dodgers dropped the first game of a three-game series with the Arizona Diamondbacks, 7-6, on Tuesday night at Chase Field.

The D-backs jumped all over Hill to start the game as six of the first seven hitters reached base, punctuated with a two-run home run by A.J. Pollock.

"They got him early," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts told the media following the game. "He wasn't sharp. His breaking ball didn't have that finish that it typically does and they were taking a lot of good swings off him."

J.D. Martinez and Brandon Drury both hit back-to-back doubles in the inning and before the desert dwellers found their seats, the Snakes were up 5-0.

Despite digging themselves a five-run hole, the Dodgers chipped away at the lead, starting with a solo shot in the second inning from Yasiel Puig.

Puig's rocket shot to center extended his career-high to 24 home runs on the season. Puig is batting .407 with 7 runs, 3 doubles and three homers in his last eight games.

Birthday boy, Chris Taylor, celebrated his 27th year on earth with a two-run home run in the third that cut the Arizona lead to 5-3.

"I was just looking for a pitch up," Taylor said of the home run. "He left one up over the middle and I was able to put a good swing on it."

Three batters later, Yasmani Grandal hit a two-out, RBI single, that scored Justin Turner and the Dodgers found themselves within a single run.

The roller coaster ride that is Rich Hill didn't last much longer as the left-hander did not make it out of the fourth inning, less than a week from his 10-inning no-hitter at PNC Park in Pittsburgh, Hill had one of his worst starts of the season.

"It was just a bad night," a disappointed Hill told reporters. "Everybody did what they were supposed to do, put runs on the board and play defense. I was terrible. Tonight was unacceptable."

Hill (9-6) took the loss, snapping his run of unbeaten starts at nine, after allowing six runs on eight hits with one walk and four strikeouts in just three and 2/3 innings.

"Rich has had a very good season for us," added Roberts, "But today just wasn't a good day for him." Ross Stripling entered the game in relief and promptly served up a 90MPH slider to Paul Goldschmidt for his 32nd homer of the season.

Zack Godley (6-7) got the win, allowing four runs on six hits with one walk and five strikeouts in six solid innings.

Fernando Rodney struggled in the ninth, allowing a leadoff double to Chase Utley and an RBI single to Taylor before inducing a groundout from Yasmani Grandal to get the win and his 33rd save of the season. The loss marked the first time the Dodgers have dropped three consecutive games since June 4-6. It ties their longest losing streak of the season, and they are the only team in MLB this season not to have a losing streak of four games.

Just two days after their unbeaten series streak was snapped at 22, the Dodgers saw another streak snap at the hands of the Snakes as their winning streak of 40 consecutive games when scoring four runs or more was snapped on Tuesday.

The streak was the third highest in MLB history, behind only the 1906 Giants (41) and the 1954 Cleveland Indians (42).

The Dodgers magic number to clinch their fifth consecutive National League West Division title remains at 14 games.

Up Next:

It will be a battle of Southpaws in the summer heat on Wednesday as LHP Hyun-Jin Ryu goes up against All-Star Robbie Ray at 6:40PM PST.

LA TIMES

Dodgers Dugout: The offense should return the same day Cody Bellinger comes back

By Houston Mitchell

Hi, and welcome to another edition of Dodgers Dugout. My name is Houston Mitchell, and baseball seems insignificant compared to what is happening in Texas.

Is it time to panic yet?

Cody Bellinger goes on the disabled list and the Dodgers lose their first series since early June. Coincidence?

Bellinger played his last game Aug. 19, and since then the Dodgers have gone 4-4. And it is strengthening the fears of some Dodger fans who think this amazing run they have been on is a mirage and they are just going to lose in the playoffs again.

So let's try to calm some of those fears.

If you are going to panic because a team went 4-4, you may as well stop following baseball because all teams are going to go 4-4 at some point in the season. But what is the root of this bump in the road?

No Bellinger. When you remove 34 home runs from the lineup and replace it with a guy who still seems to have some back problems, the offense is going to take a hit. The offense is averaging 3.1 runs per game since Bellinger went on the DL. In the 30 games before he got hurt, the offense averaged 5.03 runs per game.

The Dodgers are 78-23 when Bellinger plays, 13-15 when he doesn't.

Since Bellinger got hurt, Justin Turner is hitting .143 with one extra-base hit and two RBIs. In the 16 games before Bellinger was injured, Turner hit .288 and slugged .644 with six homers and 15 RBIs.

So the offense is down, but there's every reason to believe it will pick up when Bellinger returns on Wednesday. For one, he will provide Turner with some protection in the lineup. Second, Dave Roberts said that Adrian Gonzalez will go to the bench after Bellinger returns.

I have a lot of respect for Gonzalez. He has been a very good player for a very long time. But it's beginning to look like he should consider taking the rest of the season off and try for a comeback in 2018. He moves like a 90-year-old man. He is hitting .184/.220/.316 since coming back from the DL. And he complained of "back tightness" on Sunday. These are not good signs. Right now, I would not include him on the playoff roster.

Gonzalez, being the excellent teammate he is, has said he will play whatever role the Dodgers need him to play the rest of this season. Bellinger has said that Gonzalez has been a tremendous help to him, saying: "I think everyone in the locker room would tell you he is one of the better teammates. He has been completely helpful to me."

The other concern I hear a lot is that the Dodgers really haven't done well against potential playoff opponents this season. Is this true? Setting aside the ridiculousness of thinking that a team with a 91-38 record hasn't beaten anyone good, let's take a look at their record against NL teams that have a reasonable chance at making the postseason.

vs. Arizona, 8-5

vs. Chicago Cubs, 4-2

vs. Colorado, 7-5

vs. Miami, 6-1

vs. Milwaukee, 3-3

vs. St. Louis, 4-3

vs. Washington, 1-2

They are 33-21 against potential playoff teams, a .611 winning percentage, which would be 99-63 over a full season.

So, before anyone panics, let's get Bellinger back and see what happens. Let's get Clayton Kershaw back and see what happens. I have no idea if this team will win the World Series.

But I'll happily take the 2017 Dodgers against any other team and see what happens.

Will the Dodgers get Justin Verlander?

I was listening to the "Mason and Ireland Show" on ESPN710 the other day when the great actor and Dodger fan Bryan Cranston phoned in (self-serving note: If you somehow read this, I'd love to do a Q&A with you for this newsletter). One of the things Cranston mentioned is that the Dodgers should give serious consideration to trading for Detroit's Justin Verlander. I also get a few emails each week from fans who say the same thing.

There are a couple of reasons that isn't going to happen.

The Tigers are going to want either Alex Verdugo or Walker Buehler in return, and the Dodgers aren't going to do that.

Verlander is making \$28 million a year through the 2019 season. And the only way the Dodgers are going to give anyone \$28 million a year to pitch for them, is if his first name is Clayton and his last name is Kershaw.

What about Joc?

Joc Pederson is hitting .184/.220/.342 in nine games with triple-A Oklahoma City.

The obscure Dodgers record of the week

The Dodgers have a 1.110 team WHIP this season, which would be their lowest since moving to L.A. A look at the top 10 in L.A.:

1. 1965 Dodgers, 1.117
2. 1966 Dodgers, 1.127
3. 1975 Dodgers, 1.132
4. 1972 Dodgers, 1.158
5. 1973 Dodgers, 1.161
6. 1964 Dodgers, 1.177
7. 1968 Dodgers, 1.178
8. 1963 Dodgers, 1.178
9. 2015 Dodgers, 1.184
10. 1974 Dodgers, 1.185

The five worst:

1. 1958 Dodgers, 1.465
2. 1999 Dodgers, 1.398
3. 2006 Dodgers, 1.381

4. 1994 Dodgers, 1.376

5. 1961 Dodgers, 1.371

Next series

Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. PDT, Dodgers (Rich Hill, 9-5, 3.32) at Arizona (Zack Godley, 5-7, 3.15)

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. PDT, Dodgers (Hyun-jin Ryu, 5-6, 3.34) at Arizona (Robbie Ray, 10-5, 3.06)

Thursday, 12:30 p.m. PDT, Dodgers (Kenta Maeda, 12-5, 3.76) at Arizona (Zack Greinke, 15-6, 3.14)

Note: Pitchers are subject to change.

Magic numbers

The Dodgers are on pace to finish with a 114-48 record.

Their magic number to clinch another NL West title is 14.

Reminder

For those of you living in the L.A. area, five Dodger games will be on KTLA-TV Channel 5 the rest of the season. All of them will be on a Tuesday. They are:

Tonight, 6:30 p.m. at Arizona

Sept. 5, 7 p.m. vs. Arizona

Sept. 12, 7:15 p.m. at San Francisco

Sept. 19, 4 p.m. at Philadelphia

Sept. 26, 7 p.m. vs. San Diego

And finally

Vin Scully isn't planning a return to the Dodgers broadcast booth. Read all about it [here](#).