



## Minnesota Twins Daily Clips

Friday, June 4, 2010

- Twins hit skids on the road again (Christensen) pg. 1
- Valencia thrilled, even if his number is 79 (Christensen) pg. 2
- Patrick Reusse: Conflict of greatness and errors endures (Reusse) pg. 3
- Valencia to start at 3B in MLB debut; Hardy sits vs. King Felix (Christensen) pg. 4
- To understand why MLB needs more replay, listen carefully (Christensen) pg. 4
- Twins mount no offense against Seattle ace (Smith) pg. 5
- Twins' Valencia is hoping to make a quick impression (Smith) pg. 6
- Twins ticked and welcome replay talk (Smith) pg. 7
- Pavano, Twins sunk by long ball (Thesier) pg. 8
- Valencia records first hit in debut (Thesier) pg. 9
- Twins-A's matchup could be homer happy (Schlegel) pg. 11
- Mackey: Rick Anderson brings words of wisdom (Mackey) pg. 12
- Twins toppled in loss to Mariners (Booth) pg. 13
- Twins-Athletics Preview (STATS) pg. 14
- Rochester Red Wings quell the Tides in shutout (Mandelaro) pg. 15

---

### **Twins hit skids on the road again**

**The mariners gave up only one run for the third night in a row, dropping the Twins to 1-6 in their past seven away from home.**

**By Joe Christensen / Star Tribune – 6/4/10**

SEATTLE - One reason the Twins looked formidable earlier this season is they were winning on the road. After going 35-47 away from home two years ago and 38-43 last year, they won seven of their first 10 road games.

But by Thursday night, it looked like the same old story, as the Twins flailed away against Mariners righthander Felix Hernandez. A 19-game winner last year, Hernandez notched 10 strikeouts in eight innings, as Seattle defeated the Twins 4-1 at Safeco Field.

Carl Pavano (5-6) took the loss after giving up four runs on eight hits in seven innings. The big blow was a three-run homer by Jose Lopez in the third inning.

"It's a disturbing loss," Pavano said. "We needed to come out of this at least splitting the series. Their guy [Hernandez] threw a helluva ballgame. He really got stronger as the game wore on and he shut down a really good lineup."

The part that bothered Pavano most was giving up five stolen bases in the first three innings, including three by Ichiro Suzuki.

"I make my catcher [Joe Mauer] look bad when I'm the one that needs to be making those adjustments," Pavano said. "So it's a little bit embarrassing,"

The Twins fell to 13-14 on the road, including 1-6 in their past seven away from Target Field.

Seattle fell to 19-31 after Monday's loss to the Twins but won the final three games of the series, holding the Twins to one run each night. It's the first time since Aug. 5-7 the Twins have been held to one run or fewer in three consecutive games.

"We're going to get out of it like we always do," left fielder Delmon Young said. "You always go through ruts. We're not going to lose any sleep because we were down with [J.J.] Hardy, [Michael] Cuddyer and [Orlando] Hudson out today. We didn't have a full lineup."

Hernandez (3-4) gave up one run on five hits, dropping his ERA to 3.26. Four of his strikeouts came in the eighth inning. After Denard Span and Matt Tolbert went down on strikes, Joe Mauer struck out but reached first on a wild pitch. That allowed Hernandez to face one more batter, and he blew a fastball clocked at 95 miles per hour by Justin Morneau for strike three.

Seattle had been 0-7 in Hernandez's previous seven starts, but he'd deserved far better.

"Tough night at the plate for us," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "I think Hernandez does that to a lot of teams."

Hernandez survived a scary moment in the first inning. After Mauer hit a two-out double, Morneau hit a screaming liner to center. Hernandez reeled backward, avoiding injury, and Mauer scored the Twins' lone run.

Pavano didn't let a runner past first base over his final three innings, finishing the seventh.

"I just kept them off base," he said, chuckling. "When you're in the windup, no one's stealing on you. It's something I've got to work on. I'm sure it's frustrating for the coaching staff and the guys behind me. I've just got to do a better job at it."

## **Valencia thrilled, even if his number is 79**

**By Joe Christensen / Star Tribune – 6/4/10**

SEATTLE — Danny Valencia had a Twins jersey with his name and No. 79 hanging in his locker Thursday when he arrived at Safeco Field.

Valencia hadn't worn No. 79 since spring training in 2009. This year in big league camp, he wore No. 19, but after hazing their top third base prospect all spring, the team's veterans couldn't resist.

"I don't care, I'll wear whatever number they want me to," Valencia said. "I'm just thrilled to be here."

The team had Valencia's No. 19 ready in time to make his major league debut against Mariners righthander Felix Hernandez. He hit an infield single in his first at-bat, beating out a dribbler to third in a 4-1 loss to Seattle.

The Twins plan to send Valencia back to Class AAA Rochester after this weekend's series in Oakland, since they will need a roster spot with Michael Cuddyer returning from the bereavement list after attending his father-in-law's funeral.

"Maybe things can change — they always do — but yes, I would think he'd go right back," manager Ron Gardenhire said.

Meanwhile, Valencia, 25, will get a few games to show what he can do. He was batting .298 with 15 doubles and 24 RBI in 48 games for Rochester.

Those numbers include a .330 batting average in May. But because he's a corner infield prospect, one of his season stats sticks out — zero home runs.

"It's weird," said Valencia, who hit 14 home runs last year in the minors, including seven for Rochester. "I started out slow in April. I just wasn't hitting balls in the air. I was hitting a bunch of doubles, and my average was going up and up and up. I was happy about that, and I wasn't thinking about home runs."

Defensively, the strong-armed Valencia committed just four errors, but the Twins know he has things to improve.

"The reports said he's laying back on too many balls right now, so we'll talk about being aggressive and getting the ball," Gardenhire said. "You can't trust your arm all the time because the game's pretty fast up here."

The Twins have seen several of their prospects thrive during brief stints in the majors this year. Infielder Luke Hughes homered in his first major league at-bat. Catcher Wilson Ramos went 7-for-9 in his first two games. Shortstop Trevor Plouffe went 2-for-5 in his major league debut.

"Hopefully I don't disappoint, but man they really set the bar high," Valencia said.

Asked what the Twins have told those players to help them succeed, Gardenhire said, "Don't try to change your game and do too much. Whatever got you here, just keep doing it. Just have fun, enjoy it. It's a chance to get to the big leagues, get your first swings. Take it all in and enjoy it."

Valencia will try, even if the hazing continues. "I'm sure there's a lot of it coming my way," he said, "and I'm looking forward to it."

### **Patrick Reusse: Conflict of greatness and errors endures**

**There is luck in baseball, as in life, and the rules shouldn't be changed on the fly because of one glaring botched call.**

**By Patrick Reusse / Star Tribune – 6/4/10**

Ian Punnett is a radio host and a pastor. Earlier this week, I ran into him in a building where we work and Punnett was wearing his collar and carrying a Bible. On Thursday morning, I saw Punnett again and he said:

"So, baseball is considering a change to that call to make it a perfect game."

Punnett was in civilian clothes this time, so I didn't feel quite as bad about slipping in a couple of crude adjectives while assuring the pastor there was no way Bud Selig and his brain trust could be that stupid.

Selig might have declared the 2002 All-Star Game a tie, but that was a glorified exhibition. Baseball Bud wasn't going to destroy his game's 134-year foundation for the sake of a feeble public relations gesture, was he?

On Thursday, there was a media cacophony trying to reverse the reality that umpire Jim Joyce had missed a call that cost a perfect game for Detroit pitcher Armando Galarraga. These voices were more interested in pandering to a naïve public rather than the ideal that baseball doesn't change rules on the fly.

Galarraga had been saved early in Wednesday's ninth inning on a tremendous catch by Austin Jackson, the Tigers' dazzling rookie in center field. And on the last out that wasn't, first baseman Miguel Cabrera made the blunder of ranging far to his right, stealing the routine bouncer from second baseman Carlos Guillen and making the play at first unnecessarily close.

These things don't change the fact Joyce booted the call, but they do emphasize that a big-league ballgame is a constant conflict between greatness and mistakes.

In those couple of minutes after the call, Joyce's mistake could have been corrected if he had called for a consultation with the other umps or if one of those umps was certain enough in what he saw to approach Joyce and suggest a reversal of the call.

These things did not happen. Galarraga retired the 28th Cleveland batter, getting a shutout, congratulations, an emotional apology from Joyce and, on Thursday, a Corvette from the Tigers -- all in all, not too bad.

Five days earlier, Philadelphia's Roy Halladay recorded a perfect game that was assisted by plate umpire Mike DiMuro's 2-foot-wide strike zone. On Wednesday, Galarraga lost his perfect game to a missed umpire's call.

So, what's the suggestion, panderers: The commissioner's office goes to replay to grant Galarraga his perfect game and then takes a second look at a couple of Halladay pitches that should have been a ball four and take away his spot on the list of perfection?

There is luck in baseball, as in every other sport and as in life.

Galarraga had the good luck to face a feeble Cleveland lineup and to have Jackson in center field -- and then on the 27th out, that luck turned. Halladay had the luck of drawing DiMuro as the plate umpire, and his luck hung tough for nine innings.

There's no doubt that Wednesday's dramatic events in Detroit will cause Selig to capitulate and add more replay to our grand old game. The first such move was to help the umpires with home run calls -- much-needed when you consider the meandering yellow lines and flower-garden barriers and hard-to-see foul poles in modern ballparks.

Selig now plans to talk with the unions, the umpires and the players, to decide where to go with replay. It's not that complicated:

No NFL-style challenge system. No manager demand for a review. Simply grant the umpires the right to look at a replay when a chief and his crew feel the need to make certain an extra-close call was correct.

We have found with the replay for home runs that it's counterproductive for managers to throw their ridiculous tantrums. And we'll probably find the same is true with expanded replay:

Ask and the umpires might take a second look. Scream and get ejected.

This can work, but not to change anything for Armando Galarraga. As per the rules that existed on June 2, 2010, he will forever have thrown a one-hitter.

But, Armando, enjoy the Corvette and get ready for next start. Those come every five days and instantly make old news out of the last one.

## **Valencia to start at 3B in MLB debut; Hardy sits vs. King Felix**

**By Joe Christensen / Star Tribune – 6/3/10**

SEATTLE -- Danny Valencia will start at third base tonight in his major league debut, and J.J. Hardy, who still has soreness in his left wrist, is getting a night off with the Twins facing Felix Hernandez.

Updates to come...

**Update:** Manager Ron Gardenhire said Valencia likely will return to Class AAA Rochester after the weekend series in Oakland. The Twins will need the roster spot when Michael Cuddyer returns from the bereavement list.

"Maybe things can change, they always do, but yes, I would think he'd go right back," Gardenhire said.

J.J. Hardy said a day off today, and taking fewer swings in batting practice, should help him be able to play through the soreness in his left wrist.

Orlando Hudson is taking ground balls at second base during batting practice but there were no plans for him to start swinging a bat. Gardenhire said Hudson is day-to-day.

### **TWINS (31-22)**

1. Denard Span, CF
2. Matt Tolbert, 2B
3. Joe Mauer, C
4. Justin Morneau, 1B
5. Jim Thome, DH
6. Jason Kubel, RF
7. Delmon Young, LF
8. Danny Valencia, 3B
9. Nick Punto, SS

Starting pitcher: RH Carl Pavano (5-5, 3.99 ERA)

### **MARINERS (21-31)**

1. Ichiro Suzuki, CF
2. Chone Figgins, 2B
3. Franklin Gutierrez, CF
4. Jose Lopez, 3B
5. Milton Bradley, DH
6. Casey Kotchman, 1B
7. Josh Wilson, SS
8. Rob Johnson, C
9. Michael Saunders, LF

Starting pitcher: RH Felix Hernandez (2-4, 3.50 ERA)

*Safeco Field. First pitch: 7:10 p.m. TV: FSN. Twins Radio Network*

## **To understand why MLB needs more replay, listen carefully**

**By Joe Christensen / Star Tribune – 6/3/10**

SEATTLE -- You had to feel for Twins second baseman Matt Tolbert after Wednesday night's 2-1, 10-inning loss to the Mariners.

It wasn't just the game-ending play that was sticking with Tolbert. He was thinking about Casey Kotchman's one-out infield single in the 10th inning.

"I should have made the first play," Tolbert said. "If I get a throw off, it doesn't even lead to that."

He was thinking about the fifth inning, when Milton Bradley stole second base en route to eventually scoring Seattle's first run. Joe Mauer's throw beat Bradley to the base, but Tolbert tripped and couldn't make the tag.

"Joe had the guy," Tolbert said. "Perfect throw, just my fault. So then, he doesn't score, so everything counts."

Later, when asked about how well he pitched, Kevin Slowey reminded reporters of one of Tolbert's better moments from the game.

"We're mixing pitches up pretty well," Slowey said. "We've had some great plays from our defense. You think about the double play that Tolbert turned [in the seventh inning] -- that's not an easy double play."

Tolbert didn't need to see a replay to know Josh Wilson was out at second base on the game's final play.

"I thought he was out for sure," Tolbert said. "I couldn't believe it."

Manager Ron Gardenhire left no doubt.

"The replay shows he's out, bottom line," he said. "We don't need to talk about that anymore. It's all out there for you. Just go watch the replays of it."

All of us did. All of us have. Over and over. We can watch that replay on the highlight shows, and we're sure that call would be overturned if MLB expanded the use of instant replay.

That's why I believe it's time for MLB to strongly consider expanding replay. I talked about it in my postgame video. When you listen to Jim Joyce's comments from Detroit after Armando Galarraga's almost perfect game, you have to believe the umpires would support this, too.

It would have to be done efficiently. Perhaps each manager could have one challenge per game, and the decisions could be made in a central location with all the HD technology the umpires are given.

Think of how differently Wednesday might have been for Galarraga and the Twins, if baseball would adjust with the times.

NOTE: Check back later for tonight's starting lineups, as the Twins try to figure out a way to solve Felix Hernandez and salvage a four-game split at Safeco Field.

## **Twins mount no offense against Seattle ace** **Pavano can't match Seattle's Hernandez**

**By Kelsie Smith / Pioneer Press – 6/4/10**

SEATTLE — Joe Mauer called for time and trotted out to the pitcher's mound. He patted Carl Pavano on the back, offering the starter a pep talk and a pause as Ichiro Suzuki settled in safely at third base during the Mariners' 4-1 win over the Twins on Thursday night at Safeco Field.

At that point, Seattle's leadoff hitter likely needed a breather as well. He'd walked and stolen third base his first time up, then singled in the third inning and stole second and third.

Suzuki's third stolen base of the game was Seattle's fifth in the first three innings against Minnesota's slow-to-home starter. In those five attempts, Mauer managed to contest with a throw just once. For Pavano, it was a reminder of a costly mistake the night before, when Kevin Slowey failed to hold Milton Bradley on second. Bradley stole third easily and later scored on a sacrifice fly in Seattle's 2-1 win.

But Suzuki's swipe of third didn't prove as costly for Pavano as did his first pitch to third baseman Jose Lopez in the same inning. With Suzuki on third and Franklin Gutierrez on first via walk, Lopez smashed Pavano's 83-mph hanging slider over the fence in left field. The three-run shot completed the scoring in a four-run Seattle third inning that saw a 1-0 Twins lead shift to a 4-1 Mariners edge.

"The loss was disappointing, the way they ran on me was disappointing," Pavano said. "I was kind of fighting myself trying to find my mechanics and I didn't want to take my focus off making quality pitches, but I make my catcher look bad when I'm the one who needs to make those adjustments. It's kind of embarrassing."

For the Twins, it was a third straight night bereft of any meaningful offense and the first time since Aug. 5-7, 2007, that Minnesota has been held to one or no runs in three straight games. The 3-1 series loss also signaled a third straight loss to a team that won just eight games in May and entered Thursday's game seven games back and in last place in the American League West.

As it had the night before, the Twins' lineup generated few threats against Seattle ace Felix Hernandez, a king who lately seemed dethroned. Despite compiling a 3.50 earned-run average in his first 11 starts this season, Hernandez brought a 2-4 record into Thursday's game with his team 0-7 in his starts dating to April 26.

The Twins' run came in the first inning. Mauer hit a two-out double to center and Justin's Morneau singled him home. From there, Minnesota managed just four baserunners in the next seven innings against Hernandez, and not one of those four moved beyond first base.

In Hernandez's eighth and final inning of the evening, he struck out four batters, getting Denard Span and Matt Tolbert on called K's, then letting Mauer reach first on a wild pitch strikeout. He finished off the inning by freezing Morneau on three straight strikes. It was the third time in Mariners history a pitcher has recorded four strikeouts in one inning.

"They pitched very well against us in this series," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said of losses to Jason Vargas, Cliff Lee and Hernandez. "They're great pitchers, and you have to put swings on them, too. They shut us down."

Earlier in the game, one night after being on the wrong end of a controversial call at second base, the Twins benefited from another contested call.

With runners on first and third and two outs in Seattle's fourth, Gardenhire made an uncharacteristic visit to the mound. Gardenhire almost never takes a trip to speak with a pitcher, leaving that task to pitching coach Rick Anderson. And this trip, it seemed, had little to do with pitching.

Immediately after the manager's visit, Pavano turned and threw to Nick Punto at second base, and second base umpire Jerry Meals signaled an out.

On the previous play, a Suzuki flyout to center field, Michael Saunders (on first via single) made it all the way to second before doubling back once Span made the catch. The Twins apparently thought Saunders touched second upon his arrival at the bag then stepped toward third and did not tag second base again upon his departure, as is necessary. Umpires apparently agreed and the bizarre 8-1-6 delayed double play ended the inning.

Replays, however, suggested that Saunders held the base, meaning once he stepped on the bag, he didn't step off again until he returned to first base.

This time, the call went the Twins' way. And, again, the outcome did not.

"It's a disturbing loss," Pavano said. "We needed to come out of this with at least splitting the series, and we didn't do that."

## **Twins' Valencia is hoping to make a quick impression**

**By Kelsie Smith / Pioneer Press – 6/3/10**

SEATTLE — Danny Valencia entered the Twins' clubhouse at Safeco Field Thursday afternoon to find his name in the starting lineup and his first big league jersey hanging in his locker. Only instead of the No. 19 the team announced Valencia would wear, sewn under his last name was the number 79, the number he wore in his first big league spring training.

"They were just trying to mess with me," Valencia said of the prank. "I don't care. I'll wear whatever number they want me to wear. I'm just thrilled to be here. Whatever they want me to wear, I'll wear — triple digits, whatever."

Valencia's actual No. 19 game jersey was hanging inside his locker, and he put it to use right away, playing third base, batting eighth against Seattle ace Felix Hernandez and hoping to live up to some impressive rookie debuts from Twins players this season (see Wilson Ramos' five hits, Luke Hughes' home run and Trevor Plouffe's 2 for 5 with a double and two runs batted in).

"They set the bar high," Valencia said. "Hopefully, I don't disappoint, but, man, they set the bar high."

Valencia said he hopes, more than anything, to make a good impression on the major league club, and he likely won't have long to do so. Manager Ron Gardenhire said that when Michael Cuddyer returns from the bereavement list Monday or Tuesday, Valencia is almost certainly the player who will head out.

"I would think Danny would be going right back after he finishes this weekend," Gardenhire said.

"Things can change, of course; they always do. But yes, I would think he would go right back."

One of the Twins' biggest issues with Valencia in the past has been the infielder's defense, and on Thursday Gardenhire said scouting reports have said Valencia has a tendency to sit back on balls hit to him.

"He's got a very strong arm. Sometimes guys with strong arms rely on that too much," Gardenhire said. "We'll talk about being aggressive and coming to get the ball. You (can't) lay back up here and trust your arm all the time. The game's pretty fast up here, faster than it is down there. I'll talk to him before we start."

**Hardy rests sore wrist:** Shortstop J.J. Hardy, still dealing with lingering pain in the wrist that landed him on the disabled list last month, was out of the starting lineup Thursday. Gardenhire said he wanted to give Hardy a chance to spell that wrist.

Hardy said the pain in his left wrist was never completely gone when he returned from the DL, and when he was activated he began doing extra work in the batting cage, trying to iron out some issues he was having with his swing.

"The more swings I took the more sore it was getting," he said. "I was just planning on limiting my swings and staying in (the lineup), but if he wants to give me a day off then it's definitely not going to hurt."

Hardy did not take batting practice Wednesday or Thursday and said he likely will continue to take BP off for a few days in hopes that limiting his swings will ease the pain. He does not anticipate missing any more time.

"I definitely don't want to be playing with it like this for the rest of the season. Whatever I have to do to get it out of there, I can take less swings in BP and play in the games until it kind of starts to go away," said Hardy, who originally injured his left wrist on a slide into third base in May. "When I came back it was something I thought I could play through, and I really feel like I can. It's just getting more irritated the more swings that I take."

**Hudson still on the mend:** Gardenhire said he told Orlando Hudson on Wednesday that he expected the second baseman would need a couple more days to rest his injured left wrist, and Hudson replied that he thought that sounded right.

But Gardenhire said the team won't know whether Hudson can play in Oakland until he starts to swing again. Hudson took grounders Wednesday, Gardenhire said, and his wrist hurt during that activity.

## **Twins ticked and welcome replay talk** **Hardy in favor of a challenge system**

**By Kelsie Smith / Pioneer Press – 6/4/10**

SEATTLE — Unlike Jim Joyce, Dale Scott didn't have to wipe tears of regret from his eyes before Thursday night's first pitch. He didn't have to worry about his family, face threats from crazed fans or see his name splashed over all sorts of newspapers and websites. He didn't become a trending topic on Twitter or have lawmakers lobbying Commissioner Bud Selig to overturn his call.

But maybe Scott, the umpire who made a controversial safe call at second base in the 10th inning of Wednesday night's Twins-Mariners game at Safeco Field — a call that would have ended the inning and instead ended the game in a 2-1 Twins loss — went to sleep thinking about that play, wishing he'd had the chance to look at it once more.

Thanks to Joyce's botched play more than 2,300 miles away that cost Detroit starter Armando Galarraga a perfect game Wednesday, Scott might get that chance in the future. Selig released a statement Thursday saying that, in light of Detroit incident, he would consider expanding the use of replay and would review umpiring.

Twins shortstop J.J. Hardy, who was manning second when Scott made his dubious safe call Wednesday night, allowing a runner to score safely from second, said he's all for it.

"The way it's worked out for home runs, how many times the call has been changed because of replay, yeah, I think so," Hardy said when asked if replay use should be expanded. "It shouldn't get out of hand where you can challenge every single pitch and be like, 'That's not a strike, go check and see if it's a strike.' But in situations that it changes a game, yeah, I think that they should be able to.

"It's starting to happen in all sports. You look at tennis and they can challenge three times if they think a ball was in or out. If they're right, it doesn't count as a challenge. Why not something like that, where maybe the manager could challenge a call? I don't know what they're so worried about."

The play at second that ended Wednesday's game slipped past a baseball world still ranting and reeling over Joyce's devastating error in Detroit — a safe call that should have been the third and final out of the ninth inning, finishing the first perfect game in Tigers history — but it was first on Twins manager Ron Gardenhire's mind after the game.

Gardenhire was still fuming in his office when reporters were let into the clubhouse about 15 minutes after the game concluded. When one reporter asked Gardenhire if the team believed Scott got the call wrong, that Matt Tolbert's throw to Hardy at second beat Josh Wilson's arrival at the bag, the manager snapped, "Did you think he was out?"

"The replays show he was out," Gardenhire continued. "Bottom line."

Gardenhire ran out to dispute the call. Asked if in that situation, when one team is slapping hands and filing into the clubhouse, there is really much of a chance for any dispute to be seriously considered, Gardenhire said curtly, "You never win an argument."

Asked on Thursday whether he'd support the expanded use of replay, a still-sullen Gardenhire said he wanted to stay out of the debate. Last July, the day after his team lost to Oakland on a game-ending botched call at home plate, he was not so silent on the matter.

"I've said all along, I want a red flag," Gardenhire said then. "If you use it and you're wrong, you don't get the red flag the rest of the game, but if you use it and you're right, you get your red flag back. It'd save me a lot of money, just throw the red flag. Football has a red flag; why can't we? I'd keep it in my sock like they do."

## **Pavano, Twins sunk by long ball** **Minnesota's offense held to one run in third straight game**

**By Kelly Thesier / MLB.com – 6/4/10**

SEATTLE -- Before the Twins departed Minnesota for their seven-game road trip to the West Coast, manager Ron Gardenhire warned of the tough pitching challenge that his hitters would be facing during their two series against the Mariners and A's.

Turns out, that's exactly what this offense ran into, as it couldn't find a way to tally many runs in Seattle.

As the Twins closed out a four-game set with the Mariners on Thursday night, they were held to just one run for the third straight game, as they suffered a 4-1 loss in the series finale at Safeco Field.

This time it was Felix Hernandez, Seattle's young ace right-hander, who shut down Minnesota's offense. Hernandez held the Twins to just one run over eight innings, scattering five hits while striking out nine batters -- including four in one inning.



"A tough night at the plate for us," Gardenhire said after the loss. "I think Hernandez does that to a lot of teams, and he was pretty sharp tonight. He had a great fastball. I think early he threw a lot of fastballs and late a lot of breaking balls, along with a 95 mph fastball. So, a tough night offensively."

It wasn't the only night that the Twins' offense scuffled against the Mariners' pitching staff. Hernandez was just the latest starter for Seattle to shut down Minnesota. Cliff Lee and Jason Vargas also allowed just one run during their respective outings, and the Mariners' bullpen did not allow a run over the final three contests of the series.

"To keep that team to one run over three straight games is pretty impressive," Seattle manager Don Wakamatsu said. "Felix was just outstanding."

The last time the Twins had been held to one run or less in three straight games came back on Aug. 5-7, 2007.

"We go through droughts where we don't score any runs, but we always get out of it," said left fielder Delmon Young. "By the end of the year, we always end up near the league lead in runs scored. So I'm not going to lose any sleep over it. We were down with [J.J.] Hardy, [Orlando] Hudson and [Michael] Cuddyer out today. So it's not like we had our full lineup and weren't scoring any runs."

The Twins' lone run came in the first inning, as they actually took a 1-0 lead off Hernandez. Joe Mauer doubled with two outs before Justin Morneau drilled a RBI liner into center field that forced Hernandez to duck out of the way. But after that hit, Minnesota wasn't able to get much going.

Hernandez retired 22 of the final 27 batters he faced as the Mariners, who were just 19-30 at the start of this series, picked up their third straight victory over Minnesota.

The Mariners had lost seven straight contests with Hernandez on the mound entering Thursday's game. But this time, Seattle was able to get enough offense off Minnesota starter Carl Pavano to give the veteran righty just his third win of the year and his first since April 21.

Seattle did all of its damage in the third inning, thanks in large part to a three-run homer by Jose Lopez. Pavano didn't help himself by allowing the Mariners to steal a total of five bases over the first three innings, including three steals of third. Only once in the five steals did Mauer even get to attempt a throw from behind the plate. And the five steals were two shy of the Twins' club record for most stolen bases (seven) allowed in a nine-inning game.

"The loss was disappointing, the way they ran on me is disappointing," Pavano said. "I was kind of fighting myself, trying to find my mechanics a little bit. I didn't want to take my focus off making quality pitches. But I make my catcher look bad when I'm the one who needs to be making those adjustments. So it's kind of embarrassing."

Pavano settled down after that, allowing just the four runs over seven innings while giving up eight hits, walking two and striking out five.

Still, it wasn't enough on a night when the Twins were facing a pitcher like Hernandez, who only seemed to get better as his outing went along.

The right-hander's fastball continued to hit the mid-90s late in the contest, and he struck out four batters in the eighth inning after Mauer reached when a third strike in the dirt bounced away from catcher Rob Johnson. It was the third time in Mariners history that a pitcher recorded four strikeouts in an inning.

"It's a disturbing loss," Pavano said. "We needed to come out of this with at least splitting the series, and we didn't do that."

Things won't get much easier pitching-wise for the Twins as the club heads to Oakland. On tap for Minnesota in the first contest will be left-hander Dallas Braden, who made headlines last month for the perfect game he threw on Mother's Day. And Braden is the only one of the three A's pitchers the Twins will face who, right now, holds a losing record.

"Like we said before, good pitching on this road trip," Gardenhire said. "And we'll have to make adjustments."

## **Valencia records first hit in debut**

**Third baseman replaces Cuddyer, who is on bereavement list**

**By Kelly Thesier / MLB.com – 6/4/10**

SEATTLE -- When Danny Valencia arrived in the visiting clubhouse at Safeco Field on Thursday afternoon, a Twins road jersey was waiting for him in his locker. It was a jersey bearing No. 79, not No. 19 as he had donned this year in Spring Training.

So had the rookie third baseman decided to switch back to a previous number he had worn?

"Acutally, they were trying to mess with me," Valencia said of the veterans on the team. "I'll wear whatever number they give me. I'm just thrilled to be here. Whatever they want me to wear, I'll wear it. Triple digits -- whatever."

The rookie treatment certainly hasn't evaded Valencia, but the 25-year-old is more than willing to take it since it means he's finally getting his shot in the big leagues. Valencia was in the lineup on Thursday night against the Mariners, making his Major League debut at third base. Wearing No. 19, he went 1-for-3 with a single.

"I really wasn't expecting it," Valencia said of this callup from Triple-A Rochester. "It caught me completely off guard."

Heading into Spring Training, Valencia was considered in the mix for the Twins' starting third-base job, although the club wanted to see some improvement out of him. And the message Minnesota gave to Valencia when he was sent down was to become more consistent both offensively and defensively.

Valencia was batting .292 with 24 RBIs in 48 games for the Red Wings this season. But while Valencia has 15 doubles, a noticeable difference for the third baseman, so far, is that he has no home runs.

"When I've hit them, I don't normally hit one here and then another one seven days later," Valencia said of homers. "It's always been very streaky for me. Obviously I didn't get one of those streaks at all down there. Hopefully it will come soon. It's something I think about, but I'm not trying to go up to the plate and think, 'Hit a home run.'"

Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said the reports have been positive on Valencia, except for that he has been laying back on a few balls lately while playing third base. With his strong arm, Valencia been able to get away with that at Rochester, but Gardenhire wants to make sure he works on getting to balls better up here.

"We'll talk about being aggressive and coming and getting the ball," Gardenhire said. "You can't lay back up here and trust your arm all the time. The game is pretty fast up here, faster than it is down there. I'll talk to him before we start and just remind him to continue to separate the offense and defense."

Valencia's stint in the Majors is expected to be short-lived. He was called up when outfielder Michael Cuddyer was placed on the bereavement list following the passing of his father-in-law. Cuddyer is expected to rejoin the team on Tuesday in Minnesota, and so Valencia will likely be headed back to Rochester at that time, Gardenhire said.

But like some of the other prospects to make their debut this season for the Twins, such as Trevor Plouffe and Wilson Ramos, Valencia just hopes to make a good impression during the time that he's here.

"They set the bar high," Valencia said of that group of other prospects. "Hopefully I don't disappoint. ... I'm really thrilled to be here and happy they've given me this opportunity."

#### **Hardy takes day off to rest wrist**

SEATTLE -- Shortstop J.J. Hardy was given the day off on Thursday to rest his left wrist.

Hardy has been playing through some soreness in his left wrist since returning from the disabled list in May, but he felt that a day off, plus taking fewer swings, should help reduce some of the irritation.

The shortstop, who said his wrist only bothers him while swinging, didn't take part in batting practice in either of the past two days. While Hardy expects to play during the upcoming series in Oakland, he probably won't hit before the game over the next couple days as he tried to give his wrist a little more rest.

"I definitely don't want to be playing with it like this for the rest of the season," Hardy said. "Whatever I have to do to get it out of there, I can take less swings in BP and just play in the games until it kind of starts to go away."

#### **Twins' take on expanded replay**

SEATTLE -- Twins manager Ron Gardenhire has joked in the past that he would like to have a red challenge flag like NFL head coaches carry and be able to use that flag in order to challenge questionable calls during games via limited instant replay.

So with Commissioner Bud Selig's statement on Thursday that he'll now review the idea of expanding instant replay following umpire Jim Joyce's admission of a missed call that prevented Tigers pitcher Armando Galarraga's perfect game on Wednesday night, Gardenhire was asked again if he thinks exploring the idea is a good thing.

"I'm not even going to get involved in that stuff," Gardenhire said. "I can't do anything about it. It is what it is, and if they want to make changes to help the game, that's fine."

The Twins appeared to have a bad call end their contest against the Mariners on Wednesday night, when Josh Wilson was ruled safe at second base on a flip from second baseman Matt Tolbert to shortstop J.J. Hardy for an attempted forceout. Replays showed that Wilson was out, as the ball reached Hardy's glove before Wilson touched the bag.

Hardy said Thursday that he would be in favor of replay expanding, having already watched it be successful in regards to home run calls. His only concern would be that replay would be used in excess, where every play or every pitch could be reviewed.

"In situations where it changes the game, I think they should be able to [use replay]," Hardy said. "It's starting to happen in all sports. You look at tennis and they can challenge three times if they think a ball is in or out. If they're right, it doesn't count as a challenge. Why not something like that, where maybe the manager could challenge a call? I don't know what they'd be so worried about."

Hardy was one of the many players to throw his support behind Joyce as well. The umpire, who visibly showed emotion when getting handed the lineup card from Galarraga on Thursday, is highly regarded by both players and coaches throughout the league.

"It sucks for guys like him that you know he really cares about his job, and he really is trying and he feels bad," Hardy said. "It's going to be a call that he'll be remembered for for the rest of his life. As good of an umpire as he is, that's going to be the one call. And that sucks for him, because he is one of the better umpires out there."

#### **Worth noting**

Twins second baseman Orlando Hudson remains day-to-day with his sore left wrist. Manager Ron Gardenhire said that Hudson took some ground balls during batting practice, but he has yet to pick up a bat. So the feeling is that it will still be a couple more days until Hudson is ready to return to the lineup, ... With Ken Griffey Jr. retiring, the Twins' pitching staff will have one less prolific slugger to face, and Griffey certainly did his share of damage vs. Minnesota in his career. Griffey hit 42 of his 630 career homers against the Twins, which was the most he had against any opponent.

## **Twins-A's matchup could be homer happy**

**By John Schlegel / MLB.com – 6/4/10**

When the A's return home to the Oakland Coliseum to take on the Twins this weekend, it'll be interesting to see whether they still have the power bats they brandished on the road.

The A's cranked out a season-high four homers Thursday and have homered in eight of their past nine games heading into their meeting with the Twins -- who have been doing some road bashing of their own.

When lefty Dallas Braden takes the mound for Oakland and Scott Baker does the same for Minnesota in the opener Friday night, it'll be up to them to keep the power turned down at the Coliseum.

Kurt Suzuki had a pair of homers, his second successive day of going deep, and Jack Cust hit his first of the season as the A's racked up four homers in their series-finale victory at Boston.

The A's, actually, were one of only two teams that hadn't hit more than two home runs in a game before Thursday's outburst, leaving the Astros as the only team in the Majors with that distinction.

Entering Thursday's game, the Twins had homered in three consecutive road games and had hit 33 of their 46 homers on the road.

#### **Twins: With Cuddyer out, Valencia's in**

Twins right fielder Michael Cuddyer missed the first of four games on Thursday, after the death of his father-in-law. Cuddyer will miss the series with the A's and rejoin the team in Minnesota on Tuesday for the start of a series with the Royals. In his absence, Danny Valencia made his Major League debut and went 1-for-3. He is expected to get at least two starts in Oakland against lefties Braden and Gio Gonzalez. ... Shortstop J.J. Hardy was given the day off on Thursday to rest his left wrist. Hardy has been playing through some soreness in the wrist since returning from the disabled list in May, but he felt that a day off, plus taking fewer swings, should help reduce some of the irritation. ... Twins second baseman Orlando Hudson remains day-to-day with his sore left wrist. Manager Ron Gardenhire said that Hudson took some ground balls during batting practice, but he has yet to pick up a bat.

### **Athletics: Crisp needs time for rehab**

Coco Crisp, who has an intercostal injury in his right rib cage, is getting closer to returning to baseball activities, but A's manager Bob Geren said Crisp will need Minor League rehab games before returning to the A's. Crisp is eligible to come off the disabled list on Tuesday but isn't likely to do so. He was on the DL earlier in the season with a fractured left pinkie finger. "This isn't like the finger. He'll need to get a feel for the game again and test that side," Geren said. ... The A's will know more upon returning home about the status of starter Brett Anderson and right fielder Ryan Sweeney. Anderson left Thursday's game after just two innings with left elbow soreness, similar to what put him on the DL last month. Sweeney left the game after being hit in the head during an outfield collision in foul territory with second baseman Mark Ellis.

### **Worth noting**

This is the first meeting of the season between the two teams, with the Twins holding a 275-266 all-time advantage since the A's moved to Oakland in 1968. They will meet twice more this season, both times in Minnesota -- Aug. 13-15 and Sept. 17-19.

## **Mackey: Rick Anderson brings words of wisdom**

**By Phil Mackey / 1500ESPN.com – 6/4/10**

I'll be honest. I'm a little bit disappointed pitching coach Rick Anderson didn't come out to chat with Carl Pavano during Thursday night's 4-1 loss at Seattle.

Not that Pavano necessarily needed a mound visit. With the exception of allowing a three-run bomb to Jose Lopez in the fourth inning, Pavano pitched pretty well -- seven innings, four earned runs, eight hits, two walks, and five strikeouts.

But the potential "mustache meeting" between Anderson and Pavano would have been epic. Anderson wears his like a savvy Don Juan. Pavano wears his like a dirty Don Quixote. Both styles are admirable.

Of course, chatting about facial hair generally isn't the primary reason for a mound visit.

Take Wednesday night, for example. The Twins trailed Seattle 1-0 in the bottom of the sixth. Kevin Slowey -- who had only pitched beyond the sixth inning twice all season -- started to lose himself a bit, running the count to 1-0 with a high fastball to Mike Sweeney with runners already standing on first and second.

Anderson came to the mound, relayed a few quick, magic words, and Slowey induced a tapper back to the mound with a looping breaking ball.

Easy, right?

Of course, the Twins went on to lose in controversial fashion, 2-1, but at the time Slowey kept his team in the ballgame, which had me wondering: What in the world does Anderson tell his pitchers during these times of turmoil?

"There's been times where, I know Slowey, for one, when I've gone out and said, 'Concentrate on one pitch, Kevin, that's all you need,'" Anderson said in the Target Field clubhouse last week. "And he'll make a pitch, get out of the inning, and he'll come in and say, 'Man, my mind was swimming, but you know that just helped me get right back in line of thinking one pitch at a time.'"

Mound visits serve multiple purposes. If the manager comes walking out, the pitcher is generally doomed. If the catcher trots out to the mound, it could be for one of several reasons. If Roger Dorn strolls over, chances are the pitcher will later be punched in the face.

But when Anderson comes out, he usually brings a soothing message of some sort.

"He's very good at talking according to the situation," Slowey said. "If it's a situation where we're up a lot of runs and I'm out there kind of scuffling, he'll remind me of the score. Or if it's close and I've been making good pitches, he'll come out and just encourage me to make good pitches. I think that's what makes (Anderson) such a great pitching coach, is every situation is unique to him, and he treats it as such."

Nick Blackburn is another interesting case. On May 27, the groundball-conscious Blackburn ran into some trouble at home against the Yankees. With the Twins leading 3-0 in the top of the fourth, Brett Gardner led off with a single left, followed by two fly outs by Alex Rodriguez and Mark Teixeira, and a line drive RBI base hit by Robinson Cano, cutting the lead to 3-1.

Sensing a shift in momentum, and possibly a shift in Blackburn's manner on the mound, Anderson trotted out with some advice on how to keep that sinker down around hitters' shins.

"That's going to be (Anderson's) message to me the majority of this season, just telling me to let it work, don't overthrow anything," Blackburn said after the game. "He said it looked like I was jerking a few pitches, and like I said, relax and let it work.

"I mean, that's pretty stubborn of me to not already know he's going to say that."

Blackburn wound up inducing two groundballs to end the inning. One of them leaked through for a harmless base hit, but the second one ended the inning. He then coasted through seven innings, allowing only two earned runs.

Blackburn has run into similar mechanical issues and mental blocks several times over the last couple seasons, both between starts and during games. Many times, he already knows exactly what Anderson will say, but the message helps regardless.

"I think it's just hearing it helps me realize that maybe I am rushing it a little bit," Blackburn said.

On Monday night, closer Jon Rauch received a visit from Anderson as well. With the Twins clinging to a 5-3 lead in the ninth, Rauch allowed a leadoff double to Jose Lopez and an RBI single to Josh Wilson. Before all hell broke loose, Anderson came out to calm the situation, and Rauch eventually pitched out of the jam.

"Rarely you do mechanical, and rarely you do situational," Anderson said about his visits. "Most of the time when stuff's going on, I say, 'Hey, take a deep breath, slow yourself down, think of one pitch. All you need is one pitch here. Think about executing this one pitch.' Those kind of situations, if you go out there and start telling them about mechanics... their mind is already spinning, so you try to keep it simple."

Speaking of minds spinning, maybe it's better that Anderson didn't come out to visit Pavano on Thursday night after all.

"Usually by the time the pitching coach comes out there, I'm probably so irritated I really don't even remember what he says, to be honest with you," Pavano said last week, leaning back in his Target Field clubhouse chair, stroking his newborn mustache.

"By the time they've made it out there, I've probably made an absolute ass out of myself, and I'm already pissed off."

Ah, the wisdom of a veteran.

## **Twins toppled in loss to Mariners**

**By Tim Booth / Associated Press – 6/3/10**

SEATTLE (AP) -- Felix Hernandez saw both extremes at either end of his start Thursday night: the fear of a blistering liner coming so close he could feel the breeze of the blast whistle past his nose, and the rarity of the four strikeout inning.

In between, Hernandez was the dominant young star Seattle has come to expect.

Hernandez snapped a personal four-game losing streak, allowing one run over eight innings, and Jose Lopez hit a three-run homer to help the Mariners beat AL Central-leading Minnesota 4-1.

Hernandez last won on April 21, and Seattle lost each of his next seven starts.

"I just wanted to do my job. I feel like it's been a year since I win a game," Hernandez said. "Today was big and I hope I can do that every time."

Still, there was a moment of trepidation for every Mariner in the first inning when Hernandez barely avoided getting drilled in the head by Justin Morneau's RBI liner with two outs. It wasn't a wakeup call, but Hernandez became nearly untouchable from there.

After Morneau's hit, Hernandez (3-4) retired 22 of the final 27 batters he faced, and Seattle took three of four from the Twins, holding Minnesota's offense to one run in the final three games. Hernandez also notched himself a little bit of baseball history when he struck out

our Twins in the eighth inning after Joe Mauer reached when a third strike in the dirt bounced away from catcher Rob Johnson.

No problem for Hernandez, who got Morneau looking to end the inning and finish off his night with nine strikeouts.

It was the third time in Mariners' history a pitcher struck out four in an inning.

"That's pretty good, huh?" Hernandez said. "It's been a while since I've won a game. I was pretty excited for that."

During his losing skid, Hernandez had outings where he wasn't the young star Seattle expect, and other times when the Mariners offense simply failed to help him out. In his last start against the Angels, Hernandez threw eight innings giving up one run, and left in a 1-1 game, only to see Seattle lose 5-1.

On Thursday night, Hernandez came through with another strong effort and this time got a bit of offensive help.

In his 150th career start, Hernandez struck out nine and walked one and was still hitting the mid-90s on the radar gun in the eighth inning.

Aside from Mauer's two-out double in the first that center field Franklin Gutierrez appeared to misjudge and couldn't get to despite a diving attempt, all hits Hernandez allowed were singles.

Hernandez's last victory was a complete-game win over Baltimore in late April. David Aardsma pitched the ninth for his 12th save in 15 chances.

"To keep that team to one run over three straight games is pretty impressive," Seattle manager Don Wakamatsu said. "Felix was just outstanding."

Lopez came up with the big blow as part of Seattle's four-run third inning, but the Mariners took advantage of Twins starter Carl Pavano from the start. Seattle stole five bases in the first three innings, three of those by Ichiro Suzuki.

"I made my catcher look bad when I'm the one that should be making the adjustments," Pavano said. "It's kind of embarrassing."

Michael Saunders led off the third with a ground-rule double, then stole third and scored on Suzuki's single. After Suzuki flustered Pavano with two more stolen bases and Gutierrez walked, Lopez jumped on Pavano's first pitch. It was Lopez's second homer in three games.

Pavano (5-6) settled down after the third, but still lost for the third time in four starts. Pavano threw seven innings, giving up eight hits, walking two and striking out five.

"Carl had one bad pitch, one bad inning really," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "That kind of ate him up."

Twins prospect Danny Valencia made his major league debut and reached on an infield single in his first at-bat. Valencia was called up after Wednesday night's game while Michael Cuddyer is on the bereavement list.

NOTES: Seattle 1B Casey Kotchman set a major league record for consecutive chances (2,008) without an error by a first baseman. He bested the record of Kevin Youkilis (2,002) in the second inning. ... The roof at Safeco Field was suddenly closed in the bottom of the seventh as light rain started to fall. ... Gardenhire doesn't expect Valencia's time in the majors, for now, to last beyond Cuddyer's return to the club next week.

## **Twins-Athletics Preview**

**By STATS / SportingNews.com – 6/4/10**

The Oakland Athletics are happy to be returning home, but they probably aren't happy to see the pitcher they'll face Friday night.

The Athletics will try to defeat Minnesota Twins starter Scott Baker for the first time in five tries when the teams begin a weekend series.

Oakland (29-26) has homered a major league-low 12 times at home, where it is 18-9 to tie for the second-best mark in the AL. The Athletics have managed to be successful thanks to a major league-best 2.79 ERA at home.

"Our game is more suited for our ballpark," manager Bob Geren said. "We pitch well, we run the bases well, spray our hits around. We do timely, situational hitting. We're not a real big home run team."

Geren was speaking after his club homered a season-high four times in a 9-8 win at Boston on Thursday. Kurt Suzuki went deep twice and Jack Cust and Kevin Kouzmanoff also homered.

It will be difficult for Oakland to hit one out Friday against Baker (5-4, 4.48 ERA), who's never allowed a homer to the Athletics. He's 4-0 with a 3.24 ERA in four career starts, with three of those victories in Oakland.

Baker, however, has been vulnerable on the road this year, going 1-3 with a 5.86 ERA in five outings. The right-hander earned a 6-3 home victory over Texas on Sunday by allowing three runs over six innings.

His counterpart, Dallas Braden (4-5, 3.60), has turned in his best work this season at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum. Braden is 3-2 with a 2.14 ERA in six starts at home, where he threw a perfect game against Tampa Bay on May 9.

The left-hander hasn't won since that outing, going 0-3 with a 4.13 ERA. He gave up five runs over six innings Sunday in a 10-2 loss at Detroit.

Braden, who is 0-1 with a 2.81 ERA in four career starts against the Twins, continues to insist that a sprained left ankle that plagued him throughout May is not an issue.

"It's attached," he told the Athletics' official website. "That's the last thing that affected me."

Minnesota (31-23) is trying to avoid its first four-game losing streak since July 22-25. The Twins scored a total of three runs in dropping the final three games of their series in Seattle, falling 4-1 on Thursday.

No. 5 hitter Michael Cuddyer missed Thursday's game and will be placed on the bereavement list following the death of his father-in-law. Cuddyer, third on the team with 29 RBIs, will miss this entire series.

Danny Valencia was called up from Triple-A Rochester and went 1 for 3 in his major league debut. Manager Ron Gardenhire said that the right-handed third baseman will start Friday with the southpaw Braden pitching.

Oakland right fielder Ryan Sweeney, batting a team-high .309, left Thursday's game after colliding with second baseman Mark Ellis.

"He was a little disoriented, a little dizzy, so as a precaution he was removed from the game," Geren said.

The A's went 6-4 against the Twins in 2009.

## **Rochester Red Wings quell the Tides in shutout**

**By Jim Mandelaro / DemocratandChronicle.com – 6/4/10**

After using five relievers in Wednesday night's rain-delayed win, the Red Wings returned to action Thursday morning needing a solid outing from starter Jeff Manship.

Mission accomplished.

The right-hander tossed a four-hit shutout as the Wings blanked the Norfolk Tides 9-0 before 7,714 fans at Frontier Field.

"It's funny because I felt terrible warming up," Manship said. "But I was getting ahead and being very efficient."

Manship (3-2) threw only 92 pitches, walked no one and worked a full count only twice. He struck out six batters and lowered his ERA to 3.64.

Wilson Ramos went 5-for-5 for Rochester, meaning the catcher out-hit the entire Norfolk lineup. His two-run double highlighted a six-run sixth.

"I'm very excited, because it's the first five-hit game of my career," Ramos said.

The catcher belted seven hits in his first two big-league games for Minnesota last month but entered Thursday hitting .173 for the Red Wings.

Manship recorded just the second complete-game shutout of his five-year career and became the first Wings pitcher to go the distance this year.

"He said (before the ninth) that he wanted to go out and finish it," Wings manager Tom Nieto said.

"He gave our bullpen a shot in the arm by giving them a day off."

The Wings rocked Tides pitchers for 16 hits. Every Rochester starter had at least one except Jose Morales.

Manship and Norfolk's Brandon Erbe engaged in a classic pitcher's duel for four innings. Erbe entered the day 0-8 with a 6.04 earned-run average but handcuffed the Wings through four innings.

Rochester caught two major breaks in the fifth. A two-out fielding error by second baseman Blake Davis loaded the bases, and Erbe uncorked a wild pitch on a third strike to Morales that would have ended the inning. Ramos scored on the play.

The Wings broke it open with six runs on eight hits in the sixth inning. Ramos' two-run double to left-center made it 3-0.

The Wings strung together five straight hits, including RBI singles from Toby Gardenhire and Brian Dinkelman. Dustin Martin's two-run single made it 7-0.

Brock Peterson doubled in another run in the seventh, and a fielder's choice grounder from Dinkelman made it 9-0.

Notes: Nieto flew home to Land O'Lakes, Fla., after the game. He'll be away until Sunday at the earliest to attend the high school graduation of his son, Marcus. Hitting coach and former Red Wing Floyd Rayford will take over as manager. . . . The green jerseys worn by the Red Wings on Wednesday night were sold at auction and raised nearly \$1,600 for the United Way. The top seller was a No. 1 jersey worn by Wings shortstop Trevor Plouffe, which went for \$105.