



## Minnesota Twins Daily Clips

Thursday, July 28<sup>th</sup> 2011

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### Baker outdueled as Twins take split in Texas

Rhett Bollinger, MLB.com 7/29/11

ARLINGTON -- After Monday night's lopsided loss to the Rangers, the Twins were mostly happy with the way the rest of the four-game series turned out.

They bounced back to take two in a row before losing a tough one on Thursday, as right-hander Scott Baker gave the Twins seven strong innings, but it wasn't enough, as he was outdueled by Rangers left-hander Matt Harrison in a 4-1 loss at the Ballpark in Arlington to force a series split.

"To come back and split the series against the team that has the best home record in the American League, it's not ideal, but you take it," first baseman Michael Cuddyer said. "The margin for error is definitely small, there's no doubt about that."

But there's nothing we can do about these four games. Now we have to look ahead to Oakland and hopefully win that series."

The Twins, who remain six games back of the Tigers in the American League Central, know they can't afford to settle for too many more series splits moving forward, but they can at least take comfort in knowing they went 5-2 this year against the club that represented the AL in last year's World Series.

"I can't say we're satisfied, but after the first game [a 20-6 loss], we played some good quality baseball," Baker said. "We came up a little short today, but they're a tough team. They're the team to beat, just from the teams we've faced. They have a very potent lineup and they're pitching well, so it's a tough combination."

Baker, making his second start since being activated from the disabled list on Saturday after suffering a right flexor muscle strain before the All-Star break, showed no ill effects against a tough Rangers lineup but did come out after the seventh inning after 97 pitches.

"He said he felt all right, not great, but all right," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "I think we're still watching the arm."

Baker allowed just two runs on eight hits while striking out four but took the hard-luck loss, as Harrison was just a bit better. Harrison surrendered just one run on eight hits over 7 1/3 innings, while getting the Twins to ground out 11 times compared to just five flyouts.

"It was a good ballgame," Gardenhire said. "Both starters were very good tonight. Bake was fantastic and their young man was very good tonight. He had all of his pitches working. We only had a couple opportunities, and most of them with two outs, to get a run in but he shut us down"

The Rangers scored the first run in the fourth, when Elvis Andrus, Josh Hamilton and Michael Young laced three straight singles to open the frame. But Baker was able to get out of the jam by getting Nelson Cruz to fly out to right field before Young was caught stealing and Mitch Moreland grounded out on a hard-hit ball to Matt Tolbert at second base.

The Twins had a chance to come back in the fifth, as they loaded the bases with two outs after Jim Thome doubled and Tolbert and Ben Revere reached on infield singles, but Tsuyoshi Nishioka grounded into a fielder's choice to end the frame.

"He's staying out of deep counts, getting a lot of ground balls, and had some quick innings early," Rangers manager Ron Washington said of Harrison. "He executed pitches when things got a little hairy there. Thome leads off with a double and doesn't score, so that's a good thing."

Texas added another run in the bottom of the fifth, coming on a RBI bloop single from Chris Davis to score Yorvit Torrealba, who led off with an opposite-field jam-shot double down the first-base line.

Minnesota finally got on the board on an RBI single from Thome in the sixth to bring home Joe Mauer, who singled to open the inning.

The Rangers added two insurance runs in the eighth. Left-hander Phil Dumatrait came in and allowed the two unearned runs, keyed by a two-out throwing error from third baseman Danny Valencia that scored a run before Moreland added an RBI single.

"If I felt great, I would've asked to go back out there," said Baker, who threw 82 pitches in his last outing. "But just given the situation, I was still trying to be smart about this. I felt given the conditions, I was pretty content with where I was at. I felt good, but you could tell, I was kind of at that threshold."

The Twins were then shut down in the ninth by closer Neftali Feliz, who picked up his 21st save of the season.

"Losing makes it a long trip now," Gardenhire said. "We had a chance to win a series here. We're in a situation here where we need to do that to catch up a little bit."

### **Hamstring strain lands Casilla on disabled list** **Rhett Bollinger, MLB.com 7/28/11**

ARLINGTON -- The Twins received a blow to their middle infield on Thursday, as second baseman Alexi Casilla was diagnosed with a Grade 1 strain to his right hamstring and is expected to be out for two to three weeks, according to head trainer Rick McWane.

Casilla, who injured himself while legging out a double in the ninth inning of Wednesday's 7-2 win against the Rangers, was placed on the 15-day disabled list. Infielder Luke Hughes was recalled from Triple-A Rochester.

Additionally, to bolster their middle-infield depth, the Twins recalled infielder Matt Tolbert from Rochester and optioned left-hander Chuck James to Rochester to give the Twins 12 pitchers on their active roster.

"He's our second-hole hitter and was swinging great and playing great defense," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said of Casilla. "He's doing all the things you'd like to see, and his head has been in the game. And then all of a sudden this happens. Our depth in the middle infield isn't the greatest, so you can't afford too many injuries like that. Some people will have to step up."

Casilla, who was hitting .259/.322/.369 with 15 stolen bases and a team-high 21 doubles in 96 games, said he's hopeful that he can return to action as soon as he's eligible to be activated from the DL on Aug. 12.

"It's pretty much the same as yesterday," Casilla said. "I kind of pulled it a little bit, so I'm going on the DL and going back to Minnesota to take care of it over there. I don't think I'll need a [rehab] assignment. I'll be ready in 15 days. ... I hope they don't send me on an assignment. I'll say no because it's too much time."

In the meantime, the Twins will have to rely on a combination of Tolbert, Hughes and Trevor Plouffe at second base with Casilla out of action.

Tolbert, who hit .181 in 55 games with the Twins before being optioned on July 18, started at second base against the Rangers on Thursday.

And shortstop Tsuyoshi Nishioka is expected to bat second in Casilla's absence, as Gardenhire said he's hopeful he can handle the bat the way Casilla did in the two-hole.

"I'm hoping Nishi handles it very well," Gardenhire said. "When we signed him, we were hoping he'd be at the top of the lineup. So maybe this will get his confidence going a little bit."

### **Texas heat forces Twins indoors**

With the Texas heat reaching 100 degrees for the fourth straight game against the Rangers, the Twins decided to skip outdoor batting practice before Thursday's game, opting to hit indoors instead.

The decision was also made because the club is flying to Oakland after the game to get ready for the three-game series against the A's that begins Friday night.

"We're staying out of the sun," Gardenhire said. "We've done enough work in the sun this week, and it's been hot. So we decided to give them a back-off day to hit in the cage. It was hot yesterday, and the guys have been getting after it. So we decided to back off tonight with the late flight."

### **As Span nears return, trade appears unlikely**

**Rhett Bollinger, MLB.com 7/8/11**

ARLINGTON -- Multiple reports have linked center fielder Denard Span to the Nationals in a trade that would send closer Drew Storen to the Twins, but a baseball source told MLB.com that the Nationals aren't willing to part with their young reliever.

With Storen reportedly out of the picture, it appears less likely the Twins would want to trade Span, who has been out with a concussion suffered on June 3 in a home-plate collision with Royals catcher Brayan Pena.

Span was one of the club's best players before his injury, hitting .294 with a .361 on-base percentage while providing excellent defense in center field. He's also signed to a team-friendly deal, as he inked a five-year, \$16.5 million contract through the 2014 season that began last year. The contract also includes a \$9.5 million team option for '15.

He played nine innings in center field for the first time as part of his rehab process with Triple-A Rochester on Wednesday and did the same on Thursday, going 1-for-4 with a stolen base.

"He's continuing to do well," Twins trainer Rick McWane said. "There are no issues with the concussion."

Span, who didn't play on Monday or Tuesday, still needs to play four to six full games in a row before he's ready to be activated from the disabled list, according to Twins manager Ron Gardenhire.

"He had a couple days off, so I'm hoping he's feeling pretty good," Gardenhire said. "He should be. So we'll go from there. That's when you're starting to feel the up and up, playing back-to-back ballgames"

## **Twins aim to cool off A's resurgent offense**

**Anthony Chiang, MLB.com 7/28/11**

The All-Star break didn't just mark a resting period for the A's. It also served as a rejuvenation period for their offense.

As Oakland begins a three-game series with Minnesota on Friday, the A's will feature a surprisingly hot offense.

Entering Friday's game, Oakland is hitting a Major League-leading .317 since the break. It has also scored four runs or more in eight consecutive games for the first time since 2007.

That success has translated into an 8-5 record since the All-Star break.

"I feel like with the way we're going, any push is possible at this point because we're winning," Oakland second baseman Jemile Weeks said. "The way the offense is, if we continue to go this way it can only be a positive thing when you're winning. We're just hoping for the best through that."

Weeks has been a key contributor, collecting 10 RBIs since the break as Oakland's leadoff hitter.

"It feels great," Weeks said. "You feel like you're the catalyst and can help get things started. When you feel like that and you see everything following through -- everyone hitting and producing runs -- you just feel like you're helping the team out big time."

Oakland will send lefty Gio Gonzalez (9-7, 2.67 ERA) to the mound Friday to help support the offense. He is 2-2 with an 8.03 ERA in five career starts against the Twins, but tossed six shutout innings in his lone start against them this season.

On the other side, the Twins will start Francisco Liriano (6-8, 4.82 ERA). The left-hander lasted just 2 1/3 innings in his last start, allowing four runs on six hits against Detroit on Sunday.

"We were trying to get him to just throw his fastball over the plate, and he really couldn't find anything," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "He was spinning off the ball. Hopefully, there will be better days ahead for him."

### **Twins: Minnesota recalls Tolbert**

The Twins optioned left-handed pitcher Chuck James to Triple-A Rochester and recalled second baseman Matt Tolbert in his place on Thursday.

Tolbert's promotion is due in part to second baseman Alexi Casilla's injured right hamstring. Casilla was placed on the 15-day disabled list, and infielder Luke Hughes also was recalled.

Tolbert hit .181 in 55 games with the Twins earlier this season.

### **A's: Pennington extends hit streak**

Cliff Pennington, who is batting .465 since the All-Star break, extended his career-high hit streak to 12 games Thursday with a first-inning single.

### **Worth noting**

- Gonzalez has allowed three runs or less in eight of his past 10 starts.

- Liriano is 1-3 with a 4.91 ERA in 10 career appearances against the A's.

## Twins exit Texas quietly

### La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune 7/29/11

The Twins lost by 14 runs Monday and fought back from four runs down Tuesday to win in the ninth inning. To leave Texas on Thursday night with a split of a four-game series against the team with the best home record in the American League could be viewed as satisfying.

Instead, the Twins left for Oakland full of regrets.

They lost 4-1 on Thursday to the Rangers and missed a chance to get within five games of AL Central-leading Detroit. They gained one game on the Tigers during the series, but it could have been more.

From that aspect, Thursday's loss stung.

"The margin for error is definitely small," Twins first baseman Michael Cuddyer said, "but there's nothing we can do about these last four games. We have to look ahead to Oakland."

The Twins' schedule is shrinking on them (57 games to go), and they have to pass three teams. Those facts demand their best baseball. They didn't meet that demand Thursday.

Scott Baker (8-6) went seven innings (97 pitches) in his second start since coming off the disabled list because of a flexor muscle strain and kept the game close by holding the Rangers to two runs on eight hits.

Texas lefthander Matt Harrison (9-6) was impressive, holding the Twins to one run over 7 innings. But it also was what the Twins didn't do with the few scoring chances they had.

Cuddyer delivered a two-out double in the fourth — but Jason Kubel flied out to end the inning.

Jim Thome led off the fifth with a double, but Danny Valencia and Delmon Young both popped out. Matt Tolbert and Ben Revere reached on infield hits to load the bases, but Tsuyoshi Nishioka hit into a fielder's choice on the first pitch to end that threat.

Thome came through in the sixth with an RBI single for the Twins' only run.

"We had a couple opportunities to get a run with two outs," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said, "and [Harrison] pretty much shut us down."

Gardenhire used lefthander Phil Dumatrait after Baker because righthander Matt Capps was sore and righthander Alex Burnett needed rest, and Dumatrait should have pitched a scoreless eighth. But Josh Hamilton smashed a two-out triple. Michael Young was intentionally walked. Nelson Cruz hit a ground ball to Valencia at third, who made a nice stop but threw wildly to first for an error, allowing Hamilton to score. Mitch Moreland added an RBI single to make it 4-1. And the Twins had no answer for closer Neftali Feliz in the ninth as he earned his 21st save.

The Twins' night came down to a lack of key hits and one big error.

"We had a chance to win a series here," Gardenhire said. "We're in a situation where we need to do a little of that to catch up."

## **Jim Souhan: Twins could learn some lessons from McNabb deal**

**Jim Souhan, Star Tribune 7/29/11**

Donovan McNabb's arrival provides a reminder that trades are, and should be, about timing and value, not name recognition and emotion.

McNabb is a 35-year-old quarterback coming off his worst season. With the Redskins, he had his conditioning and savvy questioned by a coach, Mike Shanahan, who earned the reputation of quarterback guru by coaxing John Elway's best seasons from him at ages 37 and 38.

Those excited by McNabb's name recognition think the Vikings hit a home run. Those who watched McNabb throw Frisbees for the Redskins last year think the Vikings have foolishly invested in a washed-up star. Both views are probably too dramatic.

Move past the emotional response attached to McNabb's name, and what the Vikings have here is a logical acquisition of an undervalued player.

The team traded a pair of sixth-round draft picks for a starting quarterback who will allow Christian Ponder time to acclimate to the NFL. There is nothing particularly exciting about this; there is also nothing wrong with it.

But then most people react to what is in a name rather than what matters most, which is the timing and terms of the deal. Suggest that the Twins, with no guarantees that they can re-sign him, should deal Michael Cuddyer before he becomes a free agent, and fans react like you've traded the family dog for a hamster to be named later.

The Vikings and Twins have one thing in common, other than gut-wrenching postseason failures: Both franchises have remained remarkably competitive even while turning over their rosters. The Twins have dominated their division and the Vikings built what might have been the best roster in football in 2009.

Given that neither franchise possessed any natural advantages until the Twins moved to Target Field last season, we should recognize that both front offices are highly competent, if fallible.

What we learn by dissecting their most important moves is that timing and value are the keys to a good deal.

The Twins' biggest mistake of recent vintage was trading Johan Santana to the Mets for a lousy group of prospects. They were right to trade him, but their timing was awful. They dealt with the Mets during the winter just after the Yankees and Red Sox had backed away. They lacked leverage. The lesson learned: They should have backed away, too, and waited until the spring or midseason for the market to improve.

The Vikings' signed Brett Favre before the 2009 season, then re-signed him before the 2010 season. The decision looked brilliant in '09 and less so in '10, but, in fact, both were logical moves, acquiring a Hall of Fame quarterback without having to give up value in a trade.

The Twins have reason to regret the \$184 million contract they gave to Joe Mauer. The Twins knew the risks when they signed the 6-5 catcher to an eight-year deal, but Mauer had timing and name recognition inflating his value. If the Twins hadn't been entering a new publicly subsidized stadium in the wake of Mauer's MVP season, they never would have made this deal, but Mauer's agent used the timing and Mauer's name recognition to inflate his worth.

If the Twins' dealings in the trade market have proved anything, it is that trading a popular player at the height of his value -- the kind of move that enrages most fans -- is exactly the right idea.

If the Twins had traded Santana, Torii Hunter, Delmon Young and Francisco Liriano at the right time, their roster might have been deep enough for them to survive even their ridiculous spate of injuries this season.

McNabb makes sense for the Vikings not because of name recognition, but because of the deal's details. It is in the Twins' best interest to take similarly unsentimental views of their best, and most popular, players.

## Casilla to miss two to three weeks

**La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune 7/29/11**

ARLINGTON, TEXAS - **Matt Tolbert, Trevor Plouffe** and **Luke Hughes will man second base** for the injured **Alexi Casilla**.

Casilla strained his right hamstring while running out a double in the ninth inning on Wednesday during the Twins' 7-2 win over the Rangers. An MRI exam on Thursday determined that the strain is between a Grade 1 and 2 (Grade 3 is the worst).

Casilla hoped to not be out long, but the Twins estimate he will miss two to three weeks.

"They preferred to put me on the DL so I can take it easy and take care of the hamstring," said Casilla, who flew back to the Twin Cities on Thursday afternoon to begin rehabilitation.

Tolbert was called up Thursday morning and made it to the park in time to start at second base. He batted .194 in 10 games with Rochester with a double, triple and three RBI. He entered Thursday batting .181 in 47 games with the Twins.

Plouffe offers more offensive potential than Tolbert but not better defense. He is batting just .207 but has five home runs and 14 RBI. Plouffe hit .313 with 15 homers at Rochester.

One issue is that Twins manager **Ron Gardenhire** hasn't seen Plouffe play much at second base and has to become comfortable with him there.

"He will definitely take ground balls there," Gardenhire said.

Hughes will join the club Friday after being called up from Rochester. He was sent down July 22 and the rule is that a player must stay down at least 10 days before he can be called back up -- unless there's an injury.

Gardenhire will go with the best matchup of the day at second base until Casilla is ready. It's a blow to the Twins because Casilla has been playing well defensively, and his double Wednesday moved him into the team lead with 21.

"That's a hole we have to fill again," Gardenhire said. "Ad-lib again. What are you going to do?"

Span update

Players on the disabled list can be traded, so that won't be a hurdle if the Twins do decide to move outfielder **Denard Span**.

Span is wanted by Washington, but the Twins won't move him unless they get an offer they can't refuse.

Span (concussion) was back in the lineup for Class AAA Rochester on Thursday after playing into the 10th inning on Wednesday. He doubled in the 10th and was replaced by a pinch runner. If Span can play nine innings in three consecutive games, he could return to the team by the end of the weekend.

"He continues to do well," Twins trainer **Rick McWane** said. "No concussion symptoms."

Etc.

- First baseman **Justin Morneau** (neck surgery) felt better Thursday after battling migraines for a few days.
- Lefthander **Corey Williams**, the Twins' third-round pick in the June draft, has reported to rookie league team Elizabethton after signing for \$575,000 -- which is more than double the league-recommended bonus for that spot. The Twins have made good progress with their first-round pick, shortstop **Levi Michael**, and hope to have a deal wrapped up soon.



## **Postgame: Updates on Span, Valencia, Cuddyer**

**La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune 7/29/11**

Denard Span played all nine innings tonight for Class AAA Rochester in a 7-3 win over the Louisville Bats. Span played into the tenth inning yesterday before being replaced by a pinch runner. So he looks like he's on his way to returning to the Twins by the end of the weekend.

If he's still a Twin.

Actually, there not much news on the Span-to-Washington front, except that there were reports during the day that the Nationals are not willing to put Drew Storen in the deal. If that is true, then I can't see how they can put together a deal for Span. Storen solves the Twins' closer problem for several years. The Twins have indicated that they are not shopping Span and would have to be very impressed by an offer to consider dealing him.

With a need at closer for 2012 - who knows what will happen with Matt Capps and Joe Nathan - I'm not sure the Twins would do a deal without Storen. I'm not saying it's impossible, just hard to believe.

Danny Valencia was 0-for-4 on Thursday with a big error in the eighth inning. Valencia was batting .309 this month with four homers before tonight's game,so he's been working on that batting average. But his error helped Texas score two insurance runs.

Valencia might get a day off during the upcoming three-game series against Oakland. The one thing that might get him into the lineup on Friday is that lefthander Gio Gonzalez is on the mound.

Michael Cuddyer was having a pretty good at-bat in the eighth inning against reliever Yoshinori Tateyama - until the righthander threw a 71-mile an hour something at him. Cuddyer committed early and had no chance,striking out.

"I don't know what it is," he said. "an off-speed pitch is what I'm going to call it. He started it in on me, which got me to open up."

## **Twins-Texas game recap**

**La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribuen 7/29/11**

### **GAME RECAP**

### **IMPACT PLAYER**

**Matt Harrison, Rangers**

The Rangers lefthander held the Twins to one run over 7 1/3 innings on eight hits.

### **BY THE NUMBERS**

**9** three-hit games by Josh Hamilton this season.

**71** miles per hour was the speed of the pitch Yoshinori Tateyama threw to strike out Michael Cuddyer in the eighth.

**5-2** record for the Twins against Texas in the season series.

3 Twins hits in the fifth inning without scoring

1.64 ERA for Scott Baker over his past eight starts.

### **This time, closer Feliz shuts down the Twins**

**Stephen Hawkins, AP 7/29/11**

ARLINGTON, Texas - Texas Rangers closer Neftali Feliz put the poor performances earlier this week behind him and answered his manager's challenge.

Feliz pitched a perfect ninth for his 21st save, two nights after his fifth blown save of the season, and helped starter Matt Harrison cap his unbeaten July as the Rangers beat Minnesota 4-1 Thursday night for a series split.

"What happened last time I always forget it. I never gave it a thought to look back on what happened. I just came in 100 percent sure I had to do my job and do my best," Feliz said through a translator. "That's what I think. I never worry about last time."

The AL West-leading Rangers had lost two straight against Minnesota after opening the series with a 20-6 win Monday night when they had the most runs and hits (27) in the majors this season.

Feliz gave up two runs in the ninth inning Tuesday night in the Rangers' 9-8 loss. In the blowout opener, Feliz gave up a run in the ninth when he was in to get some work after not pitching for a week.

In the aftermath Tuesday night's blown save, manager Ron Washington said he wanted to see more fire from Feliz. The hard-throwing right-hander already has two more blown opportunities than all of last season, when he set a major league rookie record with 40 saves as the Rangers went to their first World Series.

On Thursday night, Feliz struck out Jim Thome and got Danny Valencia on a popup before Delmon Young grounded out to end the game.

"He was good, he threw the ball well, threw it over the plate," Washington said. "He probably responded because he's a competitor. I don't think I had much to do with it, because I'm not the one out there toeing the rubber trying to get outs."

Harrison (9-7) allowed one run over 7 1-3 innings with two strikeouts and a walk. The left-hander won all three of his decisions in his five starts this month with a 2.04 ERA.

Yoshinori Tateyama and Arthur Rhodes retired the only batters they each faced before Feliz took over.

"Harry got us as deep as he could get us, and we needed them right there," Washington said. "They got us an opportunity to give the ball to Nefty."

Michael Young and Chris Davis had RBI singles early that put Texas ahead to stay. The Rangers maintained their two-game division lead over the Los Angeles Angels, who won earlier Thursday at Detroit.

Baker (8-6) struck out four with no walks while allowing two runs over seven innings in his second start since returning from the disabled list because of a right flexor strain. The right-hander was 6-1 with a 1.50 ERA his previous seven starts, including five scoreless innings in his return Saturday against Detroit.

The Twins pulled him after 97 pitches.

"If I felt great, I would have asked to go back out there. But given the situation, we're still trying to be smart about this. Given the conditions, I was pretty content with where I was at," Baker said. "You're at that threshold. To throw any more, I don't know if that would have been beneficial. You know yourself well enough to know your limits."

Josh Hamilton had three hits for Texas, including a two-out triple in the ninth. Young was intentionally walked before Nelson Cruz reached on a throwing error by third baseman Valencia that allowed Hamilton to score. Mitch Moreland then had an RBI single.

Harrison was pulled with one out in the eighth when he issued his first walk, to Joe Mauer. He finished July with a 2.04 ERA.

Tateyama struck out Michael Cuddyer, who already had two hits in the game and was hitting .500 (14 for 28) against the Rangers this season. Rhodes then struck out Jason Kubel, who had homered off the left-hander in the series.

Elvis Andrus and Hamilton had consecutive singles to start the Texas fourth. Young drove Andrus home with a single.

Yorvit Torrealba had a leadoff double in the Texas fifth and scored when Davis blooped a high popup that dropped in short left-field near the line for a single. That made it 2-0.

Notes: Minnesota won the season series 5-3, and is 18-10 against Texas since the start of the 2009 season. ... Twins CF Denard Span, out since June 9 with a concussion, continues rehab at Triple-A. Manager Ron Gardenhire said Span will need several full games before he is ready to be activated. ... On the 17th anniversary of Kenny Rogers' perfect game at Rangers Ballpark, former Texas CF Rusty Greer had an autograph session with fans. Greer made a diving catch to start the ninth inning, then caught the final out in the only perfect game in franchise history. ... The Twins took batting practice indoors rather than endure another 100-degree session outside. ... Umpires Mike Winters, Mike Everitt, Chris Guccione and Mike Muchlinks visited Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. It was the fourth of 12 scheduled visits nationwide as part of the UMPS CARE Charities BLUE for Kids program

## **Twins' starter Scott Baker good again in 2nd start off DL, not enough in 4-1 loss to Rangers**

**Stephen Hawkins, AP 7/29/11**

ARLINGTON, Texas - Minnesota Twins starter Scott Baker had already thrown 97 pitches on a hot night in Texas. That was enough for the right-hander in only his second game back from the disabled list.

Just not quite enough for another victory.

Baker, who had been 6-1 with a 1.50 ERA his previous seven starts, allowed two runs over seven innings in a 4-1 loss to the Rangers on Thursday night, when he was outdone by Texas starter Matt Harrison.

"I felt I got enough work in for the day," Baker said. "If I felt great, I would have asked to go back out there. But given the situation, we're still trying to be smart about this. Given the conditions, I was pretty content with where I was at."

Baker (8-6) struck out four with no walks against the AL West-leading Rangers. Five days earlier, he threw five scoreless innings in a win against Detroit in his first game back from a stint on the disabled list because of a right flexor strain.

The only run-scoring hits Baker allowed were RBI singles to Michael Young and Chris Davis.

"Both starters were very good tonight. Bake was fantastic and their young man was really good. He had all his pitches working and we only had a couple of opportunities. He pretty much shut us down," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "(Baker) said he felt all right. We're still watching the arm and making sure everything's OK, but he hung in there and felt all right."

Harrison (9-7) allowed one run over 7 1-3 innings with two strikeouts and a walk. The left-hander won all three of his decisions in his five starts this month with a 2.04 ERA.

Harrison was gone after his only walk, to Joe Mauer with one out in the eighth. Yoshinori Tateyama and Arthur Rhodes retired the only batters they faced before Neftali Feliz took over and worked a perfect ninth for his 21st save in 26 chances.

Minnesota had won two straight over the Rangers after losing the opener 20-6 Monday night when Texas had the most runs and hits (27) in the majors this season.

The Twins scored twice in the ninth inning off Feliz on Tuesday night for a 9-8 win before a 7-2 victory Wednesday night.

"It was a tough loss, but at the same time we showed some courage being able to come back after first night," Michael Cuddyer of the Twins said. "To come back and split the series against the team with the best home record in the American League, that was good."

In the aftermath of Tuesday night's blown save, manager Ron Washington said he wanted to see more fire from Feliz, who had also given up a ninth-inning run in the blowout opener. The hard-throwing right-hander already has two more blown opportunities than all of last season, when he set a major league rookie record with 40 saves as the Rangers went to their first World Series.

On Thursday night, Feliz struck out Jim Thome and got Danny Valencia on a popup before Delmon Young grounded out to end the game.

"He was good, he threw the ball well, threw it over the plate," Washington said. "He probably responded because he's a competitor."

Josh Hamilton had three hits for Texas, including a two-out triple in the ninth. Young was intentionally walked before Nelson Cruz reached on a throwing error by third baseman Valencia that allowed Hamilton to score. Mitch Moreland then had an RBI single.

Tateyama struck out Cuddyer, who already had two hits in the game and was hitting .500 (14 for 28) against the Rangers this season. Rhodes then struck out Jason Kubel, who had homered off the left-hander in the series.

"Besides the first game, we played some good quality baseball but we came up a little short. They're a tough team," Baker said. "They're the team to beat, based on the teams we've faced. They have a very potent lineup and they're pitching well. That's a tough combination."

Notes: Minnesota won the season series 5-3, and is 18-10 against Texas since the start of the 2009 season. ... Twins 2B Alexi Casilla was placed on the 15-day disabled list Thursday night with a right hamstring strain. The Twins recalled INF Luke Hughes from Triple-A Rochester, and he was in Texas before the end of the game. Casilla is expected to be out two to three weeks. Matt Tobert, recalled from Rochester earlier Thursday, started at second base. ... Twins CF Denard Span, out since June 9 with a concussion, continues rehab at Triple-A. Gardenhire said Span will need several full games before he is ready to be activated.

## **Twins-Oakland series preview**

**La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune 7/29/11**

### **TWINS AT OAKLAND SERIES PREVIEW**

Three-game series at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum

**Today, 9:07 p.m. • FSN, 1500ESPN**

LHP Francisco Liriano (6-8, 4.82) vs. LHP Gio Gonzalez (9-7, 2.67)

**Saturday, 8:07 p.m. • FSN, 1500ESPN**

RHP Nick Blackburn (7-7, 4.21) vs. RHP Guillermo Moscoso (3-5, 3.47)

**Sunday, 3:07 p.m. • FSN, 1500ESPN**

RHP Carl Pavano (6-7, 4.60) vs. RHP Brandon McCarthy (3-5, 3.52)

**Twins update:** Liriano is 0-2 with a 6.29 ERA in five starts in Oakland -- his highest ERA in any road park with at least that many starts. Blackburn isn't much better: 1-1, 5.72 ERA in five starts. ... The Twins are 8-9 at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum over the past three seasons.

**Athletics update:** The Athletics averaged 3.42 runs a game and hit .233 before the All-Star break. Since then (entering play Thursday) they are averaging six runs a game and batting .321. ... SS Cliff Pennington has an 11-game hitting streak during which he's 19-for-39. ... Gonzalez is 2-2 with an 8.03 ERA in his career against the Twins but has turned into a pretty nice pitcher with an excellent curveball. ... Oakland has used the DL 25 times this season, second most in club history.

**Tom Kelly: 'I Had a lot of good players'**

**Amelia Rayno, Star Tribune 7/29/11**

Open a first conversation ever with Tom Kelly with "So, TK, where are you living these days?" and you're likely to receive a gruff "Why?" in response -- a reminder of the no-nonsense reputation the former Twins manager accrued over his years in uniform.

But in the next breath -- the second the topic turns to baseball -- his saltiness will melt and he'll turn sincere as he describes managing the 1991 team, his great respect for the game and the opportunities he had. The people who surrounded him bleed through his words.

Since he was drafted by the Seattle Pilots in 1968, the Maplewood resident has constructed a full and successful career in baseball: playing, managing, working in the front office and, most recently, doing some broadcasting for FSN. But ask about his accomplishments, and you'll likely get a reply that's freckled with the words "fortunate" and "lucky."

"When I was managing, I had a lot of good players ... and we were very fortunate that way," he said. "You have to count your blessings if you stay healthy and keep your guys on the field." He pointed to this year's squad, which has had 17 players go down because of injuries.

The decades spent ingrained in the sport naturally formed sentimental ties that proved difficult to relinquish even as he moved to less involved aspects of the game. Love for the game, ultimately, has kept him connected pretty much without pause since the very beginning.

"I was told it was going to be a very difficult thing to do -- to get away from it, it was going to take a year or two of not being involved at all," Kelly said. "And then you might be able to break away from it and look at it a little differently, where you're not so emotionally involved with all the games and with every pitch."

He never took that time, getting hired as special assistant to the general manager to "help be a sounding board for the minor league managers" the spring following his retirement as manager in 2001. All the while, he continued to do some public relations for the Twins. Recently, he's added broadcasting -- he laughs that most "downstairs" in the dugout would never have imagined him behind a microphone -- to his docket.

"It's a fun thing ... it's different, obviously," said Kelly, who added that he still doesn't feel quite comfortable up there. "You've got to be careful. It can get a little rough down there in the dugout, and you really have to keep your composure in the booth. It's dangerous."

Still, Kelly says he has plenty of time now. He spends his summers golfing and walking all 18 holes. In the winter, he designates himself the neighborhood's snow remover, whipping out the snow blower and cleaning off everyone's driveway after they go to work.

Of course, he just shrugs away the good deed, much like he does his impressive résumé of accomplishments.

"They helped me so much when I was managing," he said. "I'm just trying to return the favor."

## **Twins pitcher Scott Baker cooks to well done in loss to Texas**

### **Brian Murphy, Pioneer Press 7/29/11**

ARLINGTON, Texas - Hot, tired and cautious, Twins starter Scott Baker decided seven innings of eight-hit ball was enough work Thursday night in his second outing since coming off the disabled list because of a strained elbow.

The team's most productive and consistent starter was down 2-1 to the Texas Rangers, having thrown 97 pitches while vexing a dangerous lineup on a 99-degree night.

Baker ended up absorbing the 4-1 loss after reliever Phil Dumatrait allowed two unearned runs in the eighth while the Twins accomplished little against Texas starter Matt Harrison at Rangers Ballpark.

"If I felt great, I probably would have asked to go back out there," Baker said. "Just given the situation, I'm still trying to be smart about this. I felt like, given the conditions, I was pretty content with where I was at."

Baker (8-6) threw 82 pitches in his most recent start, a five-inning victory over Detroit on Saturday - 18 days after his previous outing.

The Twins have been accommodating to Baker, who initially was scheduled to start July 18 against Cleveland. That start was pushed back five days after he experienced discomfort during a bullpen session. Baker said he hit the target for pitches Thursday that he and pitching coach Rick Anderson established and thought it was wise to shut it down.

"I felt like I had enough work in for the day," he said. "Conditions were hot. You know, just talking to Andy, we wanted to add about another 15 pitches, trying to build up to where we need to be.

"I felt good. But you can tell you're kind of at that threshold. To throw any more, I don't know if that would have been efficient."

Manager Ron Gardenhire said "Bake was fantastic" in what was a swiftly played pitchers' duel that left scant time for rest between innings.

"He said he felt all right. Not great," Gardenhire said. "I still think we're watching the arm, making sure everything's OK. He hung in there and said he made it through it and felt all right."

Whatever intrigue there is about Baker's durability, the Twins scuttled a chance to win the four-game series against the defending American League champions and gain ground in the AL Central on the Tigers, who lost to the Angels earlier Thursday.

The split means Minnesota gained only one game in the opening series of its three-city, 10-game swing through the AL West, which continues this weekend in Oakland.

To be sure, the Twins acquitted themselves well after Texas' 20-6 beat down in Monday's opener and rallied from a 7-3 deficit to win the following night.

Still, series and days are dwindling for the Twins to catch three teams in their division as they march toward Sunday's trading deadline and then the dog days of August.

"To split the series, it's not ideal, but we'll take it," first baseman Michael Cuddyer said. "The margin for error is definitely small."

The Rangers touched Baker for three straight singles and a 1-0 lead in the fourth, then added a run in the fifth.

Meanwhile, Texas left-hander Matt Harrison was tough when he needed to be against a Twins lineup that managed only two extra-base hits.

Harrison pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in the sixth.

"He didn't really give us many opportunities," Gardenhire said. "You get some of those pitchers who get locked in, you miss a couple opportunities and they find a zone and go deep into a ballgame. That's what he did."

#### **Rangers 4, Twins 1: Minnesota fails to back Scott Baker offensively** **Brian Murphy, Pioneer Press 7/29/11**

**RECAP:** Texas opened the fourth inning with three straight singles to forge a 1-0 lead. It added another run off Twins starter Scott Baker in the fifth when Chris Davis singled in Yorvit Torrealba, who had doubled to lead off.

The Twins stranded seven runners, loading the bases in the fifth, but blemished Texas starter Matt Harrison with only Jim Thome's run-scoring single in the sixth.

Baker (8-6) threw 97 pitches in his second start off the disabled list because of an elbow problem that sidelined him for two weeks. He scattered eight hits and struck out four but received little help offensively.

The Rangers added two unearned runs off reliever Phil Dumatrait in the ninth inning, their two-out rally extended when third baseman Danny Valencia's error allowed one run to score before Mitch Moreland singled home the other.

**MEANING:** The Twins (49-56) failed to gain ground in the AL Central on Detroit, which lost to the Los Angeles Angels earlier Thursday and remains six games ahead of Minnesota. The Twins split their four-game series against Texas and head to Oakland, the second stop on their three-city, 10-game trip through the AL West.

**ETC:** Joe Mauer's seventh-inning walk tied him with Kirby Puckett (450) for seventh on the all-time Twins list. It has taken only eight seasons for Mauer to do what Puckett accomplished in 12.

-- Brian Murphy

**UP NEXT:** at Athletics, 9:07 tonight,

**Minnesota Twins scramble to replace injured second baseman Alexi Casilla**  
**Brian Murphy, Pioneer Press 7/29/11**

ARLINGTON, Texas - The Twins' injury list had shrunk to the point that trainer Rick McWane took a couple days off from briefing the media on the club's various rehabilitations.

But McWane was back with his notebook in manager Ron Gardenhire's office Thursday, explaining how second baseman Alexi Casilla would be sidelined for two to three weeks after straining his right hamstring legging out a double during the previous night's 7-2 victory over the Rangers.

Casilla flew back to Minnesota before Thursday night's series finale in Texas, destined for the 15-day disabled list. Infielder Matt Tolbert was recalled from Class AAA Rochester and batted ninth, while shortstop Tsuyoshi Nishioka moved up to Casilla's No. 2 spot.

To make room on the roster, left-handed reliever Chuck James was demoted. Infielder Luke Hughes scheduled to arrive at the ballpark during the game and afterward fly with the Twins to Oakland.

Gardenhire said he would mix and match at second base with Trevor Plouffe and Hughes, both right-handed hitters, and the switch-hitting Tolbert, who was hitting only .181 in the minors. The manager has not seen much of Plouffe at second and wants to see him practice more there before inserting him in a pivotal middle-infield position .

Casilla was playing solid defense and showing some pop at the plate before getting hurt. His last hit was his team-leading 21st double.

"He's been doing all the things you like to see and his head's been in the game. All of a sudden, this happens," Gardenhire lamented. "Our depth in the middle infield is not the greatest, so you can't afford to have injuries like that.

Casilla felt something pop rounding first base, saying, "It felt like somebody drove a knife in that spot."

Before departing for the airport Thursday, Casilla was optimistic he would start working out again in about a week. But hamstring injuries are notoriously fickle and the Twins project a more cautious two- to three-week window.

**More injury updates:** McWane said center fielder Denard Span continues to progress without any concussion symptoms.

Span was scheduled to play another nine-inning game Thursday for Rochester at Louisville.

Gardenhire said Span needs to play at least four or five straight complete games, which should give him an additional 20 to 30 at-bats, before the Twins decide when to recall him.

First baseman Justin Morneau was scheduled to visit a doctor in the Twin Cities to treat migraine headaches that have kept him off the field for the past three days. The team says the headaches are unrelated to his past concussion or neck surgery from which Morneau is rehabilitating.

**For what it's worth:** The Twins have suffered some horrific defeats lately, from gut-wrenching blown saves to humiliating blowouts, only to quickly rebound.

Matt Capps blew saves against Milwaukee, Kansas City and Chicago in a two-week span, and each time the Twins won the next day.

On June 27, the Dodgers hammered the Twins 15-0 at Target Field, but Minnesota rallied for a 6-4 victory.

Monday, the Rangers blasted them 20-6 in the club's worst loss since 1974. But the Twins rebounded to win the next two games against the American League champions.



"It's just the character of the club," pitcher Carl Pavano said. "We turn the page pretty good. We've got enough guys in here that have been around long enough to understand that we've got to take it in stride and keep your attitude in stride."

## Twins Daily: Missed opportunities doom Twins in loss to Rangers

Nate Sandell, 1500ESPN 7/28/11

**Scott Baker** allowed only two runs, but the Minnesota Twins could not generate an enough offense Thursday night, falling 4-1 to the Texas Rangers and missing out on an opportunity to draw within five games of the Detroit Tigers for the AL Central lead.

### The skinny

Despite giving up eight hits, Rangers starter Matt Harrison held the Twins to one run. **Matt Tolbert**, **Jim Thome** and **Michael Cuddyer** each had two hits. However, that proved to not be enough. The Twins botched several key scoring chances, leaving seven runners on base.

**Scott Baker** continued to show why he has been the ace of the Twins starting rotation, pitching seven strong innings. However, the Rangers clumped together several hits and manufactured a run in back-to-back innings, which pegged the loss on Baker.

Reliever **Phil Dumatrait** ran into trouble in the eighth as the Rangers recorded a pair of insurance runs to put the Twins away for good.

A 12-6 Tigers' loss to the Angels opened the way for the Twins to pick up a game in the division standings. Instead, they had to settle for staying put at six games back.

### Turning point

Rough starts to the fourth and fifth innings by Baker ended up being the difference maker.

The Rangers rattled off three straight singles to begin the fourth, topped off by Michael Young's RBI hit on a two-pitch sinker. Baker eventually settled down and got out of the jam, stranding two men on base.

But he ended up in another dilemma an inning later. Baker drew the count to 0-2 on Yorvit Torrealba before the Rangers' catcher turned on a pitch and drove it into right field for a double. The next batter, Chris Davis, looped a single into left that brought Torrealba in from second to push their lead to 2-0.

### Numbers game

**19:** Games this the Twins have scored one or less.

**20 1/3:** Consecutive scoreless innings pitched by Baker, dating back to June 29, before Michael Young notched an RBI single off him in the fourth inning.

**.354:** Batting average for Cuddyer in the month of July (33-for-94), nine extra-base hits. He went 2-for-4 on the night with a double.

### Health report

• 2B **Alexi Casilla** (hamstring) was **placed on the 15-day disabled list** after a MRI on Thursday showed a significant strain. Casilla suffered the injury while running out a double in the ninth inning of Wednesday night's game. **Luke Hughes**

will replace Casilla on the 25-man roster. The Twins added another infielder **earlier in the day**, optioning reliever Chuck James to Triple-A Rochester and recalling **Matt Tolbert**.

- **Denard Span** (concussion) played a full nine innings in his ninth game for the Red Wings Thursday, going 1-for-4 with an RBI.

### On deck

The Twins' 10-game road trip continues Friday as **Francisco Liriano** (6-8, 4.82) faces-off with left-hander Gio Gonzalez (9-7, 2.67) to begin a three-game set versus the Oakland Athletics -- the third series between the two teams this season.

Inconsistency has plagued Liriano all season. He **fell apart in his last start**, making it through only 2 1/3 innings against Detroit on Sunday and giving up four runs in a deflating 5-2 loss. It was the eighth time in 18 appearances this year he has surrendered four or more runs.

Gonzalez's season has been the opposite of Liriano's. He has been quietly dominant for the Athletics, posting 2.67 ERA and allowing more than four runs only four times this season. In a rare slip-up, Gonzalez was pelted in his last outing for six earned runs in 4 1/3 innings against the Yankees.

### Coming up

- Saturday: @ Oakland, 8:05 p.m. RHP **Nick Blackburn** (7-7, 4.21) vs. RHP Guillermo Moscoso (3-5, 3.47)
- Sunday: @ Oakland, 3:05 p.m. RHP **Carl Pavano** (6-7, 4.60) vs. RHP Brandon McCarthy (3-5, 3.52)
- Monday: Off day

### Twins place Alexi Casilla on disabled list, recall Luke Hughes

#### Tom Pelissero, 1500ESPN 7/28/11

As expected, **Alexi Casilla's** strained right hamstring will land him on to the 15-day disabled list.

The Minnesota Twins confirmed the decision during Thursday's game at Texas and announced they had recalled **Luke Hughes** from Triple-A Rochester to Casilla's spot on the 25-man roster.

Casilla was injured while running the bases during Wednesday's game. The Twins called up **Matt Tolbert** on Thursday afternoon, then recalled Hughes -- who wasn't eligible to return to the big-league roster barring an injury -- less than 8 hours later.

Hughes, who is hitting .237 (42-for-177) in 60 games with the Twins, is expected to be in uniform for Friday's series opener at Oakland.

### Twins minor league pitcher works as a paleontologist

#### Tyler Mason, FSNorth 7/28/11

John Krogstad still has a hard time believing he's a professional baseball player. After all, his path to the Minnesota Twins organization is unlike any other.

Krogstad, 22, grew up in Crookston, Minn., but his family moved to South Dakota before he turned 10. He never played high school baseball — his school didn't have a team. He didn't play college ball either because, well, he didn't go to

college. Instead, Krogstad continued to work as a paleontologist after high school, scouring South Dakota and Montana for dinosaur bones.

But while Krogstad was down in Clearwater, Fla., to take part in a training program with the American Baseball Institute this spring, it just so happened his childhood team, the Twins, were holding a tryout nearby in June. As it turned out, this paleontologist was also a good enough pitcher to catch on with the Twins' Gulf Coast League team.

"It's still kind of hard to believe I'm actually here playing with my home team," Krogstad said. "It's something I've dreamed about doing for a long time. It's crazy."

Krogstad has two main pitches — a fastball that he throws in the upper 80s to lower 90s, and a breaking ball. He says he's also working on a changeup.

"He's learning how to control his breaking ball, learning how to throw his pitches for strikes," said Ivan Arteaga, the GCL Twins pitching coach. "He's learning how to pitch. He's never had to do that before. He was just a thrower. Now he's becoming more of a pitcher."

Arteaga says Krogstad still has plenty to learn about the game, from fielding the position to fine-tuning his pitches to dealing with the every-day grind of the sport. After all, he never played organized baseball before joining the Twins.

But he's already demonstrated to Arteaga and the rest of the coaching staff why the Twins signed him in June.

"When he first signed with the scouts, he had a good fastball — he was about 88 to 91 — and a very good breaking ball," Arteaga said. "You don't see that very often, that combination. He's a very smart kid. He's still young. He works hard. We wanted to see what he has to offer, because obviously he has good stuff."

Krogstad and his family moved to Custer, S.D., in 1997. It was there that Krogstad played the only baseball of his life before catching on with the GCL Twins. He pitched for a town ball team in Custer, but was one of the youngest members on a non-competitive team.

"For the most part, it wasn't good," he said of the competition. "The average aged guy on our team was 45 years old. Our team was really old. A few of the other teams, there were a bunch of young guys and a bunch of older guys, guys that were just out there to have fun. It wasn't a real serious deal. It was a good time just getting out there."

As a kid, baseball was never Krogstad's true passion. He preferred digging for duckbill skulls or preparing tenontosaurus bones to throwing fastballs or swinging for the fences. His paleontology career began when he was 14, before his freshman year of high school. Krogstad credits his dad, John Sr., for getting him started in that profession.

"He was working on fixing a log splitter for a guy who's got the (paleontology) business. They were talking about what he did for work. My dad told him about me. 'I've got a son that's looking for work. He'd love doing something like that,'" Krogstad said. "He was hesitant about it. My dad just kind of kept pushing it and pushing it until finally the guy's like, 'OK, I'll give it a try, we'll see what happens.' I ended up working for him that first summer. I worked hard and he decided he wanted to keep me on full time."

But now that his baseball career is off the ground, Krogstad doesn't have as much time to devote to dinosaurs. That doesn't mean he's hung up his paleontology tools, but it's not as easy to find fossils in Florida as it is back in South Dakota.

"In the offseason when I go back home, that's what I'll be doing again is probably go out collecting for another month or so, whatever I've got," he said.

For now, however, Krogstad will continue to develop his skills as a pitcher. He's pitched in just two games so far for a total of 2 2/3 innings, giving up one hit while walking one batter and striking out one.

"He's a great kid. He's very honest," Arteaga said. "He wants to work hard. He's down here every day with a good attitude. ... He's in the right place. We're very happy to have him."

The feeling is mutual for Krogstad.

"I wasn't sure what to expect. I can't complain," Krogstad said. "I love it. I wouldn't trade it for anything. I'm living my dream here."

### **Tolbert recalled from Rochester** **Tyler Mason, FSNorth 7/28/11**

With yet another injury, the Minnesota Twins were forced to make a pair of roster move.

The Twins placed second baseman Alexi Casilla on the 15-day disabled list Thursday, and he's expected to miss two to three weeks with a right hamstring strain. Minnesota recalled infielder Luke Hughes from Triple-A Rochester to take Casilla's spot on the roster.

Casilla hurt himself in the ninth inning of Wednesday's 7-2 win against Texas as he was running to second base on a two-out double. He was taken out of the game and replaced with pinch runner Trevor Plouffe. Prior to his injury, Casilla had 15 stolen bases and led the team with 21 doubles. He was batting .259/.322/.369, primarily in the No. 2 spot of the Twins' batting order.

Hughes played in 60 games for the Twins this season. He was hitting .237 with 15 RBIs before he was optioned to Rochester earlier this month. The versatile Hughes has played first, second and third base for Minnesota.

The Twins also recalled utility infielder Matt Tolbert from Rochester prior to Thursday's game to add another infielder to the roster. Tolbert was in the lineup Thursday, playing second base and batted ninth.

To make room for Tolbert on the 25-man roster, the Twins optioned left-handed pitcher Chuck James to Rochester, meaning Minnesota now has 12 pitchers on the roster.

Tolbert spent most of the season with Minnesota, as he was on the Opening Day roster. But he was optioned to Triple-A in mid-July after watching his batting average drop and his playing time decrease. He was batting just .181 with a .236 on-base percentage in 55 games with the Twins.

"You never want to go down, but I understand. I wasn't doing great," Tolbert said after he was optioned on July 17. "We just need an extra pitcher. I can't stay up here hitting .180."

Tolbert played in 10 games with the Red Wings after his demotion and hit .194 with three RBIs in 36 at-bats.

Thursday marks the second time James has been sent back to Rochester this season. He began the year with the Red Wings and was called up to the Twins for the first time on May 28. He made four relief appearances during his second stint with Minnesota, giving up seven runs on 11 hits in 5 1/3 innings. He pitched five scoreless innings in his first time up with Minnesota (four games).

### **Alexi Casilla headed to DL** **AP 7/29/11**

RLINGTON, Texas -- [Minnesota Twins](#) second baseman [Alexi Casilla](#) was placed on the 15-day disabled list Thursday night with a right hamstring strain.

Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said before Thursday's series finale at Texas that Casilla had already returned to Minnesota to begin rehabilitation. Casilla got hurt in the ninth inning Wednesday night while running to second base on his double.

"He was a second-hole hitter who was hitting great, playing great defense, been doing all the things you like to see," Gardenhire said. "All of a sudden this happens. Our depth in the middle infield isn't the greatest. You can't afford to have too many injuries like that. So you've got to have people step up."

During Thursday night's game, the Twins said that infielder [Luke Hughes](#) would be recalled from Triple-A Rochester and was expected to be in uniform for Friday night's game at Oakland. Hughes hit .237 in 60 games earlier this season for the Twins.

Twins trainer Rick McWane said Casilla would be out two to three weeks.

The Twins earlier Thursday recalled infielder [Matt Tolbert](#) from Triple-A Rochester and optioned left-hander [Chuck James](#) to Rochester.

Tolbert started at second base for the finale against the Rangers.

The switch-hitting Casilla was hitting .259 with two homers and 21 RBIs in his 96 games. He also had 15 stolen bases.

Tolbert batted ninth Thursday night and shortstop [Tsuyoshi Nishioka](#) moved into the No. 2 spot in the batting order, where Casilla had been for 61 games.

"He's had success in Japan and been an All-Star, but he's still a rookie here because he hasn't seen this before," Gardenhire said of Nishioka. "It's an experience."

Nishioka went into Thursday night's game hitting only .214 in 43 games.