



**TEXASRANGERS.COM**

**Rangers planning accordingly for rest of season**  
**By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com | 09/19/11 3:20 PM ET**

The Rangers left Seattle with a 4 1/2-game lead in the American League West, with nine to play. The magic number is six, and their mantra is simply to keep winning as many games as possible.

But there are other matters to consider while Texas enjoys an off-day in Oakland. Here are eight things that might be on the Rangers' minds through the end of the season and beyond.

1. Clinch early: The Rangers will end the season with a three-game series against the Angels in Anaheim that starts next Monday. Both teams have the front of their rotation in line to pitch that set. C.J. Wilson, Colby Lewis and Matt Harrison are scheduled pitch for Texas, and Jered Weaver, Dan Haren and Ervin Santana are slated to go for the Halos.

The Rangers want to wrap up the division before they go to Anaheim, especially since the AL Division Series starts on Friday, Sept. 30. Clinching early will allow them to rest their players, and more importantly, line up their rotation for the playoffs.

Right now, if Wilson pitches on Monday in a meaningful game, he would either have to pitch Game 1 of the ALDS on three days' rest or be held back for Game 2. If he does pitch Game 2, he would still be able to start Game 5, if necessary, because there are two travel days built into the series schedule.

Derek Holland, whose last start is scheduled for Sunday, could end up pitching Game 1 of the playoffs if Wilson can't go. By the way, if the Rangers need a one-game tiebreaker with the Angels on Thursday, Sept. 29, then Alexi Ogando is in line to pitch that game.

2. Finish ahead of Detroit: The two teams with the best records get home-field advantage in the first round of the AL playoffs. So the Rangers would have to finish ahead of either the Yankees or the Tigers for them to open the playoffs at the Ballpark in Arlington.

Texas is one game behind Detroit and four behind New York. If the Rangers finish with the same record as either the Yankees or the Tigers, they lose the tiebreaker. Both teams won their season series against Texas.

Right now, the most likely scenario is the Yankees having the best record in the league, with the Wild Card coming out of the AL East. So between the Rangers and the Tigers, the team with the better record would host the Wild Card winner in the first round of the playoffs.

Also, under that scenario, the Rangers would have home-field advantage in the AL Championship Series if they beat the Wild Card team and the Tigers beat the Yankees in the first round. So Texas needs to finish with a better record than at least Detroit.

3. Set the rotation: The Rangers will only need four starters in the playoffs. Somebody will have to move to the bullpen. That's most likely going to be Ogando, although nothing has been finalized. Ogando would give them another power right-handed arm in the bullpen and somebody who could pitch multiple innings in the middle of the game.

Much will depend if manager Ron Washington feels he needs a right-handed starter or a lefty against a particular team. A right-hander might be preferable against the Tigers. But it's clear the Rangers have positioned themselves for Ogando to be in the bullpen, at least for the first round.

4. Set the bullpen: The Rangers have some interesting decisions facing them in the bullpen. If they go with a seven-man bullpen, it will include Neftali Feliz as the closer, Darren Oliver as the left-handed setup reliever, plus Mike Adams and Mark Lowe as the right-handed setup men. The extra starter -- whether it's Ogando or somebody else -- would be the fifth reliever.

That leaves two spots. Left-hander Michael Gonzalez would be one, given the Rangers' desire to have two left-handers in the bullpen. The final spot could come down to Koji Uehara, Scott Feldman, Yoshinori Tateyama or Darren O'Day. However ...

5. Decide 25th man: This could come down to either Matt Treanor or an extra reliever in the bullpen.

Texas will carry at least 13 position players. It will have Yorvit Torrealba and Mike Napoli at catcher, infielders Mitch Moreland, Ian Kinsler, Elvis Andrus, Adrian Beltre, Andres Blanco and Michael Young, and outfielders Josh Hamilton, David Murphy, Nelson Cruz, Endy Chavez and Craig Gentry.

Do the Rangers want one more? Treanor's presence would allow them to comfortably use Torrealba and Napoli in the same lineup, especially when a left-hander is pitching for the other team. That might have been one motivating reason to reacquire Treanor from the Royals on Aug. 31.

But the Rangers have been willing to use Torrealba and Napoli in the same lineup even without a third catcher. They might feel they can get more use from an extra arm in the bullpen.

6. Choose a catcher: With a left-hander on the mound, both Torrealba and Napoli could end up in the lineup, one at designated hitter and the other at catcher. With a right-hander on the mound, Moreland would be in the lineup at first base and Young at DH, meaning the Rangers will have to make a choice at catcher.

In September, Napoli has been used more often than not over Torrealba. He remains one of the Rangers' hottest hitters and has done a superb job calling games. Torrealba may have the advantage of having the better throwing arm and controlling the opponent's running game, but that probably won't keep Napoli's bat out of the lineup.

7. Win the batting title: There are all sorts of individual goals and records out there as the season comes to a close. Few, if any, are foremost on anybody's minds. But they are out there, and high on the list is Young's attempt to win his second batting title. He is hitting .331 after going 0-for-5 on Sunday, and he's still two hits short of 200 for the season. Adrian Gonzalez leads the AL with a .333 average, and Miguel Cabrera is at .331.

8. Extend the manager's contract: This probably won't get done after the season, if at all. But it needs to be considered.

Washington is finishing the first season of a two-year contract, which is likely to include a second straight division title. That alone should be worthy of at least another year on the contract, if not more.

**Inbox: Are any Rangers in line for awards?  
Beat reporter T.R. Sullivan answers fans' questions  
By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com | 09/19/11 3:20 PM ET**

What do you think the Rangers' position players' chances are of winning a Gold Glove or a Silver Slugger Award? Personally, I think Ian Kinsler should win the Gold Glove at second.  
-- Bret B., Oklahoma City

Kinsler has had an excellent defensive season. There is no telling which way fickle voters will go, but if you look at the Ultimate Zone Rating, Dustin Pedroia of the Red Sox and Howard Kendrick of the Angels both rank much higher than Kinsler, who leads the league in errors at the position. He also leads in double plays.

Adrian Beltre is the best defensive third baseman in the American League and the best for the Rangers since Buddy Bell. He should win a Gold Glove. He and the Rays' Evan Longoria are neck and neck as far as a Gold Glove and Silver Slugger. Surprisingly, Josh Hamilton doesn't rank high in UZR, even though manager Ron Washington believes he is one of the best outfielders in the game. Hamilton, despite time missed, is still a good possibility for another Silver Slugger as one of the top-three hitting outfielders in the AL.

It will be interesting to see what happens with Michael Young and Mike Napoli at Silver Slugger. Young could win a Silver Slugger at DH, although David Ortiz of the Red Sox and Victor Martinez of the Tigers deserve consideration. Napoli has had a great year offensively, although only part of that has been at catcher.

Does Craig Gentry have a legitimate chance to compete next year for the starting center-field job? It seems to me that with their offense, the Rangers could live with a .250 average and his outstanding defense and speed that he brings. What are your thoughts?  
-- Pablo G., Irving, Texas

Gentry definitely has a real chance to be an everyday center fielder in the Major Leagues, and his offense is far from a liability. He has made significant progress with the bat this season, and his speed on the bases is a real asset. There are a dozen or more clubs that could use Gentry as their regular center fielder or at least give him a legitimate chance to win the job.

What has happened to Ogando? Every time I watch him pitch, I wonder how on earth he can locate the ball with that action. Does his unusual mechanics contribute to his erratic form? Can he be improved mechanically? Does he need to be improved mechanically? What other options do we have for the rotation for the rest of this year and next?

-- Marcus R., McKinney, Texas

Ogando does have a slight tendency to throw across his body, but nothing severe or alarming. The Rangers do not see it as an issue. He has a short arm action that is not as stressful as, say, Jered Weaver. Basically, Ogando is a two-pitch pitcher who had only limited time in the Minor Leagues. He was an unknown last year, but now opposing hitters and advance scouts are getting really good looks at his stuff. They have a much better idea of what Ogando is throwing and have adjusted accordingly. Ogando will have to adapt as well, and developing a serviceable changeup could be beneficial.

Ogando also has to come to grips with the mental grind of a full season in the Majors. Kevin Brown, just as a comparison, was unable to pitch into September in his first two full seasons (1989-90) in the Majors with the Rangers. It wasn't until his fourth season that he became a 21-game winner.

Has Darren Oliver expressed interest in playing in 2012?

-- Aaron R., Dallas

Oliver, who has two young boys, said he is still undecided. He said this past weekend that it's 50-50 whether he'll pitch next season. But he looked pretty sharp on Saturday when he retired four straight hitters, including three by strikeout, in the Rangers' 7-6 win over the Mariners.

Where do you think Scott Feldman will likely fit within the Rangers' pitching corps next season?

-- Jeff F., Toronto

Feldman is going to come to Spring Training with a chance to make the rotation. He spent the second half of 2011 serving as the sixth starter for a rotation that rarely needed one. That is not something you can count on annually, and Feldman -- if healthy -- has a chance to regain a significant role on the pitching staff next season.

Could you give us a rundown of the Rangers' potential free agents and arbitration-eligibles?

-- Matt H., Union Valley, Okla.

Oliver and C.J. Wilson are the two most prominent, but so, too, are Endy Chavez, Matt Treanor and Michael Gonzalez. Oh yes, Brandon Webb, too. Right now, the Rangers have 11 players who are eligible for arbitration: Napoli, Nelson Cruz, Elvis Andrus, Mike Adams, David Murphy, Darren O'Day, Mark Lowe, Matt Harrison, Eric Hurley, Esteban German and Andres Blanco.

I find it hard to believe the Rangers have not attempted to re-sign Wilson to a long-term contract. Has Wilson stated he will not discuss a contract until after the season? Of all the players on our team, he is the most important heading into next year. It will be a "double whammy" if he signs with the Angels. We cannot let that happen. What gives?

-- Steve I., Plano, Texas

The Rangers did make Wilson a three-year offer, but from a pure economic standpoint, it was difficult to get this one done. Wilson was one season away from free agency and was looking to maximize his value. The Rangers were looking at a pitcher who had just one successful season as a starter on his resume, and they weren't ready to go all-out in an attempt to get something done. The Rangers still have a good chance of re-signing Wilson, but as in the case with Cliff Lee, it could come down to the length of the contract. The longer the deal, the more squeamish the Rangers get, and anything beyond five years may lead them to walk away.

What happened to Hurley? We heard a lot about him during the offseason, but he seems to have faded away.

-- Todd R., Abilene, Texas

Hurley, after missing two complete seasons, made a nice comeback at Triple-A Round Rock this season despite a couple more physical setbacks that included getting hit in the head with a line drive. In 16 starts, he was 8-3 with a 5.55 ERA. That ERA shot up from 4.23 when he allowed 17 earned runs in 10 innings in his last two starts. Otherwise, he had a

good season, and there were times when the Rangers were considering bringing him to the big leagues. He will be a legitimate candidate for a spot on the pitching staff next season.

What is the status of right-hander Omar Beltre? Will he be able to start in Triple-A next year?

-- Greg H., Amarillo, Texas

Beltre is working out at the Rangers' camp in the Dominican Republic. He had back/spinal surgery at the beginning of Spring Training and never really fully recovered. His entire season consisted of two innings in the Arizona Rookie League. The rest of the time was spent trying to build up core strength in his body. This year was a huge setback for a great talent, but he is still in the organization.

I don't believe they will, but if the Rangers go after Prince Fielder or Albert Pujols and get one of them this offseason, do you see us trading Mitch Moreland for a solid pitcher? Or would we try to keep him and move him around?

-- Jay S., San Angelo, Texas

Club officials have privately made it clear that they do not expect to pursue either Fielder or Pujols. There is national speculation the Rangers are a prime candidate to land one, but that is not considered the case among those in Arlington. All indications are the Rangers remain confident with Moreland and will stay with him at first base next season.

What is the likelihood Murphy will return next year? Will Leonys Martin get a shot at center field.

-- Bob H., Aviano, Italy

Two months ago, the chances of Murphy returning weren't good. They have gone up significantly since then. He is once again playing regularly, and that appears will be the case going into the playoffs. He is arbitration-eligible and a trade is always a possibility for anybody, but right now, Murphy seems to have regained his status as a keeper. He's reinforcing his value to the organization.

Why have the Rangers stopped wearing the uniforms that had the "Rangers" logo?

-- Mark A., Henderson, Texas

The Rangers made that decision a couple of years ago. They were trying to market themselves to a broader area and wanted to be identified as "The Texas Major League Team." Kind of like The Ohio State University.

## ***FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM***

**After a mechanical tweak and some tough love, Rangers' Holland making strong playoff pitch**

**Posted Monday, Sep. 19, 2011**

**By Jeff Wilson**

The longest night of Derek Holland's 2011 season was his shortest night on the mound.

Holland had recorded a whopping two outs and Florida had scored five times July 2 before he was removed in the first inning.

His previous start hadn't exactly been smooth sailing as New York tallied 12 hits and seven runs (three earned) in six interleague innings against the Texas Rangers' left-hander.

It wasn't necessarily results that made for the long night as much as the uncertainty those results created.

Though 6-4 with a shutout few weeks earlier, Holland's ERA was a plump 5.10. With right-hander Scott Feldman nearing a return from the disabled list, Holland's days as a starter were believed to be numbered.

He made what some thought would be his final start July 7. He four-hit Oakland to save his rotation spot, then five-hit Seattle a week later to open the second half.

Holland wasn't going anywhere and isn't now. Two months ago his rotation future was clouded, but it's difficult to image a postseason rotation without him in it.

All it took for Holland to save his season was a mechanical tweak, a butt-chewing and a little more diligence with his homework.

"I've done a lot of work behind the scenes to make myself a better pitcher," Holland said. "If I go out there and give the team a chance to win, that's all that matters."

Holland will make his 31st start of the season tonight as the Rangers open a three-game series at Oakland with a five-game lead in the American League West.

He's now 14-5 with a 4.02 ERA in 186 innings.

Work with bullpen coach Andy Hawkins has helped correct a mechanical flaw that was causing Holland to throw across his body. He is making a straight stride toward home plate now rather than landing to the third-base side of the mound.

"Hawk has been working really hard with him every day on his delivery," pitching coach Mike Maddux said. "The more consistent the delivery has become, the more consistent he has become."

Holland wasn't on solid ground July 30, when he threw a ball away in the second inning at Toronto to put runners at second and third in the second inning.

The sloppy play, which followed a two-out walk, earned Holland a visit from manager Ron Washington. Only one man spoke in the mound meeting, and it wasn't Holland.

Washington's stern words served as a wake-up call. Holland got out of the inning and tossed his fourth shutout of the season.

He has dropped only one decision since throwing that four-hitter.

"It better had snapped him in, because I told him if it didn't I was taking his butt out," Washington said. "It's always been his focus. I also think he's learning to trust his stuff and slow things down a bit."

With Holland's delivery and focus right, the rest has been up to him.

He's throwing more off-speed pitches, and throwing them for strikes.

He has become more of a student of the game, seeking tips from his teammates and coaches while delving more deeply into his scouting work.

He has always watched video, but it wasn't until this season that he understood that what might have worked for one left-hander against a certain team won't necessarily work for him.

"You have to take what's relevant from the guy you're watching," Maddux said. "He's more disciplined in his preparation. It comes with knowing what you need to work on and the ability to apply your homework."

Holland could find himself on a big stage in the postseason. The Rangers are headed toward a first-round series with New York, but could get Boston or Tampa Bay.

Left-handers match up better against those AL East clubs.

Holland turned in one of the biggest pitching performances of the postseason last year at Yankee Stadium during the AL Championship Series.

That was as a reliever. He's a starter this year, destined for the playoff rotation.

"It was definitely a big confidence booster," said Holland, who threw 32/3 scoreless innings and was the winning pitcher in Game 4.

"It showed that you can go in a big stadium against a team that has plenty of playoff experience. To go out there and pitch the way I did is huge for upcoming times. I'll be able to use that for the next time around."

## ***DALLAS MORNING NEWS***

**Grant: Rangers' depth has been the difference in race for the AL West**  
**EVAN GRANT**

**Published: 19 September 2011 10:52 PM**

OAKLAND, Calif. — While talk of Cliff Lee dominated the Rangers' off-season last year, all the action focused on improving the team's depth and versatility.

With nine games left and a second consecutive AL West title within their reach, the Rangers are seeing the benefits of that depth.

All around baseball, offense is off in 2011.

Except in Texas.

"Things are working the way they are supposed to," manager Ron Washington said. "Everybody is doing their part. The regulars, the subs, they are all coming together, and it couldn't happen at a better time of the year."

The offense is stronger. The hitters are reaching career highs. The lineup is fresher.

As they prepare for a three-game series at Oakland that starts Tuesday night, the Rangers have already scored more runs (801) than they did in 2010 (787). Their batting average is up four points, the slugging percentage is up 36 points and the on-base percentage has stayed solid.

The Rangers are doing this despite the fact that MVP Josh Hamilton, Adrian Beltre and Nelson Cruz have combined to miss more than 100 games with injuries.

Michael Young could set career highs in batting average and RBIs. Ian Kinsler has already set a career high in runs and still has a shot at a second 30-30 season. Elvis Andrus' numbers are up across the board. Mike Napoli is having a career year, and the division of labor at catcher has created the most productive catching situation in the majors.

Perhaps most important, it's added up to wins. Last year, the Rangers were able to coast to the AL West title with no real challenge. This year, Los Angeles has mounted such a challenge, but the Rangers have gone 11-5 in September to add to their lead. After the Angels' 3-2 loss Monday to Toronto, the Rangers' lead is five games and their magic number to clinch is five.

"I think we're seeing two things," general manager Jon Daniels said. "One, the guys have stepped up their games, they're doing what needs to be done. Two, some of them are probably a little fresher. [Washington] has done a really good job rotating guys through and giving everyone a break off their feet."

Washington has kept his players engaged to maximize effectiveness. He's kept them fresh to maximize their productiveness.

A few key examples of how things have worked:

Michael Young: How Young would be used in his new role of DH/super utility player was a source of off-season speculation and controversy. In the end, Young has once again led the team in games played (151 and counting), and after a slow finish last year, he's returned to have perhaps the productive season of his career at age 34. The biggest difference is that while he's still played the majority of his games in the field, he's had 68 starts at DH.

Young said there is no difference in him from 2010 to 2011 and noted he's made most of his starts in the field in the last two months because of the injury to Adrian Beltre.

Washington says lessening the load has improved the productivity.

"I think you can only get the answer from Michael," Washington said. "I'm not smart enough to figure out if there is a correlation or not. But I don't think his body has been grinded on like it has been in the last couple of years. I think it's helped his legs stay fresher. And you hit with your legs."

Ian Kinsler: The goal was to keep Kinsler healthy for a full season for the first time. Thanks to some early off days to combat some hamstring soreness and a three-day respite after his second child was born, Kinsler has stayed healthy. He set a career high in games (147) in Seattle. As a result, he's shattered his career best in runs with 113.

Catching: The Rangers didn't think they had a catcher capable of giving them 110-120 starts and were prepared to divide time up fairly evenly between Yorvit Torrealba and Mike Napoli. It's benefitted both players.

Torrealba will end up with about 95 games behind the plate, and Napoli about 60 (with another 40 at first and DH). The catching position is hitting .295, the best in baseball, and has an .829 on-base-plus-slugging percentage (two points behind leader Detroit).

It turns out all the talk of the Rangers depth wasn't exaggerated a bit.

## **ESPN DALLAS**

### **Rested Rangers primed for postseason**

**Players taking better care of themselves this season to stay focused and fresh**

**By Richard Durrett**

**Updated: September 20, 2011, 12:48 AM ET**

SEATTLE -- There's some pep in the step of the Texas Rangers these days. They are playing through the late September grind with their eye toward the postseason, but this is more than just the adrenaline of a pennant race.

This team looks fresher and more energetic than it did at this time last year.

"A lot of guys understand what the grind is now," said manager Ron Washington, whose team leads the AL West by five games with nine to play and has a magic number of five. "Last year was the first time those guys went through that grind. Until you go through it, you don't understand what it is."

Washington stressed in spring training that his team had to learn from the 2010 playoff chase and postseason run. They had to figure out what their bodies could and couldn't do and make adjustments.

The numbers in September show the club is doing that. They are hitting .319 as a team this month, with 31 homers and a .554 slugging percentage. The Rangers have fresh legs, as evidenced by their continued aggression on the bases, whether that's stealing second or third, going from first to third or legging out infield hits.

The club's every-day players are doing what they need to do to stay focused and ready when the games matter the most down the stretch.

"Once you been through it, you understand what it is," Washington said. "It's no big deal to go through 162 games and lose. But if you've never been through 162 games and won, that's different. And I'm not talking about going to the World Series, I'm just talking about winning and a chance to go to the postseason. You understand what it's like. That means you are bringing it every single day."

Perhaps no one has learned more than Elvis Andrus.

Washington went into the season hoping to play Andrus between 135 and 140 games. But the injury to utility infielder Andres Blanco altered those plans. Andrus will end up playing about the same number of games as last season, but the 23-year-old has taken better care of himself.

"I made sure when the season started not to push it as much," Andrus said. "I think I did too much early last season and it hurt me late. I've started sleeping more. Instead of watching TV late, I force myself to turn it off and go to sleep."

Andrus says he's seen a difference and that he has more energy now.

"At 21, you can bounce back," Washington said. "But when you are playing for something, you have to figure out what it important. He's sleeping more. He's eating better. He's learned how to take care of his body better."

He's not the only one. Ian Kinsler has played in 147 games, second only to Michael Young's 151. But Kinsler has played all but a handful of those in the field at second base. That's his career high in games played. He's avoided the disabled list for the first time in his career as a big leaguer. Kinsler is having one of the best seasons of his career, playing tremendous defense and pounding out 29 homers with 25 stolen bases.

"He hasn't been running the bases with reckless abandon, either," Washington said. "He's been picking his spots for stealing bags. That takes a little bit off his body."

Washington said he's been able to manage the off days pretty well, though he feels he hasn't maximized that effort because of Blanco's injury. Still, he's been able to get players off their feet by rotating the designated hitter spot, thanks to Young's versatility. Nelson Cruz has taken advantage of that recently, as he got at-bats without having to run around the outfield on his hamstring.

Washington noted that even the players who were out for extended periods of time with injuries have a little more in the tank right now because of it. Josh Hamilton missed six weeks early in the season. Adrian Beltre was out five weeks.

"We're fresher than we were last year," Washington said. "Guys are smarter and they have had some rest."

It doesn't hurt that the Angels have put more pressure on Texas this year. Last year, the Rangers played most of the second half of the season with a big lead. This year, with a similar record, things aren't quite as comfortable in the AL West.

"That's helped everyone stay focused," Washington said. "I hope it helps us as we finish the season."

And, of course, the playoffs. A healthy and energetic Rangers team would be a dangerous one for the opposition in the postseason.

### **When might the Rangers clinch? By Richard Durrett**

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Scoreboard watching is a full-time occupation these days with the Texas Rangers closing in on a second consecutive AL West title.

The Angels lost to Toronto in extra innings Monday, dropping them five games behind Texas. The loss also means the Rangers dropped their magic number to 5.

Texas plays the A's in a three-game series starting tonight. The Angels still have three more in Toronto. That means the earliest the Rangers could clinch would be Thursday here in Oakland. If the Rangers win Tuesday and Wednesday and the Angels lose both of those days, Texas would need a win or an Angels loss Thursday to clinch.

What seems more likely is that the Rangers would clinch this weekend in Arlington in front of the home fans.

For the three-game series in Anaheim to matter, the Angels must close the deficit from 5 games to 3 in the AL West in the next six days. If Texas goes 3-3 in that span, the Angels have to go 5-1 just to get the lead to three with three to play. The Rangers have Seattle this weekend while the Angels play the A's at home.

So when will the Rangers clinch? Give us a date and tell us why you picked it.

My bet: Friday night. Rangers win and then celebrate with fireworks on a Friday night. Plus, it would give them five regular season games to get fully prepared for the playoffs, including a stress-free trip to Anaheim.

### **Rangers Magazine: Ferguson Jenkins September, 19, 2011 By Bryan Dolgin**

While C.J. Wilson pitches every 5th day, the rest of the Texas Rangers starting rotation has had varying amounts of rest as it maintains its strength in the final month of the regular season. Conditioning for starting pitchers was a topic that came up in a recent conversation I had with Baseball and Texas Rangers Hall of Fame pitcher Ferguson Jenkins, who was a recent guest on Rangers Magazine.

"I think the main topic they always brought up was to run. The lower half of your body is your strength. That propels you later into the ballgame. I ran all the time," Jenkins recalled the advice from his pitching coaches. "I survived in Texas. Yeah, it was warm, but I still went out there and ran my 20 sprints every day, made sure I was prepared to start that ballgame within four or five days."

Jenkins said he did not get mentally psyched out by the heat and even wore a long sleeved shirt under his jersey on the day he pitched because he felt that he was in really good shape. Jenkins pitched in the Major Leagues from 1965-1983,



and he had two stints with the Rangers. The former Rangers, Phillies, Cubs and Red Sox hurler made the transformation from a "thrower" to a "pitcher" when he played winter ball in Puerto Rico early in his career.

"I learned how to change speeds, pitch location," Jenkins said. "Stay ahead of the hitter in the count. The best pitch in baseball is a strike. And, make him swing at the pitch you want him to swing at."

Certainly, the Rangers starting rotation has five pitchers who are getting the job done based on the aforementioned definition from Jenkins. Each of the Rangers in the starting rotation has at least 13 wins, the first time that's happened for a team in the American League since the 1977 Orioles and Yankees.

In my conversation with Jenkins, he also talked about Wilson, Rangers baseball in the 1970s compared to present day, pitch counts, his influential pitching coaches, and who he would have liked to play for back in the day. Listen to the podcast. Rangers Magazine is heard on 103.3 FM ESPN each Saturday.

### **Neftali Feliz looking dominant again**

**September, 19, 2011**

**By Richard Durrett**

SEATTLE -- When Texas Rangers manager Ron Washington talks about closer Neftali Feliz's body language right now, it's only in a positive light.

Ever since the skipper called his closer for a "lack of fire" as the trade deadline neared, Feliz has showed more focus. But this weekend in Seattle, he looked more like the 2010 Feliz than he has since his early-season success.

Feliz was humming his fastball at 96 to 99 mph Saturday and Sunday. He didn't mess around, either, getting all six batters he faced. The Mariners are now 0-for-45 off Feliz in his career.

"He's using all his pitches," Washington said. "The last outing at home, you begin to see the velocity really jump up. But by using all of his pitches, when that 96 jumps out there or 98, it's really super fast."

Feliz didn't have a save chance since Aug. 30 before this weekend, but now has two straight under his belt. One of those was a one-run win, too. Those are the kind of situations he'll likely face in the postseason. And Feliz is looking more and more like the pitcher who set the rookie save record last season and had the memorable strikeout of Alex Rodriguez to end the ALCS.

### **Rangers Magazine: Scott Coolbaugh**

**September, 19, 2011**

**By Bryan Dolgin**

It is true that great pitching can stop great hitting, and we saw that Friday when Blake Beavan and Brandon League combined to shut out the Texas Rangers. After that hitting pit stop, the Rangers continued to let things happen at the plate to win the series in Seattle. Prior to this series, the Rangers scored seven or more runs in each of the six games on the recent homestand, which led to the scheduling of Rangers hitting coach Scott Coolbaugh for a conversation on Rangers Magazine.

We talked about Ian Kinsler's September swing. We also talked about what is now a 12-game hitting streak for Elvis Andrus. Keep in mind, that Coolbaugh was a hitting coach for Elvis in the Rangers minor league system, too.

"He's got a few years under his belt [in the major leagues]. He's getting a little more consistent going to the plate having a plan knowing what he has to do and making the adjustments on an everyday basis," Coolbaugh said. "It's fun to watch any young player come through the system, work with him in the past and see him have success here at the major league level. That's what it's all about as far as the coaching level is concerned."

Moving down in the lineup, we did not talk about Josh Hamilton or Michael Young, but Adrian Beltre's name came up. Just like countless pitches in the second half of the season, I could not bypass Mike Napoli's bat. He is batting .465 in September and .316 for the season.

"One of the things that I think that he's done a great job since spring training was the fact that he's cleaned up some of his mechanics a bit where he felt a lot more consistent at the plate and enabled him to do a lot of things that he wanted to do. He's actually pulled some balls for some power. In the two-strike approach, he's done a lot better job with it as far as

taking the ball the other way and covering the outside of the plate. It's a credit to him. He's a big talent. The potential is always there for him to be a threat at the plate."

As far as the rest of the lineup is concerned, we talked about Mitch Moreland's recent obstacles as the plate. Even though Coolbaugh is busy inspiring players on a daily basis, we also talked about who inspired him as well as the reality of his job. Listen to the podcast of that interview which begins with him talking about the Rangers facing Beavan, an Irving, Texas, native. Rangers Magazine airs Saturday on 103.3 FM ESPN.

## **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

### **Young stayed in Texas, posts one of best years September 19, 2011**

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) -- Michael Young insists he never really wanted to leave Texas, even after requesting a trade last winter.

So when the Rangers' longest-tenured player stayed in Texas, he stayed Young and is having one of the best seasons in his career.

"It's one of the best trades that never happened," teammate David Murphy said.

The 34-year-old Young has remained a steady presence for the Rangers as they close in on another AL West title. He already has more than 100 RBIs and is only two hits shy of his sixth 200-hit season while hitting .331. That matches his career best and was tied for second in the AL on Monday, the team's last day off in the regular season.

"I don't consider this to be any different than my other years. All I care about is being healthy and being consistent," said Young, a .303 career hitter in his 11th season. "Every year you might find one season that's maybe slightly below my norm, another season might be slightly above it, but I like to think I'm always the same guy."

Even when having a new role and changing positions again.

Young became primarily a designated hitter and utility infielder after the Rangers this winter signed All-Star and Gold Glove-winning third baseman Adrian Beltre and then traded for catcher Mike Napoli.

Napoli also was a DH and first baseman, the spots Texas had planned for Young after he played third base the past two seasons. The Rangers showed interest, too, in potential DHs Jim Thome and Manny Ramirez before getting Napoli.

The trade request by Young came in the weeks before spring training, and the Rangers tried to accommodate him in the aftermath of their first World Series.

When no deal happened, Young reported to Arizona on time and put his focus on the field. He told teammates he wouldn't be a distraction and said he was preparing to have the best season he could, just like he always has.

"I have really no desire to revisit anything that happened over the winter," Young said. "But I never wanted to leave. I always wanted to be here. My teammates know that."

Reigning AL MVP Josh Hamilton said it was hard to even consider that Young might not be around.

"He's just a professional's professional. He goes about his business, he's a leader in the clubhouse," Hamilton said during the team's last homestand. "It just shows you his talent level, capable of playing pretty much any position, and still getting the job done at the plate. So it's been fun to watch."

Young has started a team-high 151 of the Rangers' 153 games. While there have been 68 games as the DH, he has started 42 of the last 52 in the field during a stretch when Beltre missed six weeks with a strained left hamstring before coming back at the start of September. Young has started 38 games at third base, 13 at second and 32 at first -- a position he had never played at any level, not even Little League, before working there this spring.

Even while playing different spots in the field, nothing has changed at the plate for the Rangers' career hits leader -- at 2,046 and counting. He also has only 78 strikeouts this season, a career low in 599 at-bats. He won the AL batting title in 2005 with a .331 average.

But Young is taking no extra satisfaction in having success this season in a different situation.

"Not at all, none," he said. "No person or no situation can take me to a place I'm already at. I mean, either you're motivated or you're not. If you're relying on other people or a particular scenario to motivate you, you're probably in the wrong business. I'm motivated by winning and by playing well, simple as that."

And the Rangers (88-65) are finally winning after so many seasons of last-place finishes without ever winning a playoff series before last year.

Before Texas won the AL West title and got to the World Series a year ago, Young had played 1,508 regular-season games without getting into the playoffs. That was the second-longest streak for an active player.

Young was a second baseman when he became a starter for Texas in 2001, then switched to shortstop after Alex Rodriguez was traded in 2004 and was an All-Star five consecutive seasons. The Rangers moved Young to third base two years ago when shortstop Elvis Andrus was promoted from Double-A.

This time, Young had to prepare for multiple positions and not always being on the field.

"It further emphasizes how mentally tough he is," Murphy said. "He's going to be a leader and he's always going to be a team guy. ... Bottom line is he wants to win."

Regardless of which glove he needs, or if he only needs his bat, Young has gotten comfortable enough in his role that manager Ron Washington no longer has to give him a heads-up about where he will play any particular game.

"I'll check the lineup and I'll be fine," Young said.

"He's understanding now that he can play every single one of those positions so it doesn't faze him," Washington said. "It doesn't matter where I put him in that lineup, he delivers and we needed him to step up in the fourth spot when Beltre was down, and he didn't miss a beat. He just stepped up and kept doing what he do. He didn't change his approach, didn't change his style, kept doing what he does, and that's swing the bat and help us win."