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**Harrison, Cruz team up to end Rangers' skid**

**By T.R. Sullivan**

**6/3/2012 8:26 PM ET**

ANAHEIM -- Score one for team meetings and manager Ron Washington.

The Rangers, at least for one sunny afternoon in Southern California, responded to their manager's remonstrations by snapping their four-game losing streak with a 7-3 victory over the Angels on Sunday at Angel Stadium. The Rangers are back to a 4 1/2 game lead over the Angels in the American League West.

"We were happy with the way we played," designated hitter Michael Young said. "It was just one game, but there were some things we want to make adjustments on and we did a pretty good job."

Washington told his players after a loss on Saturday night that they needed to get back to playing good baseball again. He wanted his team to play Rangers baseball, which includes good pitching, defense, running the bases and execution. They did all that in avoiding being swept by the Angels.

"We just had to get back to who we are," Washington said. "Play the game with fun and play the game with aggression. That's what we did. It was just a good all-around game."

"Our focus today was at a whole different level than the last few days," said shortstop Elvis Andrus, who highlighted the Rangers' errorless defensive work with a couple of outstanding plays. "Yesterday's talk opened everybody's eyes."

The Rangers also showed some serious power at the right moment. The big blow on the afternoon was a two-run homer by Nelson Cruz in the seventh inning. The ball landed halfway up a hill in left-center and was measured at 484 feet. That's the longest home run in baseball this year.

"I can't hit it any harder than that," Cruz said.

The home run, after Young led off the seventh with a single off reliever Bobby Cassevah, came on a 3-0 pitch, with Washington giving him the green light.

"I told them last night I wanted them to be a aggressive, so I had to be aggressive myself," Washington said.

Cruz's home run helped make a winner out of Matt Harrison, who allowed three runs in 6 2/3 innings to earn his seventh win. Harrison not only snapped the Rangers' losing streak, but has won three in a row himself.

"You never want to have a losing streak, so it was good for us to leave here with a win," Harrison said. "It was a big game for us. We can bounce back and get on a winning streak."

Harrison left with two on and two out in the seventh. The Rangers, after Cruz's home run, led 5-2. Alexi Ogando took over, giving up a run-scoring single to Mike Trout. He then walked Alberto Callaspo to lead the bases, and that brought up Albert Pujols.

"I don't know what Alexi was feeling, but I wasn't feeling good," Washington said.

Ogando was feeling strong. He went right after Pujols with fastballs, starting at 98 miles per hour and finishing at 100. The last one broke Pujols' bat on a fly ball to left to end the inning.

"I'll take that showdown," Angels outfielder Torii Hunter said. "Bases loaded, Ogando, 98 mph, 99, and Pujols at the plate; I will take that scenario every freaking time."

The Rangers beat Angels starter Dan Haren, working him for 104 pitches over just five innings. They were also able to stake Harrison to an early lead.

Mike Napoli and Mitch Moreland got the Rangers started in the third inning with a pair of singles. Ian Kinsler followed with a medium fly to right-center that right fielder Mark Trumbo caught on the run. Napoli tagged up and made an aggressive dash for third, barely beating the throw. Elvis Andrus brought him home with a double off the right-field wall.

The Rangers made it 2-0 in the fifth after Kinsler led off with a double and was bunted to third by Andrus. Kinsler had to stay at third when Josh Hamilton flied to shallow left, but after Adrian Beltre walked, he scored on a single by Young off Pujols' at glove first base.

Harrison retired the first 12 batters he faced before walking Trumbo on four pitches to start the fifth. He struck out Hunter and retired Howie Kendrick on a fly to center, but Erick Aybar doubled into the left-field corner, bringing Trumbo home.

The Rangers got that run right back in the sixth. David Murphy led off with a double. After Napoli was hit by a pitch, Moreland bunted the runners to second and third. Kinsler brought Murphy home with a grounder to short.

"This afternoon, some things got away from us," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "We were behind too many counts, too often. Our ability to really command counts is what set us up the first two games of this series and we were able to control some things. But today, it got away from us a little bit. They were in a lot of hitting counts, and they pressured us on the offensive side more than we could stop them."

Angels catcher John Hester, who was batting ninth, led off the bottom of the sixth inning with his first home run of the year, making it 3-2. But Harrison averted further trouble after a two-out walk to Pujols and a high pop by Trumbo that fell into shallow right-center for a double. With runners at second and third, Harrison retired Hunter on a fly to right to end the inning.

"I felt really good for the first four or five innings," Harrison said. "I felt locked in and able to put the ball where I wanted. The thing I was upset about was some of the walks, but the defense was outstanding behind me and we were able to come out with a win."

**Twice as nice: Hamilton AL's best for May  
Slugger named league's top player for second straight month  
By Evan Drellich  
06/03/12 2:27 PM ET**

In 2008, Josh Hamilton became the first American Leaguer to win the Player of the Month Award in back-to-back months to start a season. Four years later, he's done it again.

The Rangers outfielder on Sunday was named the AL's Player of the Month for May, giving him two straight monthly honors and five total in his six-season career.

"Can I shut it down for the rest of the year?" Hamilton joked. "That's awesome. I don't play to receive awards, but it always makes you feel good when you're recognized for going out and doing the best you can, and doing well."

Hamilton had a four-homer game on May 8, when he went 5-for-5 with a double, eight RBIs and 18 total bases in a 10-3 win at Baltimore, but he's been hitting on another level for the entire season. Hamilton hit safely in his first 13 games of May, part of a season-best 16-game streak for him.

In 25 games in May, Hamilton batted .344 (33-for-96) with six doubles, 12 home runs, 32 RBIs and 19 runs scored. He finished first in the AL in homers, RBIs, slugging percentage (.781) and total bases (75). He also tied for first in extra-base hits (18), was fourth in batting average and seventh in on-base percentage (.405). He also set a club homer record for the month.

On the season, Hamilton is the only Major Leaguer to reach 20 home runs so far, with 21, and the only one to crack 50 RBIs, with 57. His .358 average is second to Paul Konerko (.366) in the AL. Hamilton is just the second player in the Majors since 2002 to reach at least 57 RBIs through his team's first 51 games, joining Albert Pujols, who drove in 64 for the 2006 Cardinals.

**Rangers' chemistry helps them fight back**  
**Texas takes finale of set vs. Angels, holds 4 1/2 game lead**  
**By Lyle Spencer**  
**06/03/12 9:05 PM ET**

ANAHEIM -- Michael Young understands the fragile psyches of fans. He didn't need to be told there were growing concerns deep in the hearts of Texans as the Angels -- these remodeled Albert Pujols, C.J. Wilson Angels -- rose from their April slumber and began making threatening noises.

Victories in the first two games of a June weekend series at Angel Stadium presented manager Mike Scioscia's troupe with the opportunity on Sunday for a sweep that would shave the Rangers' American League West lead to 2 1/2 games.

Drawing on its inner reserves and deep resources, Texas muzzled Pujols in the game's most compelling moment and went on to whack his new club, 7-3. The lead is 4 1/2-games.

"I'm a fan," said Young, who grew up in the Los Angeles area cheering for the local teams but has become attached to the Cowboys since his Raiders returned for Oakland. "I watch the Lakers and Cowboys, and they lose, and there's a beer on the floor, some chips on the floor. I'm not happy.

"So I can take a step back and see how they feel about us. Our fans are emotionally invested in us, and we certainly appreciate that. They're all in. But there's a difference. It's easier for us because we can control it and move forward."

The Rangers took control on Sunday, but not until Dan Haren managed to string out their weekend frustration by stranding seven runners in five innings. The Rangers led 2-1 when Haren, his pitch count at 104, departed.

It would have been tied, if Pujols at first base had handled a one-hopper by Young that scooted past his back hand for a two-out, run-scoring single in the fifth. It brought home Ian Kinsler, who'd doubled leading off the inning.

"It's tough to see on the corners here in the daylight, on a bright day like this," Young said. "That's a tough play for Albert. He's holding the runner [Adrian Beltre] on, and he doesn't expect a right to hit a ball like that."

Young's second hit, a line-drive single to left, would be followed by a monstrous home run by Nelson Cruz in the seventh against Bobby Cassevah for a 5-2 lead. Given the 3-0 green light by manager Ron Washington, Cruz launched it an estimated 484 feet -- longest of the season and 11th longest since 2006 according to ESPN STATS & INFO.

"That's the farthest I've seen in this park," said Texas shortstop Elvis Andrus, who made dazzling plays deep in the hole, robbing Erick Aybar and Mark Trumbo, behind starter Matt Harrison and reliever Mike Adams. "Nelson and Josh [Hamilton] and Beltre are the only ones who can do it."

The Angels have some guys who also can go very deep -- Pujols, Mark Trumbo, Kendrys Morales, Torii Hunter. Pujols had a crack at turning it around in the bottom of the seventh, but reliever Alexi Ogando retired him on a pop fly to left to leave the bases loaded and preserve a two-run lead. Peter Bourjos' two-out single ignited the rally, Mike Trout driving home Bourjos.

"I don't know what Ogando was feeling," Washington said of Pujols' presence in that situation. "I certainly wasn't feeling good. He made a pitch and got the out."

This is shaping up as the heavyweight collision everyone imagined through the winter and spring.

"They're a good team," said Cruz, heating up with homers in four of his past nine games and 23 RBIs in the past 24 games. "It's not going to be easy for us. We just have to stay focused and take care of business. You're going to have your ups and downs."

The Rangers held a meeting following Saturday night's exasperating loss, reminding one another of who they are, as Washington put it.

"Wash does a good job of making sure the players take care of everything," Young, the competitive face of the franchise, said. "He knows the guys in here are going to handle stuff. Our veteran guys have been unbelievable keeping things together here.

"Chemistry is having a bunch of guys who believe in the same cause. It doesn't have to be a bunch of choir boys. We have a lot of different personalities here. This is a classic example. We have guys from all over the U.S., different countries -- Latin America, Japan -- and there are no cliques. Everyone hangs out together."

The Rangers have made wise choices in the veterans -- Beltre, Mike Napoli, Joe Nathan -- brought into the mix.

"It's important to have that strong leadership we have, to know the clubhouse belongs to the players," Young said. "We've had that continuity, with a lot of the same guys for a long stretch."

"We don't care how many games we're up. All we care about is our style of baseball -- aggressive base running, have good at-bats one through nine, pitchers attacking the zone and keeping us in the game."

It is their confident nucleus that enables the Rangers to come back so strong after a World Series experience amateur psychologists figured would cause them to come undone. Being one out, one strike from a championship and watching it get away in St. Louis was taxing, to put it mildly, on the Metroplex faithful.

"We don't take the World Series as a negative," Young said. "We played our [fannies] off. The Cardinals executed and beat us. We're all proud of what we accomplished. We had a team worthy of being world champs and did everything we could to make it happen. There's no need for us to be disappointed."

October in the distant rearview mirror, the Rangers forge on, excited by the adventures that await.

### **Feldman seeking to reverse trend against A's**

**By Christian Corona**

**6/3/2012 8:35 PM ET**

Scott Feldman looked good in the first four innings of his last three starts, allowing just three runs.

But lately the fifth inning has proven troublesome for the Rangers right-hander, as Feldman surrendered eight runs in the fifth frame of his last three starts and recorded just five outs. He is 0-3 with a 4.61 ERA in those three outings, one of them a spot start while Derek Holland rested and the other two starts while taking over for an injured Neftali Feliz in the Rangers' rotation.

"I know I can pitch more than five innings," Feldman said. "I know it's happened three times in a row, but I've been working on a starter's program between starts, and hopefully the third time is the charm. I can go deep in a ballgame and give the bullpen a break."

Feldman's stint as a starter may be nearly over as recently-signed Roy Oswalt is set to join the Rangers later this month. Oswalt made the first of what will likely be four Minor League starts with Triple-A Round Rock on Saturday, tossing two scoreless innings. Feliz, who has been sidelined with right elbow inflammation, is not expected to return until after the All-Star break.

"I just plan on going out there and giving everything I have and do as well as I can," Feldman said. "As long as I'm doing that, everything else will take care of itself."

A start against the Athletics in Monday's series opener may be what Feldman needs to break out of his funk. The A's have been blanked in three of their last four games and have lost 10 of 11, ending a nine-game losing streak with a 9-3 win on Saturday before falling to the Royals, 2-0, on Sunday afternoon.

The Rangers have also struggled as of late, losing four in a row before winning their series finale over the Angels, 7-3, on Sunday. Despite the short skid, the Rangers (32-22) still own the best record in the American League and a 4 1/2-game lead in the AL West.

"They're built for the long run to where it doesn't look like there's too many deficiencies that can be exposed all at once," said A's manager Bob Melvin. "Those are the types of teams that you really don't expect to go into big funks, because they can beat you different ways ... offensively, defensively, pitching, speed, power."

The Athletics will hand the ball to Jarrod Parker, who is 1-2 with a 2.88 ERA in seven starts this year, to oppose Feldman. Parker has turned in quality starts in each of his last two outings, posting a 0.69 ERA and striking out 12, but getting a no-decision in both games. The Athletics have scored two runs or fewer in three of Parker's last four starts -- all losses.

Rangers: Defense key to snapping skid

- For the first time in five games, the Rangers did not allow an unearned run, helping them break a four-game losing streak with Sunday's 7-3 win over the Angels. In the previous four games, the Rangers committed seven errors and surrendered nine unearned runs as they were outscored 35-15 between a pair of losses to the Mariners and two more to the Angels.

The Rangers have given up 30 unearned runs this season, tying them with the Giants for most in the Major Leagues. In fact, 13.5 percent of the runs the Rangers have allowed this year have been unearned.

- When the Rangers' position players committed three errors, grounded into three double plays, left 10 men on base, and went 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position in Saturday night's 3-2 loss to the Angels, it marked the first time that had happened in team history. The Rangers were much improved on Sunday, going 4-for-16 with runners in scoring position while not committing an error or grounding into a double play. They did leave 14 men on base, however.

Athletics: Weeks day-to-day with hip strain

- Second baseman Jemile Weeks is day-to-day after sustaining a left hip injury in Saturday's 9-3 win over the Royals. Weeks was 2-for-2 before exiting and had been riding a season-high nine game hitting streak. Weeks was used a pinch-hitter in the ninth inning on Sunday, grounding out to end the game.

Weeks leads the American League with four triples and is tied for fourth with 10 stolen bases. He hasn't recorded a RBI in his last 25 games but, after batting .186 in April, Weeks hit .250 in May. Weeks has four hits in seven at-bats in June, including a double and a triple.

Worth Noting

- When Colin Cowgill threw out Jeff Franceour at home Saturday, the Athletics broke a tie with the Rangers for most outfield assists in the Major Leagues. After having 21 outfield assists last season, the Athletics have 12 this season while the Rangers have 11.

- Oakland is the last AL West city the Rangers have visited this season. The previous two times they faced the Athletics were in Arlington. The Rangers are 2-4 this season against AL West teams on the road.

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## **Aggies Naquin, Wacha bolster Texas Draft pool**

**By Christian Corona**

**06/03/12 4:05 PM ET**

ARLINGTON -- Tyler Naquin didn't get off to a hot start at Texas A&M like his teammate Michael Wacha did.

While Wacha went 9-2 with a 2.90 ERA in his first year as an Aggie, earning Freshman All-American honors, Naquin, an outfielder, hit .244 with two home runs and 19 RBIs in 58 games as a freshman in 2010.

"I knew that I could play at the Division I level," Naquin said. "I even told my coach [Rob Childress], 'Hey, I'm going to be the Big 12 Player of the Year next year.'"

That's exactly what Naquin did. In 2011, he led the nation with 104 hits and batted a team-high .381 with 44 RBIs, 68 runs scored, 23 doubles, and seven outfield assists. Along with the conference player of the year accolades, Naquin was named a first-team All-American.

"Awards and accolades will come if you just work hard and not worry about them," Naquin said.

Following two seasons that saw him steal a combined 12 bases, Naquin then set his mind on wreaking havoc on the basepaths. As a junior this season, Naquin has stolen 21 bases and been caught stealing only five times. He also leads the Aggies with a .384 batting average, 46 RBIs, 53 runs scored and a .541 slugging percentage.

"It's a lot like hitting a double, except you're hitting a single and stealing a base," Naquin said.

The Rangers have taken 24 players from the state of Texas in the Draft over the last six years, two in the first round. That's where Wacha and Naquin, the top two Texas prospects among college players, according to MLB.com, are projected to go this year. Both are listed in MLB.com's first-round mock draft, with Wacha going to the Athletics at No. 11 and Naquin off the board at No. 30 to the Yankees.

The Rangers' first pick in this year's Draft is at No. 29, where they could consider Wacha or Naquin should they fall that far. They will make two other picks on the first day of the Draft as Texas also holds the No. 39 and No. 52 picks. The Rangers work hard to scout Texas and make sure they don't miss any in-state prospects.

"We don't want to get beat in our own backyard," general manager Jon Daniels said.

Wacha, who came to College Station from Texarkana, Texas, grew up going to Rangers games -- his family occasionally made the two-hour drive to the Ballpark in Arlington. As a junior, Wacha is 8-1 with a 2.21 ERA with 107 strikeouts and just 17 walks in 106 innings over 16 starts. He has served as the team's ace this season and has won 26 games over his three-year career.

"Growing up in Texas and going to games down in Arlington has always been a great time -- seeing them play and always wanting to be a Texas Ranger," Wacha said. "That'd be awesome to work your way up and pitch in Arlington, having family here to be able to watch."

Naquin has been impressed with what he's seen from his teammate on the mound.

"He's a fun, outgoing guy off the mound, but whenever he steps on the mound, he's a killer," Naquin said. "Whenever you have a 95-, 96-mph fastball with a changeup you can pull the string on, it's pretty deadly."

Naquin, meanwhile, has been a force of his own at the plate. He leads the Aggies, who are preparing to face Dayton in the NCAA Regionals this week, in nearly every offensive category. A native of Spring, Texas, near Houston, Naquin grew up rooting for the Astros. But he said he wouldn't mind playing for the two-time defending American League-champion Rangers, especially since it would mean still playing for an organization in the Lone Star State.

"It'd be a great opportunity to move up somewhere in that lineup and produce and help the Rangers get to another World Series later on down the road," Naquin said. "I had the blessing of having at least five to 10 family members at every A&M game. So being able to stay in Texas, I'm sure they'd all get in the car and get to those ballgames."

### **'Reality check' is theme of Rangers' meeting**

**By T.R. Sullivan and Christian Corona**

**06/03/12 4:11 PM ET**

ANAHEIM -- Late in the Rangers' 3-2 loss to the Angels on Saturday, a female fan sitting in the stands handed manager Ron Washington a hand-written letter. Washington put it in his pocket and didn't read it until well after his postgame team meeting.

"What she wrote in her letter was the same things I had just said," Washington said before Sunday's game with the Angels.

Washington doesn't call many postgame meetings. But Washington said he was going to hold one after Saturday's game even if the Rangers had rallied to beat the Angels.

"The things we're doing, that's not us," Washington said. "We're better than that. We've got to get back to where we were at. If we make the plays we're supposed to make, I'll take our chances."

Washington said the purpose of his meeting was to bring his players "back to reality." Infielders Ian Kinsler and Michael Young also spoke, as did first-base coach Gary Pettis.

"I'm not one to throw stuff," Washington said. "I don't rant and rave and turn things over. I played the game, I understand what those guys are feeling. I never wanted anybody to turn anything over on me. The whole point is a reality check. Things happen, so you've got to take care of them and fix them. I just had to step in and make sure we do that."

"Will you see results? I hope you do. You can't turn this game on or off. But the message has been sent. It could happen today or tomorrow. In my position, all I can do is send the message."

The Rangers entered Sunday's game on a four-game losing streak, including two to the second-place Angels.

"We're still 3 1/2 games up," Washington said. "They're chasing us, we're not chasing them. We've got to get back to playing our baseball and everything will be fine. We played tight; that's something we haven't done."

"Texas Rangers baseball is pitching, catching the ball, running the bases and executing. That's who we are and that's what we haven't been doing. We'll be better. They have pride and they can play. It's a matter of getting back to it."

Kirkman seeing results from cancer treatments

ROUND ROCK -- Michael Kirkman says his family took his cancer diagnosis harder than he did.

"I'm kind of a mellow person," Kirkman said. "I try not to take things too hard. But they definitely took it harder than I did."

The Rangers announced that Kirkman, a pitcher with Triple-A Round Rock, had been diagnosed with a form of skin cancer May 21. It was not considered life-threatening, but very treatable, and would not even interfere with his baseball activities. Kirkman will receive his third treatment Monday, and hopes two more treatments after that will be all he needs.

"The treatments have gone great. We're seeing results already," Kirkman said. "I feel a little more exhausted throughout the week, but that's the worst of it. I try not to let anything get me down or take me out of my game or take away from quality of life or anything like that. I try not to have any excuses."

After going 0-1 with a 11.45 ERA in seven April appearances, Kirkman went 4-0 with a 3.48 ERA in six May starts. He allowed two runs on five hits in five innings of relief of Roy Oswalt in Saturday night's 3-2 win over Albuquerque, picking up his fifth win of the year.

"I'm trying to get on a little roll here," Kirkman said. "I'm getting into a rhythm. If I get into something tonight, with a leadoff walk and a wild pitch, I was able to work through that. I was kind of erratic, but I was able to get myself through it and get out of it."

Kirkman began the season in Round Rock's bullpen before moving to the rotation in April. But since being diagnosed with cancer, while understanding that it's not a life-threatening condition, Kirkman says it's helped him put things in perspective.

"There's more important things than baseball," Kirkman said. "There's life."

Borbon, Martin nearing return to Round Rock

ROUND ROCK -- Triple-A Round Rock outfielders Julio Borbon and Leonys Martin, both on the disabled list, could be back in the lineup sometime next week.

Borbon, who injured his groin trying to beat out a ground ball in last Sunday's 19-3 win over Nashville, says that he's at about 70-75 percent. He will be available to come off the DL on Tuesday, when the Express finish a four-game series against Albuquerque.

"I should be pretty close," Borbon said of returning for the finale against the Isotopes. "A day or two more, and I should be ready to go."

Borbon was placed on the DL twice last year, once in May after straining his left hamstring and again in July after suffering a season-ending injury to his left ankle.

"This happened to me twice last year," Borbon said. "I can't control any of that. It's out of my reach. I'm just going to try to get back as soon as I can. I'm not concerned about anything else."

Borbon was riding a 15-game hitting streak before his groin injury, hitting .446 during that stretch, and .304 with five home runs, 24 RBIs and 10 stolen bases for the season. He batted .270 in 32 games with the Rangers last season.

"I'm confident now and happy with the progress," Borbon said. "I'm just concerned about getting back to being comfortable and doing the things that I could do before the groin [injury]. You just have to give it a couple more days and let it build up as the body allows it to."



Martin, a .347 hitter this year for Round Rock, has spent the past month on the disabled list after undergoing surgery to repair a torn ligament in his left thumb. He suffered the injury sliding into first base on a bunt single during a 6-3 win over New Orleans on May 1.

Martin was expected to be out for 6-8 weeks following the surgery. He has been hitting in the batting cages and running the bases. It's been nearly five weeks since Martin had surgery.

Worth noting

- The Rangers made some dubious history on Saturday. It was the first time they had the combination of at least three errors, three grounding into double plays, 10 runners left on base and going hitless in at least eight at-bats with runners in scoring position.
- Lost in Saturday's defeat was the tremendous catch center fielder Craig Gentry made to take a home run away from Erick Aybar in the third inning. Said Gentry, "With the sky the way it was, I lost it for a second. It kept carrying, but I knew I had a good jump on it. Luckily I was there in time and timed it."
- Josh Hamilton was named the American League Player of the Month for May, one day after striking out with the bases loaded in the ninth inning on Saturday night. Said manager Ron Washington, "I would have liked for him to be the Player of the Game last night. He had a tremendous May. I'd like for him to have the same month in June, starting with June 2."
- Triple-A Round Rock third baseman Tommy Mendonca has been placed on the disabled list with a head contusion.
- Roy Oswalt, who pitched two scoreless innings on Saturday for Triple-A Round Rock, is scheduled to pitch next Thursday at Omaha. It will be his second start since signing with the Rangers, and he is scheduled to throw approximately 50 pitches.

## **FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM**

### **Elvis, Rangers atone, clip Angels' wings**

**Posted Sunday, Jun. 03, 2012**

**By Jeff Wilson**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- No one player was singled out Saturday night during the team meeting manager Ron Washington held with his Texas Rangers, but one play in particular convinced him to hold the meeting.

Elvis Andrus was the key figure in that play, when he thought a seventh-inning grounder from Mike Trout had struck Erick Aybar's jersey. Andrus stopped to argue, getting no outs, and Aybar and Trout would eventually score.

A day later, Andrus was the Rangers' best player in their 7-3 victory over Anaheim that snapped a four-game losing streak and prevented a sweep by their top rival in the American League West.

Andrus went 3 for 4 with two RBIs and made two terrific defensive plays as the Rangers pushed their West lead to 4 1/2 games. He played aggressively, which is the way Washington wants the Rangers to play and the way he saw them play at Angel Stadium.

"Elvis always responds," Washington said. "What he did out there is what he's capable of doing. I never get on the guys for making mistakes. Just be aggressive."

Matt Harrison (7-3) retired the first 12 Angels and had a no-hitter through 4 2/3 innings, and Nelson Cruz supplied the big hit with a two-run homer in the seventh inning that was measured at 484 feet.

Michael Young and Mike Napoli each had two hits and an RBI as the Rangers collected 14 hits against Dan Haren (3-6) and four Angels relievers.

They also stranded 14 batters, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Timely hits are a part of the game," second baseman Ian Kinsler said. "If we continue to get guys on base, someone's going to get the big hit eventually."

Andrus was the first to do so Sunday, with an RBI double in the second inning that gave the Rangers a 1-0 lead and snapped an 0-for-13 streak with runners in scoring position.

Young singled off Albert Pujols' glove in the fifth to score Kinsler, who was at third after a sacrifice bunt by Andrus, to give Harrison a 2-0 lead.

But he walked Mark Trumbo to start the Angels' fifth, and their first hit, a double by Aybar, allowed Trumbo to score.

The clubs exchanged runs in the sixth, and Cruz delivered his mammoth shot after Young had singled to start the seventh. It was the eighth big-league homer hit this season on a 3-0 pitch.

"They gave me a green light," Cruz said. "In that situation you're trying to look for a pitch middle-in and a little up so you can drive it."

The Angels' last threat came after stretch time. Harrison had retired the first two hitters, but issued a single and a walk to end his day. Trout singled off Alexi Ogando to make it 5-3, and Alberto Callaspo walked to load the bases for Pujols.

Ogando threw two straight strikes, and then hit 100 mph on the stadium radar gun as Pujols popped to left field.

"I don't know what Ogando was feeling, but I certainly wasn't feeling good [about the situation]," Washington said.

Napoli and Andrus added RBI singles in the ninth.

Andrus later said that he didn't feel that he needed to make a statement with his play Sunday, but the be-aggressive message Washington delivered during the team meeting opened his eyes.

"It's one of those games that you needed," Andrus said. "We were happy to get the win and play our kind of baseball. I understand my mistakes, and I'm responsible for everything I do out there. I've got to keep going hard. I played my game for sure."

#### **Rangers notes: Hamilton AL player of month again**

**Posted Sunday, Jun. 03, 2012**

**By Jeff Wilson**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- A power-heavy May, which included a four-homer game at Baltimore, was more than enough for Josh Hamilton to be selected American League Player of the Month for the second straight time this season.

The Texas Rangers' outfielder, the 2010 AL MVP, led the league in home runs (12), RBIs (32), slugging percentage (.781) and total bases (75). He tied for first in extra-base hits (18), was fourth in batting average (.344) and seventh in on-base percentage (.405).

He also won the award in April. He has gone back-to-back for just the third time in history, and he's the first to do it twice. He also was the top player in April and May of 2008.

"Really? Can I shut it down the rest of the year?" Hamilton said. "I don't play to receive awards, but it always makes you feel good when it's recognized that you've going out there and done the best you can."

His bid for three straight monthly honors is off to a slow start. He is 2 for 13, a stretch that includes a game-ending strikeout Saturday with the bases loaded.

"I would have liked him to be the player of the game last night," manager Ron Washington said. "But it was a tremendous May."

More on meeting

Ron Washington doesn't like to call team meetings, but he got the urge to hold one Saturday night during the Rangers' 3-2 loss to Anaheim.

But it wasn't just one game or one play that led to the meeting, which Washington said would have been held even if the Rangers had come back to win.

The impact, which also included words from Michael Young, Ian Kinsler and Gary Pettis, might not be seen for a few more games. All the things Washington wanted to see were on display during the 7-3 victory Sunday, but Washington wants to see it consistently as he has over long stretches after meetings in past seasons.

"You can't just turn the game on and off," Washington said. "It could happen today or it could happen tomorrow, but the message has been sent."

Feldman working

Much has changed for Scott Feldman since he last took the mound. The spot he is holding in the rotation will soon be held by someone else.

But the addition of Roy Oswalt hasn't knocked Feldman completely off course. He understands that to be effective in any role that he must be able to command his pitches.

Throwing quality strikes and getting quick outs will also help Feldman reach another goal tonight at Oakland, pitching past the fifth inning.

He hasn't gone five any of his three starts since taking over for Neftali Feliz.

Feldman will likely make four more starts before Oswalt is ready.

"I'm just planning on going out there and giving everything I have," Feldman said. "I think as long as I'm doing that, everything will take care of itself."

Oswalt pitched two innings Saturday for Triple A Round Rock, and pitching coach Mike Maddux expects that Oswalt will work three or four innings in another minor league start Thursday.

## **Rangers 7, Angels 3 (F) June 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- A weekend that included two sloppy games defensively and a postgame team meeting ended on a better note Sunday for the Texas Rangers. But, like the first two games, it wasn't easy.

Matt Harrison didn't allow a hit until the fifth inning and Nelson Cruz launched a two-run homer in the seventh as the Rangers beat the Angels 7-3 to avoid a three-game sweep at Angel Stadium.

The Rangers lead the Angels by 4 1/2 games in the American League West, losing just a game to their lead over the weekend. The Rangers open a four-game series at Oakland on Monday and play three at San Francisco next weekend.

Elvis Andrus went 3 for 4 with two RBIs, and Michael Young and Mike Napoli had two hits and an RBI apiece as the Rangers collected 14 hits but also stranded 14 runners.

They needed Cruz's blast generate some breathing room after failing to deliver a key hit as Dan Haren labored. Cruz's drive to left field off Bobby Cassevah made it a 5-2 game, but the Angels came right back in their half of the inning.

Mike Trout delivered a two-out RBI single off Alexi Ogando, and Albert Pujols batted later in the inning with the bases loaded. Ogando, though, delivered a 100-mph fastball that shattered Pujols' bat on a shallow flyball to left field to end the threat.

Mike Adams worked a scoreless eighth inning, and Napoli and Andrus had RBI singles in the ninth. Joe Nathan, working in a non-save situation, pitched around a two-out single to close out the win.

-- Jeff Wilson

## **DALLAS MORNING NEWS**

### **What Ron Washington hopes to accomplish with his clubhouse meeting**

**ByEvan**

**12:41 PM on Sun., Jun. 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. - There is a tremendous mythology that revolves around the post-game "clubhouse meeting" in baseball.

Fans picture a manager foaming at the mouth, uttering profanities a mile a minute, tossing bats and equipment and food and anything else he can find. And, as the myth goes, this is supposed to rectify everything that has been going wrong with a team.

This is not how Ron Washington does them - or most other managers, either.

On Saturday night, during his 15-minute post-game meeting with his team, Washington probably did let loose a string of creative curses, but, then again, the man curses creatively even at his happiest moments.

Washington said he decided to call a meeting after Elvis Andrus froze when he thought a ball hit a runner's jersey in the 7th inning. Even if the Rangers had won, he intended to talk with his team.

Over the past three games, he'd seen a Rangers team that had gotten increasingly "tight" - his words.

Here was his take Sunday morning - from separate quotes over a long conversation with the media - on what led to the meeting and what he hopes to accomplish with it:

"I wanted to bring them back to reality," he said Sunday. "I'm not going to rant and rave and turn over stuff. I played the game and I didn't like it as a player and I know they don't like it. That's just show. We deal in reality."

"I hope they gut-check themselves. Over the course of the season, you go through things and you have let them try to fix it themselves. Sometimes you have to step in and have a meeting. Some things you have to let them work out on themselves. But that was an ugly game and I decided it was time."

"We played a little tight. That's something we haven't done. I think I run a very loose clubhouse. So that's out of [character]. I can put up with us leaving runners on base. I can put up with us not hitting. But I can't live with us not catching the ball. We pitch, catch and play defense. Those are things that we haven't done lately."

"Will you see results right away? I hope so, but I don't know. It's a process. The message was sent."

Washington wasn't the only one who spoke Saturday. Michael Young, Ian Kinsler and outfield instructor Garry Pettis also offered their thoughts.

"We just want to get back to our style of baseball," Young said after the meeting. "We play with enthusiasm. We run the bases aggressively. The one thing we can dictate is how we play the game. If we do that, the wins will follow."

### **Rangers don't expect discipline for Yorvit Torrealba**

**By Evan Grant**

**1:00 PM on Sun., Jun. 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. - Manager Ron Washington said he does not expect that C Yorvit Torrealba will face disciplinary action after his ejection from Saturday night's loss to Los Angeles.

Torrealba was ejected in the seventh inning after throwing his mask following a close play at the plate. Though a full-scale, hopping and spinning tantrum followed, Torrealba never made contact with umpire Tim McClelland. Though Torrealba came back for more after learning he was ejected, he never made contact with the umpire and Washington was able to get him back to the dugout.

"When I got out there, [McClelland] told me it was an equipment violation," Washington said. "He threw his mask. Some umpires will let that go. But that's an ejection. [Torrealba] didn't get out of control. He said what he felt he had to say and that was it."

Though Torrealba had an ugly blowup during the winter in Venezuela and received a 66-game suspension for punching an umpire in the head, that incident has no bearing on any ruling MLB officials may make on disciplining Torrealba. As is usual with equipment violations, Torrealba will likely receive a fine in the \$1,000 range. It was the sixth career ejection for Torrealba and the first of a Rangers player this season.

### **Yorvit Torrealba on his tantrum: "My frustration was my own"**

**By Evan Grant**

**1:43 AM on Sun., Jun. 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. - Yorvit Torrealba seemed to summarize the Rangers' building frustrations Saturday over a wretched stretch of baseball with a lip-flipping, hopping-and-spinning, ejection-inducing tantrum over a close call at the plate.

Speaking about 45 minutes after the Rangers' 3-2 loss to Los Angeles Saturday, a much calmer Torrealba said the tantrum was simply over the close call at the plate that was in question at the moment and not the overall quality of play.

"I don't believe in frustration," Torrealba said. "We are the best team in baseball. But everything goes up and down. I still think we are the best team in baseball, period. My frustration, if that's what you call it, was about what I thought was a missed call. And that was all."

On the play in question, Torrealba received a bullet of a throw from RF Nelson Cruz and tried to tag out Mike Trout, who had tagged up from third base. While the throw appeared to beat the runner, Torrealba may have been a step too far in front of the plate and his back leg wasn't able to ride Trout's foot off the plate. When Torrealba tagged Trout on the back, home plate umpire Tim McClelland ruled that the runner had gotten his foot to the plate ahead of the tag.

Two weeks earlier a similar play went in the Rangers favor when Mike Napoli was able to keep his foot on the plate and drive the runners' foot away from the bag.

"I thought he was out, period," Torrealba said. "I thought the throw beat him. I was trying to block the plate. I don't think he [McClelland] was in the right position to tell if he was out or safe. In a close game like that and an emotional play, I went off. It was so fast. I haven't even watched the replay. I know I tagged him for a fact. By the time I was trying to tag him, I don't think he had even slid [across the plate] yet. I could be wrong. I thought he was definitely out."

McClelland later told a pool reporter that he believed Trout's foot beat the tag and that he did not have any problem seeing the play.

### **Grant: Need to check the Rangers' temperature? Just look to Elvis Andrus**

**EVAN GRANT**

**Published: 03 June 2012 11:40 PM**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The new Rangers anatomy: Josh Hamilton is the face. Michael Young is the soul. And Elvis Andrus is the bellwether of the team's emotional health.

How Andrus reacts to situations usually indicates where the rest of the team is.

If the team is tired, manager Ron Washington usually notices Andrus dragging before others. If the team is mentally frazzled, Andrus' mistakes will stick out louder. Similarly, if Andrus is energized, so is the whole team.

In a 7-3 win over Los Angeles on Sunday, Andrus' play was the best evidence that Washington's message from a late Saturday night team meeting had been received. The win allowed the Rangers to salvage one game from a three-game series against the Angels and to rebuild their AL West lead to 4½ games. Exactly one third of the way through the season, the Rangers are on pace for 96 wins — which would tie the club record they set last year.

On Saturday night, however, things seemed so much different. After a fourth consecutive loss, Washington spent 15 minutes chiding his team for playing "tight," for inexplicable defensive and mental lapses and for generally playing the kind of baseball that the manager has spent the last six years trying to eradicate.

"Will you see results right away?" the manager asked himself rhetorically before the game. "I hope so, but I don't know. It's a process. The message was sent."

Andrus got it.

Andrus made an error Saturday for the third time in his last four starts and later assumed an umpire would see the same thing he did (the umpire didn't) on what Andrus thought was runner's interference. At the plate he hit into the first of four double plays by the wasteful Rangers.

On Sunday, he was a different player. And the Rangers were a different team.

Andrus bunted his way on base in the first inning, reached four times in six plate appearances, bunted a runner to third in a situation when the Rangers needed to add a run and made two sparkling defensive plays in which he went into the outfield grass to track down a ball, then made off-balance jump throws to get outs.

"I realized something last night," Andrus said. "I realized I had not been separating different parts of the game. I was putting everything together. My offense was [affecting] my defense. Knowing that, [Sunday] I was able to get it back on track, to separate the offense from the defense. By doing that I was able to focus on every pitch every inning. It's something I need to get better at."

If ever Andrus needs a reminder, he needs only get on YouTube and call up video from the third inning Sunday.

In the top of the inning, he drove a double to the gap in right center to give the Rangers a thin 1-0 lead. In the bottom of the inning, when speedy Erick Aybar led off with a ball into the hole between short and third, Andrus scooped it and still had enough to get the out. It allowed pitcher Matt Harrison to take a deep breath and continue plowing through the Angels lineup. Harrison retired the first 12 Angels he faced, six of them on ground balls.

In the fifth, Andrus bunted Ian Kinsler to third as the Rangers tried to build the lead with a manufactured run. Young delivered a two-out hit. It seemed all the more important after Los Angeles scored a run in the bottom of the inning.

In the sixth, Kinsler took a cue from Andrus and did, as Washington likes to say, "what the game asked" and hit a ground ball to the left side to allow a third run to score. In the seventh, Washington, figuring he needed to show a willingness to be aggressive, let Nelson Cruz swing at a 3-and-0 pitch. Cruz turned it into a 484-foot, two-run homer. In the eighth, Andrus made another catch-and-jump throw to start a scoreless inning for Mike Adams. And in the ninth, he singled home the second of two runs to give the Rangers extra cushion.

"I saw today what I like to see out there," Washington said. "There was fun. There was looseness. It was nice to see them get back to playing our brand of baseball."

### **Fraley: Despite rule changes, Monday's MLB draft still as crucial as ever for Rangers**

**GERRY FRALEY**

**03 June 2012 11:47 PM**

ARLINGTON — The Rangers return to the old standby of the amateur draft Monday night.

In the last year, the Rangers have had significant additions from the Pacific Rim with right-hander Yu Darvish and from the Dominican Republic with outfielders Ronald Guzman, Nomar Mazara and possibly Jairo Beras, whose status is being held up by Major League Baseball. Both areas operate under Wild West-like free agency, which allows the Rangers to use their creativity and aggressiveness to the fullest.

The draft is far more structured this year with the introduction of a limit for signing bonuses to players taken in the first 10 rounds. The system penalizes the Rangers, who have been aggressive and creative across the globe.

Houston, which has the first choice overall, has \$11.18 million to sign its 11 picks in the first 10 rounds. The Rangers, whose first choice is No. 29 overall, have \$6.75 million to sign their 13 picks.

The new format limits the Rangers' flexibility in the draft. That does not decrease its importance, general manager Jon Daniels said.

"They're all critical," Daniels said. "It's a talent-hungry, borderline talent-starved industry. It's extremely competitive in all areas. It's hard to rank [the areas], but the draft is a huge part of what we're doing."

"A lot of the success we've had to this point is because of the work our scouts have done."

The scouts carry more importance than ever this draft. Not only must they project where a player's talent can take him, they must determine what it will take to sign a player.

In the new system, there is an assigned bonus value for each of the 338 picks in the first 10 rounds. If a player selected in those rounds does not sign, his assigned value is subtracted from the club's bonus pool. That increases the risk of going over the limit and incurring penalties that range from a tax to lost picks.

"With our scouts, we stress having good relationships with the players, getting to know them," scouting director Kipp Fagg said. "We're going to take the best players, and we hope to sign them."

The Rangers have five picks among the first 93 choices overall. They picked up three extra selections among the first 83 as compensation for losing free-agent left-handers C.J. Wilson and Darren Oliver after last season.

Any year is a good year to have extra picks. This is a better year than most to have a bounty, Fagg said, because of the depth of the draft.

This is Fagg's 21st year in the organization and third as scouting director. In that time, he has been part of a move toward selecting more high school players with big upsides. The Rangers took a high school player with their first overall pick in each of Fagg's first two drafts and are likely to do that again this year.

Austin Aune of Argyle High School is a strong candidate. A shortstop at Argyle, Aune has attracted attention because of his left-handed bat and strong character. A top-flight quarterback for the 3A state finalists, Aune has committed to TCU for baseball and football.

Nick Williams, a raw outfielder from Galveston Ball High School, is also an in-state candidate, but the 29th choice may be too high for such an unproven player.

Fagg would not comment on any player, but he acknowledged the Rangers have put an extra focus on their home state. They are looking for an edge wherever they can find it.

## **After Saturday's debacle, Ron Washington keeps his cool while getting stern message across**

**EVAN GRANT**

**Published: 03 June 2012 11:49 PM**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — There is tremendous mythology that revolves around the postgame "clubhouse meeting" in baseball.

Fans picture a manager foaming at the mouth, uttering profanities a mile a minute, tossing bats and equipment and food and anything else he can find. And, as the myth goes, this is supposed to rectify everything that has been going wrong with a team.

This is not how Ron Washington does them — or most other managers, either.

On Saturday night, during his 15-minute postgame meeting with his team, Washington may have let loose some creative conjugating of curse words. But he always does that. Washington said he decided to call a meeting after Elvis Andrus froze when he thought a ball hit a runner's jersey in the seventh inning. Even if the Rangers had won, he intended to talk with his team.

"I wanted to bring them back to reality," he said. "I'm not going to rant and rave and turn over stuff. I played the game and I didn't like it as a player, and I know they don't like it. That's just show. We deal in reality

"I hope they gut-check themselves," he added. "Over the course of the season, you go through things, and you have let them try to fix it themselves. Sometimes you have to step in and have a meeting. Some things you have to let them work out on themselves. But that was an ugly game, and I decided it was time."

Washington wasn't the only one who spoke Saturday. Michael Young, Ian Kinsler and outfield instructor Gary Pettis also offered their thoughts.

"We just want to get back to our style of baseball," Young said after the meeting. "We play with enthusiasm. We run the bases aggressively. The one thing we can dictate is how we play the game. If we do that, the wins will follow."

Hamilton wins again: By winning the AL Player of the Month award for May Sunday, Josh Hamilton duplicated the feat he accomplished in 2008 when he became an early-season national sensation. Hamilton won the Player of the Month awards in each of the first two months of that season and has done so in 2012.

Hamilton hit .344, which ranked fifth in the AL, but led the league in home runs (12), RBIs (32) and on-base-plus-slugging (1.187). It's the third time in Rangers history a player has won consecutive Player of the Month awards. Alex Rodriguez did so in July and August 2002.

Torrealba's toss: Manager Ron Washington said he does not expect catcher Yorvit Torrealba will face disciplinary action after his ejection from Saturday night's loss to Los Angeles.

Torrealba was ejected in the seventh inning after throwing his mask following a close play at the plate. Though a full-scale, hopping-and-spinning tantrum followed, Torrealba never made contact with umpire Tim McClelland.

"When I got out there, [McClelland] told me it was an equipment violation," Washington said. "He threw his mask. Some umpires will let that go. But that's an ejection. [Torrealba] didn't get out of control. He said what he felt he had to say, and that was it."

Though Torrealba had an ugly blowup during the winter in Venezuela and received a 66-game suspension for punching an umpire in the head, that incident has no bearing on any ruling MLB officials may make on disciplining Torrealba. As is usual with equipment violations, Torrealba will likely receive a fine in the \$1,000 range. It was the sixth career ejection for Torrealba and the first of a Rangers player this season.

Briefly: OF Nelson Cruz's homer, estimated at 484 feet by ESPN, was on a 3-and-0 count. It was the seventh 3-and-0 homer in the majors this season and the second by a Ranger. 2B Ian Kinsler also had one on April 9. Said Washington: "If I wanted them to be aggressive, I had to be aggressive, too. So I let him swing there." ... RHP Joe Nathan completed his relief "shutout" Sunday by pitching a scoreless ninth. He has pitched nine consecutive scoreless innings with 12 strikeouts over his last nine games.

### **Bay Area-native Scott Feldman set to make hometown start tonight, but that might not be a good thing 8:00 AM on Mon., Jun. 4, 2012**

Rangers starter: RHP Scott Feldman (0-3, 4.50 ERA) grew up in the Bay Area and will be making two starts there this week. That's not exactly good news for Feldman. He's made six career starts in Oakland and San Francisco and is 1-5 with an 8.10 ERA. A big first step for Feldman would be to make it through five innings. He has not pitched five in any of his four starts this season. Feldman is struggling vs. right-handed hitters, allowing them a .333 average for 42 at-bats.

Matchup of note: C Kurt Suzuki has faced Feldman the most times of any active Athletics player, going 4-for-16 but with no walks for a .250 OBP.

Oakland starter: RHP Jarrod Parker (1-2, 2.88 ERA) was acquired in the deal that sent Ranger-nemesis Trevor Cahill to Arizona last fall. Parker, 23, has been impressive in seven starts. He's allowed two or fewer runs in six of them and has allowed one run on nine hits and five walks over his last two outings. Parker has allowed just one home run this season and has held opponents without a homer for the last 242/3 innings that he has pitched.

Matchup of note: Parker has not faced any of the Rangers. He is allowing lefties a .225 batting average and .340 on-base percentage.



**Looks like Rangers got message**

**Texas cleans up act against Angels after manager speaks mind in team meeting**

**Updated: June 3, 2012, 10:59 PM ET**

**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- You can only call so many team meetings before you risk your team starting to tune you out.

That's why when manager Ron Washington feels the need to speak to his Texas Rangers after a game, they listen.

Washington hasn't called many meetings in his six years at the helm, but after watching his team bobble balls and bungle opportunities in an ugly loss Saturday night at Angel Stadium, the skipper had seen enough.

Washington did most of the talking. He stressed playing "Ranger baseball," meaning strong defense, good pitching, aggressiveness on the bases and timely hitting.

"And having some fun," Washington said. "It didn't seem fun."

It looked a lot more fun Sunday. The Rangers resembled the team that stormed out to a 23-12 start, not the one that has played one game under .500 since.

When they left Angel Stadium after a 7-3 win, they were still 4½ games ahead in the AL West despite knowing they haven't played their best lately.

In other words: The Angels still need plenty of help from the Rangers if they want to catch them.

But Texas isn't really worried about the standings in June.

"We do a good job of worrying about ourselves," Michael Young said.

That's what precipitated the meeting, not any change in the standings. And the Rangers responded in Sunday's victory. They played solid defense, eliminating the errors and misplays that have plagued them the past three weeks. They came up with clutch hits. They got solid starting pitching. They ran the bases hard and, yes, they had some fun.

It was about time.

The best example: Elvis Andrus.

When the shortstop argued with an umpire rather than throw a ball to first to finish a play during Saturday's game, Washington decided a meeting had to happen right away. It was three weeks of rough play that built to that moment, but Andrus' brain cramp signified the team's mental funk.

"It was something teams that aren't doing the right things do," Washington said. "It had to change."

Andrus thought a chopper had hit Erick Aybar on the jersey, which would have been an out. But rather than gloving the ball and throwing to first before arguing, Andrus stopped. The umpire called safe and the Rangers didn't have any chance at an out.

"It was a learning experience," Washington said.

Andrus knew it, too. And he returned Sunday intent on moving on. Andrus was all over the field, making two terrific backhand plays deep in the hole at short and making tough throws to first. He was 3-for-4 at the plate and drove in two runs.

"Sometimes things happen and you don't see it's happening," Andrus said about his focus. "A talk like that early can be great. It woke me up a little bit. I told myself I have to separate my offense and my defense, and really focus better on every pitch and what I'm doing to prepare for every play. It was helpful."

It was also important for the manager to show with his own actions what he was preaching to his team. Washington told his players Saturday that they had to stay aggressive and keep going after opponents. So when Nelson Cruz got ahead in the count 3-0 in a 5-2 game in the seventh Sunday, Washington gave him the green light.

"I had to be aggressive too," Washington said. "I gave him the 3-0 hack and he did a good job with it. That's what you're supposed to do on a 3-0 pitch."

What Cruz did was send the ball to an area of Angel Stadium that is relatively unexplored. The 484-foot shot, as measured by ESPN's Home Run Tracker, landed near the Monster Energy sign high up a hill in left field. The homer was the longest hit at the stadium since 2006, when the Home Run Tracker's database began. It was also the longest homer hit in the majors this season.

But long homers used to be the main calling card of this team. Not anymore. The versatile offense that helped this club get off to a great start showed signs of a return Sunday. The Rangers moved runners over with sacrifice bunts and had productive outs. They pounded out 14 hits and left 14 men on base, a sign they were constantly putting pressure on the opponent, a hallmark of this lineup.

"We were aggressive out there," second baseman Ian Kinsler said. "We were threatening every inning. We worked [Angels starter Dan Haren] for over 100 pitches, and he was out in the fifth. We stuck to our game plan and executed."

The deep lineup made life tough on Haren.

"Their seven, eight, nine hitters could probably hit three, four, five in a couple of National League lineups," Haren said. "They never let you breathe."

With Haren out of the game, the Rangers added five runs off the Angels' bullpen.

How they played, just as much as the win itself, left the players pleased and probably a bit relieved as they headed off to Oakland for a week-long stay in Northern California. The Rangers must now use Sunday as a springboard to playing more consistent baseball.

"You don't win games because of team meetings," Kinsler said. "We knew we had to start playing better. It was a chance for us to talk about that. Now we have to do it."

## **Draft tidbits: Texas has 5 of first 93 picks**

**June 4, 2012**

**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- The 2012 MLB draft begins tonight with the first round and the Type A compensation picks and then continues with Rounds 2 through 15 on Tuesday and 16 through 40 on Wednesday. A few things to know:

\* The Texas Rangers have pick No. 29 in the first round, but thanks to compensation picks, they also have five of the first 93 picks. And they'll make all of those selections before the Los Angeles Angels pick for the first time in the third round.

\* There are new rules for the draft, which is now 40 rounds instead of 50. You need a degree in draftology to understand it, but here's a quick look from ESPN.com's Buster Olney on how it could impact things. Basically, teams have a certain amount of money they can move around if there's a player with high bonus demands that they want. But it also puts a premium on signing picks from the top-10 rounds or risk losing that slot money from the pool. And teams have until July 15 to get those players signed, a shorter window than previously.

"I think with this new system there's more pressure put on us in the organization, the scouts, to sign the players because if you don't sign them in the top-10 rounds, you lose the value of that slot," said Kip Fagg, Rangers director of amateur scouting. "We have to trust what we did in the past and our process of getting to know the players and agents. We fully intend on signing our guys."

\* The Rangers aren't going to change their approach, which is to draft the best all-around player regardless of position as long as he has "good character and good makeup," according to Fagg.

\* Fagg likes the depth of the draft, saying it's split well between college and high school players. He doesn't believe one position is head and shoulders ahead of another one.

\* The Rangers have added a third area scout to Dallas-Fort Worth and feel like they've got Texas well covered.

"We have area guys and crosschecker guys and we know them," Fagg said.

\* If you want to bet on something, bet on the Rangers taking a high school player in the first round and likely a pitcher or someone up the middle. That seems to be their early pattern. It also seems like they hit the Atlanta suburbs hard, though Fagg said that is coincidence.

"We want good athletes with good makeup and character and we don't care where they're from, really," Fagg said.

### **Matt Harrison quietly gets to seven wins**

**June 3, 2012**

**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Did you know that Matt Harrison has as many wins as Yu Darvish?

Harrison, who is now halfway to his 2011 total, has quietly gone about his business and won his third straight game on Sunday to get to seven wins. He appeared primed for something really special Sunday. He was perfect through four innings and had thrown just 39 pitches. The Angels were swinging early and often and Harrison was producing easy outs.

"I felt really good the first four or five innings," Harrison said. "I felt like I was locked in and putting the ball where I wanted to."

But a four-pitch walk to Mark Trumbo to start the fifth ended up finishing Harrison's shutout bid when Erick Aybar doubled to score Trumbo. Harrison did get through 6 2/3 innings, coming out after giving up a hit and a walk with two outs. Still, it was a quality start and Harrison pitched deep into the game.

"The thing that I was upset about was the walks," Harrison said. "Other than that, I thought I threw the ball well and the defense was outstanding again behind me."

The win stopped a four-game skid for Texas and was Harrison's third straight quality start. Harrison has allowed just six earned runs in his last 21 2/3 innings and all three of those starts are wins.

"It was a big game for us," Harrison said. "We can bounce back now and try to get on a winning streak here."

### **HR Tracker: Nelson Cruz hits longest in '12**

**June 3, 2012**

**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Nelson Cruz never did see where his blistering shot off reliever Bobby Cassevah landed Sunday. He didn't have to.

"My teammates told me how far it went and all about it," said Cruz, smiling. "I knew I hit it pretty good."

Pretty good? According to ESPN's Home Run Tracker, Cruz's homer went 484 feet, the longest home run in the big leagues this season. ESPN's database goes back to 2006 and it's the longest home run at Angel Stadium since then. The ball landed, fittingly enough, near the Monster Energy sign high up the grassy hill in left field, beyond the flag poles.

Cruz hit it on a 3-0 count.

"He was in a good position and I told them last night that we needed to be aggressive, so I had to be aggressive too," manager Ron Washington said. "So I gave him the 3-0 hack and he did a good job with it. That's what you're supposed to do on a 3-0 pitch."

Coming into Sunday, there were just seven 3-0 home runs hit in the majors this season and the last time Cruz hit one on that count was Game 1 of the 2010 ALDS off Tampa Bay starter David Price.

"They gave me the green light," Cruz said. "The at-bat before that, I took a 3-0 pitch. I was expecting something up in the strike zone and that's what I got."

His teammates jumped up and down in the dugout, many amazed by how far the ball traveled.

"Oh my," shortstop Elvis Andrus said. "I've seen a lot of homers from him, but that one and the one he hit in Minnesota was far, really far. That's got to be the hardest I've seen a ball hit in this park. I'm really happy he's with us."

**Rapid Reaction: Rangers 7, Angels 3**  
**June 3, 2012**  
**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- A two-run home run by Nelson Cruz -- and a mammoth shot at that as ESPN HR Tracker put it at 484 feet, the longest home run in any ballpark this season -- in the seventh helped propel the Rangers to a 7-3 win over the Los Angeles Angels. Texas played a much better overall game about 12 hours after a team meeting following Saturday's loss.

What it means: The Rangers avoid a sweep and leave Anaheim up 4.5 games in the AL West.

Cruz missile: Cruz hit a monster blast that nearly hit the Monster Energy sign way up the hill in left at Angel Stadium to turn a 3-2 game into a 5-2 Rangers lead in the seventh. More on the homer later. It was Cruz's fourth homer in his last nine games and it came on a 3-0 pitch from Bobby Cassevah. The last time Cruz hit a homer on a 3-0 pitch was Game 1 of the 2010 ALDS off Tampa Bay's David Price. ... It's the eighth 3-0 homer in the big leagues this season and only the second Rangers homer on 3-0 pitch (Ian Kinsler has the other one).

Ogando vs. Pujols: With the bases loaded and two outs in the seventh inning, Alexi Ogando faced Albert Pujols. Ogando hit 99 mph on the radar gun twice and then clocked 100 as Pujols hit a fly ball to left to end the inning. Pujols is 2-for-19 against the Rangers this season.

Working Haren: The Rangers had long at-bats and collected hits that forced starter Dan Haren to throw too many pitches early. He had 104 pitches through five innings, forcing Mike Scioscia to go to the bullpen earlier than he would have liked. Rangers starter Matt Harrison, on the other hand, was at just 39 pitches through four innings.

Quality start: Harrison allowed three runs on four hits in 6 2/3 innings and earned the win. Harrison had three strikeouts and three walks, but he pitched efficiently and nearly got through seven innings. He gave up a single and a walk with two outs in the seventh and was taken out in favor of Ogando. Harrison threw 85 pitches.

Leadoff walks hurt: Harrison was perfect through four innings before issuing a four-pitch walk to Mark Trumbo to lead off the fifth. After striking out Torii Hunter and getting Howard Kendrick to fly out, Erick Aybar's double (the Angels' first hit) scored Trumbo to make it a one-run game.

Small ball: The Rangers did the little things to score in the sixth. After David Murphy's ground-rule double to right, Mike Napoli hung in and was grazed by Cassevah's pitch, putting two on with no outs. Mitch Moreland put down a good bunt to get the runners over, allowing Murphy to then score on Kinsler's ground ball. That gave Texas a two-run lead.

Aggressive on bases: Napoli, who singled to lead off the third and went to second on Moreland's hit, tagged up and went to third on Kinsler's fly ball to right. It was a shallow fly ball and despite a good throw on the run by Trumbo, Napoli slid in just in front of the tag. He scored on Elvis Andrus' double to right that Trumbo got turned around on.

Andrus' great game: After a rough play on defense on Saturday, Andrus came out fired up. He had a single and an RBI double in the first three innings and made a terrific defensive play on Aybar, going into the hole, backhanding a ball and making a strong, off-balance throw to first. ... He also made a great play in the hole in the eighth, getting Trumbo out after getting to a ball that most shortstops couldn't. ... His only blemish was a relay throw to home plate that was offline in the fifth, helping Trumbo slide in before Napoli could get the tag applied. ... Andrus was at it again with his bat in the ninth, driving in Napoli with a two-out single.

Some wasted chances: One thing lacking recently is the Rangers' ability to put together big innings. They had a chance in the third after Napoli and Moreland singled and Andrus drove home a run with a one-out double to put runners at second and third. But Josh Hamilton and Adrian Beltre both struck out to end the inning. ... After playing small ball to score a run in the sixth, the Rangers loaded the bases with two outs, including back-to-back walks to Andrus and Hamilton, but Beltre grounded into a force out to end the inning. ... Texas did string together some hits in the ninth to add two big insurance runs. ... Texas left 14 men on base and was 4-for-16 with RISP.

Gentry stolen base: Craig Gentry came in to pinch run for Murphy in the ninth and stole second base. He scored moments later on Napoli's single. Gentry's speed, once again, made a difference.

Up next: Texas travels to San Francisco, where the Rangers will stay for a full week that includes four games against Oakland and three against the Giants.

**Buzz: Meeting was happening win or lose**  
**June, 3, 2012**  
**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Texas Rangers manager Ron Washington said as soon as Elvis Andrus didn't make the throw to first and instead started arguing with the umpire in the seventh inning of Saturday's 3-2 loss, that a team meeting was necessary. And the skipper said he was going to have that meeting even if Josh Hamilton had given the club the lead with his at-bat in the top of the ninth.

"I made my mind up I was going to talk to them, period," Washington said. "When Elvis didn't finish that play, I knew right then it was time. When things are going wrong, that's the way you react. You can't leave it up to the umpires. It's a learning experience for him too."

Washington did most of the talking, though Michael Young, Ian Kinsler and outfield coach Gary Pettis also spoke up.

"The things we've been doing, it's just not us," Washington said. "We're certainly better than that and we've got to get back to doing what we used to do. One thing we've done real well is when our pitchers put a ball in play, it's an out. That's it. I'm not asking for the outstanding play. Just make the play."

Washington said the meeting was to remind them of that and bring the club back to "reality."

"I'm not one of those that throws stuff and rants and raves and turns stuff over," Washington said. "I played the game. I understand what those guys are feeling when it's good and I understand what they're feeling when it's not good."

Washington received a letter from a fan before the game. She tossed it into the dugout and Washington put it in his pocket and forgot about it. He opened it after the team meeting.

"I couldn't believe what she said, because I just said the same thing," Washington said. "It's funny how fans see the same thing. Some fans. I'm not going to say all fans because some fans see only what they want to see. Some fans don't see reality, but this lady has seen reality."

Other notes:

\* OF Craig Gentry said he timed his jump at the wall well, but that next time he plans on playing it off better. He was ribbed by some teammates for smiling about it on the big screen instead of acting like he'd done that kind of thing before. Still, in a game full of defensive miscues, it was a bright spot.

\* The Rangers don't expect Yorvit Torrealba to face any extended punishment except for a fine for his tantrum Saturday. Torrealba threw his catcher's mask, which makes it an equipment violation.

**Josh Hamilton: May's AL player of month**  
**June, 3, 2012**  
**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Texas Rangers slugger Josh Hamilton has won AL player of the month honors for the first two months of the 2012 season.

Hamilton added May to his awards list Sunday after leading the majors for the month with 32 RBIs and a .781 slugging percentage. He tied for the league-lead with 12 homers and hit .344, the fifth-best mark for the month. Part of Hamilton's huge month was one particularly big game -- a four-homer performance May 8 at Baltimore. He had 18 total bases (setting an AL record) and four runs scored in that game with eight RBIs.

It's the second time that Hamilton has won player of the month honors for April and May, doing so in 2008 as well.

"Can I shut it down now?" Hamilton joked. "That's cool. You guys know I don't play to receive awards, but it's always cool and it always makes you feel good when it's recognized that you've gone out there and done the best you can and played well."

Hamilton won a Bulova watch for April. He's not sure what he might get for May.

This is just the sixth time that a player has won the first two monthly awards of the season. Hamilton is the only player to do it twice. Jose Bautista did it last season.

Hamilton's May was just the third time in club history that a player had at least 12 homers and 32 RBIs in one month (Juan Gonzalez had 15 HR and 38 RBIs in July 1996 and Rafael Palmeiro had 15 homers and 39 RBIs in August 1999).

### **Matchup: Matt Harrison vs. Dan Haren**

**June 3, 2012**

**By Richard Durrett**

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- The final game of this three-game series features LHP Matt Harrison vs. RHP Dan Haren at 2:35 p.m. on ESPN Dallas 103.3 FM and FSSW. Here's a quick look at the pitching matchup:

Haren (3-5, 3.52 ERA): In his last two starts, Haren has given up one run on 12 hits with 21 strikeouts and no walks in 16 innings in wins over New York and Seattle. ... The victory over the Mariners was a complete-game shutout with four hits allowed and 14 strikeouts on May 24 in Seattle. ... Haren was 2-4 with a 3.66 ERA in six May starts. ... He'll be pitching on normal rest, starting in the spot that was supposed to go to Jered Weaver before he was put on the DL with lower back inflammation. ... This is his 18th career start vs. Texas. Haren is winless in his last four against the Rangers with his last win on Oct. 3, 2010. ... He's 4-8 lieftimes with one complete game vs. the Rangers with a 4.20 ERA.

Harrison (6-3, 4.41 ERA): He's working on an extra day of rest (because of Thursday's off day) as he makes his 11th start of the season. ... Harrison is 3-1 with a 3.51 ERA in his last five starts, which has dropped his ERA by nearly a full run. That includes a 2-0 mark and a 1.80 ERA in his last two starts (three earned runs in 15 innings). ... He gave up two runs on seven hits in eight innings with five strikeouts and no walks in a victory over Seattle last Monday. ... It was Harrison's third career start with at least eight innings pitched and no walks allowed, his first since a complete game win in May of 2009 vs. Seattle. ... His last start against the Angels in Arlington three weeks ago was a loss as Harrison allowed four runs on four hits in six innings. He lost to C.J. Wilson, who started that Saturday after not returning following the rain delay on Friday. ... Harrison is 2-3 with a 4.62 ERA in his career vs. Angels, including 1-2 with a 5.34 ERA in five starts.

Hitters: Adrian Beltre has seen Haren a bunch and has had success, going 24-for-53 off him with seven doubles, a triple, three homers and 11 RBIs. ... David Murphy (8-for-20), Josh Hamilton (6-for-15, HR), Michael Young (17-for-52, 10 RBIs) and Nelson Cruz (5-for-11) have also hit Haren well. ... Mike Napoli and Yorvit Torrealba are both hitting less than .200 against Haren. ... Current Angels are hitting just .202 off Harrison. ... Erick Aybar, Torii Hunter and Mike Trout are a combined 3-for-31. ... Howie Kendrick is 4-for-9 with a homer.

### **FOXSPORTSSOUTHWEST.COM**

#### **Rangers follow loss with team meeting**

**Anthony Andro**

**June 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Texas Rangers followed up their 4-2 loss to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim on Saturday with a lengthy team meeting.

While no one wanted to divulge the specifics of the meeting, the general theme was simple. The Rangers need to get back to playing the kind of baseball that helped them build a big lead in the American League West.

What was not mentioned was frustration. That's because despite losing four-straight games and struggling defensively, the Rangers aren't frustrated.

"There's no sense of frustration. But at the same time, we do want to make sure we're back to our style of baseball," said Michael Young.

And while the team's lead in the American League West is down to 3 ½ games, the smallest it's been in nearly a month, catcher Yorvit Torrealba isn't concerned either.

He still believes that the Rangers are the team to beat.

"I don't believe in frustration," Torrealba said. "We're the best team in baseball, period. Everything goes up and down, and we're doing down right now. But we're the best team in baseball. I'm sure a lot of people agree with that."

Texas manager Ron Washington is eager to see how his team responds to the meeting Sunday.

"The message I want to keep to what was said to those guys in that clubhouse," Washington said. "We'll see if I made a difference tomorrow."

## **Aggressive Rangers avert Los Angeles sweep**

**Anthony Andro**

**June 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The apparent much-needed reminder from manager Ron Washington about what makes the Texas Rangers successful was taken to heart Sunday.

Texas returned to its solid defensive and aggressive offensive ways against the Los Angeles Angels and averted a sweep with a 7-3 victory at Angel Stadium.

It wasn't easy as the Rangers had to fend off a pair of rallies, but there were no complaints after Texas snapped a season high four-game slide.

"The main focus today was at a whole different level today than yesterday or the last two weeks," shortstop Elvis Andrus said. "Yesterday's talk (postgame team meeting) kind of opened everybody's eyes and minds a little bit and we really didn't try to do too much today. We wanted to get on base, see a lot of pitches and just do our game plan."

Andrus, whose seventh-inning blunder Saturday was one of the causes for Saturday night's meeting, sparkled at the plate and in the field Sunday. He went 3-for-4 with two RBI a walk and a sacrifice, while making two dynamic plays in the field.

He wasn't alone in getting things going as the Rangers also stole two bases, challenged the Los Angeles outfielders and played error-free ball after making three errors in Saturday's 3-2 loss.

Great starting pitching to begin the game from Matt Harrison didn't hurt either as Harrison carried a no-hitter into the fifth inning.

"It was just a matter of getting back to reality and knowing we're a good ballclub and going out there and playing our game," Texas manager Ron Washington said. "We accept what happens that way. We went out there and played our game. We were aggressive out there."

"Sometimes a reminder is all you need. Maybe I gave them a reminder at the right time (with the Saturday team meeting.)"

Texas needed to be aggressive offensively. The Rangers went 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position Saturday and stranded 14 Sunday. But with so many chances to get runs home, the Rangers finally started doing that.

Andrus got things going with an RBI double in the third inning and Michael Young made it a 2-0 game in the fifth with a single. After the Angels scored a run off Harrison in the fifth, Texas countered with another in the sixth and then added two more in the seventh on a mammoth homer from Nelson Cruz.

Cruz was given the green light on a 3-0 pitch from Bobby Cassevah and smashed it to left-center. There were seven homers hit on 3-0 counts going into Sunday's game and the Rangers now have two this year.

Washington said he told his players Saturday he wanted them to be aggressive so he had to get back to being aggressive too. Cruz rewarded that call by hitting a homer that was estimated by at 484 feet, the longest homer hit this season.

"They gave me a green light," Cruz said. "The bat before I was 3-0 and took it. The manager (Washington) told me it's how I feel. I felt like swinging 3-0 and was expecting something up in the strike zone."

The Cruz homer put the Rangers up 5-2. The Angels scored one in the bottom of the seventh and loaded the bases for Albert Pujols with Alexi Ogando on the mound. But Ogando induced Pujols to fly out on a 100-mph fastball to end that threat.

The Rangers weren't done though, scoring two more runs in the ninth by twice running on Los Angeles outfield phenom Mike Trout. Both times the Rangers were successful.

"We were very aggressive on the base paths," Washington said. "It was just a nice ballgame. A lot of focus. A lot of looseness. The past couple of ballgames I haven't seen that. I've seen a lot of tightness. I didn't see that out there today."

Harrison certainly was loose. He needed 32 pitches to get through three innings and didn't allow a base runner until Mark Trumbo led off the fifth with a walk. Erick Aybar ended the no-hitter with a two-out RBI double in the fifth, but Harrison responded. He ended up pitching into the seventh and upped his mark to 7-3, with four of those victories coming after Texas losses.

"You never want to have losing streaks, but it's good to leave here with a win and take that into tomorrow against Oakland," said Harrison, who threw 85 pitches and struck out three while walking three. "It was a big game for us. We can bounce back now and try to get on a winning streak here. I felt really good the first four or five innings."

## **Rangers hope to rebound after meeting**

**Anthony Andro**

**June 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The exact details of what was said during Saturday's postgame meeting in the Texas clubhouse will likely never be known to those who weren't there.

But one fan of the Rangers will have a good idea.

Texas manager Ron Washington got a note from a fan Saturday that he slipped into his pocket. He read the note after the meeting and it hit on everything that was hit on during the meeting.

"What I'm seeing people are seeing the same thing," Washington said. "Everything I told my guys this woman got in this letter. How real is that? What she is she's a fan of the Texas Rangers. She's letting me know what she's seeing. People see the same thing."

Washington wasn't the only person to speak in the meeting. Michael Young, Ian Kinsler and first-base coach Gary Pettis also talked.

The message was simple.

"The things we've been doing are just not us," Washington said. "We're certainly better than that. We've just got to get back to doing what we do."

For Washington, that means making the routine plays. The Rangers had three errors Saturday and were all costly. One play that didn't result in an error was the Elvis Andrus held ball on a play in which he thought the ball hit Erick Aybar in the seventh inning. When that play happened, Washington's mind was made up that there would be a meeting after the game win or lose.

The meeting did not include any temper tantrums.

"Bring them back to reality," Washington said. "I'm not one of those that throws stuff or rants and raves and turns stuff over. I played the game. I'm not a manager who didn't play. I understand what those guys are feeling when it's good. I understand what they're feeling when it's not good."

Washington said he only has meetings when it's necessary. After Saturday's game, it was time.

"Some things you've got to let work themselves out," Washington said. "That was real ugly game last night."

And as bad as things have gone for the Rangers in their season high four-game slide, Texas still went into Sunday's game 3 ½ games ahead of Los Angeles.

Last year the Rangers had a lead bigger than 3 ½ games just one day before July 16. Even with the need for a meeting, there's no need one panicking.



"This group has been together for a long time and experienced a lot together," Young said. "There's nothing that some wins or losses during the course of a regular season don't really have an effect on us. Our sole purpose is to try and get better. That's served us well and we're going to try and do it."

**Hamilton AL player of the month again  
Anthony Andro  
June 3, 2012**

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Josh Hamilton's streak of player of the month awards is now at two.

The Texas Rangers outfielder, who was the American League player of the month in April, followed that up by winning the honors for May.

"It was a tremendous May," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "I would like to see him have the same type of month in June, starting with June 2."

Hamilton struck out in the ninth inning Saturday night with the bases loaded in a 4-2 loss to the Los Angeles Angels.

He didn't miss much of anything in May. He led the majors in RBI (32) and slugging average (.781), and he tied for the major league lead with 12 home runs in the month. Hamilton batted .344 in May. The highlight of the month was his four-homer game May 8 against the Baltimore Orioles in which Hamilton set the AL record for total bases in a game, 18.

Hamilton is the sixth player to win both the April and May monthly award in a league since 1974. Mark McGwire was the last to do it, taking the honors for the St. Louis Cardinals in 1998.

It's the fifth time Hamilton has won a monthly award since he came to the Rangers in 2008. It's also the third consecutive month a Texas player has won the award. Adrian Beltre took the honor last September.

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

**Hamilton awed by Nelson Cruz's blast vs. LAA: 'Farthest ball I've ever seen hit'  
Published: 03 June 2012 02:42 PM**

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Texas manager Ron Washington gave Nelson Cruz the green light on 3-0, then watched the slugger put reliever Bobby Cassevah's sinker into orbit.

Cruz's tape-measure drive in the seventh inning helped Matt Harrison win his third straight start as the Rangers beat the Los Angeles Angels 7-3 on Sunday to avoid a three-game sweep.

"It's fun to see how far it goes, but the main thing the situation it came in," Cruz said. "I didn't watch where it landed, but I watched it go far enough."

Using a 34-ounce Louisville Slugger model No. R-13 that measures 35 inches, Cruz reached the championship flag poles in left-center. The ball was estimated to have traveled 484 feet, making it the longest home run in the majors this season, according to the Angels based on information from ESPN Home Run Tracker.

But teammate Josh Hamilton was quite skeptical.

"That's not right. When we come back here, we're going to bring a range-finder and we're going to get an accurate measurement on that ball," said Hamilton, the major leagues' home run leader. "That was the farthest ball I've ever seen hit. When you think about it, unless the wall is lying — it says 387 to the wall, and 100 feet past that is 487. But the ball went another 100 feet past that. So I can't wait to come back here."

Cassevah took it all in stride.

"Butch came out before that pitch, so we knew he was swinging," the right-hander said, referring to pitching coach Mike Butcher. "I was trying to throw a strike. But the sinker didn't sink, it was right over the middle, and he got all of it. But a home run's a home run to me, no matter how far they go. The hitter wants to see how far it goes. I don't. I just go on to the next guy."

Cruz said Washington also turned him loose on a 3-0 count his previous time up. He took the pitch out of the strike zone before a flyout to left field.

"He's capable with one swing of the bat of doing exactly what he did in the seventh inning, and he was in a good position," Washington said. "I told the team last night that I wanted us to get back to being aggressive, so I had to be aggressive, too. I just gave him the 3-0 hack and he did a good job with it."

The victory ended a four-game skid by the two-time defending AL champions, who lead the Angels by 4½ games in the West. The clubs play 13 more times during the regular season.

"Two out of three is not bad against a good team like Texas because they're the champs, so you've got to be happy with it," Angels outfielder Torii Hunter said. "We know them, they know us, and it's going to be a battle all year long. Right now we're getting by. We're playing a lot better baseball than we did the first six weeks, but we're a lot better than what we've shown."

Harrison (7-3) gave up three runs, four hits and three walks in 6 2-3 innings. The left-hander, who started Game 7 of last year's World Series for the Rangers, departed after giving up a two-out single to Peter Bourjos and a walk to John Hester, who had homered his previous time up.

"The thing I was really upset about was the walks and the pitch to Hester," Harrison said. "Other than that, I thought I threw the ball well, but I'm not satisfied. I want to keep getting better, keep grinding and keep learning from the mistakes I make in games. I just want to keep on this roll, get deep into games and give us a chance to win."

Mike Trout greeted Alexi Ogando with an RBI single and Alberto Callaspo walked, loading the bases for Albert Pujols, who cracked his bat on an inning-ending flyout to left field. The Rangers put it away with RBI singles in the ninth by Mike Napoli and Elvis Andrus.

Dan Haren (3-6) threw 104 pitches over five innings, allowing two runs and seven hits. The two-time All-Star, who is winless in his last five starts against Texas, ended a career-best streak of 25 strikeouts without a walk when Napoli drew a base on balls in the fourth. The franchise record for most strikeouts without a walk is 30, by Frank Tanana in May 1976.

"He's a really good pitcher, so one thing you have to do with guys like that is lock in on the strike zone," Texas designated hitter Michael Young said. "We tried to be as aggressive in the strike zone as we could be and not do him any favors outside the zone. And I think we did a fairly good job of that."

Hester's first home run with the Angels was a solo shot to left-center that trimmed Texas' lead to 3-2 in the sixth, and was the first given up by Harrison in his last four starts.

The Angels, who had won 10 of their previous 11, got on the board in the fifth after Mark Trumbo drew a leadoff walk and came all the way around on a two-out double to left by Erick Aybar — Los Angeles' first hit off Harrison. Aybar was 1 for 14 against him prior to that at-bat.

NOTES: The Angels' game on Monday night against Seattle at the "Big A" will be Mike Scioscia's 2,000th as a major league manager during the regular season — all with Los Angeles. The only coach who has been on Scioscia's staff the entire time is 1B coach Alfredo Griffin. ... This was the eighth time this season that the Angels had Trout, Bourjos and Trumbo all starting in the same outfield.

## **AUSTIN AMERICAN-STATESMAN**

### **Express pitchers find groove in victory**

**By Kevin Lyttle**

**Published: 10:27 p.m. Sunday, June 3, 2012**

ROUND ROCK — Neil Ramirez and Mark Hamburger, Express pitchers who have ERAs that look more like a line of Boeing jumbo jets, took steps in the right direction Sunday night.

Ramirez, the top right-handed prospect in the Texas system, threw six effective innings, only his second quality start in his last six outings, as Round Rock beat Albuquerque 7-3. It was the Express' fourth straight win, tying a season high. Ramirez, who entered with a 7.57 ERA partly because he hasn't been attacking hitters, was more aggressive, throwing 15 of 19 first-pitch strikes and walking just one.

Hamburger, a top-15 Rangers prospect who came in with a 7.97 ERA, worked two snappy, hitless innings.

Round Rock scored five runs in the fifth. Mike Bianucci supplied the winning hit, a two-run double.

Oswalt update

Roy Oswalt came out of Saturday's first outing for the Express in good shape, and he will pitch on four days' rest in Omaha on Thursday night.

Last week he threw 34 pitches in two scoreless innings. He might double that in Omaha, then shoot for 75-80 pitches at Albuquerque on June 12. If all goes well, he'll wrap up his Round Rock stint with a full outing at Dell Diamond on June 17 against Oklahoma City.

Rangers pitching coach Mike Maddux has high hopes for Oswalt when he gets to Arlington, probably for a June 22-24 interleague series against Colorado.

"You get a guy almost midseason that comes in pretty fresh," Maddux said. "Roy can really help us. He knows how to get it done up here. Works fast, gets quick outs, and before you know it, you're in the seventh inning."