



TEXASRANGERS.COM

Feliz makes headway in first rehab start

By Christian Corona

07/16/12

FRISCO, Texas -- Neftali Feliz's first rehab start was pushed back to Monday in Double-A Frisco after his scheduled outing with Triple-A Round Rock got rained out Sunday.

When Feliz took the mound in a game for the first time in nearly two months, he got off to a shaky start against Double-A San Antonio.

The right-hander retired the first batter he faced, but he walked two of the next three. Then Edinson Rincon hit a ground ball up the middle that was backhanded by second baseman Leury Garcia, who threw across his body and wide of first baseman Chris McGuinness. That infield single allowed Dean Anna to score an unearned run off Feliz on a play that could have ended the inning. With runners on the corners, Feliz fanned Ali Solis, his second strikeout of the inning, to prevent any further damage.

"I had a long time without pitching off a mound in a live game," Feliz said. "But I was trying to practice on all my pitches, not only offspeed pitches. I was trying to get outs as quick as I could."

Feliz was much more efficient in the second inning. Feliz retired the side and struck out the last two hitters he faced, getting Rymer Liriano looking at a 79-mph curveball while Jeudy Valdez couldn't hold up his check swing on a 77-mph curve in the dirt. After throwing 29 pitches in the first inning, Feliz threw only 11 in the second, all but one for a strike. With his fastball topping out at 96 mph, he threw 40 pitches on the night, 25 for strikes, fanning four and walking two.

"I was just trying to locate my pitches low and for strikes," Feliz said. "That's what I did in the second inning."

Feliz's first rehab start was originally scheduled for Sunday in Triple-A Round Rock, but the Express' series finale against Memphis was rained out. Round Rock headed to Nashville, Tenn., on Monday as Feliz made his way to Frisco to begin his rehab assignment there.

His last appearance was on May 18 against the Astros. Feliz, who is 3-1 with a 3.16 ERA, was placed on the disabled list with right elbow inflammation three days later.

"I feel good about my arm," Feliz said. "Throwing faster, I know I can do that at any time when I'm completely healthy. I was just trying to keep my pitches low. I wasn't trying to be overpowering."

His second rehab start is set for Friday in Round Rock, when he will throw three innings. Feliz will likely make at least two more Minor League starts after this week. Express pitching coach Terry Clark said this weekend that Feliz would throw four or five innings in his third rehab start and around six innings in his fourth, although nothing has been finalized. It's unclear yet whether Feliz will come back to the Rangers as a starter or reliever, although he is preparing during his rehab assignment to return to the rotation.

"Nobody has said anything," Feliz said. "The first thing I want to do is be ready. I started the season as a starter, but, where they are and where I am, I'm trying to help the team any way I can."

Feliz first threw off a mound two weeks ago when the Rangers were in Chicago for a three-game series against the White Sox, and his last bullpen session came on July 9 at the team's facility in the Dominican Republic. He threw 54 pitches during live batting practice Thursday in Arlington, facing Alberto Gonzalez, Brandon Snyder, Leonys Martin and Mitch Moreland, who has been on the DL with a strained hamstring since June 22.

He is one of five Rangers pitchers currently on the disabled list, although reinforcements are expected soon. Alexi Ogando (strained groin) and Koji Uehara (strained lat), who both completed rehab assignments in Round Rock on Saturday, are expected to be activated Tuesday, while Colby Lewis (forearm tightness) is scheduled to start for the Rangers on Wednesday against the A's.

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Neftali Feliz takes another step toward return with two-inning stint in Frisco

By Jon Poorman

07/16/12

FRISCO -- Texas Rangers right-hander Neftali Feliz took another step in his rehab toward the big leagues Monday night, pitching two innings for the Double A Frisco RoughRiders.

Feliz, who has been on the disabled list with right elbow inflammation, gave up one hit, one run and two walks while striking out four of the nine batters he faced in his first rehab start. Twenty-five of his 40 pitches went for strikes.

"I was trying to keep my pitches low and, of course, throw strikes," he said. "I had gone a long time without pitching from the mound, but I was trying to practice all of my pitches."

Feliz said the goal of his rehab is to return to the Rangers as soon as possible. However, he doesn't know if he will be brought back as a starter or reliever.

"The first thing is to be healthy," he said. "I want to be ready to help the team. I'm trying to be ready as soon as I can and help the team in any way. I haven't been told anything.

"I just have to do my rehab and work to get healthy and be better. All I know is my next outing is on Friday at Round Rock."

Feliz is scheduled to pitch three innings Friday for the Triple A Express.

He is 3-1 with a 3.16 ERA in eight games, including seven starts, with the Rangers. He was placed on the 60-day disabled list on June 16.

The Rangers' pitching staff is approaching a return to full health.

Alexi Ogando (right groin) and Koji Uehara (right lat) are expected back in the bullpen tonight as the Rangers begin a two-game series in Oakland. Colby Lewis (forearm tendinitis) is scheduled to start Wednesday.

Feliz likely would move to the bullpen if Roy Oswalt continues to solidify his spot in the rotation after a couple of rough starts.

Week that was, week that is for Rangers

By Jeff Wilson

07/16/12

The Rangers played only three games last week, though it seems like half the clubhouse was at the 83rd All-Star Game on Tuesday in Kansas City. That didn't go real well, and the Rangers didn't do anything outstanding in the American League's 8-0 loss to the National League. The one Rangers All-Star who fared the worst, though, is the one who fared the best as the second half resumed at Seattle.

The Rangers took 2 of 3 from the Mariners, who were saved by Felix Hernandez's dominating performance Saturday in a 7-0 victory against Yu Darvish. Rangers lefty Matt Harrison, who allowed a three-spot in the All-Star Game, returned the favor with a five-hit shutout Sunday as the Rangers won 4-0. Derek Holland tossed 7 1/3 shutout innings Friday before Joe Nathan avoided disaster in the ninth of a 3-2 win.

The series victory at Safeco Field allowed the Rangers to boost their AL West lead to five games.

The road doesn't get any easier this week, despite two off days. The Rangers are off today before playing the next two at Oakland, which is 9-1 in July. The A's are hitting better than they are pitching, which is really stunning. Roy Oswalt and Colby Lewis will try to cool them off, and the returns of Alexi Ogando and Koji Uehara to the bullpen might also help stop Oakland.

Another off day arrives Thursday ahead of a three-game series at second-place Anaheim. The Angels will have had no rest since the All-Star break, which could play in the Rangers' favor. While they'll tee up Holland, Darvish and Harrison, the Angels could send Jered Weaver, Ervin Santana and Garrett Richards to the mound.

Meanwhile, the Rangers will have scouts spread out across the majors in advance of the July 31 trade deadline. Rangers scouts have watched starters Cole Hamels, Zack Greinke and Ryan Dempster. By default, they have also seen outfielders Shane Victorino and Justin Upton.

To obtain Hamels, Greinke or Upton, the Rangers would likely have to put together a package that includes their top prospects. The Rangers don't seem too keen on that, especially for two-month rentals like Hamels and Greinke, but have enough organizational depth behind Jurckison Profar, Mike Olt and Martin Perez to put together a strong bid.

One Rangers player, though, said they don't need any deadline additions barring a significant injury over the next two weeks.

But it would be completely out of character for general manager Jon Daniels to not have scouts doing the work just in case. As in, just in case there is an injury. Or, just in case they decide that Oswalt isn't the answer in the rotation. Or, just in case the Rangers decide that they'd rather see a player fall to them than the Angels.

While the attention is on the big names available, some of Daniels' best moves the past two years have been lower-profile deals for Bengie Molina, Jeff Francoeur and Mike Gonzalez. The Rangers could definitely upgrade their bench with a veteran bat with pinch-hitting experience.

Baseball's changing face: 15 in AL, 15 in NL

By Drew Davison

07/16/12

Could the New York Yankees open the 2013 season at the Miami Marlins? How about the Texas Rangers taking on the Chicago Cubs in a season-ending series?

Those are possibilities for next season.

With the Houston Astros moving from the National League to the American League next season, there is an even split -- but odd number -- of 15 teams in each the AL and NL to balance out the divisions to five teams each.

It makes sense from a competitive standpoint, but it came with a notable concession -- there will be interleague play all season, including a season-opening series featuring an AL and NL team, as well as a season-closing series.

"Nobody wanted that, that's not a plus of the system," said Michael Weiner, executive director of the players association. "But the plusses of the system of going to 15-15 were so overwhelming that we live with that."

MLB Commissioner Bud Selig agreed that having an interleague game every day isn't ideal, but said, "I think 15-15 is going to work out very, very well."

Under the new format, teams will play six interleague series a season for 18 to 20 interleague games, similar to this season. An AL division will be matched up with a corresponding NL division each season, which will account for five series. The sixth series will match teams against a "traditional rival," such as Yankees-Mets, White Sox-Cubs, Angels-Dodgers, etc.

The traditional rivals will play a single three-game series, or home-and-home two-game series. The standard three-game home-and-home series are gone.

This is viewed as a positive because it evens the playing field more. The Mets, for example, were the only team in the NL who had to play the Yankees six times a year, while other teams in the league or division didn't face traditionally strong teams as often.

In the years the NL East is matched up against the AL East, though, the Mets would play the Yankees six times. But the other NL East teams are playing the Yankees three times.

"The reduction of the number of traditional rivalry games was a function of fairness," Weiner said. "Whether we end up at three or four [games against a traditional rival next season] is a function of mechanics."

The Rangers will lose their "traditional rival" when the Astros move to the AL. The two most likely replacements are the Arizona Diamondbacks or the Colorado Rockies.

It's also a possibility that the Rangers and Astros could alternate teams in different years under the new format, with neither having a natural rival in the NL.

As for playing interleague games all year, Selig hopes to maintain an "intense period" of interleague play during the season. Additionally, MLB will try to avoid teams playing more than one series outside of their own league the final month of the season.

"Maybe a team has two interleague series in September, but they wouldn't have two [on the road]," Weiner said. "So they wouldn't have to add the DH or lose the DH."

In the end, every team within the respective division will have a similar interleague schedule, and players are in favor of interleague play being randomly scattered throughout the season.

"It's going to be a lot of fun to play interleague throughout the year, and it's going to be a cool thing for the fans," Rangers second baseman Ian Kinsler said. "And it'll be nice to have an even number of teams [in each league]. That's a good step for baseball."

The new collective bargaining agreement has teams playing no more than 20 interleague games a season. The CBA also states under the scheduling section that: "In each interleague game at an American League park, the designated hitter shall be used; at each interleague game at a National League park, the designated hitter shall not be used."

However, Selig suggested that MLB would re-evaluate that rule, and consider using NL rules in AL parks and AL rules in NL parks. That would allow pitchers to hit during interleague games at Rangers Ballpark, providing fans a view of how the opposing league plays the game.

"I happen to like that idea," Selig said. "We've talked about that for a while. That's something we should bear down this winter and think about because that's good."

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Fraley: Return of Ogando, Uehara gives Rangers bullpen options

By Gerry Fraley

07/16/12

OAKLAND, Calif. — A good bullpen is about to become better and deeper at just the right time.

The Rangers plan on bringing right-handed relievers Alexi Ogando and Koji Uehara off the disabled list for Tuesday's opener of a two-game series at Oakland. Their return will be welcomed.

"To get those type of arms back, it's going to be a boost for the whole club," closer Joe Nathan said.

The Rangers will add two relievers who combined for 57 strikeouts and only 34 hits allowed in 56 innings before going on the DL in early June. That is the equivalent of a major trade acquisition.

The return of Ogando and Uehara should strengthen the Rangers' choke hold on the late innings.

"It's not just looking better," manager Ron Washington said. "It is better. Those are our winning pieces, and they're about to come back here.

"That will allow me to smile a little bit."

Shortening games has been a Rangers strength all season..

The offense remains inconsistent, failing to score more than four runs in the last 10 games. That is why the club is doing its due diligence on Arizona outfielder Justin Upton.

The rotation has a 4.03 ERA, adequate but not enough to preclude looking into any top-shelf starter who could become available.

The bullpen has been the constant. The best measure of its effectiveness is the handling of leads. The Rangers have won 26 consecutive games when leading after six innings. They are an American League-best 47-3 when leading after six.

That has made a big difference in the West. The second-place Los Angeles Angels, scrambling all season to find a late-innings solution, are 41-8 when leading after six.

Washington can put together games from the back end forward. The ninth inning belongs to Nathan, and Mike Adams gets the eighth. Now, Ogando will take the seventh, with Uehara getting the sixth. The Rangers also have rookie left-hander Robbie Ross, with 23 consecutive scoreless innings, in the late-innings mix.

With Ogando and Uehara back, an opponent that does not get the lead in the first five innings against the Rangers will be in a tough spot.

"I still want my starters to get me as deep as they can," Washington said. "But if they can only give me six, I'll take it. We can put it together from there."

The bullpen will not always be neatly aligned. There will be times when someone is not available. Remember that circumstances forced Washington to close with rookie Tanner Scheppers against Oakland last month.

Scheppers got the final out, but all managers want as many veterans as possible for the late innings. The Rangers received more mileage than expected from inexperienced relievers such as left-hander Michael Kirkman and Scheppers during the absence of Ogando and Uehara. Washington will have more options with Ogando and Uehara healthy.

"It will allow me not to have to get Adams and Nathan every time," Washington said. "It will be nice when they can stay down there because Ogando and Uehara and Robbie Ross have taken care of business."

Washington has been judicious in the use of his "winning pieces." Nathan has been the most-used reliever, but he is only tied for 30th in the AL for appearances with 37. The Rangers should have an advantage in bullpen freshness.

Finding respites for relievers becomes more important in the second half and beyond, for clubs that reach the postseason. Relievers begin to drag in the summer, especially those who have been pushed hard. Each game becomes a struggle.

Therein lies the psychological value of Ogando and Uehara for the Rangers. Reinforcements revitalize the group.

"Depth is always huge, and even more so now," Nathan said. "Guys are starting to feel the effects of the season. With these guys coming back, their energy can be contagious and help everybody."

Especially Ron Washington. Every manager needs a good bullpen. He has that and more.

Neftali Feliz strong, but erratic in first rehab outing

By Evan Grant

07/16/12

FRISCO – Looking a little like he'd been awakened too early from a nap, Neftali Feliz shuffled to the mound at Dr Pepper Ballpark Monday to face hitters for the first time in two months.

He looked in mid-season form.

In other words, the velocity was impressive, especially for a two-month layoff due to an elbow injury, and the command erratic. Feliz hit 96 mph on the radar gun a couple of times in his 40-pitch, two-inning outing for the RoughRider and pitched regularly at 93-95 mph. After a 29-pitch first inning, which left some doubt as to whether he'd make it out for the second, he relied on his two breaking pitches heavily to retire San Antonio hitters in order in the second.

When it was over, he had allowed one hit (an infield single up the middle that he couldn't grab) a pair of walks and one unearned run. Most importantly: He appeared healthy.

"The most important thing I want to accomplish is to be healthy," said Feliz, who is tentatively scheduled to start again on Friday for Triple-A Round Rock. "I want to get ready as quickly as possible and help the team in whatever role they give me."

Whether he returns as a starter or reliever likely depends on the health/effectiveness of current members of the rotation and whether or not he can command his fastball better than he did on Monday. Most of his fastballs in the first were up

and out of the zone. Perhaps the most discouraging aspect of the evening was that Feliz said he was trying to keep the ball down.

It was only when he took a touch off the fastball in the second that he was able to harness it a bit.

"I know I can reach back and get velocity when I need it," Feliz said. "The most important thing is to keep my pitches low."

Rangers are close to a sure-thing when this player plays a significant role in the offense

07/16/12

Leadoff hitter Ian Kinsler scored two runs in Sunday's win at Seattle. The Rangers are close to a sure-thing when Kinsler plays a significant role in the offense. They are 14-1 when he scores multiple runs.

"It always looks different when he and Elvis Andrus have things going," manager Ron Washington said. "It means we have people on the bags who can cause havoc, and good things happen."

Kinsler helped create a run in the first inning by working Hisashi Iwakuma for a walk and distracting catcher Miguel Olivo to the point that he had a passed ball. Kinsler came around to score on infield outs by Andrus and Josh Hamilton.

Kinsler started the fifth by homering on Iwakuma's first pitch. Kinsler has 10 homers, tying him with Detroit's Austin Jackson, of Denton, for the second-highest total from the leadoff spot. Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels has 12 homers as a leadoff f hitter.

"It's cool to hit home runs, but it's also cool to produce runs out of a walk," Kinsler said. "It's very important to put runs on the board without a hit."

Olt named organizational player of the month for June

By Evan Grant

07/16/12

The Texas Rangers on Monday named Double-A Frisco third baseman Mike Olt, attracting attention from clubs looking for a power hitter, and Class A Myrtle Beach right-hander Kyle Hendricks as their organizational award winners for June.

Olt, 23, was named the player of the month. He hit .325 with 10 homers and 24 RBIs in 22 games during the month. He led all Double-A players in homers and OPS at 1.175. Olt appeared in the Futures Game as part of the All-Star Game at Kansas City on July 8.

Hendricks, 22, received the pitcher-of-the-month award after going 2-1 with a 1.78 ERA for 35 1/3 innings. He held batters to a .178 average in the month. Hendricks had the lowest ERA in the Carolina League for the month. For the season, Hendricks has 98 strikeouts and 11 walks in 118 2/3 innings.

Forbes: Rangers are seventh most valuable baseball team in U.S. 1 3

07/16/12

NEW YORK — Manchester United is the most valuable franchise in sports at \$2.23 billion, according to Forbes magazine's annual survey.

The English Premier League team, owned by the same American family that owns the NFL's Tampa Bay Buccaneers, is ranked on top thanks to lucrative global sponsorship deals.

Second is another soccer team, Real Madrid, at \$1.88 billion. The New York Yankees and Dallas Cowboys are tied for third at \$1.85 billion.

Rounding out the top five are the Washington Redskins at \$1.56 billion.

The Los Angeles Dodgers and New England Patriots are tied for sixth at \$1.40 billion, followed by FC Barcelona at \$1.31 billion, the New York Giants at \$1.30 billion, and Arsenal at 1.29 billion. The Dodgers recently were sold for \$2 billion, the most for any professional sports team.

All 32 NFL teams make the list of 50 most valuable franchises, with the Jacksonville Jaguars last among the pro football clubs at \$725 million.

Seven major league baseball teams earned spots, with the Texas Rangers the lowest at \$674 million, No. 50 overall.

The highest value for an NBA team belongs to the Los Angeles Lakers at \$900 million, 35th overall. Only one other NBA franchise, the New York Knicks, make the list with \$780 million, No. 43.

No NHL clubs made the survey, but two from Formula One racing were included: Ferrari at \$1.1 billion to rank 15th, and McLaren at \$800 million.

ESPNDALLAS.COM

Neftali Feliz makes rehab start

By Richard Durrett

07/16/12

FRISCO, Texas -- Texas Rangers right-hander Neftali Feliz pitched two innings Monday in his first rehab start at Double-A Frisco, allowing an unearned run and one hit with two walks and four strikeouts.

Feliz said he felt good and was pleased with his velocity -- his fastball sat between 92-95 mph, but did touch 96 on the stadium radar gun twice -- and the fact that he had better command in the second inning after a wobbly first.

"The first thing is to be healthy," Feliz said through an interpreter. "I'm trying to be ready to help the team as soon as I can."

Feliz, on the 60-day disabled list with a sprained right UCL, is scheduled to pitch three innings Friday for Triple-A Round Rock as he continues to build up arm strength. The Rangers are stretching him out as a starter and will then decide where he can best help the team.

Feliz threw 29 pitches in the first inning Monday and had trouble keeping the ball down, issuing two walks, a hit and an unearned run. But he also had two strikeouts, thanks to his ability to drop down from the 95-mph fastball to a slider in the 82-mph range.

Feliz could not get to a grounder right back over the mound that was scored an infield hit and an error when second baseman Leury Garcia tried to make an off-balance throw that hit the dirt and could not be fielded by first baseman Chris McGuinness.

The 24-year-old Feliz focused on mainly breaking pitches in the second inning and needed just 11 pitches to get out of the frame, throwing 10 strikes. He had better overall command and had two strikeouts, dialing back his fastball to 92 mph and finding the zone to go along with nice movement on his curve and slider. He said he also threw a few changeups.

"I want to keep my pitches low," Feliz said. "I know I can throw it harder when I need to. I wanted to focus on keeping things low."

Feliz was supposed to pitch Sunday for Round Rock, but since the game was rained out he relocated to Frisco to make his first start. He's 3-1 with a 3.16 ERA in eight games -- seven starts -- this season for Texas.

Rangers Magazine: Profar's last Futures Game?

By Bryan Dolgin

07/16/12

It was quite a week for the international side of Rangers' baseball operations.

MLB made its ruling in the signing of outfielder Jairo Beras, Neftali Feliz and Alexi Ogando stopped by the Rangers Dominican Academy to throw bullpen sessions during the All-Star break, and Jurickson Profar might have played in his last Futures Game.

"After (batting practice), Jayce Tingler and I talked to Jurickson and said, 'Hey man, no home runs there in BP! What happened? No power?'" Daly said sarcastically. Tingler is the Rangers' minor league field coordinator.

Daly said that Profar responded by saying, "I'm a game player."

Sure enough, the Curacao native hit a home run in the first at-bat of his second Futures Game.

"He loves the stage. He loves the lights. Loves the pressure. He embraces it," said Daly, one of the recommending scouts when the Rangers signed Profar on July 2, 2009. "Although, he did tell me this was his last Futures Game."

That's when it sounds like the joking turns to a serious tone. In order for Profar to not play in the Futures Game next season, there would have to be a position re-location for a current Rangers middle infielder, or Ron Washington would manage to find time for Profar as a utility player, or Profar would get traded.

The 19-year-old has primarily played shortstop this season, but he has also received playing time at second base and even third base. The switch-hitter enters Monday's game with Double-A Frisco batting .294 with seven triples, 10 stolen bases, 10 home runs, 19 doubles, 43 walks, 43 RBIs, 54 strikeouts, 55 runs scored and 98 hits in 85 games. He has a .372 on-base percentage.

This is Daly's sixth season scouting for the Rangers, and he has been in his current role since 2009. Daly reviewed the Beras signing, discussed the impact of the visit by Feliz and Ogando, described life at the Dominican academy in Boca Chica and talked more about Profar. Listen to the podcast.

Trade deadline talk: Matt Garza

By Richard Durrett

07/17/12

We've talked about some of the bigger names that could be out on the trade market -- Cole Hamels, Zack Greinke (who is not making his next start to get a break, apparently) and Justin Upton, for example -- and the Texas Rangers are doing their due diligence and scouting all of them. But there could be other names out there too. So in the next few days we'll look at some of those as well and why they may or may not make sense for Texas.

Today's player: Matt Garza

The 28-year-old right-handed starter is under contract through the 2013 season as arbitration eligible, so instead of trading for a rental player, any club that acquires Garza would have him next year also. He has thrown at least 184 innings each of the last four seasons and at least 198 innings each of the past three years. He's thrown 100 2/3 innings in 17 starts this season.

Garza is coming off one of his best starts of the season, throwing seven shutout innings against Arizona with one walk and seven strikeouts Sunday. It was a much better effort than his first July start, when he allowed five runs on five hits in four innings with three homers along with three walks and six strikeouts.

Garza is not Hamels or Greinke. But he'd be a middle-of-the-rotation starter whose numbers would likely improve with a better offense (and defense) behind him. He had a 6.86 ERA in May, but improved on that with a 3.72 ERA in six June starts, which included five quality starts. He's got 93 strikeouts and 30 walks in 100 2/3 innings.

The Rangers have been interested in Garza in the past. They looked into him most recently at the Winter Meetings in Dallas last December. And they were interested when he was with Tampa Bay in 2010.

Even though he has another year of team control left, Garza shouldn't cost the price that Hamels or Greinke would in terms of prospects. The question is whether Garza represents a big enough upgrade to justify trading some solid prospects in return. Jurickson Profar and Mike Olt aren't on the table when it comes to Garza, I wouldn't think. Could a package of prospects not including those two get it done? According to ESPNChicago.com's Bruce Levine, the Cubs want young pitching and would love a third baseman. Even without Olt in the deal, the Rangers have young pitching prospects they could deal.

I'm intrigued by the idea that Garza would be under team control through next season, but he's not the huge impact pitcher that some of the others on the market are at this point. In other words: Can he make a big enough difference to justify dealing away a solid prospect or two? That doesn't mean the Rangers shouldn't consider him, but the price has to be just right for a deal like that one.

FOXSPORTSSOUTHWEST.COM

Feliz strikes out four in first rehab start

By Anthony Andro

07/16/12

FRISCO, Texas — The first outing for Texas right-hander Neftali Feliz in his bid to get back into the rotation for the Rangers went off without any problems Monday.

Feliz, who hasn't pitched for the Rangers since May 18 because of a sprained right UCL, threw two innings Monday in a rehab start for Double A Frisco.

Feliz threw 40 pitches, allowing one infield hit and one unearned run. After a rocky first that included 29 pitches and two walks, he was much sharper in the second inning. Throwing primarily off-speed pitches, Feliz breezed through three San Antonio batters, needing just 11 pitches and notching a pair of strikeouts in a 1-2-3 inning.

"I was trying to get my pitches low and just throw strikes," said Feliz, who mixed curveballs, changeups and sliders along with a fastball that reached 96 mph. "I had a long time without pitching on a mound in a live game. I was trying to practice on all my pitches and make the outs as quick as I can."

Feliz threw 25 of his 40 pitches for strikes and had better command when he didn't try to overpower San Antonio batters. But that wasn't his plan anyway, as Feliz struck out the two batters in the second on curveballs and also had a pair of strikeouts in the first inning.

"I want to try and be ready for the team and help as soon as I can," said Feliz, who was pleased with his velocity.

Feliz, who is eligible to come off the disabled list Wednesday, will make another start Friday for Triple A Round Rock. He's slated to throw three innings in that start. He'll likely need at least one more start after that before the Rangers have to find a spot for him on the staff.

Right now there is no room in the starting rotation unless someone gets hurt or struggles. The Rangers' plan for now is to stretch Feliz out as a starter and then make a decision about where he fits on the staff when he's healthy.

His role with the club isn't something Feliz is concerned about right now.

"The first thing is be healthy," Feliz said. "I started the season as a starter. Right now where we are and where they are, I'm just trying to be ready as soon as I can and help the team any way. I just have to work and do my rehab. All I know is my next outing is Friday in Round Rock."

In seven starts for the Rangers this year, Feliz is 3-1 with a 3.16 ERA before going on the DL May 21. He was the first player to go on the disabled list for the Rangers since the season started. Since he went on the DL, two other starters (Colby Lewis, Derek Holland) have also spent time on the DL.

AUSTIN AMERICAN STATESMAN

Express can't connect, drop fifth straight

BY STAFF REPORTS

07/16/12

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Round Rock hitters managed just one run off Nashville starter Mark Rogers, falling 3-1 to the Sounds on Monday night. Round Rock (39-56) has lost five straight.

The Sounds scored in the second against Express starter Ben Snyder, on back-to-back doubles by Andy Gonzalez and Taylor Green, and added two more runs in the third on a two-run home run by Eric Farris. The Express got one back in the seventh when Ryan Spilborghs doubled in Joey Butler.

Rogers (5-6) tossed seven strong innings to pick up the win. He allowed four hits and a walk and struck out six.

Snyder (2-4) took the loss for the Express. He lasted five innings and allowed three runs on five hits, striking out four.

For the Express, Julio Borbon had a hit, stole a base and walked.

Round Rock continues its four-game series today at Nashville. First pitch is scheduled for 7:05 p.m. CDT. Right-hander Greg Reynolds (7-6, 5.01 ERA) will take the mound for the Express opposite Sounds right-hander Brian Baker (2-3, 5.33 ERA).