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**Perez puts Rangers back in driver's seat  
Lefty stymies Oakland as Texas sits alone in first place**

**By T.R. Sullivan**

**9/4/2013 2:25 AM ET**

OAKLAND -- On a cool Bay Area evening in the heat of a tightly contested division race, rookie left-hander Martin Perez pitched the Rangers back into first place.

On a pitching staff that has allowed five runs or fewer in 31 straight games -- the longest such streak in the American League since 1972 -- Perez continues to show tremendous poise, especially in a game the Rangers really needed to win.

Perez allowed one run in seven innings and the Rangers regained sole possession of first place in the American League West with a 5-1 victory over the Athletics on Tuesday night at the O.co Coliseum. Perez beat Athletics ace Bartolo Colon, and the Rangers have a one-game lead over the Athletics with 24 left to play.

"He's a pitcher," manager Ron Washington said. "He's certainly showing he can pitch. He kept it down in the zone, moved the ball around. ... The thing I liked is I looked up and he's in the seventh inning with 70-something pitches. He's growing up in front of our eyes. He realizes he can pitch up here, and he's going out and pitching."

The Rangers are now 22-9 in this 31 game stretch of consistent pitching with an overall ERA of 2.99. But nobody on the staff has been better lately than Perez, who is 6-0 with a 2.54 ERA in his last six starts and 9-3 with a 3.41 ERA on the season. He is the first Rangers pitcher to win six straight starts since Kenny Rogers won eight straight in 2005.

"I'm just throwing strikes," Perez said. "I don't have any pressure and I don't have much experience, but I have a lot of veterans here helping me and that's good. I'm just throwing strikes and attacking the zone."

The Rangers, trailing 1-0 in the first inning, had to overcome some early offensive frustrations and they were still just 2-for-14 with runners in scoring position. But a big defensive play by Jurickson Profar shifted the momentum in the third inning and so did a game-tying home run by Mitch Moreland in the fourth. The Rangers then took advantage of Colon's inability to field his position to manufacture three runs in the fifth and take the lead for good.

Perez did the rest.

"He's pitching with a lot more confidence," Oakland manager Bob Melvin said. "He's got quite a run going as far as how their team's playing behind him. I would say he's probably one of their better starters at this point. He was a pretty heralded guy as far as prospects go. More of a spot starter in relief last year and this year he's settled into a starting role and doing pretty well right now."

The Athletics took a 1-0 lead in the first as Coco Crisp doubled and came home on fly balls by Josh Donaldson and Jed Lowrie. They had another opportunity in the third after Donaldson doubled with one out. After Lowrie flied to right, Yoenis Cespedes hit a grounder to the left-side hole.

Shortstop Profar made a diving stop and had no play at first. But Donaldson rounded too far off third and just kept running for home. Profar's throw was weak but in time, as catcher A.J. Pierzynski held on to the ball while Donaldson crashed into him.

"I saw him catch it, but I once I hit third I started breaking it down a little bit," Donaldson said. "And then for some reason I thought I heard go. I know it wasn't [third-base coach Mike] Gallego because once I took two steps he was sayingm 'Stay here. Stay here,' and it just kind of ended up being a really bad play for us and for myself."

"It was a great play by Profar just to get to the ball," Pierzynski said. "I wish he would have gotten it to me sooner. I know their third-base coach was trying to stop him. It looked like that play gave us some energy."

The play did seem to wake up the Rangers. So did Moreland's fifth home run at the Coliseum this season, the most a visiting player has hit at the ballpark since 1968.

After Perez kept the momentum by retiring the Athletics in order in the bottom of the inning on just nine pitches, the Rangers took charge in the fifth. David Murphy flied out before Craig Gentry hit a one-hop grounder back to the mound that clanked off Colon's glove for an error. Gentry was safe at first and then came around to score the go-ahead run as Profar doubled off the right-field wall.

"I pitched the ball well," Colon said. "The one play that made the difference was the ball they hit to me that I dropped."

Ian Kinsler followed with a hard grounder back to the mound that deflected off Colon's bare hand. This one went for an infield single, putting runners at the corners until Kinsler stole second with Adrian Beltre at the plate. Beltre brought home Profar with a ground out and Pierzynski's broken bat single to center made it 4-1. Alex Rios added an eighth-inning home run for good measure.

"We didn't need any dramatic hits," Washington said. "Just put the ball in play and good things will happen."

Especially when their rookie left-hander is dealing again.

**Rangers ask Yu to keep A's at arm's length**  
**Oakland looks to move back into first-place tie behind Parker**  
**By Andrew Simon**  
**9/4/2013 2:54 AM ET**

The tug of war atop the American League West will continue on Wednesday afternoon, when the Athletics and Rangers conclude a three-game series at O.Co Coliseum.

Oakland won the opener to pull into a first-place tie for the first time since Aug. 9, but Texas responded with a 5-1 win on Tuesday night to sit alone on top. The clubs have traded places throughout the season and appear headed for another photo finish.

"Unless you're in first place at the end of the season, right now it's just kind of conversation," A's manager Bob Melvin said before Tuesday's game. "It's nice to be playing well. We've played well over the last 10 days or so, and I think that's the most important thing for me.

"Whenever you're playing the team that you're closest to in the division, it seems to take on a little bit more intensity. But whether you're a game ahead, a game behind, two behind, two ahead -- I think the most important thing is to be ahead on the last day of the season."

Oakland's four-game winning streak was snapped Tuesday, but the club has still won seven of its past nine games.

The rubber game of the series will feature a pair of right-handers in the A's Jarrod Parker and the Rangers' Yu Darvish.

Parker (10-6, 3.59 ERA) comes in with an unbeaten streak that is tied with Hall of Famer Catfish Hunter for the longest in franchise history among starters, although the A's have lost six of those contests. Parker is 8-0 with a 2.57 ERA over that span but took a no-decision his last time out, despite limiting the Rays to three runs on six hits over seven innings.

Darvish (12-6, 2.73) is running away with the Major League lead in both strikeouts (236) and strikeouts per nine innings (12.2). His 11 K's on Friday against the Twins gave him the second-highest single-season total in club history, behind only Nolan Ryan's 301 in 1989. He also set a club record with 64 strikeouts in August, the most prolific month by any big league pitcher since Randy Johnson piled up 70 for the D-backs in August 2002.

Despite all the whiffs, Darvish has gone winless over his past three starts, none of which has seen him allow more than three runs. The latest disappointment came against Minnesota, with Darvish taking a no-hitter into the seventh before giving up a pair of homers and exiting after 6 2/3.

Now he'll take on the A's for the third time this season and the first time in Oakland.

"I take the same approach no matter who I throw against and where I throw," Darvish said. "I'm so glad we are winning and we're in first place, but my job doesn't change. I try to win and help my team as much as possible.

Rangers: Andrus still recovering

Shortstop Elvis Andrus missed his third consecutive game with a tight lower back on Tuesday, and manager Ron Washington doesn't plan to use him at designated hitter to get him back in the lineup sooner.

"We've got guys who can DH. I want Elvis total. I want Elvis on the field," Washington said.

Andrus can swing a bat and run but he feels the tightness when he bends over.

- Center fielder Leonys Martin was out the starting lineup on Tuesday after striking out four times as part of a 1-for-5 game on Monday. Washington said Martin will continue to bat leadoff despite hitting .175 over his past 14 games.

Athletics: Moss takes POTW honors

Brandon Moss was named the American League Player of the Week for the second time in his career after hitting .364 with four home runs, 11 RBIs and six walks last week.

Moss, who struck out as a pinch-hitter on Tuesday, led all Major League hitters in homers, RBIs, slugging percentage (.955) and total bases (21) to help the A's go 6-1. He matched career highs with four hits and two homers on Wednesday against the Tigers, setting a personal best with six RBIs.

- Coco Crisp started for the A's on Tuesday but was relegated to designated hitter a day after he fouled a ball off his right shin and suffered a contusion. Crisp said he was "fine" before the game, while Melvin said the outfielder was "a little bit sore." Chris Young played center field in Crisp's place, while Michael Choice was in the lineup in right. Crisp went 1-for-5 with a double.

Worth noting

- The A's still lead the Rays by 2 1/2 games for the top AL Wild Card spot.

- The Rangers hold a 9-6 lead in the season series, which will conclude with three games at Rangers Ballpark from Sept. 13-15.

- Darvish is 0-2 with a 3.75 ERA in two starts against the A's this season. His only career outing at Oakland came last June 7, when he gave up six runs over 5 1/3 innings.

- Parker is 5-1 with a 2.94 ERA against the Rangers in six career starts. The Rangers are hitting .194 off him. That's the fourth-lowest batting average for them against any pitcher with at least five starts against them in club history.

## **Rangers pondering Tepesch's next assignment**

**By T.R. Sullivan**

**9/3/2013 8:59 P.M. ET**

OAKLAND -- Right-hander Nick Tepesch came off the disabled list and pitched 3 1/3 scoreless innings against the Athletics on Monday afternoon. Now the Rangers are trying to decide if he's ready to go back in the rotation in place of Travis Blackley.

Blackley had been scheduled to pitch Saturday against the Angels. Instead, the Rangers, with an off-day on Thursday, are pushing up Derek Holland so he can pitch on his normal four days' rest. The Rangers are officially undecided on who will pitch on Sunday. They don't plan on using Martin Perez on four days' rest, manager Ron Washington said.

"We'll just see," Washington said. "It could be Blackley, it could be Tepesch, it could be somebody else."

It will not be Alexi Ogando. He was activated off the DL on Tuesday but is not ready to return to the rotation. He is in the bullpen for now and Washington said he'll try to find a non-pressure situation to use Ogando for the first time.

Tepesch entered Monday's game in the fifth inning with the Rangers down by two. The Athletics had two on with two out. Tepesch retired Alberto Callaspo on a grounder to first; then retired nine of 10 batters in the final three innings.

"A tremendous job," Washington said. "He was able to spot his fastball, he used his slider, sunk the ball. He did a great job, he really did. He certainly didn't look rusty."

It was the first time Tepesch pitched in a Major League game since going on the DL July 7 with inflammation in his right elbow. He needed just 28 pitches to get through his first relief appearance at the big league level.

"It felt good to be back out there," Tepesch said. "They were being aggressive in putting the ball in play and I was trying to be aggressive and take advantage of it."

### **Martin joins Andrus on the sideline**

OAKLAND -- Shortstop Elvis Andrus was out of the Rangers' starting lineup for the third straight game with tightness in his lower back. Leony's Martin joined him on the bench Tuesday night, getting a day off after going 1-for-5 with four strikeouts on Monday afternoon in a 4-2 loss to the Athletics.

Martin has three hits in his last 19 at-bats and is hitting .175 in his last 14 games. He has cooled off as a leadoff hitter but manager Ron Washington is not planning any lineup changes. Martin is going to continue to bat first and Ian Kinsler will stay in the No. 3 hole. The Rangers went into Tuesday having scored exactly two runs in four straight games.

"I don't have any other options I want to try," Washington said. "I wish juggling was the answer. These guys have to do their job where they are. That's the bottom line. Just stay with it, don't panic and it will come around."

Andrus tested his back with some pregame running and hitting in the batting cage. He passed those tests but is still having trouble bending over. He may not play until Friday in Anaheim.

"I feel better for sure than the past few days," Andrus said. "I still feel some pain in the middle of my lower back, but it's a lot less. I'm trying to get my body ready to go but I don't want to be out there 50 percent."

### **Pierzynski adds to 100-game streak**

OAKLAND -- Catcher A.J. Pierzynski was in the Rangers' lineup on Tuesday night, and it was his 100th game behind the plate this season. This is the 13th straight season Pierzynski has caught 100 games, tying the record held by Johnny Bench, Bill Dickey and Brad Ausmus. Bench and Dickey are in the Hall of Fame.

"Anytime you get thrown in there with a guy like Johnny Bench it's pretty cool," Pierzynski said. "This means I'm old and have been around for a while. I've been fortunate and lucky and I thank my parents they gave me good genes to keep me healthy. I remember when I first came up and I was 23-24, I was thinking I've got to do this for 10 more years.

"Everybody wants to get 10 years in. To still be going out there healthy every day is special. It's not something you can count on. You never know what will happen, especially catching."

Pierzynski would like to make it 14 straight seasons. He turns 37 in December and can be a free agent after the season.

"I don't know ... where am I going to play," Pierzynski said. "We still have 25 games left and hopefully a long postseason. I don't know what will happen but I do want to play and play every day. Hopefully I can find a place and hopefully it's Texas."

### **Murphy trying to increase production**

OAKLAND -- David Murphy was 1-for-3 with a home run and a walk on Monday afternoon and the Rangers want to see more of that. Murphy has been told by manager Ron Washington that he needs to be more productive offensively or he'll possibly lose playing time.

"I don't need to be woken up," Murphy said. "The effort and the preparation haven't been lacking, the only thing lacking are the results. I feel like I've done everything possible to get to the point of having consistent success, it just hasn't happened.

"But the great part of the game is we're in a race for the division, it doesn't matter what's happened in the past. All that matter is how I can contribute today and the rest of the season to help this team win the division and more."

Murphy, who was back in the lineup on Tuesday, went into the game hitting .222 with 13 home runs and 43 RBIs. He had a .281 on-base percentage and a .382 slugging percentage. He had a career .348 on-base percentage and .453 slugging percentage going into the season. The Rangers have called up three outfielders for September: Engel Beltre, James Adduci and Joey Butler. Beltre and Adduci are left-handed hitters.

Worth noting

- The Rangers activated pitcher Alexi Ogando off the disabled list, giving them 36 players in uniform for Tuesday's game. The only four players on the 40-man roster not called up are pitchers Josh Lindblom, Wilmer Font and Roman Mendez and first baseman Chris McGuiness.
- Outfielder Joe Benson, who was designated for assignment on Monday to make room on the 40-man roster, has cleared waivers and been assigned to Triple-A Round Rock.
- Round Rock infielder Mike Bianucci was the final Pacific Coast League Player of the Week. He was 9-for-19 with three home runs and eight RBIs in five games. Round Rock's season ended Monday.
- Joey Gallo finished with 40 home runs this season, 38 with Class A Hickory and two with the Arizona Rookie League Rangers on a rehab assignment. That was the most in the Minors and he is the recipient of the Joe Bauman Award. That goes to the Minor League player with the most home runs and he will be honored at the Winter Meetings. The Rangers record for home runs by a Minor Leaguer is 41 set by Tom Robson in 1974 while at Triple-A Spokane.

## **MLB announces postseason schedule**

**By Mark Newman**

**9/3/2013 2:42 P.M. ET**

The Cardinals and Reds are battling each other in a four-game series this week, and those same two teams would get the 2013 postseason started in St. Louis if it began right now.

Major League Baseball announced the postseason schedule on Tuesday, and it all begins with the National League Wild Card Game presented by Budweiser on Tuesday, Oct. 1. St. Louis and Cincinnati trail the Pirates in the NL Central standings but are 1-2 in the Wild Card race, respectively, so those two clubs are in line for that win-or-go-home game.

Game 1 of the 109th World Series is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 23, in the ballpark of the American League champions. That likely means an October finish as Game 7 would be played on Halloween.

The regular season concludes on Sunday, Sept. 29, and any necessary regular-season tiebreaker games would be broadcast exclusively by TBS. The NL Wild Card Game, aired on TBS, will be followed by the American League Wild Card Game presented by Budweiser on TBS on Wednesday, Oct. 2. It will mark the second year for the single Wild Card Game format, both of which were won by road teams last year: St. Louis over Atlanta and Baltimore over Texas.

Each NL Division Series will begin on Thursday, Oct. 3, and the first full slate of Division Series games, featuring the two AL Division Series openers and a pair of NLDS Game 2s, will take place on Friday, Oct. 4. The Division Series will run from Oct. 3-10, with two potential Game 5s on both Wednesday, Oct. 9, and Thursday, Oct. 10. TBS will air 18 of the potential 20 Division Series games, while MLB Network will exclusively telecast one game on Oct. 4, and another on Monday, Oct. 7.

The NL Championship Series will be broadcast exclusively on TBS and will begin on Friday, Oct. 11. Saturday, Oct. 12 will feature Game 1 of the AL Championship Series, which will be broadcast exclusively on FOX, and Game 2 of the NLCS on TBS. A potential Game 7 of the NLCS is scheduled for Saturday, Oct., 19, while a potential Game 7 of the ALCS is set for Sunday, Oct. 20.

Game 1 of the World Series is scheduled to be played at the home of the AL champs, by virtue of that league's victory in the All-Star Game. Game 3 of the Fall Classic will shift to the city of the NL champs on Saturday, Oct. 26. A Game 7, if necessary, would be played on Thursday, Oct. 31, in the AL city. The scheduled off-days during the World Series are Friday, Oct. 25, and Tuesday, Oct. 29.

FOX Sports will present exclusive live telecast coverage of the World Series for the 16th time. The NL will seek to make it four straight, following championships won by the Giants in 2010, the Cardinals in '11 and the Giants again last year.

ESPN Radio will provide live national coverage of all postseason games, including the Wild Card action.

This will mark the 110th anniversary of the Fall Classic, which started in 1903 and was played each fall except for 1904 and 1994.

## 2013 MLB POSTSEASON SCHEDULE

SERIES	DATE	NETWORK	AIR TIME(ET)		
NL Wild Card Game	Tuesday, October 1	TBS	TBA		
AL Wild Card Game	Wednesday, October 2	TBS	TBA		
ALDS A, Game 1	Friday, October 4	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
ALDS B, Game 1	Friday, October 4	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
ALDS A, Game 2	Saturday, October 5	TBS	TBA		
ALDS B, Game 2	Saturday, October 5	TBS	TBA		
ALDS A, Game 3	Monday, October 7	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
ALDS B, Game 3	Monday, October 7	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
ALDS A, Game 4*	Tuesday, October 8	TBS	TBA		
ALDS B, Game 4*	Tuesday, October 8	TBS	TBA		
ALDS A, Game 5*	Thursday, October 10	TBS	TBA		
ALDS B, Game 5*	Thursday, October 10	TBS	TBA		
NLDS A, Game 1	Thursday, October 3	TBS	TBA		
NLDS B, Game 1	Thursday, October 3	TBS	TBA		
NLDS A, Game 2	Friday, October 4	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
NLDS B, Game 2	Friday, October 4	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
NLDS A, Game 3	Sunday, October 6	TBS	TBA		
NLDS B, Game 3	Sunday, October 6	TBS	TBA		
NLDS A, Game 4*	Monday, October 7	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
NLDS B, Game 4*	Monday, October 7	TBS or MLBN***		TBA	
NLDS A, Game 5*	Wednesday, October 9	TBS	TBA		
NLDS B, Game 5*	Wednesday, October 9	TBS	TBA		
ALCS Game 1	Saturday, October 12	FOX	TBA		
ALCS Game 2	Sunday, October 13	FOX	TBA		
ALCS Game 3	Tuesday, October 15	FOX	TBA		
ALCS Game 4	Wednesday, October 16	FOX	TBA		
ALCS Game 5*	Thursday, October 17	FOX	TBA		
ALCS Game 6*	Saturday, October 19	FOX	TBA		
ALCS Game 7*	Sunday, October 20	FOX	TBA		
NLCS Game 1	Friday, October 11	TBS	TBA		
NLCS Game 2	Saturday, October 12	TBS	TBA		
NLCS Game 3	Monday, October 14	TBS	TBA		
NLCS Game 4	Tuesday, October 15	TBS	TBA		
NLCS Game 5*	Wednesday, October 16	TBS	TBA		
NLCS Game 6*	Friday, October 18	TBS	TBA		
NLCS Game 7*	Saturday, October 19	TBS	TBA		
World Series Game 1 (at AL)	Wednesday, October 23	FOX	TBA		
World Series Game 2 (at AL)	Thursday, October 24	FOX	TBA		
World Series Game 3 (at NL)	Saturday, October 26	FOX	TBA		
World Series Game 4 (at NL)	Sunday, October 27	FOX	TBA		
World Series Game 5* (at NL)	Monday, October 28	FOX	TBA		
World Series Game 6* (at AL)	Wednesday, October 30	FOX	TBA		
World Series Game 7* (at AL)	Thursday, October 31	FOX	TBA		

\* if necessary

\*\*\* TBS will air three of the four Division Series games on Friday, October 4, and up to three games on Monday, October 7. MLB Network will air one Division Series game on both of those dates. TBS will air 18 of the 20 Division Series games.

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

**Martin Perez delivers again as Rangers drop A's**

**Posted Wednesday, Sep. 04, 2013**

**BY JEFF WILSON**

OAKLAND, Calif. — The winners for American League Pitcher and Rookie of the Month for August should be revealed today, and Martin Perez has a chance at claiming both awards.

He won all five of his starts last month for the Texas Rangers, including a complete game, and his ERA was just a tick above 3.

No rookie topped that performance, and no veteran matched his 5-0 record. But, considering the circumstances, he topped all five of those starts Tuesday night.

The left-hander allowed only one run in seven innings, and Jurickson Profar had an RBI double in a three-run fifth inning as the Rangers beat Oakland 5-1 to reclaim first place in the American League West.

“He better get some Rookie of the Year votes,” catcher A.J. Pierzynski said. “What can you say? He had all the pitches going. He had a great changeup, which has always been his pitch. He was really locating his fastball, and he threw two different breaking balls for strikes.”

The Rangers’ division lead is one game with 24 to play, including four head-to-head with the second-place A’s. Yu Darvish and Jarrod Parker will square off Wednesday in the finale of a three-game series at O.co Coliseum.

Mitch Moreland and Alex Rios collected solo homers as the Rangers snapped a streak of four straight games with only two runs. The Moreland blast, with two outs in the fourth, got the Rangers going against 14-game winner Bartolo Colon.

But the play that might have gotten the Rangers going was the one that ended the third.

Josh Donaldson was at second when Profar dived to his left to keep a Yoenis Cespedes grounder from sneaking into left field. Donaldson got to third and kept going, and Profar threw home just in time for Pierzynski to brace himself and tag out a lunging Donaldson.

“It looked like it gave us some energy,” Pierzynski said.

Moreland connected for his 22nd homer of the season in the next half inning. In the field, Colon booted a one-out Craig Gentry grounder in the fifth, and Profar followed with a shot off the base of the right-field wall that caromed away from Michael Choice and allowed Gentry to score from first.

After Ian Kinsler reached in an infield hit off Colon’s right hand, Profar scored on a grounder to third by Adrian Beltre.

The Kinsler single was the Rangers’ first hit with a runner in scoring position since Leonys Martin’s walk-off single Saturday night. Pierzynski quickly followed with another, capping the rally with a broken-bat blooper to right field.

“We did it in many ways,” manager Ron Washington said. “Pitching. Defense. It didn’t take a bunch of dramatic hits. We just put the ball in play, and good things happened.”

That was enough for Perez (9-3), who won his sixth straight start and beat an All-Star for a fourth straight time. He worked quickly and efficiently despite allowing eight hits, but he didn’t walk a batter for the first time this season.

Perez made a quick adjustment after Coco Crisp started the game with a leadoff single and the A’s followed with three straight balls to center and right field as they sat on his fastball away.

He and Pierzynski recognized the A’s approach and started going with inside fastballs, which made his changeup more effective late in the game. After Chris Young started the seventh with a single, Perez threw a 3-2 changeup to get Kurt Suzuki on a pop-up and struck out Choice with a changeup in the dirt for the second out of a sixth straight scoreless inning.

“The kid’s got [guts],” Pierzynski said.

Said Perez: “I threw it late. They know I have a good changeup, so I can’t throw my best pitch in the first few innings.”

Perez isn’t making a big deal out of his performance since being recalled June 22. He has more experience than he did a year ago, when he was asked to start game No. 160 with the A’s charging toward the West crown.

Though still a rookie, he hasn’t looked like one the past six starts. And he didn’t Tuesday in the thick of a pennant race against the team the Rangers have to be to win the West.

"It was big," Washington said. "He's just continuing to do what he's been doing. Every time he goes out there is another experience. I just think we have to continue to let him to grow, and whatever expectations come upon him, let him put them on himself."

**Game 100 a landmark for Rangers' A.J. Pierzynski**  
**Posted Tuesday, Sep. 03, 2013**  
**BY JEFF WILSON**

OAKLAND, Calif. — A.J. Pierzynski made it clear Tuesday that he doesn't want to diminish the physical demands of other positions, but he also knows better than any active catcher how difficult it is to catch 100 games year after year.

"It takes a special person to want to get back there," he said.

Special, in this case, could very well mean crazy. It also means tough, physically and mentally, and once people get past his reputation as one of the most disliked players in the game, Pierzynski will be remembered as one of the most durable catchers of all time.

He started his 100th game Tuesday to become only the fourth catcher in baseball history with 13 consecutive seasons with 100 games caught. He wants to go for No. 14 in 2014.

"Where am I going to play?" said Pierzynski, a free agent after the season. "As far as I'm concerned, I want to play. ... It would be nice if it was Texas."

Pierzynski joined Johnny Bench, Bill Dickey and Brad Ausmus in the exclusive catching fraternity. Ivan Rodriguez has the most 100-game seasons at catcher, with 17, but he was derailed by injury in 1994 and 2000.

Pierzynski said that luck is responsible for much of the streak. He has managed to avoid any number of possible injuries behind the plate, though he suffered a broken wrist in 2011 when hit by a pitch and was sidelined earlier this season with a strained oblique.

He has also played for competitive teams who couldn't afford to give a young prospect a chance, and for managers who wanted him in the lineup.

"I thank my parents all the time. They gave me good genes," Pierzynski said. "To still be doing it and still be healthy and able to go out there is really something special and a blessing. You can never count on it, especially as a catcher."

Andrus sits again

Elvis Andrus was out of the lineup for a fourth straight game and could very well sit out Wednesday in the finale against Oakland as he continues to recover from stiffness in his lower back.

He gave his back an extensive test, hitting in the cages and running in the outfield without much trouble, but the shortstop said that he is still having difficulty bending over to field ground balls.

Andrus wants to give designated hitter a try Wednesday, but manager Ron Washington wants Andrus to be able to play defensively before putting him back in the lineup.

"I want Elvis total," Washington said. "I'm not just going to play him to play him. I want him on the field."

Andrus admitted that he's only 60 percent, though he ran at 80 percent. Sitting out, especially against the Rangers' main competition in the American League West, is agonizing, and he's trying to get back as quickly as possible.

"I don't even want to watch the games," he said. "Believe me, I'm trying to go as fast as I can. But I want to go out there healthy."

Briefly

- Right-hander Alexi Ogando was activated from the 15-day disabled list and is available to pitch out of the bullpen. He had a good bullpen session Monday, and with no place to send him to rehab as a starter, the Rangers decided to get him in games as soon as possible. He will be available beginning Wednesday.



- Right-hander Ross Wolf and outfielders Joey Butler and Engel Beltre arrived from Triple A Round Rock and were available Tuesday night. Outfielder Joe Benson, who was designated for assignment Monday, cleared waivers and was assigned to Round Rock.

- Joey Gallo, the Rangers' power-hitting third base prospect, received the Joe Bauman Award for leading the minor leagues in home runs. The 19-year-old hit 40 — 38 for Class A Hickory and two for the Arizona Rangers — and will be honored at the winter meetings.

## **Despite hiccups, pitching continues to carry Rangers**

**Posted Tuesday, Sep. 03, 2013**

**BY JEFF WILSON**

OAKLAND, Calif. — Yu Darvish didn't do himself any favors Friday night, when six no-hit innings were forgotten in the matter of two swings by Chris Herrmann and Justin Morneau.

Not only did Darvish surrender a late lead, he did so for the second straight start and for the fourth time this season. There doesn't seem to be any inning or any scenario in which it's acceptable for the Texas Rangers' No. 1 starter to allow a run.

"Earlier in the season people were talking about giving up runs early in the game, and now we're talking about later in the game," Darvish said. "I try to take the same approach, but there are certain things you can't control."

Derek Holland heard some harrumphs after five walks, two homers and four runs in only 42/3 innings Monday in the Rangers' 4-2 loss to Oakland, a defeat that forged a tie atop the American League West.

He and Darvish are a combined 21-13 with a 2.91 ERA and each should surpass 200 innings. Harrumph, indeed.

But the complaints about the top of the rotation cements what those who have followed the Rangers this season know: This is a team no longer built on offense, and the rotation is going to dictate if the Rangers will play in October for a fourth straight season.

"We've taken another step with our pitching," Holland said Tuesday, before the Rangers faced Oakland in a late game at O.co Coliseum.

"It's been starting to get more and more known. Yes, the hitting is always going to be there. It's a given. That's what Texas has always been about. Now, we're working on that part."

The Rangers entered Tuesday having pitched 30 consecutive games without allowing more than five runs, the longest streak in the AL since the advent of the designated hitter. The 3.62 staff ERA was third-best in the league and the team's lowest through 137 games since 1983.

The rotation has been set for the rest of the season, though it hasn't been announced. The most likely scenario has Darvish starting the finale Sept. 29 if he's needed to clinch the West or a wild-card spot. If he's not needed, he would start the first playoff game.

Matt Garza, Holland and either Nick Tepesch or Travis Blackley will start this weekend in Anaheim following Thursday's off day, and another off day Sept. 12 would allow the Rangers to adjust again.

Darvish is scheduled to start Wednesday in the series finale against the A's, who have beaten him in four consecutive starts. Though it's now September and the Rangers are in the thick of a postseason push, Darvish is treating his next start like any other.

"I'm so glad that we're winning right now, but my job doesn't change," he said. "When I'm pitching I try to win and help my team and contribute as much as possible."

At 12-7 with a 2.73 ERA and a baseball-best 236 strikeouts, Darvish has done his part in a season in which the Rangers were essentially without their past two Opening Day starters, Matt Harrison and Colby Lewis.

Holland had strung together 14 consecutive starts of at least six innings before falling four outs short Monday. Martin Perez, who started Tuesday is a candidate to be Rookie of the Year, and the Rangers have won six of the eight games Garza has started for them.

"When I came here, I looked at the pitching staff and knew these guys could pitch," catcher A.J. Pierzynski said. "They went out and got Garza. They had Perez in the minor leagues. This team is really focused on pitching. I don't know how a team could survive losing its last two Opening Day starters and still have the pitching staff we've put together."

He's right, and this season has provided the strongest evidence that the Rangers are no longer built on offense.

The offense-first label still persists in some baseball circles, even though the Rangers' offensive numbers are a steep departure from past seasons.

But if the Rangers make the playoffs, either as division champs or as one of the two wild-card teams for a second straight year, their pitching will carry them there.

"We have a strong rotation," Holland said of a unit that has a 3.97 ERA, sixth in the AL. "I don't care what anybody says. I feel like we are up there with every other staff that's out there."

## **Rangers 5, A's 1 (F)** **SEPTEMBER 04, 2013**

OAKLAND, Calif. — Martin Perez allowed one in seven innings Tuesday night, and Jurickson Profar had an RBI double in a three-run fifth inning as the Rangers beat the A's 5-1 to reclaim first place in the American League West.

Mitch Moreland jump-started the offense with a game-tying solo homer in the fourth inning off Bartolo Colon, who booted a one-out grounder by Craig Gentry in the fifth to spark the game-changing rally.

Profar followed with a double off the base of the right-field wall, and the ball caromed far enough away from Michael Choice for Gentry to score from first. After Ian Kinsler reached in an infield hit off Colon's right hand, Profar scored on a grounder to third by Adrian Beltre.

The Kinsler single was the Rangers' first hit with a runner in scoring position since Leonys Martin's walk-off single Saturday night. A.J. Pierzynski quickly followed with another, capping the rally with a broken-bat blooper to right field.

Perez took care of the rest, though Alex Rios added a homer to start the eighth. Perez (9-3) worked quickly and efficiently despite allowing eight hits, but he didn't walk a batter for the first time this season en route to his sixth straight win.

The A's made things interesting in the ninth against Joe Nathan, who allowed a leadoff single to Alberto Callaspo and a one-out pinch hit to Seth Smith. Eric Sogard, another pinch hitter, followed and was out trying to bunt for a hit.

Nathan then struck out Coco Crisp, who had doubled to start the game and scored the lone A's run.

-- **Jeff Wilson**

## ***DALLAS MORNING NEWS***

**Grant: Rangers get much-needed boost from rookies in victory over A's**

**Evan Grant**

**Published: 04 September 2013 01:39 AM**

**Updated: 04 September 2013 01:53 AM**

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Rangers will leave Oakland in first place in the AL West. They can thank the kids.

Martin Perez and Jurickson Profar, the two young gems of the Rangers' international efforts, teamed up to stop Oakland's momentum and return the Rangers to first place in the AL West with a 5-1 win.

The win pushed the Rangers back out to a one-game lead in the division with 24 games remaining. Regardless of what happens in the Yu Darvish-Jarrod Parker pitching matchup Wednesday afternoon, the Rangers will head to Anaheim with at least a share of the lead.

The final three games between the teams are next weekend in Arlington.

The Rangers made it clear Tuesday afternoon that Perez will pitch against Oakland again, sandwiched between Derek Holland and Darvish. And, to be honest, why wouldn't they pitch him?

Since July 31, he's 6-0 with a 2.53 ERA, and the Rangers have won all seven of his starts. He's one of just six AL pitchers to win at least six consecutive starts this year. The only guy to have a longer streak was Bartolo Colon (eight), whom Perez outpitched Tuesday. Then again, Perez has made a habit lately of respectfully upstaging his elders. In his last four starts, he's beaten Felix Hernandez twice, Chris Sale and Colon.

Using his fastball and changeup to perfection, Perez controlled the tempo of the game and did not allow the circumstances — potentially losing a grip on first place — or a first-inning run to unsettle him. When he was done for the night, he'd worked seven innings and allowed only that first inning run. It improved his overall record to 9-3, giving him the lead in wins among AL rookies.

It was Profar who came into the season carrying higher expectations as the No. 1 prospect in baseball. At times, he's demonstrated why he carried that title, but he's gone through long stretches of being a rookie simply trying to survive.

Tuesday was a night for one of the electrifying glimpses. On both sides of the ball.

In the third inning, he helped bail Perez out of a major jam with both athleticism and alertness. With Josh Donaldson on second base and two outs, Profar lunged for Yoenis Cespedes' hard grounder toward the hole. He glanced at first and faked a throw. Donaldson kept running and tried to score. Profar calmly made an accurate throw home to allow for A.J. Pierzynski to catch the ball, brace himself and absorb the blow as Donaldson lowered his shoulder.

Pierzynski held onto the ball following the tag and collision for the final out.

In the fifth, he broke a tie the Rangers had forged on Mitch Moreland's solo homer and a bunch of failed opportunities. The Rangers went to the fifth hitless in four at-bats with runners in scoring position for the game and in an 0-for-18 stretch.

When the inning was done, they had the lead and had broken the slump. Profar's one-out, run-scoring double technically didn't come with a runner in scoring position, but it did the trick of relaxing the offense. Craig Gentry had reached ahead of Profar on a fielding error by Colon, who couldn't squeeze his glove on a bouncer back to the mound. Profar worked the count to 3-1, then turned on an 88 mph fastball and lasered it into the right-field corner. Gentry was running on the play and scored easily.

The Rangers added an infield single, a run-scoring groundout and a run-scoring blooper by A.J. Pierzynski to build the lead to 4-1.

Perez took care of the rest. After allowing an infield single to Mansfield's Michael Choice for his first major league hit with one out in the fifth, he struck out Coco Crisp and Josh Donaldson in succession to complete a shutdown inning.

He worked around a two-out single in the sixth, then was positively artful after allowing a leadoff single to Chris Young in the seventh. He got Kurt Suzuki to lunge at a changeup for a lazy fly ball to right field, struck out Choice with a wicked change and got Crisp to fly out on a fastball to end his night.

When it was done, the Rangers were firmly in control of the game.

Sometimes, it's just child's play.

### **Grant: Ian Kinsler's slump explainable**

**Evan Grant**

**Published: 04 September 2013 01:13 AM**

**Updated: 04 September 2013 01:44 AM**

OAKLAND, Calif. — If you give gravity to statistics, playing Ian Kinsler in the final two games of the Rangers' series against Oakland would have been the low-percentage play.

Ron Washington is undaunted by statistics.

"I believe in Ian Kinsler," he said Tuesday afternoon.

It would not be hard, though, to have one's belief in a player shaken by recent events concerning Kinsler and the matchups he's facing in Oakland.

First, there is his recent slump, which reached 12 hitless at-bats Monday. Then there are the pitching matchups — Bartolo Colon, followed by Jarrod Parker — against whom Kinsler was a combined 4-for-31 (.129) in his career before Tuesday's game.

Add in the location, the O.co Coliseum, where Kinsler was 3-for-30 (.100) this season and where he had a .200 career batting average. It goes along with a career .559 on-base-plus-slugging percentage in Oakland, the second lowest by any player at the stadium over the last 20 years.

If that's not enough, factor in that Wednesday's game is a day game and things really get ugly. Kinsler, hitless in his last nine day-game at-bats and just 3-for-18 since the All-Star break, is hitting .173 during the day this season. It is the second-lowest average among 148 AL players with at least 100 daytime plate appearances. Kinsler's daytime on-base-plus-slugging percentage of .521 is also the second lowest, ahead of only Houston's Matt Dominguez (.513).

As ugly as the numbers are, it is fairly easy to explain most of them.

For instance, take the recent slump. Kinsler has struggled lately in the No. 3 spot, but he's dependent on the first two hitters getting on base ahead of him. Over the four games before Tuesday, the Nos. 1-2 spots had combined to reach base eight times in 35 plate appearances for a .229 on-base percentage.

"There are some things I need to stay on top of," Kinsler said of his swing. "I've got to continue to plug away. I've had a couple of opportunities and haven't done much with them. And sometimes when the other guys aren't reaching base, you have to create opportunities for the guys behind you."

Monday's game offered some examples. In his first at-bat, he came up with two out and nobody on and lined hard to third base. When opportunities did arise, Kinsler couldn't capitalize.

In the fifth, after the Rangers tied the score, he came up with Jurickson Profar on base and two outs and hit a foul pop to first baseman Nate Freiman. It was the fourth foul pop out in Oakland for Kinsler over the last two years, which explains a lot of why he's struggled so badly in the park.

He is prone to fly balls, and when he misses centering the ball, it's prone to be a foul pop. Oakland has more foul territory than any other park in the AL, and foul pops are often turned into outs.

"I don't swing and miss a lot," Kinsler said. "And so when I swing at a bad pitch here, it's very possible that it will become an out. Any other park, the count is 1-1, then and I'm still at the plate."

"I've had my share of good games here," Kinsler said. "It just hasn't happened very consistently. This is the one place in our division where I struggle. I feel good here. I don't know if it is just a coincidence or not."

Coincidence or not, Washington isn't about to shift things around again with his lineup because of a set of numbers. He's already moved Kinsler from first to third and Martin to the top of the order. There simply isn't much more shifting that can be done.

"I wish juggling was the answer," he said. "But the guys are going to have to do the job where they are."

And that means they may have to break some bad statistical cycles to do so.

## **Elvis Andrus remains out of Texas Rangers lineup; A.J. Pierzynski ties MLB record for catching durability**

**By Evan Grant**

**5:23 pm on September 3, 2013**

OAKLAND – The Rangers will go without SS Elvis Andrus for the fourth consecutive game Tuesday due to a still-stiff back.

Andrus left Saturday's game in the first inning with back soreness and has not played since. Manager Ron Washington had indicated on Monday that he thought Andrus would be ready to play Tuesday. The back, however, has apparently not improved as much as the Rangers hoped.

Instead, INF Jurickson Profar will start at short again and hit second.

It also means the Rangers won't give slumping 2B Ian Kinsler the day off. Kinsler is hitless in his last 12 at-bats. Kinsler is hitting just .100 in 30 at-bats at Oakland this season and is just 2-for-17 against Oakland starting RHP Bartolo Colon.

Meanwhile, A.J. Pierzynski will be behind the plate. It marks his 100th appearance behind the plate this season (93 starts) and gives him 13 consecutive seasons with at least 100 appearances behind the plate. Johnny Bench, Bill Dickey and Brad Ausmus are the only other catchers with 13 consecutive 100-game seasons. It will be the 1,659th appearance behind the plate of Pierzynski's career, which ranks 19th all-time, 40 games behind Yogi Berra.

The Rangers full lineup against RHP Bartolo Colon: CF Craig Gentry, SS Jurickson Profar, 2B Ian Kinsler, 3B Adrian Beltre, C A.J. Pierzynski, RF Alex Rios, 1B Mitch Moreland, DH Lance Berkman and LF David Murphy. LHP Martin Perez is starting for the Rangers.

## **A.J. Pierzynski on Texas Rangers starter Martin Perez: "He better get some votes for Rookie of the Year"**

**By Evan Grant**

**1:19 am on September 4, 2013**

OAKLAND: Signs you've got something special in a young starting pitcher:

- An opponent comes out with a smart and novel game plan to take away his most effective pitch and he realizes and effectively adjusts.
- When he goes toe-to-toe against a Cy Young Award winner and outpitches him.
- When he earns the unfiltered praise of a crusty veteran catcher.
- When he rolls off win after win.

With Martin Perez it goes. Check. Check. Check. And Check.

"I keep saying he is growing in front of our eyes every time he pitches," Rangers manager Ron Washington said after the 5-1 win over Oakland Tuesday put Texas back in first place. "And every time he grows a little more."

In beating Bartolo Colon, the 2004 Cy Young Award winner, Perez was nimble in adjusting his game plan.

He saw Oakland's hitters staying back on his wicked changeup early in the game and taking the ball to right field and he quickly changed gears. He started throwing his fastball in on the right-handed swinging lineup and forcing them to back off the plate a little.

The net result was that he was effective with the fastball and it opened up a path for him to return to the change later in the game.

"They had a good game plan to stay back," said catcher A.J. Pierzynski. "I don't know that I've ever seen [Yoenis] Cespedes hit a ball to right field, but they were staying back and taking the ball that way. He made the decision to throw the ball in on their hands. He's very confident now. He believes he's going to get it done. From when he first came up against Arizona [in May] to now, it's been a complete 180 degree turn. He better get some Rookie of the Year votes."

Said Perez: "When I saw them staying back, I told myself that's what I had to do. I put that in my head."

And when he needed to come back to the changeup in the seventh, it was right there for him. He threw one on a full count to Kurt Suzuki with a man on and nobody out and got a lazy fly ball. He threw one that fell off a cliff with two strikes to get Michael Choice for the second out. When he fell behind Coco Crisp 3-and-1, he perhaps had put just enough uncertainty into the veteran's head to get him to be just off a fastball. Instead of something Crisp could drive, Perez got a routine fly ball.

It was the sixth consecutive start with a win for Perez, which is tied for the second longest such streak in the AL this year. Only Colon (eight) had a longer streak.

Colon also became another Cy Young victim of Perez during the streak. He's beaten Cy Young winners in three of his last four starts: Colon and Felix Hernandez (twice). The other win in that four-game stretch was over Chris Sale. He finished sixth in last year's Cy Young voting and currently has the highest Wins Above Replacement (WAR) rating among AL starters.

The streak actually extends to a seventh start back to July 31 when he held the Los Angeles Angels to a run on four hits in 7.1 innings. In the seven-start stretch, he's got a 2.54 ERA. And his nine wins have pushed him to the top of the heap among AL rookies, ahead of both Oakland's Dan Straily and Tampa Bay's Chris Archer.

"He believes right now," said Pierzynski. "And that's awesome to see."

## **Texas Rangers moved Derek Holland up in rotation; Yu Darvish in line to start playoff opener**

**By Evan Grant**

**7:18 pm on September 3, 2013**

OAKLAND, Calif. – The Rangers are moving lefty Derek Holland's next start up by a day in order to reset their rotation for the stretch run.

The move allows the Rangers to send Holland, Martin Perez and Yu Darvish to the mound against Oakland against next weekend when the teams meet in Arlington and it would put Darvish on track to start the first game of the postseason – if the Rangers make it.

"This is best way we could keep our starting rotation on track the way we wanted to as we move through the season," manager Ron Washington said.

Holland, who threw 74 pitches in 4.2 innings Monday, will be pitching on his normal four days of rest Saturday at Los Angeles because of the team's scheduled off day on Thursday. Matt Garza will start the opener of the Angels series and the Rangers are undecided about who will pitch the final game. It will be either Travis Blackley, who had been the originally-scheduled starter for Saturday, or Nick Tepesch, who was impressive in 3.1 innings of relief Monday. Tepesch threw only 28 pitches Monday.

"He was executing exactly like people said he had been on rehab," Washington said. "He kept the ball down and used his slider well."

Washington said the team will not move up Perez, who started on Tuesday, to make the Sunday start.

The move will then give Holland five days of rest due to the team's final scheduled off day on September 12 to prepare for the A's. Perez and Darvish would follow.

Interestingly, if the schedule holds up, "hired gun" Matt Garza will not pitch against Oakland in the two September series. Garza lost to Oakland in August and was frustrated by the A's ability to bunt against him.

If Darvish starts the September 15th game in Arlington against Oakland, he'd be on track to also start September 20 at Kansas City and September 25 against Houston in the 159th game of the season. He would then be in line to pitch the first game of the playoffs should the Rangers reach them.

## **ESPN DALLAS**

**Extra Bases: It's Darvish's turn now**

**September, 4, 2013**

**8:00 AM CT**

**By Todd Wills | [ESPNDallas.com](http://ESPNDallas.com)**

The Rangers rode the left arm of rookie Martin Perez to a much needed victory over the Oakland A's on Tuesday night.

Can they do the same with the right arm of ace Yu Darvish on Wednesday afternoon?

On the due factor alone, the Rangers should. Darvish's last win came on August 12 against Houston, when he took a no-hitter into the eighth inning.

Since then they've lost the last three games Darvish started. Those losses -- all by one run -- came to Seattle, the Chicago White Sox and Minnesota.

Perez stepped up big in Tuesday's 5-1 win. With the Rangers bringing back haunting memories of last year's season-ending series at Oakland -- when the A's won three games to win the West -- Perez boosted a struggling offense. He held the A's to a first-inning run in seven innings for his sixth straight victory.

The Rangers' offense did enough, ignited by Mitch Moreland's solo home run in the fourth inning, to score five runs. They still left at least three runs off the scoreboard and went 2-for-14 with runners in scoring position.

The Rangers are 3-for-38 in those situations in the last five games. It's been agonizing to watch.

Darvish and the offense need to follow Perez's lead and step up to the moment.

WHAT'S UP NOW: Rapid reaction from the Rangers' 5-1 victory over Oakland. Plus, a post-game blog on Martin Perez and his record-breaking night.

ON DECK: The Rangers go for the series win against the A's with ace right-hander Yu Darvish (12-6, 2.73) facing A's right-hander Jarrod Parker (10-6, 3.59) at 2:37 p.m. on Fox Sports Southwest and ESPN Dallas 103.3 FM.

QUESTION OF THE DAY: Has Martin Perez made himself a frontrunner in the American League Cy Young race?

**Rookie P Martin Perez rewrites record book**  
**September, 4, 2013**  
**2:41 AM CT**  
**By Eric Gilmore | Special to ESPNDallas.com**

OAKLAND, Calif. -- When Texas Rangers rookie left-hander Martin Perez took the mound Tuesday night against the Oakland Athletics, he gave up a ringing double to leadoff hitter Coco Crisp.

Crisp later raced home on a sacrifice fly, giving the A's a quick 1-0 lead.

But that was the last run they scored against Perez, who blanked Oakland for the next six innings to win his sixth straight start, a rookie franchise record.

"After the leadoff double, he was lights out," A.J. Pierzynski said after the Rangers' 5-1 win at O.co Coliseum. "He had all the pitches going. He had a great changeup tonight, which has always been his pitch. But he really located his fastball well. And he also was able to throw two different types of breaking balls for strikes, which I think really kept them off balance."

"It seemed like they had a good game plan early, really trying to go the other way," the catcher said. "But he threw some heaters in on guys to kind of back them off a little bit, and that made his changeup and curveball a little more effective."

Perez pitched the Rangers back into sole possession of first place in the American League West, one day after Texas lost 4-2 to Oakland and fell into a tie with the Athletics for first. With 24 games left, the Rangers (80-58) own a one-game lead over the A's (79-59), and Perez deserves plenty of credit.

"He's growing in front of our eyes," said Rangers manager Ron Washington. "Just watch it and enjoy it."

Last year, as a 21-year-old, Perez appeared in 12 games with six starts for the Rangers, gaining valuable experience. He beat the A's the first time he faced them but lost to them twice down the stretch, when Oakland roared back to overtake the Rangers and win the West on the final day of the regular season.

"When you come the first time, you don't have too much of an idea how the game is here," Perez said. "It's the same ball, but a lot of guys have more experience than you. I just tried to learn last year and this year, too. Every day you learn something new."

Oakland manager Bob Melvin said he noticed a big difference in Perez.

"He's pitching with a lot more confidence," Melvin said. "He's got quite a run going as far as how their team is playing behind him. He's been one of their better starters at this point. A pretty heralded guy as a prospect goes. This year he's settled into a starter's role and doing pretty good."

Perez allowed just the one run on eight hits over seven innings before turning the game over to the bullpen. He struck out five, walked none and threw only 95 pitches -- 60 for strikes.

Melvin stacked his lineup with eight right-handed batters or switch-hitters against Perez, and they tried to take him to the opposite field. His answer was to bust them inside with fastballs.

"I just tried to attack the zone and throw strikes," Perez said. "After the second inning, I started throwing in because I saw a couple guys looking for a fastball away or for my changeup. So I said, 'OK, let me throw in,' because I'm not going to give too much credit to the hitters.

"If they're going to swing at something outside, I just want to pound inside. That's what I did tonight."

For Washington, it was a beautiful sight to see.

"He just is continuing to do what he's been doing to get to this point," Washington said. "He has tremendous pitching mechanics. He has pitches to work with. Each time he goes out there, it's another experience for him.

"He just continues to grow. And whatever expectation that comes up on him, let him put it on himself -- and not us put it on him."

Energizing play: Pierzynski and shortstop Juickson Profar combined to make a huge defensive play in the bottom of the third inning that appeared to spark the Rangers.

With two outs and A's third baseman Josh Donaldson on second after a double, Yoenis Cespedes hit a ground ball deep into the hole at short. Profar made a diving stop, but Donaldson ran through third base coach Mike Gallego's stop sign and headed home. Profar zipped a throw to Pierzynski, who survived a collision with Donaldson to record the third out, then tagged him hard again just to make sure.

"It was a great play by Profar, just to get to that ball and knock it down," Pierzynski said. "I wish he would have got me the ball a little sooner. I think he was surprised [Donaldson] was going."

"I mean, Mitch [Moreland] came out and hit a homer the next inning to tie the game," he said, "and then, obviously, the next inning we scored the three runs to finally get a lead here."

## **Rapid Reaction: Rangers 5, Athletics 1**

**September 4, 2013**

**12:55 AM CT**

**By Eric Gilmore | Special to ESPNDallas.com**

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The Texas Rangers bounced back Tuesday night to beat the Oakland Athletics 5-1 in the second game of a three-game series and regain sole possession of first place in the American League West. With 24 games left to play, the Rangers (80-58) lead the A's (79-59) by one game.

Still streaking: Rangers rookie left-hander Martin Perez won his sixth straight start and improved to 9-3 for the season. He's the first Rangers rookie to win six straight starts and the first Texas pitcher to do so since Kenny Rogers won eight straight starts in 2005. His six-game winning streak is the longest by a Rangers pitcher this season. Perez allowed just one run on eight hits over seven innings. He struck out five and walked none. He threw 90 pitches, 60 for strikes. After spotting Oakland a 1-0 lead in the first, he pitched six straight shutout innings in his first start this season against the A's. Last year, he went 1-2 with a 9.90 ERA against Oakland.

Power surge: Rangers first baseman Mitch Moreland hit his 22nd home run of the season -- an ongoing career high -- in the fourth inning, a solo shot off A's right-hander Bartolo Colon that tied the game 1-1. The home run was Moreland's second in his past three games and fifth in his past 11. In the eighth, Alex Rios crushed a solo shot off reliever Jesse Chavez, giving the Rangers a 5-1 lead. The homer was Rios' 14th of the season and second since coming to Texas from the Chicago White Sox in a trade. The Rangers had 13 hits, including two apiece by Moreland, Rios, Ian Kinsler, Jurickson Profar and Craig Gentry. Profar and Moreland doubled.

Rally time: After scoring a total of two runs in each of their past four games, the Rangers rallied for three runs in the fifth inning to take a 4-1 lead. The rally started when Gentry hit a hard one-hopper that went in and out of Colon's glove for an error. Profar lined an RBI double off the right-field wall, then moved to third when Ian Kinsler singled sharply off of Colon's



glove. Adrian Beltre grounded out to third, bringing Profar home, and catcher A.J. Pierzynski blooped an RBI single to center.

Bullpen watch: Right-hander Tanner Scheppers pitched a scoreless eighth, despite giving up a leadoff double to Josh Donaldson. He has pitched four scoreless innings in his past four games after allowing three runs on six hits in 1⅓ innings in his previous two appearances. Closer Joe Nathan allowed a pair of singles but pitched a scoreless ninth.

Timely move: Gentry made his 52nd start of the season and 47th in center field, in place of Leonys Martin. Gentry entered the game with two hits in three career at-bats against Colon. And he singled in his first two at-bats Tuesday, then reached on Colon's error and scored in the fifth.

Defensive gem: Profar, starting again for injured shortstop Elvis Andrus, saved the Rangers a run in the bottom of the third. With two outs and Donaldson on second after a double, Yoenis Cespedes hit a ground ball to the hole and Profar made a diving stop. When Donaldson ran through third base coach Mike Gallego's stop sign, Profar gunned him out at home. Donaldson collided hard with Pierzynski, but the milestone-reaching catcher held onto the ball. He then tagged Donaldson hard again for good measure. Pierzynski has now been behind the plate 100 games a record-tying 13 seasons in a row.

Missed early opportunity: Gentry led off the game with a sharp single off Colon to left and moved to third when Kinsler lined a one-out single to center, snapping an 0-for-12 skid. After Beltre struck out, Pierzynski lined a shot to left center, but A's center fielder Chris Young made a nice running catch, reaching high to rob Pierzynski of extra bases and the Rangers of two runs.

No history lesson: Colon (14-6) entered the game with a 19-7 career mark against Texas and a chance to make history. He was tied with Bert Blyleven, Dennis Leonard and Jack Morris for most wins against the Rangers. Colon is still tied, lasting just five innings. He allowed eight hits and four runs -- just one earned -- while striking out three and walking none.

Up next: Rangers right-hander Yu Darvish (12-6, 2.73 ERA) will face A's righty Jarrod Parker (10-6, 3.59) in the finale of this three-game series Wednesday afternoon at the O.co Coliseum. First pitch is at 2:37 p.m. CT on Fox Sports Southwest and ESPN Dallas 103.3 FM and 1540 AM.

### **Buzz: Pierzynski reaches milestone**

**September, 3, 2013**

**8:22 PM CT**

**By Eric Gilmore | Special to ESPNDallas.com**

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Texas Rangers catcher A.J. Pierzynski will tie the major league record of 13 consecutive seasons with 100 or more games caught on Tuesday night when he starts against the Oakland Athletics. Pierzynski will move into a tie with Bill Dickey (1929-41), Johnny Bench (1968-80) and Brad Ausmus (1995-2007).

So the question is: Will he go for 14 straight next year?

"I don't know," Pierzynski said. "Where am I going to play? Find me a team. There's still 25 games to go and hopefully a long postseason. You never know what's going to happen as far as physically or mentally, but as far as I'm concerned as of right now, yeah, I still want to play. I still think I can play every day. It's just going to be about finding a place that hopefully is competitive to play next year. It would be nice if it was Texas. I don't know what [Rangers general manager Jon Daniels] and those guys are thinking. Hopefully I'll be able to find a place for next year and take a run at 14."

Pierzynski signed a one-year deal with the Rangers as a free agent after spending his previous eight seasons with the Chicago White Sox. He started his streak in 2001 with the Minnesota Twins. He spent three years with the Twins, then one with San Francisco before signing with the White Sox in 2005 and catching 128 games during their World Series championship season.

Pierzynski said winning the World Series is his No. 1 baseball accomplishment, but his streak of playing 100-plus games at such a physically demanding position is "special."

"I remember when I first came up, just thinking, 'I'm 23, 24, I've got to do this for 10 more years.' Because that's everyone's goal, to try to get 10 years," Pierzynski said. "To still be doing it and still be healthy and able to go out there every day is really something special. It's a blessing. You never count on it because you never know what's going to happen, especially as a catcher."

"But it's been nice and I've been on good teams, and I've been on teams that let me play, which is also a luck thing. You could go to certain situations [where] you fall out of it and you don't get to play, but I've always been on teams that have been fairly competitive and also where the managers believed in me enough to keep sending me out there."

Pierzynski is batting .280 with 16 home runs and 58 RBIs this season. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, he has gone 124 games and 1,025 chances since his last error on Aug. 28, 2012 at Baltimore. Those are the longest streaks since Boston's Jason Varitek went 137 games and 1,053 total chances without an error from July 24, 2009, to Sept. 14, 2001.

Pierzynski will also move into a tie for fourth in major league history for most total seasons with 100 or more games caught. Former Rangers catcher Ivan Rodriguez tops that list with 17, followed by Bob Boone (15) and Jason Kendall (14).

Rodriguez's record appears to be safe from a Pierzynski assault.

"I don't know if my wife would allow me to do that for that much longer," Pierzynski said, laughing.

More rest for Andrus: Shortstop Elvis Andrus is out of the lineup for the third straight game as he recovers from back spasms. Hours before Tuesday night's game, Andrus ran and took batting practice.

"I feel OK. I ran like 80 percent today, and my back feels strong, and I was swinging pretty good," Andrus said.

Andrus said he might feel good enough to DH on Wednesday against Oakland, but manager Ron Washington said he wouldn't put him back into the starting lineup until he's healthy enough to play shortstop. Washington said he wanted to see how Andrus did fielding ground balls.

"I want Elvis total. I want Elvis on the field," Washington said.

"They want me healthy out there," Andrus said. "Believe me, I'm trying to go as fast as I can."

Home run king: Rangers prospect Joey Gallo reaped a reward for leading the minor leagues in home runs with 40. He received the Joe Bauman Award as well as \$8,000 -- \$200 per home run. He'll be honored at the baseball winter meetings awards luncheon in Orlando in December. He hit 38 home runs for Class A Hickory and two for the Arizona Rangers. Gallo finished one home run shy of tying the Rangers' minor-league mark set by Tom Robson in 1974 at Spokane.

Short hops: The Rangers activated Alexi Ogando (right shoulder inflammation) from the 15-day disabled list Tuesday after a solid bullpen session Monday. ... Washington named his starting pitchers for the first two games of this weekend's three-game series against the Los Angeles Angels at Anaheim. Right-hander Matt Garza will start Friday night, and lefty Derek Holland will start Saturday night. As for Sunday, Travis Blackley and Nick Tepesch are two options, Washington said. "Could be somebody else," Washington said. Washington said he and pitching coach Mike Maddux are adjusting the rotation so "things are lined up at the end like we wanted it." ... Outfielders Engel Beltre and Joey Butler and right-hander Ross Wolf were officially promoted from Triple-A Round Rock. The Rangers have 36 players on their active roster. ... Outfielder Joe Benson, who was designated for assignment Monday, cleared waivers and was outrighted to Round Rock.

### **Wash's Wisdom: Andrus getting close**

**September 3, 2013**

**2:36 PM CT**

**By Todd Wills | ESPNDallas.com**

Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus will work out Tuesday in Oakland and if all goes well and he feels like he's ready to play, manager Ron Washington said he'll have him in Wednesday's starting lineup against the A's.

"If he feels ready to go, we will give him one more day just to be safe," Washington said Tuesday on his weekly appearances on the Fitzsimmons & Durrett Show on ESPN Dallas 103.3 FM.

Andrus has missed two straight games because of lower back spasms that popped up during Saturday's game against Minnesota. The Rangers have lost both games against the Twins and A's.

Washington could try to rush Andrus back Tuesday night with the American League West race tied up now, but with a day game on Wednesday, it's better to give Andrus one more day with the quick turnaround. And with just 25 games left in the regular season.

## **ASSOCIATED PRESS**

### **Rangers beat A's 5-1, retake sole possession of AL West lead**

**Associated Press**

**Published: 03 September 2013 09:02 PM**

**Updated: 04 September 2013 01:38 AM**

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Josh Donaldson provided Oakland's biggest highlight with a breathtaking catch. He also provided the lowlight when he ran through a stop sign to kill one of the few rallies the Athletics managed against Martin Perez.

Perez allowed one run in seven innings to win his sixth straight start and Mitch Moreland homered to move the Texas Rangers back into sole possession of first place in the AL West with a 4-1 victory over Oakland on Tuesday night.

Donaldson's long run and dive over the tarp to make a backhand catch in the sixth inning against David Murphy was the game's most memorable moment, drawing praise from both clubhouses.

"You're not going to see too many plays better than that," manager Bob Melvin said.

But it was Donaldson's play at the end of the third inning that turned the momentum and put the Rangers back alone in first place a day after the A's tied them with a win in the series opener.

Donaldson was on second with two outs when Yoenis Cespedes hit a grounder into the hole between third and shortstop. Jurickson Profar got to the ball but held onto it as he had no play at first. Donaldson ran through coach Mike Gallego's stop sign and was easily thrown out at home despite barreling into A.J. Pierzynski.

"For some reason I thought I heard 'go,'" Donaldson said. "I know it wasn't Gags because as soon as I took two steps he was saying, 'Stay here, stay here.' It ended up being a really bad play for us and for myself."

Texas scored four runs over the next two innings and Oakland didn't get another good scoring chance against Perez.

After struggling as a late-season call-up last September when he lost twice to the A's to help Oakland steal the AL West title from Texas. Perez (9-3) is doing his best to win that title back this year.

"He's grown leaps and bounds really," manager Ron Washington said. "It's maturity. The experience he had last year up here helped him tremendously. He realized he can pitch up here and he just goes out there and pitches. Right now a lot of good things are happening for him."

Bartolo Colon (14-6) allowed three unearned runs in the fifth inning following his own error and missed an opportunity to become first pitcher to reach 20 career wins against Texas. Colon is winless in five starts since July 26 with a DL stint in the middle of that stretch.

Colon, making his second start back from a strained left groin, stranded runners on third with less than two outs in the first and third innings. But he lost the lead on Moreland's solo homer with two outs in the fourth.

The Rangers struck for three unearned runs in the fifth inning to take a 4-1 lead with help from two comebackers that Colon could not handle. The rally started when Craig Gentry reached on an error with one out when his grounder popped out of Colon's glove. Gentry scored on Profar's double into the right-field corner that rookie Michael Choice bobbled.

Ian Kinsler followed with another comebacker that hit off Colon's glove and was riled an infield single. Adrian Beltre added a run-scoring groundout and Pierzynski blooped an RBI single before Choice ended the inning with a sliding catch of Alex Rios' liner.

"The one play that made the difference was the groundball hit to me that I dropped," Colon said through an interpreter. "It was a routine play."

Rios added a leadoff homer in the eighth to make it 5-1.

Perez followed up his perfect August by winning again to start September, shutting Oakland down after Coco Crisp doubled and scored on Jed Lowrie's sacrifice fly in the first.

Perez became the first Texas pitcher to win six consecutive starts since Kenny Rogers won eight straight in 2005. His last four wins have come against All-Star pitchers, outdueling Seattle's Felix Hernandez twice and Chris Sale of the Chicago White Sox once.

NOTES: Pierzynski caught his 100th game for Texas, joining Bill Dickey, Johnny Bench and Brad Ausmus as the only players to reach that milestone in 13 straight seasons. ... Rangers SS Elvis Andrus missed his third straight game with a sore back and could be back for the series finale Wednesday or Friday in Anaheim. ... Oakland's Jarrod Parker (10-6), who is 8-0 in his last 17 starts, takes Yu Darvish (12-6) in the series finale Wednesday.

## ***MiLB.COM***

**Gallo Wins Joe Bauman Home Run Award**  
**Crawdads 3B led all of Minor League Baseball with 40 homers**  
**By Aaron Cox**  
**09/03/2013 2:57 PM ET**

HICKORY, NC - Minor League Baseball announced Tuesday that Hickory Crawdads third baseman Joey Gallo is the recipient of the 2013 Joe Bauman Award, presented by Musco Sports Lighting. Gallo won the award by leading all of MiLB with his 40 home runs this season, 38 of which came in a Crawdads uniform.

Gallo, 19, is the youngest player to win the award in its 12-year history, while also becoming the first teenager to hit 40 home runs in a season since 1962. The All-Star slugger is the first Crawdad to take home the prize, with his 38 Hickory homers breaking the 'Dads single-season record.

Gallo began the final week of the season trailing George Springer (AAA Omaha) by four home runs before finishing the year with seven round trippers over his final six games. The highlight of the surge came on August 30th, when Gallo posted his second 3-homer game of the season to leap past Springer and into first place.

Gallo's final homer of the night also happened to be the record-breaking 174th of the year for the Crawdads.

The 39th overall pick by the Texas Rangers in 2012, Gallo will be presented with the Joe Bauman Trophy and a check for \$8,000, \$200 for every homer hit, at the Baseball Winter Meetings Awards Luncheon at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort in Orlando, FL on December 9th.