



Minnesota Twins Daily Clips

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Errors pile up in Twins' latest blowout loss

La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune – 9/21/13

OAKLAND, CALIF. – With his innings piling up, Andrew Albers was a candidate to be removed from the Twins rotation. But manager Ron Gardenhire said following Friday's 11-0 loss to Oakland that the rookie lefthander will get the ball one more time.

That's good for him, because he wouldn't want his last start to go the way it did Friday.

Albers and the Twins were battered by the rolling A's. Yoenis Cespedes and Josh Donaldson hit home runs, the Twins committed four errors and Bartolo Colon threw six shutout innings. It was the Twins' first four-error game since Oct. 1, 2009.

"An ugly night for us," Gardenhire said. "Bartolo Colon pretty much dominated us. Every time we missed a play, they took advantage of it. Not a lot of fun in our dugout tonight."

Albers (2-4) realized his big-league dreams after five seasons in the minors and opened his career with back-to-back gems against playoff contenders Kansas City and Cleveland. Since then, though, it's been a rougher road. Friday, he lasted 4 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings, giving up eight runs, three earned, on eight hits and one walk.

He entered the season having thrown a career-high 103 innings in 2012. He has pitched 132 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings for Class AAA Rochester and 54 $\frac{1}{3}$ for the Twins for a total of 186 $\frac{2}{3}$ this season. The Twins are mindful of the jump in his workload.

"We're going to limit his innings, and we'll go from there," Gardenhire said.

Cespedes opened the scoring with a homer in the second. Josh Reddick drove in a run with a single and later scored when Oswaldo Arcia misplayed Daric Barton's single to right into extra bases. Alberto Callaspo drove in Derek Norris with a single in the four, after Norris stole second and went to third on Chris Herrmann's errant throw.

The doozy came during the A's five-run fifth. The bases were loaded with two outs when Chris Young sent a smash down the third base line. Eduardo Escobar made a splendid diving stop to his right, but he bounced his throw past Chris Parmelee at first, the ball rolling toward the seats where the Black Hole sits during Raiders games. That cleared the bases and made it 7-0.

"If we just made a couple plays behind him, it's a different story, we're still in the ballgame," Gardenhire said.

Time running out

Joe Mauer worked out at Target Field. He's not up to doing baseball-related activities, which means he's still days away from the Twins even thinking about his return to the lineup.

And even General Manager Terry Ryan admitted, "We're running out of days. There's only so many days left."

Mauer hasn't played since Aug. 19, when he suffered a concussion when he was hit in the facemask with a foul ball. So the catcher has missed more than a month of action and would have to ramp up his activities immediately if he wants to play in the Twins' season-ending homestand.

Minor leaguer suspended

Twins minor league pitcher Dallas Gallant was suspended for 50 games without pay for violating the minor league drug prevention program. Gallant tested positive for an amphetamine.

Gallant, 24, will be able to report to spring training and work out with teammates, but his suspension will begin once the minor league regular season begins.

Time running out on Mauer's chance to play again this season

La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune – 9/21/13

OAKLAND, CALIF. – Twins catcher Joe Mauer worked out at Target Field on Friday. He's not up to doing baseball-related activities, which means he's still days away from the Twins even thinking about his return to the lineup.

And even General Manager Terry Ryan admitted, "We're running out of days. There's only so many days left."

Mauer hasn't played since Aug. 19, when he suffered a concussion when he was hit in the facemask with a foul ball. So he's missed more than a month of action and would have to ramp up his activates immediately if he wants to play during the Twins' season-ending seven-game homestand that starts on Monday.

Ryan said sending Mauer to instructional games was doubtful. When asked if Mauer could be the designated hitter or even pinch hit, Ryan pointed out Mauer's absence from baseball-related activates.

Indications are that Mauer will continue to work out at Target Field in hopes of trying to play before the season is over. But it's beginning to look doubtful.

"Our main goal with Joe is to make sure he is 100 percent," Ryan said.

Minor leaguer suspended

Twins minor league pitcher Dallas Gallant has been suspended for 50 games without pay for violating the minor league drug prevention program. Gallant tested positive for an amphetamine.

Gallant will be able to report to spring training and work out with teammates, but his suspension will begin once the minor league regular season begins.

“He made a mistake, a bad decision,” said Brad Steil, the Twins director of minor leagues. “We’re fully supporting everything the commissioner’s office is doing in regards to prevention and the drug treatment program.”

Gallant, 24, was a 23rd round pick in 2010 but missed the 2011 season due to Tommy John elbow ligament replacement surgery. He split time between rookie league Elizabethton and Class A Cedar Rapids, going 1-0 with a 5.51 ERA. The Twins like his arm and are trying to mold him into a reliever. In three minor league seasons Gallant has averaged 11.6 strikeouts per nine innings, but his walk rate of 4.8 is too high.

Plouffe out

Third baseman Trevor Plouffe was not in the starting lineup on Friday after aggravating a sore left wrist during Thursday’s game. But Plouffe said his wrist felt fine and planned to be available off the bench.

Twins manager Ron Gardenhire decided to start Eduardo Escobar at third base.

Twins not OK with all of their Ks

La Velle E. Neal III, Star Tribune – 9/21/13

OAKLAND, CALIF. – Strikeouts are up across baseball. Some attribute the rise to hitters not cutting down on their swings with two strikes, the explosion of cut fastballs or other secondary pitches, or the specialization of bullpens.

Strikeouts are up across the Twins roster. There might be no explanation for it other than the Twins specialize in striking out.

The Twins entered Friday second in baseball in strikeouts with 1,310, trailing only the Houston Astros, a team that’s near the bottom in most categories. The Twins already have obliterated their previous club record of 1,121, set in 1997, and could cross the 1,400 barrier by the end of the season. The Twins struck out 10 times on Thursday during a 8-6 loss to the Athletics.

That 1997 Twins team had two players with more than 100 strikeouts, Rich Becker (130) and Terry Steinbach (106). The 2013 Twins already have five players with more than 100 strikeouts — Josh Willingham (118), Oswaldo Arcia (110), Pedro Florimon (108), Brian Dozier (107) and Trevor Plouffe (105). Joe Mauer is at as career-high 89 despite missing the past month.

“There are a lot of things you can label us,” Twins General Manager Terry Ryan said, “but we have never been a strikeout team ... up until this year.”

The walk has become more of a weapon in the game and more batters aren’t afraid to run counts deep and try to wear pitchers down. The Twins don’t mind that approach but have told their hitters to swing away if it’s a strike and they like the pitch.

What they have noticed is that their hitters are taking too many borderline pitches for strikes, especially with two strikes.

“We take a lot of called strikes,” Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. “That ball may be a little outside, but the old saying is that you have to protect the plate when you get two strikes. We have to do a better job at that. It is one of those things we have to do a lot better as we move along here and that will be something that will be talked about over the course of the winter. We can get better.”

Power hitters get leeway. Willingham is going to strike out a lot. Arcia looks like that type of hitter. But Gardenhire is disturbed by some of the other players with high strikeout totals.

The Twins’ strikeout percentage of 22.5 percent is tied for second-highest in the majors with the Braves. The Twins have 145 home runs. Atlanta has 172 and is headed to the postseason. The Twins would take more contact with runners in scoring position, as they entered Friday 29th in baseball with a .229 average.

“For a team that doesn’t have a lot of home run hitters, we need to put the ball in play,” Gardenhire said, “and we have done a terrible job at it.”

He has seen some of his hitters try to cut down their swings with two strikes and put the ball in play. He often has said Mauer has the best two-strike approach in the game. Gardenhire believes the younger hitters will cut down on strikeouts as soon as they learn to shorten their swings, which can take some time.

He hopes his hitters are learning from their slow walks back to the dugout after strike three.

“Especially the middle [infield] guys and the contact guys,” Gardenhire said.

Dozier understands. He leads the Twins with 17 homers and 63 RBI — which is a plus from second base. But his strikeouts don't sit well with him.

“They always say that if your power increases your strikeouts go hand-in-hand,” Dozier said. “I totally disagree. I think that's one of the biggest things I've got to get better at. Especially this offseason, make some adjustments.”

Minnesota Twins Project 2014: Second base

Mike Berardino / Pioneer Press – 9/21/13

For the last two weeks of the Twins' 2013 season, the Pioneer Press will take a position-by-position look at talent currently in the organization, as well as players the team might target as offseason acquisitions in its quest to bring a winner back to Target Field. We're calling it Project 2014: Remaking the Twins.

SECOND BASE

Who's here: Converted shortstop **Brian Dozier** has been a revelation. Dozier, 26, surpassed Tim Teufel's 29-year-old franchise mark for most homers by a second baseman (17 and counting) and was outslugging Boston's Dustin Pedroia and all but three American League second basemen. His 3.5 Wins Above Replacement ranked eighth among all major leaguers at his position. Dozier's defense has been both reliable and dazzling. His ability to make strong, accurate throws from a variety of angles is unmatched by any Twins second baseman in recent memory. His defensive WAR (1.51) ranked 37th overall in the majors and second on the Twins to shortstop **Pedro Florimon**. **Eduardo Escobar** has made a half-dozen starts at second, but Dozier has been an ironman at the spot, making 44 straight starts before finally getting a forced rest this week.

Who's on the way: Highly rated prospect **Eddie Rosario** opened the year at Class A Fort Myers but was promoted in mid-June. Rosario, who turns 22 on Sept. 28, made a combined 14 errors but will remain at second while getting offseason work in left field, his former spot. He is one of three Twins position prospects headed to the Arizona Fall League. Australian **James Beresford**, 24, out-produced Rosario slightly at Double-A, according to park- and league-adjusted figures, and was the primary second baseman for Triple-A Rochester during its second-half playoff run. Down the road, the Twins have 20-year-old switch-hitter **Jorge Polanco**, recently drafted third overall in the Dominican Winter League. Former first-rounder **Levi Michael** played both middle infield spots at Fort Myers but hasn't hit.

Contract status: Dozier won't be eligible for salary arbitration until after the 2015 season at the earliest.

Outside options: No need at this point, and maybe not for many years considering all the depth the Twins are developing at the position.

Minnesota Twins minor leaguer Dallas Gallant suspended 50 games

Mike Berardino / Pioneer Press – 9/20/13

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Twins minor league right-hander Dallas Gallant has incurred a 50-game suspension after testing positive for an amphetamine, Major League Baseball announced Friday.

Gallant, a 23rd-round pick in the 2010 draft, spent this season at Class A Cedar Rapids, posting a 5.51 earned-run average in 14 relief outings. His suspension will begin with the start of the 2014 season, but he will be allowed to attend spring training and extend spring training.

"He made a mistake, and now he's going to have to pay for it," Twins general manager Terry Ryan said. "It's too bad. I hate to see that happen. This will be a setback for him. He just made a bad decision."

Gallant, 24, was drafted out of Sam Houston State. Ryan said he watched the Tommy John surgery survivor pitch several times this season.

"He's got good stuff and a nice arm," Ryan said. "Sometimes you have to learn lessons the hard way."

The Twins also will have right-hander Mark Hamburger, recently signed off the St. Paul Saints roster, serving a 50-game suspension at the start of 2014. In Hamburger's case, it was for a drug of abuse (marijuana).

Minnesota Twins: Joe Mauer "running out of days" to return, says GM Terry Ryan

Mike Berardino / Pioneer Press – 9/21/13

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Joe Mauer had a second straight "good day" while working out at Target Field, Twins general manager Terry Ryan said.

However, the prospect of a Mauer return in 2013 seems to be growing less likely.

"How many games do we have left?" Ryan said before the Twins late game at Oakland Coliseum on Friday's. "Ten? We're running out of days. Add it up."

Ryan refused to rule out a brief catching stint for Mauer should he be able to return this season, but there will be no trip to Fort Myers for instructional league, the GM said.

"I don't know what that would accomplish," Ryan said, adding he had not discussed the idea with Mauer.

Mauer last played on Aug. 19, when he suffered the first diagnosed concussion of his pro career after getting in the mask by a foul tip.

With 508 plate appearances, Mauer has six more than he needs to qualify for the American League batting title. At .324, Mauer still ranks third in the league, 23 points behind league leader and defending champion Miguel Cabrera.

The Detroit third baseman would need to go into an 0-for-39 tailspin over the Tigers' final nine games to fall behind Mauer.

Angels outfielder Mike Trout had seen his average drop from .333 to .330 since Mauer went out. Eleven hitless at-bats could drop Trout behind Mauer, a three-time AL batting champion.

Adrian Beltre of Texas, who had been tied with Mauer on Aug. 19, is fourth at .316.

Minnesota Twins: Trevor Plouffe's wrist pain news to his manager

Mike Berardino / Pioneer Press – 9/20/13

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Twins third baseman Trevor Plouffe was out of the lineup Friday night but said his injured left wrist felt better a day after pain forced him to leave the game in the eighth inning.

"I think it was just an awkward swing," Plouffe said. "I've been dealing with that from time to time. I'll take one swing and there's some pain there, then it goes away."

No X-rays were taken on his wrist, Plouffe said, but there was no "significant swelling" in the joint, which he said has been bothering him off and on since the middle of June.

Twins manager Ron Gardenhire expressed surprise at hearing Plouffe had been playing through a wrist issue. He said Friday night was the first he had heard of any problems for Plouffe.

"If you're suggesting he's been hurt for a while and swinging like this," Gardenhire said, "then I suggest he hurts his wrist all the time, because he's been swinging better now than ever. He's probably been our hottest hitter. We like his sore wrist."

After hitting .189 in July and .196 in August, Plouffe was hitting .333 in 72 at-bats in September, his highest average for any month this year.

He went through his normal pregame routine Friday, taking about 30-40 swings in the indoor batting cage. He later took his usual round of batting practice on the field with no apparent difficulties.

"I had a feeling they would err on the side of caution, but I'm ready to come off (the bench) and do whatever needs to be done," Plouffe said.

Eduardo Escobar replaced Plouffe in Friday's lineup against Oakland ace Bartolo Colon. It was Escobar's 13th start of the year at third base and his 36th overall.

"I'll just trust (Plouffe)," Gardenhire said. "If he tells me he can go hit and he takes a few swings out there and everything seems OK, then we'll go from there. If he tells me he's fine to hit, then I'll put him up to hit."

Minnesota Twins: Samuel Deduno's shoulder surgery successful, agent says

Mike Berardino / Pioneer Press – 9/20/13

OAKLAND, Calif. -- There were no surprises when Twins right-hander Samuel Deduno underwent arthroscopic surgery on his throwing shoulder Wednesday in the Twin Cities.

"It went great. He should be 100 percent for spring training," Paul Kinzer, the pitcher's agent, said in a phone interview on Friday. "It was nothing major. Just some slight fraying and a slight tear (in the labrum and rotator cuff). The doctor said it was no big deal."

Deduno, 30, had hoped to start throwing again in six weeks and make at least a cameo in the Dominican Winter League. The Twins, along with Deduno's agent, have urged the pitcher to go slow.

"They don't want him to get in too big a rush," Kinzer said.

As for winter ball, where the World Baseball Classic star is a national hero of sorts, Kinzer said there is no chance Deduno will participate this year.

"Absolutely not," Kinzer said "There's too much at stake to do that."

Deduno, a journeyman before this season, went 8-8 with a 3.83 earned run average in 18 starts with the Twins this year. For more than two months he was among the American League's most effective starters before faltering in August.

Albers unable to overcome Twins' miscues on defense

Jeff Kirshman / MLB.com – 9/21/13

OAKLAND -- While the Twins can't control running into one of the AL's hottest pitchers or one of the league's most powerful lineups, they can control their play in the field. On Friday night, their defense stacked the deck in their opponent's favor.

Much of the responsibility for Minnesota's 11-0 loss to the A's on Friday at O.co Coliseum rests on the sloppy defense. The problems in the field began in a three-run second inning.

"We threw the ball around, missed the ball, had some trouble in the outfield early and every time we missed a play they took full advantage of it," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "Not very much fun for us in our dugout."

Oswaldo Arcia, a stalwart on the offensive side, misplayed two balls that aided in the A's already potent attack. He lost a line drive off the bat of Derek Norris in the lights for a double and later misplayed Daric Barton's single that allowed Barton to reach third and Josh Reddick to score from first base.

Arcia's miscues -- along with Eduardo Escobar's throwing error that allowed three runs to score in the fifth -- proved too damaging for starter Andrew Albers, who left after 4 2/3 innings, trailing 7-0 despite having yielded just three earned runs.

Of the 11 runs scored by the A's, just six were earned as the Twins committed four errors -- the most they've made in a single game since Oct. 1, 2009. The loss dropped Minnesota to 1-4 on its final road trip of the regular season. The Twins have fallen in 12 of their last 16 games dating back to Sept. 4.

Oakland's magic number to clinch its second straight American League West title is now at two.

"They got a lot of talent over there and they play hard and they play as a cohesive unit, which makes them tough to pitch to," Albers said. "They do a great job and there's a reason they are where they are and they're playing really well right now."

Albers is now winless over his last seven starts, and he's pitched two consecutive games lasting fewer than five innings.

He cited Norris' ability to draw a hit-by-pitch on an 0-2 count with two outs in the fifth as a crucial at-bat in the game. The plunking loaded the bases before the wheels fell off in the frame.

"He did a great job holding his ground. I missed up a little bit -- it wasn't that far inside -- but he had enough courage to hold his ground and take the hit-by-pitch," Albers said. "That's winning baseball, and that's why those guys are where they're at right now."

"Unfortunately for him, if we just make a couple of plays behind him it's a different story," Gardenhire added. "We're still in the ballgame. But you got to make plays."

A's starter Bartolo Colon, meanwhile, stifled the Twins through six shutout innings, striking out eight and walking one to become the 11th 40-year-old in American League history with at least 17 wins.

Not that Minnesota was without its chances. The Twins placed runners in scoring position in four of Colon's six innings, yet plated none of them, finishing the game 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position.

"Colon pretty much dominated us," Gardenhire said.

"Bartolo was absolutely phenomenal," said A's third baseman Josh Donaldson, who went 2-for-3 with a two-run home run in the sixth. "They also made a few miscues, and I think the important part is we were able to take advantage of it. We've been scoring a lot of runs lately, and that's going to take some pressure off the pitching. It's one thing to score runs and do it early as we have been, but I feel like throughout the game we continually add runs on, and that's even more important."

Twinsbaseball.com NOTEBOOK: As recovery continues, Mauer's return no sure thing

Jeff Kirshman / MLB.com – 9/20/13

OAKLAND -- One day after expressing definitive encouragement in regards to Joe Mauer's return off the disabled list, Twins general manager Terry Ryan flipped the script on Friday and questioned whether the All-Star catcher will see another at-bat before the end of the 2013 season.

"We have 10 left and he hasn't done any baseball activities, so add it up," Ryan said. "We're running out of calendar."

Ryan's sentiments contrast his stark optimism prior to Thursday's series opener in Oakland, where he said, "I'm holding out hope that we ultimately can get him back on the field. So we're working toward that."

He said Mauer's rehab went just as well Friday as it did Thursday, participating in cardio exercises and general rehab, but he's yet to pick up a bat or do any baseball activities. Mauer sustained his concussion off a foul tip on Aug. 19, and it would be presumably difficult to face Major League pitching on such short notice if and when he's cleared to play this season.

"If there's anybody that could do it, it's Joe," Ryan said. "We know that."

Ryan refused to consider whether his return might be sooner if he focused on acting as a pinch-hitter or designated hitter rather than playing a defensive position, calling the notion premature. He also refuted the suggestion of ending the speculation now rather than holding out hope for an appearance in the last handful of games. Minnesota's All-Star catcher, who's batting .324 with an .880 OPS, 11 home runs and 47 RBIs in 113 games this season, has not had an impact test in a week.

"He's still got to work. He's still getting prepared and so forth," Ryan said. "He's getting over the symptoms. That doesn't mean I'm going to strap the gear on him here in three days and sit him behind the dish."

"Our main goal with Joe is that he's 100 percent," he added. "I'm not sure what we'd accomplish."

Sore left wrist keeps Plouffe sidelined

OAKLAND -- The same soreness in Trevor Plouffe's left wrist that resulted in his removal from the eighth inning of Thursday's series opener against the A's has kept him out of Friday's starting lineup.

Plouffe, who went 0-for-5 with three strikeouts Thursday, said he felt pain after the first pitch of his last at-bat before Eduardo Escobar replaced him at third base for the bottom of the eighth. The original source of the pain, however, stems from June, when he played four games for Triple-A Rochester from June 10-14 during a rehab assignment.

This tidbit has apparently been a revelation to both Twins manager Ron Gardenhire and general manager Terry Ryan, who had no idea he had been managing the pain for such a long stretch.

His statistics wouldn't suggest it -- he's recorded eight multi-hit games in his last 17 starts and is batting .300 with 12 extra-base hits in 31 games since Aug. 18 -- leaving Gardenhire to believe the ailment isn't too severe.

"I didn't know he had a wrist problem until yesterday," Gardenhire said. "If you're suggesting that he's been hurt for a while and swinging like this, then I suggest that he hurts his wrist all the time. He's been swinging better now more than ever."

"If it's hurt him for a couple of months, he probably should've brought it to our attention if it's affected him, but I can't imagine it was or he would have," Ryan said.

"It couldn't have bothered him too much or he would've brought it up. He's not one to beg out of a lineup."

Plouffe said he took 30-40 swings in the batting cage -- his normal number -- and participated in batting practice prior to Friday's game. He said he feels fine and will be ready off the bench if need be.

"I'll just trust him," Gardenhire said. "If he tells me he can go up and hit and he takes a few swings out there and everything seems OK, then we'll go from there."

With chance to win division, A's send Parker to hill

Tyler Emerick / MLB.com – 9/21/13

After waiting until the final day of the regular season in 2012 to capture the American League West, the A's will have a chance Saturday to put their second consecutive division crown on ice with more than a week to spare.

With their magic number to clinch the division at two, the A's will first have to take care of business against the Twins before pulling for a Royals victory over Texas in a game that begins three hours after first pitch at O.co Coliseum.

If the Rangers should win, the A's can also secure a Wild Card berth if they beat Minnesota and the Indians lose to the Astros in a 6:05 p.m. ET start.

Of course, in both scenarios, each potential celebration for Oakland begins with a win.

To accomplish their end of the deal, the A's will send Jarrod Parker to the mound Saturday afternoon. The right-hander is coming off his first loss since May 22 after the Angels pounded him for eight runs -- seven earned -- on eight hits over 4 1/3 innings his last time out.

Parker said an illness, which had him vomiting just a day prior to the outing, was not responsible for his performance.

"Pretty terrible, I think," Parker said after the game, assessing his performance. "Take nothing away from them, they swung the bats well, but there weren't too many pitches that I executed."

Parker faced the Twins earlier this month as well, holding Minnesota to two runs on seven hits over six innings.

Hoping to delay Oakland's party will be Pedro Hernandez, who is coming off a solid outing against the Rays, surrendering just three earned runs on four hits over five innings. All three runs, however, came via the home run.

"It was two mistakes," Hernandez said afterward.

Athletics: Freiman still nursing abdominal strain

Unable to play since Monday, A's first baseman Nate Freiman is nursing an abdominal strain and there's no timetable for his return.

"He's had an abdomen/oblique thing he's been dealing with for about a week and a half, and that's why he's not in there today," A's manager Bob Melvin explained Friday. "He would've been in there maybe today or tomorrow, but we're not able to get him in there. He hasn't taken batting practice for a few days because of that. We're not sure when we'll get him back."

Freiman sustained the injury while taking swings in the indoor cages

Twins: Plouffe sidelined with wrist discomfort amid hot streak

The same soreness in Trevor Plouffe's left wrist that resulted in his removal from the eighth inning of Thursday's series opener against the A's kept him out of Friday's starting lineup.

The infielder has recorded eight multi-hit games in his last 17 starts and is batting .300 with 12 extra-base hits in 31 games since Aug. 18.

Plouffe said he took 30-40 swings in the batting cage -- his normal number -- and participated in batting practice prior to Friday's game. He said he feels fine.

"I'll just trust him," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "If he tells me he can go up and hit and he takes a few swings out there and everything seems OK, then we'll go from there."

Worth noting

- A's starting pitchers have allowed two runs or fewer in 11 of the last 13 games.
- Josh Donaldson contributed his 54th multi-hit game of the season on Friday night, which is fourth most in Oakland history. The record is 57, set by Miguel Tejada in 2002 and duplicated by Mark Kotsay in 2004.

Twins prospect Gallant suspended for PED use

Adam Berry / MLB.com – 9/20/13

Twins Minor League right-hander Dallas Gallant has been suspended 50 games without pay after testing positive for an amphetamine in violation of the Minor League Drug Prevention and Treatment Program.

Gallant, currently on the roster of Class A Cedar Rapids, will begin serving his suspension at the start of the 2014 season.

"He made a mistake and now he's going to have to pay for it," Twins general manager Terry Ryan said. "It's too bad. I hate to see that happen. It takes away valuable time for anybody when you lose 50 games in the season. That's quite a bit."

The 24-year-old Gallant split last year between Rookie-level Elizabethton and Cedar Rapids, going a combined 3-1 with a 5.47 ERA over 22 appearances. He struck out 36 batters in 26 1/3 innings, an average of 12.3 strikeouts per nine innings.

Gallant was selected by the Twins in the 23rd round of the 2010 First-Year Player Draft and has spent three years in Minnesota's system, none of them above Class A ball in the Midwest League. Overall, he has gone 6-1 with a 3.49 ERA, 73 strikeouts and 30 walks in 56 2/3 innings.

Oakland veteran Bartolo Colon humbles youthful Twins

Tyler Mason / foxsportsnorth.com – 9/21/13

At 40 years old, Oakland pitcher Bartolo Colon is nearly twice the age of some of the Twins hitters he faced Friday.

On this night, the crafty veteran showed that age is just a number.

Colon held Minnesota scoreless through six innings as the A's routed the Twins 11-0 and inched closer to clinching the American League West division. Oakland's magic number is now at two after Texas lost Friday night, meaning the A's could clinch the division this weekend against Minnesota.

The 40-year-old Colon had plenty to do with that. Carrying a 9-8 record and career 4.14 ERA in 23 games against the Twins, Colon held Minnesota to just five hits over six innings.

"Colon pretty much dominated us," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "Not very much fun for us in our dugout. A lot of strikeouts again. Facing a guy like Colon, you're probably going to get some. I think we had six called third strikes, something we've been preaching. ... Not a good night for our baseball team and not a lot of fun."

The only extra-base hit allowed came with two outs in the top of the sixth inning as left-hander Josh Willingham doubled to left against his former club. But Colon stranded Willingham on second base as he got first baseman Chris Parmelee to pop out for the final out of the inning -- and the final out of the night for the veteran Colon.

Colon doesn't walk many batters. In fact, he averaged just 1.4 walks per nine innings entering Friday's game (27 walks in 178 $\frac{1}{3}$ innings). But Parmelee was able to coax a walk against Colon in the fourth inning after a seven-pitch at-bat. That was the only free pass Colon allowed, however, as his impressive walk rate remained low.

The eight strikeouts by Colon were the second-most in a game this season. His season high was nine strikeouts over seven innings against Houston. Colon ended four of the six innings he pitched with strikeouts and struck out three batters in the top of the second. In all, Minnesota fanned 13 times in Friday's loss. It marks the 59th time this season that the Twins struck out 10 or more times in a game.

"Fantastic pitching," said Oakland right fielder Josh Reddick. "He comes out here every day and throws 97 percent fastballs and still strikes people out and gets people out like he's throwing a big curveball and a great slider. He pounds the strike zone and makes them put balls in play. When they don't, he's blowing it by them."

While he probably won't win it, Colon's name will surely be tossed around in Cy Young discussions. Thanks to Friday's six scoreless innings against the Twins, Colon is now 17-6 with a 2.64 ERA. He's tied for the second-most wins in the American League, trailing Detroit's Max Scherzer, who has 20. And Colon's ERA is also second in the AL behind only Tigers pitcher Anibal Sanchez (2.61).

Friday marked the first and only time Minnesota will face Colon this season. For the reeling Twins, who fell to 65-88 with the loss, that's definitely a good thing.