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**Rangers stun A's with wild ninth-inning rally
Arencibia belts go-ahead HR; Texas collects fifth straight win
By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com | @Sullivan_Ranger | 2:05 AM ET**

OAKLAND -- J.P. Arencebia hit a three-run home run in the ninth inning that helped lift the Rangers to a 6-1 victory over the Athletics on Wednesday night.

The Rangers' six-run ninth stretched their winning streak to five games. The A's loss -- combined with the Angels' 5-0 victory over the Mariners -- also clinched the American League West title for the Halos.

The Rangers have won six of eight games in Oakland this season and will go for their second three-game sweep at the Coliseum on Thursday afternoon.

The Rangers' ninth-inning rally came after Derek Holland pitched 6 1/3 innings but left trailing, 1-0.

"Those guys did a great job of picking me up," Holland said. "It was very awesome to watch. We have had a tough season to begin with, but the way we're finishing up strong, I'm very impressed with the way guys are carrying themselves. Nobody is quitting."

The Rangers still trailed going into the ninth after being held scoreless for eight innings by starter Jeff Samardzija. Closer Sean Doolittle took over not having allowed a run in his last 15 games. But the left-hander had also just been activated off the disabled list Friday after being sidelined with a strained rib-cage muscle.

"It was a tough game for us against Samardzija," Rangers manager Tim Bogar said. "He's a great pitcher and he had our number. But our guys never gave up."

Doolittle started out by getting Leonys Martin on a pop to right before Elvis Andrus singled. Rougned Odor followed with a double into the left-center-field gap, and Andrus raced around to score, beating shortstop Jed Lowrie's throw to the plate.

"I just don't think it was my night," Doolittle said. "I felt good. The ball Odor hit, give him credit, I thought it was a pretty good fastball away. He didn't try to pull it. He went with it the other way,"

Odor went to third and easily beat the throw from catcher Geovany Soto. Athletics manager Bob Melvin challenged the call because it appeared that Odor overslid and possibly stepped off the bag while third baseman Josh Donaldson was applying the tag. The safe call was upheld on review.

Adrian Beltre was then intentionally walked. Arencebia, who had struck out three times against Samardzija, fell behind 0-2 to Doolittle before hammering a 1-2 fastball over the left-field wall.

"When I got down 0-2, I thought, 'Let's go, you got to get this run in,'" Arencebia said. "This is an opportunity against a tough pitcher, we worked our way into this chance. I was looking for a ball down because he strikes out a lot of guys like that, and do something with it."

"I missed my spot a little bit, and he made me pay for it," Doolittle said.

Bogar said he considered pinch-hitting Luis Sardinas for Arencebia but decided against it.

"Sardinas is a contact guy, maybe squeeze or hit and run, stay out of the double play," Bogar said. "But I felt J.P. was a good matchup against Doolittle. Sometimes your stomach is smarter than your head."

The Rangers scratched out two more runs before the inning was over. The Rangers had six hits in the ninth after just four in eight innings against Samardzija.

Robbie Ross Jr. earned the victory as he and Phil Klein combined to keep it a 1-0 game by escaping a bases-loaded, no-out situation in the eighth. Klein retired Lowrie on a fly ball to shallow center then Ross got Alberto Callaspo on a popout and Soto on a fly ball.

"Obviously it has been an up-and-down year, so to have a little successful like that, I'm grateful," Ross said. "To get out of a jam like that and keep us in the game makes you feel good."

Rangers seek sweep of A's to extend win streak
Gray matches up with Martinez on heels of Texas' wild comeback
By Aaron Leibowitz / MLB.com | 3:01 AM ET

The A's have suffered their share of agonizing defeats over the past couple of months, but none was more stunning than Wednesday's 6-1 loss to the Rangers. Oakland took a 1-0 lead into the ninth before closer Sean Doolittle gave up five runs, helping the Angels clinch the American League West title in the process.

On Thursday afternoon, the A's, who are tied with the Royals for the AL Wild Card lead, will try to avoid a three-game sweep by the Rangers, who will be seeking their sixth consecutive win.

Oakland's offense has been a lightning rod for criticism since the team embarked on its downward spiral starting in early August. On Wednesday, the A's had the bases loaded with no outs in the eighth and could not tack on to their 1-0 lead behind eight shutout innings from Jeff Samardzija.

"We've had quite a few low points here recently, but I don't know any more so than this," manager Bob Melvin said Wednesday night.

With Sonny Gray on the hill Thursday, the A's will look to clean up their act. In his first full season, Gray appears to still be going strong. On Saturday he pitched eight innings of two-run ball in Seattle, taking a no-decision but helping the A's earn a crucial 3-2 victory.

The right-hander has taken five losses in his last nine outings and is 1-4 with a 4.85 ERA in his last eight starts, but he's allowed only four earned runs over his last two starts.

Gray will oppose Texas righty Nick Martinez, who is 3-11 with a 4.93 ERA this season in 26 appearances, 21 starts. He saw the A's twice back in April, once as a starter and once as a reliever, and held them to two earned runs in 10 innings.

Martinez will be pitching on six days' rest instead of his normal four. The Rangers pushed Martinez back to give him an extra breather and allow Derek Holland to pitch on normal rest.

"I don't think I need it, but at this point of the season I'll take it," Martinez said. "Extra rest is not a bad thing."

This will be Martinez's third straight start against a contender. He allowed two runs in six innings against the Mariners on Sept. 6 and four runs (two earned) against the Angels in his last start.

Rangers: Bogar wants aggressive baserunning

On Tuesday night, Rougned Odor's baserunning allowed him to score from first on Daniel Robertson's single. Odor went from first to third on the play and kept going when Robertson was thrown out trying for a double.

The Rangers had an aggressive baserunning team under former manager Ron Washington. Interim manager Tim Bogar wants to continue that philosophy.

"It is part of our team makeup," Bogar said. "We've got some guys who can put pressure on the defense. I'm all for being aggressive. It has been my philosophy since I started managing in the Minors. If you can get 90 feet closer to the plate, you have a better chance of scoring runs.

"We want to keep that going. We want to keep the mindset of putting pressure on other teams so you don't have to have the best lineup to score runs."

A's: Moss rediscovers power stroke

After a stellar first half that earned him his first All-Star appearance, Brandon Moss went 39 games without a home run between July 25 and Sept. 13. He snapped that streak on Sunday in Seattle and added another homer on Tuesday, a moon shot to right field.

Melvin hopes the slugger's emergence is part of a larger trend for the offense.

"It seems like our at-bats are getting better," Melvin said. "You set an expectation for four months of the season a certain way, and then you hit a little bit of a lull and now all of a sudden you're looking at it a bit differently. But it does look like some of our guys are getting better at-bats. Certainly Moss homering the last couple games is a big thing confidence-wise for him."

Moss hit 23 home runs in his first 95 games this season and has two in his last 41 games.

Worth noting

- Oakland's Adam Dunn has 462 home runs, which is tied with Jose Canseco for 35th in Major League history.
- With the Rangers' Lisalverto Bonilla starting on Friday against the Angels, it appears unlikely that Scott Baker will pitch again this season. He is sidelined with triceps tendinitis and has not pitched since Sept. 5. That spot will only get one more start after Friday and Bogar said he is "excited" to see what Bonilla has to offer.
- Robinson Chirinos started the first two games in Oakland but Tomas Telis will be behind the plate on Thursday, Bogar said.
- Although the Coliseum turf has been scarred by football use, Bogar said he has not heard complaints about the conditions. "These guys do a great job of repairing the field after a football game," he said. "It's bumpy from the games but nothing to worry about."

**Two replays go Rangers' way during six-run rally
A's lose challenge on Odor's slide; Smolinski awarded single upon review
By Aaron Leibowitz / MLB.com | 2:22 AM ET**

OAKLAND -- During a nightmare of a ninth inning for the A's at the Coliseum on Wednesday night, a pair of challenges both went the Rangers' way.

With one out, Rowned Odor hit a game-tying double off A's closer Sean Doolittle and advanced to third on the throw home. Odor's foot momentarily came off the bag on the popup slide as third baseman Josh Donaldson applied a tag, prompting A's manager Bob Melvin to challenge the safe call.

The call stood after a replay review, and Odor later scored on J.P. Arencibia's go-ahead three-run homer.

Later in the inning, the Rangers challenged a call at first base on Jake Smolinski's grounder to second base that was deflected by A's right-hander Jesse Chavez. This call was overturned, awarding Smolinski with an infield single. He came around to score the final run in Texas' 6-1 victory.

**Plate umpire replaced after foul ball hits face mask
Ripperger slides over from 2B spot as Danley exits before sixth inning
By Aaron Leibowitz / MLB.com | 1:19 AM ET**

OAKLAND -- Wednesday night's game between the A's and Rangers was delayed for nearly 10 minutes between the fifth and sixth innings as Mark Ripperger replaced Kerwin Danley as the plate umpire.

Danley was hit in the face mask by Nick Punto's foul tip in the bottom of the fifth, and Danley completed the inning before exiting.

Ripperger began the game manning second base, leaving Gary Cederstrom and Lance Barksdale as the lone base umpires after Danley departed with the A's leading, 1-0.

Daniels' managerial search sure to be thorough

Texas GM sought advice from around the Majors when hiring Washington in 2006
By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com | @Sullivan_Ranger | September 17, 2014

OAKLAND -- When Rangers general manager Jon Daniels was considering hiring Ron Washington back in 2006, he was concerned about bringing on a manager who might have a tendency to speak his mind on almost any subject. So Daniels sought the counsel of White Sox general manager Kenny Williams, who had his own loquacious manager in Ozzie Guillen.

The details of the conversation are not pertinent eight years later. The salient point is that in seeking out Williams, it shows that when it comes to a managerial search, Daniels is going to be as thorough as possible.

Daniels is in that same mode now as he begins the search for a permanent replacement for Washington. Tim Bogar is serving as interim manager to the end of the season and is a strong candidate to come back in 2015.

But nothing is guaranteed. Daniels made it clear that the search will include outside candidates.

"Tim is a real good candidate," Daniels said. "But if he is our manager, it will be a lot more meaningful if we went through a thorough search first."

The search has begun.

"We were not anticipating looking for a manager so we weren't really prepared," Daniels said. "We are doing a lot of due diligence, talking to a lot of other people in the game and getting a lot of incoming calls recommending people. We're in the stage of vetting those names and see who we want to talk to."

Bogar is not the only internal candidate. Pitching coach Mike Maddux and Triple-A manager Steve Buechele will also get consideration. First-base coach Bengie Molina has managerial aspirations but this is only his second year as a big league coach after retiring following the 2010 season. He probably hasn't built up the experience needed, although one of the latest trends in baseball has been hiring former players -- Brad Ausmus, Mike Matheny -- with no experience.

Daniels could be unpredictable. In 2006, he quietly inquired with the Twins about the possibility of Tom Kelly coming out of retirement. Daniels dropped the matter when told Kelly, who led the Twins to World Series titles in 1987 and 1991, preferred to stay retired.

Daniels ended up interviewing five candidates: Don Wakamatsu, Trey Hillman, Manny Acta, John Russell and Washington.

At the time, Wakamatsu was the clear favorite. He had been on previous manager Buck Showalter's staff and had a tight relationship with Daniels. The search appeared perfunctory although Hillman, who had spent a year as the Rangers' farm director, was considered the candidate who might beat out Wakamatsu.

Washington was perceived as a long shot, included in the process to satisfy Commissioner Bud Selig's edict that minority candidates be considered for any significant leadership opening. By the way, that edict is still in force today.

The perception of Washington's candidacy was completely wrong. Washington gave a strong interview. Daniels was impressed by his force of personality and felt he was just what was needed to change the Rangers' clubhouse atmosphere.

Washington had a rough first two years and was close to being dismissed in the first month of the 2008 season by then-owner Tom Hicks and club president Nolan Ryan. Daniels stood behind his managerial choice and won the day. Two years later the Rangers were in the World Series.

Now, Daniels wants to get it right one more time and find the right person who can help get the Rangers headed back in the right direction. He wants a partner who will invest himself in the organization.

Bogar could be that person, but the search will be thorough and nothing there is guaranteed.

Rios' time with Rangers could be winding down
Choo expected to shift from left to right field coming off ankle surgery
By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com | @Sullivan_Ranger | September 17, 2014

OAKLAND -- Outfielder Shin-Soo Choo underwent ankle surgery on Wednesday. It's the latest sign that right fielder Alex Rios most likely won't be back with the Rangers next season.

The Rangers have a \$14 million option on Rios for 2015, but it appears increasingly likely they will not pick it up and instead pay the \$1 million buyout.

One reason is that Choo, after his injury-ravaged season, is expected to shift from left to right field next season under the theory that it is less taxing physically. It is also his most comfortable position. The Rangers would then either go with one of their internal options for left -- rookies Michael Choice, Ryan Rua, Jake Smolinski or Daniel Robertson -- or look for a cheaper alternative on the free-agent market.

The Rangers would then be able use the \$14 million due Rios to help reinforce their battered pitching staff. General manager Jon Daniels said the Rangers have a good idea of what they want to do but won't make a final decision until after the season.

"I'm just waiting to see what will happen," Rios said. "The team has to make the decision. You don't know if they are going to try going the free-agent route or go with a farm product. It's tough to tell."

Rios was hitting .280 with four home runs, 54 RBIs, a .311 on-base percentage and a .398 slugging percentage in 131 games. But he hasn't played since Sept. 4 because of a bruised right thumb that became infected. He has been dealing with that and a sprained ankle for most of the second half, which may explain why he has gone from hitting .305 with a .440 slugging percentage before the All-Star break to .211 with a .281 slugging percentage after.

Rios is with the Rangers on this road trip but is not sure if he will play again this season. He will test the thumb at some point to see if he is capable of swinging the bat. There may not be any reason for him to play again this season other than to prove to other clubs that he is healthy.

"I like to be on the field," Rios said. "It's something I really take pride in. I like to be on the field playing as much as I can. If I can play 162 games, I'm for it. But you have to look at the whole situation and see what's best."

Rios has had down years before. In 2011, he hit .227 with 13 home runs, 44 RBIs and a career-low .348 slugging percentage. He came back strong in 2012, hitting a career-high .304 with 25 home runs and 91 RBIs. His .516 slugging percentage was also a career high.

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

Rangers' crazy comeback ends Oakland's reign

Posted Thursday, Sep. 18, 2014

By Jeff Wilson

OAKLAND, Calif. — What happened over the final 1 1/2 innings Wednesday night at O.co Coliseum, as the Texas Rangers helped put an end to the Oakland A's two-year reign atop the American League West, bordered on insane.

Long, drawn-out September insanity that saw Robbie Ross and J.P. Arencibia, whose struggles have been well-chronicled this season, emerge as heroes and had fans in Anaheim cheering wildly for the Rangers.

Speaking of crazy, the Rangers have now won five straight games, tying their season high, after rallying for six runs in the ninth en route to a 6-1 victory that eliminated Oakland from the AL West race and gave the Los Angeles Angels the division crown. The loss also dropped Oakland into a tie with Kansas City for the top AL wild-card berth.

"We've still got to keep playing," left-hander Derek Holland said. "The thing I'm really happy about is our guys haven't quit. These guys are continuing to fight, and we're going to see if we can wreck everyone's dreams of getting to the playoffs."

The game motored through seven innings as Jeff Samardzija outdueled Holland, but things went haywire after Samardzija worked this eighth scoreless inning.

Bottom of the eighth: Oakland, leading 1-0, loads the bases with no outs. The Rangers, though, escape unscathed in an inning in which they used four pitchers. Ross (3-6) got the final two outs.

Top of the ninth: All-Star closer Sean Doolittle quickly retires Leonys Martin to start the inning, but Elvis Andrus singles and quickly scores the tying run on a double by Rougned Odor.

Following lengthy review to see if Odor was safe after he advanced to third and an intentional walk to Adrian Beltre, Arencibia did the unexpected. Not only was he allowed to bat, after striking out his first three times up, but he made contact.

Not just contact, but a three-run homer deep into left.

Interim manager Tim Bogar considered sending Luis Sardinas to pinch-hit for Arencibia, but instead went with a gut feeling.

"I was like, 'You know what? He can do this,' " Bogar said. "It was nice to see."

The Rangers eventually loaded the bases and tacked on a run when Martin, who started the inning, was hit by pitch. Andrus, the 11th batter of the inning, singled in another run off pitcher Jesse Chavez.

Bottom of ninth: Ross returned to the mound with a five-run lead and delivered a 1-2-3 inning.

"Robbie Ross, for me, it was the most intense I've seen him go out there," Bogar said.

The wild ending overshadowed 6 1/3 more good innings from Holland and spoiled eight terrific frames by Samardzija, who allowed four hits and struck out 10.

Holland wasn't at his best. In fact, he was at his worst in his four starts this season. He issued three walks, his first three of the season, but when it was over, he had allowed only four hits and one run.

"It's still a good outing," he said.

If that's the worst he's going to do, no one with the Rangers is going to complain. If that's the worst he's going to do, he's going to make a play to be the club's No. 1 starter in 2015.

Yes, even ahead of Yu Darvish.

"He did have to battle," Bogar said. "The one inning where he gave up the run could have been worse. He has resiliency. He knows where to get his outs."

Holland's performance might have been the most normal thing that happened with the Rangers on Wednesday. The rest, which ended in their fifth straight win and the final blow to the A's reign atop the AL West, was insanity.

Rangers notes: Rios not a lock to return in 2015

Posted Wednesday, Sep. 17, 2014

By Jeff Wilson

OAKLAND, Calif. — Right fielder Alex Rios still can't swing a bat after having an infection in his right thumb cleaned up, but he hopes to play again this season for the Texas Rangers.

If he doesn't, he might not play again for the Rangers, period.

The club holds an option for \$14 million to keep Rios for 2015, or pay him a \$1 million buyout and allow him to become a free agent. That money could be used to help bolster the pitching staff, and Shin-Soo Choo could easily slide into his natural right field position.

General manager Jon Daniels said that he expects a decision to come early in the off-season, but didn't say which way the club was leaning.

"We pretty much know what we want to do," Daniels said.

Rios said that he hasn't been informed of the Rangers' thinking, but he's no longer the lock to return that he was when the Rangers came to O.co Coliseum in June and he was one of the league's top hitters.

One possibility is that the Rangers would decline the option with the hope that they will be able to re-sign Rios to a more club-friendly deal.

But the market for corner outfielders is shaping up to be rather thin, aside from slugger Nelson Cruz. Rios would fall into a group that includes Melky Cabrera, Norichika Aoki, Torii Hunter, Michael Cuddyer and Josh Willingham.

"I'm just waiting to see what happens," Rios said. "The team is the one that has to make that decision. I haven't given it that much thought."

For now, Rios is trying to determine if his thumb will allow him to play again this season. There isn't much benefit to it, he admits, but he wants to be on the field.

"It's something I take pride in," he said. "But in some situations you have to be smart."

Keep on running

The Rangers used their legs to help beat Oakland 6-3 on Tuesday night for their fourth straight victory, and the running game will be a big part of the Rangers' offense if interim manager Tim Bogar is hired full time to replace run-happy Ron Washington.

"It's part of our team makeup," Bogar said. "I feel like if we can do that, make them get 27 outs and be prepared to play the game correctly, we'll have a better opportunity to score. I'm all for being aggressive."

"That's been my philosophy since I started managing in the minor leagues. I feel like if you can get 90 feet closer to the plate, we're going to have better chances to score runs."

The Rangers swiped two bases Tuesday, but they also collected three infield hits and saw Rowned Odor score from first base on a Daniel Robertson chopper to shallow right field. Robertson drew a throw to second base, where he was an easy out, but the play allowed Odor to score easily.

"Odor needs to be getting a big pat on the back for not relaxing going around second and just being happy getting to third," Bogar said. "You're always looking for the next base past the one you're going to."

The Rangers continue to collect information on potential candidates for the managerial vacancy. They will conduct a search even though Bogar appears to be the front-runner for the job.

Briefly

- Lisalberto Bonilla, who allowed two runs in six innings in his first big-league start, will start again Friday at Anaheim. Fellow right-hander Scott Baker said that he is feeling better, but he isn't throwing off a mound. He expects to pitch again this season.

- Nick Martinez will be working six days' rest when he pitches Thursday in the finale of the Rangers' three-game series against the A's. Martinez is at 122 1/3 innings, 30 shy of his 2013 totals in the minors, but isn't complaining about the extra time. "I don't think I needed it, but at this point of the season I'll take it," he said.

Rangers executives not craving No. 1 draft pick
Posted Wednesday, Sep. 17, 2014
By Jeff Wilson

OAKLAND, Calif. — A prevailing thought floating around the Texas Rangers, not just now but for several weeks, is that if they're going to be bad, they might as well be the worst.

Wins aren't well received by many diehards, who want to see the Rangers go to Tank City. The more losses the better, they say, and there are absolutely no hesitations about 100 losses as long as the final number in the L column is one more than any other team.

Forget the fact that there is nothing to be proud about after the kind of season that results in MLB's worst record. Having the most losses comes with perks, lots of them, and that's what has many so giddy each time the Rangers are trounced.

The worst team gets the most money to spend in the June First-Year Player Draft as well as in the July 2 international signing period. After a year in which the Rangers could spend no more than \$250,000 on an international amateur, they could go off the deep end if they finish last.

First and foremost, though, is the first overall pick in the draft, referred to romantically as 1.1. Choirs sing and trumpets sound and a puppy is born at each mention of 1.1.

But as of Wednesday afternoon, as has been the case privately and occasionally publicly the past few weeks, general manager Jon Daniels has absolutely zero desire to end up with 1.1.

"I might feel different next June, but I want to win as many games as we can," Daniels said before the Rangers faced Oakland in a late game at O.co Coliseum. "Losing sucks. Even when you're eliminated, losing sucks. The system is set up with incentives to lose, but it doesn't make losing fun."

As of first pitch Wednesday, the Rangers sat in last place by two games over Colorado. The four-game winning streak the Rangers were riding had cost them three games in the standings.

If the two teams finished tied with the most losses, the Rockies would get 1.1 by virtue of having a worse record than the Rangers over the past two seasons.

"I'll take it if us and Colorado both win the rest of our games," Daniels said.

Aside from having to wear the Scarlet L for the next nine months, Daniels also doesn't want to finish last because there isn't a clear-cut, mouth-watering player who is an obvious No. 1 pick. Plus, the difference in draft pools and international signing pools isn't staggering between 1.1 and 1.2.

"We're going to have money to spend," he said.

The early indications are that the draft is deep but not top-heavy, amateur scouting director Kip Fagg said.

Fagg, who was at O.co Coliseum on Wednesday, said that the Rangers have zeroed in on 30 players who potentially could emerge as the top pick of the draft. Like Daniels, Fagg isn't rooting for the Rangers to finish with 1.1, but he and the scouting department are preparing for it.

But that doesn't translate to them going above and beyond their normal prep work. Fagg said that it has been business as usual this summer, including a busy weekend last month at the Under Armour All-America Game at Wrigley Field.

The Rangers have always done their homework on every player in the draft, even ones they expect will be long gone by the time they get to draft in the first round. But had Brady Aiken, taken 1.1 in 2014 and consequently done wrong by Houston, fallen to the Rangers, they would have had all the information they needed to confidently take the prep pitcher.

Among the early candidates to be picked 1.1 in 2015 are Florida prep shortstop Brendan Rogers; JUCO right-hander Phil Bickford, unsigned as the No. 10 pick in 2013; College Station High School outfielder Ryan Johnson, a TCU commitment; and Vanderbilt righties Walker Buehler and Carson Fulmer.

Aiken, if his case isn't resolved, would be a candidate, too.

"To me, we're going to do what we've always done," Fagg said. "We'll line them up like we have in the past. We've just never picked up there. I don't think there's that much pressure. The way it looks now, it could be 1.1. I'm not rooting for us to pick 1.1."

Neither is Daniels.

DALLAS MORNING NEWS

Texas Rangers eliminate Oakland from AL West race; win fifth straight

By Evan Grant/reporter

1:19 am on September 18, 2014

OAKLAND, Calif. – In a season full of embarrassment, the Rangers on Wednesday saved themselves from one final humiliation.

And got a little bit of long overdue revenge in the act.

With a big ninth inning, the Rangers beat Oakland 6-1, eliminated the A's from a threepeat as AL West champs and removed the possibility of having to watch the Los Angeles Angels celebrate the division title during a series this weekend. Oh, and they matched the season's longest win streak with their fifth consecutive win.

"I'm glad I don't have to see champagne spraying this weekend," interim manager Tim Lincecum said.

The win combined with Los Angeles' win over Seattle dropped Oakland 11 ½ games back of Los Angeles in the AL West with 11 games to play. It was, if only slightly, reminiscent of the final series of the 2012 season when Oakland swept the Rangers to end their two-year reign as AL West champs.

Though the offense made all the noise in the ninth inning with a big run-scoring double by Rougned Odor and a three-run homer by J.P. Arencibia, the win was built on another impressive outing by left-handed starter Derek Holland.

"The winning streak has come from good starting pitching," Bogar said. "We've pitched well for five days now. We made good pitches and gave our offense a chance."

Holland went 6 1/3 innings and allowed a single run. It was his fourth consecutive start of more than six innings and one or fewer runs allowed. It is the fourth such streak in Rangers' history and the first since 1983.

Ferguson Jenkins, in 1974, is the only Ranger to meet the criteria for five consecutive games. Holland will get his chance to match Jenkins on Monday against Houston.

As he has been all month since coming off the disabled list, Holland was sharp on the mound and the offense was moribund in his presence. The Rangers have scored just three runs while Holland has been in the game this season in 27 1/3 innings.

Holland did issue his first two walks of the season in the fourth, ending a streak of 24 consecutive walk-free innings, but it was his inability to make a play on a slow roller – one of the reasons the Rangers had waited so long to activate him from the DL – that led to the lone run. Holland said he failed to immediately go to first base on the play, which would have been close anyway.

"It was a mental mistake," Holland said.

The Rangers, however, erased the deficit in the ninth behind a one-out single from Elvis Andrus and Odor's double into the gap in left. Odor went to third on the play. Though it was contested by the A's the call stood due to inconclusive evidence. After an intentional walk of Adrian Beltre, J.P. Arencibia homered to give Texas a 4-1 lead.

Bogar thought about pinch hitting contact hitter Luis Sardinas for Arencibia, who had struck out in each of his first three at-bats, but opted to let Arencibia hit. Arencibia quickly got down 0-and-2, but found a fastball to his liking after taking a ball and drove it into the left field bleachers.

"I just wanted to get the run home," said Arencibia. "I just was focused on getting the bat on the ball and getting the ball in the air."

It marked just the fifth time this season in 89 games the Rangers won a game they trailed after eight.

And it marked the first time all year, the Rangers have eliminated a team from the division race. They could get a chance to knock Oakland, which is still tied for the top wild card spot, entirely out of the playoffs during the final weekend of the season.

"If we can keep Oakland from winning the division, that's great," Holland said. "But they still come to our place the last weekend of the season and they could still be fighting for a wild card spot. We're trying to wreck the dreams of as many teams fighting for the playoffs as we can."

Thursday Rangers scouting report: Texas looks to keep spoiling things for AL West rival
By Evan Grant/reporter
1:21 am on September 18, 2014

Texas Rangers (59-92) at Oakland Athletics (83-68), 2:35 p.m. Thursday(FSSW)

Rangers LHP Nick Martinez (3-11, 4.93 ERA) is looking to extend his streak of quality starts to three games for the first time in his young career. Martinez allowed the Los Angeles Angels four runs in his last start, but two were unearned. Martinez will be making his third start against Oakland this year and has allowed just two runs in 10 innings of work.

Matchup of note: OF Josh Reddick, who began Wednesday hitting .183 for his last 23 games, is 3 for 4 in his career vs. Martinez.

Oakland RHP Sonny Gray (13-8, 3.18 ERA) held Seattle to a pair of runs in eight innings, but got no decision, in his last start. Since holding the Rangers to a run in six innings on July 26, Gray has struggled to a 1-5 mark and 4.42 ERA. He has, however, received only 18 runs of support while he was in the game in those nine outings.

Matchup of note: Three of the Rangers' first four hitters — Leonys Martin, Elvis Andrus and Adrian Beltre — are a combined 4 for 32 (.125) vs. Gray.

Scouting efforts come under spotlight as Rangers gets closer to 'clinching' top pick
By EVAN GRANT
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OAKLAND, Calif. — Kip Fagg is about to become a lot more recognizable.

Not that it's a goal.

It's never really a goal for somebody who works on the amateur scouting side for a major league organization. When it comes to scouting, stealthiness is always preferable to a high profile. But when you secure the No. 1 pick in the next amateur draft, as the Rangers are on the verge of doing, everybody wants to know where you are going, where you have been and whom you have been watching.

So when Fagg showed up Wednesday in the Rangers' dugout, he stood out.

"Everybody has been asking me if I feel like there is a lot of pressure and, honestly, I don't feel that way," said Fagg, the Rangers' director of amateur scouting. "We will do the work. We will see the players. We've always approached the draft like we were going to have the No. 1 pick even if we were picking 30th, like we did this past year."

The Rangers went into Wednesday's game, their 151st of the season, with a two-game "lead" on Colorado for the worst overall record in the majors. If they can hold off the Rockies, they will earn the first overall pick in the draft and the large allowance of signing bonus that goes with it. If they finish behind the Rockies, they will pick no better than third. Houston, which failed to sign overall No. 1 draft pick Brady Aiken last June, gets the second overall pick as compensation.

Either way, the Rangers are going to have the highest pick they've had since selecting Bobby Witt third in 1985. The higher the pick, the more risk associated with the very inexact science of scouting. Just consider that 1985 draft. The Rangers got a serviceable long-term pitcher in Witt. Barry Larkin — er, Hall of Famer Barry Larkin — went fourth. Barry Bonds went sixth.

The point: Even selecting a legitimate big-leaguer may ultimately make the pick look like a failure based on what a club passes by.

The Rangers have already begun the scouting process. Actually, they never stopped.

"We have stayed on the road, and we do this year-round," Fagg said. "We don't look at it as a 10-month work schedule. We see guys all throughout the year. Ownership has given us the commitment to allow us to do that. I think that's significant. I feel like we are ahead of the game."

They've had as many as 10 different scouts see the likes of high schoolers Daz Cameron (son of former major-league outfielder Mike Cameron) and Brendan Rogers this summer in "showcase" events and summer league games. Fagg estimates that the Rangers have probably got upward of 15 scouting reports on top high school prospects from this summer alone. They will pick up Aiken and Duke right-hander Michael Matuella, among others, this fall.

As expected, Fagg said there isn't a clear-cut No. 1 pick at this point.

The Rangers have also streamlined their scouting operation slightly and have already hired scouts for the two regions (Alabama/Mississippi and North-Central Florida) in which they made changes. As for the streamlining of things, Fagg now reports directly to general manager Jon Daniels rather than to former assistant general manager A.J. Preller.

While the new arrangement won't really change Fagg's duties, direct communication is nearly always better than going through a third party.

It also means, however, that Daniels is likely to do a little more scouting of the potential top picks next spring.

"But I'm not going to make the call; our staff will make the call," Daniels said. "I'll see guys. It's a once-in-a-career kind of deal. At least I hope it us. I could get much more used to drafting in the 20s somewhere."

Briefly: OF Shin-Soo Choo underwent surgery Wednesday to remove a small piece of cartilage and a bone spur from his left ankle. He is expected to require six to eight weeks of recovery time. ... OF Alex Rios is hoping to try swinging a bat before the weekend to test out his injured right thumb. It will likely determine if he has a chance at playing again this season or if his year is over.

Rangers GM Jon Daniels: Manager interviews probably won't occur until after season

By Evan Grant/reporter

11:35 pm on September 17, 2014

OAKLAND, Calif. — Texas Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said the Texas Rangers probably won't begin the formal interview process for managerial candidates until after the first week after the regular season.

Daniels indicated it was unlikely that even internal candidates, including interim manager Tim Lincecum, pitching coach Mike Maddux and Triple-A manager Steve Buechele, would get their interviews until early October.

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ASSOCIATED PRESS

A's fall to Rangers to hand Angels the AL West title

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Sean Doolittle sat in a chair staring at his locker inside a quiet clubhouse before searching for the words to explain the Oakland Athletics' latest meltdown.

Doolittle allowed a three-run homer to J.P. Arencibia during a six-run ninth inning, and the A's lost 6-1 to the last-place Texas Rangers on Wednesday night.

"Right now, it really hurts," Doolittle said. "But it doesn't do you any good, it doesn't do your team any good, to sit and mope and sulk and feel sorry for yourself."

The bearded closer's fourth blown save in 25 chances negated a stellar start by Jeff Samardzija and ended Oakland's two-year reign as AL West champion. The Los Angeles Angels clinched the division with a 5-0 win over Seattle and the loss by the A's.

Oakland dropped into a tie with Kansas City for the American League's top wild card. Seattle is two games behind the A's and Royals for the second and final berth.

"It's going to be a turning point one way or another," Doolittle said. "After the season's over, are we going to look back and point to tonight and be like, 'This is the game where finally the wheels came off for good,' or are we going to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and talk about how resilient we are as a team and how we were able to overcome a game like this and still get it done?"

How A's AL West Reign Ended

On the morning of Aug. 1, the Angels trailed the A's by two games in the division. Since the start of August, the Angels have the second-best record in the AL while the A's have the fourth-worst. Performance in one-run games and on the road has been key.

The answer remains to be seen.

Sam Fuld's single in the fifth drove in Oakland's only run. The A's stranded 10 runners and loaded the bases with no outs in the eighth only to come up empty.

Robbie Ross (3-6) got the final five outs for Texas, which has won five in a row.

"It's beautiful. I love it," interim Rangers manager Tim Bogar said.

Samardzija outpitched Derek Holland to put the A's in position to start turning around their late-season slide. Samardzija struck out 10 and allowed just four hits in eight innings.

As well as he pitched, though, it wasn't enough for the A's to overcome another underwhelming performance at the plate and a late flop by the bullpen.

Elvis Andrus singled and scored on Rougned Odor's double off Doolittle (1-4) to start the Rangers' rally. After Adrian Beltre was intentionally walked, Arencibia's 10th home run silenced the crowd of 17,530 at the Coliseum.

Doolittle was charged with five of the six runs. Oakland is 5-14 since Aug. 28.

"You look at our numbers and you say, how can this happen for this long a period based on what we did in the first half?" A's manager Bob Melvin said.

Holland continued his remarkable return for the Rangers after missing five months following offseason knee surgery. He gave up one run, four hits and three walks in 6 1/3 innings.

In four starts this season, Holland has allowed just three runs. His latest outing still wasn't enough to outlast Samardzija, who provided a much-needed performance on the mound after Oakland's sloppy 6-3 loss to Texas on Tuesday night.

Samardzija stranded a runner on second in the first, third and fifth -- the only threats he faced all night. He has allowed no runs in five of his starts with the Cubs and A's this season -- but hasn't won any of them.

"No time to pout. No time to feel sorry for yourself," Samardzija said. "That's just the way it goes."

INJURED UMPIRE

Plate umpire Kerwin Danley took a foul tip from A's second baseman Nick Punto off his face mask in the fifth. Danley was replaced by second-base umpire Mark Ripperger to start the sixth, looking woozy as he staggered off the field.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Rangers: OF Shin-Soo Choo, already out for the season with an elbow injury, had surgery on his left ankle to remove torn cartilage and a small bone spur. He is in a walking boot and should start a running program in six to eight weeks.

Athletics: C Stephen Vogt (sprained left ankle) was intentionally walked as a pinch hitter in the eighth. He hadn't played since Sept. 3.

UP NEXT

Rangers: RHP Nick Martinez (3-11, 4.93 ERA) starts Thursday's series finale. He's 2-5 with a 4.72 ERA in his past 10 starts.

Athletics: RHP Sonny Gray (13-8, 3.18) takes the mound for Oakland. He has allowed four earned runs in 15 innings over his past two starts.