



## Jennings drives in both runs as Rays top A's

*By Marc Topkin, Tampa Bay Times*

OAKLAND, Calif. — Outfielder Desmond Jennings and starter Drew Smyly, the two players who rejoined the Rays last week after extended stays on the disabled list, played key roles in putting them in position to win Friday's game.

But they didn't complete the 2-1 victory over the A's until Brad Boxberger made it, well, interesting would be a polite way to put it, with another messy ninth inning.

"You take the end result, definitely," Boxberger said. "A win's a win no matter how it is. I still feel I have a lot of work to do. When things are not going your way you can really tell they're not going your way."

The Rays, who got back to .500 at 61-61, took a 2-0 lead into the ninth.

Jennings, who missed more than three months with a left knee injury that required surgery, took care of the offense. He singled in a run in the second inning and launched a homer into the second deck of the O.co Coliseum in the ninth. That was after driving in the only run in Thursday's 1-0 win in Houston, and made him 10-for-28 since his return, playing in seven of the eight games.

"I've got to do something, I didn't play in three months," Jennings said. "I'm pretty happy about it, it's going pretty good so far. Just trying to keep it up, keep going."

Smyly, who missed three months with a shoulder injury, was much sharper Friday than his rough return in Texas, working into the sixth without a run, allowing six hits but no walks while throwing 91 pitches in picking up his first win in nearly a full year.

His curveball, a major problem against the Rangers, was much sharper and his overall command much better. And he logged two huge strikeouts in crucial situations, getting Billy Burns swinging at a 92 mph fastball with two on and two outs in the fifth (and slapping his glove in a rare show of emotion), and then Brett Lawrie with the bases loaded in the sixth to end his night.

"I felt great. I commanded the strike zone way better with all my pitches," Smyly said. "I feel like I needed this game. I needed an outing to bounce back. I felt like I've been throwing a lot of strikes, but for whatever reason been giving up some hits, timely hits. Tonight it went my way, so it felt good to get those outs, those big outs when you needed to it."

Brandon Gomes got an even bigger out to end the sixth in retiring ex-Ray/current A's All-Star Stephen Vogt, and then three more in the seventh to run his streak of consecutive batters retired, over nine appearances, to 26, one shy of a reliever "perfect game." And Steve Geltz came on to work a solid 1-2-3 eighth.

But all that looked like it might go for naught the way the ninth unfolded.

Boxberger has had a tough week, giving up a game-losing homer Tuesday night in Houston (his sixth walkoff loss and major-league reliever most ninth overall) and then blowing the save Wednesday.

Friday was trending that way, as he quickly had the winning run on second base with one out before striking out Marcus Semien and retiring Burns, who fouled off five straight pitches, to escape with his 30th save.

"Ninth innings are tough at times, and this was a tough one," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "Good for him and good for us he was able to calm it down and get through that."

Boxberger got the first out, but the trouble started when Brett Lawrie grounded a ball that shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera got to but couldn't make a play on for an infield single. Vogt lined a single to center, and then Boxberger bounced a breaking ball by catcher Curt Casali to move the runners up.

Things got worse as Coco Crisp check-swing blooped a ball that fell into shallow center to score one run, and when Kevin Kiermaier made an ill-advised throw back to second, pinch-runner Sam Fuld, another ex-Ray, moved up to third.

"Again, not a lot of hard hit balls," Cash said. "That's just kind of the luck he's having a little bit right now, nothing more than that."

Despite all that was going wrong, Boxberger maintained his composure, and his focus on the next hitter.

"It's one to remember for sure for having to battle after each hitter, couple of balls falling and I was able to battle out of it," he said. "It all just kind of magnifies itself when things aren't going your way, so I'll take it as a step in the right direction and go from there."

The Rays wasted several earlier chances to expand their lead, including loading the bases in the fifth and getting a leadoff double from Grady Sizemore in the sixth.

But the most interesting sequence came in the seventh, when they again had the bases loaded.

The A's brought in ambidextrous Pat Venditte, who is, essentially, a switch-pitcher, able to go from lefty-to-righty based on the batter, though he has to commit before each at-bat starts.

The Rays had lefty-swinging Grady Sizemore due up but opted for a pinch-hitter, and Cash sent up switch-hitter Daniel Nava. Venditte chose to pitch lefty and Nava hit righty, but there were no dramatics as he popped out to end the threat.

"Obviously a unique situation," Cash said.

## Rays' Archer happiest with 'team win' Thursday

*By Marc Topkin, Tampa Bay Times*

OAKLAND, Calif. — With a day's reflection, RHP **Chris Archer** said the best thing about his Thursday one-hit, complete-game, 98-pitch masterpiece in Houston was the most obvious.

"Team win," Archer said. "Whatever it takes to do that. And (Thursday) night it was what it took.

"That's always going to be the No. 1 objective. So it was nice to get that W."

From a personal standpoint, he was most pleased the 1-0 win was a "CG-SHUT" — a complete-game shutout, what he was told to strive for when he joined the Rays in 2012.

"That's what's preached here since the day I got here," Archer said. "(Former Rays ace RHP **James Shields** made a point to let me know what was important, what your goal should be. Some guys are more capable than others of doing that, so it's about being realistic with your goals. And that's my goal every time I step foot on the mound is to go nine and not give up any runs.

"The no-hit stuff and the perfect-game stuff ... it's really hard to control the umpire's strike zone to not walk somebody, and shifts and defensive plays and scoring. But putting up zeroes is more controllable."

Archer's individual performance, the first complete game by a Rays pitcher in nearly a year, was noteworthy in a number of ways:

- He became the fourth Ray to throw a one-hit complete game, joining **Joe Kennedy** (2002), **Matt Garza** (2008) and **Shields** (2008), though the only to do so in a 1-0 win.
- He became the first AL pitcher with a one-hitter in a 1-0 win since Blue Jays RHP **Brendan Morrow** on Aug. 8, 2010, against the Rays.
- He threw his second "Maddux" — a game named after Hall of Famer **Greg Maddux** in which a pitcher has a complete-game shutout with fewer than 100 pitches. **Shields** had four; no other Ray has had one, though **Jeff Niemann** and **Doug Waechter** did it with 100 pitches.
- He became the seventh pitcher in the past 30 years — the time in which pitch-count data is considered complete — to log 11 or more strikeouts in nine innings while throwing fewer than 100 pitches.
- He made his eighth start of the season without allowing an earned run, tops in the AL and tying LHP **Matt Moore's** 2013 team record.

Manager **Kevin Cash** said that in addition to the dazzling pitching, he was most impressed by how Archer fielded his position, which has been problematic in the past. Pitching coach **Jim Hickey** said he liked how Archer didn't just "out-stuff" the Astros but backed off from maximum effort to make pitches and stick to the game plan. Hickey also liked the high percentage of pitches Archer executed.

**McGEE UPDATE:** The Rays are more encouraged about the possibility of LHP **Jake McGee** making it back before the end of the season based on results of the Friday surgery on his left knee. Dr. **Koco Eaton** had to only trim and clean out the area rather than do an extensive repair, which makes a six-week recovery more realistic than the original target of six to eight. Where the Rays are in the playoff race could also affect the decision.

"It was on the positive side," Cash said. "Everybody is optimistic (McGee will) go through the rehab process — nobody seems to be giving an exact time frame on anything — but we're hopeful that maybe we'll get to see him at some point before the year's out."

**HE'S BAAACK:** **John Jaso** was excited to be in Oakland, where he spent the two previous (injury-shortened) seasons, though he noted that both players the A's got for him, **Yunel Escobar** and **Ben Zobrist**, had been traded. "I like the coaches, and I like the players, and it's always good to see them and compete against them," Jaso said. "And it's also good to be back in California."

**MISCELLANY:** Cash said he will continue to monitor LF **Desmond Jennings** daily but there have been no issues with his surgically repaired left knee. ... Thursday was the Rays' ninth 1-0 win in the past two seasons, most in the majors, and 109th shutout since Hickey became pitching coach in 2007, tops in the AL.

## **Alex Colome just might be Rays' answer to bullpen questions**

*By Marc Topkin, Tampa Bay Times*

OAKLAND, Calif. — Rays staff and executives have wrestled for years with the question of whether right-hander Alex Colome would be more effective as a high-leverage reliever than a starter.

And now they might find out.

After being dropped from the rotation with the July return of Matt Moore (and a pedestrian 3-4, 4.70 record in 13 starts), Colome was working what seemed to be a gradual adjustment to handling more significant bullpen work.

And then two events in the span of about 24 hours propelled him into a more important role.

On Tuesday night, Jake McGee, who had been handling eighth-inning and occasional closing duty, sustained a left knee injury that required arthroscopic surgery and might sideline him the rest of the season.

And on Wednesday night, Colome, who had been doing mostly long and mop-up work, was entrusted with a lead for just the second time, and a one-run margin in the eighth at that, and struck out the top-three hitters for the Astros on 10 dazzling pitches.

"You look at a lot of these guys, a lot of young starters that go to the bullpen and maybe they simplify some things," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "Hopefully that's what he's doing because the weapons are there.

"I have no idea what the future entails for him, starter or reliever, but right now he's in our bullpen, and he seems to be really taking to it. You do hear some great stories about a lot of guys that transition to the bullpen and have a ton of success."

The Rays are very familiar with one of the best stories. Wade Davis made the initial move during the 2012 season before being traded with James Shields to Kansas City in the Wil Myers/Jake Odorizzi deal, but he didn't have the breakthrough success until 2014 with the Royals, posting staggering elite-level numbers and earning an All-Star selection this year.

Not to get far ahead of things, but Rays pitching coach Jim Hickey said Colome has similar tools to Davis — a high-end fastball and a power breaking ball, which is an 85-86 mph killer somewhere between curve and slider — and thus similar potential.

And Hickey is impressed with what he has seen thus far from Colome.

"It took Wade quite some time to make that transition, where Alex had made it a little bit quicker," Hickey said.

"He may never be what Wade Davis has become — or he may — but if he's going to do it, he's going to get there probably a little bit quicker than Wade did."

Colome, 26, admits he wasn't particularly thrilled when the Rays first moved him to the pen. He knows this is a pivotal season in his career, at least with Tampa Bay, as he is out of options and mop-up duty wasn't going to improve his job security.

"All I could say is that if they give me a chance as a reliever, I have to do it," Colome said. "It's important to do my job and pitch well to stay here."

Once Colome accepted the move, it took him a few weeks to make the adjustments. Physically, he had to learn a different routine than building toward pitching once every five days.

Then strategically, to narrow his repertoire by throwing primarily the two pitches (minimizing use of his changeup and cutter) and to be more aggressive and attack-minded since he would be working in short stints.

Over 10 appearances from the All-Star break through Wednesday he had a dominating 0.59 ERA, with nearly twice as many swings and misses when coming out of the pen.

"The first few times I pitched out of the bullpen, I feel different," Colome said. "Now, I feel really comfortable. I feel really good. I only need the chance to pitch. I don't care what the situation is. I know I can do my job."

Even as well as Davis one day?

"I can do it," Colome said. "I just need the opportunity."

## **Boxberger gets save after Jennings hits Rays past A's, 2-1**

*By Roger Mooney, Tampa Tribune*

**OAKLAND** — Brad Boxberger allowed another ninth-inning run Friday, but thanks to Desmond Jennings, it wasn't nearly as costly as the one's Boxberger allowed earlier this week.

Boxberger was able to stop Oakland's rally as the Tampa Bay Rays held on for a 2-1 victory, their second straight and third in eight games on this 10-game road trip.

Jennings, who drove in the game's first run with a second-inning single, hit his first homer of the season in the top of the ninth for a much-needed insurance run.

It was the first homer of the season for Jennings, and it landed in the second deck down the left field line.

Jennings has driven all the Rays runs in their last two games. He's now 10-for-28 with four RBI since returning from the disabled list.

His fourth inning single Tuesday drove in the only run in Chris Archer's one-hit, shutout. It was the first go-ahead RBI for Jennings since Aug. 10, 2014.

Boxberger allowed a run in the ninth on a check-swing single by Coco Crisp. He retired the last two batters with the tying run at third and the winning run on second.

It was the 30th save this season for Boxberger and it made a winner of Drew Smyly.

Smyly pitched into the sixth inning and left with two outs and the bases-loaded. He allowed seven hits -- all singles — and struck out two.

His fastball was in the low-90s. He did not walk a batter.

Smyly looked much better than he did last Sunday when he allowed five runs in four innings at Texas in his first game back since coming off the disabled list. He allowed just two hits through four innings.

His first real jam game in the fifth when he allowed a pair of two-out singles. But he struck out Billy Burns to end the inning. He jumped a little as Burns swung through a 92-mph fastball.

"That was kind of uncharted territory for him, because even through his rehab outings he hadn't gotten that many ups and downs to get that deep in a ball game," Cash said.

The A's loaded the bases the following inning with a trio of hits, the last being a slow roller to shortstop that Asdrubal Cabrera couldn't pick up, though he would not have gotten the out at first base if were able to make a play.

Brandon Gomes came on and got pinch-hitter Stephen Vogt to pop up to Cabrera to end the inning.

The Rays loaded the bases twice, but failed to score both times.

John Jaso ended the fifth-inning threat when he grounded into an inning-ending double play.

Daniel Nava ended the seventh inning when he fouled out behind third against Pat Venditti, who throws with both arms.

Venditti came in to face the left-handed hitting Grady Sizemore. He warmed up both right-handed and left-handed. Once he declared left-handed Rays manager Kevin Cash sent up Nava.

## **Rays notes: Archer in rare company after his one-hit shutout**

*By Roger Mooney, Tampa Tribune*

OAKLAND, Calif. — Former Tampa Bay Rays LHP David Price would tell his teammates, "See you in nine," when he left the clubhouse before each start. Price never hid the fact his goal each outing was to throw a complete game.

Chris Archer has yet to incorporate that into his pregame ritual.

"I'm not to that point. I'm not that confident about it," Archer said. "There's some goals you just keep to yourself."

The one-hit, complete-game shutout tossed Thursday night in Houston was still a topic of conversation Friday before the Rays began a three-game series with the A's at O.co Coliseum.

Archer is the first pitcher in franchise history to throw a one-hitter in a complete-game 1-0 victory and only the fourth to throw a one-hitter in a shutout, joining Joe Kennedy (2002), Matt Garza (2008) and James Shields (2008).

When asked what impressed him the most about the game, Archer said, "Team win, Team win. Whatever it takes to do that, and (Thursday) that's what it took. That's always going to be the No. 1 objective."

Archer said the first thing Shields told him when he arrived in the big leagues in 2012 was that throwing complete-game shutouts is an expectation placed on every member of the rotation.

“Shields made it a point to let me know what was important, what your goal should be,” Archer said. “Some guys are more capable than others of doing that, so it’s just about being realistic with your goals, and that’s my goal every time I step foot on the mound is to go nine and not give up any runs.”

When asked what he thought was the most impressive part of Archer’s outing, manager Kevin Cash said, “The way he fielded his position. We’ve seen the lights-out breaking ball and the lights-out fastball, but all kidding aside, he made two really good plays, and we’ve seen those plays not be made.”

Archer was the first American League pitcher to toss a one-hit complete-game shutout since Toronto’s Brandon Morrow on Aug. 8, 2010, against the Rays.

It was Archer’s eighth start this season in which he did not allow a run, the most this season in the AL and tied with LHP Matt Moore (2013) for the most in a season by a Rays pitcher.

McGee could return

The reports were positive Friday after LHP Jake McGee underwent arthroscopic surgery to repair a torn meniscus in his left knee.

The tear was not too big, and while he is expected to miss 6-8 weeks, the feeling is he might be able to return on the early end of that providing his rehab goes well and the Rays are playing meaningful games.

“We’re hopeful that we get to see him at some point before the year’s out,” Cash said.

No A’s for Ramirez

RHP Erasmó Ramirez will face the A’s tonight for the ninth time in his career, including six starts. He is 0-6 with a 5.26 ERA.

“I know. I’ve been kind of thinking about that,” Ramirez said. “In my mind, it’s nothing about what’s been happening. It may take more than six starts against them. I know I just have to execute, let my guys play defense and have a positive mind all game.”

Ramirez felt he had a chance to break the losing streak when he faced them May 24 at Tropicana Field. But he let the game get away after allowing a three-run homer to 1B Mark Canha in the sixth inning on a hanging slider. That gave the A’s a 5-0 lead.

“I didn’t execute,” he said. “It was one of those mistakes. They took advantage.”

## **Change in approach helps Rays rookie Casali discover power stroke**

*By Roger Mooney, Tampa Tribune*

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Tampa Bay Rays’ power lately has come from an unlikely source, though one that should be able to provide pop to the lineup.

That would be Curt Casali, who has transformed himself from a guy looking for good at-bats to one who is gripping and ripping.

“Just watching him in spring training and when he first came here, you got a 6-foot-2, 230-pound guy that looked like that he kind of wanted to carve the ball and hit the ball the other way and have ultra-quality at-bats, and all that (stuff),” Cash said. “He seems to be like, ‘I’m going to get my pitch and hit it.’ To his credit, he kind of bought into that.”

Casali hit 30 home runs during his five years in the minor leagues. That total included 10 in 2013, when he hit five each at Class-A Charlotte and Double-A Montgomery.

He said various hitting coaches suggested he swing more for the fences. It wasn’t until Rays hitting coaches Derek Shelton and Jamie Nelson suggested in July that Casali attack fastballs that the power showed up in his game.

“Most of my career I’ve been more of a higher-average/walk guy, and I appreciate that. I like doing it,” Casali said. “But at the same time, I want to be able to drive in runs whenever I can. For whatever reason, right now I feel good at the plate, and I feel that when I get a good pitch to hit it has a chance to leave the yard.”

Casali entered Friday’s game at Oakland with nine home runs, the most on the team since his recall from Durham on June 13. Eight of his past 13 hits are home runs.

In fact, Casali had nine home runs in 93 at-bats after going homerless in 72 at-bats last season with the Rays.

His home run rate of every 10.33 at-bats was the highest in team history for a player with at least 50 at-bats.

Casali said there is more to his power surge than simply a new approach at the plate.

“I think being comfortable in the big leagues has a lot to do with it for me right now, just because I’m playing more, I’m getting more at-bats. I don’t feel the pressure to necessarily be a situational guy all the time and just be a regular nine-hole hitter,

bunting and moving runners," he said. "They've instilled a lot of confidence in me and encouraged me to be aggressive in the count and try and hit gaps and barrel up the ball whenever I can."

Casali said he would like to make home runs a regular part of his production.

"Obviously I'm going to try to keep working hard to improve the average, to improve the walk-to-strikeout ratio," he said. "But right now I think it's a good start and I'm looking forward to getting better."

Cash said hitting for power should be a part of Casali's game.

"You would think so," Cash said. "It's definitely in there. Why would he take an approach where it's not there? And I'm not confusing that we want him up there whaling at balls. But when you get pitches that you can handle, drive them."

Cash also said Casali is a better player now than he was during spring training, and even his first few weeks with the team after his recall. While having quality at-bats is good and trying to get on base is always the objective, there is something to be said about hitting for power when you have a power-hitter's body.

"You can get tied up, especially a young hitter, trying to do too much. 'I don't want to swing at a ball out of the zone. I don't want to roll over a pitch.' It's kind of like, 'Who cares?'" Cash said. "Just go hit, and it's allowed him to be free and we've seen the power. He's hit some mammoth bombs."

## Rays win key battles to get back to .500 mark

By Trevor Hass, MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Twice in their **2-1 win** over the A's on Friday, the Rays nearly blew the lead. But in both the sixth and ninth innings, they did just enough to fend Oakland off.

In the sixth inning, after the A's loaded the bases, **Drew Smyly** picked up a massive strikeout on **Brett Lawrie** on a high fastball. Smyly -- who recorded his first win since Aug. 27, 2014 -- departed having allowed six hits on 91 pitches.

Had **Stephen Vogt** gotten a hit, Smyly could have ended up with a loss, but **Brandon Gomes** made sure that didn't happen. He got Vogt to pop to short, and the Rays escaped unscathed.

"I felt like I needed this game, I needed a bounceback outing," Smyly said. "I feel like I've been throwing a lot of strikes, but for whatever reason I'd been giving up timely hits, and tonight it just went my way. It felt good to get those big outs when you needed it."

Friday marked the 24th time this season a Rays starter hasn't yielded any runs, surpassing the Dodgers for tops in the Majors. The win put the Rays at 61-61 for the season and kept them at two games back of the second AL Wild Card spot.

Smyly, who has been out most of the season with a torn left labrum, struggled in his first start but commanded his pitches better and said he felt sharper this time around.

"We all said we were very optimistic after that start that he would bounce right back," Rays manager Kevin Cash said, "and he made us look smart because he did."

Gomes, who also pitched a perfect seventh, has now retired 25 straight batters. The most pivotal out of his night was Vogt's popup, when he jammed him on an inside pitch.

"If you look up and down our roster, you've got guys that get hot at times, guys that go through maybe a little bit of a funk," Cash said. "Gomer, he's hot right now. He's got a good feel for what he's trying to accomplish."

One of those guys in a funk is closer **Brad Boxberger**. Though Boxberger notched his 30th save in 34 tries Friday, it took him 33 pitches in the ninth to do so.

Lawrie scored on a check-swing bloop single by **Coco Crisp**. The ball floated into the outfield and was just out of **Asdrubal Cabrera's** reach.

**Billy Burns** battled and fouled off a string of pitches, but Boxberger ultimately got him to fly to left to end the game.

"It all just kind of magnifies itself when things aren't going your way, so I'll take it as a step in the right direction and go from there," Boxberger said.

## Smyly stymies A's to earn first win in '15

By Trevor Hass and Jane Lee, MLB.com

OAKLAND -- **Desmond Jennings** homered and the Rays beat the A's, 2-1, in Friday's three-game series opener at the Coliseum behind lefty **Drew Smyly**, who tossed 5 2/3 scoreless innings to earn his first win of the season.

"Great win," Rays manager Kevin Cash said. "I thought Drew Smyly really bounced back nicely, kind of like we thought he was going to."

Jennings not only notched his first homer of the season in the ninth off right-hander **Evan Scribner** but also drove in Tampa's first run with a single in the second against A's starter **Chris Bassitt**, who allowed five other hits across 6 2/3 innings in the tough-luck loss.

The A's, who got an RBI single from **Coco Crisp** in the ninth before stranding two runners to end the game, finished with 10 hits, leaving nine on base.

#### **MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

**Killer combo:** The A's loaded the bases with one out in the sixth, but Smyly and **Brandon Gomes** ensured they didn't score. Smyly struck out **Brett Lawrie** on a high fastball and Gomes got pinch-hitter **Stephen Vogt** to pop to short to end the frame. For Smyly, who gave up seven hits, the start was encouraging after he yielded five earned runs in four innings in his last outing.

"That was kind of uncharted territory for him, because even through his rehab outings he hadn't gotten that many ups and downs to get that deep in a ball game," Cash said of Smyly, who won for the first time since Aug. 27, 2014.

**Wild ways:** Bassitt hit two batters, among them **Logan Forsythe** to lead off the second, and allowed him to advance to second base on a wild pitch to **Asdrubal Cabrera**, setting up Jennings' one-out RBI single that put the Rays on top. The right-hander kept his team in the game yet again, though, and suffered his fifth loss of the season despite pitching to a 2.48 ERA, including 2.31 in eight starts.

"Tonight was aggravating because nothing I was throwing was going where I wanted it to go," Bassitt said. "I was just extremely wild, and it was not what I wanted. I was just trying to throw everything down the middle."

#### **SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

Jennings is 10-for-28 (.357) since returning from the disabled list on Aug. 14, and Cabrera, who singled and walked, is batting .407 in 21 games since returning from the DL on July 28.

#### **UNDER REVIEW**

The A's unsuccessfully challenged a ruling at first base in the top of the fifth inning. The safe call on Rays center fielder **Kevin Kiermaier**, who singled a sharp ground ball to Bassitt, stood as called.

#### **WHAT'S NEXT**

**Rays:** **Erasmus Ramirez** (10-4, 3.57) takes the mound at 9:05 p.m. ET Saturday for the Rays, fresh off a win over the Astros in which he yielded two earned runs in 5 2/3 innings. The right-hander has lost his last five starts against Oakland and is 0-6 with a 5.26 ERA against them in his career.

**A's:** American League ERA leader **Sonny Gray** (12-5, 2.04) takes the mound Saturday for the middle matchup of a three-game set against the Rays, with first pitch scheduled for 6:05 p.m. PT. Gray is 2-1 with a 2.63 ERA in four career starts against Tampa Bay.

## **McGee has surgery to repair torn meniscus**

*By Trevor Hass, MLB.com*

OAKLAND -- Rays' left-hander **Jake McGee** had successful arthroscopic surgery Friday to repair a meniscus tear in his left knee, and manager Kevin Cash said he's hopeful McGee would return before the end of the regular season.

"Nobody seems to be giving an exact timeframe on everything," Cash said, "but we're hopeful that maybe we'll get to see him at some point before the year's out."

McGee, who is 1-2 with a 2.57 ERA and six saves in 36 games this season and 21-11 with a 2.80 ERA over his six-year career, felt something give in his knee toward the end of his outing Tuesday against the Astros.

The timetable for McGee's return is 6-8 weeks, potentially putting him back on the mound sometime in early October. McGee was placed on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to Wednesday, and the tear was diagnosed Thursday.

"He's got a ways to go, but get the rehab and we'll see how he does when he starts throwing in a couple weeks or so," Cash said.

## **Ramirez aims to solve A's in duel with Gray**

*By Trevor Hass, MLB.com*

Erasmus Ramirez isn't sure what it is about the A's. He doesn't know why he's 0-6 with a 5.26 ERA in eight appearances (seven starts) against them.

"I've been kind of thinking about that," Ramirez said. "I just have to go execute, let my guys play defense, always have a positive mind the whole game."

Ramirez (10-4, 3.57) will look to pick up his first win against Oakland when the Rays face the A's Saturday in the second game of a weekend set at the Coliseum. The A's will counter with Sonny Gray (12-5, 2.04), who comes into the matchup with the lowest ERA for an American League pitcher since Pedro Martinez posted a 1.74 ERA for the Red Sox in 2000.

"I know Sonny Gray's going to be pitching," Ramirez said. "He's a good pitcher, so it's going to be a challenge for me."

### Things to know about this game

- Gray has pitched three complete games, including two shutouts, over his last seven starts.
- Since moving into the starting rotation May 14, Ramirez has made 17 starts and gone 10-3 -- tied for the AL lead in wins over that span. He recently became the fourth Nicaraguan player to win 10 games in a season (Dennis Martinez, Al Williams, Vicente Padilla).
- Gray is 2-1 with a 2.63 ERA in four career starts against the Rays, including a win in his only start against them this year when he allowed four hits over five shutout innings in a 7-2 win on May 24.

## Stats of the Day: Archer makes Rays history

By Roger Schlueter, MLB.com

Here are five interesting items from around the big leagues on Thursday ...

- Rays right-hander **Chris Archer** twirled a one-hit shutout with 11 strikeouts and one walk in a 1-0 win over the Astros, producing a game score of 95 with his effort -- the highest such score in franchise history. The previous high was **James Shields'** 94, from Oct. 2, 2012, when the right-hander went nine innings, allowed two hits and a run and fanned 15 with no walks. Archer became the 69th pitcher since 1914 to have a one-hit shutout with at least 11 strikeouts, with 28 of those 69 having come since 1998.
- Tigers right-hander **Alfredo Simon** also hurled a one-hit shutout with five strikeouts and two walks in a 4-0 win over the Rangers. Simon's one-hit shutout was the 35th of at least nine innings for Detroit since 1914, with 28 of the 35 having come from right-handers. Thursday marked the time since May 10, 2013, in which there were two one-hitters of nine innings in the big leagues.
- In the Indians' 3-2 win over the Yankees, **Jason Kipnis** (3-for-4) and **Michael Brantley** (2-for-4) combined for five of their team's eight hits. Kipnis (.325) and Brantley (.319) are holding down the first and fourth spots, respectively, in the American League batting race. The Tribe most recently had two qualifiers finish a season with marks as high as .319 in 2001, when Roberto Alomar batted .336 (third in the AL that year) and Juan Gonzalez hit .325 (sixth). Since the start of the '14 season, Brantley's .324 average ranks third among all MLB players with at least 800 plate appearances, behind only **Miguel Cabrera** (.327) and **Jose Altuve** (.326).
- **Charlie Morton** (6 2/3 innings, four hits) and two relievers combined on a six-hit shutout, as the Pirates defeated the Giants, 4-0, and improved to 42-19 at home. The Bucs own baseball's second-lowest team ERA at 3.16. The most recent season to see the club finish below 3.20 was 1984, when the staff posted a 3.11 mark. The Pirates also rank second in MLB with a .689 home winning percentage. Since 1901, the only clubs in franchise history to finish with better home marks were the 1902 (.789), '09 (.727) and '77 (.716) squads.
- While winning his 15th game of the year, Cubs right-hander **Jake Arrieta** worked six scoreless innings and allowed four hits and a walk. For the Cubs since 1893, there have been 171 pitchers (including Arrieta) to have at least 15 wins in a season. Arrieta's current 165 ERA+ would rank in a tie for 15th best among these 171, while his 0.988 WHIP would rank 11th. In the latter category, there have been two Cubs pitchers in the live-ball era to win at least 15 games and finish with a sub-1.00 WHIP: Warren Hacker with a 0.946 WHIP in 1952, and Bill Hands with a 0.994 mark in '68.

### Milestone watch for Friday

- This could be a weekend of milestones for **David Ortiz**. He needs one home run to tie Lou Gehrig and Fred McGriff (493) for 27th on the all-time list; he needs one RBI to tie Goose Goslin (1,609) for 33rd on the all-time list; and he needs one double to tie Ivan Rodriguez (572) for 23rd all-time.
- **Felix Hernandez** needs two strikeouts to reach 2,100 for his career. There have been four pitchers in baseball history to reach 2,100 through their age-29 seasons: Walter Johnson, Sam McDowell, Bert Blyleven and Don Drysdale.

## Mike Fiers a key addition to Astros after no-hitting Dodgers

By Mark Saxon, ESPN.com



HOUSTON - A few months ago, Mike Fiers was known as the guy who threw the pitch that fractured Giancarlo Stanton's face. A few weeks ago, he was known as that other guy in the trade that brought five-tool center fielder Carlos Gomez from the Milwaukee Brewers to the Houston Astros in exchange for a package of prospects.

Now he's known as the guy who threw the first no-hitter in Minute Maid Park history.

Fiers' rambling 10-strikeout, three-walk, 134-pitch no-hitter in the Houston Astros' 3-0 win over the Los Angeles Dodgers Friday night may not have been the most dominating effort in baseball history -- Fiers said he was quick to mention to Astros executive Nolan Ryan that he didn't have nearly the fastball of the franchise icon -- but it built to a crescendo in the late innings.

More than 33,000 fans here finally got caught up in the moment in the ninth inning. They were on their feet before it and, by the time Justin Turner stepped to the plate with two outs, the din was impressive. Every other fan seemed to have a cell phone or camera in their hands. Fiers struck Turner out on an 89 mph fastball, chucked his glove and awaited the bear hug from catcher Jason Castro, his new teammates streaming in from all corners of the field.

Before that final at-bat, the moment got a little too much for Fiers. The lanky, bearded right-hander stepped off the rubber.

"Oh man, my chest was beating hard," Fiers said. "The crowd helped me, definitely. Everyone was on their feet. I kind of looked around for a quick second, everyone's just going crazy and I'm just trying to get it done that much more."

This one snuck up on just about everybody involved. Before Friday, Fiers had never pitched in the ninth inning in a start before. He came into the game with a lifetime record of 22-28.

Mike Fiers was wild early, but settled down to retire the last 21 Dodgers in a row in his no-hitter. Troy Taormina/USA TODAY Sports

Fiers walked a batter in each of the first three innings and his command was far from pinpoint, forcing him to throw 60 pitches in those first three frames. After that, however, he was brilliant, mixing a high fastball that hovered around 90 mph with a fading changeup, a good breaking ball and a cutter to keep hitters off his fastball. The final 21 batters went down in order.

"He stayed a step ahead of us, it seemed like," Dodgers outfielder Carl Crawford said. "He kept making adjustments before we did and he hit all the spots. He didn't leave anything over the plate for us to hit."

Had the ninth inning gotten a bit hairier -- Jimmy Rollins and Chase Utley quickly flew out to right -- Fiers would have put manager A.J. Hinch on the spot again. Hinch was the manager of the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2010 when Edwin Jackson threw a 149-pitch no-hitter against the Tampa Bay Rays. After that, Jackson went 5-6 with a 4.31 ERA the remainder of that season and got traded to the Chicago White Sox. Hinch was fired in July.

"I think there were a lot of people probably wondering how high I was going to let him go and now I don't have to answer that, which is good," Hinch said Friday night.

Crawford said Dodgers hitters were warned not to chase high fastballs, a ploy Fiers uses frequently. Last Sept. 11, Fiers tried to go up and in to Stanton and struck him with an 88 mph fastball in the face, causing multiple facial fractures, broken teeth and several facial lacerations that required stitches. Stanton, one of the game's most feared sluggers, missed the remainder of the season. Afterward, Fiers was emotional in his comments to reporters, saying he would never do something like that on purpose and saying he felt, "very, very sad" that he hit him.

Fiers was choked with emotion after Friday's performance as well, but for far happier reasons. He said he thought of his mother, who died a few years ago and of former teammates who are no longer in baseball.

Fiers had spent his entire career in Milwaukee's organization until he was traded along with Gomez and cash in exchange for Josh Hader, Adrian Houser, Brett Phillips and Domingo Santana shortly before the July 31 non-waiver trade deadline. He said the last time he threw a no-hitter, it was in a college wooden-bat league.

He might have caught the Dodgers at a good time. Though the Dodgers lead the National League in OPS and home runs and are fifth in runs, they have been making pedestrian pitchers look like aces lately. On Tuesday, Felix Doubront of the Oakland A's allowed them just one hit in six innings. The next day, Jesse Chavez gave up two hits over seven.

Still, the Dodgers were impressed with Fiers' ability to keep them off balance. Turner said Fiers threw him just two fastballs in his first three at-bats before throwing him five straight in the ninth-inning at-bat.

"This guy's a really good pitcher," Hinch said. "He might be unheralded or he might be under the radar, he might not be a household name, but you talk around the league, he's had plenty of double-digit punchout games. He's been very, very effective the last couple of years. No-hitters in general are improbable, but take nothing away from Fiers against that team. He's a tough guy to hit."

## **New MLB domestic violence policy has no maximum, minimum penalties**

*By The Associated Press*

NEW YORK -- Major League Baseball can suspend players with pay when legal charges are pending in "exceptional cases" under a new domestic violence policy signed Friday.

The 13-page deal was signed Friday by the league and players' association and followed a series of high-profile domestic violence cases involving NFL players. The policy allows the baseball commissioner to issue discipline for "just cause," the same standard used under the sport's collective bargaining agreement. Discipline is not dependent on a criminal conviction.

"Major League Baseball and its Clubs are proud to adopt a comprehensive policy that reflects the gravity and the sensitivities of these significant societal issues," commissioner Rob Manfred said in a statement. "We believe that these efforts will foster not only an approach of education and prevention but also a united stance against these matters throughout our sport and our communities."

The commissioner can place a player accused of domestic violence, sexual assault or child abuse on paid "administrative leave" for up to seven days before a disciplinary decision, which can be appealed to the sport's arbitration panel, chaired by an independent arbitrator. The commissioner also may defer a discipline decision until the resolution of criminal charges.

Suspensions that are upheld are without pay, and there are no maximum or minimum penalties. Players will not receive service time for the period of the suspension.

Players can be suspended with pay while criminal charges are pending if the commissioner determines "allowing the player to play during the pendency of the criminal or legal proceeding would result in substantial or irreparable harm to either the club or Major League Baseball." If the discipline becomes an unpaid suspension, the player has the right to offset the time served against the penalty but must repay any salary he received from his team during the paid suspension.

**"Players are husbands, fathers, sons and boyfriends and as such want to set an example that makes clear that there is no place for domestic abuse in our society."**

Tony Clark, players' union executive director

The deal creates a joint policy board to provide treatment, which could include mandatory counseling and psychological evaluation. Three experts will serve on the board along with two members appointed by MLB and two by the union, and one of the experts will submit a proposed treatment plan to the full board for approval. Players who fail to comply with their treatment plan may be subject to discipline.

"Players are husbands, fathers, sons and boyfriends and as such want to set an example that makes clear that there is no place for domestic abuse in our society," players' union executive director Tony Clark said in the release. "We are hopeful that this new comprehensive, collectively bargained policy will deter future violence, promote victim safety, and serve as a step toward a better understanding of the causes and consequences of domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse."

Previously, the labor contract included a voluntary treatment program for certain alcohol-related and off-field violent conduct. It also allowed the commissioner or a team to impose discipline, but didn't say of what sort, if a player was charged with a crime "involving the use of physical force or violence, including but not limited to sexual assault, domestic violence, resisting arrest, battery, and assault."

Following the decision by [Alex Rodriguez](#) to have outside lawyers of his choice handle the arbitration of his drug suspension two years ago, the agreement includes a provision that the player and union can be represented "only by in-house counsel of the players' association and/or by outside counsel appointed by the players' association."

- deGrom's last loss came on June 19 at Atlanta. Since then the Mets are 5-2 in games he's started. He has had better results at home, where he's pitched to a 1.60 ERA in 11 starts as opposed to a 2.69 road ERA.