Daily Clips

July 8, 2016
LA TIMES:
Hyun-Jin Ryu returns for Dodgers, but his velocity is lacking in loss to Padres, 6-0- Andy McCullough
Dodgers use three-man bench after 14-inning game exhausts bullpen- Andy McCullough
For the Dodgers, Corey Seager in the home run derby could be a disaster- Bill Plaschke

DODGERS.COM:
Seager bringing rookie power to Home Run Derby- Ken Gurnick
Dodgers' bats unable to pick up Ryu- Jack Baer and Ken Gurnick
Ryu can't follow McCarthy's lead in return- Ken Gurnick
Dodgers recall Frias; 3-man bench vs. Padres- Ken Gurnick
Dodgers pit Kazmir vs. Padres' Cashner in LA- Jack baer

OC REGISTER:
Hyun-Jin Ryu struggles in return to Dodgers rotation; offense manages two hits in 6-0 loss to Padres- JP Hoornstra
Whicker: Dodgers were happy to see Hyun-Jin Ryu return, but the look was brighter than the result- Mark Whicker
Dodgers' Corey Seager not concerned (or convinced) that participating in Home Run Derby ruins a player's swing- Joey Kaufman
Dodgers' Corey Seager, two former champs among eight Home Run Derby participants-Staff
On deck: Padres at Dodgers, Friday, 7 p.m.- Joey Kaufman

DODGER INSIDER:
Ryu feels no pain after start, looks to increase velocity- Jon Weisman
Hyun-Jin Ryu struggles in return- Jon Weisman
A look back: Walter Alston put the man in manager (See Attachment)- Jon Weisman
Dodgers activate Hyun-Jin Ryu, call up Carlos Frias- Jon Weisman
Corey Seager to slug away in Home Run Derby- Jon Weisman

TRUEBLUELA.COM:
Hyun-jin Ryu hits a wall in his first game back- Eric Stephen
Home Run Derby bracket revealed, Corey Seager's dad will pitch to him- Eric Stephen
Dodgers designate Will Venable for assignment, recall Carlos Frias- Eric Stephen
Dodgers-Cardinals to play on ESPN 'Sunday Night Baseball' on July 24- Eric Stephen
Cody Thomas homers in second straight game ; Raptors win 5-4- Craig Minami

ESPN LA:
Hyun-Jin Ryu's return means Dodgers gaining more strength- Doug Padilla
Pomeranz limits Dodgers to 2 hits in 6-0 loss to Padres- Associated Press
Curse-buster: Corey Seager has no fear of Home Run Derby- Doug Padilla
Hyun-Jin Ryu shaky in return vs. Padres; Carlos Frias called up- Doug Padilla

NBC LA:
Hyun-Jin Ryu Rocked in Return, Padres Shutout Dodgers 6-0- Michael Duarte

THRILLリスト:
THE BEST THING TO EAT AT EVERY MLB STADIUM- Will Fulton

DAILY BREEZE:
Listening to Vin Scully like listening to Shakespearean actor- Mike Waldner

LA TIMES:
Dodgers Dugout: Five ways to improve the All-Star game- Houston Mitchell
Hyun-Jin Ryu returns for Dodgers, but his velocity is lacking in loss to Padres, 6-0

By Andy McCullough

The digits beamed across Dodger Stadium’s right-field scoreboard, an electronic clearinghouse for fastball velocity readings, the numbers offering a startling depiction of Hyun-Jin Ryu’s physical limitations. In the fifth inning of a 6-0 loss to San Diego, the velocity told the story.

87 . . . 88 . . . 87 . . . 85 . . . 89 . . .

The last fastball eased out of Ryu’s hand but sizzled off the bat of San Diego outfielder Alex Dickerson for a two-run triple. It was the sixth run the Padres squeezed out of Ryu, and his night would not continue.

In his first start in 21 months, Ryu could not author a triumph. He could not even arouse optimism. His outing only deepened the skepticism about his revival after last year’s career-altering shoulder surgery.

“Through four innings, the velocity was where it needed to be, 89-91,” Manager Dave Roberts said. “I thought he threw a lot of quality pitches. But yeah, that fifth inning . . . I thought he just got a little tired.”

One start cannot represent a pattern, but Ryu displayed flashes of this form as he rehabilitated in the minors. His fastball velocity hovered below the average he set in 2013 and 2014, when he won 28 games and posted a 3.17 earned-run average. At times, he could not produce the necessary speed. At times, he could not maintain it.

The Padres feasted on his refashioned form Thursday. Ryu surrendered eight hits, five of them worth extra bases, in 42/3 innings. His teammates offered minimal resistance, getting two hits against Padres starter Drew Pomeranz and two relievers, as the Dodgers (48-40) fell for the third game in a row.

Corey Seager went 0 for 4 as his 19-game hitting streak ended.

The Dodgers must hope Ryu can rebuild his arm strength as the season progresses. Yet the organization understood the uncertainty surrounding his return. Roberts tried to find positive signs.

“The No. 1 thing is he’s back,” Roberts said.

When camp opened at Camelback Ranch in February, the Dodgers suggested Ryu might be ready for the first week of the season. The coming days erased that notion. Ryu eased into his throwing program. He did not appear in a minor league rehab start until May 15. After three outings, he required a two-week layoff to let soreness dissipate.
Ryu spent eight starts facing minor league hitters. He labored against class-A lineups. One night in triple-A Oklahoma City, he gave up eight runs. But with Clayton Kershaw on the disabled list and Ryu’s minor league assignment drawing to a close, the team chose to activate him for Thursday.

“Throughout the whole outing, my shoulder felt fine,” Ryu said through his interpreter. “I wasn’t hurting. So I think I can consider myself back.”

Ryu did not experience an auspicious opening at-bat. Ryu wanted to stuff a 92-mph fastball low and inside to Melvin Upton Jr. He succeeded in his location, but Upton still lifted the baseball over the right-field fence to welcome Ryu back to the majors.

An inning later, Ryu walked catcher Derek Norris, who has a .264 on-base percentage. He allowed a single to shortstop Alexei Ramirez, batting .237. For a third act, Ryu flipped a curveball to opposing pitcher Pomeranz, who rolled an RBI single through the middle of the infield.

In the fourth, as San Diego scored another run, catcher A.J. Ellis noticed “a little bit of fatigue” in Ryu. In the fifth, as Ryu’s energy waned, the Padres took advantage.

“My velocity went down, as compared to the first few innings,” Ryu said. “I’ll just have to adjust that as I play more games.”

With two outs, former Dodger Matt Kemp stepped to the plate. Lacking fear of the fastball, Kemp smashed a changeup for a double. Yangervis Solarte smoked an 87-mph fastball down the third base line for an RBI double.

After Roberts ordered an intentional walk of Norris, Ryu faced Dickerson, a left-handed hitter playing in his 27th big-league game. Ryu hummed an 89-mph fastball at the waist, and Dickerson ripped the ball into right.

Yasiel Puig read its flight like a middle-school student trying to decipher James Joyce. He stepped forward, and the ball went over his head. After he corralled the baseball, his throw missed two cutoff men.

The route by Puig was immaterial, a sideshow to the evening’s main act. The real cause for concern would soon leave the diamond. The future for Ryu remained worrisome.

“It was a long road for him to come back,” Roberts said. “That’s something that we’re really mindful of.”

**Dodgers use three-man bench after 14-inning game exhausts bullpen**

By Andy McCullough

On Thursday evening, for at least one night, the Dodgers crafted a roster with a clear oddity: only three men on the bench.

The team made a pair of roster moves before the series opener against San Diego, activating starting pitcher Hyun-Jin Ryu from the disabled list and recalling reliever Carlos Frias.
Ryu received a start after missing all of 2015 because of shoulder surgery; Frias provided aid for a bullpen taxed during a 14-inning game Wednesday.

Both of the decisions were standard. But the team deviated from the norm in clearing space on the roster. The Dodgers elected to option reliever Luis Avilan back to triple-A Oklahoma City and designated outfielder Will Venable for assignment.

The loss of Venable left Manager Dave Roberts will only three position players available to substitute into the game.

“It’s a short bench,” Roberts said. “We thought four was short. But we’ll manage.”

The four-man bench became an issue during Wednesday’s marathon. Scott Kazmir entered the game as a pinch-hitter. Kenta Maeda was used as a pinch runner, but was unable to score from first base on an eighth-inning double by Chase Utley.

Given the repeatedly brief outings from the team’s starting rotation, the Dodgers require extra relievers. Roberts expects the club to use an eight-man bullpen, at least for the foreseeable future. The nine-man relief corps is a more temporary issue.

Few relievers in the Dodgers’ bullpen have minor league options, which would qualify them for relocation. The team chose not to risk losing Chris Hatcher (5.11 earned-run average), who could be claimed on waivers if the team had designated him for assignment.

Short hop
A day after setting a career-high with six hits, Utley received a day off. “I’ve self-admittedly said I play Chase a lot,” Roberts said. “He’s a hard guy to keep out of the lineup, because he does so many things to help you win baseball games.”

For the Dodgers, Corey Seager in the home run derby could be a disaster

By Bill Plaschke

In what has become an annual rite of madness, the Dodgers have officially received news they openly cheered but quietly dreaded.

Corey Seager has been selected to compete in next week’s Home Run Derby.

Yay! Not.

Their smoothest swinger is entering an event that historically screws up swings.

Their best spray hitter is undergoing an exercise that will require him to change his habits and pull the ball.

The best young player will partake in a circus that could mess with his head.
Congratulations! Now everyone cover your eyes.

For most hitters, altering something as tricky as a swing to compete in an endlessly boring and unnatural batting practice that serves as a hokey baseball publicity tool is a questionable idea.

For a kid hitter on a roll like Seager, it’s a downright lousy idea, and don’t the Dodgers know it.

It was a bad idea last year when Joc Pederson lost the Derby to then-Cincinnati Red Todd Frazier in a dramatic final round (yawn), then spent most of the rest of the season taking those huge swings in vain.

Yes, Pederson was already slumping when he entered the Derby, but is it really a coincidence that he hit just .178 after the event — 52 points worse than in the first half — with only six home runs in 62 games after hitting 20 in the first 89?

The Dodgers also remember two years ago, when Yasiel Puig showed up at the Derby without his own pitcher, without a clue about the rules, and eventually without hitting a homer. He then cratered in the second half, ending his season with seven consecutive strikeouts in the National League Division Series.

History is littered with Derby winners who collapsed in the second half of the season, from Bobby Abreu in 2005 to Frazier last season. The Dodgers know the Derby is dangerous, and, if they had a choice, they would surely recommend against their players participating. But they don’t have a choice. Major League Baseball sanctions the show, the player’s union organizes the competitors, and the Dodgers can only watch and hope their guy doesn’t twist himself into a three-month pretzel.

The best news for the Dodgers is that in Monday night’s event in San Diego, Seager is matched in the first round against major league home run leader Mark Trumbo of the Baltimore Orioles, so he probably won’t last long. They say they’ll be cheering for him, but, nah, probably not.

“The home-run derby is an initiative from major league baseball and the union to attract different fans to our sport,” said baseball boss Andrew Friedman, putting on a brave face. “They feel strongly it helps expand our footprint with the younger generation, and obviously I’m all in favor of increasing the popularity of our sport.”

Talking to Seager on Thursday, it’s hard to blame him for saying yes. He’s 22, it’s his first real chance to stand on a national stage, half of the fans in his own town have barely seen him because of the TV debacle, it’s a neat opportunity to be one of the cool kids.

Plus, it’s a chance for his father, Jeff, to share the stage as his pitcher.

“That’s what put it over the top,” he said of his dad’s involvement. “It’s one of those memories that you’ll never forget.”

Seager, who leads the Dodgers with 17 homers and was voted into the All-Star game by the players, said his father was so intent on being ready that on Thursday night he was playing catch with the shortstop’s mother, Jody.

“We’ll see how that goes,” he said with a grin.
Is he worried about messing up his swing? Do 22-year-old kids worry about anything?

“I don’t see it,” he said. “It’s one of those things, it’s fun for a day, I’m not going to try to do it the rest of the year. Not going to try to swing straight uphill. Hey, tomorrow my swing could stink. It’s a daily grind, every day, trying to make your swing as good as possible.”

Adrian Gonzalez, who lost in the final round of the Home Run Derby in 2011, says he would never do it again, but not because of the swing problems.

“I wouldn’t do it again not because it messed up my swing, I wouldn’t do it because fans are there to see guys hit 500 feet, and I only hit 360 feet,” he said. “Fans just don’t want to see the ball hit over the fence, they want to see it hit out of the stadium.”

But isn’t that the problem? Players suddenly gunning up to hit it out of the stadium, making changes in their mechanics that require time to smooth out?

“We do home run derby every day in batting practice and that doesn’t change our swings,” Gonzalez said. “Guys are always swinging for the fences and it’s fine.”

Gonzalez said the problem with Home Run Derby isn’t the swings, it’s the stories like these that warn about the swings.

“People say it messes up your swing, then you start off not having a good second half, and you let that creep in your mind,” he said. “It’s not the Home Run Derby that does it, it’s that you’re listening to outside people. Hitting’s such a mental thing, if you think your swing is messed up, your swing is messed up.”

There is absolutely nothing messed up about Corey Seager. His swing is a thing of beauty, his first half has been a portrait of impending greatness and his daily attitude is as quietly smooth as his stride.

Why risk any of that by joining a nationally televised dinger circus? Corey Seager is thrilled, the Dodgers are baffled, and the madness continues.

When asked if he was nervous about putting on a good show Monday, Seager said, “One-hundred percent. I’m worried about getting shut out.”

The Dodgers can only hope.

---

Seager bringing rookie power to Home Run Derby

By Ken Gurnick

LOS ANGELES -- Dodgers rookie shortstop Corey Seager will meet Baltimore's Mark Trumbo in the first round of the T-Mobile Home Run Derby on Monday in San Diego.
The 22-year-old Seager, the youngest Dodgers position player to be named to an All-Star team, leads the club with 17 home runs, only five shy of the single-season best he set last year, when he hit 18 at Triple-A and four during a September callup to the Major Leagues.

Seager said he's been excited about competing in the Derby since a Players Association rep approached him with the possibility a few weeks ago. Seager said he's flying in his parents from North Carolina and his father will be his pitcher.

As an organization, the Dodgers are vocally supportive of Seager, although also apprehensive because of the widespread belief that some players (especially young ones) have a harmful carryover effect into the second half when they alter their swing path for the Home Run Derby.

Although teammate Joc Pederson had already begun his offensive tailspin before he finished second to Todd Frazier in the competition last year, many link the severity of his second-half collapse to the Home Run Derby. Seager said he's more concerned about being shut out than any lasting effect the Derby will have.

"If it messes up your swing," Seager said, "you can figure it out later."

Manager Dave Roberts was asked if he'd prefer Seager not participate.

"I'm not going to admit that," Roberts said. "If Corey wants to be in the Home Run Derby, we're going to wish him well. You look at what happened to Joc last year, to Todd Frazier, I don't know the numbers of guys that have come out of it just fine. I'm going to root for Corey. I'm going to root for my guy.

"Corey's swing is his swing. One little bit of thought is, you liken it to three-point shooting. We watched Larry Bird, and he expended very little effort. Corey uses the lower half a lot, and it is a lot of effort. [Robinson] Cano or [Josh] Hamilton, they can just flick of the wrist. But Corey wants to do it, and regardless of the results, he'll continue to get hits for us."


Here's how this year's Derby will work.

The players were seeded one through eight based on home runs totals through Wednesday. As the top seed, Trumbo takes on No. 8 Seager in the first round, with the winner of that head-to-head battle facing the winner of No. 4 Robinson Cano and No. 5 Giancarlo Stanton in the semifinals.

On the other side of the bracket, No. 3 seed Adam Duvall faces No. 6 Wil Myers and No. 2 Frazier meets No. 7 Carlos Gonzalez in the first round.

The winners of those two dinger duels will meet in the other semi. Then the last two sluggers standing hack for the hardware in the final round.

And now for the rules:
- Single-elimination tournament in which the winner of each matchup advances and the loser of each matchup is eliminated.
• If the second batter hits more home runs than the first batter in any matchup, he will be declared the winner and not attempt to hit additional home runs.
• Four minutes per batter for each round. Clock starts with the release of the first pitch. In the first round and semifinals, each batter is entitled to one 45-second "time out." In the finals, each batter is entitled to two 45-second "time-outs."
• Thirty seconds of bonus time will be awarded for two home runs that each equal or exceed 440 feet.
• Ties in any round will be broken by a 60-second swing-off with no stoppage of time or additional time added. If a tie remains after the swing-off, batters will engage in successive three-swing swing-offs until there is a winner.

Derby coverage will begin at 5 p.m. PT on Monday on ESPN, and will be simulcast on MLB.com.

Dodgers' bats unable to pick up Ryu

By Jack Baer and Ken Gurnick

LOS ANGELES -- The Dodgers outscored the Padres 25-0 in the opening series this year and have paid the price ever since, including Thursday night, when Drew Pomeranz threw seven scoreless innings on two hits in a 6-0 San Diego win.

San Diego is 5-2 against the Dodgers since that April series sweep, this one coming at the expense of Dodgers lefty Hyun-Jin Ryu, who was making his first start since the 2014 postseason. Ryu, returning from shoulder surgery, was roughed up for six runs in 4 2/3 innings.

"To see Ryu take the mound tonight was great," said Dodgers manager Dave Roberts. "Obviously we're disappointed about the loss. Let's wait and see tomorrow, if he responds with normal soreness, that's a good thing."

Melvin Upton Jr. opened the game with a home run, Pomeranz singled in a run in the second inning and the Padres chased Ryu in a three-run fifth inning that featured doubles by former Dodger Matt Kemp and Yangervis Solarte and a two-run triple by Alex Dickerson over the head of Dodgers right fielder Yasiel Puig.

The Dodgers were held to only two hits by Pomeranz, who allowed the Dodgers one run over seven innings in a 3-2 loss in May.

"Pomeranz used his curve a lot more, threw cut fastballs in to righties, elevated the fastball late in counts," said Roberts. "He got us earlier this year, pretty much the same. He's had a really nice first half. We couldn't get any momentum."

MOMENTS THAT MATTERED
That was fast: Ryu's last pitch to Upton, the first batter of the night, was his fastest pitch at 92 mph, but it left Upton's bat even faster, at 102 mph according to Statcast™, as it soared over the right-field wall to give the Padres a 1-0 lead. It was Upton's third home run leading off an inning this season and the 47th of his career.

No defensive help: The ball was hit so hard it might have gone over his head anyway, but Puig froze on the Dickerson two-run triple that chased Ryu. After retrieving the ball at the warning track, Puig's return throw missed three cutoff men and was fielded by Ryu near third base. Another run off Ryu was aided
by shortstop Corey Seager’s errant throw that skipped past first baseman Adrian Gonzalez and rolled into the Padres' dugout.

"It was hit hard, backspun," Roberts said of Dickerson's ball over Puig. "The trajectory coming off the bat [was tricky], but I think he misplayed it. Could he have made the play? Yes. Was it easy? No, it was not."

Pitchers at-bat: In their first at-bats of the game, Pomeranz and Ryu both came up in the second inning with two outs and runners on first and second. Pomeranz bounced a hanging curve from Ryu into center field for an RBI single. Ryu tapped a roller down the first-base line that was fielded by Pomeranz, who tagged out Ryu.

Drew settles down: After ending the second inning at 43 pitches, Pomeranz righted the ship and allowed only two baserunners for the rest of his start, with none coming after the fourth inning.

"He settled in," Padres manager Andy Green said. "I think early on, he comes out -- he does this from time to time -- he just throws the BP fastball to the first batter of the game. I'm not the biggest fan of it. If you want to pick apart the guy who went seven scoreless, but he throws three BP fastballs to Howie Kendrick, ends up walking him and really didn't settle in like vintage Drew Pomeranz until the third or fourth batter of the game."

STREAK SNAPPED
Seager finished 0-for-4, ending the rookie's hitting streak at 19 games. The streak was the longest in the National League this season and one game shy of tying Tommy Davis' Los Angeles Dodgers rookie record.

WHAT'S NEXT
Padres: Andrew Cashner will take the mound in his second start since returning from the disabled list as the Padres continue their series at Dodger Stadium on Friday night. The right-hander was strong in his first start, hitting 97 mph while allowing one earned run in six innings on Sunday vs. the Yankees.

Dodgers: Scott Kazmir makes his final start before the All-Star break in this 7:10 p.m. PT matchup with the Padres. To overcome first-inning struggles, the left-hander tried a simulated game while warming up for his last start and said having batters stand in helped his focus. He's unbeaten in his last 10 starts.

Ryu can't follow McCarthy's lead in return

By Ken Gurnick

LOS ANGELES -- Brandon McCarthy was ready for his return. Hyun-Jin Ryu, not so much.

McCarthy threw five scoreless innings on Sunday in his first start after Tommy John surgery, but on Thursday night in his first start since shoulder surgery Ryu couldn't get out of the fifth inning in the Dodgers' 6-0 loss to San Diego.

Sounding as if he was talking about a Spring Training start, manager Dave Roberts issued an upbeat assessment of Ryu, even though his depleted club was just blanked by a last-place team and has a three-game losing streak.
"I think the biggest part was getting him back out there and it was a victory in itself and the biggest question will be how he feels tomorrow and the next day," said Roberts. "As far as results, we'd hoped for more and better, but to get him through five innings, there were some good things up until the fifth inning when I felt he ran out of gas a little bit. We're encouraged."

Ryu, charged with six runs in 4 2/3 innings, hadn't pitched in a Major League game since the 2014 National League Division Series against St. Louis. He underwent left shoulder labrum surgery on May 21 last year and had eight starts in an on-again, off-again Minor League rehabilitation.

"Overall, the shoulder felt really great, no issues, I consider it pretty decent today," said Ryu. "As I threw more I was feeling better. I know it will get so much better as I pitch more innings. I was happy with my control. I just need to go through it more times and I will get better."

The Dodgers tried to find a soft spot for his return against the last-place Padres. He came into the game with a 4-0 record against San Diego and a 0.84 ERA.

But Melvin Upton Jr. led off the game with a home run. By the fifth inning, with Ryu's fastball velocity dropping from 91.1 mph average in the first inning to 87.4 in the fifth (per Statcast™), the Padres chased him with three runs.

Ryu is part of the starting pitching crisis that led the Dodgers to go into this game with a 14-man pitching staff. That included the pregame callup of swingman Carlos Frias, who ate up the final four scoreless innings while resting a bullpen that pitched nine innings Wednesday.

Frias now needs a few days off before he can pitch again, so he might be the one the Dodgers send out Friday when they recall a position player after limping through this game with a three-man bench.

Roberts conceded that it's no easy feat trying to work in one returning starting pitcher (Ryu) without knowing what you'll get from start to start. And Roberts is trying to do it with two (Ryu and McCarthy).

"This is the first time he's gone through shoulder surgery, obviously it's been a long road to come back, and we're really mindful of it," Roberts said of Ryu. "Until he can sustain start after start and increase the pitch count, it's an unknown for him and for us."

**Dodgers recall Frias; 3-man bench vs. Padres**

By Ken Gurnick

LOS ANGELES -- Desperate times call for desperate measures for the Dodgers, who took a 14-man pitching staff and three-man bench into their game with the Padres on Thursday night.

They recalled right-hander Carlos Frias for long-relief protection with Hyun-Jin Ryu being activated to make his 2016 debut. To make room, Luis Avilan was optioned back to Triple-A Oklahoma City and outfielder Will Venable was designated for assignment.

The unconventional roster is the result of a combination of factors, among them being the injury that put workhorse Clayton Kershaw on the disabled list; the returns to the rotation of Ryu and Brandon
McCarthy, who are not expected to pitch deep into games coming off 2015 operations; the 3 1/3-inning start by 19-year-old Julio Urias on Monday; a four-inning start by Kenta Maeda on Tuesday; and the 14-inning loss to Baltimore on Wednesday that depleted an already weary bullpen.

The Dodgers have not had a starting pitcher other than Kershaw go seven innings since May 14. In the last three games, they have had 17 relief appearances totaling 19 2/3 innings.

"Tonight we'll go with a three-man bench," said manager Dave Roberts. "It's a short bench. We thought four was short, but we'll manage. Hope we don't go 14 innings again. We'll get through it. You might see a pitcher take an at-bat tonight other than Ryu."

For the opener against the Padres, the only reserves on the bench are switch-hitting catcher Yasmani Grandal, left-handed-hitting second baseman Chase Utley and right-handed-hitting utility man Chris Taylor.

Roberts said he would use a pitcher to pinch-hit or pinch-run if the situation arises. On Wednesday he used Maeda to pinch-run.

Frias, who began this season on the disabled list with a strained oblique, is 3-3 with a 3.95 ERA in 10 appearances between Double-A Tulsa and Oklahoma City as he recovered from the injury. He spent two days with the Dodgers this season but did not pitch.

DODGERS PIT KAZMIR VS. PADRES’ CASHNER IN LA

By Jack Baer

The Padres' Andrew Cashner and the Dodgers' Scott Kazmir will face off on Friday night at Dodger Stadium in a matchup of starting pitchers who are looking to continue making steps forward.

Cashner made a triumphant return from the disabled list on Sunday, allowing one run over six innings while striking out six against the Yankees. While he ultimately took the loss, the right-hander's stuff was very encouraging as the Friars hope he can put a rough first half behind him.

Kazmir has struggled in the first inning to begin the season, leading him to throw a simulated inning before taking the mound on Sunday against the Rockies. He turned in one of his best starts as a Dodger, allowing three hits and no walks while striking out 10 over six scoreless innings. The lefty hasn't taken a loss in his last 10 starts.

Things to know about this game
• Adrian Gonzalez has had more plate appearances against Cashner than any batter in the pitcher's career, and the Dodgers' slugger has been quite successful, hitting .344/.432/.750 with four homers.
• Alexei Ramirez and Adam Rosales, both of whom spent time in the American League while Kazmir was with the Rays and Angels, are familiar with the lefty as well, holding a combined .930 OPS in 62 plate appearances.
• Padres All-Star first baseman Wil Myers, recently selected to the 2016 T-Mobile Home Run Derby, will take batting practice on the field pitched by his little brother Beau before Friday's matchup. The setup is Beau's first tuneup since Wil chose him to be his Derby pitcher.
Hyun-Jin Ryu struggles in return to Dodgers rotation; offense manages two hits in 6-0 loss to Padres

By JP Hoornstra

LOS ANGELES – The Dodgers got the nine-inning game they badly needed Thursday. Their weary bullpen got plenty of rest.

Otherwise, the less said about their 6-0 loss to the San Diego Padres, the better.

Hyun-Jin Ryu’s return to the Dodgers’ starting rotation was better in theory than in practice, at least for a day. Ryu (0-1) allowed six runs on eight hits in his first major-league start since October 2014 and couldn’t get through the fifth inning.

The South Korean left-hander was greeted by a Melvin Upton Jr. home run to begin the game. The Padres tacked on solo runs in the second and fourth inning, then broke the game open with three runs in the fifth.

Ryu, who was reinstated earlier Thursday from the 60-day disabled list, was one out from leaving with a 4-0 deficit when Padres left fielder Alex Dickerson tripled, scoring two. Ryu was removed after throwing 89 pitches, having walked two (one intentionally) and struck out four in 4-2/3 innings.

For Ryu, it was an unwelcome return from surgery a year ago. Ryu said through an interpreter that he “didn’t feel any discomfort” on the mound. The obligatory postgame pain he felt was “totally different” compared to his first two seasons with the Dodgers, when he pitched with a partial tear in his left shoulder labrum. That was the good news.

The bad news: Ryu’s fastball velocity dipped below 90 mph after the 60-pitch mark and never came back. Ryu got away with it in the minor leagues – he allowed three earned run in three rehab starts for Triple-A Oklahoma City – but he wasn’t fooling anyone Thursday. He induced only 10 swings-and-misses.

For the Dodgers, the game raised an important question: Can Ryu capably hold his spot in the rotation for the remainder of the season – or at least until the July 31 trade deadline?

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said that how Ryu rebounds physically Friday will provide some clue about the pitcher’s durability. But how long Ryu can maintain his velocity every fifth day is a mystery.

“Until we can sustain start after start, and get some length and continue to increase his pitch count, I think it’s an unknown for him (and) for us,” Roberts said. “We’ll keep a watchful eye on it.”

Padres counterpart Drew Pomeranz (8-7) threw seven shutout innings, allowing only two walks and two harmless hits – a single by Howie Kendrick and a double by Trayce Thompson. He also hit a batter with a pitch.

The Dodgers’ third straight loss dropped them 6-1/2 games behind the first-place San Francisco Giants in the National League West.
Roberts, cognizant of the drain of a 14-inning loss to the Baltimore Orioles on Wednesday, canceled pregame batting practice on the field, and players were not required to report to the stadium at the usual hour.

Yet the Dodgers still played like a team dragging its heels before the announced home crowd of 44,759. They never threatened to score and went 0 for 4 with runners in scoring position, having gone 1 for 14 the day before. Corey Seager went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts, ending his hitting streak at 19 games.

Making his first appearance of the season, Dodgers pitcher Carlos Frias entered in the sixth inning and retired the first six batters he faced. The Padres put runners at second and third with none out in the eighth inning, but the right-hander escaped that jam without allowing a run.

Frias allowed two hits, walked one batter and struck out three in four innings. He and Ryu were added to the 25-man roster prior to the game. Pitcher Luis Avilan was optioned to Triple-A Oklahoma City and outfielder Will Venable was designated for assignment.

Roberts was forced to manage the game with only three players on his bench: catcher Yasmani Grandal, and infielders Chase Utley and Chris Taylor. Of the three, only Taylor appeared in the game. He flew out as a pinch hitter.

The Dodgers figure to bring up a position player prior to Friday’s game against the Padres, giving Roberts an extra option on the bench.

They will still be waiting for the old Hyun-Jin Ryu, the one who went 28-15 in his first two seasons. That pitcher, Dodgers catcher A.J. Ellis said, “is a number-2, number-3 when healthy.”

But it wasn’t just Ryu’s velocity or durability that was missing Thursday.

“The breaking ball is kind of a pitch he was developing before he was injured, but it’s going to take some time before he gets it back,” Ellis said. “Fastball-changeup were great. Had some good curveballs in there. Tighten that slider up, and we’ll see Hyun-Jin 2013, 2014 really soon.”

Whicker: Dodgers were happy to see Hyun-Jin Ryu return, but the look was brighter than the result

By Mark Whicker

LOS ANGELES – A.J. Ellis said the mere sight of Hyun-jin Ryu was a pick-me-up bouquet for all the Dodgers on Thursday night.

Sullen fans at Dodger Stadium were more concerned with the sound.

Ryu’s first game since the 2014 NL Division Series might have been an inspiration, but it was also a 6-0 loss to San Diego.

It was difficult to anticipate that the left-hander would be wild-card ready. He was coming off labrum surgery ... but Dodgers fans had swallowed a dose of hope on Sunday when Brandon McCarthy pitched six two-hit innings in his first post-rehab start.
If Ryu could pitch just as strongly and if Clayton Kershaw could overcome his back problems and if Brett Anderson could return and if Kenta Maeda and Scott Kazmir could keep hanging on, maybe the Dodgers could patch together a rotation that could hold off the Mets, Cardinals, Mattinglys and Pirates ...

Warning: Never trust a paragraph with so many “ifs” and “coulds.”

Ryu’s first pitch to Melvin Upton Jr. was an 89-mph ball. His sixth pitch was 92 mph coming in and 102 mph going out, a home run into the right-center pavilion, and a 1-0 lead for San Diego.

The second inning was slower and more painful for Ryu. He walked catcher Derek Norris because he couldn’t place his fastball, and he gave up a base hit to Alexi Ramirez. With two outs, he allowed pitcher Drew Pomeranz to send a grass-riding single through the middle.

The fourth inning featured a 3-and-0 count to Norris and an eventual base hit, and Norris went to second on Corey Seager’s imprecise throw. Then Ramirez whaled a double off a 91-mph fastball, and the Padres led, 3-0, after four innings.

The fifth inning brought up a two-out, none-on situation, and Matt Kemp blasted an 88 mph pitch into the left-field gap and against the wall. He scored when Yangervis Solarte hit a wicked single down the left-field line.

That preceded another episode of Yasiel Puig Live (YPL), in which the right fielder admired Alex Dickerson’s savage liner until it sailed over his head. Puig followed it with one of his throws to nowhere, and the Dodgers trailed 6-0 when Manager Dave Roberts brought the hook for Ryu.

“His velocity started dropping right there, but I think it was just fatigue,” Roberts said of Ryu. “We’d hoped for more and better from him, but to see him out there was great. We’ll know more when he comes out of this, and then the day after that.”

Ryu had thrown 4-2/3 innings and 89 pitches, few of which fooled the opposition.

Roberts called it “a victory in itself,” and Ellis also preferred the long view.

“We’re excited to see what he did today, but also the rest of the year,” Ellis said. “He came out firing, and it was great to see. He had a good heater and showed it from the get-go. Regardless of the outcome, it was so much fun to see him out there. The fastball and changeup were very similar to what he was, or what it is.”

“But to expect him to come out and do what McCarthy did, that’s a high expectation,” Roberts warned.

It was, but the Dodgers brought it on themselves, using Ryu the night after their nine-pitcher, 14-inning nightmare against Baltimore on Wednesday. Roberts confronted this game with only three position players on his bench.

Put it this way: This was not July 31, come early. The Dodgers were hoping Ryu’s return would be like a bountiful trade in which they gave up nothing. Instead, Ryu became the ninth Dodger pitcher to start a game in a 14-day span.
Ryu’s exile has been an underrated problem for L.A. He had given the Dodgers two solid seasons, with 41 quality starts in 56 games and a 17-8 road record. In that last game, Ryu left Game 3 in St. Louis with the score tied, 1-1, after six innings before Dodger bullpen follies took over.

“He proved he was a big-game pitcher, a No. 2 or No. 3 starter,” Ellis said. “We’ve missed him. But suddenly we have a lot of guys coming back to our rotation who are savvy guys. They can add quality depth.”

Not to plow up old ground, but the Dodgers knew for at least a year that Zack Greinke’s departure was a possibility. They did not land Cole Hamels, with his ridiculously favorable contract and his devastating changeup, from Philadelphia and they let Johnny Cueto take a direct free-agent flight to San Francisco, where he might well win the Cy Young Award.

The real July 31 trade deadline still looms. But any Dodgers improvement will require something more than free.

**Dodgers’ Corey Seager not concerned (or convinced) that participating in Home Run Derby ruins a player’s swing**

By Joey Kaufman

LOS ANGELES – There is history that seems to offer warning signs.

When Joc Pederson participated in last year’s Home Run Derby, it was because the center fielder hit 20 homers over the first half of the season. But he hit only six the rest of the way. Pederson also carried an on-base plus slugging percentage of .831 in the first half. It was .617 in the second half.

Yasiel Puig saw a similar second-half slump of his own in 2014, the same season he was in the home run competition.

The recent cases add fuel to the much-discussed theory that participating in the Home Run Derby can mess up a hitter’s swing. The idea is that participants establish bad habits because they are encouraged to take big cuts to carry the ball over the fence.

Corey Seager acknowledged this, but doesn’t agree. He will take part in the annual event Monday evening as part of the All-Star festivities in San Diego, becoming the third straight Dodger to do so.

“It’s going to be fun for a day, but you’re not going to try to do it for the rest of the year,” the 22-year-old Seager said. “It’s one of those things that I’m not going to try to swing straight uphill. That’s not what’s going to happen. It’s just going to be fun. It’s going to be exciting.”

It’s not a concern to the Dodgers, either.

“It’s for the fans, and I think if Corey wants to participate, and hit a bunch of homers, we’ll root for him,” Manager Dave Roberts said.
Major League Baseball introduced a bracket-style tournament format last season, with the eight sluggers matched against each other and racing against the clock.

Players are seeded based on their home run totals so far this season, meaning eighth-seeded Seager (17) will face top-seeded Mark Trumbo, the Baltimore Orioles first baseman and Villa Park native who started the day with a major-league high 26.

“I’m in trouble,” the rookie shortstop laughed. “I’m in a lot of trouble.”

It should be a memorable affair, regardless. He will face pitches from his father, Jeff, who also throws batting practice to Corey and his older brothers during the offseason.

“That kind of put it over the top for me,” said Seager, the ninth rookie to participate. “It’s one of those things where it’d be fun to do, but with him being there, it’s just that much more exciting.”

Roberts maintained he expects Seager’s swing to be fine, partly because much of his power is derived from the lower half of his body when he swings, as opposed to other hitters who rely on a loopy swing and use their arms to drive the ball.

Despite the handful of recent examples, lasting effects of the Home Run Derby are hard to pinpoint.

Dodgers have participated eight times, but three of those players had a higher OPS during the second half of the season (Mike Piazza in 1993, Hee-Seop Choi in 2005 and Matt Kemp in 2011).

“Tomorrow my swing could (stink),” Seager said. “It’s a daily grind every day to make your swing as good as possible. It’s not too concerning.”

ROSTER SHUFFLE

The Dodgers on Thursday designated outfielder Will Venable for assignment, clearing room to recall Carlos Frias from Triple-A Oklahoma City and add another arm to an overworked bullpen.

The Dodgers used eight of their nine relief pitchers during a 14-inning loss to Baltimore on Wednesday.

Frias had not pitched since July 3.

Before Thursday, the Dodgers’ bullpen had thrown 103-2/3 innings in the last 30 days, the third-highest figure in the major leagues during that span.

Thursday’s moves left the Dodgers with a three-man bench, an usually small number of position players.

Dodgers’ Corey Seager, two former champs among eight Home Run Derby participants

By Staff
Dodgers rookie shortstop Corey Seager told reporters on Wednesday that he’d be participating in this year’s All-Star Home Run Derby, and Major League Baseball announced the eight-player field Thursday, with two former winners in the mix.

Defending champion Todd Frazier, now with the Chicago White Sox, is back after winning last year’s event as a Red in Cincinnati. He’s joined by 2011 Derby winner Robinson Cano of the Seattle Mariners.

Miami Marlins slugger Giancarlo Stanton, Colorado Rockies slugger Carlos Gonzalez, the Reds’ Adam Duvall, the Baltimore Orioles’ Mark Trumbo and the Padres’ Wil Myers round out the field for Monday’s event at San Diego’s spacious Petco Park. Myers will attempt to do what Frazier did a year ago, riding the adrenaline rush of playing in front of your hometown fans to the title.

The Home Run Derby changed its format last season, and MLB is sticking with that bracket-style tournament with players facing off head-to-head and racing against the clock. The players are seeded according to their home run totals so far this season. Here are the announced pairings and their homer totals:

No. 1 Mark Trumbo (26) vs. No. 8 Corey Seager (17)
No. 2 Todd Frazier (23) vs. No. 7 Carlos Gonzalez (18)
No. 3 Adam Duvall (22) vs. No. 6 Wil Myers (19)
No. 4 Robinson Cano (20) vs. No. 5 Giancarlo Stanton (19)

MLB says the tiebreaker between Stanton and Myers was home runs hit since June 1, with Stanton holding a 7-5 edge.

The ninth rookie to participate, the 22-year-old Seager could become the youngest player to win the event.

The Home Run Derby will take place Monday at 5 p.m. PT. The All-Star Game is Tuesday.

On deck: Padres at Dodgers, Friday, 7 p.m.

By Joey Kaufman

Where: Dodger Stadium
TV: SNLA (where available)
Did you know? Corey Seager leads the Dodgers in hits, runs and home runs. No Dodgers rookie has done that since Jackie Robinson in 1947

THE PITCHERS
DODGERS LHP SCOTT KAZMIR (7-3, 4.37)
Vs. Padres: 1-0, 4.37
At Dodger Stadium: 5-3, 3.51
Hates to face: Adam Rosales, 9 for 25 (.360)
Loves to face: Matt Kemp, 2 for 11 (.182), 4 SO

PADRES RHP ANDREW CASHNER (3-6, 4.42)
DODGER INSIDER

Ryu feels no pain after start, looks to increase velocity

By Jon Weisman

Hyun-Jin Ryu said after tonight’s big-league comeback start that he felt no problems physically with his surgically repaired shoulder, and is focusing on improving the results.

“Overall, I felt really great, (though) I gave up the runs,” Ryu said. “My shoulder felt great. I didn’t see any issues.”

“As I threw more, I was feeling better mentally,” he added. “I don’t think there were any uncomfortable pitches. I was pretty much happy with my control. ... I just have to get better.”

Ryu conceded that he is hoping his fastball speed will increase as he gets more work in.

“Compared to when I was healthy, of course my velocity is a little down,” he said. “Again, as I play more games, I think (I’ll improve).”

Seeing Ryu take a Major League mound again “was a victory in itself,” Dave Roberts said.

“I think the bigger answer will be how he feels tomorrow and the next day going forward,” said Roberts. “But to see Ryu take the mound tonight was great. Obviously, (with) the results, we would hope for more and better, but to get him through five innings, there were some good things. I really thought up until that fifth inning, when he ran out of gas a little bit and the velocity started to dip ... I thought he threw the ball well. The fastball had some life to it, good arm speed with the changeup.”

Dustin Nosler @DustinNosler
Hyun-Jin Ryu averaged 89.9 MPH on his 4-seam fastball tonight. He topped out at 92.2.

The Dodgers plan to attempt to increase his innings while monitoring what, even if Ryu isn’t hurting, is still an ongoing recovery.

“Until we can sustain start after start and get some length and continue to increase his pitch count, I think it’s an unknown for him and for us,” Roberts said. “We’ll just keep a mindful eye on it. ... Obviously we talk about starters and length, but the No. 1 thing is he’s back.”
“I think that the arm speed, the repeatability of the mechanics was really good. His feel for pitching’s still there. But yeah, there’s a lot more cases of guys coming back from Tommy John (surgery) ... the shoulder’s a tricky one. But I think the mechanics haven’t been compromised. For us, tomorrow, just to see how he comes in tomorrow, the next day, just to see how he feels will be telling.”

Hyun-Jin Ryu struggles in return

By Jon Weisman

The question with Hyun-Jin Ryu tonight, or at least one of the big ones after he spent more than a year recovering from shoulder surgery, was about the effectiveness of his fastball.

The San Diego Padres didn’t have much trouble answering it, knocking eight hits and scoring six runs over 4 2/3 innings, the length of Ryu’s first big-league appearance since the 2014 playoffs, in a 6-0 victory.

Ryu struck out four — two on curveballs in the 70s, one recorded as an 85 mph slider and one as an 81 mph changeup. But he otherwise struggled to put away hitters, from the 2-2 first-inning homer he allowed to leadoff hitter Melvin Upton Jr. (the first leadoff homer ever hit against Ryu as a Dodger) to the 1-2 RBI single he allowed in the second inning to opposing pitcher Drew Pomeranz, who also threw seven shutout innings.

The 29-year-old Ryu pitched a perfect third inning, but gave up a run in the fourth and couldn’t get the third out in the fifth, succumbing to back-to-back doubles by Matt Kemp and Yangervis Solarte, followed by a 108 mph Alex Dickerson triple whose flight, admittedly, Yasiel Puig misread in right field. (Casey Fien relieved Ryu and recorded the final out of the fifth.)

Meanwhile, with much less publicity, there was another return engagement tonight. In the fifth inning, Carlos Frias entered a Major League game for the first time in nearly 10 months, and acquitted himself well, finishing off the final four innings and providing the rest of the bullpen a much-needed respite.

Frias had to escape a bases-loaded eighth inning and two mean-looking fly balls to the right-center wall in the ninth, but became the first Dodger since Travis Schlichting in 2010 to pitch four innings of shutout relief — and needed only 52 pitches to do it. Three of his four innings were one-two-three.

The Dodger offense managed four walks and two hits, none of them by Corey Seager, whose hitting streak ended at 19. Still standing: Tommy Davis’ 56-year-old L.A. rookie hitting streak record (20 games) and Jackie Robinson’s franchise mark (21).

Dodgers activate Hyun-Jin Ryu, call up Carlos Frias

By Jon Weisman

As presaged three days ago, Hyun-Jin Ryu has officially been activated by the Dodgers, who also promoted Carlos Frias from Triple-A Oklahoma City to support their heavily used bullpen.
To make room on the roster for the two right-handers, the Dodgers have designated outfielder Will Venable for assignment and will send reliever Luis Avilan to Oklahoma City.

Frias was recalled June 19 by the Dodgers but did not pitch before being optioned June 21 back to Oklahoma City. Since then, he has allowed three runs in 12 innings with two walks and seven strikeouts, including two outings of at least five innings. He made 17 appearances for the Dodgers in 2015, 13 as a starter.

Avilan retired six of seven batters he faced over the past two games, striking out three. Venable is 1 for 18 as a Dodger with no walks and five strikeouts.

Dave Roberts aimed to temper expectations for Ryu’s return performance tonight.

“To expect what (Brandon) McCarthy did the first time out, that’s a high expectation,” Roberts said, “but I know Ryu’s going to do everything he can to give us a chance to win tonight.”

Corey Seager to slug away in Home Run Derby

By Jon Weisman

Corey Seager has officially been named a participant in the 2016 MLB Home Run Derby, beginning at 5 p.m. Monday in San Diego.

The 22-year-old rookie All-Star shortstop is tied for 15th in the National League in home runs, though he has 15 in his past 54 games, equivalent to a 45-homer pace.

Only six rookies before this year had been in the Home Run Derby, including Dodger teammate Joc Pederson in 2015. Narrowly missing out as champion to Todd Frazier, Pederson upended the previous Home Run Derby shortcomings of Mike Piazza (1993, 1994), Raul Mondesi (1995), Hee-Seop Choi (2005), Matt Kemp (2011) and Yasiel Puig (2014).

Many have attributed Pederson’s struggles after a hot start last year to the Derby, though his statistical slide began more than a month before the Derby took place. From June 4 last year until the 2015 All-Star Break, Pederson hit .175/.322/.308 with three homers in 146 plate appearances.

Two years ago, Ken Woolums and Daniel R. Braunstein debunked the myth of the Home Run Derby ruining hitters at FiveThirtyEight.com.

Hyun-jin Ryu hits a wall in his first game back

By Eric Stephen
Hyun-jin Ryu had a rough time in his first major league game in 21 months, and the Dodgers dropped their opener against the Padres, 6-0 on Thursday night at Dodger Stadium, the third straight defeat from LA.

Melvin Upton Jr. homered against Ryu to open the first inning, starting Ryu's comeback on an inauspicious note. The left-hander had his ups and downs, looking good with his four strikeouts and six ground ball outs.

But there were also some pitches that were tattooed, like the home run to Upton and the RBI double off the left field wall in the fourth inning by Alexei Ramirez. But even with that, the Dodgers were still in the game, down 3-0 in the fifth inning, when Ryu suddenly hit the wall.

Matt Kemp doubled to center with two outs in the fifth, then Yangervis Solarte doubled down the left field line for another run. After an intentional walk, Alex Dickerson hit the Dickens out of a line drive over the head of a befuddled Yasiel Puig in right field for a triple to bring home two more runs and end Ryu's night unceremoniously.

Ryu threw 89 pitches in his first major league start in 640 days, and allowed six runs on eight hits, double the runs he allowed in his previous five starts against the Padres combined.

The Dodgers offense didn't do much of anything against Drew Pomeranz, who struck out six and walked two in his seven scoreless innings. He allowed only two hits, a single by Howie Kendrick in the third inning and a double by Trayce Thompson in the fourth.

The one glaring positive on Thursday for the Dodgers was Carlos Frias, called up to give the bullpen a rest, and that he did. After Casey Fien recorded the final out of the fifth inning, Frias came in and pitched the final four scoreless innings, needing only 52 pitches.

Corey Seager was 0-for-4 with two strikeouts on the night, snapping his hitting streak at 19 games.

Up next
Scott Kazmir gets the ball on Friday night for the Dodgers in the second game of the series, a 7:10 p.m. PT start. Andrew Cashner will be on the mound for San Diego.

After Frias filled his role with aplomb, it wouldn't be a surprise to see him optioned back to Triple-A Oklahoma City for a position player so the Dodgers can go back to a four-man bench for the final three games before the All-Star break.

Thursday particulars
Home run: Melvin Upton Jr. (14)
WP - Drew Pomeranz (8-7): 7 IP, 2 hits, 2 walks, 6 strikeouts
LP - Hyun-jin Ryu (0-1): 4⅔ IP, 8 hits, 6 runs, 2 walks, 4 strikeouts

Home Run Derby bracket revealed, Corey Seager's dad will pitch to him

By Eric Stephen
LOS ANGELES -- The official 2016 Home Run Derby field was announced on Thursday, and Dodgers shortstop Corey Seager drew the eighth seed among the eight contestants.

That means Seager will first face No. 1 overall seed Mark Trumbo, who leads the major leagues with 26 home runs this season, in the first round, on Monday night at Petco Park in San Diego. Looming in the second round is the winner of the battle between Giancarlo Stanton and Robinson Cano to get to the final.

The other four candidates are defending champion Todd Frazier, Wil Myers, Adam Duvall and Carlos Gonzalez.

To catapult this story into the feel-good stratosphere, Seager's father Jeff will pitch to him. So not only does Jeff Seager have to sons playing major league baseball, two sons who have made All-Star teams no less, but now he gets to throw to his son in the Home Run Derby.

Alanna Rizzo ✔ @alannarizzo
Jeff Seager is already getting loose. Corey's dad will throw to him in the Home Run derby. #Dodgers

ESPN will televise the 2016 Home Run Derby on Monday night at 5 p.m. PT, with Chris Berman, Jessica Mendoza and Aaron Boone on the call.

**Dodgers designate Will Venable for assignment, recall Carlos Frias**

By Eric Stephen

LOS ANGELES -- The Dodgers made a few roster moves before Thursday's game against the Padres, one to make room for the return of starting pitcher Hyun-Jin Ryu and the other to provide some relief for a bullpen that has been worked to the hilt of late.

Ryu was activated from the 60-day disabled list and pitcher Carlos Frias was recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City, and pitcher Luis Avilan was optioned to Triple-A. To make room for Ryu on both the active and 40-man rosters, outfielder Will Venable was designated for assignment.

The moves mean that for the time being the club is carrying 14 pitchers, including nine relievers, and only 11 position players, which means a three-man bench.

At most, this roster configuration doesn't figure to last more than four games, with the Dodgers trying to get through these four games to get to the All-Star break.

The Dodgers bullpen has pitched 19⅔ innings in the last three days and 42⅔ innings in the last 10 days, including eight pitchers throwing a total of nine innings in relief on Wednesday. The club needs Frias as the long man to protect against the uncertainty of Ryu, making his first major league start since the 2014 NLDS after missing a year and a half following shoulder surgery.

Frias has a 3.95 ERA in 10 games, including six starts this season between Double-A Tulsa and Triple-A Oklahoma City, with 32 strikeouts and 11 walks in 43⅔ innings. He last pitched on Sunday, throwing 27 pitches in 1⅔ innings.
This is the second major league stint this season for Frias, who was up for two days in June as long man insurance but did not pitch.

Venable was designated for assignment for the second time this season, removing him from the 40-man roster. The veteran outfielder was 1-for-18 (.053) with a double and a hit by pitch in 12 games, including three outfield starts.

The club has 10 days to decide what to do with the 33-year-old Venable. If he passes through waivers, as he did previously, the club can send him outright to the minors, but Venable has the right to refuse any minor league assignment should he so choose.

Avilan was up for two days as relief help in his own right, and pitched a scoreless inning on both Tuesday and Wednesday. In three major league stints this season the southpaw has allowed three runs in three innings, with four strikeouts and three walks.

**Dodgers-Cardinals to play on ESPN 'Sunday Night Baseball' on July 24**

By Eric Stephen

LOS ANGELES -- The Dodgers and Cardinals will conclude their weekend series on ESPN 'Sunday Night Baseball' on July 24, the network announced on Thursday.

After the four-day All-Star break, the Dodgers have a nine-game road trip that will take them to Phoenix, Washington D.C. and St. Louis, playing three games each against the Diamondbacks, Nationals and Cardinals.

The final game of that series against the Cardinals will now be a 5 p.m. PT start, with Dan Shulman, Jessica Mendoza and Aaron Boone calling the game along with Buster Olney for ESPN, which has exclusive broadcast rights on Sunday night.

This will be the sixth time the Dodgers play on 'Sunday Night Baseball' in 2016, including a loss to the Cardinals at Dodger Stadium on May 15, a series in which the Dodgers won the other two games. The Dodgers beat the Giants on April 17 at home and beat the Mets on May 29 in New York. They lost to the Giants on June 12 in San Francisco and to the Pirates on June 26 in Pittsburgh.

The July 24 game in St. Louis is the final game of the Dodgers’ road trip, and they are off the next day before opening a five-game homestand back in Los Angeles.

**Cody Thomas homers in second straight game ; Raptors win 5-4**

By Craig Minami

Dodger affiliates in the Rookie leagues were 5-0 on Thursday while Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Rancho Cucamonga lost. Great Lakes had their game suspended due to playing conditions.

Player of the day
13th round draft pick Cody Thomas hit his second home run for Ogden on Thursday. Thomas has played two games for the Raptors and has homered in each game. Overall, Thomas has a total five home runs; three in Arizona and now two in Ogden, in 29 at-bats.

Triple-A Oklahoma City
The Dodgers dropped their series opener to the Storm Chasers (Royals) 13-7 at Oklahoma City. Jharel Cotton started and gave up four runs in five innings. Cotton also gave up four hits, two walks and struck out six.

Left-handed pitcher Randy Choate had a rough first appearance for the Dodgers. Choate gave up two hits, including a two-run home run and walked two while recording two outs.

Andrew Toles had three hits, Micah Johnson, Rob Segedin and Corey Brown each had two hits.

Double-A Tulsa
The Drillers fell behind 5-0 and could not catch up to the Missions (Padres), losing 6-5.

Jeremy Kehrt took the loss, he gave up five runs (four earned) in his six innings.

Willie Calhoun hit his 16th home run and was 2-for-2 with two walks.

Class-A Rancho Cucamonga
The Quakes gave up their lead to 66ers (Angels) and dropped their second straight game 6-5. The Quakes led 5-1 going to the bottom of the sixth but then saw the 66ers tie the game in the seventh.

In the ninth inning, the 66ers loaded the bases and won on a sacrifice fly.

Grant Holmes pitched well for five innings, allowing one run on four hits, two walks and striking out five. In the sixth, Holmes struck out the first hitter and then gave up a walk, a single and then a two-run triple. Holmes would finish with 5⅓ innings pitched, giving up four runs, six hits, three walks and striking out six.

Three Quakes had two hits, Erick Mejia, Tim Locastro and Joey Curletta. Curletta hit his eighth home run and had four RBI.

Class-A Great Lakes
The Loons and Whitecaps (Tigers) game was suspended after one inning and will be played later this season.

Rookie - Ogden
The Raptors led 5-0 and held on to beat the Chukars (Royals) 5-4. Cody Thomas hit a two-run home run in his first at-bat to give the Raptors the early lead.

Gregor Mora recorded a three-inning save, allowing an unearned run, two hits, two walks and striking out three.

Rookie - Arizona
The AZL Dodgers scored five runs in the ninth inning to come back and beat AZL Athletics 6-4.
The Dodgers batted around in the ninth inning and they scored as a result of a bases-loaded walk, a bases-loaded hit-by-pitch, a run-scoring single, a sacrifice fly and a wild pitch.

Gavin Lux and Hendrick Clementina each had two hits.

Dominican Summer League - Dodgers1 and Dodgers2
The Dodgers1 won 9-3 over Diamondbacks2 while Dodgers2 won two games over the Astros Blue. Starling Heredia hit his second home run in the first game against the Astros Blue.

Transactions
Triple-A: Los Angeles recalled right-handed pitcher Carlos Frias from Oklahoma City; Los Angeles optioned left-handed pitcher Luis Avilan to Oklahoma City; left-handed pitcher Randy Choate assigned to Oklahoma City. Double-A: Tulsa activated catcher Tyler Ogle from the 7-day disabled list; Tulsa placed outfielder Daniel Fields on the 7-day disabled list. Class-A: Great Lakes activated infielder Brendon Davis from the 7-day disabled list; Great Lakes placed catcher Garrett Hope on the 7-day disabled list; Great Lakes placed right-handed pitcher Isaac Anderson on the 7-day disabled list retroactive to July 5, 2016. Rookie: Left-handed pitcher Devin Smeltzer assigned to AZL Dodgers; right-handed pitcher Edwin Uceta assigned to DSL Dodgers2; right-handed pitcher Oliver Polanco assigned to DSL Dodgers1 from DSL Dodgers2; catcher Marco Hernandez assigned to DSL Dodgers1 from DSL Dodgers2; right-handed pitcher Esmerlyn Cespedes assigned to DSL Dodgers1; catcher/first baseman Jair Camargo assigned to DSL Dodgers2 from DSL Dodgers1.

Thursday Scores
Omaha 13, Oklahoma City 7
San Antonio 6, Tulsa 4
Inland Empire 6, Rancho Cucamonga 5
Great Lakes 0, West Michigan 0 (Suspended)
Ogden 5, Idaho Falls 4
AZL Dodgers 6, AZL Athletics 4
Dodgers1 9, Diamondbacks2 3
Dodgers2 4, Astros Blue 3 (Game 1)
Dodgers2 3, Astros Blue 2 (Game 2)

Friday Schedule
4:05 p.m. PT - Dayton (Reds) (Jacob Constante) at Great Lakes (Dennis Santana)
5:05 p.m. - Omaha (Christian Binford) at Oklahoma City (TBD)
5:05 p.m. - San Antonio (Aaron Northcraft) at Tulsa (Scott Barlow)
5:30 p.m. - Ogden (TBD) at Grand Junction (Rockies) (Mike Nikorak)
7:00 p.m. - AZL Indians at AZL Dodgers
7:05 p.m. - Rancho Cucamonga (Joshua Sborz) at High Desert (Rangers) (TBD)

ESPN LA

Hyun-Jin Ryu's return means Dodgers gaining more strength

By Doug Padilla
LOS ANGELES -- The Los Angeles Dodgers have been unwrapping miles and miles of bandages this season, and they did more unveiling Thursday night.

Hyun-Jin Ryu represented the latest Dodgers player to return from injury, firing a wobbly 4⅔ innings at the San Diego Padres in an eventual 6-0 defeat, the Dodgers' third consecutive loss after a five-game winning streak.

Ryu followed in the footsteps of Brandon McCarthy, who returned a little more verve Sunday while firing five scoreless innings at the Colorado Rockies.

But the Dodgers were realistic and not expecting total domination, just a baseline from which to move forward. They got that, seeing Ryu work through an opponent with a fastball that ranged from 89-92 mph, and offspeed pitches that sometimes dipped into the upper 60s.

"That's how he was before, pitching in all spectrums of velocity when he was so dominate for us in 2013, 2014," said catcher A.J. Ellis, who was pleased to see his old battery-mate make a return to the mound. "He knows how to pitch. He's such an amazing athlete out there on the mound, he has such an amazing feel and great body control. He adds and subtracts really well. I'm just really excited to see him out there today."

Ryu gave up single runs in the first, second and fourth innings, and then allowed a three more in the fifth, an inning when Yasiel Puig misjudged a line drive from the Padres' Alex Dickerson for a two-run triple. By then, Ryu was showing fatigue as he continued to work himself toward full strength.

"Yes, my velocity went down in the fifth inning compared to the first few innings, but we'll just have to adjust as I go a little more, play more games," Ryu said through an interpreter. "Hopefully I will feel better."

Ryu said he is confident he can find more velocity moving forward, but Ellis suggested that he shouldn't sweat it. Ellis said Ryu is savvy enough to get hitters out and felt that Friday's effort was good enough to win major leagues games with a little refinement.

"Even from the beginning, I was never a first-half pitcher, always a second-half guy coming back later with strong velocity," Ryu said. "But compared to when I was healthy, of course the velocity is down. But as I play more games, I think I will get that back."

Ryu was only one in a string of more recoveries that are on the way. Clayton Kershaw (mild herniated disc) already is playing catch. The earliest he can return is for the start of the second half on July 15. There is also Joc Pederson working on a return from a bruised shoulder joint, Andre Ethier trying to come back from a spiral fracture in his right leg, and Brett Anderson on the mend from arthroscopic back surgery.

Officially, the Dodgers already are at the halfway point of the season, moving past their 81st game over a week ago. The unofficial midway point comes Sunday when the All-Star break begins.

So are the Dodgers healing fast enough to make a difference this season?
The simple answer is yes. The Dodgers own the second wild card at the moment, a half-game behind the New York Mets, so they are postseason eligible. The Dodgers are 2½ games clear of the St. Louis Cardinals and Miami Marlins, with the Pittsburgh Pirates three games back. In the National League West, the Dodgers are in second place, 6½ games behind the San Francisco Giants.

The reality, though, is that the Dodgers might never have the team they envisioned, even when all of the regulars have returned. Kershaw and Pederson might return to their norms, but will Ethier and Anderson have enough time to round into the level that was expected this year?

The Dodgers are going to have to come to some kind of conclusion in three weeks when the non-waiver trade deadline approaches. Does the front office deal young prospects for outfield and/or pitching help for the current club, or does it give the original vision of the club the chance to find itself?

Where Ryu fits into the mix remains to be seen. When Kershaw comes back at some point in the second half, somebody will have to be pushed out of the rotation. At this point, the main candidates are Ryu or Bud Norris.

Ryu's first pitch of the game might have been a sign that a hard night's work was ahead as his fastball registered 89 mph on the stadium radar gun. His fourth pitch clocked in at 92 mph, but it was deposited over the wall in right-center field by Melvin Upton Jr. for a home run.

Ryu's rehab starts were marked by low radar-gun readings and runs scored, the former more troublesome since it suggests the left-hander might have to forge on with an altered style in order to get batters out.

But manager Dave Roberts isn't expecting a reinvented Ryu, only a continuation of the pitcher that changed speeds so well in the past. Pitchers on the mend from shoulder surgery often are on uncharted territory these days more than pitchers on the way back from Tommy John surgery.

"I think that the arm speed, the repeatability mechanics was really good and has been good," Roberts said. "His feel for pitching is still there. But yeah, there are a lot more cases of guys coming back from Tommy John, as far as the elbow, and the shoulder is a tricky one. But I think the mechanics have not been compromised. Just to see how he comes in tomorrow and the next day will be telling."

Pomeranz limits Dodgers to 2 hits in 6-0 loss to Padres

By Associated Press

LOS ANGELES -- With the All-Star Game coming up next week, Drew Pomeranz made a strong case to pitch in his home ballpark.

He tossed two-hit ball over seven innings, Melvin Upton Jr. homered leading off the game and the San Diego Padres beat the Dodgers 6-0 on Thursday night in a rough comeback for Los Angeles starter Hyun-Jin Ryu.
Pomeranz (8-7) struck out six and walked two in his third straight start of seven innings with one run or less. The left-hander has 26 strikeouts in his last 27 innings. He helped himself offensively, singling in a run with two outs in the second for a 2-0 lead.

"I don't know what else I'm supposed to do for that," Pomeranz said of a possible All-Star berth in San Diego. "I try not to focus on it. My goal is to go out there and do what I did every single time. Seven innings, three starts in a row, that's an improvement for me, and that's what I want to do, be out there in the game longer."

The National League is in need of a replacement for injured Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw and Pomeranz deserves the nod, Padres manager Andy Green said.

"He's been outstanding. Sometimes the opportunity doesn't present itself. We're hopeful that it does the next couple of days," Green said. "Anybody who is tuned into this game, if they're looking for somebody to replace Kershaw, I think he is clearly the candidate."

Ryu (0-1) got a rude welcome back to the major leagues, giving up six runs and eight hits in 4 2/3 innings with four strikeouts and two walks. The South Korean left-hander was reinstated earlier Thursday from the 60-day disabled list to make his first major league start since Sept. 12, 2014. He had shoulder surgery in May 2015, causing him to miss all last season.

"Overall, I felt really great," Ryu said through a translator. "My shoulder felt really great. I didn't see any issues."

Ryu's struggles extended an unwelcome streak for Dodgers starters, with none of them going seven innings since May 14 except for the now-injured Kershaw.

However, just having Ryu back in the rotation was a welcome sight for the Dodgers. Brandon McCarthy recently returned to the rotation and Brett Anderson is soon to follow.

"He looked very comparable to where he was," Dodgers catcher A.J. Ellis said. "We'll see the Hyun-Jin of 2013-14 really soon. He's going to be a huge weapon for us in the second half."

Dodgers rookie All-Star Corey Seager went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts, ending his 19-game hitting streak, which was the longest in the National League this season.

San Diego won for the fifth time in seven games, rapping out 10 hits.

Alexei Ramirez's RBI double extended the Padres' lead to 3-0 in the fourth. They tacked on three runs with two outs in the fifth on Yangervis Solarte's RBI double and Alex Dickerson's first career triple to deep right. Yasiel Puig misplayed the ball, which went over his head, and then he missed the cutoff man, making it 6-0 and chasing Ryu.

GREAT CATCH
Dodgers center fielder Trayce Thompson made two nifty catches to rob former Dodger Matt Kemp. He snagged Kemp's liner before crashing into the wall in the seventh and then grabbed another long shot from Kemp in the ninth. One batter earlier, Puig made a highlight catch on Wil Myers in deep right. In the first, Puig made a running grab of Solarte over the low wall in right field to end the inning.
HIT IT HERE
Seager has a tall task in the first round of the Home Run Derby during All-Star festivities next week. The rookie takes on Baltimore's Mark Trumbo, the top seed and current major league leader with 26 homers. Seager ranks second among major league rookies with 17 homers. He's flying his family from North Carolina to San Diego to watch.

"He's going to be nervous and there are some guys who get shut out," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "There's a lot of pressure. You're kind of like a man on an island out there."

ALL IN THE FAMILY
Myers is making the Home Run Derby a family affair. He picked his 19-year-old brother Beau to pitch to him during the contest. Beau just completed his freshman year as a third baseman at Appalachian State.

"He sent me a couple videos of him throwing BP in the cage, so hopefully he's ready," Wil Myers said. "Win or lose it doesn't really matter. It's a cool thing for me and him to go out there and do, and it's something that we'll remember for a long time."

DODGERS MOVES
Los Angeles recalled RHP Carlos Frias from Triple-A Oklahoma City for his second stint on the active roster this season. He was recalled June 19-21 but didn't appear in a game. The reliever pitched last Sunday for OKC against Nashville, allowing one run and one hit in 1 2/3 innings for his third win of the season. ... They designated OF Will Venable for assignment and will send LHP Luis Avilan to OKC.

TRAINER'S ROOM
Padres: RHP Tyson Ross (shoulder inflammation) had a rehab bullpen session pushed back after twisting an ankle while in his room exercising Wednesday. An X-ray was negative. He is resting the ankle and expected to throw in the next few days. ... 2B Cory Spangenberg (hamstring) and 2B Jemile Weeks (hamstring) are progressing in their rehab in Arizona and expected to begin playing minor league rehab games by the middle of next week.

UP NEXT
Padres: RHP Andrew Cashner (3-6, 4.42 ERA) makes his second start since being reinstated from the DL.

CURSE-BUSTER: COREY SEAGER HAS NO FEAR OF HOME RUN DERBY

By Doug Padilla

LOS ANGELES -- Corey Seager’s thoughts on haunted houses and UFO sightings remain unknown. He was revealing, though, on his opinion of the Home Run Derby Curse.

“I don't see it,” said Seager, one of baseball’s brightest young stars, who got the invitation to participate in the Home Run Derby on Monday at San Diego in advance of Tuesday’s All-Star Game.

The impressive shortstop and No. 2 hitter for the Dodgers was a slam dunk for All-Star consideration. He won’t start for the National League -- that popularity contest was won by Addison Russell of the Chicago Cubs -- but Seager’s production was worthy of the players’ vote to join the squad.
Heading into play Thursday, Seager led all National League shortstops in hits (102), was second in slugging percentage (.537) and OPS (.900), and ranked third with 17 home runs.

He will be just the seventh rookie to compete in the long-ball event after Wally Joyner and Jose Canseco in 1986, Mark McGwire (1987), Mike Piazza (1993) and Kris Bryant and Joc Pederson last year.

“It’s one of those things that, it’s going to be fun for a day, but you’re not going to try to do it for the rest of the year,” Seager insisted. “It’s one of those things that I’m not going to try to swing straight uphill. That’s not what’s going to happen. It’s just going to be fun. It’s going to be exciting.”

Yet Pederson did struggle after nearly winning the Home Run Derby last year. He hit just six home runs the remainder of the season. And the guy who won last year’s Home Run Derby? Todd Frazier also had power issues in the second half.

So do the Dodgers really want Seager to be doing this? Maybe manager Dave Roberts will admit that it is far from a good idea.

“I’m not going to admit that,” Roberts said. “I think that if Corey wants to be in the Home Run Derby, we’re going to wish him well. You look at what happened to Joc and Todd Frazier ... I don’t know, the guys that have been in the Home Run Derby and have come out of it just fine and continued their second half just fine. I don’t know. I’m not going to say that those are outliers, but I don’t know. Of all the guys that participate, how they fare, I don’t know those numbers.”

Seager shares a residence with Pederson. So what did his roommate say about the experience?

“Yeah, he said it was fun, just to enjoy it, don’t worry about getting tired, all that other stuff,” Seager said. “Just have fun. We talked a little about bats he swung. Other than that, he said just to enjoy it.”

So instead of a conversation on why Seager might not want to participate, Pederson offered tips on how to win the thing. It won’t be an easy task for Seager, who is a No. 8 seed in the eight-man field. He said that per Pederson’s advice, he ordered some bats longer and lighter than the ones he swings in games.

Another way Seager is making the event as comfortable as possible is to fly in his father from North Carolina to have a familiar face pitching to him.

“That kind of put it over the top for me,” Seager said. “It’s one of those things where it’d be fun to do, but with him being there, it’s just that much more exciting.”

And when the second half resumes, Seager is confident his hit-to-all-fields swing will be intact.

“Tomorrow my swing could suck. It’s a daily grind every day to make your swing as good as possible,” Seager said. “It’s not too concerning.”

Perhaps more concerning is that Seager will be in a home-run-hitting contest when he doesn’t even consider himself to be a home-run hitter.

“Not really,” he said. “I’ve had some success early right now. It’ll be exciting and fun, and I am looking forward to it. I’m just going to try to enjoy it.”
Hyun-Jin Ryu shaky in return vs. Padres; Carlos Frias called up

By Doug Padilla

LOS ANGELES -- After a 14-inning game Wednesday, the Dodgers made a pair of roster moves Thursday in advance of a four-game series against the San Diego Padres.

As expected, left-hander Hyun-Jin Ryu was activated from the disabled list to start Thursday's game. It was Ryu's first outing in 21 months after a shoulder injury that required surgery.

Ryu lasted just 4⅔ innings, allowing six earned runs on eight hits and two walks while striking out four.

"Overall, I felt really great," Ryu said through a translator. "My shoulder felt really great. I didn't see any issues."

The Dodgers fell 6-0 to the Padres.

"The biggest part was getting him out there, and it was a victory in itself," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "Up until the fifth inning where he ran out of gas and velocity started to slip, I thought he threw the ball well."

The Dodgers also got some help for a tired bullpen, calling up right-hander Carlos Frias from Triple-A Oklahoma City. Frias came on in relief Thursday and pitched four scoreless innings, allowing two hits and a walk with three strikeouts.

To make room on the 25-man roster, outfielder Will Venable was designated for assignment for the second time this season. The Dodgers also optioned left-hander Luis Avilan back to Triple-A Oklahoma City.

Ryu had not pitched in the majors since Sept. 21, 2014. He ended that season with a 14-7 record and a 3.38 ERA, with 139 strikeouts in 152 innings. He did not have shoulder surgery until May of last year.

He posted a 4.23 ERA over eight minor league rehab starts in advance of his return. Ryu had a setback this spring with a leg injury and another during his rehab stint, when he worked through shoulder soreness.

Frias is making his second appearance with the Dodgers but did not pitch the first time he was called up. In 10 minor league games this season, Frias was 3-3 with a 3.95 ERA. Five of his 10 outings were starts.

"We have so much quality depth in our rotation," Dodgers catcher A.J. Ellis said. "We'll see Hyun-Jin of 2013-14 really soon. He's going to be a huge weapon for us in the second half."

NBC LA

Hyun-Jin Ryu Rocked in Return, Padres Shutout Dodgers 6-0
By Michael Duarte

It was over after the first batter.

Hyun-Jin Ryu served up six runs in his highly anticipated return to the Major Leagues and the San Diego Padres defeated the Los Angeles Dodgers 6-0 on Thursday night at Dodger Stadium.

Melvin Upton Jr. greeted Ryu back to the big leagues with a solo shot in his first at-bat of the game—the first time in his career that Ryu allowed a leadoff homer—and the second leadoff home run by Upton this season.

"They made good swings tonight so give them credit," said Dodgers' catcher A.J. Ellis who caught Ryu. "Regardless of outcome, it was great to see him out there on the mound."

The game marked Ryu's first trip back to the mound since he pitched game three of the NLDS series in St. Louis on Oct. 6 2014.

"I'm so excited just to see him out there on the mound. He's somebody I developed a great pitcher-catcher rapport with," Ellis added. "I'm proud of him. He looked comparable to where he was before. A little rust and fatigue, but a lot to be encouraged by."

Entering the game he had the lowest ERA 0.84 against the Padres, but the Korean left-hander was knocked around as his fastball velocity continued to decline after each inning he pitched.

"Of course my velocity is a little down from before," Ryu said through a translator. "I think after a few games I'll get better at it. Overall I felt great. My shoulder felt fine."

Ryu allowed six runs on eight hits with two walks and four strikeouts in 4 and 2/3 innings of work.

"He's a big game pitcher and pitched in many playoff games for us," continued Ellis. "We have so much depth and quality pitchers in our rotation now."

Carlos Frias, who was activated by the Dodgers on Thursday, and pitched a career-high four innings of scoreless relief in his first MLB action of 2016.

"For our bullpen to get a reset and get a day was good to see," Roberts said of Frias. "We haven't decided which direction we're going to go, but we're going to send someone down and a position player will be coming back."

Drew Pomeranz threw a two-hitter for his eighth win of the season, striking out six over seven strong innings of work.

"Pomeranz got us earlier this year," Roberts said of his former pitcher. "He's had a really nice first half and baserunners were hard to come by tonight and we really couldn't get any momentum."

Pomeranz (8-7) helped his own cause with an RBI single in the second inning and the Padres were able to chase Ryu from the game with three runs in the fifth thanks to back-to-back doubles by Matt Kemp and Yangervis Solarte followed by a triple by Alex Dickerson.

Dickerson recorded the first multi-hit game of his career, going 2-for-4 with a triple and two RBI.
The Dodgers dropped their third straight game, and their offense was shut out, after a six-hour marathon game the day before.

"We have three more games left before the All-Star break," added Roberts. "We expect to win all three of those games."

Corey Seager went 0-for-4 and saw his career-high 19-game hitting streak snapped at the hands of San Diego. Seager's streak was the second longest by a rookie in franchise history as the 22-year-old rookie fell one game shy of Tommy Davis' record of 20 games.

Players of the Game:

Drew Pomeranz: No runs on two hits with six strikeouts in 7.0 IP.
Melvin Upton Jr.: Leadoff home run.
Alex Dickerson: 2-for-4 with a triple and two RBI.

Three Takeaways:
1. Oh Snap: Corey Seager finished 0-for-4 and struck out looking in his final at-bat as the rookie's 19-game hitting streak was snapped. The streak was the longest in the National League this season and the second longest by a rookie in Dodgers' franchise history as he fell one shy of tying Tommy Davis' 20-game streak in 1960.
2. Pitchers at the Plate: The difference in the game could very well have come down to who batted better at the plate between starting pitchers Hyun-Jin Ryu and Drew Pomeranz. Pomeranz came to the plate in the second inning with runners on first and second and two outs. The Padres pitcher promptly hit an RBI single up the middle to give the Padres a 2-0 lead. Ryu came up with runners at first and second and two outs in the bottom half of the second and weakly grounded out to Pomeranz.
3. Over 2 Million Served: With 44,759 fans in attendance at Dodger Stadium, the team surpassed the two-million mark in total attendance for 2016. The Dodgers lead the league in total attendance and average attendance and could eclipse the 4 million mark if things continue.

Up Next:
Padres (38-48): Andrew Cashner gets the call on Friday night for San Diego.
Dodgers (48-40): Scott Kazmir gets the start at 7:10 PM PST.

---

**THRILLIST**

**THE BEST THING TO EAT AT EVERY MLB STADIUM**

By Will Fulton

The next time you take yourself out to the ball game, don't buy some peanuts and Cracker Jacks. Because firstly, why would you buy peanuts and Cracker Jacks when Cracker Jacks already have peanuts in them? And secondly, food at baseball parks has gotten much, much better since the days when the Sultan of Swat served up dingers with a side of stale popcorn in a box with what we can only assume is an illustration of a child-slave sailor and his loyal attack dog.
Every modern MLB cathedral has more copious and varied food options than Babu's Dream Cafe, and each park always has a signature dish that simply outplays the rest of the roster. These national-pastime noshes add character and culinary ambience to their respective parks, and in their own little way, can make even the most boring of games (Marlins vs. Padres in mid-August, anyone?) somehow bearable. Now please rise and remove your caps, these are the best foods at every Major League ballpark.

Arizona Diamondbacks: Chase Field
What: Churro dog
Where: Sections 114 and 123
A relatively new addition to the concessions lineup at Chase Field, the ice cream-covered churro dog is, to paraphrase The Big Lebowski, "a churro-based snack for its time and place... it fits right in." Sure, I could have went with the flashy, 18in D-bat corn dog, but honestly, it's a little much. Kind of like a swimming pool in the outfield, right? But the churro dog is the benchmark of desert-baseball desserts.

Atlanta Braves: Turner Field
What: Buffalo chicken and waffles
Where: The 755 Club
Instead of opting for Georgia barbecue, or any of the Braves' increasingly gregarious stunt-Frankenfoods, I'm going with this spicy revival of a Southern classic. It's literally the best thing about the last-place Braves right now. The combo of zesty Buffalo sauce, crispy fried chicken, and waffles brings memories of the triple-headed Maddux, Smoltz, and Glavine in the mid-'90s... but again, just a little spicier. Be warned: the Braves are swapping stadiums next season, and no one is sure if the Buff chix waffles will travel with them. So, enjoy them while they last.

Baltimore Orioles: Camden Yards
What: Chesapeake fries
Where: The Flying Dog Grill, Section 27
The picturesque, bay-side stadium that Cal Ripken built (but not really, they used city-paid construction workers) actually has some of the best food options of any ballpark in the junior circuit, in a town brimming with surprisingly choice eats. So, this was a tough choice. In the end, this appetizer-meal -- which, in case you were wondering, is waffle fries covered with mounds of fresh Maryland crab dip -- won because of its regional ties (the Old Line State =crabs and Old Bay), and also because it's just really damn good. It's actually the best thing to come out of Charm City since The Wire wrapped. Apologies to Joe Flacco.

Boston Red Sox: Fenway Park
What: Fenway Frank
Where: Pretty much everywhere in Fenway Park
Part of the charm of baseball is the nostalgia (also, the coaches have to wear full uniforms, which is hilarious). The game is essentially played the same way it was hundreds of years ago. It's like a historical reenactment every summer, with limited commercial breaks and zero boring butter-churning. Back when the Great Bambino was slinging fastballs in Fenway, they ate hot dogs. And the nation still does. The Fenway Frank is a staple in one of America's oldest parks, and it remains the most popular thing on the menu. They're wicked ubiquitous, brah.

Chicago Cubs: Wrigley Field
What: Hot Doug's
Where: Bleachers only -- behind the center field scoreboard
When Hot Doug's shuttered its brick-and-mortar Chicago joint in 2014, many feared they wouldn't taste those sweet sausages again. Cubs fans finally found relief when Doug Sohn himself brought his sausages to the recently renovated, ivy-adjacent bleachers of Wrigley. The Friendly Confines just got a little friendlier, with a new trademark dish. Now, if they could just win a championship, Cubs fans could die happy. And full.

Chicago White Sox: US Cellular Field
What: Elote/corn off the cob
Where: Sections 104, 127, 142 and 529
The Second City's second-favorite baseball team (but Obama's No. 1!) gives the South Side of Chicago something to root for, if not on the field, than at least in the concessions line at the park formerly known as Comiskey. You can snag this snack in the form of an elote (corn on the cob), or a bowl of corn cut fresh off the cob and loaded with toppings of your choosing, including chili, salt, butter, and mayo. But when the dude asks what you want on top of yours, do the responsible thing and say, "All of them."

Cincinnati Reds: Great American Ball Park
What: Skyline Chili
Where: All over the park
Skyline Chili -- much like Reds legend Pete Rose -- is beloved by fans, but dramatically divisive, and sometimes controversial, pretty much everywhere else. While Cincinnatians (Cincinnatites? Cinccers?) consider their messy pseudo-chili a city landmark in itself, out-of-towners might not be able to grasp what makes the famous Skyline puddle so damn endearing to Queen City taste buds. But who cares? When in Cincy, you eat like the Reds fans do, which means plenty of Skyline. On nachos, on hot dogs, on ice cream (maybe?). You can get this stuff all over GABP, and you damn well should.

Cleveland Indians: Progressive Field
What: Melt Bar and Grilled
Where: The Right Field District
As the Cavaliers put the finishing touches on a historic, once-in-a-lifetime championship season, every Indians fan is asking the same thing: "LeBron can play first base, right?" At any rate, fans of the Tribe can look forward to eating what is consistently considered one of the best grilled cheeses in the entire nation at Progressive's newly renovated Right Field District. One bonkers sandwich from Melt alone is enough to shed the "Mistake by the Lake" label The Land was slapped with over the past quarter-century. Maybe it's best to ignore the Browns.

Colorado Rockies: Coors Field
What: CHUBurger
Where: The Rooftop at Coors Field
For this one, we turn to senior staff writer and Denver dweller Lee Breslouer: "CHUBurger is weirdly not the burger place owned by Nobel Prize winner Steven Chu. Rather, it's a rooftop location of a burger joint opened by the stalwart Colorado beer maker Oskar Blues. OB got its start as a brewpub, so it's no surprise to anyone from the area that its burger joint is one of the best in a state full of 'em. To wit: the first year it was open in 2014, the hard-working staff flipped 50,000 burgers. Local, grass-fed Angus beef is the centerpiece of said burgers, and it can be paired with shakes, fries, and a few Oskar Blues."

Detroit Tigers: Comerica Park
What: TIE: Craft beer and bacon on a stick
Where: Michigan Craft Beer, Section 104
That's right. Craft beer -- definitely a liquid -- is sharing the honor of the Motor City's best ballpark food with a stick-based cured meat. And it's not just because Tigers fans need to drown their sorrows with high-ABV counts quite regularly. I'll let Thrillist Deputy Editor and self-admitted Tigers fan Bison Messink explain: "Though the Tigers are behind the game in food, they were one of the first parks to step it up with craft beer, with a particular stand in right field (called 'Michigan Craft Beer') with beer from Michigan breweries like Founders, Bell's, New Holland, and Atwater. That stand also has bacon on a stick, which is also the best food-thing at the stadium, actually." OK. Sold.

Florida Marlins: Marlins Park
What: Pan con lechon (pork sandwich)
Where: Papo Llega y Pon, Section 27
The Marlins have one of the gaudiest parks in the entire league, but their best dish is surprisingly simplistic. For an authentic taste of Miami, which is pretty much an authentic taste of Cuba, you could do much, much worse than the pork sandwiches at Papo Llega y Pon, who have been whipping up sandwiches around South Beach for decades. The Marlins are known for fire-selling their team once every four to five years. Hopefully they hold on to this once-in-a-generation sandwich talent. Remember what happened with that Miguel Cabrera kid?

Houston Astros: Minute Maid Park
What: Texas Smoke
Where: Section 125, 406
Texas Smoke and its legendary brisket get bonus points as celebrity chef and owner Bryan Caswell is a legit Astros fanboy. It also truly embodies local flavor, and could hold its own as a meal outside of the ballpark. There are two locations in-park, though, to ensure the crowds at Minute Maid are never too far from a banging plate of homestyle BBQ. When the 'Stros moved from the NL to the AL, they luckily brought their trademarked brisket with them. They did add a designated hitter, though. Bad news for National League purists, good news for people who like to eat meat.

Kansas City Royals: Kauffman Stadium
What: Belfonte Ice Cream
Where: All over the stadium
So, we eschewed tradition and didn't go with any type of Kansas City BBQ. We know, "blasphemy," "heresy," "we'll burn for this," blah, blah, blah. Hear us out: Belfonte has been a KC staple since 1969, the same year the Royals themselves were founded (coincidence? ... Yeah, probably.). The ice cream is the antidote to those hot Midwestern day games out amidst the boiling metal of Kauffman's bleachers. It's the antidote to World Series hangovers, empty stomachs, and, if used correctly, malaise. Even better than a loaded bullpen.

Los Angeles Angels: Angel Stadium
What: Chronic Tacos
Where: Section 223
The Angels have one of the most exciting young players in the league in Mike Trout. They also have one of the most exciting young tacos in the league in the carnitas taco. While Trout comes from Millville, NJ, the tacos come from Chronic Tacos, a local SoCal joint that has become the one of the most popular food stops in the whole park. Mike Trout is a five-tool player (average, power, catch, throw, run). These are five-tool tacos (delicious, cheap, pork, spicy, for sale). Fans can only hope to see more excellence from both in the coming years.
Los Angeles Dodgers: Dodger Stadium
What: Super Dodger Dog
Where: All over
"OK, it's time for some true honesty: classic Dodger Dogs -- the long, sort of mushy, very skinny, beef/pork-blended hot dog that's one of the most famous foods in baseball -- is sort of terrible, especially if you get the steamed version (available through most of the park) rather than the much more flavorful grilled version (available only at select vendors). But it's that processed, salty flavor that also sparks nostalgia for childhood summers and the smell of tee-ball tees and not-quite-broken-in mitts that makes going to Dodgers games, especially for local Angelenos, a must-do. The pro tip is to order the far better Super Dodger Dog, made entirely of beef, which is slightly fatter, way juicier, and is absolutely more palatable, but still allows you to leave the stadium feeling like you made the correct food choice. And then, drive through a nearby In-N-Out," says LA Editor Jeff Miller.

Milwaukee Brewers: Miller Park
What: Bratchos on a stick
Where: All over the park
There are some things in life you shouldn't try to explain or make sense of. They are things that just need to be accepted as what they are, nothing more, nothing less. Such is the case with Miller Park's Bratchos (get it?). A fried wad of cheese, seasoned ground beef, crushed Doritos, and sour cream on a 6in toothpick. "We've sold nachos before, but some people don't want to get messy," the concessions GM at Miller Park told ESPN, "I think this is going to be a big seller because you can eat this in one hand and have a beer in the other." It's like a deep-fried plastic bag, dancing in the wind.

Minnesota Twins: Target Field
What: Indurrito
Where: Hot Spice, Section 120
The safe (and obviously still delicious) choice would be ordering a sausage from one of Kramarzuck's many outposts around the park. Instead, be adventurous and try the "Indian burrito" from Hot Indian Foods -- one of the Twin Cities' premier food trucks, and purveyor of eclectic Indian dishes. Plus, in Minnesota it's only summer for most of July and half of August, basically. So you could use a little spice out in those bleachers when it's snowing in April, June, and September.

New York Mets: Citi Field
What: Fuku chicken sandwich
Where: Fuku, Section 102
New York's NL squad lacks for quality food like it lacks for young flamethrowers who look like they're into Thor cosplay. That's a baseball-nerdy way of saying they have a smorgasbord of sexy food choices in the concessions at Citi Field... and a litter of blonde, long-haired starters. With all apologies to the honorable Shake Shack and legendary Pat LaFrieda Meat Purveyors, the crown goes to David Chang (duh) and his transcendent spicy chicken sandwich from Fuku. It's the best thing to happen to the Mets since Keith Hernandez and his mustache came to town.

New York Yankees: Yankee Stadium
What: Dirty-water dogs outside Yankee Stadium
Where: Outside Yankee Stadium
For better or worse, the Yankees are the quintessential New Yorker sports team. And, for better or worse, the quintessential New Yorker thing is to charge a metric shit-ton of cash for the simplest pleasures -- something the Yankees and their stadium fully embrace. So, if you can't grab a bite at Stan's
before you watch the Bombers, do the other quintessential New York thing, and scarf down at least two DWDs before you go through security. The stadium has sushi. And steak. And a veritable farmers market. But the hot dog guy has ketchup and mustard for approximately $50 less.

Oakland A's: The Coliseum
What: Ribs and Things
Where: Section 104
The team has seen better days. The Coliseum has seen better days. And as the city just across the Bay Bridge has the shiny new(ish) park and myriad food options, the old also-is-a-football-stadium Oaktown ballpark is a little rough around the edges and scarce in food options. But Ribs and Things comes through... and saves the day, I guess.

Philadelphia Phillies: Citizens Bank Park
What: A cheesesteak
Where: Tony Luke's, Section 104
In the (very unfortunate) absence of the legendary "Schmitter," which was pretty much the only reason to go to a Phillies game since 2009, a cheesesteak should rightfully take its place on the Iron Throne of Philly's ball team. Citizens Bank has a few cheesesteak options -- including Campo's -- but the honor here goes to Tony Luke's, the sandwich that's always in the "Best of Philly" conversation. It's a cheesesteak. It's Philly. You get it.

Pittsburgh Pirates: PNC Park
What: Anything from Primanti Brothers
Where: Section 104
Occasionally a sandwich will rise above the bread that holds it, and become something more than the sum of its sandwichy parts. Primanti Bros.' was designed as a workingman's lunch, a full meal in the palm of dockworkers' and steelworkers' calloused hands. It has since evolved into a bona fide Pittsburgh icon. And there's no better place to bite into the quintessential yinzer classic than dahntahn at PNC Park with a beautiful view of of the City of Champions over the outfield wall, n'at.

San Francisco Giants: AT&T Park
What: Crab sandwich
Where: Crazy Crab'z, Centerfield
While the Giants seem to somehow win the World Series every even-numbered year lately, their fans are kept satisfied during the odd years with one of the most eclectic and bountiful concession-stand lineups in the Majors. It's as if each food stand was injected with some sort of performance enhancer, much like that one dude who hit a bunch of dingers in McCovey Cove a little while back. The crab sandwich of fresh crab meat stuffed between two slices of buttered, authentic San Fran sourdough rises to the top. Mainly because it's fresh crab meat stuffed between two slices of buttered, authentic San Fran sourdough.

San Diego Padres: Petco Park
What: Ahi poke tacos
Where: The Patio, Section 228
Despite being served cold, poke tacos are so hot right now. And while it might be a little too trendy for grizzly old-school fans, you shouldn't reject this dish just because it's not a hot dog. Admittedly, it's dangerously close to sushi -- and sushi at the ballpark is a little gauche. As is saying the word "gauche," by the way. But if you are going to do it, it might as well be in San Diego at a SoCal staple like Patio,
where you can reasonably assume the fish is fresh. And authentic! If poke isn't your bag, baby, you can snag decent fish tacos (which are almost the same thing, really) from a plethora of outposts inside Petco. Embrace your good fortune.

Seattle Mariners: Safeco Field
What: Liege waffles
Where: Sweet Iron, Section 136
When Kimmy Schmidt says she's "making waffles!" it means she's about to do some serious damage. When Safeco makes waffles, it means it's delivering one of the best ballpark snacks at one of the best ballparks for ballpark snacks in the nation. These Pacific Northwest Liege waffles aren't your standard stadium fare, but they're as inexplicably beautiful and effortlessly cool as a young Ken Griffey Jr.'s swing. That means they Instagram very, very well. Sweet Iron is an Emerald City legend, much like Nirvana. But unlike Nirvana, they smell like delicious baked dough. Which smells kind of like teen spirit, I suppose.

St. Louis Cardinals: Busch Stadium
What: St. Louis dog
Where: Food Network Hot Dog Bar, Section 144
Oh, how original right? The St. Louis dog in St. Louis. Well, buddy, this wiener -- despite being from a place called Food Network Hot Dog Bar -- is pretty much the only thing at Busch Stadium that can beat can after can after can of fresh light beer (or as I call it, America Sauce). Let's go over the insides: potato chips, barbecue sauce, and shredded cheese atop a big ol' frankfurter. Wash it down with some America Sauce, and you have a perfect encapsulation of baseball, summer, and good old USA excess.

Tampa Bay Rays: Tropicana Field
What: Cuban sandwich
Where: All over the park
Here's the thing: Tropicana Field is probably the worst stadium in baseball. Sometimes, balls actually hit the ceiling. And the team has one of the lowest budgets in the league, leading to the unfortunate nickname, "Tampa Bay Triple A's." Despite all this nastiness, the home of the Rays has some legitimate foodstuff (that doesn't involve orange juice) for fans to enjoy while dodging balls falling from the roof, like the Cuban sandwich. You've got your ham, your pork, Swiss cheese, salami, the optional mustard/pickles, on toasted Cuban bread. You're not in Havana... or even Miami... but hey, as far as your tongue is concerned, you might as well be.

Texas Rangers: Globe Life Park
What: Chicken & donut skewer
Where: Flew the Coop, Section 50
Everything's bigger in Texas, apparently, and if the food at Globe Life is any example, also weirdly juxtaposed. The combo of chicken and donuts with sweet-and-spicy Buffalo-honey glaze (on a skewer, no less) is Arlington's finest food option, at least around its baseball diamond. And if you need explanation why, you probably don't deserve to eat it in the first place. Some things justify their existence, by simply just existing. Like rainbows, or the sequels to Police Academy. This skewer joins their noble ranks.

Toronto Blue Jays: Rogers Centre
What: Sausage poutine
Where: Toronto Street Eats, Section 134
Poutine is, essentially, Canadian nachos. So, if you happen to catch America's pastime north of the border, play along, and snag the sausage poutine from Toronto Street Eats. Let's run down the ingredients: smoked farmers sausage, peameal bacon sausage (two sausages!), caramelized onions, sautéed peppers, and gravy -- which is the nacho cheese of Canadian nachos. Also, there are cheese curds. God bless, Canada.

Washington Nationals: Nationals Park
What: Chili half-smoke hot dog
Where: Ben's Chili Bowl, sections 109, 140, 317
Does it get any more patriotic than eating a hot dog while watching America's game in our nation's capital, in Nationals park, watching the Nationals? The answer is maybe... but it involves riding a bald eagle through a tornado of cowboy hats and hard copies of the Declaration of Independence. So doing that first thing is much more realistic. The Nationals are a budding young team with a nice talent core. On top of that, their park has DC's legendary half-smoke hot dog soaked and smothered in the District's famous chili. It's sweeter than a Bryce Harper dinger, and only a fraction of the cost. For once, Congress is doing something right. And by Congress, I mean the guys who make food at the baseball stadium down the street from Congress. I'm sure Congress wasn't really involved at all.

**DAILY BREEZE**

**Listening to Vin Scully like listening to Shakespearean actor**

By Mike Waldner

We live in a time when hyperbole is the order of the day, which leaves understatement way under the radar.

An exception to this new rule is Vin Scully, the voice of the Dodgers.

Make that The Voice of the Dodgers.

Yes, there are others who also chronicle the fortunes and misfortunes of the Boys in Blue verbally. But it is Scully who is The Voice of the Dodgers.

Although some are willing to give it a shot, it is hard to oversell the impact this 88-year-old treasure has had in Southern California.

There are those of us who can trace listening to him since he arrived with the team from Brooklyn in 1958. His impact was immediate. It was transcendent.

In what now is looked on as a quaint tradition, fans took their transistor radios, the rage of the time, to games to listen to Scully.

Columnists from New York, elitists that they were, scoffed about the rubes in La La Land needing to listen to the radio to understand the game. They were the ones who did not understand. Listening to Scully was like listening to a Shakespearean actor.
Talk about the game slowing down for an athlete. Scully sees it in slow motion.

So many broadcasters focus on the ball and miss much of the action. Scully sees the entire field, much as a scout does, and tells you about the relay man and the catcher when the throw is to the plate, as well as the outfielder and runner or runners, as the play unfolds.

A small-sample survey of his enduring impact is provided during daily travels, at a luncheon, at the gym, at here, there and just about everywhere. People constantly feel a need to talk about how much they enjoy listening him, about how much they admire the man.

One fellow’s story is about a round of golf at Sherwood Country Club. Someone pointed to a house where Scully then lived. The fellow said he had to fight the urge to go knock on the door to say hello. Scully probably would have greeted him with a smile because he is as pleasant in person as he is on the air.

Back when the small army of newspaper reporters traveling on the road with the Dodgers ranged from seven to 10, Scully would on occasion join the ink-stained wretches for a post-game refreshment.

You will not be surprised to learn he loved telling stories. Some of his best were about Red Barber, his mentor in the broadcast booth from the day he went to work for the Dodgers in 1950.

A more contemporary view of Scully is provided Aaron Charlton, a STATS, Inc. statistics research analyst who pitched at Cal State Dominguez Hills. The Manhattan Beach resident moonlights supplying information during games to baseball and basketball broadcast teams at Dodger Stadium and Staples Center. He has advanced from wide-eyed fan to professional who has seen the good, the bad and the ugly in the sports broadcast business. He smiles when asked about Scully.

“He’s my favorite,” Charlton said. “He’s amazing.”

Quality, civility and Scully. It’s a match.

“The better announcers are better to work with and nicer,” he said. “They’re more prepared, more professional and they’re less antsy.”

Antsy is a label never attached to Scully.

Prepared?

Or course.

Professional?

Definitely.

Also old-school. Very old-school.

In an era when many broadcasters show up looking as if the ballpark is a pit stop on the way to the golf course, Scully always comes to work in a suit and tie.
Charlton has a rare view of the inside of broadcast booths.

“A play-by-play guy who is unsure of himself a lot of times is a guy who is snarky to you because they need so much help,” he said.

Scully and snarky never appear in the same sentence.

“I’d say Vin is probably the best,” Charlton said.

He’s as good as it gets.

Not for much longer because he has decided this will be his last season on the job.

“He’s got a little bit of experience,” Charlton added.

How about that for tongue in cheek?

What is comes down to is we have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to listen to Scully for all these years

“He’s an institution,” Charlton said. “People love his voice. They love the way he talks.”

This is not hyperbole. Not when the subject is Vincent Edward Scully, The Voice of the Dodgers.

CLEARING OUT THE MINI-NOTEBOOK:

Opinion: With Kevin Durant headed to the Warriors, where will his now former teammate, Russell Westbrook, sign a year from now when he becomes a free agent? It says here San Antonio and New York are the co-favorites followed by hometown Los Angeles with the Clippers having an edge over the Lakers. ...

RIP: IT’S BEEN A BAD WEEK.

Former USC, etc. play-by-play man Tom Kelly, who was two days from his 88th birthday when he died last week, was an excellent broadcaster and in later years a good Trojan football press box friend never shy about sharing his informed opinion about what was or was not happening on the field.

Also lost childhood friend Joe Jares, a basketball standout at Hamilton High, writer and associate editor for Sports Illustrated, sports editor and columnist for the Daily News, etc. He was a diligent editor and a quality writer with a keen reporter’s eye who brought dignity to the press box. ...

Bottom line: Thumbs up to Rogie Vachon’s election to Hockey’s Hall of Fame.

LA TIMES

Dodgers Dugout: Five ways to improve the All-Star game
By Houston Mitchell

How to improve the All-Star game

If you don’t mind, I am going to remove my Dodgers cap for the first item of today’s newsletter and talk about a more general baseball topic: The All-Star game. It seems the All-Star game has lost its luster the last few years. When I was a kid, the Dodgers were rarely seen on TV (sort of like now for most of L.A.) and my only chance to see players on other teams was if they played on NBC’s Game of the Week or ABC’s Monday Night Baseball. So, if you wanted to see Reggie Jackson or Johnny Bench, the All-Star game could be your only chance.

Now we can see almost every player every night, so it’s no big deal to see them in the All-Star game. That has taken away a lot of the pizazz (yes, I was born in 1890) from the game.

So here are a few things I would do to improve the All-Star game and maybe lure some fans back into watching it:

1. Allow players to come back into the game as a pinch-hitter after they have been removed. Example: Mike Trout plays the first five innings of the game and is removed to give some Minnesota Twins player no one has ever heard of a chance to play. The AL is trailing, 5-4, with the bases loaded and two out in the ninth. Imagine the buzz if the AL manager sends Trout up to hit. Remember, the winner of the game gets home-field advantage in the World Series. However, during the most important part of the game, the late innings, all the starters, who are usually the best players, are out of the game. If the game really counts for something, as Bud Selig always said, then the best players should be available at the end of the game.

2. Drop the “one player from each team” rule. The best 30 players should make the team, and if that means that Tampa Bay doesn’t get a representative, then too bad. Rays fans can complain to the team’s front office about putting together such a bad team that they don’t even have an All-Star representative.

3. Move the game to Sunday. The All-Star game is really designed for kids to enjoy. Right now, the game is on Tuesday night. If you live on the East Coast, the game often isn’t over until after midnight. Also, Tuesday night is when a lot of kids who are on sports teams (Little League, AYSO soccer, etc.) play their games or have practice. So when they get home, they have missed part of the game and the best players have already been removed. Put the game on Sunday afternoon, when kids make up the largest part of the TV audience.

4. The game shouldn’t be for home-field advantage in the World Series. Of the two teams who make the World Series, the club with the best interleague record should get home-field advantage. If they have the same record, then the team with the best overall record should get it.

5. Get anyone other than Joe Buck to call the game. Seriously, he’s horrible.

So, there’s just a few ideas.
Home run derby
Corey Seager will compete in the All-Star game Home Run Derby this year, which has led many Dodgers fans to worry that it will mess up his swing for the rest of the season. After all, Joc Pederson fell apart after participating last season.

However, the “Home Run Derby messes up your swing theory” is not based in reality, according to sabr.org and fivethirtyeight.com.

Flag bearers
I got a lot of emails from people after the Dodgers played on July 4, complaining that the team had U.S. flag patches on their uniforms on backward. As you can see in the picture above, the field of stars was in the top right corner and not the top left. It turns out that they were displayed properly, according to the official military regulation for such display of the flag.

Army Regulation 670-1, Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia, was updated most recently on Sept. 5, 2003, and addresses the proper and lawful placement of a U.S. flag patch. The regulation states that when authorized for application to the proper uniform, the flag patch is to be worn, right or left shoulder, so that “the star field faces forward, or to the flag’s own right. When worn in this manner, the flag is facing to the observer’s right, and gives the effect of the flag flying in the breeze as the wearer moves forward. The appropriate replica for the right shoulder sleeve is identified as the ‘reverse side flag.”

Ask Ross Porter
Former Dodgers announcer Ross Porter will be answering select reader questions for the rest of the season. Email me a question for Ross, and I will pass it on. His latest response:

Bruce Lawhead asks: Ross, I'm a big fan of yours, and enjoyed reading your memorable Dodgers moments. Recalling Don Sutton's first pitch on opening day in 1977, which Gary Thomasson of the Giants hit for a home run, what made it stand out for me was Don later saying he looked into his dugout and all the Dodgers players were doubled up laughing. You couldn't see that from your perch high in the stadium.

Ross: There was a sidelight to the story, Bruce. Major League Baseball had switched to Rawlings baseballs that season, and it had been decided beforehand that the first pitch thrown by Sutton that day was to be taken out of play and sent to the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. Don was told Thomasson would take the pitch so the ball could be saved. Gary claimed he knew nothing about the plan. Sutton told me later, "If I had known that, I wouldn't have thrown him a batting practice fastball down the middle of the plate." Thomasson put it in the right-field bullpen.

Don gave up only two more hits and pitched a complete game, winning 5-1. I don't know why the Hall of Fame wanted that baseball. There had been other major league games played that season before the Dodgers and Giants met on April 7.

What Vin Scully means to me
I asked you to tell me your best Vin Scully memories, and I got a lot of responses. I will publish selected ones in each newsletter. And keep emailing them to me.
Rob Harol: When it comes to my memories of Vin, the baseball diamond has always just been the canvas he used to paint his beautiful stories. When there was no comfort to be found in the score, there was always plenty to be found in Vin's voice.

I will forever remember Vin's broadcast on the day Don Drysdale died in 1993. I don't recall the score of the game or the time of the day, but I will not soon forget the moment Vin broke the news. At once his voice reminded me that Vin was both a true professional and a treasured member of the family. My heart broke for him as he announced the passing of his dear friend, while I was simultaneously filled with gratitude in knowing that it was Vin's calming presence that would make that day's bitter pill slightly easier to swallow.
It was a month after the Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony in 1983, and legendary Los Angeles Times columnist Jim Murray felt it was appropriate to devote his column space to one of the inductees — legendary Dodger manager Walter Alston.

“Walter Alston was one of the most unafraid men I have ever known,” Murray wrote. “Almost everyone has the smell of fear, the hint of panic, the look of swallowed hysteria at some time or another. Alston’s throat was always flat.”

It’s now 60 years since the quiet-man-nered baseball man from Darlington, Ohio, became the Dodgers’ manager. For 23 seasons, beginning in 1954, Alston skippered the Dodgers to unprecedented success for the franchise. Throughout that tenure and in all the years since his final game in the dugout in 1976, Alston was and has been known as a calming presence — as fearless and patient as Murray described him.

However, the beginning was challenging, maybe chaotic in some respects. The man was calm, but the world around him wasn’t.

PROVING GROUND

“He was essentially unknown,” said Roger Kahn, the legendary Brooklyn Dodger beat writer who penned the revered book, “The Boys of Summer.”

Kahn recalled that Dodger general manager Buzzie Bavasi and owner Walter O’Malley didn’t like all the publicity that Charlie Dressen, the manager from 1951-53, received. The Dodgers won the National League pennant in 1952 and 1953 under Dressen, who Kahn described as a sharp baseball guy who got along with players and the press. But Dressen tested O’Malley’s famous stance of not going beyond a one-year contract with his managers after the 1953 season. He asked O’Malley for a multiyear deal, and he was out. Alston was in.
Pee Wee Reese was the favorite to replace Dressen, Kahn said, but Reese didn’t want the job. The mainstay at shortstop for the Dodgers, Reese had developed an ulcer due to tension. Kahn remembered Reese fearing that managing would provide more pressure than he could bear.

Famously greeted by a New York newspaper headline of “Alston (Who’s He?) New Dodger Manager,” the new skipper’s ways confused outsiders immediately — especially in New York, where managerial color was in abundance with the Yankees’ Casey Stengel and the Giants’ Leo Durocher. Alston was the anti-Stengel and more so the anti-Durocher.

“His personality was so different than these firebrand managers who had plenty to say to the press and to give their opinion,” said Carl Erskine, who played for Alston on the Dodgers from 1954-1959. “Walt was so laid back.

“In the first spring games in ’54, we played away from Vero Beach north with the Braves. … I got a phone call in my room at the hotel. I was the player representative. ‘Would you come down and speak to us?’ (a reporter asked). I thought something had erupted. I went down and was asked, ‘Carl, tell us about this guy. He won’t talk.’”

Kahn said Alston didn’t endear himself to his players right away either.

“Every position on this team is up for grabs,” Kahn remembered Alston telling the press early.

The writers thought that was silly with a star-studded roster that included the likes of Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe, Duke Snider, Reese and Gil Hodges. Kahn reasoned that there was no team in 1954 better than the Dodgers, but they played at a disadvantage.

Alston had managed in the Dodger minor league system for a decade and skippered teams with a 17-man roster, Kahn said. Kahn and other New York sportswriters noticed that he managed the Brooklyn Dodgers like it had 17 men in 1954, and Durocher managed the Giants by making the most of all 25 men on his roster. The Giants won the pennant and swept the Cleveland Indians in the World Series that year.

In 1955, Alston adjusted.

“I think he played what the Dodgers system taught him,” Erskine said. “He played solid baseball. Wasn’t a gambler, but not afraid to make a decision.”

Simple. And in 1955, the Dodgers
won their first World Series ever by beating the Yankees in seven games.

And simplicity carried on through his managerial career, through the next generation in Los Angeles with Sandy Koufax, Don Drysdale and Maury Wills. Silent-and-steady Walt guided Dodger teams to World Series titles in 1959, 1963 and 1965.

“He is non-irritating,” Walter O’Malley said of Alston’s longevity, according to the New York Times. “Do you realize how important it is to have a manager who doesn’t irritate you?”

Though confrontations behind the scenes with players could often be heated – one 1963 legend has Alston challenging players to step off the team bus and fight him – by the early-to-mid-1970s, Alston remained known as the strong, silent type. But the Dodgers went seven seasons without making the postseason between 1967-1973.

A March 1974 Sports Illustrated article on the Dodger manager said many of his players interpreted his silence as a sign of wisdom. The headline of that story was, “Strong, Silent, Enduring.” But it had a subhead that began, “But is Walter Alston a superior manager?”

LEGACY BEYOND ’76
The Dodgers returning to the World Series that year may have answered that question. But it might have also been answered by the last generation of Dodgers he managed.

The end of Alston’s career (he was just shy of 65 when he retired) was the beginning for a young group that included the legendary infield of Ron Cey, Bill Russell, Davey Lopes and Steve Garvey.

Cey and Garvey both say that the Dodgers’ success toward the waning years of Alston’s on-field leadership and after Tommy Lasorda took over as manager at the end of the 1976 season had something to do with Alston being patient with his younger players and giving them the opportunity to learn on the job and grow.

“One of the reasons he was so successful was he had a great deal of patience,” Cey said. “As a player in Major League Baseball, I think he had one at-bat and didn’t get a hit. When he didn’t have that kind of success (as a player), there has to be a lot of patience that goes along with that.”

Said Garvey: “He was the epitome of consistency, but he realized the business starting to change and with this next era of talent, he knew he would have to make some alterations and some changes. But it wouldn’t change who he was and the core beliefs.”

But it was time. Lasorda fostered many of these younger Dodgers in the minor leagues and took the reins in 1976 with four games remaining in the season. He went on to make his own impression with Alston’s final group and with future generations of Dodgers.

Alston became a memory — albeit a lasting one.

It’s clear by Murray’s remembrances of the great Dodger manager that his impression of Alston was that of a man whose quiet nature was a character strength, and never a flaw.

Said Murray: “He was a man you’d most like to be next to in a lifeboat. Or a foxhole. Alston made mistakes, but they were never motivated by fear of failure. Alston never cut his losses. Or alibied his defeats.”

Murray reasoned that Alston made the Hall of Fame because players responded to he was.

“He excelled in the far more difficult area of human endeavor,” Murray wrote. “He was a man with a capital M, and he made all those around him better for it.”