

## Major League Baseball

### Jays get 9 in bottom 2 innings to beat Rangers

TORONTO (AP) — George Bell hit a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth inning and Rance Mulliniks' two-run double highlighted a five-run eighth as the Toronto Blue Jays rallied against Texas ace Bobby Witt and beat the Rangers 9-7 Sunday.

Witt breezed through the first seven innings, allowing just five hits as the Rangers took a 6-0 lead. But Tony Fernandez reached on second baseman Jeff Kunkel's fielding error to open the eighth and Lloyd Moseby walked.

The first of three wild pitches by Witt allowed the runners to move up and Mulliniks followed with a double to left. Ernie Whitt's RBI single, Rick Leach's run-scoring groundout and another wild pitch by Witt made it 6-5.

Barbaro Garbey gave Witt an insurance run with an RBI single in the ninth but the right-hander failed to retire a batter in the bottom of the inning.

Manny Lee struck out to lead off the ninth but reached first when Witt threw a wild pitch on strike three. Tony Fernandez's single brought on Mitch Williams, 2-5, who gave up a bunt single to Lloyd Moseby, loading the bases.

Williams struck out pinch-hitter Pat Borders but Bell hit the reliever's second pitch 20 rows deep into the left-field stands. It was Bell's 20th homer of the sea-

son and sixth career grand slam.

Witt, bidding for his 10th complete game in 11 starts, has blown six-run leads in his last two outings. John Cerutti, 6-6, worked the ninth for Toronto.

The Blue Jays have won three straight and pulled to within 7½ games of the first-place Tigers in the American League East. Texas has lost four straight.

Jim Sundberg had three hits for Texas, including an inside-the-park homer.

In the fourth, Sundberg hit a flare down the right-field line that Rick Leach dove for and missed. Second baseman Lee chased the ball to the fence but overthrew three potential cutoff men as Sundberg scored standing up.

Texas scored twice in the first inning with four consecutive hits off Jeff Musselman, who made just 20 pitches before being relieved by Frank Wills.

Scott Fletcher tripled with one out and scored on a single by Barbaro Garbey. Ruben Sierra doubled and Mike Stanley followed with an RBI single, chasing Musselman.

The Rangers added another run in the second when Sundberg doubled and later scored on Bob Brower's double-play grounder. Geno Petralli had an RBI single in the fifth and Sundberg made it 6-0 with an RBI single in the eighth.

## Mets have LA's number this season

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NEW YORK (AP) — The Los Angeles Dodgers are running out of time to dodge the New York Mets.

"October? We have to get there first," Dodgers Manager Tom Lasorda said. "And if we do, we better not let the Mets get there thinking they can just walk over us."

That's exactly what the Mets have done this year in a possible preview of the National League playoffs. New York won 10 of 11 meetings between the division leaders, holding Los Angeles to just 18 runs in those games.

The Dodgers' performance against New York is their worst against any opponent in one season since moving to Los Angeles in 1958.

"There's really no explanation for it. It shouldn't be that way," Mets manager Dave Johnson said.

The reason is simple. It's pitching. New York leads the majors with a 2.93 earned run average and has been especially tough on the Dodgers. They have scored more than two runs in just two games against the Mets.

Ron Darling shut out Los Angeles on Friday night while Dwight Gooden and Randy Myers held the Dodgers to one run on Saturday. Sunday's game, the last scheduled meeting, was rained out.

The lack of runs got Lasorda screaming at his hitters as they walked to the clubhouse after Saturday's loss. Johnson, meanwhile, offered plenty of praise to his pitchers. "Our staff is peaking right now," Johnson said. "That's what you hope for at this time."

Despite an inconsistent offense, dominant pitching has helped the Mets take a nine-game lead over Pittsburgh in the NL East. Los Angeles held a 5½-game margin over Houston in the NL West heading into Sunday.

"I'm not talking about a preview of anything," Lasorda said. "You're talking about something that is 30 days from now."

The best-of-seven playoffs begin in the NL West city on Oct. 4. The Mets won all six games in Los Angeles this season.

Maybe the Dodgers can rely on the law of averages. In 1983, they went 11-1 against Philadelphia in the regular season and then lost to the Phillies in four games in the playoffs.

"The Mets definitely have our number now," said the Dodgers' Danny Heep, an ex-Met. "Their pitching is excellent."

The Mets' best past performances against Los Angeles were 9-3 marks in 1984 and 1986. New York's top all-time effort was 17-1 versus Pittsburgh in 1986 while the Dodgers' previous worst was 2-10 against Philadelphia last season.

### Bass, Hatcher lift Astros over Cards 4-3

HOUSTON (AP) — Kevin Bass hit a two-run homer and Billy Hatcher drove in two runs, leading the Houston Astros past the St. Louis Cardinals 4-3 Sunday.

Bob Knepper, 13-4, pitched five innings and allowed three runs and eight hits. Dave Smith, the fourth Astros pitcher, got the last three outs for his 24th save.

Houston scored three runs in the first inning off Greg Mathews, 3-5. With one out, Bill Doran

walked and Bass followed with his 13th homer. One out later, Buddy Bell singled and scored on Hatcher's triple.

The Astros made it 4-0 in the third when Bass reached on a force play, moved to third on Glenn Davis' single and scored on Hatcher's sacrifice fly.

St. Louis cut it to 4-1 in the fourth when Terry Pendleton singled, moved to third on Jose Oquendo's double and scored on a throwing error by catcher Alan Ashby.

### Jackson wins 20th; Reds rout Cubs 17-0

CHICAGO (AP) — Danny Jackson became the National League's first 20-game winner this season and went 4-for-5, including two hits during Cincinnati's nine-run fifth inning, as the Reds routed the Chicago Cubs 17-0 Sunday.

Luis Quinones paced the Reds' 18-hit attack with a three-run homer and two-run single. Jack-

son, who scored four runs, entered the game with nine hits in 74 at-bats, a .122 average.

Jackson, 20-6, allowed six hits and walked none as the Reds won their fifth straight game and eighth in their last 11.

The losing pitcher was Calvin Schiraldi, 8-10, who was relieved in the fifth inning by Frank DiPino.

## Aggies

(Continued from page 13)

said the Aggie defense's inability to pressure quarterback Tom Hodson was a key to the success of the LSU offense.

"We couldn't get to him," Sherrill said. "The turf slowed our rush down, but that's no excuse."

"They did a good job protecting Hodson. They had it in their game plan to get the ball off early, and they were able to do that."

Nebraska was able to exploit the Aggie blitz with traps, draws and quick passes. LSU simply blocked everyone A&M sent. Only once was serious pressure applied to an LSU quarterback.

Sherrill and Defensive Coordinator R.C. Slocum both attributed much of A&M's poor blitzing effort on the grass and the rain. Drizzle fell

throughout the game, and the field was thoroughly soaked from constant rains the last month.

But Slocum said that wasn't the main trouble. He said A&M's failure to stop LSU's run offense was what gave control of the game to the Tigers.

"The passing game was not what beat us — it was our inability to stop the run," Slocum said.

"You can't blitz when it's second and four," he said. "If you can't stop the run, you've got big problems. My philosophy of football is if you can't run and you can't stop the run, there's no sense worrying about the pass."

Once again, A&M was unable to control the ball on offense. In the first half the Aggies only managed three first downs and had the ball little more than one-third of the time.

Sherrill said, "Our offense is not very good, to put it point blank. We can stand here and say we lost some big weapons in (Matt) Gurley, (Darren) Lewis and (Rod) Harris. We don't have a lot of continuity in there."

It showed up in turnovers. Besides Pavlas' interceptions, the Aggies fumbled the ball six times and were fortunate only to lose one of them.

Richardson said, "We turned the ball over way too many times. We couldn't move the ball in the air or on the ground."

Osgood said, "I thought going in to the game we could go man for man with them and run the ball down their throats."

Obviously not.

## Hammons

(Continued from page 13)

was the Tiger second- and third-string tailbacks who both outrushed the entire A&M team in the first half.

The Nebraska fiasco could be termed a result of inexperience and that unexplainable Aggie jinx in first games.

Saturday can't be explained away. What the Aggies need to come to grips with is that their team isn't nearly as good as they thought it was.

A national-championship contender? Yeah, there was one of them out there. And they were wearing purple. The only way you could be excused for not picking that up is if you were watching black-and-white.

The Aggies are at the same stage as they were last year after the Texas Tech loss. The offense isn't working at all, and the defense is literally tired of covering for them.

The answers are easily stated. Implementation, unfortunately, is not so simple:

- Regain composure. Losing the first two games of the season has to affect a team, no matter what they say in locker-room interviews.

A&M has to realize, cliché though it may be, that the past is unchangeable. The Aggies need to look at the two games to see what needs changing, not to see how bad they are.

- Establish a passing game. As if no one has thought of this yet.

But the obvious sometimes must be stated. Eventually, if the trend continues, defenses are going to completely forego pass protection — and rightfully so. The result will be a complete shutdown of the run attack as well. And obviously you can't win without some kind of offense.

- Establish offensive continuity and composure. The offense has looked inept eight consecutive quarters, particularly under Lance Pavlas and Bucky Richardson.

Osgood said after the game that Sherrill told the team at halftime to get its collective head up, that a 20-point deficit wasn't that much — "not with our offense."

Obviously Mr. Sherrill knows more about the game than I. But I beg to differ with him on this point. The Fightin' Texas Aggie Offense is in the toilet. And it needs to get out quick.

The first order of business is convincing the team that they can still play. After all, they have a lot of tal-

ent, and they have been plagued with key injuries.

Then, in much the same way as they did last year, the Aggie coaches have to decide what it is that the team is capable of doing, and structuring the offense around that. It's easy to say "a quarterback for every attack plan," but it appears the Aggies aren't going to be able to function offensively in every attack mode.

Pavlas and Richardson simply aren't as ready as we have been led to believe. The question remaining is, does Sherrill scrap the first half of the season and let one or both of them learn under fire, or does he bring them along slowly as he has done in the past.

An obvious solution is Chris Osgood. He has more experience, more tools, and it would seem more composure. The result was more first downs in the third quarter under Osgood than the other two could manage in the entire first half.

You've got to think it's a prime consideration in Sherrill's mind: Start Osgood, and maybe bring in one or both of the others from time to time for experience or special circumstances.

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