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Astros spear Marlins; Rangers slip by Red Sox

The Associated Press

Houston 4, Miami 0

MIAMI — Things haven't exactly gone as expected this season for Greg Swindell and Doug Drabek, the two free agents the Houston Astros hoped would make them a contender.

Swindell (10-9) struck out 10 in seven innings and combined with two relievers on a six-hitter as the Astros beat the Florida Marlins 4-0 Tuesday night. Drabek is 7-14, tying Dwight Gooden for the most losses in the NL by starters.

The right-hander allowed three hits and two walks. Xavier Hernandez pitched one inning before Doug Jones got the last three outs. Craig Biggio hit a three-run homer for Houston.

"I just really felt good, I was able to get the ball inside a lot," Swindell said. "Normally, I pitch away, but when you can control that inside pitch like tonight it makes a big difference."

Jeff Conine of the Marlins struck out three times against Swindell.

"Mystery pitches to me, I missed some that I thought I was right on," Conine said. "It was one of those nights where he was throwing mystery balls."

Florida starter Jack Armstrong (7-13) continued to struggle for victories. The right-hander entered the game with an 0-3 record and a 5.24 ERA in his previous six starts.

Armstrong's last win was July 17 over Cincinnati, 6-3. He allowed seven hits, one run and walked three in seven innings against the Astros.

Biggio led off the game with an infield single and Steve Finley followed with a double before Jeff Bagwell hit a sacrifice fly.

The Astros made it 4-0 on Biggio's three-run homer in the ninth, his 16th.

Notes: The Marlins began a 12-game homestand, their longest of the season, with their sixth loss in the last seven games. That streak includes a three-game sweep in Houston last week. ... The Astros are 8-2 against the Marlins this season, including six straight wins.

groundout. Tom Henke got the final out for his 30th save.

Danny Darwin (13-9) started the day with the second-best ERA in the league (2.89) and a four-game winning streak. He allowed four runs on six hits and two walks and struck out eight.

Texas snapped a 2-2 tie with a two-run fifth. Dan Peltier, Manuel Lee and Hulse hit consecutive singles, and Doug Strange hit a sacrifice fly.

Palmeiro's leadoff homer in the fourth tied the game at 2-2.

Boston's run in the second was set up by singles from Mo Vaughn and Rob Deer to open the inning.

After Mike Greenwell's fielder's choice grounder, Hatcher's single drove in Vaughn.

Greenwell went to third and was picked off when Pavlik faked a throw to first and fired to third, catching Greenwell leaning toward the plate.

Texas tied the game at 1-1 in the third when Dean Palmer doubled, went to third on a passed ball and scored on Hulse's sacrifice fly.

The Red Sox took a 2-1 lead in the fourth on Vaughn's 20th homer of the season. Vaughn became the first lefthanded batter to reach 20 homers for the Red Sox since Greenwell in 1988.

Notes: Juan Gonzalez, Palmeiro and Palmer have combined for 94 homers, the most in club history by any trio. ... The Rangers observed a moment of silence prior to the game in memory of former owner Eddie Chiles, who died Sunday at his home in Fort Worth. Rangers players will wear a patch bearing Chiles' initials on the right sleeves of their uniforms for the rest of the season. ... Nolan Ryan, slowed by a strained muscle in his left ribcage, reported Tues-

day that he felt "about the same." He will be re-evaluated by team medical personnel in a few days and won't be allowed to resume throwing until he is given medical clearance. Ryan suffered the injury Saturday and will miss at least his regularly-scheduled turn on Thursday.

Braves 6, Giants 4

SAN FRANCISCO — Terry Pendleton, Ron Gant and David Justice homered to help the Atlanta Braves pull within 5 1/2 games of the NL West-leading San Francisco Giants on Tuesday with a 6-4 victory.

Gant's homer, his 31st, gave the Braves a 1-0 lead in the first inning.

Pendleton hit his ninth homer off Bryan Hickerson (6-5) in the sixth. Damon Berryhill doubled and scored on Mark Lemke's single for a 5-0 lead.

In the sixth, Matt Williams tripled and Barry Bonds singled, his league-leading 97th RBI.

Tom Glavine (15-5) gave up three runs on nine hits, but only one run was earned. Glavine walked one and struck out seven in seven innings. Greg McMichael got his 11th save, giving up an RBI single to Willie McGee.



Baseball Roundup

American League

West Division

	W	L	GB	ST
Chicago	68	54	—	W1
Kansas City	65	59	4	W3
Texas	63	60	5.5	W3
Seattle	61	62	7.5	L2
California	56	67	12.5	L2
Minnesota	52	69	15.5	W2
Oakland	51	70	16.5	L4

East Division

	W	L	GB	ST
Toronto	72	53	—	W1
New York	71	54	1	L1
Baltimore	66	58	5.5	W1
Boston	65	58	6	L5
Detroit	65	61	7.5	W4
Cleveland	59	65	12.5	L1
Milwaukee	50	74	21.5	W2

Texas 4, Boston 3

ARLINGTON — David Hulse drove in two runs and Rafael Palmeiro hit his 32nd homer Tuesday night as the Texas Rangers defeated Boston 4-3, sending the Red Sox to their fifth consecutive defeat.

Roger Pavlik (8-6) allowed 10 hits over eight innings but was able to work out of trouble with 10 strikeouts.

Texas won its third straight and fifth in its last seven to remain 4 1/2 games behind the Chicago White Sox in the AL West. The Rangers earned their 13th victory in the last 16 meetings with the Red Sox at Arlington Stadium.

Boston pulled within one run when Billy Hatcher led off the ninth with a triple off Cris Carpenter and scored on pinch-hitter Ernest Riles'

National League

West Division

	W	L	GB	ST
San Fran.	83	43	—	L2
Atlanta	78	49	5.5	W4
Houston	67	58	14.5	W3
Los Angeles	65	60	17	W1
Cincinnati	62	66	22	L1
San Diego	48	78	35	W1
Colorado	48	78	35	L1

East Division

	W	L	GB	ST
Philadelphia	79	47	—	W1
St. Louis	69	57	10	L1
Montreal	67	60	12.5	L1
Chicago	62	64	17	W1
Pittsburgh	59	67	20.5	L1
Florida	52	73	26.5	L3
New York	43	82	35.5	W1

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