

M's never trail in four-game sweep of Twins

MINNEAPOLIS — When Lou Piniella looks at the Minnesota Twins, he sees a lot of the Seattle Mariners.

"Both teams have about the same ingredients: athleticism, defense and good pitching," the Mariners manager said after Seattle won 3-2 Monday to complete a four-game sweep. "They were all very competitive games, and we were fortunate to come out on top."

Seattle never trailed during the series, outscoring the Twins 19-8 in the matchup of division leaders. But Piniella noted that in the four games, the teams combined for just three home runs.

"That shows the type of teams that Seattle and Minnesota have, and how much they resemble each other," he said. "There are a lot of

the same components."

Minnesota dropped into second place in the AL Central, two percentage points behind Cleveland after the Indians beat the White Sox 2-0 Monday night. The Twins led by five games at the All-Star break but have lost nine of 12 since.

"It just wasn't meant to be," Twins manager Tom Kelly said. "They outplayed us for four days. They outpitched us and did everything just a little bit better than we did."

Jamie Moyer (10-5) allowed both runs and seven hits in 6 2/3 innings with seven strikeouts. Kazuhiro Sasaki got four straight outs for his major league-leading 33rd save in 37 chances, completing the Mariners' 5-1 road trip.

Brad Radke (10-7) lost his third

consecutive start, giving up all three runs — one was unearned — and nine hits in eight innings and striking out seven.

"There's a lot of baseball left, so we can't hang our heads," Radke said. "The next two months are crucial, not just the next road trip. Every game is important."

Seattle, which has the best record in the major leagues at 72-27, went ahead in the first when Mark McLemore tripled and scored on Bret Boone's sacrifice fly.

"When you're able to hit the ball in the gap, you can take those extra bases," Moyer said of McLemore's triple. "The ball moves a little bit faster on turf, and we've got some of those guys who can find holes. That's a big plus for us because we can thrive in any environment."

Ichiro Suzuki singled and stole second in the third inning, then scored on a two-base throwing error by Radke.

"We just did a really good job of manufacturing some runs today," Seattle's John Olerud said. "Neither team has really big home-run hitters, so we both showed what you can do with good starters, defense and running the bases."

Chad Allen hit an RBI single in the third, but Suzuki made it 3-1 with a run-scoring single in the fifth.

David Ortiz homered in the sixth inning, his seventh of the season and first since coming off the disabled list last week.

Allen doubled with one out in the eighth and tried to score on Corey Koskie's single to center but

was thrown out at the plate by Charles Gipson. Piniella had put Gipson into the game in the eighth.

"To be able to make that throw in that situation was amazing," Suzuki said.

Game notes:

Seattle's Al Martin had a second-inning double to extend his season-best hitting streak to eight games.

Martin had a career-best 20-game streak in 1999, when he was with the Pirates ... The Twins have not won a season series against the Mariners since 1992 ... With 31,220 at Monday's game, the four-game series drew 146,249 — the Metrodome's highest audience for a four-game series since August 1993.

The Associated Press

Clemens moves past Seaver into fourth on career strikeout list

NEW YORK — Roger Clemens clearly recalls those days in 1986 when he sat beside Tom Seaver on the Boston bench, trying to absorb everything the aging ace taught him about pitching.

Now, Clemens is no longer next to Seaver. The Rocket is ahead of him.

Clemens moved past Seaver into fourth place on the career strikeouts list, winning his 10th straight decision as the New York Yankees beat the Toronto Blue Jays 7-2 Monday night.

"Tom Seaver is just a tremendous name and a tremendous pitcher and a tremendous person," Clemens said. "He was a teammate, and in the short time he was, I was able to learn a lot from him. In that aspect, it was nice."

Clemens (14-1) tied Arizona's Curt Schilling for most wins in the majors. His 274th victory put him ahead of former Yankees Hall of Famer Red Ruffing for 27th place.

"Just longevity," the 38-year-old Clemens said. "That's what you have to have when you're chasing down guys so rich in history."

Tino Martinez, Paul O'Neill, Jorge Posada and Shane Spencer all homered for New York. For the second straight day against Toronto, the Yankees tied a season high for homers.

Jose Cruz Jr. and Alex Gonzalez homered for the Toronto runs.

Clemens is unbeaten in 11 starts, and his winning streak is the longest by a Yankees pitcher since Jimmy Key won 11 in a row in 1994.

Clemens improved to 9-0 at Yankee Stadium, drawing standing ovations when he passed Seaver — an inning after most of the 38,573 fans thought he'd done it — and again when he left after 6 2/3 innings.

The Rocket caught Luis Lopez looking at a fastball leading off the fifth inning for his sixth strikeout of the game and No. 3,641 lifetime, one more than Seaver.

"I've only seen him on TV," Lopez said. "He's a Hall of Fame pitcher, and I can see why."

"It's OK, though," Lopez said. "There are 4,000-some odd other guys with me."

The ball was taken out of play, and Clemens backed off the rubber

to wave his glove and tip his cap to a standing ovation.

Manager Joe Torre and coaches Mel Stottlemyre and Don Zimmer applauded in the dugout, and Clemens saluted them. The accomplishment also was posted on the scoreboard.

"It was so loud. Doing it here in front of this crowd in this uniform, with so much tradition, really makes it special," he said.

When the inning ended, Posada and infielders Scott Brosius and Alfonso Soriano shook Clemens' hand before he got to the dugout.

An inning earlier, it looked like Clemens had passed Seaver when Cruz swung at a 2-2 splitter in the dirt. Posada tagged Cruz and threw the ball to Brosius at third base as music commemorating the mark began to play.

But plate umpire Charlie Reliford rushed out, indicating a foul tip, and Cruz eventually grounded out.

"I knew about it. I knew it was coming," he said. "I just wanted to stay locked in."

Clemens struck out eight and finished the night with 3,643.

Next up on the strikeout list for Clemens is Bert Blyleven, third with 3,701.

Nolan Ryan holds the career record with 5,714 and Steve Carlton is second with 4,136.

Seaver spent the end of 1986, his final year in the majors, playing for the Red Sox.

Clemens, who won the first of his five Cy Young Awards that season, made sure to study Seaver every chance he got.

Clemens watched how the future first-ballot Hall of Famer fired up his fastball in key situations, and talked to him about it.

"I was able to take some things Tom told me on the bench," he said.

Clemens still can look ahead to him in another, bigger category — Seaver finished with 311 victories.

"I thought it was remarkable when Nolan Ryan and Steve Carlton pitched into their 40s," Torre said. "Roger hasn't had to back off."

Steve Parris (4-6) endured another tough night at Yankee Stadium. In his only other game against New York, he was tagged for seven runs in 1 1/3 innings.

This outing wasn't much better from the start. Chuck Knoblauch led off with a double, moved up on a wild pitch and scored on Derek Jeter's groundout.

Martinez hit his 250th career homer, a shot into the upper deck in right field, Posada followed with a double and O'Neill homered.

A day earlier against Toronto, Martinez and O'Neill hit upper-deck shots in the same inning.

Posada homered in the fourth and Spencer hit his first home run since June 27, a two-run drive in the seventh.

Game notes:

New York opened a 1 1/2-game lead over idle Boston in the AL East. ... Toronto RF Raul Mondesi was a late scratch because of flu-like symptoms. ... Next up for Clemens on the career wins list is current Yankees announcer Jim Kaat at 283. ... The Yankees passed the 2 million mark in home attendance in their 50th date. ... Cruz made a superb diving catch in center against Knoblauch.

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