

SPORTS

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Snell shuts down M's

Rays homer twice in 3-0 victory

By **DICK SCANLON**
Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — There was a long stretch early in the season when Blake Snell was the lone pitcher in the Tampa Bay rotation who couldn't get a win. Now he seems to be the only one who can.

Snell allowed just two hits in seven innings for his second consecutive victory, and the Rays beat the Seattle Mariners 3-0 on Sunday.

"I wish I would have come together a lot sooner, but I feel really good about where I'm at," said Snell, the only starting pitcher to win for Tampa Bay in its last 17 games.

UP NEXT: MARINERS

• Seattle Mariners (63-62) at Atlanta Braves (55-67)
 • Today, 4:35 p.m. TV: RTNW

Kevin Kiermaier and Adeiny Hechavarria homered for the Rays, who snapped a four-game skid and won for the first time in six tries against Seattle this season.

Snell, who ended a streak of 16 winless starts with a victory Tuesday at Toronto, gave up a leadoff single to Nelson Cruz in the second inning and another single to Robinson Cano in the eighth. The left-hander retired 12 straight during one stretch.

His strikeout of Cruz after Cano's hit was the key out of the game to Snell, who led 1-0 at the time.

"You can't control what just happened, you can only control what's going to happen," Snell reminded himself. "Any at-bat against a really good hitter is going to be a big at-bat, especially when you know with one bad pitch, he can capitalize."

Snell (2-6) struck out eight and walked two, winning consecutive starts for the first time in his career. Alex Colome pitched the ninth for his 36th save.

Cruz's single extended his hitting streak to 12 games.

Kiermaier led off the bottom of the first with a home run against Yovani Gallardo, his eighth of the season. It was the first home run since June 2 for Kiermaier, who missed 61 games with a broken hip.

"It's been a while," he said, "but to get the team going from the first inning was great. To look back on it, it was a game-winning hit in the first inning, but all the credit has to go to Blake Snell for shutting them down."

Hechavarria's third home run of the year, second since being acquired from Miami, came with a runner on in the seventh.



AP Photo/Chris O'Meara
Seattle Mariners pitcher Yovani Gallardo watches as Tampa Bay Rays' Adeiny Hechavarria runs around the bases after Hechavarria hit a two-run home run during the seventh inning of a baseball game Sunday in St. Petersburg, Fla.

America still in turmoil a year after Kaepernick's protest



AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez
San Francisco 49ers outside linebacker Eli Harold, left, quarterback Colin Kaepernick, center, and safety Eric Reid kneel during the national anthem before an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys in Santa Clara, Calif., in October. What started as a protest against police brutality has mushroomed a year later into a divisive debate over the future of Kaepernick who refused to stand for the national anthem and now faces what his fans see as blackbaling for speaking out in a country roiled by racial strife.

NFL quarterback without a team

By **JANIE HAR**
 and **JESSE J. HOLLAND**
Associated Press

What started as a protest against police brutality has mushroomed a year later into a divisive debate over the future of a football player who refused to stand for the national anthem and now faces what his fans see as blackbaling for speaking out in a country roiled by racial strife.

Supporters of former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick demonstrated outside the Los Angeles Rams' Aug. 12 preseason opener against the Dallas Cowboys, part of calls for boycotts of the upcoming NFL season. Film director Spike Lee is promoting a rally on his behalf.

On the opposing end of a wide range of opinions, some fans say Kaepernick shouldn't have sat or knelt during the national anthem, while others argue the quarterback's lack of a job is more about his talent.

The once-rising star and Super Bowl quarterback has been unemployed since March, when he opted out of his contract and became a free agent who could sign with any team. At least three NFL clubs have openly discussed the idea of signing him, but the embattled quarterback has yet to sign a contract with training camps well underway.

Just weeks away from the regular season, he has become a symbol of the clash of celebrity, sports and social issues as more people—including players, fans, politicians, team owners and pundits—invoke his name to debate thorny issues of patriotism and race. Other prominent NFL players have sat out or demonstrated during anthems this preseason, one saying his decision was bolstered by a recent white supremacists' rally in Virginia



AP Photo/Bob Leverone
A Carolina Panthers fan holds his sign in protest in September of the San Francisco 49ers Colin Kaepernick.

that turned deadly.

"There's a lot going on inside people's hearts right now," said Dan Rascher, a sports business professor at the University of San Francisco. "This may have been a catalyst for that even though it's not about Colin Kaepernick, but about our country and who we are."

Other players who joined Kaepernick in protest are still employed. Philadelphia Eagles safety Malcolm Jenkins pledged to continue his protests this season, tight end Martellus Bennett signed a free agent contract with the Green Bay Packers and linebacker Brandon Marshall stayed with the Denver Broncos even as he lost two endorsements for kneeling during the anthem.

Still, some fans say they believe Kaep-

ernick has been passed up as punishment for his actions, which initially went unnoticed until the third preseason game last year.

The chorus gets louder every time a quarterback vacancy is filled on an NFL team, such as when the Miami Dolphins brought 34-year-old quarterback Jay Cutler out of a short-lived retirement to lead its franchise. Cutler was out of work—like Kaepernick, Robert Griffin III, and others—and planned to work as a television analyst before the Dolphins reunited him with coach Adam Gase.

"Either some owners and/or the NFL are punishing him for speaking out, or they've decided that it's best for business to sweep these valid issues under the rug in order not to upset fans who, in our opinion, don't have a valid reason to be upset about Colin Kaepernick being on their team," said Tim Clark, who is organizing boycotts of all 32 teams for the NFL's regular season opener.

Color of Change, an online civil rights organization, flooded Baltimore Ravens headquarters with telephone calls when the team didn't quickly sign him as it openly considered options to react to an injury. The Los Angeles chapter of the National Action Network, which demonstrated over the weekend, says it will boycott the Rams and Chargers games at Memorial Coliseum. A change.org petition calling for a season-long boycott of the NFL has collected more than 170,000 signatures.

"We understand the NFL is very important to you. We also understand the purpose of Colin Kaepernick's protest is FAR more important than any games you will ever watch," the petition said.

Elie Mystal, an editor at the "Above the Law" legal commentary website, agreed with the proposed boycotts.

"Kaepernick doesn't have a job because he spoke out about race," Mystal said. "That's the thing you're not allowed to do in our sporting culture and most of our popular culture, unless you're so over-the-top talented that they need you for winning."

Fant's injury cast shadow over Seahawks' win over Vikings

Offensive line in question

By **TIM BOOTH**
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Just when the Seattle Seahawks were getting settled on its shaky offensive line, it's once again their biggest question with the regular season approaching.

Russell Wilson looked just fine throwing for 206 yards and two touchdowns in the first half, and the Seattle Seahawks suffered a significant injury to left tackle George Fant in their 20-13 victory over the Minnesota Vikings on Friday night.

Fant suffered a torn ACL in his right knee when he was injured midway through the second quarter. Fant was rolled into by teammate Justin Britt and immediately fell to the turf in pain. The team training staff attended to Fant on the field and placed an air splint around his lower right leg before he was taken away.

Seattle coach Pete Carroll said Fant will need surgery and expected to be done for the season.

"It's heartbreaking. It's so unfortunate for George," Carroll said.



AP Photo/Stephen Brashear
Seattle Seahawks offensive tackle George Fant is helped onto a cart after he went down on a play against the Minnesota Vikings during the first half of an NFL football preseason game Friday in Seattle.

"There are other things that follow that but my first thoughts are for George."

Fant's injury likely means significant changes for Seattle's offensive line. Luke Joeckel was set to be the starting left guard, but may be an option at left tackle with the entire right side of the line still unsettled.

Fant took over at left tackle midway through last season and spent the offseason reshaping his body to be stronger going into this season. Earlier this week offensive line coach Tom Cable said Seattle was set on the left side of the offensive line.

Fant's injury overshadowed what was an otherwise solid performance

NFL PRESEASON

• Kansas City Chiefs at Seattle Seahawks
 • Friday, 5 p.m. TV: CBS

by the Seahawks. Wilson picked apart a Vikings secondary that played without starting cornerback Trey Wayne and safety Andrew Sedenjo, completing 13 of 18 passes. He hit Kasen Williams on a 1-yard touchdown pass and found Mike Davis on a 22-yard catch-and-run TD late in the first half.

Williams continued to make a bid for a roster spot with an acrobatic 27-yard catch, followed by his 1-yard TD on Seattle's opening drive. He nearly had a second TD but couldn't haul in a deep pass from Wilson near the goal line in the second quarter.

"I've been on practice squad for two years now and quite honestly I'm tired of it," Williams said.

Minnesota's Sam Bradford was 7 of 11 for 95 yards, leading three drives for the Vikings before calling it a night. Taylor Heinicke threw a 21-yard touchdown pass to Bucky Hodges in the fourth quarter.