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Keuchel, Bregman lead the Astros past M's

By JIM HOEHN
Associated Press

SEATTLE — Alex Bregman had a tiebreaking two-run double in Houston's four-run seventh inning and Dallas Keuchel pitched effectively into the eighth to lead the Astros to their fifth straight win, 6-2 over the Seattle Mariners on Monday.

Keuchel (12-3) allowed two runs and seven hits in 7 2/3 innings. He struck out five and walked two in his longest outing since May 5. The left-hander started the season 9-0, but was 2-3 with a 5.35 ERA in his seven previous starts since coming off the disabled list on July 28.

Yuli Gurriel and Brian McCann had solo homers in the fifth for the Astros, and Josh Reddick added a two-run single in the seventh. Nelson Liriano finished the eighth inning and Ken Giles struck out the side in the ninth.

"You have to give credit to Keuchel, he was really good today," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "Fourteen outs on the ground. Double play balls certainly squashed a couple rallies we thought we got going. He's an accomplished left-handed starter with a good sinker, and he got it done against us."

After starter Erasmo Ramirez limited the Astros to four hits, including the two homers, through six innings, Houston broke through against the bullpen.

Marwin Gonzalez singled and McCann walked against Marc Rzepczynski (2-1). Nick Vincent came on and Cameron Maybin advanced the runners with a bunt. George Springer was walked intentionally to load the bases and Bregman sliced an opposite-field double down the right-field line.

"They decided to walk Springer," Bregman said. "He's been driving the ball. ... I was just fortunate enough to put a good swing on the ball and thankful to come through for my teammates."

Jose Altuve was intentionally to reload the bases. Reddick's two-out single scored two more runs.

The Astros, who managed just two singles through four innings, erased a 1-0 deficit with two homers in the fifth. Gurriel opened with his 16th, sending a 1-1 pitch over the wall in left. After Gonzalez grounded out, McCann followed with his 14th.

Kyle Seager brought the Mariners even in the sixth with his 20th, a two-out solo shot to center — his sixth consecutive season of 20 or more homers.

First-inning singles by Jean Segura, Nelson Cruz and Seager staked the Mariners to a 1-0 lead.

Houston, which led the AL West by 16 games at the end of July, stumbled a bit through injuries to 11-17 in August, but are perfect so far in September.

Seattle, coming off a three-game sweep of Oakland, entered the day 2 1/2 games behind Minnesota for the second wild card spot.

Mariners moves

Seattle claimed OF Jacob Hannemann and RHP Seth Frankoff off waivers from the Chicago Cubs on Monday. RHP David Phelps (right elbow impingement) was transferred from the 10-day DL to the 60-day DL and LHP Zac Curtis was designated for assignment.

Trainer's room

Mariners: CF Jarrod Dyson (groin) is day to day, Servais said. ... RHP Felix Hernandez, on the 10-day DL (right shoulder bursitis), threw a 37-pitch bullpen session Monday. "The bullpen today was much better than it was the last time," Servais said.



AP Photo/Seth Wenig

Then-New York Jets defensive end Sheldon Richardson stretches prior to a game against the Buffalo Bills.

Seahawks make statement in getting Richardson from Jets

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — Sheldon Richardson received the traditional welcome of being a new member of the Seattle Seahawks.

In his first team meeting on Monday, he was the brunt of a practical joke.

"The team meeting is nuts. The team meeting is a little different," Richardson said after completing his first practice with his new team. "They got me today. Cracked a little joke on me. No need to go into it. But it was fun. A fun environment."

Richardson became the latest star added to Seattle's already standout defense when he was acquired via trade from the New York Jets last Friday for wide receiver Jermaine Kearse and a 2018 second-round pick.

It appeared Richardson's time with the Jets had worn thin, so the move may have been somewhat expected. The surprise was Seattle making such a strong statement about its intent for the upcoming season.

SEAHAWKS 2017 SCHEDULE

Sun, Sep 10.....@ Packers	1:25 p.m.
Sun, Sep 17.....vs 49ers	1:25 p.m.
Sun, Sep 24.....@ Titans	1:05 p.m.
Sun, Oct 1.....vs Colts	5:30 p.m.
Sun, Oct 8.....@ Rams	1:05 p.m.
Sun, Oct 22.....@ Giants	1:25 p.m.
Sun, Oct 29.....vs Texans	1:05 p.m.
Sun, Nov 5.....vs Redskins	1:05 p.m.
Thu, Nov 9.....@ Cardinals	5:25 p.m.
Mon, Nov 20.....vs Falcons	5:30 p.m.
Sun, Nov 26.....@ 49ers	1:05 p.m.
Sun, Dec 3.....vs Eagles	5:30 p.m.
Sun, Dec 10.....@ Jaguars	10 a.m.
Sun, Dec 17.....vs Rams	1:05 p.m.
Sun, Dec 24.....@ Cowboys	1:25 p.m.
Sun, Dec 31.....vs Cardinals	1:25 p.m.

Home games bolded

"The team that drafted me. Met some great people along the way, met people I liked and didn't like," Richardson said of leaving behind the Jets.

"Other than that, they're still family. That locker room is still my brothers, I'll keep in touch with them, I will, they know I will ride



Veteran DT Ahtyba Rubin among Seahawks final roster cuts

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

RENTON, Wash. — The Seattle Seahawks released veteran defensive tackle Ahtyba Rubin, backup quarterback Trevone Boykin and fullback Marcel Reese as part of their roster moves to reach the 53-man limit on Saturday.

The cuts included wide receiver Kasen Williams and cornerback Pierre Desir after both had been standouts in training camp.

The decision to release Boykin means Seattle will go into the season with just veteran Austin Davis as the backup QB to Russell Wilson. Boykin had served as Wilson's backup a year ago, but was inconsistent during the preseason while Davis played well in the final two exhibition games.

Seattle also made a pair of trades, sending defensive end Cassius Marsh to New England in exchange for fifth- and seventh-round picks and acquiring offensive lineman Isaiah Battle from Kansas City in exchange for a seventh-round draft pick.

Seattle's initial 53-man roster featured 10 offensive linemen — including undrafted rookie Jordan Roos — and eight defensive linemen. Rubin is not part of that defensive line group after being with the Seahawks for the past two seasons, starting all 32 games in the regular season.

The decision to cut Rubin was made easier by the acquisition of Sheldon Richardson from the New York Jets on Friday and will save Seattle money against the salary cap in each of the next two seasons.

Cutting Williams was the bigger surprise after a stellar preseason in which he led the NFC with 208 yards receiving in four games. Williams' spot appeared safe after Jermaine Kearse was sent to the Jets as part of the Richardson trade.

Seattle will go into the regular season with five wide receivers — Doug Baldwin, Tyler Lockett, Paul Richardson, Amara Darboah and Tanner McEvoy — and five running backs. The running back group includes seventh-round pick Chris Carson and J.D. McKissic, who can double as a wide receiver and kick returner.

Seahawks preview capsule

Associated Press

SEATTLE SEAHAWKS (11-6-1)

New faces: DL Sheldon Richardson, CB Justin Coleman, OL Luke Joeckel, RB Eddie Lacy, LB Michael Wilhoite, K Blair Walsh, OL Oday Aboushi, DB Bradley McDougald, rookies OL Ethan Pocic, CB Shaquill Griffin.

Key losses: DE Cassius Marsh, DT Ahtyba Rubin, OL George Fant, K Steven Hauschka, OL Garry Gilliam, LB Brock Coyle.

Strengths: Defense is still elite and may have most depth since Super Bowl winning season. Addition of Richardson to defensive line may push Seattle over top. LB Bobby Wagner led NFL in tackles last season, S Earl Thomas is recovered from broken leg, and CB Richard Sherman and DE Michael Bennett remain among best in league at positions. QB Russell Wilson also fully healthy after playing through knee, ankle injuries last season, and has TE Jimmy Graham, WR Doug Baldwin as primary targets.

Weaknesses: Offensive line remains biggest question, especially after loss of LT Fant due to season-ending knee injury. Run game has potential, but both Thomas Rawls and Eddie Lacy have durability questions. Cornerback opposite Sherman closely watched with Deshaun Shead recovering from major knee injury.

Fantasy Players To Watch: Wilson, Graham, Rawls, WR Tyler Lockett, K Blair Walsh.

Expectations: Anything less than playoff spot and being in Super Bowl conversation is considered disappointment. Seattle still viewed as favorite in NFC West even with defense aging and some offseason drama. Wilson has looked superb in preseason and healthy return of Thomas is significant for defense. Favorable schedule means Seahawks should be in running all season for best in NFC.

Seahawks believe their title window remains open

By TIM BOOTH
Associated Press

SEATTLE — When it became clear Pete Carroll had pieced together a special group and guided them to a first Super Bowl title, the debate topic was how many championships the Seattle Seahawks would win under his watch.

Four years since winning that first title, Carroll and the Seahawks are still looking for that second championship. They are relying on much of that same special group. But that core unit is slowly creeping into the latter stages of its prime and shrinking the remaining opportunities for future championships.

"If you looked at that, I think you might see that not very many teams win for a long time. I think the windows are kind of open and shut, but I'm not thinking that way," Carroll said. "I have no place in my brain for that kind of thinking, we're just trying to keep on going and stay on it."

The Seahawks head into the 2017 season as clear favorites in their division and again likely contenders for an NFC championship. Finding them in Minneapolis in February playing in their third Super Bowl under Carroll would not be a surprise.

But as the past few seasons have shown, there is a fragility associated with the team. Whether it was internal strife or key injuries, the line between just being good and being a championship contender is thin.

"I think that this year we kind of found our, I don't want to say edge, but we've got some motivation," wide receiver Doug Baldwin said.

Seattle appears to be putting extra urgency in this season, highlighted by the acquisition of former Pro Bowl defensive lineman Sheldon Richardson last week. It wasn't a move needed for Seattle to be competitive, but could be a move that is the difference in being a contender and a Super Bowl participant.

There is little doubt what Seattle's defense will be with the addition of Richardson, the return to health of standout safety Earl Thomas, plus the rest of the stellar holdovers, including Bobby Wagner, Richard Sherman, Kam Chancellor and Michael Bennett. They should be among the best in the NFL.