Cruz's double in 8th lifts Mariners over Houston

By KRISTIE RIEKEN
AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON — The Seattle Mariners are feeling pretty good after beating Houston All-Stars Justin Verlander and Gerrit Cole on consecutive nights.

Still, they know they have a lot more work to do as they chase their first playoff berth since 2001.

"We came here and wanted to start playing some better games and that's what we've done," manager Scott Servais said. "We're just playing better baseball right now and the top of the lineup has been really swinging the bat well."

Nelson Cruz hit a tie-breaking two-run double in a three-run eighth inning to lift the Mariners a 5-2 victory over the Astros on Friday night.

Houston leads the AL West and Seattle is 2 1/2 games behind Oakland for the second wild-card spot.

Mitch Haniger doubled with one out in the eighth, and Denard Span singled to chase Cole (10-5). The double by Haniger was his fifth extra-base hit in the last two games after he doubled in the sixth Friday and had two doubles and a homer Thursday.

Cole was replaced by Ryan Pressly, whose first pitch plunked Jean Segura on the top of his left hand. Cruz then smashed a ball off the wall in left-center to score Haniger and Span and make it 4-2. The Mariners tacked on a run when Segura scored on a groundout by Kyle Seager.

AP Photo/David J. Phillip

Seattle Mariners' Nelson Cruz watches a two-run double against the Houston Astros during the eighth inning of a baseball game Friday in Houston.

"They've got a really good club," Servais said. "You've got to pitch them really well, you've got to keep them down because you know it's going to be tight ball games here and we got some big hits late."

Seattle starter Mike Leake allowed eight hits and two runs in six innings. Adam Warren (1-1) allowed one hit in a scoreless seventh for the win and Edwin Diaz struck out two in a perfect ninth for his 44th save.

MLB

Mariners	Astros
5	2

Cole yielded six hits and four runs in 7 1/3 innings for his season-high third straight loss.

The Astros had trouble stringing hits together until Marwin Gonzalez and Tyler White hit consecutive singles with no outs in the fifth inning. Martin Maldonado then reached on a fielder's choice that left Gonzalez out at home.

Tony Kemp's single to center field with two outs scored White to make it 1-0. Alex Bregman followed with an RBI double to push the lead to 2-0 before Carlos Correa grounded out to end the inning and leave Kemp stranded at third. Correa was 0 for 3 in his return after missing more than a month with a sore lower back.

Cole sailed through the first five innings, retiring 15 of the first 16 batters he faced with the only baserunner coming on a double by Cruz to start the second inning. He'd sat down 12 straight when Cameron Maybin singled to start the sixth inning.

RODEO: Hermiston's Mary Shae Hayes runs top time in barrel racing

Continued from 1B

fastest time of the night with 3.7 seconds, while Bothum scored 5.0 seconds.

Barrel racing

The barrel racing lineup saw a lot of Eastern Oregon and Columbia River Circuit riders running Farm-City's course on Friday.

Eight of the 12 riders call Oregon home, and at the end of the night it was Hermiston's Mary Shae Hayes that scored the best run and earned the $100 bonus and coveted bottle of Chute 8 whiskey. Hayes completed the course in 17.39 seconds on her eight-year-old horse Ace, holding off Pueblo, Colorado's Christine Loughlin's time of 17.40 seconds.

"I feel like I got a little more nervous than usual," Hayes said. "My horse, he's consistent but we still have our moments. That's not one of my best runs, but it worked, and you just never really know with barrel racing. Even with the best horse, something can always go wrong."

Hayes also took home an extra $500 bonus for the Darrell Sallee gray ribbon challenge on Friday, which was extra special for her.

"Darrell was really special and we were good family friends with him," she said. "So it just means a lot when you can win something like that."

Bull riding

It was a quiet night in bull riding on Friday as only two of the 11 riders were able to stay on for eight seconds for a qualified ride.

But the event saved the best for last.

Omak, Washington's Wyatt Covington hopped on Corey and Lange's Hunky Dorie for the last ride of the night, and rode through all the twists and turns for 86.5 points. The ride gave Covington the top score of the night and pushed him to No. 1 on the overall leaderboard.

"That ride was a great feeling," said Covington, who gave a big fist pump to the crowd and tossed his helmet in celebration after the ride. "I've been on that bull before and I was really excited to get back on him again. It bucked me off the first time, so I wanted a little redemption and it worked out perfectly in my favor."

Honeyville, Utah's Tim Bingham was the only other rider to get a score Friday, riding Korkow Rodeo's Double Action for 81 points, putting him in sixth place for the round.

Saddle bronc

Canadian cowboy Kolby Wanchuk's first trip to the Farm-City Pro Rodeo was a memorable one.

The rookie bronc rider hopped on Corey and Lange's Duck Butter on Friday night and rode the horse to an 85.5-point score, giving him the top ride of the night and moving him to first on the overall leaderboard.

"It was a fun horse and everything went well," Wanchuk said. "There's not much more you can ask for."

Tygh Valley's Johnny Espeland was close behind Wanchuk with 83.5 points on Calgary Stampede's Zealous Departure, while Cort Scheer of Elsemere, Nebraska, rode Calgary's Urgent Delivery for 80 points.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Orin Larsen of Inglis, Manitoba, Canada, rides Special Delivery for 88.5 points in bareback riding Friday at the Farm-City Pro Rodeo in Hermiston.

Bareback

The bareback riding portion of Friday's performance was a short one.

With five riders withdrawing from the competition, it left only Orin Larsen and Kaycee Feild to make rides to start of the evening. And though the field was small, the cowboys did not disappoint. Feild started things off with an 83-point ride on Korkow Rodeo's Broken Angel, but Larsen followed with a massive 88.5 points on Calgary Stampede's Special Delivery — a horse that Larsen was very familiar with.

"I've been on that horse three or four years previous and it kind of made me look silly," Larsen said with a smile, "so I was happy to have it and get some redemption."

Larsen's score moved him to the top of the overall standings, while Feild slides into sixth place.

Team roping

Friday's team roping competition may have ended in a tie, but it was Chad Masters of Cedar Hill, Tennessee, and Joseph Harrison of Overbrook, Oklahoma, who ultimately took home the prize money and bottles of Chute 8 whiskey.

The duo tied Brenten Hall of Jay, Oklahoma, and Chase Tryan of Helena, Montana, with an average time of 9.9 seconds. However, they edged them out by 0.1 seconds for the night's main event, roping their steer in just 4.8 seconds, while Hall and Tryan finished in 4.9.

Masters is a two-time world champ in steer wrestling, taking the title in both 2007 and 2012. He's also won the event in Farm-City in 2006. Harrison has already qualified for the NFR at the end of the season, where he'll team rope with Charley Crawford of Prineville, Oregon. Still, despite their accomplishments, the team was surprised by the night's results.

"I thought we took a lot longer," Masters said. "It worked out really well. We drew a really good steer."

Tomorrow, the team will compete in Bozeman, Montana in the hopes of keeping their streak going.

"I really needed tonight's win," Masters said. "I've been struggling, but Joseph's been having a great season. I'm just trying to keep it positive."

Tie-down roping

Ty Baker of Van Horn, Texas, may have won the night with an 8.3-second time in tie down roping, but it was Jason Minor of Ellensburg, Washington, who claimed the event's No. 1 spot after Farm-City's first three nights.

Minor trailed behind Baker by just 0.2 seconds, finishing at 8.5, but with Baker's no-time in the day's slack and Minor's score of 10.4, he sits atop the average with 18.9.

It was a slow start in the event, with the first few cowboys out the gate receiving no-time for failing to rope their calves properly. It wasn't until Baker and Minor took their turns when the competition really started to heat up.

"It was a little tough tonight," Minor said. "The calves were all fresh and untrained."

Although he's from Ellensburg, Minor has roots in Hermiston — his wife Haley, who also competes in the rodeo, calls this town home. His cousins Riley and Brady will team rope on Saturday, and Riley's wife Jordan took first in barrel racing on Thursday night.

MINOR: She's raced in over 60 rodeos so far this year, currently ranked No. 3

Continued from 1B

the rodeo.

In fact, it was the rodeo that brought the two together in the first place. The couple met as freshmen in high school when they toured rodeos during their summers off.

"We went to every rodeo together," she said.

They started dating when they were seniors in 2007 and married four years later. The rodeo lifestyle hasn't slowed down for either of them, however. Riley, 30, stands at No. 8 in the world in team roping, in which he competes alongside his brother Brady. He has qualified for the Wrangler National Finals four times and has won rodeos in Marwayne, Alberta; Bakersfield, California; and Coulee City, Washington, this year alone.

The two spend much of their time apart, touring the country and riding in rodeos from coast to coast between June and September.

"We're together in the winter and spring, but when the heat of the summer comes, we go our separate ways," Minor said. "We both grew up around rodeos; we're used to the different schedules."

She's raced in over 60 rodeos so far this year.

"You get tired of the long drives, but once you're in the arena, it's always exciting," she said.

Minor is currently at No. 3 in the Columbia River Circuit. Thursday, she finished off a nail-biting race on top, edging out Cheyenne Allan of Mabton, Washington, and Teri Bangart of Olympia, who hold the No. 1 and No. 2 spots, respectively.

She clocked in at 17.19 seconds, besting Allan's time by just .03 seconds and staking her claim over her home turf. But for Minor, it's important to keep a level head and stay focused on what's to come.

"I don't pay much attention to the standings," she said. "They change every day, and it's a tough circuit. I like to take it one rodeo at a time."

Her mother, grandmother, aunt, and sister Jade were all in attendance for her big hometown victory. After the race, her mother helped her groom her 8-year-old horse, preparing it for their next competition, which is six hours away in Missoula, Montana.

"My parents taught me everything I know, and they still teach me new things every day," Minor said. "My mom records every run we make so we can learn from our mistakes and improve for the next time around."

The rodeo life means spending months on the road, often away from family. It's rare that the entire Minor/Crossley family is together under one roof, but when they are, there's only one thing on their minds.

"We're usually talking about the rodeo — where we're going next, training our horses, and raising new colts," she said. "I want to do this for as long as I can. Monroe already loves the horses, it just runs in the family."

SCOREBOARD

Baseball

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

American League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	82	35	.701	—
New York	72	43	.626	9
Tampa Bay	59	57	.509	22½
Toronto	52	63	.452	29
Baltimore	35	81	.302	46½
Central Division	**W**	**L**	**Pct**	**GB**
Cleveland	64	51	.557	—
Minnesota	53	62	.461	11
Detroit	48	68	.414	16½
Chicago	42	73	.365	22
Kansas City	35	80	.304	29
West Division	**W**	**L**	**Pct**	**GB**
Houston	73	44	.624	—
Oakland	68	48	.586	4½
Seattle	67	50	.573	6
Los Angeles	59	58	.504	14
Texas	52	66	.441	21½

Friday's Games
Boston 19, Baltimore 12
Texas 12, N.Y. Yankees 7
Tampa Bay 7, Toronto 0
Detroit 5, Minnesota 3
Chicago White Sox 1, Cleveland 0
Seattle 5, Houston 2
St. Louis 7, Kansas City 0
L.A. Angels 4, Oakland 3

Saturday's Games
Boston (Price 11-6) at Baltimore (Yacabonis 0-0), 10:05 a.m., 1st game
Texas (Hutchison 1-2) at N.Y. Yankees (Lynn 8-8), 10:05 a.m.
Tampa Bay (Stanek 1-3) at Toronto (Gaviglio 2-4), 1:07 p.m.
Minnesota (Gibson 5-9) at Detroit (Liriano 3-6), 3:10 p.m.
Boston (Cuevas 0-0) at Baltimore (Ramirez 1-4), 4:05 p.m., 2nd game
Cleveland (Bauer 11-6) at Chicago White Sox (Shields 4-13), 4:10 p.m.
Seattle (LeBlanc 6-2) at Houston (Morton 12-2), 4:10 p.m.
St. Louis (Flaherty 5-6) at Kansas City (Duffy 7-10), 4:15 p.m.
Oakland (Jackson 3-2) at L.A. Angels (Skaggs 8-7), 6:07 p.m.

Sunday's Games
Boston at Baltimore, 10:05 a.m.
Texas at N.Y. Yankees, 10:05 a.m.
Tampa Bay at Toronto, 10:07 a.m.
Minnesota at Detroit, 10:10 a.m.
Cleveland at Chicago White Sox, 11:10 a.m.
Seattle at Houston, 11:10 a.m.
St. Louis at Kansas City, 11:15 a.m.
Oakland at L.A. Angels, 1:07 p.m.

National League

East Division	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	63	50	.558	—
Philadelphia	64	51	.557	—
Washington	59	57	.509	5½
New York	48	65	.425	15
Miami	47	70	.402	18
Central Division	**W**	**L**	**Pct**	**GB**
Chicago	67	48	.583	—
Milwaukee	66	53	.555	3
St. Louis	61	55	.526	6½
Pittsburgh	60	56	.517	7½
Cincinnati	51	65	.440	16½
West Division	**W**	**L**	**Pct**	**GB**
Arizona	64	53	.547	—
Los Angeles	64	53	.547	—
Colorado	61	55	.526	2½
San Francisco	57	59	.491	6½
San Diego	47	71	.398	17½

Friday's Games
Chicago Cubs 3, Washington 2
Cincinnati 3, Arizona 0
N.Y. Mets 6, Miami 2
Atlanta 10, Milwaukee 1
St. Louis 7, Kansas City 0
Colorado 5, L.A. Dodgers 4
San Diego 2, Philadelphia 0
Pittsburgh at San Francisco, 10:15 p.m.

Saturday's Games
Washington (Roark 6-12) at Chicago Cubs (Lester 12-4), 1:05 p.m.
Arizona (Ray 3-2) at Cincinnati (Harvey 5-7), 3:40 p.m.
Milwaukee (Miley 2-1) at Atlanta (Teheran 8-7), 4:10 p.m.
N.Y. Mets (Oswalt 1-2) at Miami (Straily 4-5), 4:10 p.m.
St. Louis (Flaherty 5-6) at Kansas City (Duffy 7-10), 4:15 p.m.
L.A. Dodgers (Buehler 5-4) at Colorado (Freeland 10-7), 5:10 p.m.
Philadelphia (Nola 12-3) at San Diego (Lockett 0-2), 5:40 p.m.
Pittsburgh (Williams 9-8) at San Francisco (TBD), 6:05 p.m.

Sunday's Games
Arizona at Cincinnati, 10:10 a.m.
N.Y. Mets at Miami, 10:10 a.m.
Milwaukee at Atlanta, 10:35 a.m.
St. Louis at Kansas City, 11:15 a.m.
L.A. Dodgers at Colorado, 12:10 p.m.
Philadelphia at San Diego, 12:40 p.m.
Pittsburgh at San Francisco, 1:05 p.m.
Washington at Chicago Cubs, 5:05 p.m.

Soccer

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Atlanta FC	14	4	6	48	50	28
New York	14	6	2	44	44	23
New York FC	13	5	5	44	45	29
Columbus	10	7	6	36	30	29
Montreal	9	13	2	29	30	40
New England	7	7	8	29	36	35
Philadelphia	8	11	3	27	29	37
Orlando City	7	14	2	23	35	54
Toronto FC	6	11	5	23	37	41
Chicago	6	13	5	23	35	48
D.C. United	4	9	6	18	30	36

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
FC Dallas	12	4	6	42	36	28
Portland	10	3	7	37	33	25
Sporting K.C.	10	6	6	36	40	30
Los Angeles FC	10	6	6	36	45	37
LA Galaxy	10	8	5	35	44	38
Real Salt Lake	10	9	4	34	33	40
Vancouver	8	9	6	30	36	46
Seattle	8	9	5	29	24	25
Minnesota United	9	13	1	28	36	46
Houston	7	9	6	27	39	33
Colorado	5	12	5	20	27	37
San Jose	3	12	7	16	32	41

NOTE: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Saturday's Games
Houston at Columbus, 4:30 p.m.
Philadelphia at New England, 4:30 p.m.
New York at Chicago, 5:30 p.m.
San Jose at Colorado, 6 p.m.
Montreal at Real Salt Lake, 7 p.m.
Minnesota United at LA Galaxy, 7:30 p.m.
Sporting Kansas City at Los Angeles FC, 7:30 p.m.
Vancouver at Portland, 8 p.m.

Sunday's Games
New York City FC at Toronto FC, 1 p.m.
Orlando City at D.C. United, 5 p.m.
FC Dallas at Seattle, 7 p.m.

Basketball

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Atlanta	20	10	.667	—
x-Washington	19	11	.633	1
x-Connecticut	17	13	.567	3
Chicago	11	19	.367	9
New York	7	22	.241	12½
Indiana	5	25	.167	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
x-Seattle	23	8	.742	—
x-Los Angeles	18	12	.600	4½
x-Minnesota	17	13	.567	5½
x-Phoenix	17	14	.548	6
Dallas	14	15	.483	8
Las Vegas	12	18	.400	10½

x-clinched playoff spot

Friday's Games
Chicago 97, Connecticut 86
Phoenix 94, Indiana 74

Saturday's Games
Dallas at Atlanta, 11 a.m.
Indiana at Las Vegas, 7:30 p.m.

Sunday's Games
Atlanta at New York, 11:30 a.m.
Chicago at Connecticut, 12 p.m.
Dallas at Washington, 12 p.m.
Los Angeles at Phoenix, 4 p.m.
Seattle at Minnesota, 4 p.m.

Football

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE
Preseason

Friday's Games
N.Y. Jets 17, Atlanta 0
Oakland 16, Detroit 10

Saturday's Games
Minnesota at Denver, 6 p.m.
L.A. Chargers at Arizona, 7 p.m.

Golf

PGA Championship
Friday,
At Bellerive Country Club, St. Louis
Purse: TBA ($10.5 million in 2017)
Yardage: 7,316; Par: 70
Leaderboard at time of suspended play

Golfer	Score	Thru
Gary Woodland	-10	F
Kevin Kisner	-9	F
Brooks Keopka	-8	F
Dustin Johnson	-7	F
Charl Schwartzel	-7	F
Thomas Pieters	-7	F
Rickie Fowler	-7	10
Brandon Stone	-6	F

Auto Racing

NASCAR CUP SERIES
Consumers Energy 400 Lineup
After Friday's Qualifying; race Sunday, 11:30 a.m. (NBCSN)
At Michigan International Speedway
Brooklyn, Mich.
Car number in parentheses
1. (11) Denny Hamlin, Toyota, 202.794 mph.
2. (18) Kyle Busch, Toyota, 202.731.
3. (4) Kevin Harvick, Ford, 202.100.
4. (20) Erik Jones, Toyota, 201.805.
5. (3) Austin Dillon, Chevrolet, 201.748.
6. (31) Ryan Newman, Chevrolet, 201.658.
7. (78) Martin Truex Jr., Toyota, 201.421.
8. (12) Ryan Blaney, Ford, 201.309.
9. (22) Joey Logano, Ford, 201.230.
10. (88) Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 201.185.
11. (10) Aric Almirola, Ford, 200.524.
12. (41) Kurt Busch, Ford, 200.033.
13. (17) Ricky Stenhouse Jr., Ford, 200.842.
14. (21) Paul Menard, Ford, 200.814.
15. (1) Jamie McMurray, Chevrolet, 200.574.
16. (14) Clint Bowyer, Ford, 200.267.
17. (42) Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 200.072.
18. (2) Brad Keselowski, Ford, 199.590.
19. (48) Jimmie Johnson, Chevrolet, 199.496.
20. (24) William Byron, Chevrolet, 199.231.
21. (9) Chase Elliott, Chevrolet, 199.077.
22. (43) Bubba Wallace, Chevrolet, 197.721.
23. (37) Chris Buescher, Chevrolet, 197.596.
24. (38) David Ragan, Ford, 197.439.
25. (47) AJ Allmendinger, Chevrolet, 197.352.
26. (6) Trevor Bayne, Ford, 197.298.
27. (13) Ty Dillon, Chevrolet, 197.298.
28. (95) Kasey Kahne, Chevrolet, 197.287.
29. (34) Michael McDowell, Ford, 196.512.
30. (32) Matt DiBenedetto, Ford, 196.383.
31. (00) Landon Cassill, Chevrolet, 195.567.
32. (72) Corey LaJoie, Chevrolet, 193.533.
33. (51) BJ McLeod, Chevrolet, 191.744.
34. (99) Gray Gaulding, Chevrolet, 190.446.
35. (15) Reed Sorenson, Chevrolet, 189.663.
36. (7) Garrett Smithley, Chevrolet, 188.344.
37. (66) Timmy Hill, Chevrolet, 185.648.
38. (96) Jeffrey Earnhardt, Toyota, 184.054.
39. (23) Blake Jones, Toyota, 182.315.
40. (19) Daniel Suarez, Toyota, 0.000.