

# Sports

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

## Dodgers hit 8 homers in 12-5 win over Arizona

By Greg Beacham  
AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES — Joc Pederson and Enrique Hernandez each hit two of the Los Angeles Dodgers' eight home runs, which set a major league record for opening day and tied the franchise mark for any game, during a 12-5 victory over the Arizona Diamondbacks on Thursday.

Hernandez, Austin Barnes and Corey Seager all homered in the fourth inning to chase Arizona ace Zack Greinke.

Max Muncy, Cody Bellinger and Hernandez then connected in the seventh for the power-packed Dodgers, whose pursuit of a third straight National League pennant got off to a thrilling start.

Adam Jones and Christian Walker went deep for the Diamondbacks, but their pitching staff's eight homers allowed also set a team record.

The Dodgers broke baseball's previous opening day record of six homers, set by the Mets in 1988 and matched by the White Sox in 2008.

Los Angeles also equaled the franchise mark set against Milwaukee on May 23, 2002, when Shawn Green hit four of the Dodgers' eight.

The Dodgers finished second in the majors last season with 235 homers, and they were even more potent in their first regular-season game under new hitting coach Robert Van Scoyoc. All eight dingers were hit by returning players to the Dodgers, who have only two new position players on their opening day roster.

The Dodgers provided ample support for Hyun-Jin Ryu, who yielded four hits and struck out eight over six stellar innings as Los Angeles' first opening day starter not named Clayton Kershaw since 2010. Kershaw's franchise-record streak of eight consecutive opening day starts ended due to left shoulder inflammation.

Ryu, who retired 13 straight during one stretch, became the second Korean-born pitcher to start on opening day in the majors.

Meanwhile, Greinke's latest return to Dodger Stadium was a debacle.

## Verlander, Astros cruise past Rays

By Fred Goodall  
AP Sports Writer

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. — Justin Verlander relished facing Blake Snell on opening day.

"I don't try to hide behind the this-is-just-another-start anymore," the Houston ace said.

The Astros star delivered, beating Snell and the Tampa Bay Rays 5-1 in a rare season-opening matchup between pitchers who finished first and second in balloting for the Cy Young Award.

"There definitely is more intensity to it," Verlander added. "It's kind of somewhere between a playoff game and a regular-season game, so I just kind of used the adrenaline, and you go from there."

George Springer homered on opening day for the third straight year. Michael Brantley and Jose Altuve also went deep for the Astros against Snell, the AL Cy Young recipient who won 21 games and led the league in ERA.

Verlander (1-0) allowed a leadoff homer to Austin Meadows on his fourth before dominating a mostly young Tampa Bay lineup featuring just one player — center fielder Kevin Kiermaier — who started for the

Rays on opening day last year.

"I just hit the reset button real quick," the 36-year-old right-hander said.

"It's not something you want to do, to lead off the year with a homer," Verlander added. "But I've done it before, so it was let's go turn the page and try to find it."

Verlander, fresh off signing a three-year contract that added \$66 million in guaranteed money for 2020 and 2021, limited the Rays to one run and three hits over seven innings before a crowd of 25,025 at Tropicana Field — Tampa Bay's 14th consecutive sellout for a home opener.

"We ran into a buzz saw. He did a great job having all of us off balance," Kiermaier said. "For me personally, I feel like every time I thought a fastball was coming it was an offspeed. A couple times I thought he's going to try to get me to chase an off speed, it was a heater."

Verlander, who improved to 4-1 in 11 opening day starts, struck out nine and only allowed one hit — Yandy Diaz's seventh-inning double — and three base-runners total after walking a batter and plunking another in the second.

## Baez hits two HRs as Cubs win 12-4

By Stephen Hawkins  
AP Baseball Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas — Javier Baez had a slight smile on his face when he was asked how different he felt playing shortstop and hitting cleanup for the Chicago Cubs.

Two big swings on opening day indicate he's picking up where he left off last season.

"Uh, the same. I feel more confident at the plate, being smarter with a plan," Baez said. "About the lineup, you can really put me anywhere. We've got guys here who

can hit leadoff, third, fourth, last. It doesn't matter."

Baez homered twice, Jon Lester won for the first time in his last five opening day starts and the Cubs began the season with a 12-4 victory Thursday at Texas, spoiling the debut of new Rangers manager Chris Woodward in the 26th and final opener in their current ballpark.

While batting everywhere in the lineup except ninth, Baez hit 34 homers and led the National League with 111 RBIs last season.

PORTLAND TRAIL BLAZERS

## Trail Blazers rout Chicago 118-98

By Andrew Seligman  
AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO — The Portland Trail Blazers got a feel-good moment before the game when they face-timed with Jusuf Nurkic and followed that up with an easy victory. Considering the circumstances, it was definitely not a bad night.

Seth Curry scored a season-high 20 points and the Trail Blazers beat the Chicago Bulls 118-98 on Wednesday night.

Still shaken by Nurkic's gruesome leg injury two nights earlier in a double-overtime victory over Brooklyn that secured their sixth straight playoff appearance, the Blazers made it look easy against a short-handed team.

Curry made four 3-pointers, Rodney Hood added 15 points, and Enes Kanter and Zach Collins each had 13. Portland won its fifth in a row even though Damian Lillard scored a season-low 11.

Seeing Nurkic gave them just the lift

they needed, even if there were some audio issues.

"It was cool," Curry said. "It was a little awkward. Unfortunately, we couldn't hear. The volume wasn't working so we couldn't hear what he was saying. But it was good to let him know we were thinking about him before we headed out there. That pregame huddle was a good moment for everybody."

Chicago's Shaquille Harrison set career highs with 21 points and 10 rebounds. Robin Lopez had 15 points and nine rebounds. But with mostly reserves in the lineup, the Bulls lost for the eighth time in 10 games.

Chicago announced afterward forward Lauri Markkanen will miss the remainder of the season after experiencing a rapid heart rate and fatigue.

Markkanen remained overnight in Toronto after exiting Tuesday night's loss to the Raptors. He was evaluated in the training room by the Bulls' medi-

cal staff and Toronto's team physician and underwent more tests at a hospital. He also was examined Wednesday in Chicago and will miss the remaining six games.

Markkanen joins a long list of unavailable Bulls players. Wendell Carter Jr., Chandler Hutchison and Denzel Valentine all had season-ending injuries.

Leading scorer Zach LaVine (bruised right thigh, right knee tendinitis), Otto Porter Jr. (strained right rotator cuff) and Kris Dunn (back) were unavailable Wednesday.

"(It's) very tough, because you got some of our core guys that's out right now," Harrison said. "But it's the NBA. And the next guy is the reason why these guys are on a roster, the reason why I'm on a roster. Because when your time is called, it's time to step up. And you can't really complain about much and keep it forward and try to get some wins."

## Gonzaga defeats Florida State 72-58

ANAHEIM, Calif. (AP) — Gonzaga was not going to be bullied by Florida State again with a spot in the Elite Eight on the line.

The top-seeded Bulldogs beat Florida State 72-58 in a Sweet 16 rematch Thursday night that moved Gonzaga to a regional final for the fourth time.

"This year we came with revenge and we did it," said Rui Hachimura, who led Gonzaga with 17 points in the West Region semifinal.

Gonzaga (33-3) is back in the Elite Eight for the second time in three years after Florida State ended the Bulldogs' season last year. That defeat, as well as games

this season against North Carolina, Duke and Tennessee, is what Zach Norvell Jr. said prepared Gonzaga to face fourth-seeded Florida State (29-8) again.

"We wanted to be more physical than them, take the fight to them both on offensive and defensive ends, trying to switch up schemes and don't let them get too comfortable," said Norvell, who scored 15 points.

Gonzaga will face Texas Tech on Saturday for the first spot in the Final Four.

The Bulldogs were the aggressors against Florida State, which had only lost to Duke and North Carolina in the two months leading

into the NCAA Tournament.

Gonzaga had four players score 14 or more points but was powered by defense — the Bulldogs outrebounded Florida State by nine, had 13 offensive rebounds and scored 17 second-chance points.

Florida State could not consistently counter Gonzaga's physicality, and the Seminoles shot just 39.3 percent from the field (24 of 61), were 3 of 20 on 3-pointers and committed 14 turnovers.

"They are great athletes so it's tough to get them off the boards," Seminoles forward RaiQuan Gray said. "Their off the glass play, they attack the boards hard. It was really

tough to play against."

Brandon Clarke — who had 15 points, 12 rebounds and five blocked shots — also said that confidence played a role. The Bulldogs had Florida State's 7-foot-4 center Christ Koumadje in early foul trouble and held the senior to eight points and only 12 minutes.

"It's always tough when you're playing a player that's 7-4, so that just always kind of has you second-guessing when you're driving in the lane," he said. "But I feel like this year we weren't really doing that and we were just, you know, going in strong and just playing the game that we always play."

## Mariners tag Sale, beat Red Sox 12-4

By Tim Booth  
AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE — Tim Beckham, Domingo Santana and Seattle's hodgepodge of new faces sent the defending World Series champions to a deflating start.

The Mariners didn't just knock off Boston. They thumped their way past the Red Sox and their ace, Chris Sale.

Beckham hit two of Seattle's three home runs off Sale, and the Mariners improved to 3-0 with a 12-4 victory in

their home opener Thursday.

The Mariners followed up their two wins over Oakland last week in Japan by rattling Sale (0-1) and knocking out the lefty that had dominated Seattle in the past. Sale was done after just three innings, while the Mariners were just getting started on their big offensive day.

"We like our team. It's a different look to our team. I get that. It's not the household names, the names you are used to seeing in our lineup," Seattle manager Scott Ser-

vais said. "But these guys can play and I've said it all along, as this season goes along I think fans will have plenty of guys to latch onto because we certainly have personality on this team. You saw some of that come out today."

Beckham did the most damage, hitting a solo homer in the second and following up in the third with a two-run shot to center field. The infielder was hitless in 15 career at-bats with nine strikeouts against Sale before hitting his second and third

home runs of the season.

Edwin Encarnacion added a solo shot off Sale as part of a four-run third inning. Ryon Healy and Santana both homered against Boston's bullpen as Seattle finished with five long balls.

Santana has nine RBIs in three games, the most in team history after the first three games of a season. He had 20 RBIs in 85 games last year with Milwaukee.

Sale had overpowered Seattle the last three times he faced the Mariners.

## Twins top Indians

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — When the time came for Rocco Baldelli to remove Jose Berrios from the game, the new manager of the Minnesota Twins clapped as he reached the mound and extended his right hand for a rare congratulatory shake with his ace-in-the-making.

This opening day victory over Corey Kluber and the Cleveland Indians was clearly an occasion to celebrate.

Marwin Gonzalez hit a two-run double in the seventh inning, Berrios outdueled Kluber and the Twins gave Baldelli a win in his debut by beating the Indians 2-0 on Thursday to start the season.

"Usually you get a fist bump or a 'good job,' and then you walk off of the mound, but this was opening day," Berrios said through the team's interpreter. "It's a special day for all of us and the first game for him as a manager. It was emotional out there."

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