

throwing the heat



KEVIN BOTTRELL/Colby Free Press

Zach Stones fired a pitch during the Colby K-18 team's game against Oakley on Thursday. Colby defeated Oakley 12-2.

Crazy play dooms Royals in 4-3 defeat to Cleveland

CLEVELAND (AP) — Coco Crisp thought he still had a chance to get to Shin-Soo Choo's bouncing base hit. A bird beat him to it.

The ball flattened a low-flying gull in the 10th inning and rolled past Kansas City's center fielder and Mark DeRosa scored from second base without a throw to give the Cleveland Indians a 4-3 win over the Royals on Thursday night.

"Crazy things happen in this game," Crisp said after Shin-Soo Choo's line single over the second-base bag clipped the wing of one of hundreds of birds that buzz the ballpark. "It was hit so sharply, I felt like I had a chance," Crisp said. "You never know what the heck is going to happen."

The stunned bird flopped around for a few seconds before finally flying off.

Just another wild win at Progressive Field.

"I didn't see it, but I'll take it," Choo said.

Two years ago, a swarm of bugs rattled New York Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain in the AL division series, helping the Indians rally.

The bugs, common near the lakefront in late spring, returned a few weeks ago, and for the past few weeks, flocks of gulls have flown around feeding off them, as well as scraps of food tossed by fans.

"I guess the bugs brought the birds with that whole nature thing," Crisp said. "I'd rather have the birds, to be honest."

DeRosa opened the inning with a single off Kyle Farnsworth (1-4) — his third single along with two walks in five times up.

Victor Martinez then walked and Choo lined a 1-0 pitch over second and off the gull.

The collision changed the ball's path just enough to redirect it past Crisp all the way to the wall as DeRosa scored easily and the Indians mobbed Choo to celebrate the win.

Choo was 0-for-4 with three strikeouts when he came up with two on and none out.

"When I got in the batter's box,

I thought they would want me to bunt, but I appreciated they let me hit away," Choo said. "I saw the birds. I've seen them for weeks and been worried maybe 200 of them would be flying and one would get hit when I was trying to field a ball. Then what would I do?"

Matt Herges (2-0) worked the top of the 10th, allowing one hit. The right-hander has not allowed a run in his last 10 2-3 innings.

Cleveland moved out of last place in the AL Central, a half game ahead of the Royals, who have lost 23 of 30 since leading the division by three games on May 7.

"If we don't make errors the first day and today, we should sweep this series," Royals manager Trey Hillman said after Kansas City committed two errors on one play that helped Cleveland come back from a 3-1 deficit.

Royals starter Zach Greinke left with a 3-1 lead and one out in the eighth.

Reliever John Bale got Choo to hit a potential double-play grounder, but the Royals started tossing the ball around wildly.

With DeRosa on second and Martinez on first, Choo's bouncer was fielded by first baseman Billy Butler, whose throw to shortstop Tony Pena forced Martinez.

But Pena's return throw was in the dirt and got past Butler for an error that allowed DeRosa to score with a head-first slide.

Meanwhile, second baseman

Alberto Callaspo retrieved the ball and threw wide of home, sending Choo to second.

Jhonny Peralta followed with a high drive off the left-field wall that just missed being a homer, but easily scored Choo.

"When I got on base, things happened," Choo said. "I need to get on base more."

Greinke, coming off his worst start of the season, allowed three runs and six hits over 7 1-3 innings — matching his season-high pitch count at 116.

The right-hander won his first six starts and had an astounding 0.40 ERA on May 4.

Then the Royals went just 2-4 in his next six outings, including a 9-3 loss at Toronto on Friday in which Greinke gave up five runs.

Miguel Olivo hit his third homer in three games, a solo shot off reliever Luis Vizcaino to make it 3-1 in the top of the eighth.

Martinez put Cleveland ahead 1-0 with an RBI single in the third.

The Royals went ahead in the fifth by scoring twice against starter Jeremy Sowers.

David DeJesus had a run-scoring double and later scored Butler's grounder.

Sowers gave up two runs and six hits over five innings. Eight of the first nine outs registered by the left-hander were on grounders. He has a 2.14 ERA in four outings including three starts since being recalled from the minors May 23.

Rockies complete sweep of Brewers with 5-4 win

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The Colorado Rockies are learning to love life on the road under new manager Jim Tracy.

Aaron Cook pitched shutout ball into the seventh inning and closer Huston Street shook off a ninth-inning home run by Ryan Braun to earn his fourth save in as many games, lifting the Rockies to a 5-4 victory and three-game sweep over Milwaukee on Thursday.

That's eight straight wins, all on the road, for the Rockies, who completed a four-game sweep of St. Louis earlier this week — shredding two of the NL Central's best over seven days.

"I think we should just go straight to Seattle," Cook said.

Instead, the Rockies will face the Mariners at home, where they're 9-14 this season.

"Now we have to take this home with us to our fans and get our house in order," Tracy said. "Because we're a much better team at

home than 9-14."

Colorado is 10-4 under Tracy, who took over for the fired Clint Hurdle on May 29.

But it's not like the Rockies were completely adversity-free Thursday: Catcher Paul Phillips nearly got run over by the Miller Park "Racing Sausage" mascots as he walked out of the dugout.

And Phillips got booed for it!

"I said, 'Jeez, tough crowd,'" said Phillips, whose two-run single in the eighth proved to be the

difference for the Rockies. "They were more into the sausage race, obviously, than they were the game."

Oh, and Braun's three-run homer off Street in the ninth did add some drama.

With the Rockies leading 5-1, Randy Flores allowed a pair of runners to reach base with one out. Tracy brought in Street, who struck out Mike Rivera before giving up Braun's homer.

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