



Three straight saves not possible

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Three straight saves didn't seem possible for Kansas City's bullpen. This time, they weren't. Jason Grimsley gave up a one-out, two-run single to Corey Koskie in the ninth inning Tuesday night as the Minnesota Twins rallied past the Royals 6-5. Kansas City has three blown saves this year and 59 since the start of the 1999 season. Minnesota got its seventh come-from-behind victory this year and has earned 42 of its 79 wins since the beginning of last year after trailing. "They're a tough club," said the Royals' Mark Quinn, who hit his seventh homer and extended his hitting streak to 13 games. "They put the ball in play." That's exactly what Minnesota manager Tom Kelly wants to see. "That's important — not trying to overdo it," Kelly said. With regular closer Roberto Hernandez resting after pitching three straight days, including the last two when he picked up saves, Grimsley relieved in the ninth. A.J. Pierzynski led off with a broken-bat single, and

Cristian Guzman barely beat out a drag bunt. Denny Hocking sacrificed the runners over, Matt Lawton was intentionally walked to load the bases and Koskie, 8-for-13 in his last three games, singled to spoil Grimsley's save bid. He hadn't given up a run in 10 2-3 previous innings this year. "I just told myself I need to get a base hit and we win the game," Koskie said. "I just wanted to put the ball in play." The Royals built a 4-1 lead against Twins starter J.C. Romero in the fifth. Dave McCarty hit a two-run double, and Carlos Febles singled him in. After the Twins tied the game in the seventh on Lawton's sacrifice fly and Koskie's RBI single, Mike Sweeney put Kansas City back on top with a sacrifice fly in the eighth. With a payroll stripped to \$15 million in 1999, Minnesota (10-3 this year) played 18 rookies and went 63-97. Now, many of those youngsters are maturing and their confidence is beginning to show. "No doubt, you've seen it this year already," said Jacque Jones, who got his second outfield assist of the year by

throwing out Febles at the plate in the fifth. "We've been through a lot of one-run games in the last two years, and now we're getting to the point where we know how to win them." Royals starter Brian Meadows pitched into the seventh and was charged with four runs and seven hits. Bob Wells (1-0) got the last four outs for Minnesota and earned his first win since Aug. 28, 1999. After allowing seven runs in 2 2-3 innings last Sunday against Kansas City, Twins starter J.C. Romero retired his first 11 hitters. But with two outs in the fourth, Quinn homered. Notes: Quinn is 8-for-18 against the Twins this year. Romero gave up three hits and three walks in 4 1-3 innings, striking out four. Bobby Kielty hit a sacrifice fly in the fourth and Luis Rivas hit one in the fifth for Minnesota. Kansas City has homered in 12 straight games. Guzman extended his career-best hitting streak to 12 games. Koskie, who had just nine stolen bases in two-plus seasons, stole two bases in the first four innings and has three this year.

Rockies outhit Padres

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The last thing Tony Gwynn was trying to do was become the first San Diego Padres player to hit for the cycle. But that was clearly what most of the fans were thinking about as the Padres were well on their way to losing 9-5 to the Colorado Rockies on Tuesday night. Gwynn doubled, tripled and singled his first three times up. After he flied out in his fourth at-bat, most of the crowd of 16,615 walked out. Gwynn batted one more time, lining out to shortstop. "We got our rears kicked nine to whatever, and that's what people are going to focus on," Gwynn said. "They want you to go up there and try to hit a home run. That's stupid. It just makes no sense whatsoever, and that's why I didn't try to do it." Gwynn, who went 3-for-5, is in his 20th season and has 3,120 hits. He's coming off surgery on his left knee that limited him to a career-low 36 games last year. Manager Bruce Bochy said it was exciting watching Gwynn, who turns 41 on May 9. "It's pretty amazing what he can still do," Bochy said. "He's playing terrific ball. He was everywhere. He's playing like he's 21." Juan Uribe hit a bases-loaded triple

and Larry Walker a two-run homer for the Rockies. Starter Pedro Astacio (2-1) drove in two runs and limited the Padres to two runs and five hits in six innings, and Todd Walker hit a solo homer. The Rockies, who were swept by the Padres in a three-game series in Denver during the season's first week, batted around in the seventh and scored five runs off rookie reliever Brian Lawrence. Larry Walker hit Lawrence's third pitch for his seventh homer, scoring Todd Walker, who had three hits. With the bases loaded and one out, Uribe hit a triple that skipped past Gwynn in right field. "It seemed like everybody did something good tonight," manager Buddy Bell said. Rickey Henderson, called up from the minors by the Padres earlier in the day, singled as a pinch-hitter in the ninth inning for his 2,915th career hit. Todd Walker homered off Bobby Jones (0-2) to lead off the fifth and break a 2-2 tie. Astacio lined an RBI single to center in the sixth and also had a sacrifice bunt in the fourth that tied the game at 2. Gwynn doubled with one out in the first, tripled into the Rockies' bullpen in the right-field corner with one out in the third and singled leading off the

fifth. The double was the 536th of his career, moving him into sole possession of 22nd on the career list. Gwynn's triple was his first since July 14, 1997, against San Francisco, a span of 347 games. San Diego took a 2-0 lead in the second inning. Donaldo Mendez singled in Ben Davis, who scored when center fielder Juan Pierre's one-hop throw got away from catcher Ben Petrick. Astacio backed up the play but threw the ball into center field trying to get Mendez at second, allowing Santiago Perez to score from second on the error. Todd Helton singled in Colorado's first run in the third. Astacio walked six and struck out five. Jones allowed four runs — three earned — on eight hits in six innings. Davis hit a two-run single during the Padres' three-run ninth. Jose Jimenez came in and retired Bubba Trammell with two runners on for his fourth save. Notes: The Padres put OF Mark Kotsay on the 15-day DL, retroactive to Monday with a left quadriceps strain, to make room for Henderson. Triple-A shortstop Kevin Nicholson was designated for assignment. Colorado reliever Joe Davenport singled in his first major league at bat in the ninth.

Nuggets lose title to Lakers

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Shaquille O'Neal knows who he'd vote for as the NBA's Most Valuable Player. Himself. O'Neal made 13 foul shots without a miss in scoring 33 points, and also had 13 rebounds, three assists and three blocked shots Tuesday night as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the undermanned Denver Nuggets 108-91 to clinch the Pacific Division title. O'Neal, who fell one vote shy of becoming the first unanimous MVP selection in NBA history last season, led the Lakers in scoring in each of their final 17 games; scored 31 or more points in the last 11, and grabbed 10 or more rebounds in the last 17.

In addition, he made 159 of 235 free throws in the last 15 games (67.7 percent), raising his season percentage to 51.3. "I had an OK first half, I told you I was coming back with a vengeance in the second half," O'Neal said. "But the playoffs are when it really, really counts. I'll be ready." The way he's been shooting free throws just might put the Hack-a-Shaq strategy to rest forever. "He's sure making them at the right time," teammate Rick Fox said. "He was very confident on the free throw line, it was nice to see that," Lakers coach Phil Jackson said. O'Neal said it's all a matter of hard work, adding, "I've been shooting them with a lot of rhythm." The defending NBA champion Lakers will take an eight-game winning streak into the playoffs, which begin this weekend, as well as the No. 2 seed in the Western Conference, behind the San Antonio Spurs. The Lakers will face slumping Portland, seeded seventh in the West, in the first round of the playoffs in a rematch of last year's conference finals. The Lakers completed the regular season with a 56-26 record, 11 games behind their 67-15 mark of a year ago,

when they won their first championship in 12 years. But they have plenty of momentum entering the postseason. "We feel fortunate we had the opportunity to come into this position where we have home court, finish second in the conference, first in our division," Jackson said. Sacramento could finish with the same record as Los Angeles should it beat Denver in its finale Wednesday night, but the Lakers are division champions because they won the season series with the Kings 3-1. Kobe Bryant had 26 points for the Lakers despite sitting out the fourth quarter. O'Neal left for good with 6:08 to play and the Lakers leading 96-79. Raef LaFrentz led the Nuggets with 22 points and 13 rebounds. Voshon Lenard added 20 points, and Anthony Goldwire scored a season-high 18. The Nuggets (39-42) played without Antonio McDyess, Nick Van Exel and Kevin Willis, all sidelined with injuries. "We are overmatched when we play them with everybody healthy," Nuggets coach Dan Issel said. The Lakers took command at the end of the second quarter and beginning of the third, outscoring Denver 25-5.

baseball scoreboard

By the Associated Press

AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	10	4	.714	—
Toronto	10	4	.714	—
New York	8	6	.571	2
Baltimore	6	8	.429	4
Tampa Bay	4	10	.286	6
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	10	3	.769	—
Cleveland	6	6	.500	3 1/2
Detroit	5	7	.417	4 1/2
Chicago	4	8	.333	5 1/2
Kansas City	4	10	.286	6 1/2
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	11	3	.786	—
Texas	7	8	.467	4 1/2
Anaheim	6	8	.429	5
Oakland	4	10	.286	7
Monday's Games				
Boston 4, N.Y. Yankees 1				
Baltimore 6, Tampa Bay 2				
Kansas City 5, Minnesota 3				
Seattle 9, Texas 7				
Oakland 6, Anaheim 3				
Tuesday's Games				
Toronto 6, N.Y. Yankees 5				
Cleveland 8, Baltimore 1				
Detroit 7, Chicago White Sox 4				
Boston 10, Tampa Bay 0				
Minnesota 6, Kansas City 5				
Seattle 6, Texas 4				
Oakland 5, Anaheim 1				
Today's Games				
Kansas City (Suppan 0-2) at Minnesota (Redman 1-1), 11:05 a.m.				
N.Y. Yankees (Hernandez 0-1) at Toronto (Michalak 2-0), 5:05 p.m.				
Cleveland (Colon 1-1) at Baltimore (Hentgen 0-1), 5:05 p.m.				
Chicago White Sox (Buehrle 0-2) at Detroit (Holt 1-1), 5:05 p.m.				
Boston (Crawford 1-0) at Tampa Bay (Lopez 2-1), 5:15 p.m.				
Texas (Davis 1-1) at Seattle (Tomko 0-0), 8:05 p.m.				
Oakland (Lidle 0-1) at Anaheim (Schoeneweis 1-1), 8:05 p.m.				
Thursday's Games				
Cleveland (Sabathia 1-0) at Baltimore (McElroy 0-0), 1:05 p.m.				
N.Y. Yankees (Clemens 2-0) at Toronto (Hamilton 1-0), 5:05 p.m.				
Chicago White Sox (Wells 1-1) at Detroit (Weaver 1-2), 5:05 p.m.				
Boston (Martinez 1-0) at Tampa Bay (Wilson 0-1), 5:15 p.m.				
Oakland (Zito 1-1) at Texas (Rogers 1-0), 6:05 p.m.				
Anaheim (Valdes 0-1) at Seattle (Garcia 1-0), 8:05 p.m.				

West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
San Francisco	8	5	.615	—
Colorado	7	6	.538	1
Los Angeles	7	7	.500	1 1/2
San Diego	6	7	.462	2
Arizona	6	8	.429	2 1/2
Monday's Games				
Pittsburgh 3, Houston 0				
N.Y. Mets 4, Montreal 3				
Atlanta 4, Florida 3				
Arizona 2, St. Louis 1				
Philadelphia at Chicago Cubs, ppd				
Tuesday's Games				
Philadelphia 6, Chicago Cubs 3				
Cincinnati 3, Milwaukee 2				
N.Y. Mets 4, Montreal 0				
Florida 3, Atlanta 2				
Arizona 17, St. Louis 4				
Colorado 9, San Diego 5				
San Francisco 3, Los Angeles 2				
Houston at Pittsburgh, ppd				

Today's Games	
Florida (Dempster 2-0) at Atlanta (Glavine 1-1), 1:05 p.m.	
Montreal (Vazquez 1-1) at N.Y. Mets (Trachsel 0-2), 1:10 p.m.	
Philadelphia (Chen 0-0 and Wolf 0-2) at Chicago Cubs (Tapani 2-0 and Bere 2-0), 2, 1:20 p.m.	
Houston (Reynolds 0-0) at Pittsburgh (Arroyo 1-1), 7:05 p.m.	
Milwaukee (Wright 1-2) at Cincinnati (Harnisch 1-1), 7:05 p.m.	
Arizona (Johnson 2-1) at St. Louis (Kile 1-2), 8:10 p.m.	
Colorado (Hampton 1-0) at San Diego (Eaton 2-0), 10:05 p.m.	
Los Angeles (Park 2-0) at San Francisco (Hernandez 1-2), 10:15 p.m.	
Thursday's Games	
Colorado (Neagle 1-0) at San Diego (Williams 1-1), 5:05 p.m.	
Montreal (Reames 2-0) at Florida (Clement 1-1), 7:05 p.m.	

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