

# Batting champion Helton turns average around

DENVER (AP) — Todd Helton struggled at the plate during a recent six-game road trip, returning home in a 2-for-20 slide that dropped his batting average to .222.

The NL's batting champion last year has turned it around in two games with the Chicago Cubs, going 4-for-8 with three home runs and eight RBIs.

"When you hit two home runs, you are definitely getting a little more locked in," Helton said. "You are at least getting good contact with the ball."

Helton homered twice and drove in

five runs, and Jeff Cirillo hit a ninth-inning sacrifice fly as the Colorado Rockies beat the Cubs 6-5 Wednesday night.

"It's just our luck to catch Helton getting hot," Baylor said. "He really seems focused now."

Helton was further motivated when Chicago starter Jason Bere struck him out with nobody out and the bases loaded in the fifth inning.

"I was definitely upset," Helton said. "Heredia is a tough lefty, and I don't think I have ever gotten a hit off of him up to that point."

Helton, who also homered Tuesday, hit a three-run drive in the first inning. With the Rockies trailing 4-3 in the seventh, he hit a two-run homer off Heredia, giving Helton 17 career multihomer games, including two this season.

"It was a slider that I left in the middle of the plate," Heredia said. "You can't do that to a guy like Helton."

Todd Hundley tied the score at 5 in the ninth with a solo homer off Jose Jimenez (1-0), who blew his second save in seven chances.

Colorado then loaded the bases with one out against Courtney Duncan (1-1). Cirillo flied to center, and Damon Buford's throw was late.

"I don't know if you can atone for an error," said Cirillo, whose error led to two unearned runs in the fourth inning. "The good thing about baseball is you always have a chance to atone and get the job done."

Denny Neagle allowed four runs — two earned — and seven hits in six innings. He is 2-0 with a 3.21 ERA in three starts at Coors Field this year.

Cubs starter Jason Bere gave up

three runs and six hits in six innings, with seven strikeouts. He worked out of a bases-loaded jam in the fifth by fanning Helton and getting Cirillo to ground into a double play.

Neagle worked out of minor trouble in the first and third innings, but couldn't escape a bases-loaded jam in the fourth after Sammy Sosa walked, Cirillo booted Rondell White's grounder to third and Ron Coomer singled. Two outs later, Joe Girardi singled to make it 3-2.

Chicago took a 4-3 lead in the fifth on White's RBI double and Coomer's

sacrifice fly.

Notes: Coomer was activated by Chicago after spending a three-game rehabilitation assignment at Triple-A Iowa. Coomer was on the disabled list since April 3 with a torn ligament in his left knee that required surgery.

The Cubs optioned OF Roosevelt Brown to Iowa. Brown was limited to two starts in left field and was 0-for-5 at the plate in those starts.

White had a 13-pitch at-bat in the fourth inning before reaching on Cirillo's error. Ben Petrick has struck out 17 times in 35 at-bats this year.

# Devil Rays hold on to defeat Royals at Tampa Bay, 5-3

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Russ Johnson hit a three-run double and Paul Wilson won for just the second time since 1996 as the Tampa Bay Devil Rays held on for a 5-3 victory over the Kansas City Royals on Wednesday night.

Johnson went 2-for-4, and Wilson (1-2) continued his comeback from shoulder and arm problems by allowing three runs on four hits in five innings before a crowd of just 11,156.

Esteban Yan pitched the ninth for his fourth save in as many opportunities.

The Devil Rays built a 5-0 lead with one run in the first and four in the second off Jeff Suppan (1-3).

Fred McGriff and John Flaherty had RBI singles before Johnson's bases-loaded double drove in three more.

Kansas City, limited to one hit through four innings, loaded the bases with no outs in the fifth on singles by Mike Sweeney, Dee Brown and Raul Ibanez. Two runs scored when Tampa Bay shortstop Felix Martinez threw wide of second base on an intended force play, and Kansas City trimmed its

deficit to 5-3 on Rey Sanchez's sacrifice fly.

The victory was the second for Wilson since Sept. 20, 1996, when he was with the New York Mets. The right-hander missed parts of 1997 and '98 and all of '99 because of separate surgeries on his pitching shoulder (Nov. 1996) and elbow (April 1999) and was acquired from the Mets last July in a deal that sent Rick White and Bubba Trammell to New York.

Wilson appeared in four games out of the bullpen before moving into

Tampa Bay's rotation in late August and remaining there the rest of the season. He won for the first time in more than four years when he stopped Toronto last Sept. 25.

Wednesday night's victory was the three in four games for the Devil Rays, who improved to 3-4 under new manager Hal McRae.

Wilson struck out two and walked one before being replaced by Doug Creek.

Suppan, 0-3 lifetime against Tampa Bay, allowed five runs, eight hits,

walked four and struck out five in six innings.

The announced crowd was the second-smallest crowd to watch the Devil Rays at Tropicana Field in the team's four-year history — although the turnout appeared to be smaller than the record-low 11,056 announced for the series opener Tuesday night.

Notes: All three of Suppan's losses this season have come on the road, where the Royals are 2-9 and have scored three or less runs in seven of the 11 games.

Royals RF Jermaine Dye, listed as day-to-day with a left knee bruise, did not play.

Manager Tony Muser said there's a 50-50 chance Dye will play in the series finale Thursday.

Wilson won for the first time in four decisions at Tropicana Field.

After homering in a club-record 15 consecutive games, the Royals have gone two straight without one.

The Devil Rays have allowed 28 unearned runs in 21 games, a team record for one month.

# Padres' player breaks walks record

SAN DIEGO (AP) — Rickey Henderson got his walks record and a dirty uniform in another loss for the San Diego Padres.

Henderson set the major league walks record at 2,063 Wednesday night, taking sole possession of the mark he shared for a day with Babe Ruth.

It didn't do San Diego any good, though. The Padres lost 5-3 to Philadelphia, their third straight loss and their ninth in 10 games.

"The record is outstanding," a subdued Henderson said. "It's great to be in a class with Babe Ruth and all that good stuff, but I'm the type of person that wants to win."

Henderson walked on a 3-1 pitch from closer Jose Mesa leading off the ninth. He tossed his bat aside and jogged to first, shook hands with base coach Alan Trammell, tipped his batting helmet and acknowledged the standing ovation from what remained of the crowd of 12,573 by blowing

kisses.

"I still feel great about breaking this record by one of the greatest ballplayers who ever played this game," Henderson said. "He was Mr. Baseball. He was the one who gave me the motivation to go out and play baseball and make this game a fun game. It seems like he had a lot of fun."

Henderson said he'll keep first base and send the ball to the Hall of Fame. Phillies first baseman Travis Lee moved away from the bag to let Henderson have his moment, then walked over and congratulated him.

"That was awesome," Lee said. "If you think about it, that's 20 years of 100-plus walks a year. Not many guys are going to play this game for that long."

Henderson, 42, is in his 23rd major league season.

"It's quite a milestone," Padres manager Bruce Bochy said. "You're talking about history. I don't know if that will ever be broken. I'm proud for

Rickey. "It was great getting the leadoff hitter on that inning. But then we fell short."

Henderson, the career steals leader with 1,371, was thrown out by catcher Mike Lieberthal trying to take second — head first, as usual — as Mike Colangelo struck out.

Henderson was 10-for-24 lifetime against Mesa coming in, with 10 walks.

The record walk "came at a time we needed to get on," Henderson said. "You get up there and you're trying to work your way on the base, no matter which way you go, a walk or a hit."

"When they bring in their stopper out of the bullpen, you've got to go up there and be prepared to hit the ball. It so happened he walked me."

Henderson tied Ruth at 2,062 as a pinch-hitter in Tuesday night's 12-7 loss to the Phillies.

Henderson finished 1-for-4 with the walk and committed an error when he dropped Marlon Anderson's fly ball.

# baseball scoreboard

By The Associated Press

AMERICAN LEAGUE				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Boston	14	7	.667	—
Toronto	14	7	.667	—
New York	11	10	.524	3
Baltimore	10	11	.476	4
Tampa Bay	7	14	.333	7
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Minnesota	15	4	.789	—
Cleveland	11	8	.579	4
Chicago	7	12	.368	8
Kansas City	6	14	.300	9 1/2
Detroit	5	14	.263	10
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Seattle	17	4	.810	—
Texas	10	12	.455	7 1/2
Anaheim	9	12	.429	8
Oakland	7	14	.333	10
Tuesday's Games				
Toronto 7, Texas 5				
Boston 9, Minnesota 4				
Anaheim 7, Cleveland 2				
Baltimore 8, Detroit 3				
Seattle 7, N.Y. Yankees 5				
Tampa Bay 4, Kansas City 2				
Oakland 6, Chicago White Sox 4				
Today's Games				
Toronto 8, Texas 5				
Minnesota 6, Boston 4, 10 innings				
Anaheim 3, Cleveland 1				
Baltimore 6, Detroit 4				
Seattle 7, N.Y. Yankees 5				
Tampa Bay 5, Kansas City 3				
Chicago White Sox 2, Oakland 1, 11 innings				
Thursday's Games				
Kansas City (Suzuki 1-1) at Tampa Bay (Rekar 0-2), 10:15 a.m.				
Baltimore (Johnson 1-1) at Detroit (Holt 1-2), 11:05 a.m.				
Minnesota (Milton 3-0) at Boston (Nomo 2-1), 5:05 p.m.				
Seattle (Moyer 3-0) at N.Y. Yankees (Mussina 1-2), 5:05 p.m.				
Oakland (Heredia 0-4) at Chicago White Sox (Parque 0-2), 6:05 p.m.				
Friday's Games				
Anaheim (Washburn 0-2) at Toronto (Loaiza 3-1), 5:05 p.m.				

Texas (Oliver 4-0) at Cleveland (Drew 0-0), 5:05 p.m.

Tampa Bay (Rupe 1-2) at Detroit (Mlicki 0-2), 5:05 p.m.

Kansas City (Stein 1-2) at Boston (Castillo 2-1), 5:05 p.m.

Oakland (Mulder 2-1) at N.Y. Yankees (Hernandez 0-2), 5:05 p.m.

Baltimore (Mercedes 0-3) at Minnesota (Mays 2-1), 6:05 p.m.

Seattle (Sele 3-0) at Chicago White Sox (Baldwin 0-0), 6:05 p.m.

NATIONAL LEAGUE				
East Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Philadelphia	14	6	.700	—
Atlanta	10	12	.455	5
Montreal	9	12	.429	5 1/2
New York	8	12	.400	6
Florida	8	13	.381	6 1/2
Central Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Chicago	12	8	.600	—
Cincinnati	11	9	.550	1
Houston	11	9	.550	1
Milwaukee	10	10	.500	2
St. Louis	10	10	.500	2
Pittsburgh	8	11	.421	3 1/2
West Division				
W	L	Pct	GB	
Colorado	12	8	.600	—
San Francisco	11	9	.550	1
Arizona	11	10	.524	1 1/2
Los Angeles	11	10	.524	1 1/2
San Diego	7	14	.333	5 1/2
Tuesday's Games				
Houston 11, Atlanta 6				
Milwaukee 6, N.Y. Mets 4				
St. Louis 7, Montreal 2				

Colorado 14, Chicago Cubs 1  
Arizona 9, Houston 3  
Philadelphia 12, San Diego 7  
Pittsburgh 5, Los Angeles 1  
Cincinnati 9, San Francisco 5

Wednesday's Games

Atlanta 11, Houston 3  
Milwaukee 7, N.Y. Mets 2  
St. Louis 5, Montreal 2

Colorado 6, Chicago Cubs 5  
Arizona 10, Florida 7  
Philadelphia 5, San Diego 3  
Cincinnati 7, San Francisco 5  
Los Angeles 6, Pittsburgh 5

Today's Games

Montreal (Armas Jr. 0-4) at St. Louis (Ankiel 1-2), 11:10 a.m.

N.Y. Mets (Hinrichliffe 0-0) at Milwaukee (Rigdon 2-0), 12:05 a.m.

Chicago Cubs (Lieber 1-1) at Colorado (Bohanon 0-2), 1:05 p.m.

Cincinnati (Harnisch 1-2) at San Francisco (Ortiz 3-1), 1:35 p.m.

Philadelphia (Person 2-1) at San Diego (Jarvis 0-2), 3:05 p.m.

Pittsburgh (Ritchie 0-2) at Los Angeles (Brown 2-1), 8:10 p.m.

Friday's Games

Florida (Penny 1-0) at Houston (Lima 1-1), 6:05 p.m.

N.Y. Mets (Appier 2-1) at St. Louis (Morris 2-2), 6:10 p.m.

Cincinnati (Reitsma 2-1) at Colorado (Astacio 3-1), 7:05 p.m.

Pittsburgh (Anderson 1-1) at San Diego (Jones 0-2), 8:05 p.m.

Philadelphia (Telemaco 2-0) at Los Angeles (Prokopec 2-0), 8:10 p.m.

Chicago Cubs (Wood 0-1) at San Francisco (Gardner 0-2), 8:35 p.m.

# America beats Costa Rica at Kansas City

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Josh Wolff's timing couldn't have been any better.

The sparkplug for the United States in World Cup qualifying this year was about to be replaced Wednesday night. But off a corner kick, he knocked home a rebound for a 1-0 victory over Costa Rica.

Wolff's goal and the steadfast goal-keeping of Kasey Keller gave the Americans a stranglehold on qualifying in the North and Central American and Caribbean region. The Americans are 3-0, with victories over Mexico, Honduras and Costa Rica, considered their staunchest competition in the race for three spots in the 2002 World Cup.

Before a crowd of 37,319, the largest ever for soccer at Arrowhead Stadium, the United States extended its home unbeaten streak in World Cup qualifying to 18. The last loss was in 1985 to Costa Rica, which still holds a 5-4-2 edge over the Americans in qualifying matches.

Costa Rica is 1-1-1 in this round, tied for second with Mexico, which played a 1-1 tie Wednesday at Trinidad and Tobago.

With Ante Razov set to come in for

Wolff, the Americans first had a corner kick. Jeff Agoos' drive was played by Clint Mathis in the middle of the penalty area. The ball ricocheted to Wolff, who played it off the ground with his left foot and beat goalkeeper Erick Lonnis in the 70th minute from point-blank range.

His job completed, Wolff celebrated his second game-winner of the three qualifying games, then left the field. From there, it was Keller's job to protect the lead. He did it with several terrific hand saves, including one on a dangerous header by Paolo Wanchope with eight minutes left.

With fireworks exploding behind the stadium, the U.S. players saluted the crowd by taking a lap around the field.

After a lackluster first half, play immediately picked up as both sides threatened. In a span of four minutes, Mathis sent a header wide on a gorgeous cross from David Regis; Earnie Stewart's 25-yard shot was stopped by Lonnis; Wolff shot just wide from close-range after a giveaway; and Wolff's sliding shot was stopped by a prone Lonnis.

Costa Rica also had a dangerous

chance in that flurry, but Keller caught a close-in header by Steve Bryce.

Although the Americans carried the play for most of the first half, they had trouble when they got near the Costa Rican penalty area. Too often, they eschewed crosses and chips for footwork, and the visitors easily stymied the attacks.

But the United States got one excellent opportunity in the 16th minute.

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