

Royals lose despite starting pitcher's efforts

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — The Kansas City Royals are just going to have to let Chad Durbin pitch the ninth.

For two consecutive starts, the young right-hander has held his opponent scoreless for eight innings, then given way to the bullpen in the ninth. Both times, the bullpen blew it.

In muggy 90-degree heat Wednesday night, Durbin and Seattle's Jamie Moyer pitched shutout ball for eight innings. Each gave up four hits.

Then Roberto Hernandez started the ninth for the Royals, and Jeff Nelson started the ninth for the Mariners. In the 10th, with two outs, Bret Boone and

David Bell knicked Hernandez for RBI singles, giving the Mariners a 2-0 victory.

Last week in Pittsburgh, Jason Grimsley gave up a ninth-inning run as the Royals lost 1-0.

"It's a shame anyone had to lose this game," said Dan Wilson, who singled and scored the go-ahead run off Hernandez (2-3). "It was a pitchers' duel to say the least."

Durbin was not in a mood to talk about how he felt about things.

"It's two losses," he said. "It doesn't matter if it's 1-0 or 7-6, a loss is a loss." Wilson singled with one out in the

10th and went to second on Mark McLemore's two-out single. Boone, who failed earlier with runners in scoring position, then slapped an opposite-field single for his league-leading 89th RBI.

"I knew it would be a tough at-bat," said Boone. "Roberto throws that slider and that splitter so hard. I had two strikes and kind of put a funky swing on it, and it worked."

Hernandez pointed out the only ball hit solidly in the inning was Wilson's single to center.

"But when you've got as many RBIs as Boone, that means you've been hit-

ting good pitches and you've been hitting bad pitches," Hernandez said.

The Royals have lost 12 of 14 games, while the Mariners raised their major league-leading record to 68-26.

Nelson (4-1) pitched the ninth for the win, and Kazuhiro Sasaki finished for his 31st save. The Mariners' bullpen has pitched 20 straight scoreless innings.

Moyer said he told manager Lou Piniella to take him out.

"Why go out there and try to be a hero?" Moyer said. "Our bullpen has been fairly well rested. Why put our club in jeopardy being tired?"

Durbin walked three and struck out six — including McLemore and Boone to end the eighth inning with Ichiro Suzuki on second base.

Suzuki, who snapped an 0-for-18 skid with two hits on Tuesday, was 2-for-5, raising his average from .334 to .335.

He singled leading off the game, but Durbin did not allow another baserunner until Boone doubled with one out in the fourth.

Boone was then erased on a double play when first baseman Dave McCarty went to his knees to spear John Olerud's line drive and threw to

second. The Royals had two on with one out in the fourth. But Moyer got Jermaine Dye to hit into an inning-ending double play.

"A whole lot of good pitching is what we got," Piniella said. "And good defensive play and just enough offense."

Notes: Moyer remains tied with Mark Langston for second place on Seattle's career win list with 74. Randy Johnson's 130 wins are the most in Mariners history.

Seattle OF Mike Cameron missed the game to be with his wife in Seattle, who turned out to be in false labor. He was to rejoin the club on Thursday.

baseball scoreboard

By The Associated Press

American League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
New York	56	38	.596	—
Boston	55	39	.585	1
Toronto	44	51	.463	12 1/2
Baltimore	41	53	.436	15
Tampa Bay	30	65	.316	26 1/2
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Minnesota	57	37	.606	—
Cleveland	53	39	.576	3
Chicago	46	46	.500	10
Detroit	41	51	.446	15
Kansas City	36	58	.383	21
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Seattle	68	26	.723	—
Oakland	50	44	.532	18
Anaheim	46	48	.489	22
Texas	39	55	.415	29
Wednesday's Games				
Texas 6, Baltimore 4, 1st game				

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Atlanta	53	41	.564	—
Philadelphia	52	42	.553	1
Florida	48	47	.505	5 1/2
New York	44	52	.458	10
Montreal	41	54	.432	12 1/2
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Chicago	55	38	.591	—
Houston	52	41	.559	3
St. Louis	47	46	.505	8
Milwaukee	43	50	.462	12
Pittsburgh	35	58	.376	20
Cincinnati	35	59	.372	20 1/2
West Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Arizona	54	39	.581	—
Los Angeles	53	42	.558	2
San Francisco	50	45	.526	5
San Diego	44	50	.468	10 1/2
Colorado	40	54	.426	14 1/2
Wednesday's Games				
Chicago Cubs 6, Pittsburgh 5				

National League				
East Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Montreal 7, Philadelphia 6				
Houston 17, St. Louis 11				
Atlanta 3, Cincinnati 1, 7 1/2 innings, rain				
N.Y. Mets 4, Florida 3, 11 innings				
Arizona 1, San Diego 0, 3rd inning, susp., power outage				
Los Angeles 5, Milwaukee 0				
San Francisco 10, Colorado 0				
Friday's Games				
N.Y. Mets (Reed 8-4) at Philadelphia (Person 7-5), 5:05 p.m.				
Cincinnati (Acevedo 2-1) at Florida (Clement 5-6), 5:05 p.m.				
Montreal (Thurman 4-6) at Atlanta (Millwood 1-3), 5:35 p.m.				
Chicago Cubs (Lieber 12-4) at Houston (Redding 2-0), 6:05 p.m.				
Pittsburgh (Schmidt 5-5) at St. Louis (Hermanson 7-7), 6:10 p.m.				
Los Angeles (Prokopec 6-4) at Colorado (Bohanon 4-5), 7:05 p.m.				
Milwaukee (Sheets 10-6) at San Diego (Hitchcock 1-0), 8:05 p.m.				
Arizona (Ellis 6-4) at San Francisco (Hernandez 7-11), 8:35 p.m.				

Bonds homers twice

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Barry Bonds hit his 41st and 42nd home runs of the season, tying Mickey Mantle for ninth place on the career list with 536 as the San Francisco Giants beat the Colorado Rockies 10-0 Wednesday night.

Russ Ortiz (11-5) pitched a five-hitter for his first career shutout. He also went 2-for-4 with a career-high three RBIs.

Bonds put the Giants up 1-0 in the

fourth inning with a shot off Mike Hampton (9-7) that sailed into the seats atop the right-field wall.

Soon after rounding the bases, Bonds was led, clutching his back, into the clubhouse by Giants trainer Stan Conte. Bonds returned to left field in the top of the fifth.

Bonds hit a two-run drive to left off Hampton in the fifth. He was then replaced in left field by Armando Rios.

NBA scouts have their eye on tight end star of Chiefs

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Kansas City Chiefs star tight end Tony Gonzalez has been playing so well during his usual summer league basketball workouts that some NBA scouts are asking if he might want to play professional basketball.

Gonzalez, who played both sports in college before he was drafted in 1997, said he's intrigued by the idea but he would consider it only if it didn't interfere with his NFL career, where he has made himself into what many consider the best tight end in the game.

This summer, Gonzalez is playing in the NBA's Southern California Summer Pro League with the likes of Magic

Johnson, Penny Hardaway and Baron Davis. He's also scrimmaged in front of NBA executives in Boston.

"It's no secret that I love playing basketball — everyone knows that," said Gonzalez, who recently had 26 points and 11 rebounds in a victory over Johnson's team. "But I haven't really planned on anything. I'm just playing like I have every other year, trying to get in shape for the NFL season."

"It's just that this summer, I've been playing really well, and scouts are coming up to me asking if I'd think about playing in the NBA. I am curious, but I would think about it only if

it didn't interfere with football."

Chiefs coach Dick Vermeil said he was unsure how he would react if Gonzalez seriously considered a two-sport career.

"I'd give it some thought if it became an issue, but right now, I'm not concerned about him as a basketball player, I'm concerned about him as a football player," Vermeil said.

"Right now, my focus is on getting in shape for training camp and having a great season with the Chiefs," Gonzalez said. "If an NBA team were interested in me, I'd think about playing after the football season is over."

The seasons do overlap. NBA teams

open training camps in October, when the Chiefs are in the heart of their season. They won't play their final regular-season game until Dec. 30 at Jacksonvile.

Any talk about playing two sports comes at an interesting time for Gonzalez, who last season had 93 receptions for 1,203 yards and nine touchdowns. That made Gonzalez the Chiefs' main star and set him up nicely for the coming season.

Also, even Gonzalez concedes that at best, he'd be a role player in the NBA. At 6 feet 4 and 249 pounds, he would be at a decided disadvantage in the NBA.

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