

Colorado rocks Texas pitchers, but not Moreland

Written by Administrator
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DENVER (AP) — Outfielder Mitch Moreland was Texas' best pitcher on a lost night.

Moreland threw a scoreless eighth inning but the damage was already done long before he took the mound. Carlos Gonzalez had five of Colorado's season-high 21 hits and Nolan Arenado made several slick plays at third base on a night he extended his hitting streak to 26 games as the Rockies routed Texas 12-1

It's the third time in Gonzalez's career he's had five hits in a game, and it came at the expense of the Rangers.

Robbie Ross Jr. (1-3) had a rough outing as he allowed six runs and 12 hits in 5 1-3 innings and Alex Ogando was touched for four runs and six hits in one-third of an inning.

"They got (hits) in all kinds of ways," manager Ron Washington said. "When Ogando came in they got every kind of hit you could possibly get."

But they couldn't get one off Moreland.

Given the lopsided score, and to save his bullpen, Washington sent Moreland to the mound for the eighth. He set the Rockies down in order as he became only the sixth position player to pitch in Rangers history.

"I had fun. It's always been a dream of mine," said Moreland, who said he last pitched in the minors in 2008. "I begged skip for years in situations like that. He came up and offered it to me so of course I was ready to do it."

Moreland threw mostly fastballs and changeups and hit 94 mph on the radar gun with one of his pitches.

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"I tried to let a couple go, especially early in the count, just to have some fun," he said. "It's tough in a game like that to have some fun, but it's always been a dream of mine."

Leading 4-1, the Rockies broke open the game with a six-run sixth in which they sent 12 batters to the plate. Pinch hitter Brandon Barnes even got up twice, hitting singles both times.

Ross Jr. started the inning but was lifted after allowing Charlie Blackmon's RBI double to left-center that gave Colorado a 5-1 lead.

Ogando came on and got the second out of the inning before the next seven batters reached against him.

"They put the ball in play and found holes," Washington said. "There was nothing we could do about it."

Arenado waited until his final at-bat in the seventh to extend his streak, lacing an RBI double that hit just inside the left-field line. He's one away from tying the team record of 27 set by Michael Cuddyer last season.

Juan Nicasio (4-1) got through five innings without his best command, giving up two hits and one run. He also walked a season-high five.

The first four hitters in Colorado's lineup — Blackmon, Drew Stubbs, Troy Tulowitzki and Gonzalez — went a combined 13-for-20 with two homers and seven RBIs to help the Rockies take two games from Texas at Coors Field. Colorado now travels to Arlington, Texas, for two more in a home-and-home situation.

"We're looking forward to getting home and getting our offense going," Washington said.

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Blackmon led off the game with a homer. Stubbs added another in the seventh.

"They can freakin' hit. They've got some good hitters," Ross Jr. said. "I missed locations here and there and they hit some balls that were good pitches. They're swinging hot sticks right now."

Although the Rockies had one of their best offensive outputs of the season, the player missing from the festivities for most of the game was Colorado's hottest hitter, Arenado. The crowd erupted when his hit fell in. The 26-game hitting streak is the longest for anyone 23 years or younger since Albert Pujols hit in 30 straight in 2003.

Arenado's glove set the stage for the run eruption. He robbed Adrian Beltre of two hits and, along with it, potentially big innings for the Rangers.

In the third, Arenado, the reigning Gold Glove winner at the hot corner, gobbled up a hot grounder from Beltre and threw him out at first. Beltre playfully looked at Arenado and raised hands as if to say, "Did that just happen?"

Arenado has been stealing hits all season. So much so that before the game Washington said of Arenado: "That kid over there is a highlight reel."

In the fifth, Arenado got Beltre again as he snared a two-out slow roller with his bare hand and made a strong throw that barely beat Beltre.

NOTES: LHP Joe Saunders (left ankle) went four innings and gave up three runs — two earned — in a rehab start at Double-A Frisco on Tuesday. ... RHP Colby Lewis (2-1) will pitch Wednesday as the Rangers return from a five-game road swing. The Rockies counter with LHP Jorge De La Rosa (3-3).

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