

Rangers fall to Red Sox in finale

Written by Administrator
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ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — The strong finish by Texas Rangers left-hander Robbie Ross wasn't enough to offset his bad start.

Ross lost his fourth straight decision, even after facing the minimum number of batters over a stretch of more than four innings, in the Rangers' 5-2 loss to the defending World Series champion Boston Red Sox on Sunday.

"In the beginning, I don't know, I just kind of focused on stuff, trying to force it, instead of just going out and pitch," Ross said. "I was focused on getting pitches and looking too far ahead. I realized I've just got to go out and keep us in the game. It worked out."

Ross (1-4) made it through 6 2-3 innings and a career-high 112 pitches, settling down after being down 4-0 after two innings — and big run-producing hits by former Rangers catchers A.J. Pierzynski and Mike Napoli.

Napoli put Boston ahead to stay with an RBI double, two batters before Pierzynski's two-run single. Both went to the Red Sox as free agents after being in Texas — Pierzynski was the primary catcher for the Rangers last season, and Napoli was there the previous two years.

Dustin Pedroia's two-out solo homer in the seventh chased Ross, and was the first Red Sox hit since Jonny Gomes' one-out single in the third.

Ross faced the minimum 13 batters between that, with only one runner reaching on an error being wiped out on a double play grounder.

"I thought today he had a little rough first inning, trying to get the ball where he wanted to. But after that I thought he settled down and pitched well," manager Ron Washington said. "But I like his recovery, I hope there's better things ahead. He's healthy, and he showed that he can start making adjustments."

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It was the second homer for Pedroia, who led off the game with a double before Napoli drove him home.

"The home run by Pedroia was a punch to the gut. I tried to get too fine after I got two strikes," Ross said. "It was kind of a gut check for myself. I would like to see what would have happened if I'd been getting him out. "

John Lackey (5-2) struck out nine while allowing two runs over seven innings. The big right-handed Texas native threw 75 of 105 pitches for strikes without any walks.

Koji Uehara, who also went from Texas to Boston in 2013, worked the ninth for his ninth save in as many chances.

Shin-Soo Choo homered for the Rangers, who have lost 10 of 14 overall and dropped seven of their last nine home games.

The Red Sox (19-18) won the last two games in the series after being held to one hit by Yu Darvish Friday night. They have won six of their last eight games, including their last three series, and have a winning record for the first time since winning two of three in the season-opening series at Baltimore.

"It's probably as much about the series, not so much the overall record," manager John Farrell said. "It's encouraging to see on day three when you've got a chance to either sweep or win that rubber game, we've been able to put together a very good effort."

Choo's fourth homer was an opposite-field shot to left-center in the fourth to make it 4-1. Mitch Moreland had an RBI double in the seventh before Lackey struck out his final two batters with two runners on base.

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Notes: Lackey made his 20th road start against the Rangers, surpassing Seattle's Felix Hernandez for the most. Lackey is 14-15 overall with a 5.71 ERA in his career against Texas — those are his most losses and highest ERA against any AL team. ... Boston is 10-4 against left-handed starters. ... This is the earliest Boston and Texas have completed a season series, which the Red Sox won 4-2. The Rangers had won the series each of the previous five seasons. Texas is 31-18 vs. Boston since 2009, still the best record by any Red Sox opponent in that span. ... Napoli has reached base in 31 consecutive games. ... Rangers 3B Adrian Beltre, shifted toward shortstop, made a back-handed scoop catch after running a long way for David Ortiz's popup near the foul line to end the second.