

Rangers lose rain-shortened game

Written by Administrator
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NEW YORK (AP) — Once the rain arrived, Yu Darvish and the Texas Rangers never got another chance to come back against New York.

They did, however, find time during the delay to trade closer Joakim Soria to Detroit.

Brett Gardner hit a tiebreaking homer off Darvish, and the Yankees beat the Rangers 2-1 Wednesday night in a rain-shortened game stopped in the fifth inning under bizarre circumstances.

When the thunderstorm ended, the grounds crew did its best to dry out the field. But both managers expressed concern about players getting hurt on the soft basepaths, and the game was called after an unusual delay that lasted 1 hour, 49 minutes.

"What made me complain was because of them not being able to get the tarp on the field," Rangers manager Ron Washington said, adding he had never seen a similar situation in his career. "This game shouldn't come to us losing it. It should have been suspended."

But there was no avenue for a protest, Washington acknowledged.

During the stoppage, the last-place Rangers reached an agreement to send Soria to the AL Central-leading Tigers for minor league pitchers Jake Thompson and Corey Knebel.

"I'm very grateful to this organization. They helped me a lot when I was hurt," Soria said. "They picked me up and they gave me a chance to come back and be a major league pitcher again. I'm grateful to them and I wish them the best. I hope that this trade helps them in the future."

Francisco Cervelli doubled twice for the Yankees, and David Phelps (5-4) pitched out of a jam just before the storm.

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Phelps gave up five hits in his first career complete game. After a one-out triple by Leonys Martin in the fifth, the right-hander retired Chris Gimenez on a foul popup and struck out Rougned Odor.

Phelps and Cervelli shouted and pumped their fists as they headed toward the dugout — perhaps knowing how important that last out might be, making the game official with heavy rain in the forecast.

Play was halted with one out in the bottom of the fifth, and the grounds crew struggled mightily to pull the tarp through the mud as a heavy downpour soaked the field. It appeared the teams were ready to resume at one point, but Washington and Yankees manager Joe Girardi were worried about more injuries to their banged-up teams.

"Neither one of us can afford to lose another player on the DL because of conditions players shouldn't be on," Girardi said.

After much discussion with the umpires and head groundskeeper Dan Cunningham, a light rain returned and the tarp was put back on the field. Less than 10 minutes later, the game was halted for good — giving the Yankees the victory.

"The field was just not playable," umpire crew chief Dale Scott told a pool reporter.

Darvish (9-6) allowed four hits and threw 67 pitches in his second complete game of the year. He struck out five and walked none.

"I was looking forward to going back on the mound, but it is what it is and I'm disappointed," Darvish said through a translator. "I think we could have done a lot more and they stopped the game, so it was a loss that we half-heartedly accepted."

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When the rain started, it took 13 minutes and three tries for the grounds crew to drag the soaked tarp over a drenched infield. Bat boys, clubhouse attendants and security guards in clear ponchos rushed out to help. One stumbled and briefly got trapped underneath. It took more than 30 men to finally finish the job, bringing a roar from the crowd.

Only 15 minutes later, the rain had stopped and workers removed the tarp. But the playing surface was so wet, it took about 50 minutes to dry and prepare the field.

A public-address announcement informed fans the game was scheduled to resume at approximately 10:05 p.m. But as Darvish headed back to the mound and other players warmed up, Girardi stalked around near first base testing the surface.

He motioned for an audience, and the huddle that ensued included both managers, Rangers pitching coach Mike Maddux and Cunningham, who appeared to be doing much of the talking.

The umpires and grounds crew headed back underneath the stands, and Texas players milled around in front of their dugout for about 20 minutes waiting for word. Darvish flipped a ball, and even pawed at the dirt near third base.

When the rain started falling again around 10:25 p.m., the tarp was placed back over the infield. And that was it.

NOTES: Rangers RF Alex Rios returned to the lineup after missing three games with a sprained right ankle. Before the game, Rios said trade talk has not affected his play. ... RHP Nick Tepesch is still on track to start Friday night against Oakland, Washington said. Tepesch threw 12 pitches in relief during the 14th inning Tuesday night and took the loss — after making 99 pitches during Sunday's start in Toronto.

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