

Oswalt pitches Phillies to 3-0 win over Mets in series finale

By Dave Skretta
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK -- Roy Oswalt considers himself a cerebral pitcher. He prides himself on taking detailed notes on hitters, studying hours of game film and putting together a comprehensive plan of attack before he ever steps on the mound.

All that's left after that is to make the pitches. Relying on what he learned from watching the Mets earlier in the series, Oswalt set down New York in quick fashion Sunday.

He yielded only four hits in his second complete game this season, as the Philadelphia Phillies won 3-0 in a tidy 2 hours, 15 minutes.

"Pretty much fastball and changeup most of the day, and started to add some curveballs late so they wouldn't start sitting on pitches," Oswalt said. "It worked."

Oswalt needed 113 pitches for his 20th career complete game. He struck out six, allowed only one walk (to the pitcher) and didn't allow a runner to reach second base.

In fact, the only time he was in trouble came in the ninth inning, and only because Jose Reyes lined a pitch off one of Oswalt's legs.

Trainers came out to check on Oswalt and he threw a warmup pitch before staying in the game -- the Phillies bullpen barely stirred -- and promptly started a 1-6-3 double play.

Oswalt ended the game a

"If we finish up and win series the rest of the year, we'll be good. That'll put us in a very good spot."

Charlie Manuel
Phillies manager

MLB

3
Philadelphia

0
New York

minute later by striking out Carlos Beltran.

David Wright was waiting on deck, though he probably wanted no part of Oswalt again.

He'd already struck out in each of his first three tries.

"He was definitely on his game. He can throw any pitch at any time," said Josh Thole, who also went 0 for 3.

"You know any time you face a guy like that, you're in for a rough time. Except for one pitch, everything he threw me was at my knees or below."

Raul Ibanez hit a solo homer off Jon Niese (9-8), and Chase Utley and Ryan Howard also drove in runs to provide the only offense for the Phillies.

They nosed ahead of Atlanta in the NL East by winning for the fifth time in six games, although the Braves had a chance to pull back into a tie when they played the St. Louis Cardinals later Sunday.

"Today was a big game for us," Phillies manager Charlie Manuel said.

"If we finish up and win series the rest of the year, we'll be good. That'll put us in a very good spot."

Oswalt (12-13) had the lead before he even took the hill.

Shane Bieber led off with a single, Placido Polanco drew a walk and Utley singled to right to make it 1-0 in the first. Philadelphia added another run in the third when Polanco doubled and Howard hit a two-out single to left, and Ibanez homered

to straightaway center in the seventh.

Even that much offense had to make Niese a bit jealous.

The closest the Mets got to scoring was first base -- Angel Pagan was cut down trying to steal second in the first inning, and Niese was erased before reaching second on fielder's choice groundouts by Jose Reyes in the third and sixth innings.

Niese wound up allowing eight hits and a pair of walks in seven innings, losing for the third time in his last four starts at Citi Field. He hasn't won at home since July 27.

"I thought he pitched extremely well. I thought he had good stuff, good life on his pitches," Mets manager Jerry Manuel said. "I thought some extra rest helped him."

Niese pitched especially well during the middle innings and gave the Mets a chance, but Oswalt by now is used to making due with little run support.

He only gets about three runs per game, the fourth-lowest average of any starting pitcher in the major leagues this season.

Much of that had to do with the Houston Astros' anemic offense earlier in the year, but this was still the third time the Phillies have supplied him with three runs or fewer.

Philadelphia has won each of those starts, though, and hasn't lost with Oswalt on the mound since he dropped his debut with the defending NL champions.

Forgue

From Page 10.

and delivering his fair share of hits. A tough, physical player by nature, Forgue was right at home knocking players down all over the field.

"Personally I love it when the refs let us play," Forgue said.

"I think, this team, there are a few guys who can bang some bodies but yeah, I definitely enjoyed that aspect."

Forgue's play of the game came a little more than halfway through the game.

Senior Andres Casais missed a slide tackle that sprung Bearcats midfielder Ryan Walter on a breakaway.

As Walter ran toward the goal, Forgue was running harder toward him. Flying in from across the field, Forgue took an angle and slid in, jarring the ball off of Walter's foot, giving up a corner kick but preventing an easy scoring chance.

"I was just thinking, 'Cut down his angle.' Obviously he wanted to take a touch inside to get toward the net," Forgue said.

"I just angled my run to force him more toward the sideline and it was fortunate for me, he took his touch inside and it deflected off my leg."

Junior forward Corey Hertzog played with Forgue on a club team, the Reading Rage, and said the sophomore has always played the same way.

Hertzog said he knew Forgue would be ready when his turn came.

"I told him, 'Hey, you've made a lot of progress and you deserve a start.'"

Bob Warming
men's soccer coach

"He's just a great player," Hertzog said. "He's physical, mentally he's just tough and doesn't care if he gets knocked around, he'll get back up and keep playing."

Forgue cramped up making a slide tackle in the second half, where he still managed to get the ball back for the Lions.

The sophomore stayed down for a few moments, got up, made a throw in then subbed out shortly after.

However, he only sat for about 14 minutes before returning, replacing Casais in the middle. Once the game ended, Forgue dropped down in pain, but the fact he fought through the cramps showed the winner's mentality Warming praised.

Forgue fought early in the season to get minutes, but the way the sophomore has worked in practice hasn't escaped Warming, and it prompted the coach to start Forgue.

"He was fantastic, he was disappointed he wasn't playing, but he's handled it all the right way," Warming said.

"I told him, 'Hey, you've made a lot of progress and you deserve a start,' and he was great today."

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Women's Soccer

From Page 10.

the biggest blow to the Lions came in the 70th minute. Sophomore Lexi Marton was involved in a collision, dropping her to the ground where she had to be carted off the field with a left knee injury.

Walsh said she didn't have a great view of the collision and did not know the extent of the injury at press time.

"All I know is her knee has a giant cleat mark in the middle of it so that's what I'm basing it off of," Walsh said.

Overall, Portland outshot Penn State 22-6, with an 8-3 margin in shots on goal.

The Lions were tied at the half despite a 12-3 shot margin due to a tie in shots on goal, with two apiece.

Walsh said the Lions were on their heels too much during the

"All I know is her knee has a giant cleat mark in the middle of it."

Erica Walsh
Penn State women's soccer coach

game and if they do a better job of possession they can cut down the number of opponent's shots.

Sunday's game showed Walsh her team can play with anyone and she hopes the players use that going into a tough week that includes a Wednesday night home meeting with the Bucknell Bison.

"Hopefully we take some momentum from this game," Walsh said.

"This is the first one in five that we walk off the field with our heads held high because we put the effort in."

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Streak

From Page 10.

the Lions. Because of that, the Lions will go on following the loss as if nothing changed.

From here, Penn State will only get stronger as Rose finds the right lineup to put on the floor -- one thing he admitted has been a struggle.

"It's like a puzzle right now," Rose said last week.

"When I was young I didn't do crossword puzzles, and I didn't play computer games, so I'm not so good at trying to figure it out right now."

You can bet once Rose figures out the ideal lineup, the Lions will only continue to improve.

Penn State will enter the Big Ten season with freshmen still looking to gain experience.

But after challenges with Illinois, Minnesota and the rest of the conference, the team will find out what its true makeup is.

The strong Big Ten schedule

"The win streak is over, but the one the team cares about still remains."

will test the team and possibly add another loss or two, but the experience gained will help in the postseason.

Add the potential return of sophomore outside hitter Darcy Dorton to the mix, and the Lions will be ready to contend for another title.

The win streak is over, but the one the team cares about still remains.

The Lions have three straight national titles and are still in the position to make four.

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Men's Soccer

From Page 10.

The Bearcats caused problems for the Lions' back line all game, coach Bob Warming said.

But the offense was there to pick the team up.

Sophomore defender Brian Forgue reiterated his coach's thoughts, praising the team's ability to help each other out.

"It's unfortunate that we gave up three goals and we definitely have some stuff to work on, but to be able to get out of it," Forgue said.

Corey scored in the last five minutes or so. That's a testament to the character that this team has."

Hertzog's game-winner came after countless scoring opportunities for the Lions, including 16 shots in the second half.

One chance in particular just a minute before his goal drove the junior to take the Hail Mary shot.

After beating a defender and running to meet a through ball deep into the Binghamton zone, Hertzog sent a shot wide of the goal.

"The shot was one of the Lions' best chances of the game, Warming said.

But Hertzog knew what he did wrong on the shot, and only used the missed opportunity as motivation for his game-winning goal.

"I wouldn't say anything was really going through my head," Hertzog said of his goal.

"Just the anger from the play

"That's a testament to the character that this team has."

Brian Forgue
Sophomore defender

before and missing the breakaway."

Though the goal may have seemed like a prayer to most, Warming wasn't surprised in the least.

He knows what his forward is capable of, especially when his team needs him most.

"I'm not the first guy and I won't be the last guy to say it," the first-year coach of Penn State said. "But with Corey, you just never know what to expect."

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Field Hockey

From Page 10.

found herself in a position to put her team ahead with a penalty stroke and she didn't let the opportunity get away.

The 5-foot-4 junior ripped a wrist shot underneath the goalie's stick hand to put the Lions up a goal.

"Pretty much every day I'll take two or three [penalty strokes] at least," Longstreth said of her practice routine.

"I aim at my low left, so the goalies low right."

She said possession was huge, but it was the passing that kept

the Lions attack fierce for the entire 70 minutes.

Gryzwacz wasn't the only freshman to score Sunday.

She found herself on the assist side of a play as she lasered a pass to freshman Lauren Purvis who put away the shot on a one-timer.

"It's exciting, I mean scoring's always fun but it was just good to finally [score]," Purvis said.

"Cause 2-1 is still a really close game but putting it 3-1 makes it so we can relax a little bit more. But it was awesome."

Coach Char Morett said the pressure of winning probably got to her team a little but sticking to the game plan kept the Lions on track.

The Lions had 15 more corners

"I thought that we executed the corner options pretty well."

Char Morett
Penn State coach

than their opponent, which is something Morett said was part of the game plan.

The shots were heavy early but the targets just weren't hit until late.

"One of our goals was corner execution," Morett said.

"We threw in a couple different corners since we had the time off. I thought that we executed the corner options pretty well."

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