

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 • 2002

SPORTS WEEKEND

STAR TRIBUNE • PAGE C11

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

TWINS REPORT

Home games in bold

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Standings table for American League showing Central, East, and West divisions with columns for W, L, Pct, GB, LH, LH, Home, Away, and Totals.

TODAY'S PITCHING MATCHUPS

Pitching matchups table listing pitcher names, teams, ERA, WHIP, and other statistics.

LEADERS

Leaders table for batting average, home runs, and RBIs.

AL Wild-Card Standings table showing teams like Anaheim, Seattle, Boston, and L.A. Angels.

Home Runs table listing players like A. Rodriguez, J. Pate, and S. Lincecum.

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Standings table for National League showing NL East, NL West, and NL Central.

Pitching matchups table for National League.

Leaders table for National League.

NL Wild-Card Standings table.

By La Velle E. Neal III Star Tribune Staff Writer

DETROIT — When Javier Valentin singled in the ninth inning Wednesday, it was his first hit in the majors since Sept. 20, 1998. "It felt like my rookie year," Valentin said. "I wanted to ask for the ball."



Twins bandwagon hoppers might not know Valentin, who spent 1998 and 1999 as the backup catcher.

But he's played at the Class AAA level in each of Valentin the past three seasons before getting called up last week. He batted .286 for Class AAA Edmondson this season, with 21 homers and 80 RBIs.

Valentin, who turned 27 on Thursday, is a switch hitter with some power who can throw well. Inconsistency has held him back. "I've been here before and I'm going to try to do some things I did in the minors, play hard and wait for my chance," he said. "I

know I can play in the big leagues for a long time."

Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said Valentin still has a chance to carve out a major league career. "He's still a young man," Gardenhire said. "He's had time here. He's had some problems with his knees, but he has pads that protect him, so that helps. He was catching about three times every six games down there [at Edmondson]. That's good enough for a backup role at this level."

Twins trainer Jim Kahmann said Jones remained a couple of days away from playing, but that the swelling had gone down considerably. He was injured Tuesday while trying to slide into second base.

Injury report Corey Koskie (bruised right shin) and Tori Hunter (bruised right forearm) were back in the lineup Thursday. Left fielder Jacques Jones (sprained left ankle) and first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz (sore back) remained out.

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TWINS FROM C1

Milton's performance brief but encouraging for lefty

The game, which will not be made up, was significant for Milton, who failed to get out of the second inning in his previous start Friday. He needed to show he was ready to make that October start. The Twins were so concerned about his sharpness, or lack thereof, they jugged the rotation to make sure he would get two more starts after Thursday to get his act together. Although he pitched only two innings Thursday, he left an encouraging impression. "He hit me for one hour on the radar gun, threw his breaking ball and hit his spots. "I was just juggling in a groove and getting loose," he said. "It was not my day. I'm finally feeling half-

ATTACK FROM C1

Royals jump on attackers to help coach

A folded-up pocket knife was found the scene. White Sox outfielder Aaron Rowland said he saw it fall out of one of the fans' pockets, and Royals closer Roberto Hernandez said he saw security guards place it in an evidence bag. "It was just stiff and sore," said Gamboa, 54. "I heard one of the guys say there was a knife. I was stumped and didn't realize it." Gamboa said he had no idea why he was attacked. He did not fault first base umpire Matt Holmwood or White Sox second baseman Willie Harris for not immediately coming to his aid. "It fairness to everybody, everyone was stunned," Gamboa said. The father and son were led off the field in handcuffs. White Sox spokesman Scott Reiffert said their names will not be released until they are charged. Reiffert said the father will face a charge of aggravated felony assault. The son, whose age was not made available, will face unspecified juvenile charges. "I would expect major league baseball to do something," Royals outfielder Chuck Knoblauch said. "It is amazing something like that hasn't happened before. But it is a fear of players because it seems like the fans continue to get more and more hostile." Knoblauch said one of the men

NOTES

Double ring

Matthew LeCroy and Michael Cuddeyer have talked about the possibility of winning two championship rings this season. They both were key players at Edmondson, which won the Pacific Coast League championship last week. And both, barring injury, will be on the Twins' post-season roster. "That would be great," Cuddeyer said. "Then I could give one of the rings to my family. Uh, which one?" "The PCL ring," he said while laughing. "That's a no-brainer." LeCroy was called up four times during the season, but never got discouraged. "It's worth it," he said. "All the flights. All the frequent flier miles."

Big park

Player complaints have forced Tigers officials to consider moving the fences in at Comerica Park. On Thursday, a makeshift fence — about 15 feet in — was installed in left field during Detroit's batting practice. It was a way to evaluate the effects of a smaller field. Comerica Park's center-field fence is 420 feet from home plate. The deep left-center gap is about 400 feet, and the power alleys are 385 feet. It's built for speed, not power.

Etc.

> Twins General Manager Terry Ryan was asked before Thursday's game if outfielder Mike Ryan was any relation to him. "Only if he's," Ryan said. They're not related. But Ryan collected hits in his first two at bats Thursday.

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Two spectators at Comiskey Park attack Kansas City first base coach Tom Gamboa (lower right). One assailant appears to have a pocket knife (lower left), and such a weapon was found at the scene.