

Major league baseball

at Chicago
Today 7:05 p.m.
Saturday 6:05 p.m., Ch. 23
Sunday 1:05 p.m., WCCO
(All games on WCCO, 830 AM)

Chicago at glance
The White Sox won the first two games of a four-game series against the Twins last weekend at the Metrodome...

Who's hot
Rhinoceros Alex Fernandez reached his career-high seventh straight victory in Tuesday's 7-0 victory over Kansas City...

Who's not
After going 7-for-19 (.368) on Chicago's most recent homestand, Tim Lincecum is 0-for-21 in his last 21 games...

Stats 'n' stuff
Frank Thomas is in position to become the only player in major league history to hit 300 or better with 20 home runs...

Probable starters
Today: Jose Benito (4-5, 3.74) vs. Luis Arocas (2-1, 2.87)
Saturday: Rich Robertson (2-0, 4.43) vs. Alex Fernandez (12-8, 3.57)

In the bullpen
Roberto Hernandez has 32 saves in 42 opportunities. Hernandez, who has saved 10 games in five consecutive seasons...

Possible batting orders
Twins vs. right-handers vs. left-handers vs. right-handers vs. left-handers

Chicago statistics
Batting
Innings 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Runs 114 108 111 110 107 105 103 101 99 97

Twins statistics
Batting
Innings 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Runs 108 104 101 99 97 95 93 91 89 87

Pitching
W L ERA G GS CG SHO IP H R ER BB SO B/A
R. Hernandez 2 0 3.00 16 0 0 0 0 110 118 52 20 111 111

Twins

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...and in," Knoblauch said. "I know the head area will bleed heavily, but I couldn't believe how much blood there was, and they couldn't get it stopped."

Knoblauch was talking after the game. He shouldn't and said: "I still can't believe how much blood there was, and they couldn't get it stopped."

The reason? Martinez builds much of his game around a slider away, and he doesn't want hitters such as Knoblauch — or Puckett — to reach that pitch.

Knoblauch was at third with one out. If Puckett could get him home with a fly ball to the left, it would have been RBI No. 100 in this abbreviated season.

At the ball approached, Puckett kicked his front leg in his trademark scuff and seemed to be aiming for the pitch to break. None came.

He fell and the blood started gushing. Before trainers and paramedics could get him to the dugout, Puckett was on a stretcher and headed for the hospital.

"I just couldn't get my head out of the way," Puckett said to people in the clubhouse before leaving for the hospital.

"Puck has never been hurt. In all these years he has stayed," Twins GM Carl Pohlad said.

Twins scorecard
Pitcher: Hernandez (2-0, 3.00) vs. Fernandez (12-8, 3.57)

Fielding
Innings 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Errors 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

Game notes
Hernandez struck out 11 batters, including Puckett, in the first inning.

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manager Tom Kelly said. "If you play this game long enough, something ugly is going to happen. I guess, except for that [K] Knoblauch."

The Twins will play the final three games of the season in Chicago without Puckett. He should be recovered long before February's start of spring training.

Thursday, the Twins' two best hitters had been hit in the first inning. Knoblauch in the shoulder. Puckett in the face. Other than Kelly as manager, the Twins have played through the bad-business situations without seeking retribution.

That pitch to Belle — it is something a pitcher has to do after his team's star has been hit in the leadoff spot? Knoblauch said: "I don't know." Rodriguez said: "I don't know what to say. The pitch got away."

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