

Hernandez blanks Nationals

By David Lennon
NEWSDAY

WASHINGTON — Getting swept in Pittsburgh was tough to stomach, literally, but a series loss to the Nationals would have been damaging in more ways than just the loss column.

METS	7
NATIONALS	0

And the Mets, already beaten up physically, did not want to start this week with self-esteem issues — not with the Phillies and Yankees waiting on deck.

So they leaned on Ryan Church, just back from the disabled list, and Livan Hernandez, who took the ball on Sunday despite dealing with flulike symptoms. Church helped fuel a five-run first inning with a double off the rightfield wall and Hernandez made that lead stand up with seven scoreless innings as the Mets cruised to a 7-0 victory before a crowd of 31,841 at Nationals Park.

"This was huge, especially with the road trip that we had," Church said. "To end it on a positive note, to feel good about ourselves, and to get everybody healthy again for the big stretch coming up. We came out and got on them early."

Church started in right-

field and went 2-for-5 with a run scored. Fernando Martinez rewarded the Mets for keeping him even after Church returned with a double that drove in the first run. David Wright went 2-for-3 with a run-scoring single and Carlos Beltran had an RBI double as the Mets finished their rain-shortened trip through Pittsburgh and D.C. at 2-4.

They open a three-game series against the Phillies on Monday night at Citi Field, where the Mets are 17-9 this season.

"This road trip didn't go like we had wanted it to, like we had planned," Wright said. "Unfortunately, that's baseball. But how we finished the trip, we can take some positives from that and hopefully use it as a springboard going back to a place we've played well at."

Hernandez (5-1) is pitching the way he promised he would back in spring training, when he won the fifth starter's job in a matter of weeks and dismissed critics who said his health would be a problem. Despite feeling sick, Hernandez allowed four hits and trimmed his ERA to 3.88.

The Mets are 7-4 in his 11 starts and Hernandez has won four straight decisions.

METS WATCH

UP NEXT

—Tuesday vs. Philadelphia, 7:10 (SNY); J.A. Happ (4-0, 2.48) vs. Johan Santana (7-3, 2.00).



— STAFF REPORTS

In his last four starts, he is 2-0 with a 1.57 ERA. Jerry Manuel has learned to expect this type of performance from him, but he was a little surprised when Hernandez was ready to give up the ball after 116 pitches.

"Obviously, we need good pitching, and that was outstanding pitching," Manuel said. "He had a shutout going and he came in and said, 'I'm done.' That's not normal for Livan. He can throw 160, 170 pitches and not flinch, so you know he's battling some different things."

One thing he didn't have to battle was his own team, which had shown some self-destructive tendencies on this trip. But here's a statistic that should irritate Johan Santana: The Mets have not committed an error with Hernandez on the mound during his 67½ innings this season — the longest stretch for any pitcher in the majors without an error behind him.

Yanks rally for victory

Continued from B1

"You can't come to a game angry or with too much venom. Then you are not in control of what you are doing," Rivera said. "I have to control myself before I can go out and pitch. Yesterday is over. What can I do?"

With the Yankees trailing 3-1 with one out in the eighth, Johnny Damon lined a single off Grant Balfour (2-1), and Mark Teixeira followed with a single to put runners at the corners. Alex Rodriguez walked to load the bases.

J.P. Howell relieved and walked Robinson Cano, making it 3-2.

Jorge Posada then hit a bouncer to third that Willy Aybar, subbing for Longoria (hamstring), couldn't handle. Teixeira scored the tying run, Posada was given an RBI and Aybar was charged with an error.

"They're like us, they do play all nine," said Howell, who walked two while getting just two outs. "They're ready to take advantage because you're going to get a break and they're ready to pounce when they get one."

Matsui then chopped a soft grounder to second and



Yankees catcher Jorge Posada, left, congratulates closer Mariano Rivera after the final out in their 4-3 victory over the Rays.

beat the throw to first, preventing an inning-ending double play and giving New York a 4-3 lead.

"When I hit the ball it was hit pretty weakly. I had a feeling it wouldn't be a double play," said Matsui, who has struggled with leg injuries this season but insisted he was close to 100 percent.

Swisher's 11th homer in the third made it 28 games in a row with a homer to open the ballpark, extending a record — Hiram Bithorn Stadium in Puerto Rico opened with long balls in 22 straight. There were 160 homers last season at the old Yankee Stadium.

Upton had an RBI double

YANKEE WATCH

BRUNEY THROWS — Setup man Brian Bruney had a bullpen session. Out with a strained right elbow, Bruney has pitched only once for New York since April 21. He said the 30-pitch session was a "huge positive step."

UP NEXT — Today vs. Tampa, 7:10 (YES); Andy Sonnanstine (4-5, 7.07) vs. Andy Pettitte (5-2, 4.33).

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

in the third and Gabe Gross hit a two-run single in the sixth to give Tampa Bay a 3-1 lead.

Neal Huntington wrote an open letter to the team's fans explaining the decision to trade center fielder **Nate McLouth** to the Atlanta Braves wasn't financially motivated.

The Pirates, who traditionally have one of the majors' lowest payrolls, are averaging a major league-low 16,588 in attendance. The low turnout is prompting speculation that the surprise McLouth deal last week was made to save money.

McLouth, the Pirates' lone All-Star last season, was traded for three prospects, only one of whom is considered to be close to reaching the majors. The trade enraged not only fans but the Pirates' players, with first baseman Adam LaRoche saying he didn't know of any player who wasn't unhappy.

Since last season, the Pirates have dealt their three most productive offensive players in **Jason Bay**, **Xavier Nady** and **McLouth**. The Pirates signed McLouth to a contact extension during the offseason.

"I understand why some people, at first glance, may believe this move was financially motivated," Huntington wrote in a letter dated Saturday and posted on the team's Web site. "In fact, our owner, **Bob Nutting**, was as surprised as some of our fans when we sought his approval for this trade. I am grateful that he has faith in me, our baseball operations staff and the processes we have in place to approve a move like this, despite the risk of public backlash on him personally and the organization as a whole."

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

YANKEES 4, RAYS 3

Tampa Bay	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.
B.Upton cf	4	0	1	0	0	2	.221
Crawford lf	4	0	0	0	2	3	.323
W.Aybar 3b	4	1	1	0	0	1	.250
C.Pena 1b	3	1	1	0	0	1	.223
Zobrist 2b	4	0	0	0	3	2	.296
Joynt rf	3	0	0	0	0	2	.207
Gross dh	4	0	2	0	1	2	.255
Navarro c	3	0	1	0	0	1	.206
a-Longoria ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.320
Brignac ss	3	1	1	0	0	0	.222
Totals	33	3	6	3	1	9	

New York	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.
Jeter ss	4	0	0	0	0	0	.307
Damon lf	4	2	0	0	0	1	.300
Teixeira 1b	4	1	1	0	0	0	.286
A.Rodriguez 3b	3	1	1	0	1	0	.255
Cano 2b	3	0	0	1	1	1	.300
Posada c	4	0	1	0	0	0	.306
H.Matsui dh	4	0	0	1	0	0	.249
1-Berona pr-dh	0	0	0	0	0	0	.133
Swisher rf	2	1	1	1	2	0	.250
Gardner cf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.265
Me.Cabrera cf-rf3	0	0	0	0	1	2	.303
Totals	31	4	6	4	5	4	

Tampa Bay001 002 000—3-6 1
New York001 000 03x—4-6 1

a-grounded out for Navarro in the 9th.
1-run for H.Matsui in the 9th.
E—W.Aybar (3), Posada (3), LOB—Tampa Bay 5, New York 8. 2B—B.Upton (11), Damon (14), HR—Swisher (1), off Garza. RBIs—B.Upton (15), Gross (2) (16), Cano (34), Posada (27), H.Matsui (23), Swisher (33), SB—Gross (3), CS—Brignac (2).

Runners left in scoring position—Tampa Bay 5 (Gross, W.Aybar, B.Upton, Navarro 2) New York 6 (H.Matsui, Teixeira 3, Me.Cabrera 2).

Tampa Bay	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Garza	5	4	1	1	2	2	96	3.55
J.Nelson H,5	2	0	0	0	0	1	19	5.55
Balfour L,2-1 H,8½	2	3	2	2	1	0	19	6.31

New York	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Chamberlain	6	5	3	3	1	4	100	3.70
Aceves W,4-1	2	1	0	0	0	4	33	2.70
Ma.Rivera S,13-14	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	3.33

Umpires—Home, Scott Barry First, Ted Barrett Second, Tim McClelland Third, Adrian Johnson. T—3:13. A—46,465 (52,325).

METS 7, NATIONALS 0

New York	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.
Cora 2b	4	2	1	0	1	1	.297
F.Martinez lf	5	2	1	0	0	0	.200
Beltran cf	5	0	1	0	0	0	.342
D.Wright 3b	3	1	2	1	2	0	.345
Dan.Murphy 1b	4	1	2	1	1	0	.247
Church rf	5	1	2	0	0	0	.277
Schneider c	3	0	1	0	1	0	.219
W.Valdez ss	4	0	0	0	0	2	.200
L.Hernandez p	3	0	1	0	0	0	.130
c-Reed ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.311
Feliciano p	0	0	0	0	0	0	—
Parnell p	0	0	0	0	0	0	—
Fr.Rodriguez p	0	0	0	0	0	0	—
Totals	37	7	11	5	4	3	

Washington	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.
C.Guzman ss	4	0	0	0	0	1	.326
N.Johnson 1b	4	0	0	0	2	3	.325
Zimmerman 3b	3	0	1	0	1	0	.320
Dunn lf	3	0	2	0	1	0	.264
Dukes cf	4	0	0	0	0	0	.269
Keasra rf	3	0	0	0	1	2	.214
J.Bard c	1	0	0	0	3	0	.211
A.Hernandez 2b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.262
Stammen p	1	0	0	0	0	0	.167
a-Alb.Gonzalez ph1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.295
Colome p	0	0	0	0	0	0	—
b-W.Harris ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.256
Tavarez p	0	0	0	0	0	0	—
MacDougal p	0	0	0	0	0	0	—
d-Bellard ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.173
Totals	30	0	5	0	6	6	

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Washington000 000 000—0 5 1

a-singled for Stammen in the 5th, b-flied out for Colome in the 7th, c-flied out for L.Hernandez in the 8th, d-flied out for MacDougal in the 9th.
E—MacDougal (1), LOB—New York 8, Washington 9. 2B—F.Martinez (4), Beltran (18), D.Wright (16), Church (8), Schneider (3), RBIs—F.Martinez (5), Beltran (33), D.Wright (34), Dan.Murphy (19), Schneider (5), SB—Cora (4), D.Wright (14), SF—Schneider.

Runners left in scoring position—New York 4 (Dan.Murphy, L.Hernandez, Church 2) Washington 4 (A.Hernandez 2, Keasra, Dukes).

DP—New York 2 (Dan.Murphy, W.Valdez, Dan.Murphy), (W.Valdez, Cora, Dan.Murphy) Washington 1 (N.Johnson, C.Guzman, MacDougal).

New York	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Hernandez W,5-1	7	4	0	0	4	114	3.88	
Feliciano	½	1	0	0	1	21	2.35	
Parnell	½	0	0	0	0	4	1.96	
Fr.Rodriguez	1	0	0	1	1	16	0.68	

Umpires—Home, Darryl Cousins First, D.J. Reylburn Second, Jim Joyce Third, Brian Runge. T—2:48. A—31,841 (41,888).

RANGERS 6, RED SOX 3

Texas	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.
Kinsler 2b	5	0	1	0	0	1	.274
M.Young 3b	5	2	1	1	1	1	.336
Blalock dh	4	0	0	0	3	2	.253
N.Cruz rf	4	3	3	1	0	1	.292
Dav.Murphy lf	4	1	3	2	0	0	.250
Byrd cf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.294
C.Davis 1b	4	0	0	0	1	2	.202
Teagarden c	4	0	0	0	0	2	.220
Vizquel ss	4	0	2	1	0	0	.345
Totals	38	6	12	5	0	10	

Boston	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg.
Pedroia 2b	3	0	0	0	1	0	.318
Elisbury cf	3	0	1	0	0	0	.302
Baldeck lf	1	0	0	0	0	1	.259
Youkilis 1b	3	0	1	0	1	1	.349
Bay lf	2	0	0	0	2	1	.277
Lowe 3b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.296
D.Ortiz dh	4	0	1	0	0	2	.197
Varetek c	2	1	0	0	1	1	.247
Kotsay rf-cf	3	2	2	1	0	0	.286
N.Green ss	3	0	0	0	0	0	.271
Totals	28	3	4	2	5	7	

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E—Kinsler (6), LOB—Texas 5, Boston 3. 2B—Kinsler (13), N.Cruz (12), Dav.Murphy (6), Youkilis (15), SB—N.Cruz (1), HR—M.Young (8), off Matsuzaka N.Cruz (17), off Okajima Kotsay (1), off Padilla. RBIs—M.Young (22), N.Cruz (42), Dav.Murphy 2 (12), Vizquel (7), Elisbury (16), Kotsay (1). CS—Bay (1), D.Ortiz (2). Runners left in scoring position—Texas 2 (Kinsler, C.Davis) Boston 2 (Lowe 2). DP—Texas 1 (Kinsler, Vizquel, C.Davis).

Texas	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Padilla W,4-3	7	4	3	2	4	4	99	5.22
O'Day H,5	1	0	0	0	2	11	1.00	
C.Wilson S,5-6	1	0	0	0	1	12	3.33	

Umpires—Home, Tim Timmons First, Rob Drake Second, Jeff Kellogg Third, Ron Kulpa. T—2:49. A—37,537 (37,373).

BASEBALL CALENDAR

June 9-10 — Amateur draft, Secaucus, N.J.
July 14 — All-Star game, St. Louis.
July 26 — Hall of Fame inductions, Cooperstown, N.Y.
July 31 — Last day to trade a player without securing waivers.
Aug. 15 — Last day to sign selections from 2009 amateur draft who have not exhausted college eligibility.
Sept.