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SPORTS

Dodgers Notes: Adrian Gonzalez goes back to DL with disc problem, Dodgers activate Joc Pederson



Dodgers first baseman Adrian Gonzalez went on the disabled list for the second time this season and the team is not putting a time table on his recovery from back issues. (Photo by Sean M. Haffey/Getty Images)

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Register

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CLEVELAND — Adrian Gonzalez went nearly 14 years before going on the disabled list for the first time in his major-league career. He took less than four weeks to go back.

The Dodgers placed their veteran first baseman on the DL on Tuesday with lower back discomfort. Gonzalez has been dealing with a herniated disc for some years and the issue flared up again Sunday. He was removed from the game against the Cincinnati Reds and underwent an MRI on Monday.

The MRI examined by Dr. Robert Watkins showed the same herniated disc in Gonzalez's lower back that he has been dealing with since his days with the San Diego Padres. Gonzalez did not travel to Cleveland with the team and was scheduled to get a second opinion from a doctor in San Diego on Tuesday before a recovery plan is put in place.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said Gonzalez had “a bit of an exhale” after the MRI did not uncover a new issue or something potentially more serious.

“It's not something where right now we know that surgery is needed,” Roberts said. “A lot of it is just wear and tear from his workload over the years. So now with potential rest or an (epidural) injection, it's managing it per his tolerance.”

Gonzalez received an epidural injection early in the 2016 season and got a good deal of relief from it. He has not received one this year, according to Roberts.

There is no timetable for Gonzalez's return at this point.

“I think right now we’re just going to wait for that second opinion and figure out what’s best for Adrian,” Roberts said. “Can I see it happening (before the All-Star break)? Yes. Is it probable? I don’t want to put Adrian or us in a corner. I’m hopeful.”

The Dodgers already brought Gonzalez back faster than planned once. In early May, the 35-year-old Gonzalez went on the DL with a combination of issues — elbow tendinitis that began in the spring and discomfort in his back and neck that followed. He returned earlier than anticipated when outfielder Andrew Toles was lost for the season with a torn ACL.

In 20 games since returning, Gonzalez showed some improvement at the plate, batting .254 with six doubles, one home run and 12 RBI. But he is still on pace for career-worst numbers offensively with just that one home run in 182 plate appearances and a .643 OPS.

PEDERSON PLAN

Gonzalez’s second DL trip changed the Dodgers’ plan for outfielder Joc Pederson. He had been expected to spend as much as a week on a rehab assignment with Triple-A Oklahoma City – as much to complete his recovery from a concussion and neck injury suffered in an outfield collision with Yasiel Puig on May 23 as to have him work on the problems that led to a .200 average and only two home runs in his first 35 games this season. But he was activated from the DL to replace Gonzalez on the active roster.

“I talk about being able to adjust in this game. It calls for that,” Roberts said. “Joc, physically, feels fine. Ideally, I would have liked for him to stay there and get more at-bats. But circumstances called for him to be here.”

In three rehab games over the weekend with Oklahoma City, Pederson hit two home runs while going 3 for 9 with four RBI and said it was “extremely helpful” to have time to work with OKC hitting coach Shawn Wooten.

“It was a good place to be – see some pitching, get some at-bats, get some innings in the field and get some work in,” Pederson said of his brief rehab assignment. “I feel like I’m in a good spot.”

With Gonzalez out and Pederson back, Roberts said Chris Taylor will become the primary left fielder with Cody Bellinger moving back to first base.

ALSO

The draft resumed with the third through 10th rounds Tuesday. The Dodgers continued to load up on college talent, taking catcher Connor Wong from the University of Houston in the third round and four college pitchers after that – Riley Ottesen (Utah), Wills Montgomerie (Connecticut), Zach Pop (Kentucky) and Connor Strain (Evansville) – as well as outfielder Zach Reks of Kentucky.

Tuesday’s game in Cleveland began a stretch of 20 consecutive days before the Dodgers’ last off day before the All-Star break. They will play on 26 of 27 days before the break. Roberts said right-hander Kenta Maeda (bumped from the starting rotation last week) could make a spot start during this stretch to give the other starters an extra day off and to keep Maeda’s pitch count built up. “But most of all, he has to pitch well,” Roberts said.

Tags: [Adrian Gonzalez](#),
[Joc Pederson](#)

Bill Plunkett

Bill Plunkett has covered everything from rodeo to Super Bowls to boxing (yeah, I was there the night Mike Tyson bit Evander Holyfield's ear off) during a career that started far too long ago to mention and eventually brought him to the OC some time last century (1999 actually). He has been covering Major League Baseball for the Orange County Register since 2003, spending time on both the Angels and Dodgers beats.

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