

Everything goes wrong for Blue Jays in Game 1 loss in ALDS

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By Israel Fehr

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TORONTO – This was supposed to be all about the Toronto Blue Jays, their first postseason home game since 1993, and how the joy of baseball had returned to a city so desperately starved for a winner. And it was, right up until the game started Thursday. The fans roared at every little thing and ferociously waved the white towels they were given when their Blue Jays took the field for the top of the first inning.

Then, everything went wrong, and now Toronto is left staring at a 1-0 series deficit after dropping Game 1 of the ALDS to the Texas Rangers by a [score of 5-3](#).

David Price struggled on the mound, allowing five runs on five hits in seven innings of work. Josh Donaldson slid hard into second base trying to break up a double play in the fourth and took a

knee to the head. After playing in the field the next half-inning, he was [removed from the game](#) to receive further evaluation for a potential concussion. To make matters even worse for Toronto Jose Bautista left the game in the eighth with mild right hamstring tightness. At this point Donaldson and Bautista are both expected to be in the Blue Jays' lineup for Friday's Game 2, but there's clearly enough there to be at least a little concerned.



Since coming over in a trade from Detroit in late July, Price has been nearly untouchable. He went 9-1 in 11 starts for Toronto with a 2.30 ERA to solidify his status as the AL Cy Young favorite. By no means was he awful in Game 1, but he certainly wasn't sharp. On this day that simply wasn't good enough.

The Rangers scored two runs off singles in the third to jump out to an early 2-0 lead. A two-run shot by No. 9 hitter Robinson Chirinos in the fifth made it 4-1. The Blue Jays managed to tack on a couple runs to make it 4-3, but No. 8 hitter Rougned Odor hit a solo homer in the seventh to restore a two-run advantage for Texas.

"He didn't give up too many hits. The key ones were the two home runs, the two-run by Chirinos and then Odor getting him later, that was really the difference in the game," said Blue Jays manager John Gibbons. "(It was) just one of those games, not a lot of hits, they weren't hitting him around, just a couple key hits."

The loss means Price, who was working on 11 days rest, has lost all six of his career starts in the postseason. His command eluded him at various points in the game, ultimately walking two batters and hitting Odor twice with a pitch.

"I was more so battling nerves," said Price. "I care. So if you're not out there and you're not nervous in those first couple innings, you're not human."

At the plate, the offense never really got clicking. They finished the game with six hits, three of them for extra bases. Between the ineffective outing from their prized starter and the injuries to two of their stars, Thursday was hugely disappointing for a fan base that had waited over 20 years to watch their team in the playoffs again.

"The fans were great. Good energy, from start to finish," said catcher Russell Martin. "The only thing that wasn't good was the result."

Now the Blue Jays turn to Marcus Stroman – in his major-league postseason debut no less – to give them a lift in Game 2, while the Rangers send a former World Series MVP to the mound in Cole Hamels. In an early hole, the margin of error shrinks even further.

"Every game's vital really." said Gibbons. "You've got to win three out of five. The thing we've got going for us is I think we've been resilient all year. We've lost some tough games and we don't lose many in a row. So it will be a good bounceback day for us. Like I say, we're facing their ace tomorrow, Hamels, that definitely won't be easy, but we like the matchup and we'll see. One thing I know about us is that we always seem to respond."

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