

# Marco Estrada rides changeup to another win facing elimination in Game 5

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By Israel Fehr

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TORONTO – For the second time this postseason the Toronto Blue Jays gave right-hander Marco Estrada the ball in a do-or-die game. And for the second time, Estrada came through.

With the Blue Jays on the brink of elimination Wednesday in Game 5 of the ALCS against the Kansas City Royals, Estrada was at his best. He pitched 7 2/3 innings and allowed just one run on three hits and a walk and struck out five to lead Toronto to a [7-1 win](#) and help them force a Game 6 on Friday night in Kansas City. Estrada was also there to pick up his team in the ALDS against Texas after the Blue Jays dropped the first two games, winning Game 3 in Texas. He's just the eighth pitcher in major-league history to win multiple elimination games in one postseason.



"He's pitched like that all year. We've seen him take a couple of no-hitters late in the games, very durable. He gives up minimal hits, that kind of thing," said Blue Jays manager John Gibbons. "The fact that it's an elimination game, he really rose to the occasion ... He had everything going, he's sticking that fastball, nice little curveball and his overpowering change-up. He shut down a good hitting, hot team."

His latest dominant outing really came on the strength of his changeup. In a [poll conducted by Baseball America](#) earlier this season, major-league managers ranked Estrada's changeup as the third best in the American League, behind Felix Hernandez and Chris Sale. It may have never been better than it was in Game 5. Estrada got Royals hitters to swing-and-miss 15 times. Ten of those swing and misses were from his changeup.

"It's Bugs Bunny-esque," Blue Jays ace David Price said of Estrada's changeup. "Even out there in the bullpen, you can kind of see it hit the bricks. He does it with full arm speed. That's part of the reason why it's so good."

It was certainly a big part of the reason why he was able to pitch so well again Wednesday night. When Estrada was removed from the game with two outs in the eighth, the fans at the Rogers Centre responded with a rousing ovation.

"I'm just trying to do my job, help these guys win. I'm excited to be a part of this team. We've got a great team here," said Estrada. "It was an incredible feeling walking off the mound, seeing all the support that this team has gotten the entire year, not just today. But it was extremely loud and it was a great feeling just walking off that mound."

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