Rockies lose Gray but get win vs. Bumgarner

By Thomas Harding and Michael Wagaman / MLB.com | 2:23 AM ET

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Rockies absorbed losing starting pitcher Jon Gray when he aggravated a left big toe injury in the third inning and overcame eight strikeouts by Giants pitcher Madison Bumgarner en route to a 3-1 victory at AT&T Park on Thursday night.

Gray appeared to tweak the toe -- originally injured during a March 19 Spring Training game -- when making a leaping grab of an Eduardo Nunez chopper in the third. Gray left after walking the leadoff man in the fourth and his next start is in jeopardy. But lefty Chris Rusin rescued the Rockies by holding the Giants to two hits and a run in 3 1/3 innings.

"He was the key to the game," Rockies manager Bud Black said of Rusin, who has had three stellar performances when replacing an injured Rockies starter over the last three seasons. "Jon gave us three zeros up there. Chris gave us good middle-to-long relief and was very efficient on a cool night."

Bumgarner yielded Trevor Story's first home run of the season with two out in the fourth. The Rockies added three hits and a run, on Mark Reynolds' one-out, two-on single in the sixth -- Bumgarner's final inning of six-hit pitching.

"I didn't make a whole lot of great pitches tonight," Bumgarner said. "I did OK to keep us in the ballgame but obviously I would like to be a little better for us than that. I thought my stuff was there. Just maybe not as sharp with the command as I wanted to be."
Before coming to The City by the Bay, the Rockies went 15-for-90 while losing two of three at home against the Padres. But they’ve also beaten two heavyweight lefties -- the Dodgers’ Clayton Kershaw in Friday’s home opener and Bumgarner -- and are 7-4.

"Pretty much any guy you face is going to be tough, but we have a very confident team and take that attitude out on the field with us," Story said.

**MOMENTS THAT MATTERED**

**The challenge, and the answer:** Rockies right fielder Carlos Gonzalez entered with a .321 batting average and five homers against Bumgarner -- a hard-to-explain run of left-on-left success. Gonzalez fanned with two on in the first. With bases empty in the fourth, Bumgarner's first pitch buzzed near the chin of Gonzalez, who dropped to his back. But Gonzalez lined the next pitch past Bumgarner for a single, and Story homered two batters later for a 2-0 lead.

**Ottavino puts up a Big 0:** The Giants scored on a Nunez sacrifice fly in the seventh and had lefty hitter Jarrett Parker up against Rockies righty Adam Ottavino with two out. Lefties had hit .250 with a homer against Ottavino going into the game. However, Ottavino’s stuff has sharpened with each appearance, and it took him five pitches to fan Parker. Ottavino struck out two in 1 1/3 innings to run his season total to 10 in six innings.

"Today I had more fun out there than usual," Ottavino said. "I'm usually like, 'Have fun after the fact.'"

**• Giants' woes cashing in runners continue**

**QUOTABLE**

"Just be loose and be ready. Always be ready for something like that." -- Rusin on the secret to replacing an injured starter. On three such occasions over the last three years, Rusin has replaced an injured starter and yielded just one run in 10 2/3 innings on those occasions.

**SOUND SMART WITH YOUR FRIENDS**

Bumgarner is winless after three starts for the first time since 2011, when he went 0-6 in his first eight starts.

Ottavino, lefty Mike Dunn and closer Greg Holland (sixth save) combined for 2 2/3 scoreless innings. When pitching with a lead, Rockies relievers have a 1.18 ERA with 12.9 strikeouts per nine innings.

**UPON REVIEW**

The Giants lost their challenge on a close play at first base in the fifth. Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado grabbed Nunez's bouncer and was uncharacteristically lackadaisical while short-hopping his throw to first baseman Reynolds, who
couldn't glove the ball. As Reynolds fell, he grabbed the ball with his bare hand. Umpire Mike Everitt ruled that Reynolds possessed the ball with his foot in contact with the bag, and replay officials ruled the play stands.

A sliding catch by Giants center fielder **Denard Span**, on a soft Story liner in the eighth, was ruled it would stand after a challenge from the Rockies. Replay showed that Span skimmed his glove under the ball before it hit the turf.

**WHAT'S NEXT**

**Rockies:** Lefty **Tyler Anderson** is usually a strike-thrower, but he had an out-of-character four walks in five innings and gave up five runs and five hits while losing to the Padres in his last start. He'll try to return to the strike zone and regain his groove against the Giants at AT&T Park on Friday at 8:15 p.m. MT.

**Giants:** Right-hander **Johnny Cueto**, who opposes Anderson at 7:15 p.m. PT, has also had some minor control issues this season, though it hasn't hurt him. Cueto walked two or more in each of his first two starts this year. He had more than one walk in back-to-back games only three times in all of 2016.
Gray could miss start with toe injury

By Thomas Harding and Michael Wagaman / MLB.com | 2:23 AM ET

SAN FRANCISCO -- Rockies right-handed pitcher Jon Gray left a 3-1 victory over the Giants after three scoreless innings Thursday night because he suffered an aggravation of a left big toe injury that originally occurred in Spring Training.

Lefty Chris Rusin took over and held the Giants to one run in 3 1/3 innings, and he might have to enter the rotation for Gray, who is not sure if he can make his next start.

Manager Bud Black said it's "a little too early to tell," but the injury will be evaluated Friday morning.

The injury originally occurred March 19 against the Athletics in a Cactus League game. Gray left his next start, March 24 against the Giants, in the third inning because the Rockies' dugout saw him favoring it. Gray insisted the toe hasn't been a factor during his first two regular-season starts even though his performance was mixed.

"I just think rest and stay off of it," Gray said. "I did that before and it was feeling great before. I'm just going to do that again, but even better."

At the end of the second inning, Gray felt pain flare upon landing after he leaped to spear Eduardo Nunez's chopper and threw to first. Gray struck out as the leadoff hitter in the top of the third, pitched another inning, then left after walking Joe Panik to open the fourth.

"I knew at the time I did it," Gray said. "It sucks to have a setback like that. But I'm just going to stay off of it and get it healthy."

Gray said the strikeout was a blessing, since his thought during the at-bat was, "Don't run, no matter what."

The toe is on Gray's landing foot, so the Rockies want to be careful with him so he doesn't alter his pitching mechanics.

It occurred on a night when Gray was efficient, with 34 pitches, including the walk to start the fourth.
"It was one of my better-feeling days for a start, so it's a little more disappointing," Gray said. "But it's [his effectiveness] not going anywhere. It'll be there when I get back."
Rockies look to break spell vs. Giants’ Cueto

By Michael Wagaman / Special to MLB.com | 1:21 AM ET

Giants right-hander Johnny Cueto looks to keep his recent dominance of the Rockies going while Colorado counters with lefty Tyler Anderson when the two teams continue their four-game series Friday at AT&T Park.

Cueto (2-0) has won five consecutive decisions against the Rockies, his last loss to Colorado coming May 25, 2012. Since then, the two-time All-Star pitcher has been masterful when facing the Rockies while compiling a 5-0 record with a 1.33 ERA over his last seven starts against them.

In four games against Colorado in 2016, Cueto allowed just four earned runs over 30 1/3 innings.

Anderson (1-1) doesn't have the history against the Giants that Cueto does with the Rockies. Anderson is making just his third career start against San Francisco and second at AT&T Park.

Anderson is trying to bounce back after getting tagged for five runs in five innings against the Dodgers on Sunday. The 27-year-old left-hander battled control issues most of the day and set a career high with four walks.

Things to know about this game

• Cueto is the first Giants pitcher since Matt Morris in 2006-07 to win his first two starts in back-to-back seasons. If he wins Friday, Cueto will be the fourth pitcher in franchise history to win his first three starts in consecutive years.

• As a rookie last season, Anderson held opponents to the lowest average exit velocity, 85.1 mph, of 174 pitchers who allowed 200 balls in play. However, he has an 8.44 ERA through his first two outings of 2017, over which his average exit velocity allowed is 88.5 mph.

• The game will be Bud Black's 155th against the Giants as a manager. Now with the Rockies, Black earned his first win as a manager at AT&T Park on April 3, 2007, while with the Padres.
Third baseman Nolan Arenado isn't looking for a break, even though he's one of only two Colorado players to have started every game so far this season. Arenado also played in the World Baseball Classic, and despite the Rockies playing their first 14 games in 14 days, the veteran infielder feels fine.

"To be honest, early in the season I just want to keep playing," Arenado said. "You need those days off later in the year. Right now we just want to get playing, keep going and get our swings down."

Leadoff hitter Charlie Blackmon has also started all 11 of the Rockies games this year.
Rusin comes to the rescue after Gray's injury

By Thomas Harding / MLB.com | @harding_at_mlb | 2:57 AM ET

SAN FRANCISCO -- Rockies lefty Chris Rusin stepping in to replace an injured starter and providing stingy pitching -- 3 1/3 one-run innings in Thursday night's a 3-1 victory over the Giants at AT&T Park, after Jon Gray's left big toe injury flared in the fourth inning -- was familiar.

On May 31, 2015, Rusin replaced Jordan Lyles -- who suffered a season-ending right big toe ligament injury -- and held the Phillies scoreless in 4 2/3 innings of the Rockies' 4-1 road victory over the Phillies.

Last Aug. 13 -- same Citizens Bank Park, same Phillies -- Rusin replaced Tyler Chatwood, who suffered a back injury, and held the Phillies scoreless for three innings. Chatwood struggled before leaving and the Rockies lost, but Rusin at least held them close.

Gray originally suffered his injury in Spring Training and he aggravated it in the second inning. Gray stayed in through the third and into the fourth, which at least gave Rusin time to prepare.

"Once they told me he came up slow after that one ground ball he fielded, I was stretched and ready to go," Rusin said. "I knew I had to eat up innings and get outs as quickly as possible. I was able to do that."

Rusin needed just 37 pitches to get the game into the seventh inning, from which point the strong back of the Rockies bullpen could assure victory.
Desmond continues progress in hand recovery

By Thomas Harding / MLB.com | @harding_at_mlb | April 13th, 2017

SAN FRANCISCO -- Rockies first baseman Ian Desmond handled short-hop and ground balls thrown to him Thursday -- the second day since his left hand fracture was deemed recovered enough for him to begin catching baseballs.

Desmond, injured in Spring Training when hit by a pitch March 12, has yet to take balls off the bat. Activity will increase, with the hope that he can begin a hitting progression next Wednesday as he works on a four-to-six-week timetable for a return.

"The bone growth is to the point that he feels comfortable of the impact of a ground ball, of the ball thrown into his mitt, just the jarring action on that bone," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "These are good signs for Ian."

**Worth noting**

- Rockies righty reliever Chad Qualls was scheduled to make his second injury rehab appearance for Triple-A Albuquerque at Reno on Thursday. On Tuesday, Qualls threw a scoreless inning with a strikeout against Reno, and fastball velocity was reported at 91 to 92 mph.
- Righty Jairo Diaz, completing a recovery from Tommy John surgery, made his second rehab appearance Wednesday for Class A Lancaster and gave up a wind-blown two-run homer. Diaz will join the Albuquerque club.

- The Rockies went 15-for-90 while dropping two of three at home against the Padres, who threw several unfamiliar pitchers. Could the four-game set against the Giants, who are throwing four established starters, actually be better for the Rockies?

  "I wouldn't necessarily say any of these pitchers we're facing on the Giants are comfortable, but there is a familiarity," Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado said. "They're going to be tough. It's going to be a battle. It's always fun playing these guys because it's a good team and the fans are into it."
Eleven days into the season, Rockies closer Greg Holland is leading the Major Leagues in saves, a perfect 5-for-5 in save situations. No other reliever in the big leagues has more than three.

And Holland has been dominant in those five games, working five hitless innings, issuing only two walks and striking out eight batters.

"I think you could say he is back," said Colorado manager Bud Black.

But then the Rockies thought that all along. That's why they signed Holland to a $7 million free-agent contract in the offseason that includes an option at $10 million for 2018.

Yes, Holland is coming off Tommy John surgery. The mention of that operation used to send shivers down the spine of baseball executives, but not anymore.

"It is sickly comforting that he has had Tommy John and recovered from it," said Colorado general manager Jeff Bridich. "It is a credit to the surgeons and a credit to rehab staffs, knowing how to rehab guys and put them in position to be as good as they had been."

Last year alone, there were at least 190 pitchers in the big leagues who had returned from Tommy John surgery, according to the tracking of Jon Roegle, who has detailed 1,364 players who have undergone the surgery, beginning with Tommy John himself in 1974.

That included several who pitched well enough that they were traded in season to contenders, including Rich Hill from the Rays to the Dodgers, Mark Melancon from the Pirates to the Nationals and Matt Moore from the Rays to the Giants.

Over the course of the 2016 season, the Reds used 13 pitchers who had undergone Tommy John surgery, followed by the A's with 11 and the Royals and Tigers with 10 apiece.

Holland and starting pitcher Lance Lynn of the Cardinals are the new guys on the list this season.
Thursday afternoon's Cubs-Dodgers game featured a matchup of Tommy John success stories -- Hyun-Jin Ryu of the Dodgers and Brett Anderson of the Cubs.

It is not simply a matter of the pitchers getting back to the big leagues. They have flourished.

The list of current big league pitchers who have come back from Tommy John surgery includes the likes of Melancon, Francisco Liriano, Adam Wainwright, Alex Cobb, Stephen Strasburg, Danny Duffy, Edinson Volquez and Matt Harvey.

It's not like there is a reason to celebrate having undergone Tommy John surgery, but it also is not the death knell to a career that it once was believed to have been.

Rockies pitcher Tyler Chatwood is even a two-time Tommy John patient, who bounced back from the second operation a year ago to go 12-9 with a 3.87 ERA for Colorado.

"We're talking 10 years between surgeries," said Chatwood. "The first one was my sophomore year in high school. If I'm good for another 10 years, that's pretty good."

The recent history of not only the number of pitchers who have returned from Tommy John surgery, but the level at which they have been able to pitch once they return was a factor the Rockies considered in pursuing Holland, who is still throwing his fastball in the mid-to-upper-90s.

"Also he had a longer rehab than normal," said Bridich, pointing out that Holland underwent the surgery in October 2015. "We knew by the time Spring Training [2017] came around, he was going to be close to 18 months post-op. That's five, six months longer than most relievers in their return from Tommy John."

For the Rockies, there was another insight they had they helped them with the decision to sign Holland -- the presence of pitching coach Steve Foster and bullpen coach Darren Holmes. The two of them convinced Bridich that Holland would be the key to giving Colorado's bullpen depth the franchise has never enjoyed.

Foster was the Royals' pitching coach when Holland broke into the big leagues in Kansas City, and the two developed a strong bond.
"That personal knowledge and some of the stories Steve shared with us about his experience, seeing Greg do what he did for that team made an impression," said Bridich. "Also Greg lives in Asheville, N.C., and Darren Holmes does, too. They connected over the winter. We felt we had first-hand information."

And the early returns, at least, seem to reinforce the Rockies' expectations.
SAN FRANCISCO — Jon Gray, the blazing right-hander carrying so much hope for a young Rockies rotation, walked out of the fourth inning Thursday at AT&T Park with a toe injury. The Rockies swallowed their gasps of worry long enough to celebrate.

Gray aggravated a left big toe injury first suffered in spring training, the club said. But the Rockies for a second time in five days beat one of the best pitchers in baseball, topping Madison Bumgarner and the Giants, 3-1 in front of a sellout crowd of 41,195.

Trevor Story shook of a slow season start to hammer a two-run homer in the fourth inning off Bumgarner and the Rockies survived the loss of their No. 1 starter to move to 7-4 in the young season. The Giants fell to 4-7 after losing a third game when Bumgarner starts.

The Rockies will hold out hope Gray's toe does not devolve into long-term concern. But in his past two starts, Colorado has victories over Bumgarner and Clayton Kershaw. They will focus on that excitement.

"Who wouldn't?" Rockies manager Bud Black said. "These are great wins."

At his locker later, Gray said his toe felt sore enough not to run. He underwent an X-ray Thursday night and will be reevaluated Friday morning.

"It stinks to have a set-back like that, but I'm just going to stay off it again and get it healthy," Gray said.

Gray was streaking through a Giants lineup in the first game of a four-game series here. San Francisco managed just one hit off the 25-year-old in three innings. But after walking Joe Panik to open the fourth, Colorado manager Bud Black immediately jumped out of the dugout to signal home-plate umpire Jordan Baker.

Gray was out. Long man Chris Rusin replaced him.

Late in spring training, Gray injured his left big toe running out of the batter's box. Five days later, in a Cactus League start on March 24 against the Giants, a game he was also mastering early on, Gray abruptly exited the third inning. The
Rockies eased up on Gray over the final week of spring training. And he started opening day on schedule against the Brewers in Milwaukee.

On Thursday, Gray gave up just one hit, a single to Denard Span to lead off the Giants’ first inning. He retired eight of the next nine batters he faced.

But in the second, Giants shortstop Eduardo Nunez muffed a high-chop grounder over Gray’s head. Gray leaped off the mound to stab it, then throw to first for the inning-ending out. But he walked off the field slowly and delayed on his way out of the dugout to hit leading off the third.

“I know it’s nothing serious. I’ll be back out there,” Gray said.

The Rockies led 2-0 when Gray exited. Rusin, a lefty, picked right up. He retired the next nine Giants without a hit. In the sixth, Mark Reynolds clubbed a single to center field that scored DJ LeMahieu for a 3-0 lead. Against the Gray and Rusin piggyback, the Giants managed three hits and a run over 6 1/3 innings.

**BOX SCORE:** Rockies 3, Giants 1

“Big props to Rusin,” Story said. “We have a lot of confidence in that guy.”

The Rockies then got 2 2/3 scoreless innings from reliever Adam Ottavino, Mike Dunn and Greg Holland.

“I think I had more fun out there than usual,” Ottavino said.

Colorado twice this week lost games started by San Diego spot-starters, losing to the Padres behind Jarred Cosart and Zach Lee. But last week, the Rockies nailed three home runs of Dodgers ace Clayton Kershaw in a 4-2 victory. The key to beating the Rockies, it seems, is to put a soft-tossing screwball on the mound.

Their defeat of Bumgarner gave the Rockies victories over two of the 10 best pitchers in baseball in a five-day span — not coincidentally, both games started by Gray.

Closer Greg Holland entered in the ninth and gave up his first two hits of the season, but induced a game-ending double play for his sixth save.

“(The Giants) pitch so well, they play defense. Tonight, we pitched really well and played defense too,” Black said. “When that happens, you’re going to get low-scoring, tight, every-pitch intensity games. That’s what you saw tonight.”
Road not getting easier for scuffling Rockies offense. But they have found some hope.

By Nick Groke / Denver Post | April 13th, 2017

SAN FRANCISCO — Dustin Garneau was born with the burden of being right-handed. After he broke camp on a major-league roster for the first time in his life, the Rockies’ backup catcher was served up like a sacrifice to the pitching deities. Within a week, Garneau faced the two best lefties in baseball, the Dodgers’ Clayton Kershaw and the Giants’ Madison Bumgarner. Garneau is statistical desperation for the Rockies — his right-handed swing is slightly more likely over 1,000 at-bats to scratch out a hit compared to his left-swinging counterpart, Tony Wolters.

So Colorado manager Bud Black assigned Garneau to face Kershaw, last weekend, and Bumgarner, on Thursday to open a four-game series against the Giants at AT&T Park.

“I know it’s coming,” he said.

The Rockies are looking for hits anywhere they can find them. In a three-game series at Coors Field against the lowly Padres this week, they collectively hit 15-for-90 (.167). Five of those hits were home runs, three of them came in one game, all solo shots in a 3-2 victory Tuesday. In the other two games, the Rox were outscored 11-3.

It was a wasted series, sandwiched between matchups against the Dodgers, the National League West champions four years running, and the Giants, winners of three World Series since 2010. Their bats busted, the Rockies missed a chance to win three consecutive series to start a season for just the second time in their 25-year history.

“We can stack our lineup against anybody in baseball. It’s just, this is how baseball works,” Garneau said. “You have ebbs and flows and we’re in one of those valleys for us. We’ll get out.”

The Rockies are nearing the end of a breathless season-opening stretch of 14 games in 14 days. It culminates in a four-game set against the Giants. San Francisco’s top two pitchers, Bumgarner, who pitched Thursday, and Johnny Cueto, who will throw Friday, dominated the Rockies last season. The Giants went 6-1 in games they pitched.

Facing that duo in ideal circumstances is a tough assignment. Doing it while trying to snuff out a collective hitting funk may be a disaster in the making.

“No secrets here,” Black said. “There are no tricks with Bumgarner, man. Familiarity, and knowing him, I don’t know if that’s a good thing or not. You look at his record book, he’s pretty good. He doesn’t give up very many runs.”
There is a precedent for hope, Garneau said. On Saturday at Coors Field, the Rockies nibbled eight hits of Kershaw in a 4-2 victory.

“I didn’t really see him well that day at all, if you couldn’t tell,” Garneau said. He struck out three times against Kershaw, but Nolan Arenado, Mark Reynolds and Gerardo Parra homered off him. “When you can beat one of the best — pardon me, the best — it’s always a huge confidence boost for your team. Especially with our offense struggling a little bit, collectively. Beating him that day was a big deal for us.”

Desmond ramping up. Ian Desmond, the Rockies’ high-profile offseason signing, let loose Thursday for the first time since he suffered a broken hand in spring training, taking infield practice like a nearly full-functioning first baseman.

“Ian is gaining on it,” Colorado manager Bud Black said. “He’s starting to get some clearance to up the activity. He’s able to play catch, take short-hops, a few groundballs.”

Footnotes. Colorado catcher Tom Murphy, who broke a bone in his right forearm the day before Desmond’s injury, remains in a thumb-extending brace and has not started participating on the field. … Outfielder David Dahl remains in the Rockies’ infirmary with a stressed rib bone. But he will return to the team this weekend. Dahl is playing catch and doing cardio work, but not hitting or fielding. … Veteran reliever Chad Qualls (forearm strain) was scheduled for a second rehab appearance Thursday night in Reno, Nev., for Triple-A Albuquerque. … Jairo Diaz (Tommy John) pitched his second rehab appearance for High-A Lancaster on Wednesday night. He gave up two runs on two hits with two strikeouts in one inning.
Ian Desmond returns to the Rockies’ infield in recovery from broken hand; Murphy, Dahl still waiting

Desmond signed a five-year, $70 million free-agent contract with the Rockies in December

By Nick Groke / Denver Post | April 13th, 2017

SAN FRANCISCO — Ian Desmond, the Rockies’ high-profile offseason signing, let loose Thursday for the first time since he suffered a broken hand in spring training, taking infield practice like a nearly full-functioning first baseman.

“Ian is gaining on it,” Colorado manager Bud Black said. “He’s starting to get some clearance to up the activity. He’s able to play catch, take short-hops, a few groundballs.”

Desmond — who signed a five-year, $70 million free-agent contract with the Rockies in December — has not yet appeared in a game with his new team. He was tagged by an errant Reds pitch in a spring training Cactus League game March 12 and fractured the second metacarpal in his left hand. He underwent surgery four days later to insert a metal plate.

The Rockies waited one month for healing. Now they are allowing Desmond to push back into baseball activities.

“They wanted the bone growth to be a point where he’s comfortable with impact, when a ball hits his mitt, that jarring action,” Black said. “These are good signs for Ian.”

Black said he hopes Desmond will start taking batting practice next week. It remains possible Desmond could return in April.

Murphy on pause. Colorado catcher Tom Murphy, who broke a bone in his right forearm the day before Desmond’s injury, remains in a thumb-extending brace and has not started participating on the field.

Murphy, who was expected to be one of two catchers on the Rockies’ season-opening roster, broke a bone just above his wrist when he collided with Kris Bryant’s bat trying to throw to second in a spring game against the Cubs. Doctors discovered a fracture two days later.

“I’m not a doctor, but we were told he has to remain in that brace in a thumbs-up position for awhile,” Black said. “When you see him out of this thing, then he’s on his way. The nature of his break is, they really wanted to immobilize it.”
Dahl, too. Outfielder David Dahl, who raked through 63 games in a midseason rookie call-up last year, remains in the Rockies’ infirmary with a stressed rib bone. But he will return to the team from their spring headquarters this weekend when he flies to San Francisco.

Dahl is playing catch and doing cardio work, but not hitting or fielding.

“Nothing rotational. And in baseball,” Black said, “you have to be rotational.”

Pitching rehabs. Veteran reliever Chad Qualls (forearm strain) was scheduled for a second rehab appearance Thursday night in Reno, Nev., for Triple-A Albuquerque. In his first appearance, a scoreless inning with one strikeout, Qualls’ mph velocity reached the low-90s. … Jairo Diaz (Tommy John) pitched his second rehab appearance for High-A Lancaster on Wednesday night. He gave up two runs on two hits with two strikeouts in one inning.

Looking Ahead …

Rockies LHP Tyler Anderson (1-1, 8.44 ERA) at Giants RHP Johnny Cueto (2-0, 4.50), Friday, 8:15 p.m., ROOT, 850 AM

Anderson, despite pitching less than a full season a year ago, proved to be the Rockies’ most valuable pitcher with a 3.5 WAR (wins above replacement) and a 138 ERA-plus (park-adjusted ERA where 100 is average). But the 27-year-old lefty has struggled out of the gate this season. He has not yet finished a sixth inning in two starts. And against the Dodgers earlier this week, he threw just 54 of 95 pitches for strikes. He will go against Cueto, the Giants’ wily veteran who stymied the Rockies last season. San Francisco went undefeated in his four starts against the Rox. Nick Groke, The Denver Post

Saturday: Rockies RHP Tyler Chatwood (0-2, 6.35 ERA) at Giants LHP Matt Moore (1-1, 2.70), 2:05 p.m., ROOT

Sunday: Rockies RHP Antonio Senzatela (1-0, 1.50) at Giants RHP Jeff Samardzija (0-2, 6.75), 2:05 p.m., ROOT

Monday: Off.
Colorado Rockies ride stingy bullpen to 3-1 win over San Francisco Giants
The Rockies were carried by their bullpen once again as they opened their road trip with a win.

By Hayden Kane / Purple Row | @hwkane | Apr 13, 2017, 11:17pm MDT

As expected, Thursday night's game between the Rockies and the Giants contained a dominant pitching performance. Also as expected, it contained a good piece of hitting from a left-handed pitcher.

The unexpected part is that both of those things came from Chris Rusin, who saved the bullpen, shut down the Giants in relief of the re-injured Jon Gray, and even added a single in the top of the seventh for good measure. And Rusin wasn't the only one to swing the bat well; after a rough showing in the Padres series, Rockies hitters finally showed some life, scoring three runs on seven hits en route to a 3-1 victory to open their six-game west coast road trip.

Rusin entered the game in long relief and was perfect through three innings of work before running into some trouble and handing things over to the back of the bullpen in the seventh. He struck out two, walked none, and generated six ground-ball outs. If the Rockies can string together some wins on this trip, Rusin's bullpen-saving performance tonight might be a big reason why.

From there it was the usual candidates holding the lead late, and once again they looked like studs.

Adam Ottavino inherited a bit of a sticky situation from Rusin and limited the damage to only one run; he recorded two outs in that inning and also got two outs to start the eighth inning with a couple of strikeouts on especially nasty sliders.

Mike Dunn retired Denard Span to finish the eighth, and Greg Holland came on in the ninth and was able to shut the door despite a couple of cheap hits and a walk. In a tense situation with the bases loaded and one out, Holland was able to coax a game-ending double play grounder from Eduardo Nuñez to squash the typical late threat from the Giants and record his MLB-leading sixth save of the season.

The bad news for the Rockies came in the bottom of the fourth inning. With a 2-0 lead and looking as strong as ever, Gray left with what was later confirmed to be an aggravation of the left toe injury he sustained this spring. It is not yet known whether he will miss his next start or any time beyond that, but this is certainly an issue that the Rockies do not want to linger for their top starting pitcher.
Trevor Story got the offense going when he broke out of his slump with a no-doubt home run off Giants’ ace Madison Bumgarner, temporarily easing some of the concern about his slow start. But what was perhaps even more encouraging was the rally that produced a run in the sixth inning; in that frame, the offense actually strung together some hits, something that has been sorely lacking this season, and Mark Reynolds was able to grind out a tough at-bat and drive in the team’s third run.

Bumgarner’s box score looks fine, but he was not as efficient as usual. The Rockies chased him with 101 pitches after six innings. He struck out eight and surrendered all three runs. Eduardo Nuñez drove in Conor Gillaspie on a sacrifice fly off of Adam Ottavino for the Giants’ only run.

With Gray’s injury tonight, this team continues to feel like something of a patchwork group. That they’re hanging on with a 7-4 record in this context can be viewed a number of ways. Perhaps it’s a positive sign about a group that is deeper and more resilient than Rockies teams of the past. Or maybe it’s a fluke and we shouldn’t get our hopes up.

Let’s go with the positive one. The Rockies will be back at it in San Francisco tomorrow night with Tyler Anderson on the mound.
Rockies remove Jon Gray from start with apparent injury
Rockies remove their ace mid-inning with apparent injury

By Eric Garcia McKinley / Purple Row | @garcia_mckinley | Apr 13, 2017, 11:17pm MDT

The Colorado Rockies removed Jon Gray in the middle of the fourth inning of Thursday night’s game against the San Francisco Giants. It’s not clear what the issue is, but there’s both speculation and evidence that Gray might have re-aggravated the toe injury on his left foot that kept him out of a portion of spring training.

In the bottom of the second, Gray leapt up to grab a bouncer from Eduardo Nuñez. He landed at the edge of the mound. After making the out, he walked off the field with a subtle but noticeable limp. He led off and bat for himself in the third inning. Gray also came back out for the third inning, where he walked one batter but otherwise looked good. But after Gray walked Joe Panik to lead off the fourth inning, head trainer Keith Duggar and manager Bud Black paid Gray a visit on the mound and removed him from the game. Chris Rusin entered in relief.

The Rockies began the season with 14 consecutive games, but they do have two days off next week. If rest would help Gray, they could take advantage of the shorter 10-day disabled list and put him on it. If they do that, Gray could conceivably only miss one start. He could be back for the April 24 game against the Nationals. Chris Rusin could take his place for a spot start, or the Rockies could bring Germán Márquez back up to get a start or two.

Gray departed having only allowed a hit and two walks in three innings. It’s disappointing to lose him for the night, but the long game is more significant here.
Colorado Rockies Injury Update: Ian Desmond Closer to Returning

By Kevin Henry / Rox Pile | April 13, 2017

The Colorado Rockies appear to be inching closer to getting arguably their biggest free agent acquisition of the offseason back on the field.

Ian Desmond has yet to play an inning for the Rockies in the regular season. That, however, could be getting close to changing according to some activity before Colorado opened a four-game series against the San Francisco Giants at AT&T Park on Thursday night.

According to Nick Groke of The Denver Post, Desmond took infield practice with his Rockies teammates in San Francisco. That would mark his first on-field major activity since he was hit by a pitch on March 12 in a spring training game against the Cincinnati Reds. That inside pitch fractured the second metacarpal in Desmond’s left hand and would require him to undergo surgery four days later.

“Ian is gaining on it,” Colorado manager Bud Black told reporters prior to Thursday night’s game. “He’s starting to get some clearance to up the activity. He’s able to play catch, take short-hops, a few groundballs.”

The next step for Desmond will be taking batting practice, which could occur within the next week. If all goes well, the 31-year-old, right-handed-hitting Desmond could be back with the Rockies before the end of April.

Desmond, who signed a five-year, $70 million contract with the Rockies in the offseason, will look to reclaim the first base spot where Mark Reynolds has filled in nicely since the start of the season. Reynolds came into Thursday night’s opener in San Francisco with a team-leading four homers and 10 RBI. He also told Rox Pile in a recent interview that he’s not going to give up the first base position without a battle.

The addition of Desmond could help a Rockies offense that has struggled at times through its first 10 games. Included in that stretch was a shutout loss at home to San Diego on Wednesday when Colorado could muster just three hits on the day.
The 100 Greatest Colorado Rockies: No. 36 Bruce Ruffin

By Ben Macaluso / Rox Pile | April 13, 2017

We continue our look at the top 100 Colorado Rockies of all time in this article. Here, we look at No. 36 on our list, Bruce Ruffin.

There is something refreshing about Bruce Ruffin. He was a pitcher that sought out the opportunity to pitch in Denver. That put him in rarified air. Metaphorically and literally. He was one of the first free agents the Colorado Rockies ever signed.

To be fair there wasn’t any precedent for major league pitching in 1993, but Ruffin played in Denver before playing for the Rockies. In 1992 he pitched for the Denver Zephyrs, the Triple-A affiliate of the Milwaukee Brewers.

Whether ignorance was bliss or he Denver suited his skills, signing with the Rockies paid off for Ruffin. Ruffin was one of the older guys on the team and was one of few free agents along with Bryn Smith and Andres Galarraga.

Although he started 12 games in the inaugural season, he eventually transitioned to a role in the bullpen. He became a stabilizing force in that early bullpen and became one of the best lefty’s the Rockies have ever seen. He used an effective slider similar to Adam Ottavino but from the opposite side.

He played for the Rockies from 1993-1997 after making mostly starting appearances with the Phillies and Brewers. He earned 60 saves with the Rockies which places him fourth in all-time saves for the franchise. He struck out nine in one game which is a Rockies record for a reliever. His 6.6 WAR with the club puts him in elite Rockies relief history.

Anybody who wants to pitch in Denver stands out among the crowd. That mentality led him to some elite company and one of the best closer’s in Rockies history. He fit well in Denver. Ruffin was a pioneer.
Jon Gray exits game after aggravating toe injury, to be evaluated Friday

By Casey Light / Mile High Sports | April 14, 2017

A Colorado Rockies starting rotation that was already being asked to improvise early in the season following the loss of Chad Bettis will likely have more impromptu changes coming as No. 1 starter Jon Gray left Thursday’s game in San Francisco after aggravating a left foot injury suffered in Spring Training.

#Rockies Jon Gray left the game in San Francisco after aggravating the injury to his left foot - suffered in Spring Training.
10:17 PM - 13 Apr 2017

Gray pitched three scoreless innings, allowing one hit and two walks, before exiting Thursday’s 3-1 Rockies win at AT&T Park in San Francisco. Gray missed time late in Spring Training because of a left big toe injury, but rebounded to make three starts in the regular season, including the season-opener. Although he is yet to earn a decision this year, Colorado is 3-0 in games started by Gray.

Gray received X-rays following the game and will be re-evaluated on Friday, according to Nick Groke of the Denver Post.

Manager Bud Black would not speculate postgame whether or not Gray will be ready to start his next game. Gray’s turn in the rotation is due up on Wednesday in Los Angeles. Colorado has an extra rest day on Monday, and another on Thursday of next week.

According to the Rockies’ ace, rest is exactly what he needs.

“I just have to stay off it and give it some rest,” Gray told reporters in San Francisco after the game. “If I were to try to run right now, it would be tough.”

Gray, 25, was 10-10 for Colorado last season in 29 starts. His 168 innings pitched in 2016 were second only to Bettis. With both Gray and Bettis (who is battling cancer) out of the rotation, Colorado is without a pair of starters who accounted for 354 innings pitched and 24 wins last season.

Chris Rusin, who pitched 3.1 innings of solid relief to earn the win on Thursday, is the most likely candidate to replace Gray in the rotation short-term.
The starting pitching matchup figured to be a showdown of two of the top arms in the National League West – Colorado’s Jon Gray versus San Francisco’s Madison Bumgarner – but it was the Rockies bullpen that was the story of the night. After Gray departed the game having re-aggravated a toe injury, Chris Rusin and the Rockies bullpen shut down the Giants to deliver a 3-1 victory to open the four-game series in San Francisco.

Gray surrendered one hit and two walks over three innings, but had to leave the game after throwing just 34 pitches. His status will be re-evaluated Friday. Rusin, meanwhile, pitched 3.1 innings in long relief to earn the victory, allowing one run on two hits. Adam Ottavino earned his fifth save of the year, retiring four hitters and striking out two. Mike Dunn retired the only batter he faced in the eighth inning to earn his third hold. Closer Greg Holland allowed his first two hits of the season and had to work his way out of a bases-loaded jam in the bottom of the ninth after walking the bases loaded, but forced a game-ending double-play to register his sixth save in as many tries.

Trevor Story provided the big hit for Colorado, taking a first-pitch Bumgarner fastball deep to left to give the Rockies a 2-0 lead in the fourth inning. Colorado would string together three singles in the top of the sixth inning courtesy of DJ LeMahieu, Nolan Arenado and Mark Reynolds to tack on an insurance run.

Colorado remains in San Francisco through the weekend. The Rockies will have played 14 consecutive games without a day off before getting two in four days next week. Tyler Anderson (1-1, 8.44) faces Johnny Cueto (2-0, 4.50) in the second game of the series on Friday night. First pitch is scheduled for 8:15 p.m. MDT. After the Giants series, Colorado faces the Dodgers in Los Angeles for a two-game set on Tuesday and Wednesday.
DJ LeMahieu’s bat is heating up while his glove is more important than ever

By Drew Creasman / BSN Denver | April 14, 2017

It’s been a slow start at the plate in 2017 for the defending National League batting champion. Colorado Rockies second baseman DJ LeMahieu collected two base hits against San Francisco Giants ace Madison Bumgarner in order to bring his batting average up to .211 and talked to us recently about how over magnified stats like that can be this early in the year.

So while we are shining the magnifying glass on some things, it’s worth pointing out that LeMahieu’s defense hasn’t slumped a bit. He has been fantastic with the leather early on, making his biggest play of the season to end the game last night, snaring an Eduardo Nunez grounder on a tough hop and spinning toward second base to start the double play.

He’s already shown again this year that he can make the spectacular play when it counts and make the in-between plays look routine. His ability with the glove will be even more important this season as the Rockies will rely more and more on run prevention instead of run creation.

His game-saving play last night — hey if Jonathan Villar is a second, that game is probably tied there — is just the next sentence in an opening chapter of the 2017 part of this conversation on team building. The Rockies have already kept narrow leads because of the otherworldly defense of Nolan Arenado in the first series in Milwaukee, the very good defense of Gerardo Parra against the Dodgers at Coors Field, and the continues-to-surprise-people-despite-doing-this-consistently-for-a-while-now defense of Mark Reynolds all season.

GM Jeff Bridich has placed a premium on defense and athleticism, and LeMahieu says he thinks Bridich may be ahead of the curve on that.

He got a pair of hits and scored a run in a tight contest, but ask closer Greg Holland who was a misplay away from blowing his first save of 2017 which if the hits or the play to end the game were more important to the win, ya know?

So far, the Colorado Rockies are winning on pitching and defense. Can you imagine what they might look like if they ever start hitting?
Rockies slay second dragon in a week behind Trevor Story's mighty swing

By Drew Creasman / BSN Denver | April 13, 2017

The headlines coming into tonight’s contest between the Colorado Rockies were about another marquee match-up between NL West aces. Jon Gray versus Madison Bumgarner just five days after Gray versus Clayton Kershaw.

Coming into this first game of a 10-game road trip for the Rox, worries were also swirling about the lackluster (to be friendly) offense for a team that most believed sported a formidable lineup. But we got a decidedly different game than that. Bumgarner, who can be unbeatable at times, didn’t have his best stuff and the Rockies, who had looked lost against lesser pitchers, were dialed in on the Giants ace, grabbing three runs on six hits.

When the Rockies made their run to the World Series in 2017, pitcher Josh Fogg was given the moniker “dragon slayer” as he became known for picking up wins against other team’s aces despite relatively underwhelming peripheral numbers the rest of the time. This pretty much describes the Rockies offense right now.

The big blow came in the fourth when Trevor Story made good on his promise to keep working hard and work through his slump, hammering his first home run of 2017, ambushing a first-pitch fastball from Bumgarner to make it 2-0, Rockies.

But the celebration would be short-lived as Gray had to be removed at the start of the very next half-frame, not able to fully bounce back from a hard landing in the second, aggravating a toe injury he sustained in spring training. The status of Gray’s health will be updated soon.

Chris Rusin came on in the emergency situation and did his job as a long man as well as it can possibly be done, retiring the first nine batters he faced, taking what could have been a “panic button” situation and turning it into comfortable sailing for his club.

The Rockies tacked on another run in the sixth when DJ LeMahieu and Nolan Arenado hit back-to-back singled, LeMahieu moving to third on a fly out off the bat of Carlos Gonzalez.
Then, Mark Reynolds put together a fantastic at-bat against Bumgarner coming through with the Rockies third single in the inning and collecting his 11th RBI already this year. That puts him just one behind Marcel Ozuna of the Miami Marlins for the National League lead. It also put the Rockies up 3-0.

Reynolds also made a number of impressive defensive plays in the game, notably saving Arenado from his first error of the season with some nifty bare hand work on his second attempt at a dig.

Brandon Belt broke up Rusin’s perfection in the seventh but just barely as Story nearly robbed the hit with a diving attempt. Rusin was removed after a one-out single by Conor Gillaspie, and though it was curious he was asked to work a fourth inning, the damage was limited by Adam Ottavino who did allow a sac fly to Eduardo Nunez which made it 3-1 but he punched out Jarrett Parker on a nasty slider to end the threat.

Ottavino got the first two outs of the eighth, finishing his night by striking out old battery mate Nick Hundley on a slider that changed area codes. Mike Dunn came on to get lefty Denard Span and that’s exactly what he did, inducing a weak grounder to second.

Greg Holland was called upon yet again for the save. Joe Panik managed to end Holland’s streak of not allowing any hits when he got a fortunate bounce off the pitcher himself for an infield single to lead off the ninth. He got a second soft groundball from Belt, which turned into a fielder’s choice because it wasn’t hit hard enough to get the double play. Hunter Pence followed with the third soft grounder of the inning, this one hit so lightly that a charging barehand attempt from Story was a tad too late, and the Giants had their second infield hit of the inning. Then Holland walked Gillaspie and the bases were loaded with just one out.

But, as he so often does, he stayed calm and collected on the mound, getting Nunez to ground into the game-ending double play that, quite frankly, he deserved. It was the first truly nerve-wracking one, but Holland converted his sixth consecutive save of 2017.

The bullpen continues to be lights out, leading MLB in strikeouts, holds, and saves.
The Rockies have now beaten both Kershaw and Bumgarner in the last week, which is impressive considering the offense is still firmly in the “getting out of the gate” stage of a race. Dragon Slayers, indeed. And tonight it was the mighty swing of Trevor Story that slain the beast.
Colorado Rockies starting pitcher Jon Gray was removed from Thursday night’s contest against the San Francisco Giants after walking the first batter in the bottom of the fourth. We cannot be 100 percent certain at this point the reason, but Gray appeared to have aggravated a toe injury he sustained during spring training, and injury he told us about a week ago was keeping him from running at full strength but not affecting his pitching.

He did so making a good defensive play, but he landed awkwardly on the jump.

Gray was pitching a one-hit shutout and had just been given a 2-0 lead on Trevor Story’s first home run of the year. Left-hander Chris Rusin came on in relief.

We will have an update as soon as we know more about Gray’s health status.
Colorado Rockies stars diagnose offensive woes

By Drew Creasman / BSN Denver | April 13, 2017

It’s no secret that the 2017 Colorado Rockies, as a collective, are in a hitting slump. After Wednesday’s loss to the San Diego Padres, DJ LeMahieu, Carlos Gonzalez and Trevor Story — all of whom were expected to be big contributors this season — are hitting .171, .200 and .133 respectively.

As LeMahieu told us after the game, “The pitching’s done great. That’s the only reason we’re 6-4 right now is the pitching.”

And he’s right. Not only that, the offensive woes can’t be blamed on the Rockies not being at full strength. The “fill ins” Mark Reynolds, Gerardo Parra and even Dustin Garneau have been very good with their bats while the regular “bombers” have been quiet.

The only player expected to perform at an All-Star level who has is third baseman Nolan Arenado. And he is confident that his teammates are about to join him in that endeavor.

“As an offense we haven’t got going yet the way we know we can. We know we’re not hitting the way we know we can. So it’s kinda frustrating but at the same time we’ve won,” he says. “We’re happy that we’re winning, and we know we haven’t even gotten close to what we know we can do. We’re winning ballgames and are nowhere near what we can do.”

One of the guys we know can do a lot more than he has so far is Charlie Blackmon, who appears to be looking more like himself lately. He hit one of the three necessary solo home runs to beat the Padres 3-2 on Tuesday and collected two-thirds of the Rockies hits yesterday afternoon in the 6-0 loss.

“I don’t think there is a particular reason [why I wasn’t and now am] I think I wasn’t seeing the ball very well early in the season,” he told BSN Denver. “We’ve just continued to play and make our adjustments and that’s just kind of how baseball goes.”

Soft-tosser Jered Weaver may have taken the mound at the most inopportune time for the Rockies. As much as the boys in purple suggest they aren’t “pressing” it’s only human nature to try to do more when you are achieving less, and that can just make matters worse.
“It’s easy to try and do too much against someone that’s not throwing that hard,” Blackmon continued. “And that’s what he wants you to do. He wants you to over swing at pitches that aren’t good pitches to hit, and we did that a lot tonight. He made some good pitches. I took some pitches I should have swung and swung at some pitches I shouldn’t have swung at. So he got me, too. But luckily we threw the ball well enough to still get a win.”

While that was, of course, just one game, it is indicative of the problems the Rockies have had at the plate this season. It’s why they hit 14 pop flies yesterday and scored only via the solo home run the day before. It would be an oversimplification to say that everyone is trying to hit a grand slam on every swing, but Colorado hitters are very aware that they aren’t holding up their end of the bargain and that needs to change.

Carlos Gonzalez agrees.

“We gotta get going,” he says. “It’s kind of hard for the pitchers when we don’t score runs. They’ve been giving us a chance since day one. We’re making a lot of mistakes, swinging at pitches out of the zone, hitting a lot of fly balls, not [being able to] put an inning together.”

It’s important to remember not to overanalyze so early in the year, though. “Everything’s magnified the first week” says LeMahieu. “I’m sure [we’ve] gone through stretches like this before, it’s just magnified the first week. I don’t think there’s any doubt we’ll start clicking. We haven’t done it yet. We’ve had glimpses here and there. Hitting’s contagious one way or the other, so hopefully we get a couple of guys hot and the rest of the team heats up.”

The word of the day is “confidence.” And the Rockies still have plenty of it.

“We’re in a good spot record wise, we just need to step it up offensively and we’ll be just fine,” LeMahieu continued. “We’ve got a lot of talent in this room. We just gotta play better, I don’t think any of us are panicking at all.”

Trevor Story, arguably the biggest source of consternation from those outside the team, looks as … again, confident … as his words suggest: “It’s only the first week of the season. We’ve got 150 games to go. I’m not too down on myself. I’m just coming to work everyday and I’m just going to work myself out of it.”

The longest tenured Colorado Rockie and one of the best leaders the club has had in a while says his guys are going to be just fine heading into a 10-game road trip that will see them take on the San Francisco Giants and Los Angeles Dodgers.
“Everybody is good here, I trust in my team, I trust in my teammates. I think we’re going to step up,” Gonzalez said.

And how do they go about doing that?

“We’re a good team. You just gotta shake it off and show up the next day and do a better job.”

And it just so happens that the next day is today.
Rockies' Jon Gray has X-rays after re-injuring toe

By ESPN Services / ESPN.com | April 13, 2017

Colorado Rockies starting pitcher Jon Gray had X-rays taken after re-injuring his big toe on his left foot during a 3-1 victory over the San Francisco Giants on Thursday night.

Gray, who originally hurt the toe during spring training, said he reinjured it while leaping to snag a high hopper in the second inning. He left the game after allowing one hit in three scoreless innings.

He had X-rays taken, but manager Bud Black said the team wouldn't know the severity of the injury until Friday morning and couldn't speculate on whether Gray will make his next start.

"I just have to stay off it and give it some rest," Gray said after the game. "If I were to try to run right now, it would be tough."

In other injury news, Black said first baseman Ian Desmond, who broke his left hand during spring training, has started to play catch and take a few ground balls.

"Ian is gaining on it," Black said. "He's starting to get some clearance to up the activity."

Black hopes Desmond, who signed a five-year, $70 million deal with the Rockies in December, can take batting practice next week, but there's still no timetable for his return.

Rockies catcher Tom Murphy (broken forearm) and outfielder David Dahl (rib) still are not ready to resume baseball-related activities.
SAN FRANCISCO -- The Colorado Rockies lost starter Jon Gray early with a re-aggravated toe injury, so they turned to solid relief pitching and strong defense -- and got just enough from their sputtering offense -- to beat the San Francisco Giants.

Trevor Story hit a two-run homer and five Colorado pitchers combined on a five-hitter in the Rockies' 3-1 victory on Thursday night. The Giants loaded the bases with one out in the ninth, but Greg Holland -- who notched his sixth straight save this season -- got Eduardo Nunez to ground into a game-ending double play.

"Tonight we pitched really well and played good defense," Rockies manager Bud Black said. "Your starter gets knocked out early, and your bullpen comes through."

Gray left with a re-aggravated toe injury after allowing one hit in three scoreless innings. Chris Rusin (1-0) pitched the next 3 1/3 innings, allowing one run and two hits. Adam Ottavino got four straight outs, Mike Dunn got one more and Holland pitched the ninth -- getting out of trouble after the Giants loaded the bases on two infield singles and a walk.

"We owe ourselves two or three comebacks, because we've lost some tough ones," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said. "You'd like to think tonight was going to happen. But we came up short. It's hard to win a ballgame when you score just one run."

Gray, who originally hurt the big toe on his left foot during spring training, said he reinjured it while leaping to snag a high hopper in the second inning. He had X-rays taken, but Black said the team wouldn't know the severity of the injury until Friday morning and couldn't speculate on whether Gray will make his next start.

"I just have to stay off it and give it some rest," Gray said after the game. "If I were to try to run right now, it would be tough."

Story's first home run of the season came with two outs in the fourth inning against Giants starter Madison Bumgarner (0-2), who allowed three runs and six hits in six innings. He struck out eight. It is the worst start to a season for Bumgarner, a four-time All-Star, since he went 0-6 in his first eight starts in 2011.
"All you can do is control what you can control. You go out there and do your job," Bumgarner said. "And at the end of the day, if you can keep your team in the game and give them a chance to win, that's all you can do. There's no need to add any unneeded pressure on yourself."

Mark Reynolds added a run-scoring single in the sixth inning for the Rockies.

The Giants' only run came on a sacrifice fly by Nunez in the seventh inning.

CRAWFORD MOURNS

Shortstop Brandon Crawford was not in the starting lineup for the Giants after driving to Los Angeles on Wednesday night with his wife, Jalynne, to join her family after the death of her oldest sister. He rejoined the team before Thursday night's game and pinch-hit in the eighth inning, grounding out to first base on the first pitch he saw.

GRAY'S NEW LOOK

Gray was making his first start since having eight inches of his hair cut and donated to Locks of Love, a nonprofit that provides hairpieces to financially disadvantaged kids under age 21 suffering from long-term hair loss due to a medical reason.

BELT ENDS SLUMP

Brandon Belt's single in the seventh inning for the Giants ended an 0-for-18 slump. He grounded out in the ninth inning.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Rockies: 1B Ian Desmond, who broke his left hand during spring training, has started to play catch and take a few ground balls, Black said, adding that "these are good signs for Ian." Desmond is with the team, but no timetable for his return has been set, Black said.

Giants: C Buster Posey is lifting weights and doing some cardio workouts as he recovers from concussion symptoms. Bochy said he's optimistic Posey will be able to return April 18 when he comes off the disabled list. "He's feeling good, he's doing well," Bochy said. "We're going to ramp it up a little bit and see how he does."

UP NEXT

Rockies: Tyler Anderson starts the second game of the four-game series in San Francisco.
Giants: Johnny Cueto faces the Rockies, against whom he is 5-0 with a 1.33 ERA over his last seven starts. He went 3-0 with a 1.19 ERA in four starts against Colorado last season.
Rockies RHP Jon Gray leaves with apparent injury

By Dave Holcomb / FanRag Sports | April 13, 2017

Colorado Rockies right-hander Jon Gray left Thursday’s start against the San Francisco Giants during the fourth inning after walking the first batter of the frame. He may have suffered his apparent injury after running down a slow chopper in the second inning.

Gray suffered from a left big toe injury during spring training. At this time, there’s no indication of whether this is an aggravation of that previous injury or a new ailment. At the time of his exit, Gray had allowed just 1 hit and 2 walks. He also struck out 1 in three shutout frames.

In the top of the fourth, the Rockies took a 2-0 lead on a home run from shortstop Trevor Story. Even if Colorado holds on to win the game, though, Gray will not get the win because he didn’t pitch the five required innings needed from a starter in order to qualify for the victory. Left-hander Chris Rusin came on in relief for the injured Gray.

In three starts this season, Gray still doesn’t have a decision. The right-hander owns a 4.38 ERA and 1.46 WHIP in 12.1 innings. He also has 9 strikeout and 7 walks.

Last year, the right-hander went 10-10 with a 4.61 ERA, 1.262 WHIP and 185 strikeouts in 168.0 innings over 29 starts. Gray owns a 10-12 record with a 4.76 ERA in 41 MLB starts.

Prior to Thursday’s final result, the Rockies were 6-4 to begin the season, which is 1.0 game back of the Arizona Diamondbacks for the early lead in the National League West. Colorado started a six-game road trip Thursday.