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Yankees top Red Sox in London power show no one saw coming

By George A. King III

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LONDON — Many voices expected the first major league game played in Europe would be a slugfest due to cozy dimensions, a fast playing surface and muscular lineups.

Nobody could have predicted, or wanted, Arena Baseball to break out at London Stadium on Saturday, where the Yankees and Red Sox savagely attacked each other in the opening inning.

Yet, after each team plated six runs in the first frame, when starting pitchers Rick Porcello and Masahiro Tanaka were spanked, the Yankees' bats remained hot and the Red Sox didn't score again until Jackie Bradley Jr.'s solo homer in the sixth and Michael Chavis' three-run blast that highlighted a six-run seventh inning for Boston.

Consequently the Yankees outlasted the Red Sox and posted a wild, 17-13 victory that took 4 hours and 42 minutes and was witnessed by a sold-out crowd of that included loud fans from both sides of the biggest baseball rivalry in America.

The Yankees' 12th win in their past 13 games raised their AL East-leading record to 53-28 and pushed their lead over the third-place Red Sox to 10 lengths.

Seventeen runs and 19 hits are the most by the Yankees this season. The Yankees' pitchers allowed a season-high 13 runs and 18 hits.

Aaron Hicks, Brett Gardner and Aaron Judge homered for the Yankees, who have hit at least one in a major league record 30 straight games and have scored at least one run in 163 consecutive games.

Playing his first game since being voted onto the AL All-Star team, DJ LeMahieu started the day atop the AL batting race with a .336 batting average and went 4-for-6 with five RBIs.

Aroldis Chapman, the eighth pitcher used by Yankees manager Aaron Boone, recorded the final three outs in a non-save situation.

The Yankees' relievers who followed Tanaka were better than the arms that surfaced after Porcello.

Chad Green, David Hale, Nestor Cortes held the Red Sox scoreless until the sixth. Cortes then allowed five runs and five hits in three innings.

According to Elias Sports Bureau, it is the first time in the Yankees-Red Sox rivalry that each team scored six runs or more in the first inning. Fox reported during its broadcast the last time that happened was June 23, 1989, when the Blue Jays scored seven and the Athletics six in the opening frame.

Luke Voit and Rafael Devers

Luke Voit and Rafael Devers

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Luke Voit left the game in the fifth inning with a leg injury after awkwardly pulling into second with his third double and fourth hit. Red Sox shortstop Xander Bogaerts

departed with a left-calf injury after running first to third in seventh inning.

It took 3 hours and 5 minutes to become an official game and the Yankees led 17-6 after five innings.

Bradley's two-out, bases-empty homer in the sixth didn't look like much, but the Red Sox scored five more in the seventh to cut the Yankees' lead to 17-11.

Leading, 14-6, entering the top of the fifth the Yankees added three runs on Didi Gregorius' RBI single and LeMahieu's two-run, two-out single.

A blinding sun and vacant white seats beyond the outfield fences made it difficult for outfielders to see batted balls and had infielders flinching when taking throws from the outfield during the early innings.

With the teams combining a dozen runs in the first inning that took 58 minutes to complete, Gardner's two-run homer off Steven Wright in the third inning gave the Yankees an 8-6 lead.

That increased to 9-6 in the fourth when Gardner drew a bases-loaded walk from Mike Shawaryn with two outs after being in a 1-2 hole. LeMahieu's three-run double to left upped the Yankees' advantage to 12-6 and Judge's two-run, opposite-field blast to right made it 14-6.

Green took over for Tanaka with the score tied, 6-6, in the first, worked two scoreless innings and got out of a jam in the second when the Red Sox had runners at the corners and one out. Hale replaced Green with two outs and a runner on first in the third. He caught Mookie Betts looking at a 3-2 pitch to close the frame and keep the Yankees' 8-6 lead intact.

Tanaka needed 22 pitches before getting the initial out of the home first inning with the Yankees leading, 6-1, and the bases loaded.

Staked to a 6-0 lead in the top of the inning Tanaka gave up a leadoff single to Betts and an RBI double to Rafael Devers. Consecutive walks to Bogaerts and J.D. Martinez loaded the bases without an out for Andrew Benintendi. He popped out short in front of Christian Vazquez's fly to deep right that plated Devers for the second Red Sox run. Brock Holt's ground single to right scored Bogaerts and cut the Yankees' lead to 6-3.

That got Green, who had been the likely starter for Sunday's game, throwing in the bullpen and he replaced Tanaka after Chavis crushed a three-run homer to center that tied the score, 6-6.

As bad as Tanaka was (six runs and four hits in two-thirds of an inning), Porcello was worse. At least Tanaka retired two batters. Porcello, who lost to the Yankees on June 1 at Yankee Stadium when he gave up five runs and nine hits in 4 ²/₃ innings, left after registering an out. In that one-third of an inning the Yankees scored six runs and five hits. The biggest blow was Hicks' two-run, two-out homer that handed Tanaka a 6-0 lead.

Gregorius provided a two-run double and Voit and Edwin Encarnacion produced RBI doubles.

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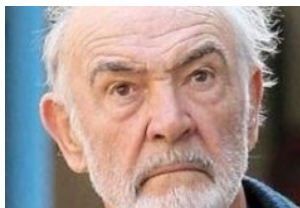
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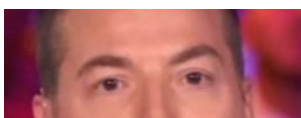
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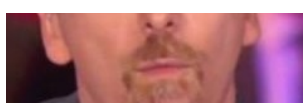
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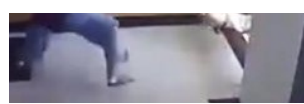
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