

Mauer Working Through Kinks In Swing After Early Struggles

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — In his final at-bat against Oakland on Sunday, Joe Mauer ripped a double off the wall in right field.

That has been the exception more than the rule for the Minnesota Twins' All-Star catcher early in the season as he works to find the comfort zone that made him a three-time AL batting champion and earned him an eight-year, \$184 million contract extension that kicked in this year.

Mauer is hitting .233 with three RBIs in his first eight games this season, and that double that slammed off the wall at Target Field remains his only extra-base hit. He has grounded out to second base nine times in 30 at-bats, and Mauer himself admits that he just doesn't feel quite

right at the plate yet after a low-key spring training.

"I've been struggling a little bit," he said after the home opener on Friday. "Not feeling too great. Still try to go out there and give good at-bats. You know it's going to come around. You go through these stretches throughout a season."

Mauer had arthroscopic surgery on his left knee in the offseason and had a very light work load in Florida to try and reduce the wear and tear on his legs and stay fresh for the rigors of catching an entire season. He played in just eight games in the spring and had only 20 at-



Mauer

bats to work on his timing.

Of course, Mauer has shown in the past that spring training can be overrated. He missed all of spring training and the first month of the 2009 season with back issues before hitting .365 with 28 homers and 96 RBIs to win the AL MVP award.

"You'd like to get off to a good start but we've had maybe 20 at-bats so far and we're looking at 600 or 500 for the season so it's a short stretch," Mauer said. "Hopefully get out of it soon."

Mauer has a hit in five straight games and has come through in a couple of big situations already this season. His single in the 10th inning in New York on April 5 scored the winning run in a rare victory over the Yankees and his RBI-single in

the eighth inning against Oakland on Friday lifted the Twins to a 2-1 win.

Perhaps even more important, that hit was a hot grounder down the third base line, beating an infield shift that a lot of teams are starting to deploy against the left-handed Mauer.

"You notice it every time I step in there, but I'm just trying to hit the ball hard wherever it's pitched," Mauer. "As I've gotten older I've started looking for things. But I'm not going to change too much."

Mauer is flourishing compared with many of his teammates.

The Twins are hitting .214 as a team and have scored just 24 runs in nine games, which is second-worst in the AL. Jim Thome (.167), Delmon Young (.188),

Michael Cuddyer (.107), Danny Valencia (.194) and Alexi Casilla (.167) all are hitting under .200.

"You're not going to see us hit .100 the whole year," Cuddyer said. "That's just not going to happen. It's frustrating. There's no doubt about that. ... But at the same time, we know we've got good hitters in here that aren't going to hit .100 or even .200 for the whole year."

Cuddyer said all the time that he, Young, Mauer and Justin Morneau missed in spring training with various injuries could be contributing to the sluggish start. Maybe they just need a little extra time to get back in the groove.

"But at the same time, you get up

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Lancers Sign Kernels' Miller For Volleyball

Mitchell High School volleyball standout Courtney Miller will enroll at Mount Marty College and play volleyball for the Lancers, the institution announced Monday.

Miller, a 5-foot-5 libero, averaged 93.4 percent for serving with 37 aces last fall for the

Kernels, who finished eighth at the state tournament in Yankton.

She also had 193 digs for the 2010 season. For her efforts, she was awarded Kernel Crusher, Hustler of the Year, Most

Inspirational, and Academic All-State. Courtney has also received community awards such as 4-H Hometown Hero 2010, Exchange Club Student of the Month, and National Women and Sports Day recognition.

"Courtney is a solid defensive player with great volleyball fundamentals and communication skills on the court," MMC coach Candice Climer said. "She is aggressive, has a strong work ethic and will be an excellent student athlete on and off the court. Courtney will fit in great at Mount Marty College."

Said Mitchell High School volleyball coach Deb Thill, "Courtney's strengths include her work ethic and character. She has a great attitude, excellent communication skills, respect for coaches, teammates, and the game."

Miller will major in nursing at Mount Marty, where she will also be receiving a Dean's Scholarship. She is the daughter of Jeff and Rita Miller, Mitchell.

Florida's Larson Suspended After Burglary Arrest

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) — Florida basketball coach Billy Donovan has suspended forwards Erik Murphy and Sioux Falls native Cody Larson after they were arrested and charged with breaking into a car.

Donovan says he is "very disappointed with the news" and the players have been suspended from "basketball-related activities." Donovan says he will not comment further until he gets more information and meets with the players.

Police say witnesses spotted Murphy and Larson breaking into a car outside a restaurant/bar. The car owner reported nothing missing.

Murphy and Larson were charged with one felony count of third-degree burglary. They were booked at the St. Johns County Jail about 4 a.m. Sunday and later released on \$5,000 bond.

WJXT reported that a third man, team manager Joshua Adel, was charged with principal to burglary. Police say he acted as a lookout.

Murphy, a 6-foot-10 sophomore from South Kingstown, R.I., averaged 4.8 points and 2.3 rebounds in 10.8 minutes this past season. He was the team's best 3-point shooter (40 percent). Larson, a 6-foot-9 freshman from Sioux Falls Roosevelt, didn't play.

Last May, Larson received a 120-day suspended jail sentence and two years of probation for allegedly being in a room where drugs were knowingly kept and used. He also was ordered to undergo counseling and perform community service. He was suspended from the Roosevelt basketball team during the 2010 season.

Larson later said he gave a high school teammate dealing with ankle pain a Hydrocodone pill left over from Larson's knee surgery.

Coyotes Jumping To New Heights



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

South Dakota's Bethany Buell competes in the women's pole vault in a double-dual, hosted by USD Saturday in Yankton. The Coyotes went 1-2-3-4 in the event, led by Buell's first-place jump of 13-1.5. On the men's side, USD earned the top three finishes in the men's pole vault.

UConn's Moore Taken First By Lynx In WNBA Draft

BRISTOL, Conn. (AP) — Maya Moore is used to winning titles at Connecticut.

Now she's ready to bring that same mentality to her new team — the Minnesota Lynx, who took her with the first pick in the WNBA Draft on Monday.

"Every year the goal is a championship," she said. "That's what I expect. I go on to every team expecting to win a championship, especially with the amount of talent we have. I don't want to limit to the playoffs, I want to win a championship."

She helped UConn win a record 90-straight games during one stretch over the past two seasons, and also led the school to two national championships in her stellar four-year career.

Her selection as No. 1 wasn't much of a surprise.

"It feels really great to finally be able to have the moment of being drafted No. 1," Moore said. "All the hype and excitement around it."

Moore was followed in the draft by Elizabeth Camburg of Australia (Tulsa), Courtney Vandersloot of Gonzaga (Chicago), Amber Harris of Xavier

(Minnesota) and Jantel Lavender of Ohio State (Los Angeles).

Moore, a four-time All-American, averaged 22.8 points this season. She was also the only collegian to play on the U.S. women's national team that won gold at the world championships last October.

The two-time AP player of the year is used to having a lot of pressure put on her. "I think I live in the land of high expectations after playing at Connecticut," Moore said.

She is also the second straight UConn player to be taken with the first pick in the draft, and fourth overall. Tina Charles went to the Connecticut Sun last season and earned the league's rookie of the year award.

Camburg was drafted second by the Shock. The 6-foot-8 phenom made a splash internationally at the world championship, where the 19-year-old was Australia's leading scorer, averaging 13.6 points in that tournament.

She's one of the youngest players taken in the WNBA draft, only a few months younger than countrymate Lauren Jackson, who was just under 20 when she

was drafted in 2001 by Seattle.

"I don't really think it's an issue," Camburg said of her age. "I'll have a great lot of people looking after me in Tulsa. A lot of people think I'm in my 20s. I'm 19, a little baby, mature for my age."

Camburg made the long trek from Australia to Bristol, Conn., for the draft. She'll be counted on to turn around the Shock (6-28), who had the league's worst record last year.

"This is the coolest moment right now," she said.

Vandersloot, a point guard, helped lead the Zags to a berth in the regional final before they lost to Stanford. She is excited for a chance to play with Epiphany Prince and Sylvia Fowles in Chicago.

"It's a very good fit," Vandersloot said. "They needed a point guard and (coach Pokey) Chatman is going to be able to teach me everything I don't know already."

The Lynx (13-21) took Harris with the fourth selection. Minnesota had the rights to the first pick last season before trading it to Connecticut with Renee Montgomery for Lindsay Whalen. The Sun also traded their first round pick this year to

USD Vaulters Benefit From Olympian Miles' Help

BY JEREMY HOECK

jeremy.hoeck@yankton.net

Exactly why the University of South Dakota has suddenly become a pole vault haven is not really a secret.

That will happen when your vault coach, Derek Miles, is a two-time Olympian and ranked No. 1 in the nation.

As a result of Miles' hands-on work with the USD men's and women's vaulters, the Coyotes routinely dominate such events — just as they did at Saturday's double dual in Yankton with South Dakota State and North Dakota.

Though they are the ones actually sprinting down the runway and trying to contort themselves over the bars, the USD vaulters are quick to point out just how much influence Miles has on the team.

"We just trust him," said sophomore Megan Meyer, who finished second in Saturday's meet at Williams Field. "That's the best way I can say it."

"We never doubt anything he says to us or shows us what we need to fix."

Against a field of only two other schools, USD still displayed that same dominance. The Coyote women went 1-2-3-4 in the pole vault, while the USD men earned the top three finishes.

All the while, teammates were there cheering each other on, giving each other tidbits and talking with Miles about what they can correct.

"I enjoy the relationships we all have. It's the same with recruiting," Miles said. "We make those connections before they even commit to USD. That's a fun part of the whole process."

It's on the women's side where the evolution may be more pronounced. Sophomore Bethany Buell already boasts the school record and won Saturday's event with a jump of 13-1.5 — with even higher efforts within reach.

And she, like Meyer, is quick to credit Miles with helping her fine-tune the skills that brought her to USD over other Division I schools.

"It's great having him as a coach, he's really supportive and knows what he's doing," Buell said. "All those emotions that go into a jump, he understands because he's been there, on the biggest stage."

Eligible to qualify for the NCAA Division I Outdoor Championships for the first time this season, USD is nearing the end of its final year in the Great West Conference. Next season, the Coyotes join the Summit League.

With that added competition comes similar goals, according to Miles.

"Our goal is to go 1-2-3 in the Summit and qualify for nationals," he said matter-of-factly. "That's lofty, sure, but that's the way I am. We'll have enough talent to do that. This is a committed and motivated group."



JAMES D. CIMBUREK/P&D

South Dakota's Tane Owens clears the bar in the men's pole vault in a double-dual, hosted by USD Saturday in Yankton. Owens won the event with a jump of 15-5.

USD's top four women's vaulters are boast season's best well over 11 feet, with Buell (13-2.25, school record), Meyer (11-11.75), sophomore Betsey Whisonant (11-5.75) and senior Haley Peterson (11-5.75).

By comparison with the current Summit League rankings, Buell would be No. 1 ahead of North Dakota State's Leslie Brost (13-1.5).

Yet, Miles estimates that Buell — who is technically a freshman in the outdoor season after redshirting last spring — can go much higher.

"Bethany is on the verge of something big. I can guarantee you that," Miles said. "She's capable of 13-9 or 13-10. We're heading in the right direction with her."

Asked about Miles' goal for her to jump 13-9 or 13-10, Buell added, "And hopefully soon, too."

"It's been soon with me for a while," she said. "I'm always pushing for those heights. Hopefully within the next two weeks, I can get that high."

Buell is also preparing to make a run for the USA Outdoor Championships, which will be held June 22-28 in Eugene, Ore.

What makes USD even more dangerous for opposing vaulters in the future is the two high school recruits the Coyotes brought aboard.

Kaitlin Petrilose (McNeil, Texas) is currently the fourth-ranked high school girls' vaulter in the nation, with an outdoor season best of 13-1. Emily Grove (Pontiac, Ill.) was at one point No. 1 in the country for indoor with a best of 13-1.5, but hasn't jumped this spring.

Adding those two to an already-strong vaulting crew will make for some intense competition, according to Meyer.

"My first thought was, 'Uh oh, I better get to work,'" Meyer said. "They'll really keep practices competitive, so it'll be nice to have that spark. We'll see what happens."

Added Buell, "I'm excited to see what they bring. I'll like to have that

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Bucks Improve To 4-0 With Shutout

Mike Janish and Josh Teichroew combined on a three-hitter as the Yankton Bucks remained perfect with a 5-0 victory over Brookings in high school club baseball action Saturday at Riverside Field.

Janish allowed three hits in six scoreless innings and Teichroew pitched the seventh.

Trevor Bailey had two hits and a run, Devin Gullikson had an RBI double and Alex Mueller added a hit and two runs. Nik Davis and Cameron Schiltz each had one hit.

In the JV game, Yankton remained perfect with a 12-2 win over Brookings in five innings.

Andrew Hummel recorded three hits, two RBI and two runs scored, while Zach Benjamin scored three runs. Chris Kanaly added a hit and two runs, while Jordan Groves had a double and an RBI.

Alex Wagner pitched all five innings and had eight strikeouts.

The Bucks host Vermillion on Wednesday at 5 p.m.