

Yankees defeat Twins

From B1

The 39-year-old Mussina retired 14 of the first 17 batters and, for the third straight start, didn't walk a batter. He has given up just five runs in his past five starts and now has 263 career wins.

It's quite a turnaround from last season, when he was 11-10 with a career-high 5.15 ERA. He was overshadowed by the young prospects, Phil Hughes and Ian Kennedy during spring training.

But while they went a combined 0-7 for the Yankees before going down with injuries, Mussina has emerged as the team's most consistent pitcher.

"You could really make a good case, without Moose I don't know where we would be," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said.

LaTroy Hawkins gave up three hits, including Mike Lamb's RBI single in the ninth, before giving way to Mariano Rivera. The closer struck out pinch-hitter Jason Kubel with runners on second and third for his 25th save.

The 10-game winning streak at home is the Yankees' longest since Sept. 9, 1998, to April 14, 1999. The last time New York won 10 in a row at Yankee Stadium in a single season was July 26-Aug. 14, 1998.

"We did a real nice job during this homestand," Girardi said. "It's been a real nice stretch for us."

A big part of New York's recent success is the re-emergence of Robinson Cano, who went 2-for-4 and was in the middle of yet another Yankees scoring opportunity.

Hitting .560 since working on his swing with his father in the Dominican Republic during the All-Star break, Cano singled in the fifth and scored on Christian's two-run double down the left-field line to give New York a 2-0 lead.

Christian got a turn to bat in the inning because Twins second baseman Alexi Casilla lost track of the outs, and instead of trying to turn two with the slow-footed Jose Molina running to first he just got the force.

"Lexi made a mistake but that just cannot happen," Gardenhire said. "That's as routine a double play as can happen. You just throw the ball. Who was running?"

Glen Perkins (7-3) was coming off throwing six shutout innings against the powerful Texas Rangers and had won five straight decisions. He last loss on May 30, against the Yankees.

Perkins, who is considered one of the main reasons why Francisco Liriano's agent has asked

the union to investigate why his client has not been called up despite dominating Triple-A hitters for the past six weeks, gave up a season-high five runs on eight hits and a walk.

He gave up a double off the left-center wall to Rodriguez in the sixth that scored Derek Jeter and Bobby Abreu, who ran through third base coach Bobby Meacham's stop sign, and slid in just ahead of the relay that catcher Mike Redmond could not handle.

Rodriguez advanced on the throw and Sexson followed with his sacrifice fly to make it 5-0.

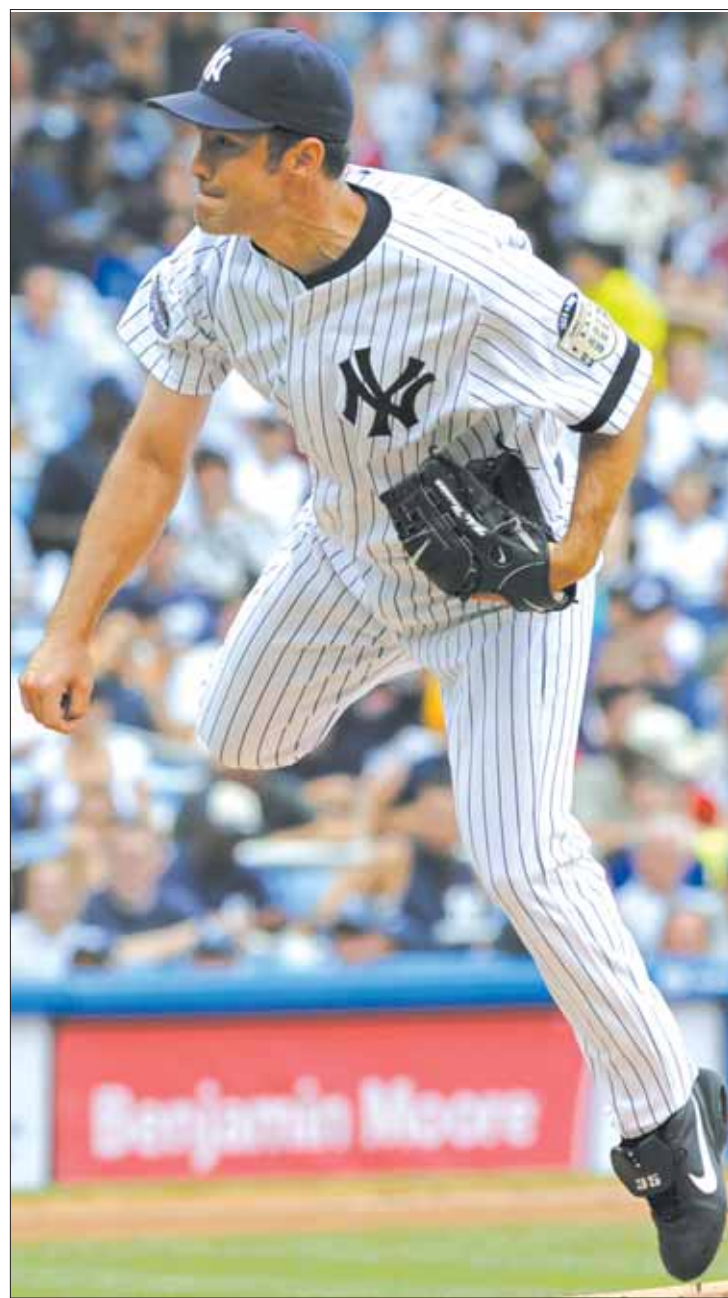
It was his defense that earned Sexson the most praise. He made several tough plays.

"Obviously when you're 6-foot-12, you're going to get a lot of balls," Mussina said.

But Sexson returned the compliment, saying Mussina's pinpoint control is the reason he played so well.

"It makes it easy to play defense when you see the catcher set up and he's hitting his spots," Sexson said.

Notes: There are 26 home games remaining at Yankee Stadium. The Twins are 3-19 in the Bronx since the start of the 2002 season. ... Twins All-Star C Joe Mauer was given the day off. ... The Twins have been swept five times this season.



AP photo
New York Yankees starter Mike Mussina delivers a pitch during Wednesday afternoon's game against the Minnesota Twins at Yankee Stadium. Mussina picked up his 13th win of the season and the Yankees won their 10th straight at home. New York won, 5-1

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Kinlock tourney field set

NORWALK — The David Kinlock Memorial tournament will pit five teams from youth leagues around the city in competition scheduled to begin Aug. 1 at Vets Park.

The tournament — which began in 1975 — will be played in its entirety at the new Norwalk Little League fields at Vets Park.

YOUTH BASEBALL
There will be two games per night and all games will begin at 6 p.m.

Games will be played on Fridays, Sundays and Wednesdays through the tourney's conclusion on Aug. 22. Rainouts will be made up on the next available date.

The field will include Cranbury West, Cranbury East, Spinola, Ben Whone and Ripken teams.

While there is no Kinlock championship trophy, the victors get bragging rights for the next year.

The Aug. 1 openers will pit Cranbury East against Spinola and Cranbury West against Ripken.

Two days later, Spinola will face off against Ripken while Ben Whone makes its tourney debut against Cranbury East.

Twinbills will also be played on Aug. 6, 8, 10, 13, 15, 17, 20 and 22.

The Tom Corbo tournament for teams of 10-year-olds will begin Aug. 2 and continue through Aug. 23. Doubleheaders will also be played, also beginning at 6 p.m., and also on the diamonds at Vets Park.

In the Aug. 2 opening twinbill, Cranbury East will play International Blue and Cranbury West will take on Ripken.

On Aug. 4, International Blue and Ripken will square off while International Red debuts against Cranbury East.

Corbo contests are set for Saturdays, Mondays and Thursdays.

Norwalk Sr. BR wins

From B1

the conditions. It rained on and off during the game and sometimes it came down pretty good, but they never had to stop playing.

"It's an all-turf field, but the bases were dirt and it was all muddy. It was hard to get good leads and steal. We had three guys thrown out trying to steal, which is unusual for us. We might get one thrown out, but not three."

Norwalk came out of the gate fast with three runs in the top of the first on three walks, a two-run single by O'Brien and Barbarula's RBI double off the fence.

Vermont got one run back in the last of the first, but Norwalk came right back with five runs in the second. Jacoby accounted for the first two with his home run following a walk, while RBI singles by O'Brien, Barbarula and Andrew Hines made the score 8-1.

Barre scored another run in its half of the second, but Andino shut the Vermont state champs down the rest of the way.

Norwalk tallied its final two runs in the top of the sixth, one on Corey DelBene's sac fly.

"It was definitely a good game and a good way to start the tournament," Ron DelBene summed up.

Petrides, who accounted for Norwalk's other two wins in the state tournament, is scheduled to start on the mound today.

Posada puts off surgery, opts to rehab shoulder

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Yankees catcher Jorge Posada wants to put off surgery on his right shoulder even if it means sacrificing the start of next season. If he does play the rest of this year, it won't be behind the plate.

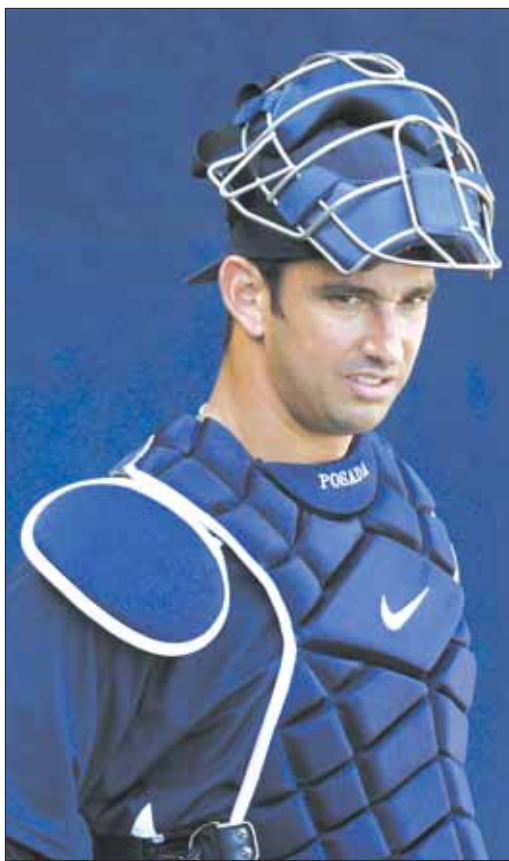
On the disabled list for the second time this season, Posada had his throwing shoulder examined by New York Mets medical director Dr. David Altchek on Tuesday, and surgery was again recommended. An MRI showed fraying in the tendons around the labrum, but not a rotator cuff tear; Posada said Wednesday before the Yankees played the Minnesota Twins.

He missed more than a month earlier this season with right rotator cuff tendinitis.

"I've got 15 days to make a decision," said Posada, who went on the DL Monday. "I'll rehab it and see how it feels and have a decision by then."

In his 14th season, Posada is extremely proud about being a full-time catcher his entire career. But he said that if he is to continue

New York Yankees catcher Jorge Posada gets ready for a bullpen session during spring training. On the disabled list for the second time this season, Posada had his throwing shoulder examined by New York Mets medical director Dr. David Altchek Tuesday, and surgery was again recommended. Posada, however, has decided to put off surgery in favor of a rehab.



AP photo

playing this season, catching is "out of the question" for the remainder of the year.

"It's not about me. It's about the team now, how can I help the team. That's why

I'm going to go through the rehab," Posada said. "If I'm able to hit, I'm going to try to do that. If I'm not able to hit, I'm going to have surgery."

Posada said the Yankees

agreed with his decision to keep playing even with the possibility of a six-month rehab looming after surgery.

Hitting .268 with three homers and 22 RBIs in 168 at-bats this season, Posada said the shoulder doesn't hurt when he's swinging a bat but has gotten weaker because of his throwing.

Posada will continue his rehabilitation regime without throwing drills and will make a decision based on how the shoulder is responding.

"The doctor said if I'm not throwing, it won't get weak because I'm not throwing," Posada said. "I can strengthen it and hit. Then it won't get weak. They put me on the DL to make a decision of what to do and strengthen and rehab it and go from there."

Manager Joe Girardi said there's a "risk/reward" with whatever decision is made.

"Obviously you look at a player long-term," Girardi said. "But there's ways you also could help a club and there's decisions that all parties will discuss, and

then we'll decide what's best."

Posada could play first base or serve as the designated hitter, two spots at which the Yankees are overloaded with Jason Giambi, newly acquired slugger Richie Sexson, Johnny Damon and the injured Hideki Matsui.

"There are a lot of different things we could do," Girardi said. "There are situations, maybe against a lefty. He might play first or Richie might play first and he might DH. There's a lot of different things you could do."

Whether Matsui needs season-ending surgery on his knee could be a factor in the team's decision. Matsui has been on the DL since June 23 and has been resisting surgery. Girardi said Matsui will resume baseball activities Monday and the Yankees will see how the knee reacts to the stress.

Matsui's and Posada's progress will go a long way toward helping the Yankees decide if they need to be aggressive as the non-waiver trade deadline approaches on July 31.

'Team' is key concept for defending Super Bowl champs

From B1

game, was a good physical blocker, and a guy when he caught the ball and had it in his hands could make things happen."

However, Shockey was also a distraction that neither Coughlin nor team executives would tolerate. Hence, their willingness to accept second- and fifth-round draft picks from the Saints as compensation, saying it was in the best interests of the team and Shockey, 27, a former first-round draft pick.

Shockey didn't just com-

plain. He accused the team of leaking information to the media. While nursing a badly sprained ankle, he refused to even make a token appearance on the field during a veteran minicamp in June and then got into a shouting match with general manager Jerry Reese.

It all resulted in the trade just days before the opening of camp. It was a deal that surprised teammates and even tight ends coach Mike Pope, who learned of it while flying into Newark Liberty International Airport.

Pope said he believes that

in some cases a player can be in one place too long.

"I think the circumstances that happened with the injury and the things that went on in his mind — having to sit and watch the Super Bowl and watch the team continue to succeed — I don't think his worth in his own mind diminished, but I think he realized, as this organization realized, the fans and all you folks realized, that organizations and teams can keep moving when individuals aren't there," Pope said.

Pope said he spoke to Shockey several times but

was unable to get him to reconcile with the team.

Pope said it will be hard to replace the contributions Shockey made to the running game, but he hopes that second-year pro Kevin Boss, who has gained 20 pounds in the offseason, will step up this season.

The goal for the Giants will be to avoid the problems that have plagued recent Super Bowl winners. New York has failed to get back to the playoffs in the three seasons after they appeared in the title game.

Coughlin plans to discuss that in his first meeting

with the players, while reminding them that hard work got them a title last season.

"No one ever gave us or anybody else anything and we don't expect it," he said. "We are not asking for anything."

Pope remembers the challenges from the previous years-after.

"We will be challenged like most of these players can't even imagine," Pope said. "It is going to be undeniably the hardest year in their short careers and they are going to find that out very quickly."

Harding races to easy victory in Westport summer series

WESTPORT — Tom Harding of Westport won his first race of this summer's Road Runners program when he bested a field of 142 runners in a 4.07-mile run starting at Compo Beach.

The 42-year-old covered the course in 22:18, finishing more than a minute-and-a-half ahead of runner-up Doug Scarth of Redding.

Although an excellent effort under the prevailing weather conditions, Harding's time was well off

the course record of 20:35 set by Roy Mascolino of Westport in 1983.

Scarth was second in 23:51, ahead of Tom Parise of Atlanta (24:46), Paul Greenberg of Westport (25:09) and Christopher Ryan of Armonk, N.Y. (25:23).

Kristin Simonsen of Norwalk was the first woman to finish, placing 10th overall in 26:19. She was followed by Emily Williams of Norwalk (11th overall, 26:36) and Joy

ROAD RUNNERS

Palmer of Weston (28th, 29:54).

Other area residents in the top 10 included David Allen of Westport (sixth, 25:27) and Roger Baxley of Weston (ninth, 26:18).

Age group winners among the men were Parise (junior), Jason Domena (open), Allen (sub-masters), Harding (masters), Scarth

(grand masters), Lee McMaster (veterans) and Jim Stevens (grand veterans).

Age group winners among the women were Judy Feng (juniors), Williams (open), Simonsen (submasters), Joan Nevin (masters), Palmer (grand masters) and Kay Anderson (veterans).

The next event in the series is a 4.7-mile run starting at 8 a.m. Saturday at Longshore Club Park. The

course record is 23:26 set by Dave Peterson of Fairfield in 1983. The women's record of 28:05 was set by Mary Dolan-Zengo of Wilton in 1998.

Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. at the wood pavilion near the volleyball courts at Longshore.

The fee for the series is \$30 for Westport residents and \$50 for others. Runners can also pay a per-race fee of \$5 for residents and \$8 for others.