Three things we learned from Kansas City Royals' frustrating series vs. Astros

BY JAYLON THOMPSON jathompson@kcstar.com

HOUSTON

The Kansas City Royals have a clear winning for-

Much is predicated on their starting rotation, which remains near-flawless this season, and their stagnant offense being able to scratch across a few runs. The formula has worked for most of the 2025 campaign.

For a while, it was on full display against the Houston Astros at Daikin Park. However, the Royals couldn't put away the Astros in the late innings on consecutive nights.

On Wednesday, the Royals (25-20) fell 4-3 in the series finale.

Royals starters Michael Wacha, Kris Bubic and Michael Lorenzen were sharp in their outings.

The trio allowed seven earned runs in 20 innings. Bubic continued to make a case for an All-Star nomination in Tuesday's pitcher duel with Astros star Framber Valdez. This season, Bubic ranks fifth in the majors with a 1.66 ERA.

"We are playing good ball," Lorenzen said. "You know, our pitching is doing great and we are playing good defense. Every game is like a war and we are getting battle tested for sure. So we will take that."

Offensively, the Royals scored in spurts. KC logged seven runs in Monday's game but was shut out after the third inning. Valdez limited KC to one run — a Freddy Fermin RBI single — and the club scored three times against Astros rookie Colton Gor-

The consecutive losses sting. The Royals now sit 4 1/2 games behind the Detroit Tigers in the

American League Central. "They are tough losses," Royals manager Matt Quatraro said. "I mean, we

ROYALS

always been something

Zumwalt said. "For me,

a high school hitter and

watching Chipper Jones as

trying to figure things out

with a heavy front side, it

was something I instituted

as a high school hitter. It's

one of those things that is

about rhythm and timing."

standing. He learned that

quires a rhythm that pre-

through the strike zone.

throughout the batting

create space and recog-

mic," Zumwalt said. "I

like to think of the met-

good ones have that met-

ronome cadence to their

Zumwalt was named

2022. In his tenure, he has

helped players find their

timing at the plate. Zum-

walt played an instru-

mental role in Garcia

Royals hitting coach in

ronome in music. The

toe tap."

nize a pitch better.

There must be synergy

stance. Jones detailed that

a toe tap allows a hitter to

"It's usually very rhyth-

to get a deeper under-

a successful toe tap re-

vents over-striding

Zumwalt talked to Jones

that I'm interested in,

"I think the toe tap has

FROM PAGE 1B

come in and have a game and get off to a good start. Then these last two are one-run games. We play a lot of close games and we have to figure out how to be one run better."

ROYALS AT ASTROS: WEDNESDAY RECAP

The Royals took advantage of Gordon making his first MLB start. A few timely hits gave Lorenzen an early cushion on the scoreboard.

Maikel Garcia powered the offense on Wednesday. He hit a solo home run in the second inning and added an RBI double that bounced off the secondbase bag.

This season, Garcia ranks second on KC in home runs and fourth in RBIs. He made an adjustment this offseason by incorporating a toe tap in his batting stance. Now, he is able to remain balanced and better connect with incoming pitches.

"The last couple of games, they have thrown me a lot of breaking balls when they are behind in the count," Garcia said. "So I was just waiting for it and I hit a homer."

Garcia drilled a 79.1 mph slider into the Crawford Boxes. The homer traveled 405 feet and fueled the Royals in short

Lorenzen took over from there. He limited the Astros to four runs in 71/3innings. Astros third baseman Isaac Parades hit a solo homer to account for the lone early damage.

"The process was good and I attacked the whole time," Lorenzen said. "You can't be afraid to give up a game. So we went out there and attacked. You're afraid to get punched in the face, you are never going to accomplish anything."

Parades belted two homers in the series. He was responsible for the Astros' walk-off victory Tuesday

This time, things fell apart in the eighth inning.

"I just kept going out there and attacking," Lorenzen said. "I think the game of baseball kind of beat us today with those staying fair there. Two in row and that happens. We were right there the whole time. We played a great game and it just didn't go our way."

Houston (22-20) scored twice to take a 4-3 lead. Mauricio Dubon hit an RBI double to tie the game. Next, Jeremy Pena added the go-ahead single to put the Astros in front.

Astros closer Josh Hader closed the door and picked up the save.

Here are three takeaways from the series...

JONATHAN INDIA THRIVES IN **LEADOFF SPOT**

It took a minute for Jonathan India to find his footing with the Royals. He posted a .216 batting average in April and dealt with a few hurdles.

India was hit in the helmet by an errant fastball against the Cleveland Guardians. Later, he dealt with a right quad tightness.

In recent games, the Royals have seen better production. India entered Wednesday's action hitting .306 (15-for-49) with an .810 OPS in his last 12 games.

India went 3-for-5 with two RBIs in Monday's game. He added an RBI single in the series finale.

'The last couple of weeks he has really started to put good at-bats together," Quatraro said. "We have seen he's already compiled a bunch of walks. Now, he is getting some hits in big spots.'

BOBBY WITT JR. DAZZLES IN SERIES

It's wise to not blink when Bobby Witt Jr. is at the plate. There is a chance he could do something extraordinary with each swing.



Kansas City Royals catcher Salvador Perez (13) reacts to striking out against the Houston Astros to end the first inning at Daikin Park on May 14, 2025.

In the series, Witt hit two triples. He showcased his dynamic speed on Monday by racing hometo-third in 11.07 seconds. It was the third-fastest time of that distance in the majors this season.

And Witt flashed the leather defensively.

Witt has a knack for making difficult plays look routine. He helped turn some key double plays that got the Royals out of potential jams.

"That's a special player, man," Royals second baseman Michael Massey said Monday. "You know, obviously sometimes we take it for granted while watching it. That's just amazing. He is a great player, great

teammate and we're lucky to have him."

LUCAS ERCEG CONTINUES SCORELESS STREAK

The Royals have relied on Lucas Erceg a lot this season. He has answered the call with 11 2/3 scoreless innings in his last 11 appearances.

During that stretch, Erceg has allowed five hits and registered nine strikeouts. On Tuesday, Erceg recorded five outs for the first time all season.

Quatraro likes to use Erceg in a fireman role. He has extinguished a few problematic flames and leads the majors with 13 holds.

Erceg has not allowed a run since April 18 against the Detroit Tigers. He currently sports a 0.47 ERA in 20 appearances.

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IN THE DISTRICT COURT

OF JOHNSON COUNTY, KANSAS Child In Need Of Care Proceedings Under Chapter 38 of K.S.A.

In the Interest of MARIE FAY COKER Date of Birth 10/05/23

Case No.23JC00363

NOTICE OF HEARING TO: Deanna Coker, mother, all unknown grandparents of the above Respondent, Marie Fay Coker, and all other persons who are or

You are hereby notified that a Petition has been filed in the above named Court by Donald W. Hymer, Jr., Assistant District Attorney, alleging that said child is a Child in Need of Care as defined by K.S.A. 38-2202, alleging that natural parent is unfit by reason of conduct or condition which renders the parent unable to care properly for a child and the conduct or condition is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future; and requesting the Court to permanently deprive their parental rights in and to said child, and to further place said child for adoption pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2269 or, in the alternative, appoint a permanent custodian for said child.

The mother is Deanna Coker. The father is Johnny Dewayne Coker. The hearing

will determine why said parents should be permanently deprived of their parental rights and the right to permanent custody; and that the care, custody and guardianship of the person and estate of said child be committed to the Kansas Secretary of the Department for Children and Families. Or, in the alternative, the hearing will determine why said parents should be rendered unfit; and that the care, and custody of the person and estate of said child be committed to the Kansas Secretary of the Department for Children and Families, with the appointment of a permanent custodian.

You are required to appear before this Court via Zoom at 3:00 o'clock p.m. on the 9th day of June, 2025, in the Juvenile Section of the District Court of Johnson County, Kansas, City of Olathe, Division 10 or prior to that time file your written response to the pleading with the Clerk of the Court. If, after a child has been adjudged to a Child In Need of Care, the Court finds a parent or parents to be unfit, the court may be petitioned to make an Order permanently terminating the parent's or parents' parental rights.

Michelle Anne Decicco, an attorney, has been appointed as Guardian Ad Litem for said child. Each parent or other legal custodian of the child has the right to appear and be heard personally either with or without an attorney. Ryan Kaiser, an attorney, has been appointed as attorney to represent the natural mother of the minor child. Donald S. Smith, an attorney, has been appointed as attorney to represent the natural father of the minor child. Each parent has the right to apwho is financially unable to hire one

Clerk of the District Court IPL0233035

May 16,23 2025

Notice of Proposed Telecommunications Tower: Public Participation Harmoni Towers, LLC is proposing

to construct a new monopole style telecommunications tower approxi-mately 0.06 miles south-southwest of Bannister Road and Blue Ridge Blvd. also known as 9510 Blue Ridge Bou levard, Kansas City, MO 64134, 38° 57 6.3" N, -94° 30' 31.3" W. The height of the tower will be 38.1 meters above ground level (311.5' above mean sea level) and 41.1 meters above ground level including appurtenances (352.6 feet above mean seal level with appur-tenances). The tower will not require FAA lighting. Specific information regarding the project is available by calling T-Squared Site Services at 724-308-7855 during normal business hours. Interested persons may review the application for this project at www.fcc.gov/asr/applications by entering Antenna Registration (Form 854) file no. A1312230 and may raise environmental concerns about the project under the National Environ-mental Policy Act rules of the Federa Communications Commission, 47 CFR 1.1307, by notifying the FCC of the specific reasons that the action may have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Request for Environmental Review must be filed within 30 days of the date that notice of the project is published on the FCC's website and may only raise environmental concerns. The FCC strongly encourages interested par ties to file Request for Environmental Review online at www.fcc.gov/asr/ environmental-request. If the filer is unable to submit electronically, or i filing electronically would be unrea sonably burdensome, the reques may be submitted by mail to FCC Request for Environmental Review, Attn. Ramon Williams, 445 12th Street SW Washington, DC 20554 with a request for waiver under 47 CFR § 1.1304(b) A copy of the Request should be pro-

IPL0232272 May 9,16 2025 **ADVERTISMENT FOR BID**

vided to T-Squared Site Services, Attn

Todd Marimpietri at 2501 Shenango

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Bids for Construction Services -Telecom & Data Wiring, Project Nos. IDIQMCA-5004. IDIQMCA-5005. and IDIQMCA-5004, IDIQMCA-5005, and IDIQMCA-5006, will be received by FMDC, State of MO, **UNTIL 1:30** PM, June 10, 2025, via MissouriBUYS. Bidders must be registered to bid. Project information available at: http://oa.mo.gov/facilities IPL0231641

May 12-16,18-22 2025

ITB Bid #117

MARC/KCRPC is seeking bids for temporary RN/LPN staffing agency on behalf of area agencies. Bids due by 1PM 6/6/25. Visit www.demandstar. com or www.marc.org for documents or contact rita.parker@kcrpc.com. IPL0233188

INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids will be received by Kansas City Parks and Recreation Dept. at 4600 E. 63rd Street, Kansas City, 64130 until 2:00pm on May 28, 2025, when publicly opened and read. All Bids must comply with the Bidding Requirements of Kansas City, MO. Bids shall be submitted as sealed bids, be addressed to Director of Parks and Recreation, state on out-Project title and number, and be deposited in the locked Bid box

The proposed work includes: seaments with new concrete trail, for segments of the Indian Creek Trail located between State Line Road and

Plans and specifications are available at the Kansas City, Missouri Plan Room, http://www.kcmoplanroom.org. IPL0230742 May 1-2,4-9,11-16,18-23,25-28 2025

ITB Bid #116

MARC/KCRPC is seeking bids for petroleum products on behalf of area agencies. Bids due 1PM 6/6/25. Visit www.demandstar.com or www.marc org for documents or contact rita. parker@kcrpc.com. IPL0233183 May 16 2025

Public Notice of Name Change Brandi Plummer change of name to Brandi Sangster of Greenwood MO. IPL0233439 May 16,23,30 2025

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THE KANSAS CITY STAR.

tap was designed to help Garcia control his gather

adding the toe tap this offseason. He suggested to Garcia to bring back the toe tap. After watching film, Zumwalt felt that Garcia was crashing into the plate. The re-addition of the toe

and generate more contact

balance. "He feels himself getting back in a really strong position early," Zumwalt said of Garcia. "That's allowing him to slow the pitch down and create more space between his

eves and the baseball." Garcia has an instrumental role in the Royals lineup. He offers production in the middle of the order behind Bobby Witt Ir. Vinnie Pasquantino and

Salvador Perez. "This is the most consistent he's been, obviously, in his big league career, Zumwalt said. "I saw stretches of him like this in the minor leagues. ... Seeing him do it at this level and be consistent with it — his work and seeing him smile — he is having fun."

TIC-TAC-TOE

While Garcia has seen the biggest growth with the toe tap, the Royals also have other players utiliz-

ing it from time to time. Infielder Jonathan India switched to the toe tap in recent weeks. He doesn't have a set batting routine but felt the toe tap could help him regain his tim-

"I just needed to be athletic," India said. "In the spring, it was working and I was hitting everything hard. Being here I was just being stiff. My foot didn't have any swag and the rhythm was lost.'

India entered Wednesday hitting .317 (19for-60) in his last 15 games. In that span, he

added seven RBIs and registered seven walks. On May 4, India hit his first home run of the season against the Baltimore

Orioles. He attributed the toe tap adjustment as a reason

for his quick turnaround. "It creates timing and rhythm for me," India said. "I have timing and I can see the ball better. I never have a set stance. I'm a player that plays the game. Whatever it is it is. I'm going to enjoy it, have

fun and play hard." Both Pasquantino and Perez have used the toe tap as well. Michael Massey experimented with it for a while.

"Everyone has to find their own ways to time the pitcher and be able to adjust," Zumwalt said. "No two guys do it exactly the same, but all of the good ones get into a simi-

lar position at toe touch." Zumwalt also believes repetition is needed to perfect the move. He continues to work with Royals assistant hitting coaches Keoni DeRenne and Joe Dillon to help players find

ways to be successful. The toe tap is one discipline that has worked.

"It looks simple, but it's really hard," Zumwalt said. "I think that's why you don't see a lot of people do it. Just seems like we have a lot on this roster that are doing it right

Jaylon Thompson: @jaylonthompson