



THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Minnesota Twins' Torii Hunter, left, celebrates with Michael Cuddyer after they won 8-2 against Chicago White Sox Monday in Chicago to clinch the AL Central division title.

■ TWINS

Continued from page 11

two strikes, you're not going to do that," Guerrero said. "I feel good. I only feel sore where the ball hit me."

In other AL games, it was: Toronto 6, New York 3; Baltimore 9, Boston 6; Detroit 3, Cleveland 1; and Kansas City 6, Tampa Bay 3.

Even though Guerrero appears to be fine, it might have been a costly win for the Angels. They also lost second baseman Adam Kennedy to a sprained right knee, and outfielder Jose Guillen came out in the eighth because of a strained right hip flexor. Kennedy was to have an MRI on Tuesday.

John Lackey (13-12) gave up two runs in six innings, and Troy Percival earned his 29th save in 34 chances. Dallas McPherson had three hits and an RBI in his first

major league start for Anaheim.

"Great performance," manager Mike Scioscia said. "For a kid to come into a pennant race and get his first start and swing the bat the way he did gave us a big lift. You can see the talent is there."

After Guerrero went down, Scioscia was ejected after yelling and pointing at Franklin (4-16). Seattle's bench emptied, but no punches were thrown.

Mariners star Ichiro Suzuki went 2-for-4 with a walk. His two singles gave him 238 hits this season, 19 short of George Sisler's major league record set in 1920. Seattle has 12 games remaining.

At Chicago, Hunter and Corey Koskie each hit a two-run homer off Mark Buehrle (14-10) in the first inning. Henry Blanco and Luis Rivas also connected for the Twins,

and Carlos Silva (13-8) allowed two runs in seven innings to win his third straight start.

Minnesota is the second team to clinch its division this year, joining NL Central champ St. Louis. The Twins had to wait for someone else to lose to secure their last two titles; this time they won on the field.

"They're all great," Gardenhire said. "It means everything in the world."

The White Sox didn't bother sticking around for the festivities. As if watching Minnesota celebrate in their own park wasn't bad enough, the loss officially eliminated them from the playoffs.

Chicago has lost seven games in a row to the Twins.

"I will admit it stinks watching it," Paul Konerko said.

■ KICKERS

Continued from page 11

Before last week's game, Holtz said he was a "basket case" worrying about the kicking game but noted this week that other teams in the SEC have struggled as well, including LSU, Auburn, Tennessee and Vanderbilt.

"Other people have noticed (other teams doing poorly), but not our fans," Holtz said. "I wish (the NCAA) would go back a few years and make the PAT's automatic."

As for other aspects of the special teams unit, receiver Noah Whiteside returned for last week's game after serving a one-game suspension for violating team rules. Whiteside had four punt returns for 42 yards. Holtz was somewhat disappointed in two of Whiteside's decisions to field punts inside the 10-yard line but is pleased overall with how the punt-return

game is progressing.

"If you average 14 yards per return, you're among the top-10 in the country," Holtz said. "I think right now we're at (12.3 yards), so we're almost there."

"Last week, I made a bad mistake, letting the team down," Whiteside said. "I just felt like I had to step up and make a point."

◆ NOTES

Defensive tackle Darrell Shropshire dislocated a right finger Saturday, which required stitches. He is questionable for practice but might play against Troy.

Tailback Demetris Summers is limited and not expected to play this week because of a high ankle sprain.

Holtz was upset with his offensive line after Monday's practice, citing a lack of sharpness and a need to improve fundamentally.

Comments on this story? E-mail [gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu)

There's more to USC than the Big 3

■ Lesser-known sports deserve the same love as Holtz and company

Pop quiz: Which mainstream NCAA sport does Carolina not participate in?

If you can't answer with "gymnastics," then this column is for you.

ESPN GameDay brought the football team the greatest amount of publicity imaginable. The basketball team enjoys front-page coverage and

the unity of an arena-wide "Blackout." The baseball team is portrayed year in and year out on national television as a member of the College World Series. What Gamecock fans don't know, however, is that there are also 15 other competitive teams that would also enjoy widespread support from the most loyal fans in the country.

Walking around on a random day, students can't help but notice the women's soccer players self-promoting their games with banners, trying to get more than 1,000 fans to attend their games. In contrast, one glimpse of Josh Gonner and a Feb. 15 men's basketball ESPN date against Kentucky comes to mind. The volleyball team, as well as other teams, must depend on special promotions to steal an extra spectator or two. Case in point: Players asked fans to wear their favorite Gamecock gear to get in free against Michigan State last Saturday. Gamecock athletics should not have to beg and give away presents to be noticed, let alone supported.

If we want to win the Sears Cup, given annually to the top sports programs in the nation based on results, we must recruit the top players. If we want to recruit the top players, we have to show them that Carolina is the best place to play. If we want to promote Carolina, we have to fill the seats. The No. 1 prospect in the nation wants to play in front of 1,000 USC Trojans fans, not 500 USC Gamecock fans. If you love Carolina, you owe it to her to attend at least one game per sport.

How many Gamecock fans know we had Danielle Wiggins, ranked as high as No. 25 in the nation, in women's tennis? Don't forget our best freshman last year on a team sport — no, not Renaldo Balkman, but Lynae Vanden Hull, SEC Freshman of the Year in volleyball. Local product Lauren Simms received some basketball respect also on the SEC All-Freshman team. Outside of the Big Three, softball, men's and women's tennis, men's and women's track, golf, and both swimming and diving teams received national rankings last year. But of course, we already knew that, didn't we?

Bottom line — there are more than three sports at USC. Moreover, there are more than just men's sports. Our athletes deserve to be supported by more than family, friends and Gamecock Jesus. It's time we live up to the hype and show why Carolina fans are the most respected in the country.

Don't forget to check out The Gamecock's full-color football recap every Monday on the back page.



Interested in taking The Gamecock Challenge?

If you can beat the editors, you'll win a free Gamecock T-shirt. Send your picks to [gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:gamecocksports@gwm.sc.edu) by 2 p.m. Thursday. We'll select ONE person's picks, at random, to be our Reader of the Week.

This week's games:

Clemson at 8 FSU  
Syracuse at 12 Virginia  
Air Force at 14 Utah  
Kentucky at 16 Florida  
Iowa at 18 Michigan

Penn State at 20 Wisconsin  
Vanderbilt at Navy  
Alabama at Arkansas  
NC State at Virginia Tech  
Troy at USC

◆ FOR TIE-BREAKING PURPOSES, PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR SCORE FOR THE USC-TROY GAME. AND DON'T FORGET YOUR NAME!

Look for a special section from *The Gamecock* this Friday highlighting USC's Parents Weekend

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