

Brewers' Murphy doesn't think team has played great

BY STEVE MEGARGEЕ
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MILWAUKEE — Pat Murphy doesn't sound like the manager of a team with the best record in the major leagues as he discusses what the Milwaukee Brewers have accomplished thus far.

"I don't think we've played great," the two-time reigning NL manager of the year said Wednesday, one day after the Brewers beat the Seattle Mariners 22-0 to match the most lopsided shutout win in modern MLB history. "We haven't really jelled. We haven't really come together."

The Brewers' results tell a different story.

Milwaukee appears well on its way to earning its eighth playoff berth in the last nine seasons as it chases a fourth consecutive NL Central title. The Brewers' blowout of Seattle came after they won three of four at Los Angeles against the two-time defending World Series champion Dodgers, who swept Milwaukee out of the NL Championship Series last year.

"There's so much that I see that needs to improve, yet you look up and everybody's saying, 'Wow, I love the way you play,' " Murphy said. "And I look funny and I look behind me, and I see if they're talking to someone else. Really? Maybe I'm too critical. Maybe I'm missing something. I



AARON GASH/Associated Press

Milwaukee Brewers manager Pat Murphy looks on during the third inning of a baseball game against the Minnesota Twins, Saturday, Aug. 8, in Milwaukee.

don't know. I do trust the team."

They've been rewarding that trust.

SURVIVING A 17-DAY GRIND

The Brewers just completed a 17-day run that included no days off, one complete West Coast trip and part of another. They went 10-7 during that stretch and won the Dodgers series after getting swept in San Diego.

"I think it says we're a good baseball team," first baseman Jake Bauers said. "I think in tough times it can be easy to lose sight of that, but we have the right people around to bounce back when things get tough, and we have the right people around to continue to play winning baseball."

Milwaukee has needed to stay hot to remain ahead of the Chicago Cubs, who fell five games behind Milwaukee in the NL Central standings after losing 3-0 to the Chicago White Sox on Wednesday afternoon. The Brewers and Cubs face off in a four-game series Aug. 31-Sept. 3 at Wrigley Field before meeting again for three games in Milwaukee from Sept. 7-9.

During that grueling 17-day run, the Brewers encountered some criticism for their inability to acquire two-time AL Cy Young Award winner Tarik Skubal. The Brewers made a strong push to land Skubal, only to see the Detroit Tigers send him to the Dodgers instead.

Having NL Cy Young Award front-runner Jacob

Misiorowski and Skubal fronting a starting rotation in a playoff series would have given the Brewers perhaps their best shot at making the postseason breakthrough that has eluded them during the franchise's longest run of sustained success. The Brewers haven't reached a World Series since 1982 and have never won it all.

CONTINUING TO WIN WITHOUT ADDING SKUBAL

Logan Henderson, an outstanding rookie pitcher the Brewers chose to keep rather than including in a trade last month, outdueled Skubal in Sunday's series finale at Los Angeles. The 6-2 victory improved Henderson's record to 7-2 with a 2.70 ERA.

The Brewers pivoted after the Skubal trade by acquiring former St. Louis Cardinals right-hander Dustin May, who is seeking to become the latest in a growing list of starting pitchers to improve after joining the Brewers. Left-hander Kyle Harrison, who also is thriving in his first year in Milwaukee, attributes that trend to Milwaukee's pitching coaching staff of Chris Hook, Jim Henderson and Juan Sandoval.

"They're so good at just knowing who you are as an individual and knowing what you need," Harrison said. "Shoot, yeah, they've been

doing it for a while now, too, so it's pretty cool to have those guys you can trust and rely on."

The Brewers believe they have the makings of a quality playoff rotation with Misiorowski, Henderson, Harrison and May. Milwaukee has withstood injuries that knocked two-time All-Star Brandon Woodruff out for the season and prevented Quinn Priester from pitching at all this year.

Milwaukee's lineup has produced the fewest homers in the big leagues, yet the Brewers remain among the top five teams in scoring. Bauers' breakthrough season has helped the Brewers overcome down years from 2018 NL MVP Christian Yelich and three-time All-Star William Contreras.

Without naming names, Murphy said: "I watch some of our leaders that might not be getting the results, but the way they handle everybody else is pretty impressive." Murphy added that might be one of the keys to this team's success.

Another is simply the ability to continue competing even when things aren't going as smoothly, as they did on Tuesday.

"Maybe that's the secret," Murphy said. "Maybe this team still plays well enough to be close when they're not at their best."

BRIEFS

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also feels the effects of the black hole's rotation. Studying how it moves could help clue scientists into the

black hole's mysterious properties, including its spin rate. The findings were published Wednesday in the journal Nature.

CHARTER CHOPPER CRASHES IN KENYA

A helicopter with seven people on board crashed in a remote part of

northern Kenya. The Kenya Civil Aviation Authority said that the helicopter crashed Wednesday while flying from the Loisaba Conservancy to the Ewaso Nyiro area in Samburu County.

The authority said that an investigation was underway. The helicopter

was carrying six passengers in addition to the pilot.

Local media reported the crash occurred in the foothills of Mount Ololokwe. The helicopter, owned by local company Lady Lori Helicopters, was operating a charter flight when it crashed.

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