

## Philadelphia Phillies

# MLB Rumors: Roy Oswalt's Career in Jeopardy with Latest Back Injury?

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By  
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(Contributor) on June 24, 2011

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The Cardinals added injury to insult on Thursday night after St. Louis whipped the Philadelphia Phillies en route to 12-2 win.

Starting pitcher Roy Oswalt was pulled from last night's game when he began to feel soreness in his lower back.

The right-hander gave up four earned runs in two ugly innings before exiting. He issued no walks, but he surrendered five hits and forced only a single strikeout.

The lack of success has been a recurring theme of late.

Heading into Thursday's game, Oswalt had been roughed up for 21 hits and 11 earned runs in his most recent 20 innings.

Oswalt has a long history of back problems. He spent almost three weeks on the disabled list in late April and early May, and there are concerns that he has worsened the condition by pitching through the pain.

"He's had trouble for quite a while," coach Charlie Manuel revealed. "This started back [in April] in Arizona.

"I'm concerned because this has been going on for quite a while," Manuel said. "I'm definitely concerned about it.



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"He's close with his fastball, but he's had to rely a lot on command and hitting spots now. That might be because of the trouble with his back."

The Phillies are likely to reevaluate the 33-year-old veteran on Friday afternoon before making any roster decisions.

The pain in Oswalt's back will cause him to miss his next start, and it's certainly possible that the veteran starter will be headed back to the 15-day disabled list.

Oswalt, though, has a bit more grim perspective. He does not know when he will pitch again, if at all.

"You throw as long as you can and when you can't throw anymore you don't," the 33-year-old pitcher explained after the game. "Hopefully it's not to the point where I can't throw anymore. If it's at that point, you just have to accept it."

"I've had a pretty good one," Oswalt said about his career, recognizing the possibility that his latest injury could put his career in jeopardy.

Since his previous stint on the disabled list, he has come back to make seven starts, but the back pain has slowed the velocity on his fastball.

"I feel it when I sit down, stand up, walk, pitch, sleep," he said.



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Revealing his reasoning to pitch through it, "I don't want to be labeled a quitter," he quipped.

He himself even realized during Thursday night's brief outing that he was hurting the team.

"I'm kind of a liability more than anything. I was more heaving the ball than throwing it. It was no good keeping me out there."

Oswalt revealed that he has had a number of cortisone injections in his back throughout his career and that an MRI while still in Houston showed two degenerative discs.

"I don't know if it's gotten to the point where it's bulging," he said. "Hopefully not."

"We'll see where it's at and if I have to get it fixed, I'll get it fixed."

Kyle Kendrick, who allowed two runs in four innings in relief of Oswalt against the Cardinals, appears primed to fulfill Oswalt's spot in the rotation. He is 4-4 with a 3.23 ERA in 18 appearances and five starts this season.

Any extended absence for Oswalt would be a blow to a team built around its starting rotation of Oswalt, Roy Halladay, Cliff Lee and Cole Hamels.

The Phillies never recovered from yesterday's early deficit. They finished a six-game road trip split at 3-3, and with one of the four aces out indefinitely, the trip certainly ends on a bitter note.

Oswalt, a three-time All-Star, has a mutual option with the team for \$16 million next season. If he walks away or his contract is bought out, he will make \$2 million.



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