

# The Fireworks Came Late

## The MLB Home Run Barrage of July 14

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There were 51 home runs across fifteen MLB games today. From the surprising names in the middle of it to the games with the most homers, here's a breakdown of the barrage today.



Oakland A's outfielder Lawrence Butler, who was busy today [\[1\]](#)

### Have a day, Oakland! (Team Breakdowns)

The Athletics hit eight home runs in their 18-3 beatdown at the Phillies' expense, who actually opened up the scoring with a solo homer from Trea Turner. Two games (Rockies @ Mets, Cubs @ Cardinals) had seven home runs. Two of the fifteen games (Dodgers @ Tigers, Twins @ Giants) did not feature a home run.

### Bring 'em Home!

Of the 51 home runs:

- 26 solo home runs
- Eighteen two-run shots
- Four three-run homers (Ben Rice, Joey Bart, Jo Adell, Travis d'Arnaud)
- Three grand slams (Zack Gelof, Kevin Kiermaier, Ketel Marte)

## Big Days

The 51 homers were hit by 40 different players, and of those 40, nine different players had multi-homer days:

- 3 home runs:
  - Lawrence Butler (OAK)
  - Michael Toglia (COL)
- 2 home runs:
  - Christopher Morel (CHC)
  - Josh Smith (TEX)
  - Brent Rooker (OAK)
  - Seth Brown (OAK)
  - Ezequiel Tovar (COL)
  - Pete Crow-Armstrong (CHC)

## Unlikely Sources

Of those nine players, six of them had a  $wRC+$ <sup>1</sup> below 100 entering today, four of them had a below average home run rate (HR/PA), and three of them had both. The league-average HR/PA is 2.9% and 100  $wRC+$  is average.

Player	entering today	
	HR/PA	$wRC+$
Lawrence Butler	3.2%	81
Michael Toglia	6.9%	75
Travis d'Arnaud	3.4%	101
Christopher Morel	4.1%	91
Josh Smith	2.4%	140
Brent Rooker	5.6%	160
Seth Brown	2.5%	65
Ezequiel Tovar	2.9%	89
Pete Crow-Armstrong	0.6%	48

The  $wRC+$  and HR-rate of the nine players with multi-homer games entering July 14. The cell being blue means the statistic is below league-average; red means it's above league-average.

As seen in the figure, the multi-homer explosion truly came from unlikely sources. Six out of nine players were either not prolific home run hitters or were having a poor offensive season. Only Rooker and d'Arnaud were statistically above-average in both home run rate and producing runs.

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<sup>1</sup>Weighted Runs Created Plus, an advanced stat that attempts to contextualize a player's ability to create runs, given the era and run environment in which they play in - [FanGraphs article on  \$wRC+\$](#)

## A Boost

As imagined, such a productive day behind the plate gives a massive boost to OPS and wRC+, especially given the low starting points of the six players with a below average wRC+.

Player	OPS before	OPS Now	OPS growth
Lawrence Butler	.622	.686	.064
Michael Toglia	.694	.763	.069
Travis d'Arnaud	.728	.773	.045
Christopher Morel	.669	.690	.021
Josh Smith	.838	.861	.023
Brent Rooker	.915	.942	.027
Seth Brown	.564	.610	.046
Ezequiel Tovar	.737	.764	.027
Pete Crow-Armstrong	.525	.582	.057

The growth of the OPS of the nine players with a multi-homer game

## Days To Remember

Pete-Crow Armstrong, Michael Toglia and Lawrence Butler - three young outfielders trying to establish themselves in the majors - all had career days.

And a brief pulse from the carcass of Seth Brown.

Player	wRC+ before	wRC+ Now	wRC+ boost
Lawrence Butler	81	97	19.8%
Michael Toglia	75	92	22.7%
Travis d'Arnaud	101	113	11.9%
Christopher Morel	91	97	6.6%
Josh Smith	140	145	3.6%
Brent Rooker	160	167	4.4%
Seth Brown	65	77	18.5%
Ezequiel Tovar	89	96	7.9%
Pete Crow-Armstrong	48	64	33.3%

Figure 1: The percentage growth in wRC+ from the nine players with a multi-homer game

## References

- [1] Edwards, Robert. "Oakland Athletics outfielder Lawrence Butler (4) rounds." USA TODAY Sports, 14 April 2024.
- [2] Statistics taken from Baseball-Reference and Fangraphs, and the graphs were designed in Excel.