

## Mariners' Josh Naylor Eases Shoulder Injury Concerns

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Seattle, WA, Seattle Mariners first baseman Josh Naylor provided reassurance Friday after leaving Thursday's series finale against the Chicago White Sox due to left shoulder soreness.

"I'm fine," Naylor said ahead of Friday's game against the Tampa Bay Rays. "I'm not worried about it."

Manager Dan Wilson expressed similar optimism, describing Naylor's status as "day to day" and emphasizing caution in sitting him out of the starting lineup. "It's just a chance for him today to get a little rest, and we'll reassess again after the game," Wilson explained. "I think he seems to be in a pretty good spot. It's just a chance to catch his breath."

Naylor's discomfort was visible after fouling a pitch in his first plate appearance Thursday, and when he appeared uncomfortable on a groundout in the third inning. Following a consultation with the training staff, veteran Donovan Solano replaced him and started at first base Friday.

This left shoulder issue marks Naylor's second shoulder-related setback this season, although this time it's on the opposite side. He previously injured his right shoulder during a game against the White Sox on June 23 while with the Arizona Diamondbacks, missing several games before returning in early July. Both Naylor and the Mariners believe this latest injury is temporary.

Since his trade to Seattle on July 24, Naylor has been a key contributor to the Mariners' push for the postseason. In 13 games, he is batting .261 with a .798 OPS, hitting three home runs, driving in six runs, and impressively stealing 10 bases without being caught. His combination of power and speed has added a dynamic edge to the Mariners' lineup as the team sits just 1.5 games behind Houston in the AL West race.

Naylor's reputation for toughness is well-known. Earlier this year, after being hit by a fastball on his hand, he remained in the game, telling reporters, "As long as I can move it, we're good." Wilson acknowledged this competitive spirit but made clear the team will not risk worsening the injury.

"He wants to play every day," Wilson said. "But we'll make sure we do what's best for him and the team in the long run."

The Mariners have enough depth to manage without Naylor temporarily. Solano is a reliable option at first base, and Eugenio Suárez has been performing well offensively. Additionally, outfielder and first baseman Luke Raley started a rehab assignment with Triple-A Tacoma on Friday and could return soon.

Seattle plans to rest Naylor through the Rays series, aiming to have him ready for the August 12 opener against the Detroit Tigers. Given the tight AL West standings, preserving Naylor's

health for the critical stretch is paramount.

For now, both Naylor and the Mariners remain confident the injury will not sideline him for long.