

# This pitcher who set a record with 12 straight strikeouts has strong ties to Miami

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OCTOBER 08, 2019 04:22 PM, UPDATED OCTOBER 08, 2019 04:22 PM



Playing for the Low-A Lowell Spinners, Yusniel Padron of the Batavia Muckdogs, pitched six scoreless innings. Padron set an all-time record for professional baseball by striking out 12 consecutive batters.

They call him “Salsa” because of his spicy and outgoing personality.

But on Sept. 5, former Miami Dade College pitcher Yusniel Padron wasn’t feeling well. Despite feeling dizzy and nauseous, Padron —now playing minor-league baseball for the Boston Red Sox — had a job to do that day.

And as soon as he entered the game, it was his opponent, the Miami Marlins-affiliated Batavia Muckdogs, who looked dizzy.

Padron, who turns 22 on Nov. 12, set an all-time record for professional baseball by striking out 12 consecutive batters.

Playing for the Low-A Lowell Spinners, Padron entered the game in the fourth inning and absolutely dominated Batavia. He pitched six scoreless innings, allowing just one single and no walks.

Out of 19 batters faced, Padron struck out 14 and allowed just the one base-runner.

“As soon as I got into the game, I changed my temperament,” Padron said in Spanish. “The rest was history.”

Indeed, it was history — the major-league record for consecutive strikeouts in a game is 10, set by Hall of Famer Tom Seaver in 1970.

Padron, a 6-0, 205-pound right-hander, has quite a back story. Four years ago, he left his native Havana — along with his parents — hopping around to Russia, Belarus, Serbia and Germany before entering the U.S. via the Mexican border.

At a 2017 baseball tryout in Hialeah, Padron was noticed by former pitching star Livan Hernandez, a 44-year-old Cuban native who was the World Series’ MVP in 1997, leading the Marlins to the championship that season.

“I’ll never forget it,” Padron said of meeting Hernandez. “Livan told me I had tremendous talent. I was filled with positive thoughts. I couldn’t believe Livan wanted to train me.”

Besides helping Padron with his pitching and fitness, Hernandez also took him to meet the two men who at the time were running the MDC baseball program — head coach Danny Price and pitching guru Kevin Long.

Thanks in part to the guidance of those coaches, Padron was the 2018 Pitcher of the Year for Florida junior colleges. After the season, he was Boston’s 22nd-round pick as the Red Sox jumped ahead of two teams that had called Padron to express interest, the Oakland A’s and Kansas City Royals.

Long, now retired from baseball, said Padron had a good fastball when he arrived at MDC, but that wasn’t enough.

“He had a breaking ball that had potential,” Long said. “I said to him on numerous occasions, ‘You’ve got to work on your changeup. You need something with a [velocity] differential.’”

Padron has apparently learned his lessons well as he now has five pitches — a fastball that pops between 90 and 94 mph, a curve he believes is his forte, a slider, a sinker and that changeup.

In the recently completed minor-league season, Padron went 7-3 with a 3.38 ERA and 84 strikeouts in 64 innings. He pitched 19 games, including 12 starts, and his nine-inning averages included 11.1 strikeouts, 8.4 hits, 2.1 walks and 0.9 homers.