

## A's News Clips, Saturday, August 22, 2009

### Depression sidelines A's pitcher Duchscherer

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's announced Friday afternoon that right-hander Justin Duchscherer is undergoing treatment for clinical depression and will miss the rest of the season.

Duchscherer's agent, Damon Lapa, said on a conference call with reporters that Duchscherer has a "very treatable form" of depression and that there's reason to be optimistic he'll be back pitching in 2010.

Duchscherer has been on the disabled list all season after undergoing arthroscopic elbow surgery at the end of spring training. Back problems delayed his return as well.

He recently pitched 11 scoreless innings spread over three rehab appearances but also was scratched from two outings for what the A's described as "non-baseball" issues.

Friday's news came hours before the A's lost 3-2 to the Detroit Tigers.

"It's something I think he's probably been battling for some time," Lapa said. "He recently made the very difficult decision that he needs to put his career on hold for the time being and focus 100 percent of his efforts on his recovery."

Duchscherer, 31, was expected to be the ace of an otherwise very inexperienced starting rotation in spring training. He will be eligible for free agency for the first time this winter, and with a healthy and productive season, the two-time All-Star could have been in position to land a hefty contract either from the A's or another team.

Lapa was not specific on how long Duchscherer has battled depression or how much this season's injuries may have contributed to his condition, if at all. But Lapa did say "everyone is extremely optimistic with the progress he's made in the past few weeks and past few months."

Duchscherer isn't discussing the matter publicly for the time being, according to Lapa.

A's assistant general manager David Forst, who addressed reporters after Lapa's conference call, said the team has been aware of Duchscherer's condition "for some time" but wouldn't specify how long.

Given Friday's revelation, it makes sense why team officials had been so guarded in discussing Duchscherer's status.

"I think we're all sympathetic on a personal level with what Justin's dealing with," A's general manager Billy Beane said. "In a situation like this, when you're talking about something like clinical depression, you're more concerned with the person than the player."

An online definition of clinical depression described it as "a mental disorder characterized by an all-encompassing low mood accompanied by low self-esteem and loss of interest or pleasure in normally enjoyable activities." According to [psychologyinfo.com](http://psychologyinfo.com), about 17 million American adults experience clinical depression.

Duchscherer isn't the only major leaguer this season to grapple with depression-like symptoms. Detroit left-hander Dontrelle Willis, St. Louis shortstop Khalil Greene and Cincinnati first baseman Joey Votto all have been sidelined with depression or anxiety-related issues.

Duchscherer was acquired by the A's in a trade from Texas shortly before the 2002 season. He was an All-Star as a reliever in 2005 and a starter in 2008.

But his career also has been interrupted by several injuries. His '07 and '08 seasons both ended prematurely because of right hip surgery.

A's infielder Bobby Crosby and left-hander Dallas Braden knew about Duchscherer's condition only after being told by reporters.

Duchscherer has been away from the team since March. But Braden, who assumed the No. 1 starter role after Duchscherer was sidelined, said Duchscherer has texted him after many of his starts.

"He was kind of ribbing me about the whole 'Ace' thing — 'That a way, Ace. Go get 'em, Ace.' So obviously he was definitely following us a lot," Braden said.

Neither Braden nor Crosby said they ever picked up signs from Duchscherer that suggested depression.

"He's always been a guy that just takes things as they come," Braden said. "Whether it be something on the field, or it sounds like this is something a little more off the field, he would never wear any of those types of emotions on his sleeve around here."

Added Crosby: "He's a guy who's been through a lot with injuries and different things. As a teammate, you just hope things get better and he gets his mind right. "... Things happen in people's lives that you don't know as a teammate."

## **A's notebook: Homers ruin Gonzalez's night**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

A's third-base coach Mike Gallego didn't lack company Friday night.

Oakland ended four innings with a runner stranded at third base and had another runner thrown out at home to make the difference in a 3-2 loss to the Detroit Tigers.

Jack Cust led off the bottom of the ninth with a single and advanced to third with two outs. But Fernando Rodney got Adam Kennedy swinging to end it.

Rodney also got a big assist from second baseman Placido Polanco, who snared Nomar Garciaparra's sharp grounder and retired him for the second out.

Ryan Raburn connected for two homers off A's left-hander Gio Gonzalez (4-4), who went 5<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings. His career-high nine strikeouts were offset somewhat by four walks. He's issued 10 free passes combined over his last two starts.

Still, Gonzalez wasn't upset with his outing.

"I felt strong," he said. "I was working on getting that first-pitch strike, the (leadoff) out of the inning."

Raburn turned on a fastball in the first and sent it out to left. Gonzalez tried a change-up in the third and Raburn ripped another solo shot to put Detroit ahead 2-1.

Clete Thomas' RBI single in the sixth made it 3-1 and chased Gonzalez (4-4).

The A's pulled to within a run in the seventh when Rajai Davis' double down the right-field line scored Cust, who went 3-for-4 with an RBI.

Barton returns

The A's placed Bobby Crosby on the 15-day disabled list with a strained left calf and reinstated Daric Barton from the DL.

Barton started at first base and went 1-for-2 before Tommy Everidge pinch-hit for him in the seventh. A's manager Bob Geren said the two will platoon at first.

The rest of the season should provide a nice audition as the A's decide if Barton or Everidge — or both — fit into future plans at first.

"I look at it as an opportunity to play," Barton said. "I'm going to do what I can do to prove I belong here and have a chance to make the team next year."

Short hops

A crowd of 15,927 showed up on Jason Giambi Bobblehead Night, as the A's went ahead with the promotion even though Giambi was released Aug. 7. "... The A's had several nice defensive plays. Davis, playing center, threw a runner out at second. Shortstop Cliff Pennington made an over-the-head catch of Brandon Inge's shallow fly, and Ryan Sweeney made a sliding catch and doubled Polanco off first to end the top of the ninth.

## **Depression sidelines A's Duchscherer for season**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Justin Duchscherer's agent said Friday that the right-hander will not pitch for the A's this season because Duchscherer has chosen to focus his efforts on dealing with "a very treatable form of clinical depression."

"It's something that I think he's probably been battling for some time," said Damon Lapa, Duchscherer's agent, "and he recently made the really difficult decision that he needs to put his career on hold for the time being."

Duchscherer, who made the All-Star team as a reliever in 2005 and a starter last season, has not pitched for Oakland this year. Hip injuries cut short his 2007 and '08 seasons, and he had elbow surgery in March.

The 31-year-old, who also has had back problems, has made three rehab starts recently but also missed two because of what the A's had termed a "nonbaseball-related issue."

Said Lapa: "I think he felt a tremendous sense of obligation, a tremendous desire to pitch for the organization and get back up to Oakland and contribute. Between trying to balance that and trying to balance his recovery and dealing with his issues, it just became too much."

Duchscherer has been with the organization since the A's acquired him from Texas in March 2002.

"With someone like that who has been in our organization for a long time," A's assistant general manager David Forst said, "the personal stuff is really what matters, and you do just want Justin to get well."

"It's unfortunate," second baseman Mark Ellis said. "... Hopefully, he can work through it and get around this problem. That'd be great."

Lapa said Duchscherer had made his decision in the previous 24-48 hours and "he now, in some ways, has a bit of release."

Because Duchscherer is a free agent at the end of the season, it's conceivable he has thrown his last pitch for the A's. "I think everyone is extremely optimistic with the progress that he has made in the past few weeks or months," Lapa said. "I think we're all optimistic that he'll return to the mound in 2010."

Forst said Duchscherer displayed courage in acknowledging his diagnosis.

"This is something that millions of people deal with," Forst said. "It's not unique to pro athletes. Unfortunately, he's in the public eye and has to deal with it publicly."

"We have full confidence that he will get through this and be able to pitch again."

Duchscherer isn't the only major-leaguer sidelined by non-physical problems this season. Anxiety disorders have forced Detroit pitcher Dontrelle Willis, St. Louis infielder Khalil Greene and Cincinnati first baseman Joey Votto onto the disabled list.

## **A's lose, Barton and Crosby trade places**

Steve Kroner, Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writers

**Gio Gonzalez** limited Detroit to four hits in 52/3 innings and set a career high with nine strikeouts on a gorgeous Friday evening at the Coliseum.

The 23-year-old left-hander still had his record fall to 4-4 as the Tigers prevailed 3-2.

**Ryan Raburn** tagged Gonzalez for no-doubt solo shots to left in the first and third innings. Gonzalez twice struck out **Clete Thomas**, but Thomas ended Gonzalez's night when he stung an RBI single to center on a 2-2 pitch with two outs in the sixth.

The A's cut a 3-1 deficit to 3-2 when **Rajai Davis** greeted reliever **Brandon Lyon** with an RBI double down the right-field line with two outs in the seventh.

Oakland had a runner at third with two outs in the ninth, but **Fernando Rodney** picked up his 26th save by striking out **Adam Kennedy**.

Oakland made four excellent defensive plays: **Ryan Sweeney's** diving catch to take a hit away from **Placido Polanco**, Davis' throw from near the warning track to cut down **Miguel Cabrera** trying to stretch a single into a double, **Cliff Pennington's** over-the-shoulder grab on **Brandon Inge's** pop-up to left and Sweeney's diving catch on **Aubrey Huff's** liner that turned into a double play.

**Barton for Crosby:** Before the game, the A's re-instated first baseman **Daric Barton** (hamstring) from the disabled list and placed utilityman **Bobby Crosby** on the DL with a strained left calf.

Crosby hit .223 in 87 games. Barton was 5-for-34 in two stints with the A's this year and was 1-for-2 Friday.

Barton's return means diminished playing time for **Tommy Everidge**, who struck out looking as a pinch-hitter in the seventh and laid down a nice sacrifice bunt in the ninth.

Crosby's absence means the A's backup shortstop to Pennington is **Nomar Garciaparra**, who's spent the bulk of his career there but has not played the position this season.

**Briefly:** The A's acquired minor-league pitcher **Scott Patterson** from the San Diego organization for cash considerations. Patterson, a right-hander, will join Triple-A Sacramento. ... Friday was **Jason Giambi** Bobblehead Night.

## **A's leading off**

Steve Kroner

**Coliseum dominance:** The A's took two of three from Detroit at the Coliseum in early summer. Oakland regularly has handled the Tigers between 66th and Hegenberger: In the past 23 seasons, the A's have had a losing home record against Detroit once (1997, 2-4).

## **Gonzalez's nine K's not enough vs. Tigers**

### **A's lefty takes loss despite strong outing in front of father**

By Jane Lee / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Gio Gonzalez entered Friday's start having allowed five earned runs in a seven-run loss to the White Sox in his most recent start.

Not exactly numbers to write home to Dad about -- even though Gonzalez insisted his pitches weren't missing by a mile, but rather a hair.

Still, the 23-year-old lefty knew he could have done better.

So, on Friday, with father Max in the stands for the first time in Oakland, Gonzalez did just that, scattering only four hits and three runs while walking four and striking out a career-high nine.

Yet, this time, Gonzalez wasn't the only one missing by a hair. His offense faced the same problem, posting just two runs to let Detroit slide by with a 3-2 victory in the opener of a three-game set at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

"It was good to see him out there," the southpaw said of his dad in attendance. "You always want to do well, not only in front of your dad, but in front of your team."

Loss aside, Gonzalez pitched well by most standards, prompting Detroit manager Jim Leyland to take note of his outing following the game.

"Their guy was very good," Leyland said. "He was a lot better than last time."

"Last time" being June 30, when Gonzalez took the loss in a 5-3 Detroit victory in which Gonzalez struggled with command, confidence and composure. But on Friday, that might as well have been a lifetime ago.

"I've definitely improved over my last few starts," Gonzalez said. "I felt good. I felt strong. I felt positive. I've been pounding the strike zone and going after hitters."

That much was evident by the strikeout total, one of which went to Ryan Raburn. By the time the Tigers outfielder grabbed his K in the sixth, though, he had already done enough damage in the form of two solo home runs.

"I was working on getting first-pitch strikes," Gonzalez said. "Sometimes you just have to tip your hat. Those guys are getting paid big bucks to do that."

"When you're throwing strikes, those things happen, especially with good hitters like that."

Manager Bob Geren, who carefully takes mental notes of his pitchers' continual improvements, backed up the always-optimistic Gonzalez.

"He actually threw the ball pretty well," the skipper said. "He had a very good breaking ball going and a lot of movement on his fastball. It wasn't pinpoint stuff, but I liked what I saw."

Unfortunately, the same could not be said of the offense, which has scored three runs or less in its past six contests. The team has now lost five of its last seven games and is 5-45 on the year when scoring four runs or less.

"When you get over four runs, you have a slightly better chance of winning," Geren said. "We're still last in the league in home runs, and that's how you score more runs."

Detroit starter Edwin Jackson kept Oakland's lineup in check -- and away from the fences -- for the better part of the night. He gave up two runs on six hits while walking one and fanning five in six-plus innings.

"He made his pitches," Jack Cust said. "He humped up a little on his fastball when he needed to. He had good stuff out there."

Coincidentally, so did Cust. The A's outfielder, who has been facing obvious struggles at the plate lately, recorded a season-high-tying three hits with a 3-for-4 night.

"Maybe that can get him going," offered Geren. "He looked very disciplined at the plate. Their guy was throwing 97 on his 96th pitch, and Cust turned it around. That's a good sign."

Also adding some life to the lineup was Ryan Sweeney, who collected two hits -- the first being a double to lead off the second inning that eventually turned into a run thanks to Cust's first hit of the night.

Despite a handful of other scoring opportunities, including a fifth-inning play at the plate that ended in an out, the A's only other run came in the seventh courtesy of a double off the bat of Rajai Davis.

"It was a close game," Geren said. "You always look at the little things in games like these, and it was one that could have gone either way."

## **Barton's recall allows A's to spell Everidge**

### **Oakland (53-68) vs. Detroit (65-56), 6:05 p.m. PT**

By Jane Lee / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Late bloomer Tommy Everidge has been a lineup regular since being promoted from Triple-A Sacramento on June 9.

The 26-year-old infielder will be the first to say he loves being at first base virtually every day, but his manager will be the first to note that everyone -- including wide-eyed rookies -- needs a break at some point.

Enter Daric Barton.

The A's on Friday reinstated the familiar face from the disabled list and placed Bobby Crosby on the 15-day DL with a strained right calf retroactive to Tuesday.

The 23-year-old Barton, in his second stint with the A's this year, hit .227 during a seven-game rehab assignment with the A's affiliate in the Arizona Rookie League and Class A Stockton.

"When Daric came up last time, he was swinging the bat well," manager Bob Geren said before the A's took on the Tigers on Friday. "We'll see what he can do, and we'll give him some playing time at first."

Geren wasted no time in doing so Friday, giving Everidge a day off and Barton his 10th start of the season at first base.

"Crosby going on the DL created an opening, and Daric felt he was ready," Geren said. "He played all nine innings in his last three rehab starts."

Crosby, entering his seventh career stint on the DL, was batting .223 with six home runs and 27 RBIs in 87 games before injuring his calf Monday night against New York.

Geren appeared confident when asked of his veteran infielder's ability to come off the DL when eligible.

"I would say yes," the skipper said, "but that's one injury that's difficult to predict."

### **Pitching matchup**

#### **OAK: RHP Trevor Cahill (6-12, 4.97 ERA)**

Cahill handled the White Sox through five innings on Sunday, holding them to just two hits. He allowed two runs in the

sixth, though, then let the first two hitters reach base in the seventh before he was chased. "I started off good with some quick innings," Cahill said, "but I got into a little trouble when I was going through the lineup for the second and third time." The Tigers tagged Cahill for seven earned runs in 2 1/3 innings -- a career low for the righty -- on May 17.


#### **DET: RHP Armando Galarraga (6-10, 5.16 ERA)**

The Tigers hope Galarraga can get back on a routine and back up to full strength after a throat infection left him unable to eat solid food for a few days and sapped his energy last week. Still, the Tigers wouldn't mind seeing the same deception Galarraga used in his return to strike out six batters over five innings while allowing just four hits. For someone who still looked worn down and struggled mightily with his pace in his opening inning, Galarraga had better velocity on his fastball than he had in some of his healthy starts. He's 2-1 with a 6.97 ERA in six career outings against Oakland, four of them starts.

#### **Dribblers ...**


The A's have scored three runs or less over the past six games. ... Pitcher Dallas Braden, who has been battling a left foot infection since July 31, said he "100 percent feels great -- it's just a matter of the action of throwing that causes the nerve to fire. It's uncontrollable, and it's in almost every throw I make." ... The A's on Wednesday handed out Jason Giambi bobbleheads to the first 10,000 fans and deemed the giveaway a "collector's item." Fan favorite Giambi was released by the organization on Aug. 7. ... Geren, who spent his last off-day undergoing an emergency root canal, had a much more pleasant day away from the field on Thursday. The skipper threw batting practice to his sons, cleaned his house and enjoyed spending time at Danville's Hot Summer Nights Car Show.

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


#### **On television**

- CSNCA

#### **On radio**

- KTRB 860, KDIA 1640 (Español)

#### **Up next**

- Sunday: Athletics (Brett Tomko, 2-2, 4.21) vs. Tigers (Rick Porcello, 10-7, 4.21), 1:05 p.m. PT 
- Monday: Athletics (Vin Mazzaro, 4-8, 5.31) at Mariners (Ian Snell, 3-9, 5.60), 7:10 p.m. PT 
- Tuesday: Athletics (Brett Anderson, 7-9, 4.51) at Mariners (Ryan Rowland-Smith, 2-1, 4.24), 7:10 p.m. PT 

## **Duchscherer to miss entire season**

### **A's righty steps away to battle clinical depression**

By Jane Lee / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- It wasn't long ago Justin Duchscherer starred in his own feel-good story of longtime-reliever-turned-dominant-starter.

The story blossomed even more when two All-Star appearances forever became etched in his career narrative.

No matter how big the story or how large the limelight, though, successful professional athletes like Duchscherer are not any less prone to everyday issues faced by your average Joes.

Those who think otherwise will have to read the latest twist in the chronicles of the A's proven pitcher -- if not for the reality check, then at least to appreciate the guts it took for Duchscherer to make a decision larger than anything found on the diamond.

On Friday, the pitcher's agent, Damon Lapa, announced his client made the choice to miss the remainder of the season while treating what he deemed a "very treatable form" of clinical depression.

"He recently made the really difficult decision that he needs to put his career on hold for the time being and focus 100 percent of his efforts on his recovery," Lapa said. "I know now it's somewhat of a bit of relief. I think he felt a tremendous sense of obligation, a tremendous desire to come pitch for the organization and get back up in Oakland and contribute.

"Between trying to balance that and trying to balance his recovery and dealing with his issues, it just became too much."

Duchscherer had arthroscopic elbow surgery in March and had been hindered by back problems as well, prompting the A's to keep him on the disabled list the entire season. The two-time All-Star, however, had been making regular rehab starts, the most recent being Aug. 13.

While he proved more than ready to return to Oakland, throwing out countless scoreless innings, the team continually contributed his setbacks to a "non-baseball-related" issue.

"It's something he's been trying to fight through for some time," Lapa said. "Obviously he's been able to make his rehab starts in the Minor Leagues, but ultimately he reached a point where he felt he was going to have to carry it beyond the game of baseball in the true-life sense to focus on making sure he was happy and healthy first."

Assistant general manager David Forst said the A's have been aware of Duchscherer's situation for a while, but he did not specify how long, only acknowledging the team's unwavering support.

"Someone like that who's been in our organization for a long time, the personal stuff is really what matters," Forst said. "Our only concern is getting him healthy, and he obviously has all the resources available we can provide him, and we've been trying to help him and will continue to."

Lapa mentioned that Duchscherer, who will become a free agent at the end of the season, has full intentions of making a healthy recovery and returning to the game of baseball "for many years to come."

After pitching exclusively out of the bullpen from 2004-07, he was converted to a starting pitcher in 2008 and went 10-8 with a 2.54 ERA in 22 starts. Duchscherer has a 2.82 ERA in 214 career appearances with Oakland, which is third-lowest in the franchise's history.

"As far as a timetable of moving forward, I know that he is now going to focus 100 percent of his efforts on getting right and getting healthy," Lapa said. "I think everyone is extremely optimistic with the progress he's made in the past few weeks, and I think we're all optimistic he'll return to the mound in 2010."

Joining the hopeful bunch is Dallas Braden, who was taken aback when hearing of Duchscherer's latest struggle on Friday.

"You don't wish this type of thing upon anyone," Braden said. "Confidence is something you absolutely have to have at this level, and when you try to second guess yourself and things start to spiral, it's really tough to climb back out of it. But that guy's an absolute competitor."

Duchscherer missed the final four months of 2007 and the final month and a half of 2008 with hip problems that led to surgeries both times. Although well aware of those issues, along with the pitcher's most recent injury battles, Braden said Duchscherer has never been one to wear his emotions on his sleeves around the clubhouse.

"The thing about Duchscherer I've known is he's always been a realist," Braden said. "He never really got too far ahead of himself. He never counted his chickens before they've hatched. And he's always taken everything as they've come."

Similarly confident in his teammate's journey toward a healthy rebound is Mark Ellis, the longest tenured A's player who knows first-hand the mental effects that injuries can have on an athlete.

"When you're injured, you tend to spend a lot of time by yourself," Ellis said. "You're alone a lot, but hopefully baseball brings him back. He probably wants people to know he's getting the help he needs, and maybe this is his cry for help.

"You can't begin to imagine the things he's going through, but hopefully everyone in the organization is doing as much as possible to help him out."

Forst assured just that, noting the importance of facing the future rather than being concerned with the logistics of how the depression arose.



"This is something millions of people deal with," he said. "It's not unique to pro athletes. Unfortunately, he's in the public eye, but we have full confidence he will get through this and be able to pitch again."

Braden echoed those statements, but couldn't help but think of how he would deal with the lapses Duchscherer has endured.

"You guys probably would have gone to my funeral by now," Braden said. "I know when I had arm surgery in 2006, I didn't watch baseball because I couldn't handle it."

"I mean, he's had to get up, look himself in the mirror and tell himself, 'I can't.' And that's something no pro athlete ever wants to have to endure. You never want to have to come to that point in your career, and he's been battling that all year."

## **Raburn burns A's with homers**

Associated Press

OAKLAND – Ryan Raburn homered in his first two at-bats, Edwin Jackson pitched six strong innings, and the Detroit Tigers beat the A's 3-2 Friday night.

Clete Thomas also drove in a run for the Tigers, who won for the sixth time in eight games to take a 3 1/2-game lead over the Chicago White Sox in the American League Central.

Jack Cust and Rajai Davis each had two hits and drove in a run for the A's, who have lost five of seven. Ryan Sweeney added two hits.

Cust, who went 3 for 4 with an RBI, singled to lead off the ninth inning. He advanced to third with two outs, but Detroit closer Fernando Rodney got Adam Kennedy swinging on a nasty breaking ball to end the game.

Raburn hit solo home runs his first two times up to put Detroit on top. It was his second career multihomer game and his first in over two years.

Jackson (10-5) allowed two runs on six hits, striking out five and walking one in winning his third consecutive decision. He's allowed two runs or less in nine of his 14 road starts. The All-Star pitcher is 4-1 over his last 11 starts. His 2.80 road ERA is third in the A.L.

Jackson did not allow a home run for the first time in nine games. Bobby Seay and Brandon Lyon got the Tigers through the eighth, and Rodney pitched the ninth for his 26th save in 27 games.

A's left-hander Gio Gonzalez (4-4) allowed three runs on four hits, walking four and striking out a career-high nine.

Tigers manager Jim Leyland switched the top of his lineup, giving Plácido Polanco his second start at the leadoff spot and Raburn his second start in the third position.

Raburn responded to the move with two-out home runs in the first and third, the second breaking a 1-1 tie. He has three homers in his last two games.

Thomas singled home a run in the sixth.

Cust singled home a run in the second for the A's, while Davis doubled home a run in the seventh.

### **A'S NOTES**

Justin Duchscherer's agent says the A's right-hander won't pitch this season so he can concentrate on his treatment for depression. Duchscherer has been out all year after undergoing right elbow surgery in March. He made the All-Star team as a reliever in 2005 and a starter last season.

- The A's placed infielder Bobby Crosby on the 15-day disabled list with a strained left calf. The move, made before Friday's game against the Detroit Tigers, is retroactive to Tuesday. Crosby hurt his calf Monday against the New York Yankees.

## **Duchscherer to miss rest of season**

By Jerry Crasnick, ESPN.com

Oakland Athletics pitcher Justin Duchscherer has been diagnosed with clinical depression and will miss the rest of the 2009 season as he undergoes treatment for the condition, his agent said Friday.

Duchscherer had been on the 60-day disabled list with an elbow injury, but the A's have reclassified his DL status to reflect the diagnosis of depression, agent Damon Lapa said. General manager Billy Beane and assistant GM Dave Forst made the announcement before Friday's game against Detroit.

Lapa said that Duchscherer recently decided to come forward to aid in his recovery and to serve as an example to others suffering from depression.

"Justin has been battling this for quite some time, and it's kind of reached the apex where he made a really tough decision and owned up to the problem," Lapa said. "He wants to take a step back and really focus on addressing his personal issues off the field.

"Ultimately, this transcends the baseball field and goes beyond the diamond. This is about his health and happiness as a human being."

Duchscherer, 31, is a two-time All-Star who was expected to serve as the veteran anchor to a young Oakland rotation this season. But he suffered an elbow injury that required surgery in late March, and he incurred more down time because of lower back pain in June. Duchscherer pitched 11 scoreless innings with eight strikeouts in three minor league rehab appearances, but has yet to pitch in Oakland this season. He will be eligible for free agency this off-season.

Duchscherer is the latest of several major league players to be sidelined by depression or anxiety-related issues this season. The list includes Detroit pitcher Dontrelle Willis, St. Louis infielder Khalil Greene and Cincinnati first baseman Joey Votto, who told reporters in June that he suffered from depression, anxiety and panic attacks after the death of his father last August.

Lapa said the A's have been extremely supportive, and that health professionals have told Duchscherer he has a "very treatable" form of depression.

"I think athletes have had this for a long time," Lapa said. "Maybe it's a sign of our times or more advanced medical treatment. The last thing Justin wants to do is run from the issue and deny he has a problem. It takes a lot of courage that he's willing to come forward with this."

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Cats get sweep, return home with magic number at 5**

By Andrew Hazard, [rivercats.com](http://rivercats.com)

The Sacramento River Cats brought their brooms to the ballpark Friday night in Nashville as they looked to sweep the Sounds.

Starting pitcher Chad Reineke pitched one-hit ball through six innings and Sacramento held on for a 7-5 victory. Sacramento's early 6-0 lead evaporated to a 6-5 lead after 11 Nashville batters came to the plate in the seventh, but relievers Jerry Blevins and Sam Demel came in to secure the sweep.

Right fielder Chris Denorfia hit a one-out single down the left-field line and stole second in the first inning as the River Cats looked to be in business. From there, Sounds pitcher Lindsay Gulin used an unusually slow pace on the mound to retire 12 River Cats in a row.

On the flip side, a lead-off double from Nashville first baseman Joe Koshansky was the only thing that resembled early offense for the Sounds. Reineke sat down 16 consecutive batters after that hit.

The game was a pitcher's duel until the fifth inning. After getting a quick out, Gulin walked back-to-back batters. Then second baseman Yung-Chi Chen found the gap deep in right-center field, allowing Adrian Cardenas to score. Gulin then let a pitch get away from him and shortstop Gregorio Petit took advantage of the mistake with a three-run homer down the left-field line. Nine batters came to the plate for Sacramento in the inning. The River Cats enjoyed a 4-0 lead going into the sixth.

Dave Johnson replaced Gulin with one out in the fifth and did not have much more success. Center fielder Matt Carson led off the inning with a double. Two batters later, catcher Anthony Recker added to Sacramento's lead with a two-run

blast.

Reineke kept rolling into the seventh inning. He began the inning by striking out Eric Patterson's brother, Corey. Then, former Milwaukee Brewers All-Star J.J. Hardy came to the plate. On a 1-1 pitch Hardy hit a pop fly near the backstop for what seemed to be an easy out. Recker, however, lost track of the ball and it fell right in front of him for a strike. Three pitches later, Hardy made Sacramento pay with a solo shot directly to center field to put the Sounds on the scoreboard.

Reineke walked two of the next three batters he faced. He then gave up back-to-back RBI singles to designated hitter Erick Almonte and Brendan Katin. Henry Rodriguez was brought in to stop the bleeding, but gave up a walk and a hit before he was replaced by Blevins. Blevins struck out Hardy looking to get the River Cats out of the dreadful inning. Still, Sacramento led 6-5.

The bats started to heat up again in the ninth for Sacramento. Left fielder Eric Patterson led off the inning with a walk and then swiped his 41st base, adding to his single-season franchise record. Three batters later Carson hit his second double of the game to right off of John Axford, and Patterson easily scored to make the score 7-5.

Demel came in to close out the game in the ninth. He began the inning on fire, striking out Almonte. Katin singled and then stole second, but Demel struck out catcher Patrick Arlis. After walking Adam Stern, the game ended when Petit nabbed a bullet off the bat of Corey Patterson.

Reineke's (7-4) pitching line does not illustrate how well he pitched. He struck out seven, walked two batters, gave up four hits and allowed five unearned runs in 6.2 innings of work. Chen went 2-for-3 with a run scored and an RBI.

With the Fresno Grizzlies' 10-8 win over Memphis, Sacramento's magic number to win the Pacific Coast League South Division is now five games.

The River Cats (80-46) return to action at Raley Field for their final homestand of the season Saturday against the Portland Beavers (53-73).

## **Brown Homers Twice As Hounds Sweep**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Corey Brown capped by a 3-run, game-winning home run to deep right-center in the last of the eighth inning, erasing a 7-5 Northwest Arkansas lead and leading the RockHounds to a sweep of the 3-game series with the North Division leading Naturals.

Corey's season has twice been interrupted by injury with two trips to the disabled list. When he last returned from the D-L (August 7 at Corpus Christi), he homered on the first pitch he saw, but had slipped into a slump since then, entering Friday's game with just one hit in his last 30 at bats. Brown busted out of the slump, belting a solo home run, one of three homers in the second inning, as the 'Hounds erased a 4-0 deficit, eventually tying the game at 4-4. In the fourth inning, he was robbed of an extra-base hit when NW Arkansas' Ed Lucas made a tremendous, leaping catch at the right field wall.

The RockHounds trailed, 5-4, going into the last of the eighth. Chris Carter drew a leadoff walk against Naturals' closer Juan Abreu, who then got the next two outs with Carter still at first. Alex Valdez ripped a double down the right field line, extending his hit streak to eight games and putting runners at second and third. Brown then belted a drive to deep right-center (between the 394 and 410 foot markers). The ball was ruled a home run, although whether the ball got "out" or not remains unclear (video was not conclusive). No matter ... two runs would have scored in ANY event on the 2-out blast, and the RockHounds took the lead.

Jared Lansford pitched out of a bases-loaded jam in the ninth, striking out Corey Smith (one of the league's top five home run hitters) for the second out with the bases full, then getting pinch hitter Jeff Howell to fly to right field to end the game, completing the 3-game sweep. The win was the RockHounds' 11th in their last 14 games.

Matt Spencer and Jemile Weeks hit solo home runs in the second inning, both finding the "short porch" in right field, with Brown sending the inning's other solo shot over the high wall in left. "Spence" lost a 16-game hit streak Thursday night, but came back to go 2-for-4 Friday, and has now hit in 28-of-his-last-31-games. Weeks, selected by Oakland in the first round of the 2008 draft (12th overall) out of the University of Miami, hit his first Double-A home run one night after collecting his first two RBI (including the game-winner) as a RockHound, in Thursday's 3-2 win.

Travis Banwart, who was 3-0 with a 0.95 ERA in his previous three starts, lasted just 3.0 innings Friday, but the bullpen quartet of Jason Fernandez, Rocky Roquet, Steve Sharpe and Lansford combined to allow just one run over the last 6.0 innings, with Sharpe picking up his eighth win and Lansford his 11th save.

### **Texas League South**

Tulsa won for the second straight night at Frisco, shutting out the RoughRiders, 3-0 ... the Drillers now come to Citibank Ballpark for a 3-game series while NW Arkansas heads to Frisco for a 3-gamer. Corpus Christi won for the first time in three games at Arkansas, 7-5, and Springfield took "round three" of the series between first half champions, downing San Antonio, 3-1.

The RockHounds now lead Frisco by five games ... Corpus Christi by seven and San Antonio by nine. There are 17 games remaining in the regular season (10 at home & seven on the road for the RockHounds).

### **Popcorn, Peanuts, Fresh Cut Grass**

The RockHounds are home at Citibank Ballpark through Monday, August 24, hosting the Tulsa Drillers, Double-A affiliate of the Colorado Rockies. Fireworks follow Saturday night's game.

Reminder: RockHounds Monday-Saturday home games in August and September will start at 6:30 p.m..

For tickets, groups, picnics, youth teams of the night and more ... call the RockHounds office at 520-2255. The Citibank Ballpark box office will be open all day, and through the games, each night of the home stand.

### **RockHounds Radio**

The 'Hounds' new radio home is Jack-FM (102.1-FM). RockHounds broadcasts are also available online. Look for the link to Jack-FM on the RockHounds' web site ... then click "Jack On The Box." Broadcast time from Citibank Ballpark Saturday is 6:15 p.m.

### **ROCKHOUNDS VS DRILLERS**

Saturday, August 22nd - Fireworks Kyle Middleton (3-0, 1.50) vs. Keith Weiser (7-13, 5.52)

Sunday, August 23rd - Family Night Tyson Ross (2-2, 6.33) vs. Samuel Deduno (11-2, 2.72)

Monday, August 24th Graham Godfrey (10-6, 3.72) vs. Brandon Durden

### **Brown leads RockHounds to sweep**

By Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter Telegram

Midland RockHounds center fielder Corey Brown had been getting frustrated at the plate against Northwest Arkansas during the three-game series and needed a big hit to get out of those batting woes.

Brown got the big hits he needed on Friday night and it helped the RockHounds to a series sweep over the first place team in the Texas League North Division. Brown's three-run home run in the eighth inning proved to be the difference in the RockHounds' 7-5 come-from-behind victory over the Naturals in front of 5,387 fans at Citibank Ballpark.

Brown, who finished the night going 2 for 4 at the plate, also had a solo home run in a three-run second inning to break out of an 0-for-7 slump against the Naturals and an even worse 1-for-30 slide coming into the game.

This was an especially satisfying night for the 23-year-old center fielder who has shown a lot of potential this season but has also battled injuries, particularly patella tendonitis, that has put him on the disabled list twice and limited him to 52 games.

"It's good to be back," Brown said. "Hopefully, I can just stay healthy for the rest of the season, keep contributing to the team and hopefully win a ring this year."

Midland manager Darren Bush is particularly pleased to see Brown healthy and probably back to his old self again at the plate

"He's been having good (at-bats) but just missing," Bush said. "Tonight he didn't miss. I'm happy for him."

Brown, who's has had plenty of big hits when healthy, got the biggest one of the night when the RockHounds needed it the most. Midland was down 5-4 in the eighth with two outs and both Chris Carter and Alex Valdez in scoring position. Facing hard-throwing righty Juan Abreu, Brown faced a 1-1 count when he unloaded on a fastball over the right-center field wall, an approximate 410 feet.

"I was just hoping to kind of get me a fastball in the air 'cause I was kind of excited with a lot of fans here," Brown said. "Since I've been back from the DL, this was a good day to make some good contact and get some balls to fall in. That three-run bomb really helped."

Brown's heroics helped to overcome a rare sluggish start for Travis Banwart, who seemed to struggle hitting his spots against the Naturals.

Northwest Arkansas jumped on Banwart for three-consecutive singles in the first inning but only got one run out of it. Then in the second, the Naturals tagged him for three more runs for a 4-0 lead.

The RockHounds responded to three-run outburst by the Naturals with a three-run bottom of the second inning behind their power stroke. Matt Spencer led off the frame with a solo homer to right off Matt Kniginzky. Then with two outs, Brown hit a solo shot over the right field fence. Then Jemile Weeks, not to be outdone, hit a line shot into the right field bullpen for his first home run of the season to close the gap to 4-3.

"That's been our offense the entire year," Brown said. "We have a great lineup and you really can't pitch around any guy. From top to bottom I think we have guys who can hit. It doesn't matter how many runs we're down by, we're going to be up there fighting."

Still, a team hitting three solo home runs in one inning doesn't happen very often in professional baseball.

"That was nice and I think that's the first time we've had three in one inning," Bush said. "It was nice to see."

Midland tied the game at 4 with a run in the third and the rest was left up to the bullpen of Jason Fernandez, Rocky Roquet, Steve Sharpe (8-1) and Jared Lansford, who combined to allow one run on six hits over six innings.

It got a little hairy in the ninth when the Naturals loaded the bases with one out, but Lansford picked up his 11th save and second in as many days by striking out Corey Smith and getting pinch hitter Jeff Howell to fly out to right.

"It's definitely a huge confidence boost to come out and sweep (the Naturals) here but now we've got Tulsa coming in and they've got a great pitching staff," Brown said. "We're going to have to come out and keep banging as well."

## NOTEBOOK

**GETTING SOME SEPARATION:** With the RockHounds winning on Friday and Frisco losing at home to Tulsa, 3-0, Midland extended its lead over the RoughRiders in the Texas League South Division by five games.

Midland manager Darren Bush said while the sweep of Northwest Arkansas was nice, every game is huge at this time of the season. With 17 games remaining in the regular season, Midland has put itself in good position to earn a postseason berth.

**'HOUND BITES:** Midland is now 9-3 against Northwest Arkansas this season. ...1B Chris Carter went 0 for 2 but drew two walks. Arguably the Texas League's best hitter, Carter has hit in 31 of his last 34 games. ...With a walk on Friday, Archie Gilbert has now reached base in 29 of the last 32 games. ...Shane Peterson extended his on-base streak to 22 games by going 1 for 4.

TONIGHT'S MATCHUP: The RockHounds welcome the Tulsa Drillers for a three-game series at Citibank Ballpark with tonight's first game getting underway at about 6:30.

Going on the mound for Midland is right-hander Kyle Middleton (3-0, 1.50 ERA), who was named on Monday as the Texas League Pitcher of the Week after going 2-0 and allowing just three runs and striking out 15 in 11 innings of work for the week of Aug. 9-15.

The probable starter for the Drillers is left-hander Keith Weiser (7-13, 5.52)

## **Giants Overcome Ports, 4-3**

### **Stockton stumbles in series opener**

**STOCKTON, Calif.**— The Stockton Ports (55-69) a 3-1 lead in the second, but were unable to hang on to the small lead against the San Jose Giants (80-44). The Ports lost Game 1 of the three-game set, 4-3 at Banner Island Ballpark on Friday.

The Ports collected nine hits—five coming in the second frame—and left 12 runners stranded. Shortstop Dusty Coleman went 3x3 and Jermaine Mitchell collected two hits in the game, while Grant Desme walked three times in the contest. LHP Anthony Capra gave up three runs on eight hits in 5.1 innings of work. Ben Hornbeck picked up the loss for the Ports, giving up the winning run on four hits in 2.0 innings of relief. Nick Walters tossed 1.2 hitless frames to close the game for Stockton.

San Jose made it 1-0 in the top of the first, as Thomas Neal blast a solo shot, which landed in the visitor's bullpen.

Stockton retaliated by scoring three in the second. With two out, second baseman Frank Martinez smacked a triple to right field. He scored on an RBI single by Coleman. Coleman advanced to second on a passed ball while Mitchell was at bat. Mitchell collected his second single of the game, which allowed Coleman to score. Left fielder Shane Keough singled, and then first baseman Steve Kleen singled to score Mitchell. Desme grounded out to end the frame.

Neal made it 3-2 with his 20<sup>th</sup> home run in the top of the third. His second home run of the night landed over the mini monster wall in left field. Neal finished the contest 2x3 with three RBI. He has collected four home runs off Ports pitchers this season.

The Giants pulled ahead, 4-3, in the seventh frame with Hornbeck on the mound. Second baseman Nick Noonan singled, and was followed on base by Neal, who walked. Catcher Nestor Rojas notched an RBI single to score Noonan.

The Ports had at least one base runner in each inning from the fourth to ninth innings, but were unable to bring any runner home.

With one out in the eighth inning, Todd Johnson collected a pinch hit single. Martinez popped out for the second out of the frame. Johnson advanced to third on a single by Coleman. Coleman stole second while Mitchell was batting. Mitchell was called out on strikes, leaving runners stranded at second and third. Ports manager Aaron Nieckula vehemently argued the struck out looking call, arguing that the third strike was letter-high, with home plate umpire Antonio Gutierrez, and was ejected from the game.

Walters retired the Giants in order in the ninth. The Ports put runners on first and second in the ninth, but Matt Smith flew out to shallow left field to end the game.

The Ports will take on the Giants at 7:05 p.m. on Saturday at Banner Island Ballpark. LHP Daniel Haigwood (2-1, 2.20) will start for Stockton, and face off against LHP Paul Oseguera (4-6, 3.91), who will start for San Jose.

## **Oakland A's MLN: Desme Inching Closer**

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Melissa Lockard  
OaklandClubhouse.com

Aug 21, 2009

Grant Desme moved himself closer to achieving a statistical milestone on Thursday in Stockton. We have the details of Thursday's action in the Oakland A's system, as well as some news and notes inside...

### **Desme Moving Closer To 30-30**

It has been so long since the Oakland A's have had a 30-30 player in their system that even the A's Director of Player Development Keith Lieppman couldn't think of when the last time was that an A's farmhand reached that statistical milestone. Stockton Grant Desme crept closer to that achievement on Thursday when he blasted his 28th homer of the season. Desme already has 37 stolen bases.

Unfortunately for the Stockton Ports, Desme's blast wasn't enough for the team to pull out a victory over their rivals, the Modesto Nuts. Stockton managed only Desme's solo homer and two RBIs from Jermaine Mitchell, as the Ports fell by a score of 4-3.

Starter Carlos Hernandez had one bad inning, and it cost him. He went seven strong innings, but allowed four runs in the second and that was enough to earn the loss. He struck-out seven and walked one. Mickey Storey gave the Ports a chance to earn the win late with two scoreless innings in relief. He struck-out five and allowed only one hit.

The story for the Ports right now is Desme's attempt to reach that exclusive 30-30 club. The centerfielder began the year with Kane County and he hit .274 with 11 homers and 24 stolen bases in 69 games for the Cougars before being promoted to Stockton. Since arriving in Stockton, he has been a one-man wrecking crew. He has hit 17 homers, swiped 13 bases and has posted an 1033 OPS in 53 games.

This is Desme's first full pro season. The Cal Poly alum was the A's 2007 second round pick, but he missed virtually all of last season with shoulder and wrist injuries.

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### **Barton Rehabs With Ports**

A's first-baseman Daric Barton continued his rehab from a hamstring injury on Thursday, this time in Stockton. Barton had been rehabbing in Arizona with the A's Rookie League team. He went 0-4 for the Ports on Thursday.

According to Lieppman, Barton has looked healthy while he was in Arizona. He will either join the Sacramento River Cats when they return from their East Coast roadtrip or rejoin the A's directly, possibly as soon as this weekend.

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### **Chacon Sharp In River Cats' Win**

Sacramento earned a 6-1 victory over the Nashville Sounds on Thursday night. Anthony Recker led the way for the River Cats with a 3-4 night that included a run-scoring double off of rehabbing Brewers' starter Jeff Suppan. Jeff Baisley, Matt Carson, Adrian Cardenas and Eric Patterson had multi-hit nights.

Starter Shawn Chacon earned the win over Suppan with seven outstanding innings. He allowed only two hits and one run with four strike-outs and two walks. Brad Kilby and Jerry Blevins nailed down the win by pitching a scoreless eighth and ninth, respectively.

The River Cats' offense has been hot and a number of Sacramento hitters extended streaks on Thursday. Recker has hit safely in seven out of his last eight games and is batting .429 over his last 10 games. He has a .251 average and a 754 OPS for Sacramento this season.

Baisley is now working on a six-game hitting streak and he has raised his average to .245 with a .328 average for the month of August. Cardenas added his third consecutive multi-hit game and he has a five-game hitting streak and a .436 average over his last 10 games. Cardenas hit second on Thursday after batting near the bottom of the River Cats' line-up for his first few weeks with the team. Carson homered for the second straight game to extend his River Cats' team lead to 18 for the season.

Brett Wallace had what for him lately would qualify as an off-night, collecting only one run-scoring hit in five at-bats. Wallace has been on a tear on the River Cats' road-trip. In seven games against Memphis and Nashville, Wallace is 13-31

with five homers and nine RBIs. He has drive-in runs in five straight games. Since joining the A's organization, Wallace is batting .306 with seven homers and 18 RBIs in 26 games.

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### **Simmons Day-To-Day**

Sacramento starter [James Simmons](#) struck-out 11 in six innings in his last start on August 5th. Unfortunately, the A's first pick from the 2007 draft hasn't been able to build on that start, as he has been out with a strained right deltoid muscle. According to Lieppman, Simmons is day-to-day with the injury and it isn't clear whether he will make it back on the field before the end of the regular season.

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### **Leon Dazzles Again in Midland Win**

[Arnold Leon](#) had made himself into a solid prospect as a reliever during his first year-plus in the A's organization. He is quickly becoming an even better prospect as a starter since he moved into the rotation at the start of August.

In four starts, Leon has allowed only one run on eight hits and two walks in 16.2 innings. He has struck-out 15. As a reliever, Leon had a 4.74 ERA in 43.2 innings for Midland this season. In three of Leon's four starts, he has allowed no runs and he has allowed two or fewer hits. In his first start, Leon combined with [Jason Fernandez](#) to toss a no-hitter.

On Thursday, in his fourth start of the season, Leon was brilliant once again. The only thing that got to him was his pitch count, which is still limited as he makes the transition from relieving. In 4.2 innings, Leon allowed five hits and no runs. He struck-out six and walked none.

[Justin Friend](#), [Jonathan Hunton](#) and [Jared Lansford](#) combined to toss 4.1 innings of two-run baseball to help the Rockhounds earn a 3-2 victory over NW Arkansas. Lansford earned his 10th save of the season and Friend notched his first Double-A win.

The Rockhounds' offense was limited to only three runs, but they did collect 10 hits. [Corey Wimberly](#), [Chris Carter](#) and [Alexander Valdez](#) had multi-hit games. [Jemile Weeks](#) had a two-RBI single that proved to be the difference in the game.

Carter made another start in the outfield, something that has happened with frequency since last Friday. He spent some of the game in left and some at first base, with [Shane Peterson](#) swapping spots with Carter defensively. According to Lieppman, Carter's move into the outfield isn't being done with any specific promotion plan in mind for this season. The A's coaching staff had been interested in seeing Carter play in the outfield for awhile and it worked out that with the Rockhounds' current roster alignment, it made sense for Carter to give the outfield a shot. Lieppman has been pleased with how Carter has done out there thus far.

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### **Kane County and Vancouver Fall**

The Kane County Cougars and Vancouver Canadians both lost on Thursday night. The Cougars dropped a 5-1 decision to Beloit, while the C's lost to Eugene by a score of 4-2.

Ryne Jernigan had a homer for Vancouver, his second of the season, and [Tyreece House](#) had two hits to pace the Vancouver offense. [Ronny Morla](#) got the loss by allowing three earned runs in 4.1 innings.

Kane County's struggling offense managed only six hits, as [Leonardo Gil](#), [Tyler Ladendorf](#) and [Chris Berroa](#) each had two hits. Ladendorf drove-in the Cougars' only run. [Shawn Haviland](#) got the loss. He allowed two runs in 4.2 innings.

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### **Update On A's Recent Signees**

The A's Arizona-based coaching staff are eagerly awaiting the arrival of Oakland's recently signed draft picks [Grant Green](#), Max Stassi and Ian Krol, all of whom signed on Monday.

Green, Stassi and Krol will all report to the A's complex at Papago Park over the next few days. After undergoing physicals and the standard first-year player drills and orientation, the three 2009 picks could see playing time either in the Arizona Rookie League or the Northwest League during the season's final weeks. Lieppman anticipates that Green won't be ready to play in either of those leagues and instead will debut during the A's Instructional League, but Stassi and Krol could report to the A's Rookie League affiliate or to short-season Vancouver if they are fit.

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### **De Los Santos Progressing**



After missing a month, A's pitching prospect Fautino De Los Santos is back on track with his rehab from 2008 Tommy John surgery. De Los Santos has made three appearances since August 9th. The first two appearances were single-inning outings, but the most recent outing was a two-inning affair. In total, De Los Santos has tossed eight innings in five outings for the AZL A's this season. He has 10 strike-outs and one walk over that stretch.

Despite the progress, De Los Santos isn't expected to play for any other affiliate but the AZL A's this season. He is ticketed to participate in the A's Arizona Instructional League this fall.

## **STOCKTON CAN'T HOLD ANOTHER LATE LEAD**

By Scott Niendorf, Stockton Record

STOCKTON - The Ports tried to set the tone early as they opened their final season series against California League-leading San Jose in front of 5,008 fans on Friday at Stockton Ballpark.

Although Stockton scored three runs in the second inning for the early lead, it was Thomas Neal who made a statement, hitting two home runs in a Giants 4-3 victory.

Nestor Rojas' two-out single through the legs of pitcher Ben Hornbeck in the top of the seventh inning proved to be the winning hit for San Jose (38-16 second half, 80-44).

Stockton (30-24, 55-69) threatened in the eighth by putting with two runners in scoring position, but after home plate umpire Antonio Gutierrez rung up Jermaine Mitchell on a called third strike to end the inning, Ports manager Aaron Nieckula was ejected.

Stockton starting pitcher Anthony Capra surrendered the first of Neal's home runs, his 19th and 20th of the season, to give the Giants a 1-0 lead in the first.

But Stockton scored three runs with a two-out rally in the bottom of the second, highlighted by Frank Martinez's triple.

Dusty Coleman scored Martinez on a bloop single to center and, after taking second on a passed ball, scored on Jermaine Mitchell's single. Shane Keough singled, and Steve Kleen's hit drove in Mitchell for a 3-1 advantage.

San Jose's Darren Ford tied it 3-3 in the fifth with a leadoff ground-rule double onto the right-field lawn and scored on a sacrifice bunt and sacrifice fly by Neal, his third RBI of the game.

The Giants knocked Capra out of the game in the sixth after giving up a leadoff double, a strikeout and a walk. Ben Hornbeck relieved and struck out the final two batters to end the threat. Capra (2-0, 2.62 ERA) finished with five strikeouts and leads the Oakland farm system with 142 strikeouts.

## **Cougars Lose a Wild One in Beloit**

8<sup>th</sup>-inning rally not enough as Kane County drops sixth out of last seven

**BELOIT, Wisc.** – The Kane County Cougars rallied for five runs Friday night in the top of the eighth inning to take a 6-5 lead against the Beloit Snappers, only to allow four runs in the bottom half and fall 9-6 at Pohlman Field. The Cougars have lost six of their last seven and are six games under .500.

Down 5-1 through seven innings, the Cougars scored five in the eighth against the Beloit bullpen. Chris Berroa and Tyler Ladendorf each drove in a run, Jeremy Barfield belted a game-tying two-run double and Franklin Hernandez delivered an RBI single for a 6-5 lead.

The advantage did not last long. The Cougars' bullpen had retired 15 straight hitters entering the bottom of the eighth, but Beloit scored four times against Daniel Thomas (0-1) to make it 9-6. Billy Bullock (3-0) ended up with the win, and Daniel Berlind posted his first save. Cougars starter Murphy Smith gave up five runs in 1 1/3 innings, forcing the Cougars to go to the bullpen early. Matt Fitts and Josue Selenis combined for 4 2/3 shutout work, and Thomas logged a flawless seventh before the eighth-inning trouble.

The Cougars (24-30, 65-59) and Snappers (22-32, 50-74) continue the four-game set Saturday night at 7 CT. Kenny Smalley (9-6, 2.46) will face Liam Hendriks (1-4, 3.99).