

A's News Clips, Saturday, August 29, 2009

A's let a big lead get away in loss to Angels

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's don't have as much on the line as the Los Angeles Angels with the dog days of August drawing to a close. But a loss such as Friday's 11-7 setback in Anaheim is enough to leave any team fuming.

Oakland had a second straight victory in its grasp until the Angels scored seven runs in the bottom of the seventh to erase a four-run deficit.

A crowd of 41,912 that was booing the home team for its bumbling ways earlier in the night quickly changed its tone. And the Halos secured an improbable victory that may loom large if they eventually win the American League West.

Two errors and a blown umpire's call in the seventh helped fuel the Angels' rally, as they reversed the A's 6-2 lead. Not that the A's were deflecting blame.

"It was all one inning," manager Bob Geren said. "You can't give a team with that firepower two extra outs."

The sequence began with A's third baseman Adam Kennedy airmailing a throw to first base on Howie Kendrick's grounder, Kennedy's second error of the game and his team-high 12th of the season. With runners on the corners and one out, Bobby Abreu hit a grounder that first baseman Daric Barton mishandled. Barton still managed to shuffle the ball to reliever Craig Breslow covering first.

Replays showed Breslow tagged Abreu before Abreu touched the bag, but first base umpire Greg Gibson called Abreu safe, and a run scored to make it 6-3. Gibson had an explanation for Breslow.

"I just told him I tagged him," Breslow said. "He just said his foot was on the base when I tagged him. The (replay) would support otherwise."

Brad Ziegler replaced Breslow and coaxed Torii Hunter's ground out, but Vladimir Guerrero blooped a two-run single to right to bring the Angels within one. After Juan Rivera's infield single, Kendry Morales drilled an 0-2 pitch to right-center for a three-run homer that put the Angels ahead for good, 8-6.

Morales had a career night, finishing 5-for-5 with two homers, six RBI and tying an Angels single-game record with four extra-base hits.

His stats could have been gaudier. He ripped an RBI double off the top of the right-field wall that was reviewed on instant replay but ruled to have stayed in the park. Morales leads the AL with 42 RBI since the All-Star break.

Ziegler thought he buried a changeup low enough on Morales' go-ahead homer.

"He took a bad swing," Ziegler said. "He was way out in front, but he still found a way to get the barrel on it."

The Angels added two more in the eighth, with Morales driving in another run in that frame.

The comeback capped quite a day for Los Angeles, which bolstered its stretch run by acquiring Tampa Bay left-hander Scott Kazmir for two minor leaguers.

The A's? They should have had a third straight victory tucked away for Brett Tomko. The right-hander delivered his third stellar effort in three starts for Oakland, allowing four hits and two runs over 52/3 innings. Scott Hairston's two-run homer highlighted a five-run third.

Tomko wasn't bitter about losing the win.

"Being a reliever for a couple of years, you realize it's not an easy thing," he said. "I've been there. It's tough."

A's notebook: Barton's bid to stick at first base starts now

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Barton's bid to stick at first base starts now

ANAHEIM — The A's optioned Tommy Everidge to Triple-A Sacramento before Friday's game with the Los Angeles Angels, leaving Daric Barton as the primary first baseman for the rest of the season.

Outfielder/second baseman Eric Patterson was recalled to take Everidge's roster spot, giving manager Bob Geren some flexibility with left fielder Scott Hairston (quad) and center fielder Rajai Davis (thumb) playing through injuries.

But the significance of this latest move: Barton has the chance to finish strong and leave a lasting impression with the A's brass going into the offseason. Some of the A's most promising prospects are at first base, and the competition should be tough when spring training rolls around.

Barton entered Friday 5-for-15 in five starts since being activated from the disabled list. He missed 23 games with a strained left hamstring.

"He had some pretty good swings (Thursday)," Geren said. "He just came off the DL. After missing that much time, it takes a few days to get your timing back."

Everidge played regularly after getting his first major league call-up July 28. He got off to a good start but was hitting .146 (6-for-41) with one RBI over his past 12 games.

Rosters can expand to 40 on Tuesday, and Geren didn't rule out Everidge returning at some point.

Others figuring to get a look at first during the spring include Chris Carter — who put up huge stats at Double-A Midland before getting promoted to Sacramento — and Sean Doolittle, who has been sidelined most of this season with knee problems.

"The idea that we might have a lot of talented players at any one position is exciting," Geren said.

≈ Patterson has enjoyed a terrific all-around season for Sacramento, helping the River Cats clinch their eighth Pacific Coast League South Division title in 10 years. This is his third call-up of 2009. During his last stint, July 24-Aug. 5, Geren indicated Patterson would get substantial time in center. But he hit just .182, and when Rajai Davis got hot at the plate, Patterson was expendable.

The A's have just three non-pitchers on the bench, but Patterson provides some versatility. He was splitting time among center field, left field and second base at Sacramento.

"I told Bob, 'I'll play wherever you need me,'" Patterson said.

≈ Shortstop Grant Green, the A's first-round pick, has been training with the organization's rookie league team in Phoenix. He'll continue doing the same with Single-A Stockton as he gets back into shape before participating in the fall instructional league.

Green, who went to USC, hasn't played competitively since the collegiate season ended, and the A's are working him back in slowly.

Fourth-round pick Max Stassi, a catcher, was 4-for-13 with four RBI for short-season, low Single-A Vancouver entering Friday.

Too much Morales, too many errors

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Angels first baseman Kendry Morales and poor defense ruined the A's evening and another fine start by Brett Tomko on Friday at Angel Stadium.

With Oakland up by four runs on the AL West leaders to start the seventh, third baseman Adam Kennedy bobbled a grounder by Howie Kendrick, then threw the ball away - the start of one of the A's worst innings of the season. The Angels sent 11 men to the plate and scored seven unearned runs in an eventual 11-7 victory.

"I just launched it," Kennedy said of his bad throw. "You give those guys an inch, and they'll just keep going."

Kennedy's error, his second of the game, put Kendrick at second, and after a one-out base hit by Chone Figgins, Bobby Abreu hit a grounder that first baseman Daric Barton booted as Kendrick raced in to score. Replays showed that reliever Craig Breslow, who took the toss at first, tagged Abreu before he reached the bag, but Abreu was ruled safe and Barton was charged with an error.

Breslow said he told umpire Greg Gibson he'd made the tag, and "he agreed, but he said Abreu's foot was on the bag," Breslow said. "Pictures would support otherwise."

Oakland has made 11 errors in the past 15 games. Kennedy, playing a new position, has a team-high 12 overall.

Brad Ziegler followed Breslow, and after Torii Hunter grounded out for the second out, Vladimir Guerrero knocked a two-run single to right. Juan Rivera reached on an infield single, and Morales clocked his second homer of the game, a three-run shot to right that put the Angels up 8-6; he finished with five hits and six RBIs.

"We were pitching ahead of him most of the night and he was still finding a way to hit even good pitches," said Ziegler, who threw Morales a changeup down in the zone.

Erick Aybar tripled into the corner in right and trotted in on Kendrick's single up the middle.

That turn of events prevented Tomko from earning his third victory in as many starts with Oakland, but there is little doubt that the 36-year-old right hander is demonstrating he can still be an effective big-league pitcher.

Tomko has allowed three runs in his three starts - and just two while he was on the mound. He gave up a two-out homer to Morales in the second inning, and after Tomko left in the sixth, Breslow surrendered a two-out double to Morales, sending in Guerrero. Morales also had an RBI single in the eighth.

In 162/3 innings with Oakland, Tomko has allowed 12 hits, walked four and struck out 14.

"I've faced some pretty good lineups, going against three first-place teams," Tomko said. "From where I was at after the All-Star break to what's transpired, it's a good feeling."

For the second time in three days, the A's had a video review of a possible home run; both times, the call stood - a foul ball for Jack Cust on Wednesday in Seattle and Morales' RBI double Friday off the top of the right-field scoreboard. Morales also got a video review on his homer at the Coliseum in July; the ball hit a camera beyond the fence.

Oakland scored five in the third off rookie right-hander Trevor Bell, who came in with an ERA of 9.49. Kurt Suzuki provided a bases-loaded single, Cust a sacrifice fly and Scott Hairston a two-run homer.

Clemente-worthy effort

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Catcher **Kurt Suzuki** has helped raise more than \$60,000 for the **Jon Wilhite** Fund to help with medical expenses after Wilhite was nearly killed in a car accident in April. For his work, Suzuki is expected to be considered for Major League Baseball's prestigious **Roberto Clemente** Award, which recognizes charitable work in the community. Nominees will be announced next week.

"It's amazing what Kurt and his wife, **Renee**, have done," said **Kristy Fick** of the A's media relations department, who has helped with the Wilhite Fund activities. "Kurt has dug deep, and he's put so much love and serious thought into it. You can't fake that. And it's nice to see fans and players come together to really help raise funds together. People are trying to help any way they can."

Fick said that when the "mystery" autographed balls ran out during a fund-raiser at the Coliseum last month, fans were just providing the donation amount, anyway, and she noted that athleticsnation.com raised more than \$2,000 in online donations.

Wilhite, the lone survivor of the crash that killed Angels starter **Nick Adenhart** and two other friends, will throw out the first pitch tonight. Wilhite, who did the same thing at the Coliseum last month, is Suzuki's former college teammate, and Suzuki's parents have flown in from Hawaii for tonight's game. Suzuki said his parents became friends with Wilhite's parents during Cal State Fullerton's College World Series run in 2004.

Briefly: Closer **Andrew Bailey** said he's fine after slightly tweaking his sore left knee while fielding a bunt Thursday. Bailey has a bruised patella tendon, and there's the possibility he might need some cartilage smoothed out in the offseason. ... Infielder **Bobby Crosby** (calf) had a day off from running. He's likely to run the bases today and could potentially play a game or two on a rehab assignment before he is eligible to come off the DL on Wednesday.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser

Title town: Triple-A Sacramento clinched its eighth Pacific Coast League Southern Division title in 10 years; the River Cats have won the past two Triple-A championships. "The ring is there for them year in and year out," said Eric Patterson, called up from Sacramento on Friday.

A's let a victory slip away

Missed call costs Oakland in loss to Halos

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- It was shaping up as a wholly satisfying evening at Angel Stadium for the A's on a number of levels.

It ended up being the kind of lose-from-ahead nightmare that can't, on any level, be pinned on the power of the Rally Monkey.

No, the A's had only themselves to blame for Friday night's 11-7 loss in the second game of a four-game series against the American League West leaders.

First-base umpire Greg Gibson probably deserves an assist, but he wasn't the one kicking routine grounders, throwing balls into the dugout or making Kendry Morales look like Albert Pujols on his best day.

It was Oakland that squandered a rare offensive explosion, wasted another fine outing from right-hander Brett Tomko and blew the five-run lead they took into the bottom of the sixth inning.

"It's tough," said Tomko, who was leading, 6-1, when he left the game after allowing four hits and a walk with five strikeouts over 5 2/3 innings. "The bad call at first base didn't help, but you can't give a team like that a couple extra outs."

The call to which Tomko referred came two batters after A's third baseman Adam Kennedy made his second error of the night, firing the ball into the Oakland dugout after picking up a routine grounder by Howard Kendrick to open the bottom of the seventh.

After Chone Figgins singled to right with one out off lefty Craig Breslow, who had taken over for Tomko in the sixth and allowed the third of Morales's four extra-base hits to make it 6-2, first baseman Daric Barton booted a broken-bat grounder off the bat of Bobby Abreu.

Barton recovered and fed the ball to Breslow, who made a sweeping tag on Abreu before their footrace to the bag came to an end. Gibson, however, called Abreu safe as Kendrick scored to further trim the lead.

"He didn't dispute that I tagged him," Breslow said of the ump. "He said [Abreu] was already on the base."

Replays said otherwise -- in a big way -- and Breslow held his hands about two feet apart to illustrate how far from the bag Abreu was when he was tagged.

"The replays," said A's manager Bob Geren, "clearly showed he was out."

Righty Brad Ziegler took over from there, and he got Torii Hunter to ground out. Had the A's gotten the call from Gibson, the inning would have been over.

Instead, it had to feel to Oakland fans as though it went on forever.

"It's frustrating," Ziegler said. "That [call] changed the whole inning."

Vladimir Guerrero dropped a two-run single into right, cutting the lead to one. Next, Juan Rivera reached on a swinging bunt that bounced off the plate.

And then came that man again. Morales, who had opened the scoring with a solo homer off Tomko in the second, yanked a three-run shot into the bleachers beyond right-center field.

"I made a pretty good pitch, a changeup down in the zone," Ziegler said. "He took a bad swing at it -- we had him way out in front. But he still found a way to get the barrel on it."

Not content with having taken the lead, the Angels piled on. Erick Aybar tripled, and Kendrick finished what he started with an RBI single. All seven runs in the inning were unearned.

"We made too many mistakes in the inning," Geren said. "You can't give a team with that kind of firepower extra outs."

Especially with Morales mashing everything in sight. His RBI single in the eighth gave him a career-high five hits (in five at-bats) and matched his career high of six RBIs.

"He's been what I consider their best player," Geren said. "He's got a lot of talent."

"Today was my day," Morales said.

Ya think?

"He's a good, quality hitter, and he had a great day," Tomko said. "He had a *huge* day."

Added Ziegler: "He's seeing the ball well. We have to make some adjustments."

The A's seemed to be seeing the ball pretty well themselves Friday. They batted around in the third, getting a two-run single from Kurt Suzuki, a sacrifice fly by Jack Cust and a two-run homer from Scott Hairston. Kennedy padded the lead with a fourth-inning single after Barton doubled and moved to third on a passed ball.

Kennedy, Suzuki, Rajai Davis, Ryan Sweeney and Cliff Pennington each had two of Oakland's 13 hits, and Suzuki finished with three RBIs, but none of that was of much solace in the church-quiet clubhouse after the game.

"It was all one inning," Geren said.

"Everything," Ziegler offered, "just kind of fell apart."

A's recall Patterson, option Everidge

Geren makes moves to provide more versatility

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- Eric Patterson got to celebrate with his Triple-A Sacramento teammates Thursday night after the River Cats clinched a spot in the Pacific Coast League playoffs.

On Friday night, he was wearing an A's uniform. Not a bad 24 hours.

Patterson, among the top candidates for the PCL's MVP award, was called up for his third stint of the season with Oakland in advance of the second game of a four-game series against the host Angels.

He took the roster spot of first baseman Tommy Everidge, who was optioned back to Sacramento.

A's manager Bob Geren explained that the move was made to give his three-man bench more versatility. Patterson, who was batting .306 with 56 RBIs and 43 stolen bases in 110 games with the River Cats, can play second base and in the outfield.

Everidge batted .224 with seven RBIs and 17 strikeouts in 24 games after being called up from Sacramento on July 28. Geren said Daric Barton will get the majority of the playing time at first base for the time being, but the skipper didn't rule out a return trip for Everidge after big league rosters expand Sept. 1

Patterson said the promotion caught him by surprise, primarily because there was a recent meeting with Sacramento manager Tony DeFrancesco that suggested everyone in the room likely was going to be with the team for its upcoming postseason run.

That would have been fine with Patterson, but as he noted, "You play the game to get to this level."

In his previous two stints with the A's, Patterson batted .167 (5-for-30) in 12 games.

Barton getting a second look at first

Oakland (56-72) at Los Angeles (76-51), 6:05 p.m. PT

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- Daric Barton made a splashy big league debut in 2007, hitting well over .300 after a late-season callup, but he struggled mightily in his first full season in the Majors, batting .226 in 140 games last year.

That put his status as Oakland's first baseman of the present and future in serious jeopardy. The A's signed veteran Jason Giambi in the offseason, and Giambi was the club's primary first baseman before he was placed on the disabled list on July 20 and subsequently released.

Meanwhile, Barton has spent much of the season at Triple-A Sacramento or injured.

He was called up for a second stint with the A's when Giambi was placed on the DL, but he joined Giambi on the DL eight days later. And when Giambi was released, Tommy Everidge was recalled from Sacramento to take over at first base.

Barton, however, appears to be getting another shot at proving he can live up to the considerable hype that followed him throughout the Minors. He came off the DL a week ago, and Everidge was optioned back to Sacramento on Friday, clearing the path for Barton to reclaim the position.

A's manager Bob Geren said Barton, who batted .333 (5-for-15) in his first five starts off the DL and was in the starting lineup on Friday, will be back in the lineup Saturday for the third game of a four-game series at Angel Stadium -- and likely will be the starter whenever Oakland faces a right-handed pitcher.

"I want to give him some more [playing] time after missing that much time [on the DL]," Geren said.

No matter how well Barton plays between now and the end of the season, he'll have his work cut out for him next spring. The A's appear well stocked with potential First Basemen of the Future, including Chris Carter, Sean Doolittle and Everidge.

Brett Wallace, a third baseman at Sacramento, could be in the mix, too, if the A's decide he's better suited for the other corner of the infield.

"The idea that we might have a lot of talented options at the position is exciting," Geren said. "That's a good thing."

Pitching matchup

OAK: RHP Vin Mazzaro (4-9, 5.32 ERA)

Mazzaro flirted with disaster in the early innings Monday in Seattle, stranding five runners after allowing three hits, a walk and hitting a batter in the first two frames. His command never really improved, and the Mariners went the quick-strike route. Jose Lopez hit a solo homer in the third and Ken Griffey Jr. hit a two-run shot in the fifth to stick the 22-year-old rookie with his ninth loss in his past 11 decisions. Mazzaro was pulled after the fifth, having allowed three runs on five hits, four walks and two hit batters while striking out four. He's faced the Halos once this season, getting torched for eight runs -- four earned -- on 10 hits and two walks over three innings of a loss on July 18.




LAA: RHP Jered Weaver (13-5, 4.03 ERA)

Weaver didn't have his best stuff against the Tigers on Monday, allowing five runs on eight hits over 5 1/3 innings at Angel Stadium. Miguel Cabrera was the main culprit, as he hit a run-scoring double and two-run homer against Weaver. But the bullpen was the other culprit. Weaver exited the game with two runners on in the sixth and the Angels down by three runs. But by the end of the inning, the Tigers led by 10. Weaver is 2-2 with a 3.28 ERA in eight career starts against the A's.

Dribblers ...

Geren didn't have anything new to report on lefty Dallas Braden, who is in his hometown of Stockton, Calif., getting physical therapy on his left foot, which landed him on the disabled list on Aug. 1. ... Bobby Crosby (left calf) had a scheduled day off from running Friday. He's eligible to come off the DL on Sept. 2. ... Righty reliever Brad Ziegler entered Friday's game with a 1.33 ERA over his previous 26 outings. ... Rajai Davis' streak of 12 successful stolen-base attempts ended when he was thrown out at second in the first inning Friday. It was the longest streak of his career and longest by an A's player since Miguel Tejada stole 12 in a row between Sept. 14, 2002, and Sept. 14, 2003. ... In honor of the 20th anniversary of the Bay Bridge World Series, the Sacramento River Cats will hold a tribute to the 1989 World Series champion A's on Saturday at Raley Field. World Series MVP Dave Stewart, Dave Henderson and Tony Phillips will be on hand, along with the official 1989 World Series trophy.

Up next

- Sunday: Athletics (Brett Anderson, 7-9, 4.35) at Angels (John Lackey, 8-7, 4.16), 12:35 p.m. PT 
- Monday: Athletics (Gio Gonzalez, 4-5, 5.88) vs. Royals (Luke Hochevar, 6-7, 5.52), 7:05 p.m. PT 
- Tuesday: Athletics (Edgar Gonzalez, 0-1, 5.24) vs. Royals (Kyle Davies, 5-9, 5.94), 7:05 p.m. PT 

It's the Angels' lucky day

Associated Press

ANAHEIM – Kendry Morales went 5 for 5 with two homers and six RBIs, and the Los Angeles Angels used a seven-run surge in the seventh inning to rally past the A's 11-7 on Friday night.

The Angels increased their American League West lead to five games over Texas.

Morales, who tied a career high for RBIs, put Los Angeles ahead with a three-run shot in the seventh. He also opened the scoring in the second with a solo homer off Brett Tomko.

Morales doubled in each of his next two at-bats and added his 29th home run against Brad Ziegler (1-4) to break Chili Davis' 1996 club record for the most homers in a season by a switch hitter.

For good measure, Morales added an RBI single in the eighth against Santiago Casilla. The Angels' first baseman leads the A.L. with 42 RBIs since the All-Star break and has a team-high 91 in his first full big league campaign.

The four extra-base hits by Morales also tied a club mark. His sixth-inning double off Craig Breslow drove in a run, hitting the top of the 18-foot wall in right-center and bouncing back onto the field. The umpiring crew had to look at a replay to uphold the decision by first-base umpire Greg Gibson, after Angels manager Mike Scioscia contended it was a homer.

All seven runs in the seventh were unearned, the result of first baseman Daric Barton's fielding error on a broken-bat grounder by Bobby Abreu.

José Arredondo (2-3) pitched two innings of one-hit relief for the victory after inheriting a 6-1 deficit. It was the ninth time this season that the Angels won after trailing by four or more runs. In Thursday's series opener, they were held to three hits in a 2-0 loss to Trevor Cahill.

Brian Fuentes got two outs for his major league-leading 37th save in 42 attempts after Kevin Jepsen gave up an RBI single to Kurt Suzuki.

Angels rookie Trevor Bell lasted just 2 2/3 innings in his fourth big league start, giving up five runs and seven hits, including Scott Hairston's sixth homer of the season during Oakland's five-run third. The right-hander has a 10.80 ERA since Scioscia inserted him into the rotation on Aug. 12.

Tomko was handed a 6-1 lead. The 36-year-old right-hander allowed two runs and four hits over 5 2/3 innings and struck out five.

A'S NOTE

Former Angels second baseman Adam Kennedy, the first Oakland player to start at least 40 games at two different infield positions in the same season since Mike Bordick in 1992, committed two errors at third base. The 2002 American League Championship Series MVP also singled home a run in the fourth inning against Darren Oliver.

Davis Beats the Odds: NLHS graduate in Major League Baseball

By David Driver, New London Times, 8/28/09

Baltimore — As a young boy in New London, Rajai Davis would go outside of his home on Cape Ann as late as 11 p.m. to practice his baseball swing.

He would pretend to bat against Major League pitchers on some of those cool New England evenings as he imitated some of his heroes from the 1980s New York Mets, such as Darryl Strawberry and Howard Johnson.

Now, nearly 20 years later, the swings are for real for the 1999 New London High School graduate.

Davis, 28, who made his big league debut in 2006, is in the midst of his best season in the Major Leagues.

The speedy Oakland center fielder had two hits on a recent Sunday in a 3-2 win over the White Sox and is now hitting .300 (60 for 200) with 12 doubles, four triples, two homers, and 25 RBI. He leads Oakland in steals with 24 in 30 tries.

"It has been a blessing. I am thankful God has been working on my side," said Davis, standing beside his locker prior to a game in Baltimore against the Orioles Aug. 12.

Davis is the son of Roscoe and Diane Davis and he spends his offseason with his wife, Marissa, in Connecticut, where he is involved in the Miracle Temple Church in New London.

"I have a great support system with my family and my church family. You need a support team," he said.

Davis, who joined Oakland last season, has seen more playing time as the season has progressed in 2009.

"His season has gone really, really well," said Jim Skaalen, the hitting coach for Oakland. "His work habits are unparalleled. He works as hard as anyone we've got. His attitude is off the charts."

Oakland pitcher Andrew Bailey was impressed with Davis right away in spring training.

"He is a big asset to our team," said Bailey, a product of Wagner College in New York. "He is a rally starter. He gets on base. He makes things happen. He gives 100 percent day in and day out."

Davis has overcome long odds to make the majors, many of them based on geography.

For one he is among the few non-pitchers from New England to make The Show in recent years. He is the product of a small college program (Connecticut-Avery in Groton), unlike many of his peers who played with big budget programs in the warm-weather Sun Belt. And he was drafted in the 38th round by the Pittsburgh Pirates in 2001 after two years of junior college at Avery, which means more than 1,000 players were taken before him that year.

He worked his way up through the Pittsburgh farm system, with stops along the way in Williamsport, Pa., Hickory, N.C., Lynchburg, Va., Altoona, Pa., and Indianapolis. He made his debut in Pittsburgh in 2006 when he hit .143 in 20 at bats for the Bucs.

"A lot of it was persistence and seeing myself here [in the majors], even though I wasn't here," said Davis, who was born in Norwich and has lived in Waterford in recent years. "I was confident in myself that once I got here I was meant to be here. I just worked hard on my ultimate goal to get here."

Davis, who also played football in high school, appeared in 27 games with Pittsburgh in 2007 before he was traded to the San Francisco Giants on July 31 in a deal that sent pitcher Matt Morris to the Pirates.

He played in 51 games with the Giants in 2007 and hit .282 in 142 at bats. He was back with the Giants in 2008 and hit .056 in 12 games before he was claimed off waivers by the A's on April 23, 2008.

"For me it was a fresh start, a new beginning," he said of joining Oakland. "I was excited about the opportunity to come to the A's. The big part was getting to stay in the big leagues and not go to the minors" with the Giants.

Last season with the A's he played in 101 games and hit .260 in 196 at bats with 25 steals. He combined for 29 stolen bases in 2008 with the Giants and A's and became just the seventh player since 1900 to get that many steals in a season with fewer than 250 plate appearances.

"You have to concentrate and set goals," said Davis, who speaks to youth in the off-season about being successful.

Davis spent spring training in Arizona in 2008 and 2009. While many Major League players from the north move to warm weather climates in the winter, Davis comes back to Connecticut.

"I enjoy my time at home, even though it gets cold," he said. "It is important for me to spend time at home."

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Arizona League announces all-star team; Padres' Cody Decker is MVP

August 28, 1:20 PM - [Arizona Baseball Examiner](#) - Rodney Johnson

Former UCLA slugger Cody Decker is the Arizona League MVP. (Photo by ASUCLA Photography)

The Padres made it a double-decker on Thursday when the 2009 Arizona League awards were announced. In 2008 Padres first baseman Jaff Decker was the league Most Valuable Player. This year Cody Decker, also a first baseman for the Pads, took home MVP hardware. Cody, a 22nd round pick from [UCLA](#) in the 2009 draft, has shattered the AZL record books. This season he has set records for RBI (63); extra base hits (39); and total bases (142). His 15 home runs are one shy of the record set by Wladimir Balentien of the Mariners in 2003.

Andy Bottin who led the Mariners to first place division finishes in both halves of the Arizona League split-season, was named AZL Manager of the Year. Bottin is in his second season as Mariners skipper. The M's won the West Division first half title with a 17-11 mark and have clinched the second half title with a 15-10 record with two games left to play.

Bottin spent six seasons as a Mariners coach before becoming manager in 2008. Before that, he spent six seasons as a coach for Everett in the Northwest League. Andy played in the New York Yankees farm system from 1967-72. A Vietnam veteran, Bottin spent 20 years as a policeman in Seattle before returning to baseball. He is a member of both the ASA and USSA softball halls of fame.

Selections by team: Angels (3); Mariners (3); Dodgers (3); Padres (2); Indians; Giants; Brewers.

1B – Cody Decker, Peoria Padres (.354; 15 HR; 63 RBI)
2B – Kevin Mailloux, Peoria Mariners (.318; 5 HR; 37 RBI)
3B – Jesus Brito, Arizona Indians (.366; 3 HR; 25 RBI)
SS – Rolando Gomez, Tempe Angels (.301; 2 HR; 19 RBI)
DH – Eric Oliver, Tempe Angels (.280; 4 HR; 35 RBI)
Catcher – Pedro Tavarez, Arizona Dodgers (325; 1 HR; 26 RBI)
OF – Mike Trout, Tempe Angels (.369; 1 HR; 25 RBI)
OF – Rymer Liriano, Peoria Padres (.349; 8 HR; 42 RBI)
OF – Nick Akins, Arizona Dodgers (.333; 7 HR; 34 RBI)
LP – Anthony Fernandez, Peoria Mariners (5-2; 3.24 ERA; 49 SO)
RP – Cameron Lamb, Scottsdale Giants (3-1; 2.24 ERA; 49 SO)
L Relief – Roberto Feliciano, Arizona Dodgers (1-2; 1.50 ERA; 2 SV)
R Relief – (tie) Jeff Breedlove, Peoria Mariners (2-1; 1.57 ERA; 9 SV)
Maverick Lasker, Arizona Brewers (5-1; 3.26 ERA; 0 SV)

Manager of the Year – Andy Bottin, Peoria Mariners
Most Valuable Player – Cody Decker, Peoria Padres

Arizona League MVPs:

1988 Ed Ricks, Athletics
1989 Leon Glenn, Brewers
1990 Marc Newfield, Mariners
1991 Howard House, Brewers
1992 Brian Rupp, Cardinals
1993 Jason Myers, Giants
1994 Alfonso Mota, Angels; Juan Melo, Padres
1995 Ramon Hernandez, Athletics
1996 Shane Cronin, Padres
1997 Kevin Burford, Padres
1998 Rene Reyes, Rockies
1999 Michael Wenner, Athletics
2000 Luis Montanez, Cubs
2001 Chris Tritle, Athletics
2002 Matt Creighton, Cubs; Felix Pie, Cubs
2003 Michael Aviles, Royals #1
2004 Herman Iribarren, Brewers
2005 Lorenzo Cain, Brewers
2006 Cedric Hunter, Padres
2007 Anthony Norman, Angels
2008 Jaff Decker, Padres
2009 Cody Decker, Padres

The Angels (19-8) scored two runs in the ninth inning after two were out to beat the A's (11-15) 8-6 in Phoenix.

The Giants (19-7) jumped out to an early 5-1 lead and then held on to win 6-4 against the Cubs (12-15) in Mesa.

The Giants play at the A's on Friday in Scottsdale while the Angels are idle. Regardless of the outcome of Friday's game, the East Division second half title will be decided on Saturday when the Giants and Angels meet at Tempe Diablo Stadium. Both games start at 7:00 and admission is free.

Fresno silences Cats' bats

By Jordan Moore, rivercats.com

WEST SACRAMENTO, Calif. - The Sacramento River Cats, after securing their third consecutive PCL Pacific South Division title Thursday night, could not best the Fresno Grizzlies in Friday night's 3-0 loss.

The Cats didn't seem their usual explosive selves, going scoreless for the eighth game this season.

Shown: *Sacramento reliever Michael Benacka pitched a scoreless ninth inning Friday night.*

The Cats managed only three hits on the evening before 11,722 fans at Raley Field. Fresno scored three runs in the second inning and wouldn't manage any more, going scoreless for the next seven innings.

Fresno's second inning opened with Jesus Guzman's 26th double of the season. Then, with two on, second basemen Matt Downs earned two RBIs for the Grizzlies from a base hit to center field. Downs then scored when Clay Timpner singled for the Grizzlies' third and final RBI.

Sacramento walked three times and had three base hits, including an electric seventh-inning, two-out triple from Anthony Recker. The bulky catcher was stranded at third when Yung-Chi Chen grounded out.

Sacramento right-handed starter Jerome Williams threw 8.0 innings, allowing eight hits and the three second inning runs. Williams also picked off Andres Torres at first after he opened the game with a base knock to center. Michael Benacka pitched a 1-2-3 ninth for Sacramento.

The River Cats move to 82-51 on the season, still embracing their recently defended division title. They will play Fresno again Saturday night in Game 4 of the five-game set.

Right-hander Clayton Mortensen will make another start for the Cats opposite Fresno righty Kevin Pucetas on Saturday. Pucetas has a record of 10-4 this season and Mortensen boasts an 8-8 record.

Ross and Donaldson Carry Hounds In Shutout

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

In baseball terms, pitcher + catcher = "battery." The RockHounds battery of Josh Donaldson and Tyson Ross came through ... big time ... as the RockHounds made it back-to-back 4-hit shutouts, defeating Corpus Christi, 4-0, Friday night at Whataburger Field.

Donaldson belted a monster, 3-run home run in the top of the first inning, and Ross pitched 6.0 shutout innings, as the RockHounds took the 4-game series with the Hooks, 3-games-to-1.

Frisco won again at San Antonio, so it's now official: The Texas League South pennant race is a 2-team duel between the RockHounds and RoughRiders.

The two clubs face each other in 6-of-the-last-10 games of the season. The first three of those meetings are in Frisco, beginning Saturday night. The 'Hounds will later host the RoughRiders in the regular season's final three games at Citibank Ballpark.

Donaldson's blast would be the only scoring until Corey Brown belted a solo shot in the eighth inning. "Brownny" appears to be coming out of a sump, as he went 2-for-3 with a double, a walk and the solo shot.

Jemile Weeks continues to impress in his Double-A debut. Oakland's first round draft choice in 2008 (12th overall out of the University of Miami) extended his on-base streak to 12 games with a single and stole his first base as a RockHound.

Ross turned in his second, consecutive, brilliant performance after tossing 7.0 shutout innings against Tulsa at Citibank Ballpark. Oakland's 2nd round draft choice in 2008 out of the University of California, Ross allowed just two hits and one walk over 6.0 innings, striking out five. He allowed a lead-off single to former college rival Jason Castro (who went to Stanford and was Houston's top draft choice in '08)... but the hit was wiped away on a 6-4-3 double play. Ross then pitched out of a huge jam in the sixth, when Jonathan Fixler tripled to lead off the inning. Ross then retired the next three batters, two on strikeouts.

Texas League South

The 'Hounds lead Frisco by three games with 10 to go. Of the 10 games remaining, the 'Hounds at Frisco for a 3-game series before hosting San Antonio in a 4-game set and wrapping up the regular season in a potential 3-game showdown with the RoughRiders at Citibank Ballpark.

Popcorn, Peanuts, Fresh Cut Grass

The RockHounds return to Citibank Ballpark Tuesday to begin a critical, 7-game stand hosting San Antonio and Frisco (September 1-7).

Game times: Games in the final home stand of the regular season begin at 6:30 p.m., with two exceptions: Friday, September 4th at 5:30 p.m. and Sunday, September 6th at 6:00 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 Dr Pepper Ballpark in Frisco Saturday evening is 6:50.

Quakes Score Five In The 9th To Rally Past Ports 8-7

RANCHO CUCAMONGA, Calif. - There are losses, and then there are gut-wrenching losses. Friday night's contest at The Epicenter ended as a gut-wrenching loss for the Stockton Ports. Having held a lead as large as six runs and entering the bottom of the ninth leading 7-3, the Ports saw the Rancho Cucamonga Quakes plate five runs, the final three coming on a walk-off three-run homer from Jeremy Moore, and found themselves on the short end of an 8-7 score. Stockton's loss, combined with Bakersfield's loss earlier in the night, clinches the second half title for the San Jose Giants and assures the Modesto Nuts of a playoff spot, leaving the Boys of Banner Island just one loss away from elimination.

Early in the contest, things were looking bright for Stockton as the offense got off to a quick start. After a one-out single from Shane Keough, Steve Kleen doubled to the gap in left-center, scoring Keough and giving the Ports a quick 1-0 lead. Two batters later with two down, Frank Martinez tripled down the right field line to score Kleen and make it 2-0. Quakes skipper Keith Johnson contested that the ball was hit foul down the line and was immediately thrown out by plate umpire Nate Thompson. Matt Smith came up next and singled to left, scoring Martinez and putting the Ports up 3-0.

After Smith's single, Stockton's bats were quieted by Quakes starter Matt Shoemaker. Shoemaker would 13 of the next 14 he faced without allowing a hit to take him into the sixth. With one down in the sixth, Kleen drilled a solo home run to left to make it 4-0.

Kleen's blast signaled the end of the night for Shoemaker, who received a no-decision after going 5.1 innings, allowing four runs on five hits.

Ports starter Pedro Figueroa, meanwhile, was in the midst of a very strange night. Figueroa continually escaped jams, pitching through the sixth and keeping the Quakes off the board. Stockton's southpaw allowed just two hits in his six innings of work, but walked a season-high seven while recording seven strikeouts.

Figueroa would be in line to receive the win up until Moore's walk-off blast in the ninth. He received a no-decision, and in his six innings of work stranded seven Quakes baserunners.

The Quakes made their first appearance in the run column in the seventh. Jamie Richmond came on to start the inning for Stockton and yielded an infield single to P.J. Phillips. Three batters later with two away, Hector Estrella doubled to right, scoring Phillips and cutting Stockton's lead to 4-1.

Stockton's offense responded with an impressive showing in the eighth. On three singles, the Ports loaded the bases with nobody out facing Quakes reliever Jeremy Haynes. The Quakes, with the bases loaded and nobody out, would dip into their bullpen and call upon Taylor Wilding. Wilding immediately yielded a single up the middle to Kleen on which two runs scored. The throw came back to the infield where it was cut off by first baseman Effren Navarro. Navarro attempted to throw to third to throw out Keough, but his throw went into the stands, allowing Keough to come home and Kleen to go to third and giving the Ports a 7-1 lead.

All three runs that scored in the inning were charged to Haynes who pitched 1.2 innings in the ballgame.

The Quakes, despite falling farther behind, would continue their comeback in the eighth by taking advantage of some poor Stockton defense. With one away, Jay Brossman hit as solo home run off the foul pole in left to make it a 7-2 game. Moore followed and reached on an error made by Christian Vitters at third. The next batter, Clay Fuller, would reach on another fielding error made by Dusty Coleman at short, putting runners at first and second with one out. Richmond got Phillips to fly to center, at which point left-hander Nick Walters was brought in from the 'pen to face switch-hitting pinch-hitter Carlos Colmenares. Both baserunners would advance on a passed ball charged to Smith, then Walters would uncork a wild pitch, scoring Moore from third and cutting the Ports lead to four at 7-3.

The bottom of the ninth for Stockton got off on the wrong foot and ended the same way. Walters started the inning by walking Andrew Romine, then giving up a base hit to Estrella, then walking Nieves to load the bases with nobody out. After Walters struck out Navarro, right-hander Daniel Sattler (0-1) was brought in from the 'pen to face right-handed hitting Jay Brossman with the bases loaded and one away. Brossman greeted Sattler with a single to center, scoring Romine and Estrella and pulling the Quakes to within two and bringing the possible winning run to the plate in Moore. Moore would become exactly that, as he took a 1-0 pitch from Sattler and knocked it high over the center field fence, a walk-off three-run blast that completed a seven-run comeback from the Quakes over the final two innings.

Sattler, who made just his second Ports appearance since being signed out of the Independent Leagues, was charged with the loss as the final two runs that scored on Moore's blast were his. The winning pitcher was Eddie McKiernan (5-4), who pitched a scoreless top of the ninth.

After the tough loss, the Ports will look to rebound on Saturday at The Epicenter when they play the third of their four-game set with the Quakes. Right-hander and Rancho Cucamonga native Scott Hodsdon (6-9, 5.25 ERA) will head to the hill for the Ports, opposed by left-hander Jayson Miller (5-9, 4.74 ERA) for the Quakes. First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

Cougars Walk Off vs. Wisconsin in 10th

Kane County continues hot streak on homestand with walk-off finish

GENEVA, III. – The Kane County Cougars improved to 4-1 on their eight-game homestand after defeating the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, 4-3, Friday night in 10 innings in front of 6,876 at Elfstrom Stadium. Nino Leyja scored the winning run on a Franklin Hernandez bases-loaded popup with the infield fly rule in effect, as a Wisconsin outfielder dropped the ball in shallow right field allowing Leyja to score.

The game was tied, 3-3, after four innings and stayed that way until the 10th. Leyja and Leonardo Gil each singled against Brandon Ritchie (5-1) and were bunted along by Steve Parker. After Mike Spina was walked intentionally to load the bases, Hernandez hit a flyball to shallow right field. Wisconsin's second baseman and right fielder converged, the ball dropped between them and Leyja scampered home with the winning run.

Paul Smyth (1-0) notched the win with two perfect relief innings. Trey Barham and Justin Murray combined with Smyth for 5 1/3 innings of no-hit relief. Starter Anvioris Ramirez gave up three runs -- two earned -- on six hits over 4 2/3 innings in a no-decision.

The Cougars took a 3-2 lead in the third. Spina was hit by a pitch with the bases loaded, and Hernandez nailed an RBI single to score Chris Berroa, and Leyja came home on an error. Wisconsin tied the game in the next frame, and the 3-3 total remained until the the 10th.

The Cougars (29-32, 70-61) and Timber Rattlers (23-37, 57-73) continue the four-game series Saturday night at 6 CT. Mathieu Leblanc-Poirier (3-6, 4.84) will face Cody Scarpetta (4-10, 3.39).

C's heat up against Eugene Emeralds

By Rob Fai / Vancouver Canadians

(Civic Stadium - Eugene, OR) - Just hours after finding out the Canadians had no player named to this year's Northwest league All-Star team, Vancouver decided to simply go out and take their second straight series on the road defeating the Eugene Emeralds 4-2 at Civic Stadium.

The C's got to the Emeralds in the top of the 3rd inning when **3B Marcos Luis** hit his 6th double of the season scoring **LF Rashun Dixon** who led the inning off with a walk off of Eugene RHP Jeffery Ibarra. Shortly after, **CF Tyreace House** singled home **2B Ryne Jernigan** to give the Canadians a 2-0 lead.

Vancouver would tack on two more runs in the top of the 5th inning when Eugene's defense got sloppy as **SS Michael Gilmartin** hit a ball to 2B Joey Railey would couldn't handle it allowing Ryne Jernigan to score. **RF Myrio Richard** would hit a sacrifice fly to right field scoring Tyreece House and Vancouver led 4-0.

The Emeralds scored a pair in the bottom of the 6th inning as OF Matt Vern lead off with a triple to right field off of **RHP Joselito Adames** and later scored on a single off the bat of OF Ty Wright. Wright would come around to score on a single from SS Dean Anna to cut the Canadians lead to 4-2.

The Canadians pitching was solid on Thursday as starter RHP Joselito Adames went 5.2 IP scattering seven hits, walking two and striking out two leaving with a 4-2 lead. Vancouver **RHP Bo Schultz** was outstanding in relief going 2.1IP giving up no hits and no runs before turning the ball over to **RHP Conner Hoehn** who went a scoreless 9th inning for his 4th save of the season.

For a complete box score from Thursday evening's 4-2 victory in Eugene, OR, please visit the link at the top of this story.

The Canadians (32-34) will wrap up this nine game road trip on Friday, August 28th at 7:05pm vs. the Eugene Emeralds (30-36) with **RHP Dan Straily** (3-3 4.56) getting the call for the Vancouver.

Vancouver returns to Nat Bailey Stadium on Saturday, August 29th at 7:05pm to open up a three-game series vs. Eugene Emeralds. Tickets are available by calling 604.872.5232 or by clicking on the link at the top of this story.