

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, September 1, 2009

### A's happy ending befits last-place competition

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

In a game befitting a pair of American League cellar-dwellers playing before a sparse crowd, the A's essentially beat the Kansas City Royals 8-5 Monday night on a comebacker to the mound.

It was the second of two bonehead plays made by Royals pitchers on an evening of general ugliness on both sides. But things got better for the A's as the night wore on, while the Royals performed a self-destruct act more than worthy of the AL's worst team.

"We imploded awfully quickly," Royals manager Trey Hillman said.

Hillman definitely got the "awfully" part right. With the score tied 5-5 in the bottom of the sixth inning, the A's loaded the bases with one out. But Royals reliever John Bale appeared to escape the jam when Adam Kennedy hit a sharp one-hopper that the pitcher leaped to snare.

"I was thinking, 'Well, I sure screwed that one up,'" Kennedy said.

Bale should've initiated a home-to-first double play. Instead, the left-hander wheeled toward second base and sailed a hideous throw well to the right of the bag and into center field. The A's scored two runs, subsequently added a third on Rajai Davis' RBI single and never looked back.

"I'm going to beat myself up all night over this," said Bale.

At least he should have had company. Kansas City starter Luke Hochevar was given a 4-0 lead in the first two innings, but he made the first goofy gaffe of the night in a five-run giveback in the third. Backing up right fielder Willie Bloomquist's errant throw home on Davis' run-scoring single, Hochevar looked to second.

Davis rounded the bag and stopped as Hochevar looked him back from near the backstop. But inexplicably, Hochevar then put the ball in his glove, removed his cap with his throwing hand and looked down as he started to walk back to the mound. Davis alertly dashed to third, making it easily, and subsequently scored on a Kurt Suzuki ground out.

"It's something I definitely used to do in Little League all the time," said Davis. "I don't know how you rule that. I'm hoping they give me a stolen base."

The play was scored a fielder's choice — not much way around it since an official scorer can't rule a mental blunder, even one that dumb. But as bad as Hochevar's play was, Bale's was even worse.

"You want to win as many games as you can, but sometimes when you get a break like that, nobody really likes to see somebody make an error like that," said A's manager Bob Geren. "But even after that throw, we still had to pitch well out of the bullpen and do a lot of things to win."

The game got off to a messy start for the A's when Gio Gonzalez gave up three runs in the first inning and one more in the second. After the Royals' gave up five in the third, Gonzalez managed to hold that lead for only an inning, surrendering a one-out walk to Billy Butler and a two-out triple to Alberto Callaspo.

But four Oakland relievers — Craig Breslow, Michael Wuertz, Brad Ziegler and Andrew Bailey — were far more efficient in shutting down the Royals without a run over the final 32/3 innings. Bailey, continuing to bolster his candidacy for AL Rookie of the Year, picked up his 21st save and 16th in a row with a scoreless ninth.

There was one more intriguing residual from the Bale play. After Davis singled to bring home the third run of the breakout sixth, he subsequently stole second — his 30th of the year. The A's haven't had a player with 30 steals since Rickey Henderson swiped 66 in 1998.

"Thirty bags means a lot, but it's just a number on the road to bigger and better things," Davis said.

## **A's notebook: Reinforcements coming, but perhaps not that many**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Reinforcements coming, but perhaps not many

They need a chuckle these days in Oakland, and Bob Geren got his Monday night when a young TV reporter asked the A's manager, "So what's the transition going to be like when you get 12-15 new guys in the clubhouse tomorrow?"

Because it's Sept. 1, the A's can add reinforcements from the minor leagues, but they won't be bringing in an army of prospects. Even the players they do call up aren't likely to excite, at least not right away.

"We will not be getting 12-15 new guys, that's for sure," Geren said. "We're talking right now about a few, at the most. It's not going to be a big addition."

While they won't name names until today, the A's likely will be looking at fortifying their bullpen. The A's already are going to a six-man rotation over the final month to limit the workload on their young starters.

The other element is that Triple-A Sacramento still has a week to go in the regular season, and at least a week of Pacific Coast League playoffs after that.

"You'd rather keep someone down there playing as opposed to up here sitting," Geren said. "Especially if you're talking about a position player that might not play much, staying down and playing in a playoff atmosphere in Triple-A would be better. If I do need them up here, they've ... got 40-50 more at-bats instead of sitting."

The A's will begin implementing their six-man rotation plan tonight when middle reliever Edgar Gonzalez (0-1) starts against the Royals' Kyle Davies (5-9). Gonzalez, a 26-year-old right-hander, made two starts in late May and pitched five innings both times.

The A's originally had planned to start veteran Brett Tomko on Wednesday and push rookie Trevor Cahill back a day to give him a little extra rest. But that plan has been scratched, and Cahill (7-12), who leads Oakland with 1531/3 innings pitched, will take his normal turn Wednesday, opposing K.C.'s Brian Bannister (7-10).

Geren said infielder Bobby Crosby will be activated from the disabled list on his scheduled return date Wednesday. Crosby has been on the DL with a strained left calf. ... August was the A's fifth consecutive losing month. The only time in Oakland history the team has had a losing record all six months was in 1979, when the A's lost 108 games.

## **Davis gets A's up and running**

Rusty Simmons, Chronicle Staff Writer

Rajai Davis walked into the clubhouse Monday night with a ball of dripping ice wrapped to his left hand, but the pain in his thumb couldn't erase the smile on his face or hamper the speed in his legs.

The center fielder went 2-for-4 with two RBIs and kick-started the A's offense with aggressive base running in their 8-5 victory over Kansas City in front of a few hundred fans who were announced as a 10,376-person crowd at the Coliseum.

The A's won for the third time in their last eight games and avoided dropping to a season-worst 17 games below .500. They have not been more than 16 below .500 since finishing the 1997 season 65-97.

Davis was part of the action in the decisive sixth, an inning that included a 30-foot throw that needed to be closer to 50 feet, an attempted steal of home and a Davis stolen base despite a Royals' pitch out.

With the bases loaded, one out and the game tied 5-5, John Bale fielded an Adam Kennedy one-hopper and appeared to have a routine home-to-first double play to escape the inning unscathed. Instead the left-handed reliever whirled toward second base and bounced it wildly off the infield dirt, allowing Ryan Sweeney and Daric Barton to score.

"We were celebrating just like the fans," Davis said.

Cliff Pennington was thrown out at home on an attempted double steal, but he stayed in a rundown long enough to allow Kennedy to advance to third base. He scored on a two-out bloop to right field by Davis, who later stole his 30th base of the season.

"Thirty bags mean a lot, but it's just a number on my road to bigger and better things," Davis said.

The A's had taken a 5-4 lead in the third inning, when Davis drove in Pennington with a single to right field and then provided a new-fangled version of a "Rajai Run."

Davis moved to second base on a throwing error by right fielder Willie Bloomquist and darted to third as Kansas City starter Luke Hochevar walked from behind the plate to the mound with his head down. Davis scored on a groundball to second, and Sweeney drove in two with a triple down the right-field line.

"I don't know how you rule that, but I was hoping they'd give me a stolen base," Davis said. "I think running like that is exciting and inspiring. After that, we went on a little tear.

"You have to stay tuned, because you don't know what's going to happen next."

Despite a rocky first two innings, A's starter Gio Gonzalez struck out eight batters, six during a 21/3-inning stretch spanning the fourth and sixth. Still, he couldn't hold the 5-4 lead, yielding Alberto Callaspo's game-tying triple that scored Billy Butler in the fifth and moved his numbers to 0-3 with a 7.29 ERA in his last four starts.

"You see Rajai going out there and trying to make things happen, and you want to match his performance," Gonzalez said.

Hochevar was supplied a 4-0 lead on an RBI double by Mark Teahen and a two-run single by Callaspo in the first inning, and a solo home run to right-center by David DeJesus in the second. The Monday stat line for the 2006 No. 1 overall pick, though, was typical of his dreadful performances against the A's. Hochevar is 0-4 with an 11.37 ERA in four starts against Oakland.

**Briefly:** Manager Bob Geren said he expects to promote some bullpen help today, but the team will make only "a few" September call-ups with Triple-A Sacramento competing in the playoffs. Pitchers Chad Reineke, Clayton Mortensen and Jerry Blevins already are on the 40-man roster. ... Shortstop Bobby Crosby (strained left calf) is on pace to be reinstated from the disabled list Wednesday. ... Royals manager Trey Hillman is attending his father-in-law's funeral in Texas. John Gibbons is the acting manager.

## **A's leading off**

[Rusty Simmons](#), San Francisco Chronicle

**Waiting game:** Edgar Gonzalez is scheduled for tonight's start, his first since a May 29 loss to Texas. In fact, he has pitched only one inning in the last 24 days.

## **Oakland teams haven't hit rock bottom**

[Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

It would be wrong to call Oakland, as a sports town, a train wreck.

After a train wreck, the cleanup and recovery begin immediately. The locomotive doesn't keep careening down the track, out of control, unless Stephen King is calling the shots.

Oakland is down right now, but there is still a big downside.

How can it get worse?

The A's: For an organization to dig itself out of a huge slump, someone in power has to want that to happen, and there's no evidence of that in A's-land. If ownership is in a panic over plummeting attendance and a deteriorating product, or has a fix-it strategy, there is no outward sign.

The downward spiral leads where? There is a word we haven't heard in a while: Contraction. The A's could become the first baseball team ever repo'd by MLB.

The Raiders: You think 45-7 is rock bottom? We're talking about exhibition, people! This team's limitations are limitless.

Remember how the Raiders spent the first two days of training camp executing plays in slow-motion? Uh, fellas, that was supposed to be temporary.

The Raiders have the potential to run the table this year, especially if they can avoid avoiding key injuries, and 0-16 would signal the need for some serious league intervention.

Excuse me, Mr. Davis. Commissioner Goodell wants to see you. And bring your playbook.

The Warriors: The W's might be the most lost team in Oakland. Stephen Jackson wants out. This goes beyond curious and disturbing, to heartbreaking. He is the team's leader, spokesman and soul.

This is like your bride announcing on the first morning of the marriage, "It's been grand. Now here's a list of guys I'd rather live with."

Good thing the Warriors got rid of Chris Mullin, who strongly objected to giving Jackson that lavish contract extension.

For the Warriors, this is a new record: The earliest day in the year on which the team became officially doomed.

Sorry, Oakland, but this is not as bad as it gets.

## **Davis' heads-up play sparks A's to win**

### **Outfielder takes third uncontested with pitcher not looking**

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- One of the songs that pumps through the A's clubhouse after most victories is "Swagga Like Us," a collaboration featuring some of the biggest names in hip-hop.

That was the soundtrack as Rajai Davis discussed his role in Oakland's 8-5 victory over the visiting Royals on Monday, and was it ever fitting.

Davis, typically one of the more humble professional athletes you'll ever encounter, definitely had some swagger to his vibe. He was, as the kids say, feeling himself.

And rightfully so.

Down 4-0 after what's become the customary early rough patch by 23-year-old lefty Gio Gonzalez, the A's stormed back with a five-run third inning, on which Davis put his stamp with an electric, heady bit of baserunning.

"It's exciting to make the game more exciting, more fun," said Davis, who also had two hits, two RBIs and his career-high 30th stolen base of the season. "You gotta stay tuned. You don't know what's gonna happen next."

Certainly nobody knew what was going to happen after Davis put Oakland on the scoreboard with a one-out RBI single, knocking a tough breaking ball from Royals righty Luke Hochevar into right field in the third inning.

He moved to second when right fielder Willie Bloomquist's errant throw home went to the backstop, and after taking a hard turn at the bag, he turned back as Hochevar picked up the ball.

"I went out there and was really baiting him to throw to second base," Davis said. "He glanced at me one time and put his head down. It was like, 'OK, you're not paying any attention? I'm going to take advantage of it.'"

That's when the fun began.

As Hochevar, with the ball in his glove, nonchalantly removed his cap to wipe his brow, Davis bolted for third and made it without a throw.

"I used to do that in Little League all the time," Davis said. "I'm hoping they give me a stolen base on it, because I stopped."

Davis did not get a stolen base. It was scored a fielder's choice. Hochevar, who said he thought time was out, had another word to describe it.

"That's just a bonehead play right there," he copped.

The crowd, announced at more than 10,000 but likely closer to a third of that, went nuts.

Hochevar fell apart.

Davis scored on a fielder's choice, Jack Cust walked, Scott Hairston singled, Ryan Sweeney tied it up with a two-run triple, and Mark Ellis' RBI single gave the A's their first lead.

"I think it got us going a little bit," Oakland manager Bob Geren said of Davis' derring-do.

Davis had no doubt whatsoever that he'd served as the spark that set the fire.

"We kind of took off after that," he said.

Gonzalez, who allowed three runs in the top of the first inning and one in the second before finding a feel for his huge curveball and striking out six over his final 2 1/3 innings, said Davis has been jump-starting the A's for a while.

The numbers back him up.

Davis went 2-for-4 to wrap up the best month of his career. He batted .316 with 10 doubles and 15 stolen bases in 28 games -- the most stolen bases by an Athletic in a month since Hall of Famer Rickey Henderson took 16 bags in June 1998.

"He's aggressive out there, and guys like trying to get him in," Gonzalez said. "He's always going to score from first on a double, from second on a single, he's going to steal bases, and he's going to do some things you might not have seen before.

"You can't put your head down on a guy like that. He's fun to watch."

Gonzalez -- five runs on six hits and four walks over 5 1/3 innings -- gave up a game-tying RBI triple by Alberto Callaspo in the fifth, but with the bases loaded and one out in the bottom of the sixth, reliever John Bale added to Kansas City's defensive disaster.

With the bases loaded and one out, he snagged a comebacker from Adam Kennedy that had 1-2-3 double play written all over it. But he inexplicably wheeled to throw to second -- freaking out the Royals' middle infielders -- and virtually spiked the ball, sending it into the outfield and allowing two runs to score.

"If I go home, it's an easy double play. I just screwed it up," Bale said. "The middle infielders were looking at me like, 'What are you doing?' It was a dumb mistake."

Later in the frame, Davis dumped a single into right to score Kennedy. A's relievers Craig Breslow, Michael Wuertz Brad Ziegler and Andrew Bailey took it from there, teaming up on 3 2/3 shutout innings of three-hit work without a walk.

"It was a battle for me personally, but the guys picked me up," Gonzalez said. "Rajai got us going, the offense picked me up, and the bullpen was great. I'm sure it was fun for the fans.

"How could it *not* be?"

## **Gonzalez joins rotation to face Royals**

### **Oakland (58-73) vs. Kansas City (50-81), 7:05 p.m. PT**

By Adam Loberstein / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Edgar Gonzalez has been a starting pitcher for the majority of his professional career.

Not this year, though.

Gonzalez made two starts for the A's in late May, but has come out of the bullpen in each of his 19 appearances since.

That'll change Tuesday as Gonzalez gets the nod in the second game of a three-game set against Kansas City.

"I'm so happy, so excited," Gonzalez said. "[Starting] is what I prefer, but I'll do whatever they want me to do."

Gonzalez, who is 0-1 with a 5.24 ERA in 46 1/3 innings, will certainly be well-rested. He threw one inning against the White Sox on Aug. 15 and hasn't toed the slab since.

"It's been hard for me," Gonzalez said. "[Sixteen] days without throwing -- it's hard to go that long without facing hitters."

Gonzalez has spent the time off trying to build up his pitch count. He's thrown two side sessions in the past five days, going 35 and 40 pitches, respectively.

How many pitches will he have in him on Tuesday?

"A lot. I'll be ready for 100," Gonzalez joked. "Really, it just depends what [manager Bob Geren] says."

Gonzalez doesn't know how long he'll be in the rotation, saying he was only told to get ready for Tuesday.

If all goes well, though, Gonzalez will have the opportunity to stick, as the A's intend to employ a six-man rotation.

"Oh yeah, sure," Geren said. "We do have a couple off-days coming up, but we'd like to stick with six [starters]."

### [Pitching matchup](#)

#### **OAK: RHP Edgar Gonzalez (0-1, 5.24 ERA)**

Gonzalez, who was brought to Spring Training to compete for a starting job but opened the season at Triple-A Sacramento, was called up on May 19 and made two starts, going 0-1 with a 5.40 ERA. His past 19 outings have come out of the bullpen, with an ERA of 5.20. Gonzalez most recently faced the Royals on Aug. 8 and allowed four earned runs on nine hits over 3 2/3 innings.




#### **KC: RHP Kyle Davies (5-9, 5.94 ERA)**

Davies wobbled at times in his past start at Seattle, but made big pitches when he had to and gave up just two runs in six innings. He gave up five hits and three walks. Davies felt he made more progress in refining his pitching motion to give him increased command, especially with his fastball. Now he's won two of his last four starts and he has 20 strikeouts in those games, a good sign. This will be his first start against Oakland this year; in his career, he has faced the A's three times and has a 1-1 mark and a 4.02 ERA.

### **Tidbits**

Bobby Crosby (left calf) is expected to be activated once he's eligible to come off the disabled list on Wednesday. "It looks like that'll happen," Geren said. "He's passed all his tests." ... Geren said there was "nothing new" on Dallas Braden, who has been on the DL since Aug. 1 with a rash on his left foot. ... Aaron Cunningham has a seven-game hitting streak going with Sacramento, batting .414 over that span. ... Stockton's Grant Desme is one of only two California League players to have at least 20 homers and 15 steals this season.

### [Up next](#)

- Wednesday: Athletics (Trevor Cahill, 7-12, 4.64) vs. Royals (Brian Bannister, 7-11, 4.60), 12:35 p.m. PT 
- Thursday: Athletics (Brett Tomko, 3-2, 3.62) vs. Mariners (Ian Snell, 5-9, 5.29), 7:05 p.m. PT 
- Friday: Athletics (Vin Mazzaro, 4-9, 5.32) vs. Mariners (Ryan Rowland-Smith, 2-2, 3.95), 7:05 p.m. PT 

## **Cust is hot hand for A's**

### **Outfielder in cleanup spot for Monday's contest**

By Adam Loberstein / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Manager Bob Geren has always called Jack Cust a streaky hitter.

Cust was mired in a 12-for-71 (.169) funk from July 24 through Aug. 17, going homerless with no RBIs in 23 games over that span.

He's been streaking in the other direction ever since.

Cust, who entered Monday's game against the Royals leading the A's in homers (20) and walks (78), is batting .371 with four home runs, eight RBIs and nine walks in 11 games from Aug. 19-30, netting a .489 on-base percentage.

"He went through a little bit of a cold spell there," said Geren. "He still had a high on-base percentage, though. He was swinging at pitches he was supposed to swing at.

"Now he's got it again. You feel like he's going to give you a good at-bat every time. If you give in to him, he can hurt you. You need to throw him good pitches. If not, he'll walk."

Much of Cust's recent success can be attributed to a mechanical change. The left-handed hitter has gone back to his old toe tap with his right foot, helping to trigger his load and generate more power through his lower body.

Cust, who had slid as low as seventh in the order during his slump, has been back in the cleanup spot for the past five games through Monday's series opener.

"I don't get into where guys hit too much," Geren said. "I'm not afraid to move them around. You just go with the guys that are hot. Statistically speaking, if you hit up in the order, you're going to get more at-bats."

The way Cust has been going, the more at-bats, the better.

## **MLB.com At Bat 2009 app expanding**

### **Watch out-of-market games for just 99 cents each**

By Mark Newman / MLB.com

In another first for Major League Baseball fans, all live out-of-market games are now available for only 99 cents each -- the cost to download a typical song -- for those who have the popular MLB.com At Bat 2009 app on their iPhone or iPod Touch devices.

For the rest of this season, simply [choose any game](#) anytime. Let's say you want to watch your favorite team clinch or your favorite pitcher start, or you want to see a milestone like Ichiro Suzuki breaking the record for most consecutive 200-hit seasons. Whatever the game, just buy it as easily as you would a must-have song in Apple's iTunes Store.

This follows the recent announcement that all MLB.TV and MLB.TV Premium subscribers who have the MLB.com At Bat 2009 app can see *all* out-of-market games live over their iPhones or iPod Touch devices, just as they can over a computer.

Now fans can have it both ways, just as the pennant races are hitting overdrive. You can use your MLB.TV subscription to immediately watch any live out-of-market game at any time. The 99-cent games are great options to those fans who do *not* have MLB.TV and who want the a la carte convenience.

Apple's newest feature also includes customizable notifications, so if you have MLB.com At Bat 2009, then you will be notified whenever a game is about to start. Many fans will thus be prompted to order that game immediately and start watching it live wherever they are.

Fans can access every out-of-market game in high quality video over either a Wi-Fi connection or the carrier network as part of At Bat 2009. Leveraging standards-based https streaming technology enabled by the recent iPhone OS 3.0 update, the MLB.com app includes controls to give users the ability to pause a game or rewind the action. Additionally, adaptive bitrate technology is constantly working automatically to give users the highest-quality voice stream their network connection can support.

MLB.com will continue to make up to two free games per day -- the AtBat.TV Game of the Day -- available for all At Bat 2009 subscribers, subject to blackout restrictions.

The application also offers live audio broadcasts without blackout restrictions, a continuously updated scoreboard, MLB.com Gameday functionality, real-time video highlights and Condensed Games, a short-form video recap of every payoff pitch from every game.

This is the latest in a series of big baseball-tech breakthroughs this season, many of them involving mobile technology. Fans have raved the past year about the MLB.com At Bat app, which has been a steady No. 1 among top-selling sports apps.

"Having MLB.TV was already awesome in itself. Then came MLB.com At Bat 2009 on my iPhone," said Cristian Podar, a 31-year-old Tigers fan in the Detroit area. "I thought I had it made until now. Now I have the ability to watch every out-of-market game on my iPhone wherever I go.

"I am a baseball nut and a Tigers fan. I follow what every team in the division does constantly throughout the day. Now I can actually watch the action live on my iPhone. This is an absolutely revolutionary way to provide fans with the complete experience. This will literally change my daily routine."

Wade Strange, a 30-year-old Red Sox fan transplanted from Western Massachusetts to "the heart of Yankees country" -- East Rutherford, N.J. -- said being able to watch live games on his iPhone changed life for the better.

"As a complete workaholic, I spend more time at the office than I care to admit," Strange said. "I need access to my Sox. My normal routine of using MLB.com At Bat audio on my iPhone to listen to the start of night games, and then racing home to log on and finish the game in HD using MLB.TV will now get a significant upgrade with the recently updated MLB At Bat app for iPhone. I was happy with just the audio and now I'm ecstatic for video access to every game wherever I



am. I consider myself a modern, technically savvy baseball fan and I'm still amazed every time I pull out my phone to watch a Sox game. We are truly living in the future."

## **A's get helping hand from Royals defense**

Associated Press

OAKLAND – Ryan Sweeney had a two-run triple and scored the go-ahead run on Adam Kennedy's bases loaded fielder's choice grounder in the sixth inning to help the A's beat the Kansas City Royals 8-5 on Monday night.

Rajai Davis added two hits and two RBIs for the A's, who won for only the fifth time in their last 13 games.

David DeJesus homered, and Alberto Callaspo drove in three runs for the Royals, who played without manager Trey Hillman.

Hillman left the team to be with his family following the death of his father-in-law and is expected to miss the entire series with the A's.

Bench coach John Gibbons served as Kansas City's interim manager and will do so the remainder of the series. Hillman is expected to rejoin the team later this week.

Oakland trailed 4-0 after two innings but scored five runs in the third and added three more in the sixth. In both innings, the A's got a helping hand from the Royals' sloppy defense.

Davis singled home Cliff Pennington in the third, and right fielder Willie Bloomquist's throw home skipped past catcher Miguel Olivo, allowing Davis to take second. When starting pitcher Luke Hochevar retrieved the ball and appeared to look down at the ground, Davis alertly took third and scored on Kurt Suzuki's groundout. Two batters later, Sweeney tripled in two runs and Mark Ellis followed with an RBI single to put the A's up 5-4.

After the Royals tied the game in the fifth, Oakland broke the game open in the sixth when Kansas City reliever John Bale fielded Kennedy's one-out grounder and threw wildly to second, skipping the ball into center and allowing Sweeney and Daric Barton to score.

Davis tacked on an RBI single to make it 8-4.

Craig Breslow (6-7) got two outs for the win. Andrew Bailey worked the ninth for his 21st save in 25 chances.

Hochevar (6-8) took the loss, allowing seven runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings. The right-hander, who fell to 0-4 in four career starts against the A's, has five losses and two no-decisions in his last seven starts.

Oakland starter Gio Gonzalez didn't have much better numbers but was bailed out by the A's offense and bullpen. Gonzalez gave up five runs and six hits in 5 1/3 innings with eight strikeouts and four walks.

Despite the win, Oakland is guaranteed of finishing with a losing record in each of the first five months of the season.

It's the first time since 1993 the A's have had that happen.

Note – The A's scratched right-hander Brett Tomko from Wednesday's scheduled start against the Royals and will instead use right-hander Trevor Cahill.

Tomko could pitch Thursday against Seattle.

## **Davis leads A's to comeback victory**

By Giovanni Albanese Jr. , Tri City Voice, 9/1/09

Oakland, Calif. -- If there were any questions as to why the Kansas City Royals are one of the worst teams in Major League Baseball, they were answered on Monday night in their 8-5 loss to the Oakland A's at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

Two plays -- one in the third; one in the sixth -- triggered multi-run rallies for the A's en route to their 58th win of the

year.

Holding onto a 4-0 lead going into the A's half of the third, Rajai Davis singled to right, scoring Cliff Pennington from second. Davis advanced to second on a throwing error by right fielder Willie Bloomquist, which sailed behind the plate where Royals starter Luke Hochevar picked it up. Hochevar casually headed back to the mound, took off his cap and stared into the ground. Davis took third while Hochevar lost focus.

"He glanced at me one time and then he put his head down," said Davis, who went 2-4 on the night with two RBIs, along with his 30th stolen base of the season. "So I was like, 'OK, you're not going to pay attention, I'm going to take advantage of that.' "

After Davis' heads-up base running, the A's followed up with four more runs. "I've always said no one play ever wins a game, but that was definitely a big break for us," said A's Manager Bob Geren of the Davis base running play.

"It's fun to be on the bases," Davis continued. "It's fun to take advantage of the opportunities, really."

Kurt Suzuki grounded out to second, scoring Davis (which never would have happened had Hochevar kept his eye on the diamond a play earlier); after Jack Cust walked and Scott Hairston singled, Ryan Sweeney tripled to right, plating two; and Mark Ellis concluded the five-run frame with an RBI single to center.

Oakland loaded the bases in the sixth with the score tied at five knocking Hochevar out of the game. John Bale relieved Hochevar and induced a groundball to himself off the bat of Adam Kennedy. Instead of electing to throw to the plate, Bale spun and threw the ball into centerfield, scoring two on the play.

Davis followed that with an RBI single extending the lead to 8-5 before Robinson Tejeda came on for Bale to stop the bleeding.

"That's the name of the game," said Davis about the A's having to come back on several occasions this season, including Monday night. "We've been fortunate to have some guys that believe it's going to turn around and we're going to win."

Oakland held onto their 8-5 lead with scoreless bullpen work from the usual suspects -- Craig Breslow (2/3 IP, 1 H), Michael Weurtz (1 IP, 2 K), Brad Ziegler (1 IP, 1 H) and Andrew Bailey (1 IP, 1 H, 1 K) who recorded his 21st save.

"They've been good all year," said Geren of his four horsemen out of the pen. "I need somebody other than those four guys to step up and throw some innings, too."

Gio Gonzalez started for the A's and got off to a shaky start, allowing three runs in the first, the big blow being a two-run single by Alberto Callaspo.

David DeJesus connected on a 3-2 pitch by Gonzalez in the second inning -- on the ninth pitch of the at bat -- for a home run to right-center, extending the Royals' lead to 4-0.

Gonzalez gave up the newly-acquired one-run lead on a Callaspo RBI triple in the fifth, tying the game up at 5-5 before the A's rallied for three an inning later. Gonzalez went 5 1/3, allowing five runs on six hits, walking four and striking out eight.

"Our bullpen came on and shut it down, and our offense came through," said Gonzalez of the overall performance of the game. "Take it as it is, it's a win."

Breslow was credited with the win, improving to 6-7 on the year. Hochevar, who pitched 5 1/3 innings, allowing seven runs (six earned) on six hits, walking four and striking out five, dropped to 6-8 with the loss.

After the win, the A's improved their record to 58-73, remaining in last place in the AL West, 20.5 games behind the division-leading Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim. Meanwhile, the Royals dropped to an AL-worst 50-81, 19.5 games behind the AL Central-leading Detroit Tigers

Oakland and Kansas City will resume their three-game set on Tuesday night with Edgar Gonzalez (0-1, 5.24) taking the hill for the A's. Gonzalez will oppose Kyle Davies (5-9, 5.94) for the Royals.

Game notes: Prior to the game, Oakland announced that Trevor Cahill will be starting in the series finale against the Royals on Wednesday in place of Brett Tomko. Attendance: 10,376. Time of game: 2 hours, 50 minutes. Umpires: Derryl Cousins, home plate; Mike Estabrook, first base; Jim Joyce, second base; and Bill Miller, third base.

# **Pitchers Lead Race for Rookie of the Year**

By [Benjamin Hoffman](#), New York Times, 8/30/09

While this season's rookie class may not have anyone with 49 home runs like Mark McGwire in 1987, or a player challenging for the Most Valuable Player award like Fred Lynn in 1975 and Ichiro Suzuki in 2001, it does feature an All-Star ([Andrew Bailey](#) of the Athletics), a key member of a leading rotation ([J.A. Happ](#) of the Phillies) and a July call-up that has put on a power display ([Garrett Jones](#) of the Pirates).

A look at the race for the Rookie of the Year reveals that a pitcher leads each league, with the hitters lagging behind.

## **American League**

### **The Favorite**

**Andrew Bailey, P, Athletics**

*6-3, 1.90 E.R.A., 20 saves*

Bailey, who would be the eighth Athletics player to win the award, got off to a good start by being named Oakland's lone representative in the All-Star game. He has not been perfect, blowing four saves in 24 opportunities, but he has been a consistent presence, with 71 appearances. His sub-2.00 E.R.A. tabs him as the leader of what could be a great bullpen next season with Brad Ziegler, Michael Wuertz and perhaps the return of the injured Joey Devine.

### **The Top Hitter**

**Nolan Reimold, OF, Orioles**

*.274, 12 H.R., 39 R.B.I.*

[Reimold](#) leads A.L. rookies in home runs and on-base plus slugging percentage. His .274 average is tied with the White Sox' [Gordon Beckham](#) for first. On pace for 16 home runs and 11 stolen bases, Reimold has been steady, not spectacular, and at 25 should have room to grow.

### **The Rest**

Beckham's 48 R.B.I. are tops among A.L. rookies, and he has the added benefit of playing in the infield, but his contributions as a hitter are just shy of Reimold's. [Elvis Andrus](#) has done a nice job taking over at shortstop for the Rangers, and has 24 stolen bases, but has not hit as well as Reimold or Beckham. On the pitching side, [Ricky Romero](#) of the Blue Jays and [Jeff Niemann](#) of the Rays have been effective starters but have not been overpowering.

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## **National League**

### **The Favorite**

**J.A. Happ, P, Phillies**

*1.P.)10-3, 2.63 E.R.A., 143*

Happ has been nothing short of amazing in his first year as a full-time starter for Philadelphia. Currently fifth in the National League in E.R.A., Happ has been good enough that when the team acquired Cliff Lee from the Indians and brought Pedro Martinez off the disabled list, it was the veteran Jamie Moyer who lost his rotation spot rather than the 26-year-old left-hander Happ.

### **The Top Hitter**

**Andrew McCutchen, OF, Pirates**

*.293, 10 H.R., 43 R.B.I.*

Just edging his teammate Garrett Jones, [McCutchen](#), 22, has shown why the team was willing to trade the talented Nate McLouth to the Braves just a year after his breakout season. A solid hitter, fielder and base runner, McCutchen looks like a future superstar for Pittsburgh.

### **The Rest**

Jones hit 10 home runs in July, tying the Pittsburgh franchise record, but he cooled off some in August. Despite the drop-off, he leads all rookies with 15 home runs despite having been active for only two months. [Chris Coghlan](#) has been a steady presence for the Marlins since being called up in May. [Tommy Hanson](#) has shown bursts of brilliance while starting for the Braves, but innings, he won't be able to challenge Happ, even if he may have)with only 88 as bright a future.

### **Update | 4:44 p.m.**

A few readers have expressed concern over Rick Porcello, the Tigers starting pitcher, not being mentioned in this post. With all due respect to Porcello, who has had a fine season for a 20-year-old, he had no place on this list. Two American League starters made my list, Jeff Niemann and Ricky Romero. That duo has outperformed Porcello in winning percentage, E.R.A., innings pitched, strikeouts, strikeout-to-walk ratio and home runs allowed, a list that comprises every meaningful pitching statistic. Even if you used the advanced statistic E.R.A. + to adjust for team and home ballpark, he is still behind both by a significant amount. This list was not meant as a comprehensive list of all rookies, but simply a glance at the favorites and the top handful in each league. Porcello very well may have a brighter future than the older pair of Niemann and Romero, but as far as this season goes they have him beat.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Carter's power propels Sacramento**

rivercats.com

Chris Carter left behind dreams of winning a Triple Crown in Midland. That doesn't mean the slugger will stop hitting homers and driving in runs.

The 6-foot-4, 225-pound Oakland A's prospect hit three bombs and drove in seven runs en route to a 17-6 River Cats victory over the host Reno Aces on Monday night.

Carter started the season in Double-A, where he hit .337 with 24 homers and 101 RBIs over 125 games for the Midland RockHounds of the Texas League. If the Texas League season ended today, the Redwood City, Nev., native would finish second in batting average (he hit .337, .001 behind Andrew Locke), second in home runs (he slugged 24, one behind Chad Tracy) and third in RBIs (he had 101, eight behind Locke). To put the Triple Crown achievement in perspective, the last Major League Baseball player to lead the league in batting average, home runs and RBIs was Carl Yastrzemski in 1967.

But on August 26, the Oakland organization felt the first baseman/left fielder was ready to show his worth in Triple-A Sacramento.

In only six games with the River Cats, Carter has proved the Oakland brass right. He is hitting .321 with three home runs and 12 RBIs, including a three-run double during his first game with the club.

Carter's work Monday night matched a River Cats record for home runs in a game; only Graham Koonce and Matt Carson have also belted three home runs in one contest. Carter's seven RBIs on Monday was a season high for the River Cats, and fell just one short of the franchise high of eight set by Dan Johnson (2004) and Cody McKay (2002).

The slugger's stat line wasn't without help from the top of Sacramento's order. The River Cats' first five hitters (Carter batted sixth) combined for 14 hits and a walk. Eric Munson was the only River Cats starter who failed to get a hit.

With two runs already on the board in the first inning, Carter belted a three-run homer to left-center. His second smash, also to left-center, was a solo shot to lead off the fifth and give Sacramento a 10-5 lead. His three-run blast to left field in the ninth opened the scoring for a seven-run Sacramento inning that put the game out of reach.

The River Cats' slugfest didn't end with their 22-year-old left fielder, either.

Matt Carson, who won Pacific Coast League Player of the Week on Monday, smacked the seventh home run in his last 10 games played. The designated hitter added three other hits on the night, including a double, and improved on his team lead in home runs (24) and RBIs (74). In the month of August, Carson hit .356 with 10 homers, 27 runs and 26 RBIs in 26 games played.

Tommy Everidge, now batting .378, continued his pursuit of a .400 batting average by going 2-for-4 with his 10th home run on the season and three RBIs. The first baseman will fall short of the at-bats needed to qualify for a Pacific Coast League batting title (he has played in only 46 Triple-A games with 184 at-bats), but he also hit an impressive .308 in Midland before getting called up.

In all, Sacramento collected five home runs, five doubles (Adrian Cardenas had two) and a triple (Chris Denorfia) in Monday's route. Starting pitcher Chad Reineke (9-4, 4.72) took advantage, recording the win despite allowing six runs in 5.2 innings.

The River Cats, who clinched the PCL South Division last Thursday, will play Game 2 of the four-game set in Reno on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

## **Everidge, Kilby Hoping For Sept. Homecoming**

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Melissa Lockard  
OaklandClubhouse.com

Aug 31, 2009

It isn't that often that players get a chance to suit up for the local big league teams that they followed as kids. For Sonoma native Tom Everidge, that dream came true in August. For Elk Grove native Brad Kilby, the dream is drawing closer with every zero recorded in the books. Both are hoping to contribute to their "hometown" Oakland A's this September.

In many ways, the career paths of [Tom Everidge](#) and [Brad Kilby](#) have been very similar. Both are Northern California natives who played their college ball in the Bay Area (Everidge played at Sonoma State, while Kilby was a Spartan with [San Jose State](#)). And both have had to prove themselves at each level, never having been given the fast-track through the Oakland A's system despite posting solid numbers year-after-year.

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In 2009, Everidge, a 10th round pick of the A's in 2004, finally got the break he had been working for when his contract was purchased by the A's in late July. Everidge, who began the year at Double-A Midland despite having driven-in a Texas League-best 115 runs for the Rockhounds in 2008, earned his promotion to Oakland by batting .335 with 17 homers and 85 RBIs for Midland and Triple-A Sacramento.

Everidge earned his first start with the A's in Boston against the Red Sox and his first hit was a memorable one – a two-out double off of the Monster in left-field off of All-Star closer [Jonathan Papelbon](#). That hit keyed a two-out, top-of-the-ninth inning rally by the A's and an eventual extra-inning win. For Everidge, the first hit was an unforgettable moment.

"It was amazing. I didn't have a hit yet and walking up there I was thinking that it would be a good time to get one. He just threw a fastball and I swung and I was like, 'oh my God, I better run because it isn't that far out there,'" Everidge said.

The first-baseman appeared in 24 games with the A's in July and August, during which time he hit .224 with two homers and seven RBIs. His second homer came in front of friends and family at the Oakland Coliseum, when he crushed a [C.C. Sabathia](#) pitch deep into the left-field bleachers.

Everidge was sent back to Sacramento last week when the A's decided that they needed another middle infielder on their bench ([Eric Patterson](#)), but he is thankful for his opportunity with the A's this season and believes that his first taste of the big leagues will help him succeed the next time he is there.

"I think I learned a lot about what to expect and how the game works up there. I got to talk a lot to the veterans. I just got to learn and soak up as much as I could. I tried to figure out what I should do better," Everidge said.

"I think the confidence of knowing that you can play up there helps you a lot. It's baseball. It's the same game. Things are just better up there. You've got to raise your game up and you have to try to stay focused on what you have to do. If you aren't bringing it in that at-bat, they are going to get you out."

Kilby is hoping to experience what Everidge did with the A's sometime soon. The left-handed reliever is in his second year with the Triple-A Sacramento River Cats. The A's 29th round pick in 2005 was a candidate to be added to Oakland's 40-man roster last off-season after he posted a 3.47 ERA and he struck-out 66 in 70 innings in 2008. The A's chose to leave him off of the roster, however. He has responded with an even better campaign with Sacramento in 2009. In 62.1 innings, Kilby has a 2.17 ERA with the River Cats and 75 strike-outs. Opponents have hit only .177 off of him.

Kilby credits his improvements to some mechanical work with Sacramento pitching coach Rick Rodriguez and an increased sharpness with his stuff.

"I think my off-speed pitches have come around. My change-up and slider have been a lot better this year and my fastball velocity has been a lot better," Kilby said.

"Ricky Rod [River Cats' pitching coach Rick Rodriguez] made a small mechanical adjustment with me with my hands. I set them way down low at my waist and that has helped me repeat my delivery a lot easier this year."

Although Kilby hasn't had an opportunity to play in the big leagues during the regular season, he did spend some time with the A's during big league camp this spring. He appeared in only two games, but he was in the A's bullpen for a number of other spring games. Like Everidge, Kilby took the opportunity to learn as much as he could from his big league teammates.

"[Pitching in big league camp] is very important. It was a great opportunity this year," Kilby said.

"Just to be there was a lot of fun. Being able to hang out with the guys, I feel like I would know pretty much everyone up there [in Oakland] right now. I was able to be in the clubhouse and got a chance to talk to them. Everyone was really friendly. I think I would fit in nicely there."

Although Kilby is having a standout season with the River Cats, it would be unfair to say that the 2009 campaign has been a breakthrough year for the left-hander. In five minor league seasons, Kilby has never posted an ERA above 3.50 and he has averaged more than 10 strike-outs per nine innings. His career WHIP is 1.10. Kilby isn't a flame-thrower, however, and he has had to overcome the perception by many scouts that his success stems solely from a funky delivery that scouts assume will eventually be figured out at the higher levels.

Before the River Cats game on Saturday, one scout admitted that he had believed Kilby's success was not sustainable at the higher levels last season, but this year he has been convinced that the lefty can contribute in the major leagues. Unlike many lefties, Kilby has the advantage of being able to get out right-handers just as easily as left-handers, something Kilby attributes to the natural action on his fastball.

"I have a fastball that I can run away from [righties]. Then I can get right in on their hands. Usually that is my strength. I can pound them away, away and then bust them in late and I am able to get a lot of strike-outs that way," Kilby said.

Like nearly every player in Triple-A who has had a great season, both Everidge and Kilby are keeping an eye on September 1st, the day that major league teams can expand their rosters to 40 players. With the A's out of contention in the AL West, it is expected that Oakland will call up several players throughout the month, as the team tries to determine which young players will be part of the core for the 2010 A's squad. September 1st can be a distraction, but Everidge and Kilby are keeping their focus on the immediate task at hand – trying to get the Sacramento River Cats their third consecutive PCL title.

Although Everidge showed promise in his first stint with the A's, he isn't resting on his laurels and assuming that he is going to return to the club in September.

"I'm just going to wait and see. I just thank them for giving me the opportunity and obviously I want to go back there. I'll just keep busting my tail and hope to just be ready if I get that call," Everidge said.

Kilby isn't on the A's 40-man roster, but the team has open spots on that roster, giving him hope that he could get that long-awaited call sometime this month.

"It's definitely in the back of my mind. But anything I can do to help this team [Sacramento] win another PCL championship would be fine with me," Kilby said.

"If they call me up after [the PCL playoffs], that would be great, but if they called me up tonight, my bags are ready and I could pack in about two minutes. I'm ready to go if they need me."

## **Hounds Punch Back With Hard Fought Win**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Okay, it wasn't the Rangers ... it was their Double-A affiliate ... but the RockHounds faced a Texas Major Leaguer in the clean up spot in each of the three games at Frisco.

The first two nights, it was catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia; Monday it was Andruw Jones.

The potential Hall of Famer contributed early with a flair single to right that set up the first run of the game, which scored on a throwing error in the first. From there, playing first base all nine innings, Jones was held in check. Travis Banwart struck him out on a change-up in the sixth, and Corey Wimberly made a nice play up the middle with a runner in scoring position to retire Jones and end the last of the eighth.

Banwart went 6.0 strong innings, allowing just two runs (one earned) for his 10th win.

Matt Sulentic led a balanced attack, and delivered a key, 2-run game-tying single in the fourth inning, as the RockHounds erased a 2-0 deficit and took the lead for good.

Carlos Hernandez, Dewon Day, Steve Sharpe and Jared Lansford combined to pitch the final 3.0 innings in shutout fashion, with "Lanny" earning his 12th save.

The win came in what was .. so far ... the biggest game of the season. A Frisco win would have given the RoughRiders a first place tie. Instead, the 'Hounds lead by two games with seven to play ... all seven games coming at Citibank Ballpark beginning Tuesday night.

Congratulations!!! Adrian Cardenas, Graham Godfrey & Chris Carter have been named to the 2009 Texas League Post-Season All-Star Team, with Carter named the Texas League's Player of the Year. Darren Bush has been named the league's Manager of the Year.

The player-manager co-winners mark the second occurrence in franchise history: Andre Ethier & Von Hayes did it with the 2005 Texas League champion RockHounds.

### **Texas League South**

The RockHounds lead Frisco by two games with seven (7) to go. The RockHounds host San Antonio in a 4-game set (while Frisco hosts Corpus Christi in a 4-gamer) with the 'Hounds and Frisco then facing off in a 3-game series at Citibank Ballpark to end the regular season.

### **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.

## **Cougars Unable to Sweep Rattlers**

## **Kane County ends homestand with 6-2 mark**

**GENEVA, III.** – The Kane County Cougars closed out a series, homestand and month on Monday night at Elfstrom Stadium but fell to the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, 2-0. The Cougars took three of four from the Rattlers to win the series, went 6-2 on their eight-game homestand and finished August with a mark of 15-15.

Spot starter Trey Barham (4-1) suffered the hard-luck loss. He gave up an unearned run in the first inning and left after the second, allowing no hits, walking one and fanning three. The other run of the game came against Justin Murray in the seventh. Scott Deal, Jose Guzman, Paul Smyth and Josue Selenis all had scoreless relief appearances, and Smyth has not allowed a run of any kind in 33 1/3 professional innings.

The Cougars' offense managed six hits, went 1-2-3 just twice and stranded six. Mike Spina had two hits to lead the way.

Maverick Lasker (1-0) won his Rattlers debut with seven solid innings and Brandon Ritchie posted two innings for his fourth save.

The Cougars (31-33, 72-62) are off Tuesday and start the final six games of the regular season Wednesday night at 6:30 CT in Peoria with the opener of a three-game set against the Chiefs (40-23, 78-54).

## **Ems sweep the legs out from under C's**

By Rob Fai / Vancouver Canadians

(Nat Bailey Stadium - Vancouver, BC) - Vancouver's baseball culture is alive and well as for the third straight night, the Canadians had a crowd in excess of 5,000 and watched as the Eugene Emeralds took their third straight from the Canadians on Monday night. The C's fell four games below .500 with a 12-3 loss to the Emeralds as Eugene managed a series sweep in the process.

Vancouver Scoring:

Bottom of the 1st Inning: Emeralds 3 Canadians 1

**CF Tyreace House** reaches base on Catcher's Interference (Emmanuel Quiles), and advances on a wild pitch from Eugene starter RHP Pedro Hernandez. Hernandez is then hit in the shin by a line drive off the bat of **SS Micheal Gilmartin** advancing House to third base. Hernandez has to leave the game due to an injury and is replaced by RHP Alessio Angelucci who allows House to score from third base on a wild pitch.

Bottom of the 5th Inning: Emeralds 6 Canadians 2

**DH Kent Walton** singled to right field and then stole his 5th base of the summer to advance out to second base. **C Ryan Ortiz** then singled off of Eugene RHP Andrew Bovich scoring Walton to cut the lead to 6-2.

Bottom of the 9th Inning: Emeralds 13 Canadians 3

**2B Ryne Jernigan** singles off of LHP Jeffery Ibarra and advances to third base on a double (7) off the bat of **3B Marcos Luis**. Jernigan crosses home plate on a Fielder's Choice off the bat of Tyreace House as the Canadians centerfielder grounds out to Eugene SS Dean Anna.

For a complete box score from Monday night's 12-3 loss to the Eugene Emeralds, please visit the link at the top of this page.

The Canadians will travel to Everett, WA on Tuesday, September 1st to open up the final road series of the 2009 Northwest League season against the Aquasox starting at 7:05pm. Vancouver sends **RHP Joselito Adames** (5-5 5.74) to the mound in hopes of snapping the teams current three game losing skid.

Vancouver returns home on Friday, September 4th at 7:05pm to open up the final home stand of the 2009 season against the Everett Aquasox. Tickets are available by calling 604.872.5232 or by clicking on the link at the top of this story.