

## A's News Clips, Monday, September 14, 2009

### Finale is another 'Dome-town beating for A's

By Adam Czech, Bay Area News Group

A big reason for the A's improved play recently has been the emergence of their young starting pitchers. Another reason? Their improved situational hitting.

The A's struggled in both areas during their last scheduled game at the Metrodome, an 8-0 loss that left them with a 71-86 mark inside the baggie-clad place since its opening in 1982. The Twins are scheduled to open play at Target Field next season.

It was the eighth time the A's have been shut out this season and first since July 19 against the Angels. It also prevented them from their first series sweep since early June, and their first road sweep since taking three from the Giants at AT&T Park from June 13-15, 2008.

The Twins again roughed up Gio Gonzalez, rocking the lefty for seven runs and eight hits in just three-plus innings. In two starts against Minnesota, Gonzalez has allowed 18 earned runs in 52/3 innings, an ERA of 28.56.

"You fall behind on any hitter, they can definitely do damage," Gonzalez said. "It's something you work on, but you know what? You go out there and keep throwing. You can't fall behind on a good hitting team like this."

The Twins trail the Tigers by 5 1/2 games in the American League Central and still hope to make the playoffs. They haven't played well lately and have especially struggled offensively. But their hitters wasted no time in taking out their frustrations on Gonzalez.

The first three Twins batters reached base. Michael Cuddyer drove in two runs with a bouncing single over second base, and another run scored on a double play.

Joe Mauer, the AL batting leader (.366), led off the third inning with an opposite field home run, his 27th and one of three hits.

"You just tip your hat to a good hitter like that," Gonzalez said.

The Twins added four more runs in the fourth, highlighted by a two-RBI double from former A's shortstop Orlando Cabrera.

The A's loaded the bases with one out in the second but failed to score when Brian Duensing got Landon Powell to foul out and Cliff Pennington to strike out.

Duensing also wiggled out of a second-and-third, nobody-out jam in the sixth. The A's finished 1-for-11 with runners in scoring position.

"I think we chased a couple pitches that we shouldn't have," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Give a little bit of credit to their pitcher. He made some good pitches throughout the game. When he got in a jam, he tended to make some of his better pitches of the afternoon."

Duensing pitched seven innings, allowing eight hits and striking out six.

Rajai Davis had three hits for the A's, pushing his average to .310. Bobby Crosby had two hits and was robbed of a third when speedy center fielder Carlos Gomez ran down a drive to the right-center field gap and held onto the ball after slamming into the wall.

Notes: The A's have 65 stolen bases since the All-Star break and 119 this season, fourth most in the American League. Geren said it's a misconception that the A's organization has something against steals, but that it's not going to be a key to his team's success in future seasons. "It's going to be part of our game, but we need to hit home runs, hit for a high slugging percentage." ... Andrew Bailey has converted 19 consecutive save chances and holds the A's rookie record for most saves in a season with 24. Bailey has a chance to win Rookie of the Year. "I truly believe that he deserves it," Geren said. "I hope the people voting can be open-minded to a reliever winning the award." ... A's prospect Chris Carter

homered for the fifth straight game to lead Triple-A Sacramento to its third consecutive Pacific Coast League championship series. Geren said he will wait until after the playoffs to consider calling up Carter or other prospects.

## **Gio finds Twins hard to figure out**

### **Lefty tagged for seven runs; Oakland settles for series win**

By Tyler Mason / MLB.com

MINNEAPOLIS -- Oakland pitcher Gio Gonzalez watched fellow starters Clayton Mortensen and Brett Anderson keep Minnesota's offense at bay for the first two games of the A's three-game series.

But when it came time for Gonzalez to complete the sweep on Sunday at the Metrodome, the Twins got the best of him. Again.

In his only other start against Minnesota, Gonzalez was lit up for 11 runs on 10 hits in just 2 2/3 innings. Sunday wasn't much better for the young lefty, as he surrendered seven runs on eight hits in Oakland's 8-0 shutout loss.

"He didn't throw his type of game that he needed to," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Gonzalez was roughed up early, as Minnesota put three runs on the board in the first inning. Twins first baseman Michael Cuddyer started the scoring with a bases-loaded single to left that scored Denard Span and Orlando Cabrera. Minnesota catcher Joe Mauer scored one batter later on a groundout, putting Minnesota ahead, 3-0.

"You can't fall behind on a good hitting team like this," Gonzalez said.

Mauer later added a solo homer in the third off Gonzalez to lead off the inning. Mauer's 27th home run of the season gave Minnesota a 4-0 lead.

Gonzalez didn't face Mauer the last time he started against the Twins. On Sunday, Mauer collected three hits off Gonzalez and raised his Major League-leading batting average to .366.

"Good, patient hitter," Gonzalez said. "You fall behind him, and then you get ahead of him and he slaps it the other way, which is what a good hitter does. He learns how to adjust with two strikes. ... You tip your hat to a good hitter like that."

Minnesota added to its lead with a big four-run fourth inning that chased Gonzalez (5-6) from the game. The first five Twins batters of the inning reached base, and Cabrera drove in a pair with a double to left. Gonzalez was relieved by Jerry Blevins, who was charged with the eighth and final Minnesota run.

"We just didn't do anything very well today," Geren said.

Oakland had a pair of chances to chip away at Minnesota's lead, but it couldn't solve Twins starter Brian Duensing.

The first chance came in the top of the second, when the A's loaded the bases with just one out against Duensing. But the left-hander was able to get Landon Powell to pop out to second, and he struck out Cliff Pennington to escape the inning and maintain Minnesota's 3-0 lead.

Again in the sixth, the A's had runners in scoring position with a chance to cut the Twins' lead. Nomar Garciaparra led off the inning with a single and advanced to third on Bobby Crosby's double. But yet again, Duensing worked out of a jam, retiring the next three Oakland hitters without surrendering a run.

"Unfortunately, we were unable to capitalize on some opportunities that we had," said A's center fielder Rajai Davis, who went 3-for-4 with a walk on Sunday. "[Duensing] made some good pitches in the pressure situations."

The A's finished the game 1-for-11 with runners in scoring position, leaving a total of 12 men on base.

"Our situational hitting wasn't good today," Geren said. "Give credit to their pitcher. I thought he made some pitches throughout the game. When he got in a jam, he tended to make some of his better pitches of the afternoon."

Duensing (3-1) pitched seven scoreless innings for the Twins, striking out six A's batters while scattering eight hits. He is now 3-0 with a 1.74 ERA in his past five starts following Sunday's win.

"He actually has some pretty good stuff," Davis said. "He had a pretty good curveball. He had really nice movement on his two-seamer. He located the ball pretty good."

Blevins, Brad Kilby, Dana Eveland and Santiago Casilla combined to pitch five innings out of the bullpen, allowing just one run on four hits.

With Sunday's loss, the A's were unable to earn their third series sweep of the year. Instead, they'll settle for winning a series against a Minnesota team that continues to chase Detroit in the American League Central.

"We came in against a good team and won two out of three," Geren said. "You have to look at it that way as a successful series. When you win the first two, you certainly don't want to win two out of three."

## **Closing argument: Bailey's a winner**

### **Oakland (64-78) at Texas (80-62), 5:05 p.m. PT**

By Tyler Mason / MLB.com

MINNEAPOLIS -- Andrew Bailey rewrote the Oakland record books on Saturday against Minnesota, as his 24th save of the year topped Huston Street's mark for most saves in a season by a rookie.

And while Bailey's name will be the one next to the record, the 25-year-old closer was quick to give credit where credit was due.

"You can't say enough about the guys that pitch before me in the games and get in there and do their jobs as well," Bailey said. "It's an individual award, but I kind of look at it as a bullpen award because without those guys, I wouldn't be getting all those saves."

"That is a wonderful statement that he made, because that's so true," A's manager Bob Geren said. "That just tells you a little bit about his character by acknowledging the people in front of him."

Those given credit by Bailey include Michael Wuertz, Brad Ziegler and Craig Breslow. That trio makes up part of a bullpen that recently had a stretch of 17 innings of relief with only one run allowed.

"To get saves, first of all, you have to score runs, you have to play defense," Geren said. "And then when you have the lead, Mike Wuertz and Brad Ziegler and Breslow have to hold it for him to even get an opportunity to get a save."

"The bullpen's awesome. We've got a lot of good guys down there," Bailey said. "Some guys with experience, some younger guys that have been doing well."

Of those younger relievers, Geren lately has liked what he's seen from Jerry Blevins and Brad Kilby, both of whom were called up at the beginning of September. Blevins, in his second stint with the A's this season, had thrown 5 2/3 scoreless innings in five appearances this month prior to Sunday, when he gave a run in the A's 8-0 loss to the Twins. Kilby, who made his Major League debut on Sept. 2, has yet to give up a run in 5 2/3 innings of work.

"I've been very impressed with Blevins the second time around," Geren said. "His velocity is up a couple mph. He's added another pitch. With those two facets of his game improving, I like what he's done so far. And Brad Kilby, first time I've gotten to take a look at him, he's performed really well, too."

While other young bullpen arms have been impressive, no one has impressed more than Bailey, whose rookie saves record is just the latest accomplishment in his impressive season. The right-hander was named to the 2009 All-Star Game as Oakland's lone representative, and won the American League Rookie of the Month Award in August.

After spending all of 2008 with Double-A Midland and making the A's roster as what Geren called an "extreme long shot," Bailey's rookie season has gone better than what he could have imagined.

"It's been a whirlwind experience for me," Bailey said. "I'm just kind of taking advantage of some opportunities that have been thrown my way. You can't really write a better script so far. Hopefully, it continues and I finish up the year strong."

### **Pitching matchup**

#### **OAK: RHP Brett Tomko (4-3, 4.47 ERA)**

Backed by seven runs in the game's first two innings, Tomko picked up an easy victory in an 11-3 win against the White Sox on Tuesday night. Tomko probably would have liked to have gone deeper into the ballgame, however. Despite a hefty cushion, he lasted only 5 1/3 innings, allowing three runs on six hits with three strikeouts and one walk. He threw 82 pitches, but Geren had seen enough after Tomko surrendered a homer and a walk in the sixth. Tomko has thrown six innings only once in his five starts with the A's. Lifetime against the Rangers, Tomko is 1-3 with a 7.94 ERA in 13 games (five starts).




#### **TEX: RHP Scott Feldman (16-4, 3.46 ERA)**

Feldman takes a seven-game winning streak over eight starts into this game. He has a 2.29 ERA in those eight games and he has allowed just one run in his past four starts. He is the only Texas right-hander to allow just one run over four starts. Feldman has started five of the Rangers' 11 league-leading shutouts, including three in his past four starts. He is trying to become the first Rangers right-hander to win at least 17 games in a season since Rick Helling won 20 in 1998. He beat Oakland twice earlier this season, both times in May, by holding them to two runs in six innings in both starts. He won, 3-2, on May 6 and, 5-2, on May 29.

### **Tidbits**

When asked if Minor Leaguers Chris Carter or Brett Wallace might see time with the A's this season, Geren said he'd like to wait until the Triple-A River Cats season is done before making any decisions. "We'll just kind of see how the playoffs go, how deep they go and reevaluate their team at that point," Geren said. "They're obviously in Triple-A performing well. Their timetable for getting the chance up here is getting very close." ... Sunday's game marked the final time the A's will play at the Metrodome. Oakland finished with a 71-86 record at the dome. ... The A's were shut out for the eighth time this season in Sunday's 8-0 loss. The last time they had been blanked was July 19 against the Angels.

### **Up next**

- Tuesday: Athletics (TBD) at Rangers (Brandon McCarthy, 7-2, 4.81), 5:05 p.m. PT 
- Wednesday: Athletics (Clay Mortensen, 1-2, 6.75) at Rangers (Dustin Nippert, 5-2, 3.95), 5:05 p.m. PT 
- Thursday: Indians (Justin Masterson, 4-7, 4.25) at Athletics (Brett Anderson, 9-10, 4.37), 7:05 p.m. PT 

## **Mauer's HR, 3 hits lead Twins to 8-0 win over A's**

Associated Press

Brian Duensing has exceeded expectations for the Minnesota Twins since he was inserted into the starting rotation on Aug. 22.

The rookie left-hander has even surprised himself.

Joe Mauer had three hits, including his 27th home run, and Duensing pitched the Minnesota Twins to an 8-0 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Sunday.

Duensing (3-1) scattered eight hits and three walks over seven innings to win his third straight decision. He struck out six.

Bobby Keppel and Joe Nathan completed a 10-hit shutout for the Twins, who remained 5 1/2 games behind first-place Detroit in the AL Central.

"I've surprised myself at how well I'm doing," Duensing said. "I always knew I could throw strikes and stuff like that, but the results I'm getting is something I'm not really used to. I'm not a strikeout guy. I usually let the defense play and let the hitters put the ball in play. But lately I'm throwing the ball really well and it's a good surprise."

Mauer drove in two runs and raised his batting average to a major league-best .366. Michael Cuddyer added three hits and two RBIs for the Twins, who avoided getting swept by the last-place A's.

"We needed this pretty desperately and we got it today," Minnesota manager Ron Gardenhire said. "It started with our pitcher."

Oakland started its own rookie left-hander, but Gio Gonzalez struggled again. Gonzalez (5-6) lasted three-plus innings, allowing seven runs and eight hits.

Meanwhile, Duensing has provided a boost for the Twins in a starting role.

He was 4-6 with a 4.66 ERA while starting for Triple-A Rochester, but 14 of his 15 first appearances with Minnesota were out of the bullpen. He has a 5.34 ERA as a reliever.

When fellow lefty Francisco Liriano went on the disabled list, Duensing entered the rotation. He's done what few of the team's young starters have managed to do — give the Twins quality innings each time out.

He's gone at least five innings in each of his six starts and hasn't allowed more than three runs in any of them. Duensing also might be putting himself into consideration for a spot in the rotation next season.

"We've been talking about a lot of guys in there next year, and when we get to next year, we'll get there," Gardenhire said. "What's impressive is he's stepping in there in a big situation for us when we've got pitchers going down and proving that he can pitch at this major league level and use all his pitches like that. That's impressive, and much-needed."

Oakland tried to apply pressure, but Duensing effectively worked his way out of trouble.

The A's got the leadoff hitter on base in five of Duensing's seven innings, but left 10 runners on. Duensing stranded seven runners in scoring position.

"He had some pretty good stuff, pretty good curveball, some really nice movement on his two-seamer, and he located the ball pretty good," said Oakland's Rajai Davis, who finished with three hits. "Unfortunately, we were unable to capitalize on some opportunities that we had. He made some good pitches under pressure situations."

Minnesota gave Duensing an early advantage.

Cuddyer singled in two runs in the first inning and Mauer scored on a groundout by Delmon Young. Mauer homered to the opposite field against Gonzalez leading off the third, just clearing the left-field wall.

Gonzalez's outing ended after Denard Span drove home a run with a single in the fourth. Orlando Cabrera followed with a two-run double and Mauer had an RBI single as part of a four-run burst.

Gonzalez won three straight decisions from July 25 to Aug. 10, giving up four runs in 19 2-3 innings. Since then, he has a 7.55 ERA in six starts.

"Gio just didn't have command of his pitches today," A's manager Bob Geren said. "It seems when he missed he walked guys, and then he'd come in and it would hit the fat part of the plate."

NOTES: Minnesota RF Jason Kubel was scratched from the lineup before the game with a sore neck. ... Slumping 1B Justin Morneau was rested with a strained lower back, the result of a slide into first base Friday. Morneau had played in 18 straight games, but had just three hits in 39 September at-bats. He is hitting .201 since the All-Star break. ... Davis was caught stealing in the third inning. He had stolen a base in four straight games, which was the fourth-longest streak by an A's player. ... Oakland went without a stolen base after stealing five in Saturday's victory. The A's had 12 steals in their previous four games. ... Oakland has started a rookie pitcher in 77 of its last 95 games.

## **A's leading off**

Associated Press

**Davis' streak ends:** Rajai Davis was caught stealing in the third inning Sunday, and he failed to steal a base in the game, ended a streak of stealing a base in four games, which was the fourth-longest streak by an A's player.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

**No games played Sunday, 9/13**

### **Cats keep three-peat hopes alive**

By Daren Smith / MLB.com

Chris Carter is getting a well-deserved reputation as "Mr. September."

Carter homered for the fifth straight game as part of a 12-hit attack Saturday as the Sacramento River Cats topped the Tacoma Rainiers, 13-8, to reach the Pacific Coast League Championship Series for the fifth time in seven years.

Tommy Everidge contributed two hits and three RBIs and Adrian Cardenas scored three times for Sacramento, which won the best-of-5 semifinal series, 3-1. The River Cats are three wins away from becoming the first team to win three straight PCL titles since the Albuquerque Dukes from 1980-82.

"Pretty much our lineup, 1-9, everyone can get on. There are no weak links on our team," said Carter, who homered in his final regular-season game and has gone deep in all four playoff games. "We're solid defensively and offensively."

The strongest links have been Everidge and Brett Wallace with seven RBIs apiece; Carter has driven in six runs. A year ago, the former 15th-round pick dominated the California League playoffs, hitting .318 with five homers, 18 RBIs and 11 runs scored in 12 games.

"There's a little more excitement, rising to the occasion," said Carter, the 2009 Texas League Player of the Year. "We're just trying to get that [championship] ring."

That might explain why the River Cats' on-field celebration was comparatively tame Saturday.

"We focus on winning the next series, getting to that," Carter said. "Everyone's still pretty excited though."

Sacramento left little doubt about the outcome after scoring six times in the first inning. Wallace hit a two-run triple and Carter went deep with a man aboard two batters later.

"I'm just doing the same thing I've been doing all season," Carter said. "I'm trying to get a good pitch to hit and make a lot of contact with it."

Major League veteran Shawn Chacon (1-0) got the win, despite allowing four runs on eight hits and four walks in five innings.

Rainiers starter Gaby Hernandez (0-1) retired only two batters and was charged with six runs on five hits and two walks. Chris Shelton and Matt Tuiasosopo both homered and drove in three runs for Tacoma.

Awaiting the River Cats in the best-of-5 PCL Championship Series are the Memphis Redbirds, who completed a three-game sweep of Albuquerque in the semifinals.

## **Oakland A's MLN: Moving On**

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Melissa Lockard  
OaklandClubhouse.com

Sep 13, 2009

Both the Sacramento River Cats and the Midland Rockhounds had opportunities to move onto their league finals on Saturday night, and they didn't miss those opportunities.

### **Sacramento Heading Back To Familiar Territory**

If it is September, then it must be time for the Sacramento River Cats to be in the Pacific Coast League finals. Sacramento clinched their spot in their third-straight PCL finals with a resounding victory over the Tacoma Rainiers on Saturday night.

A night after winning 13-2, Sacramento again made the number 13 lucky on Saturday. The River Cats used two six-run innings to account for most of their scoring and they withstood some late Tacoma scoring to win, 13-8.

Chris Carter, who dominated for the Stockton Ports in the California League playoffs last season, hit his fourth homerun in as many PCL playoff games. This one came in the first inning, an inning in which the River Cats scored six times. The River Cats would be up 7-0 at the end of the second inning.

Tacoma would pull within two runs at 7-5 in the sixth inning, but Sacramento would put the game away with six runs in the seventh. Every River Cats' starter either reached base or drove-in a run. Adrian Cardenas, Brett Wallace, Tom Everidge and Matt Carson each had multi-hit games. Cardenas is batting .467 in the playoffs. Shawn Chacon got the win despite allowing four runs in five innings.

Sacramento will take on Memphis in the finals. The finals begin on Tuesday in Memphis. Sacramento will host Game Three on Friday and Games Four and Five, if necessary, on Saturday and Sunday. Sacramento is looking to win their third straight PCL title.

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### **Weeks, Ross Lead Midland To Finals**

The Oakland A's top two picks in the 2008 draft were on display in Game Four of their Texas League playoff series, as first-round pick Jemile Weeks drove home four and second-round pick Tyson Ross earned the win to send Midland to the Texas League finals.

Weeks went 2-4 and hit a three-run homer and had four RBIs in the 5-2 win. He hit .308 in the series. Red-hot Matt Spencer reached base three times on a hit and two walks and he scored twice. He finished the series with a .467 average.

Ross was terrific in his first Texas League playoff start. He went into the seventh inning, allowing two runs on four hits in 6.1 innings to earn the win. Ross struck-out eight and walked only two. Mickey Storey continued his brilliant playoff work, throwing 1.1 scoreless innings in relief of Ross, and Jonathan Hunton earned his second save with 1.1 scoreless innings of his own. Storey appeared in three games in the series and didn't allow a run in 4.2 innings. He struck-out five. Hunton tossed 3.2 scoreless innings in three appearances in the series.

Midland will take on Northwest Arkansas in the Texas League finals. The series begins in Midland on Tuesday and will continue in Midland on Wednesday. It will then move to Northwest Arkansas for Game Three on Friday and Saturday and Sunday, if necessary.