

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, September 22, 2009

### A's streak ends with big thud

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

As convincing as the A's beat the opposition while winning seven games in a row, Monday night's streak-buster also was no cheapie.

The Texas Rangers pounded A's starter Edgar Gonzalez early and coasted to a 10-3 victory, preventing the A's from bagging a season-high eighth straight win.

Oakland outscored its opponents 45-12 during the win streak and never trailed in any of the games.

That changed in a hurry Monday, as the Rangers scored four runs in the first two innings and led 6-0 by the fourth to end most of the intrigue for an announced crowd of 10,581 at the Oakland Coliseum.

"We haven't had too many of these all year," A's manager Bob Geren said of the lopsided loss. "You know the winning streak is going to come to an end, but not necessarily in this style."

Gonzalez's command was off, and he also thought he got squeezed by home plate umpire Laz Diaz on some borderline pitches.

"After that, I had to throw the ball down the middle," he said.

Gonzalez (0-3), whose work had been sporadic most of the season as a long reliever, was making his third start since being inserted into the A's expanded six-man rotation. He was tagged for nine hits and six runs (five earned) in 31/3 innings.

The A's, though, are without injured starters Dallas Braden, Vin Mazzaro and Brett Tomko for the rest of the season, so Gonzalez will remain in the rotation at least through his next start Sunday against the Los Angeles Angels.

A's third baseman Adam Kennedy booted a grounder in the first that extended the inning and helped the Rangers get on the board. Then Texas unloaded on Gonzalez.

The Rangers pounded out 15 hits on the night, and Julio Borbon, David Murphy, Hank Blalock and Chris Davis each had two RBI.

The A's continued getting solid work from Brad Kilby. The lefty relieved Gonzalez in the fourth and worked out of a one-out jam to strand runners at second and third.

He hasn't allowed a run through his first seven major league appearances and has 13 strikeouts in 11 innings.

More adventurous was the big league debut of teammate Henry Rodriguez. The right-hander hit 100 mph on the stadium radar gun. But he uncorked two wild pitches, walked a batter and hit another in an eventful eighth inning that included a throwing error by second baseman Eric Patterson that led to an unearned run.

Rodriguez ended the eighth by freezing Nelson Cruz with a called third strike on a breaking ball.

Said A's starting catcher Kurt Suzuki, who was out of the game by the time Rodriguez took the mound: "He'll walk the bases loaded, then strike three guys out. That's what kind of guy he is."

A's outfielder Matt Carson registered his first two major league hits Saturday, got his first RBI on Sunday and belted his first homer Monday, a two-run shot in the ninth off Eddie Guardado.

Oakland, 13-6 in September, is one victory away from clinching its first winning month since June 2008.

Texas starter Kevin Millwood (11-10), who allowed three hits over seven innings, had much to pitch for. He induced a 4-6-3 double play from Mark Ellis in the fifth inning. With that play, Millwood reached the 180-inning mark this season and activated his \$12 million option for the 2010 season.

## **A's notebook: Cahill pulls 'White Rabbit' out of hat**

BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

Cahill pulls 'White Rabbit' out of introductory cap

There are any number of adrenaline-pumping songs that can fire up a pitcher before he takes the mound.

"White Rabbit" isn't one of them.

Yet the slow-paced, psychedelic number by Jefferson Airplane has served as the walkout song all season for A's right-hander Trevor Cahill. It's an outside-the-box selection for a 21-year-old rookie, but the 1967 classic gets Cahill in the right frame of mind to start a game.

A's fans will be serenaded by "White Rabbit" tonight, as Cahill (9-12) faces Texas and tries to win his fourth straight decision.

"It's just kind of relaxing. It's got a good beat. It gets you into a rhythm," Cahill said. "I'm not a guy that comes in to heavy metal and gets pumped up to throw it by guys."

Though Cahill struck out a career-high seven against the Rangers in his last start, he has just 88 strikeouts this season in 168 1/3 innings.

His success revolves around his ground ball-inducing sinker. But Cahill also has started using his changeup and slider more effectively, a key to his recent success. Opponents are hitting just .177 over his past four starts.

As for his musical taste, Cahill is a classic rock nut, so "White Rabbit" isn't that surprising of a choice. He's been using it as his walkout music since 2007, when he was with low Single-A Kane County (Ill.).

"I knew the song was in a lot of Vietnam movies, and I'm a big movie guy," Cahill said. "But I never knew (what band it was) until they played it on the radio. I downloaded it. "... I had a pretty good year (at Kane County), so I kept it."

A's manager Bob Geren confirmed pitcher Brett Tomko will miss the rest of the season with nerve pain in his right arm. Geren said he didn't know the results yet of Tomko's visit to a neurologist, but Tomko wouldn't have his arm back in pitching shape by season's end regardless.

Tomko will be a free agent and should garner interest after going 4-1 with a 2.95 ERA in six starts with the A's. But Oakland may consider making him an offer to provide some veteran savvy for a rotation that's featured four rookies for most of 2009.

"That's something you'd look at in the winter (depending) on where we're at," Geren said. "I thought he did a nice job. He's definitely going to be a big league pitcher somewhere. If he fits in with us, great."

Daric Barton suffered a heel injury while running the bases Sunday, so Bobby Crosby started at first base Monday against Texas. Geren said he was hopeful Barton could return tonight.

A's left fielder Scott Hairston left Monday's game after four innings with a left hip injury, the severity of which is unknown. "I don't know what's going on with it," Hairston said. "Sometimes there's a shooting pain that goes down to my knee. Hopefully it's better (today)."

## **Little to cheer as A's winning streak ends**

Rusty Simmons, Chronicle Staff Writer

The loudest reaction from a sparse Monday night crowd at the Coliseum came in the fourth inning, when A's manager Bob Geren strode toward the mound.

The crowd of 10,851 picked the right time to stop practicing for Presidents Cup attendance and make some noise, because it was about the only thing that could have induced a positive response in the A's 10-3 clunker against Texas.

Edgar Gonzalez gave up six runs (five earned) in 31/3 innings, so the reaction was about equal parts jeers for his performance and genuine claps for Geren's decision to yank the starter.

Gonzalez failed to get past the fifth inning for his third consecutive start and moved his record to 0-3. He had made two decent outings following a three-month hiatus from starting, but Gonzalez was bad from the outset against the Rangers.

The right-hander gave up nine hits, and many of the outs he recorded were sharply hit grounders or liners to the outfield. By the time he allowed Marlon Byrd's fourth-inning RBI double, Gonzalez had put the A's in a 6-0 hole.

The white-hot A's couldn't climb back and didn't really threaten to do so. They managed only three hits - none between the fourth and seventh innings - against Texas starter Kevin Millwood and had only a gift run in seven innings to show for their efforts.

"You know your winning streak is going to come to an end eventually, but not necessarily like this," Geren said.

The A's mostly lackluster show brought their winning streak to a halt at seven games and, at least, stalled them from clinching their first winning month of the season. The Rangers had lost six of seven, including a three-game sweep last week at the hands of the A's.

Texas appeared to be hunting a little payback.

The Rangers went ahead 1-0 in the first inning, taking advantage of an Adam Kennedy error that kept the inning alive for Hank Blalock's RBI single to left field. Things got worse from there for Gonzalez, who gave up three runs in the second and two more before being yanked in the fourth.

Julio Borbon had a two-run single and David Murphy added an RBI double in the second. Murphy and Byrd had back-to-back run-scoring hits in the fourth to push the lead to 6-0. Borbon, Murphy and Blalock had three hits and two RBIs apiece.

The A's finally scored in the sixth, when Cliff Pennington was hit to lead off the inning. He moved to third on an error by Ian Kinsler and scored on a sacrifice fly by Rajai Davis.

That was all the A's could muster against Millwood, who was pitching on eight days' rest. When he got Mark Ellis to ground into a double play in the fifth inning, Millwood reached 180 innings for the season and locked the Rangers into a \$12 million option for 2010.

The major-league debut of A's reliever Henry Rodriguez did ignite a little life in the Coliseum. The right-hander, who was clocked at 101 mph five times for Triple-A Sacramento, dialed up 99- and 100-mph pitches on his first two offerings. He also winged two wild pitches, was late covering first, causing an errant throw by Eric Patterson and gave up two runs (one earned) in his one-inning outing.

"Obviously, you can see talent there, but he has a way to go from what I saw tonight," Geren said. "You don't see the scoreboard go to triple digits very often, but he's got to work on his command."

Matt Carson hit his first major-league home run in the ninth to cut the deficit to 10-3. The two-run shot to left came off Eddie Guardado, who tied Cy Young for 21st on the all-time list with 906 appearances.

**Briefly:** Brett Tomko, who has a nerve problem in his right arm, will not pitch again this season, Geren said. ... Scott Hairston tweaked his hip/back in the fourth inning, and Geren listed the outfielder as doubtful for tonight.

## **A's leading off**

Rusty Simmons, San Francisco Chronicle

**On his heels:** Daric Barton missed Monday's game and is day-to-day with a sore heel. Barton, who is hitting .375 in his past eight games, was hurt trying to score from first on a Scott Hairston double Sunday.

## **A's streak ends as E. Gonzalez struggles**

### **Rangers put up six runs on righty while bats go quietly**

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's starter Edgar Gonzalez lasted just four innings last week in Texas, but he was backed by five shutout innings from the bullpen and a huge night from the offense as the A's pounded their way to the third victory of what grew to a season-high-tying seven-game winning streak.

On Monday at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, Gonzalez couldn't get through the fourth inning, the bullpen was less than stellar, and the pounding was provided almost exclusively by the visiting Rangers.

Cooled off by Kevin Millwood, the A's didn't play well in any phase of the game as their streak came to an end with a 10-3 drubbing in the opener of a four-game series.

"We haven't had too many of these all year," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "You can't win every night."

Certainly not when your starter has the kind of evening Gonzalez endured. Seemingly at odds with the strike zone of home-plate umpire Laz Diaz, Gonzalez gave up six runs (five earned) on nine hits and two walks while throwing 73 pitches over 3 1/3 innings.

"I thought I was throwing good pitches [on the corners], but he was calling a lot of balls," said Gonzalez, who gave Diaz a derisive tip of the cap upon exiting in the fourth. "After that I had to throw it right down the middle. There's nothing I can do about that."

Millwood, meanwhile, was at his stingy best in allowing three singles, a walk and an unearned run while throwing 90 pitches over seven innings.

"He was pretty sharp tonight," said Oakland catcher Kurt Suzuki. "He kept the ball off the middle of the plate, and when he fell behind, he executed his pitches. You can't say, 'We should have done this,' or, 'We could have done that.' There's not really much you can say at all. We just couldn't muster anything against him."

Added Geren: "That was the best I've seen him in a long time. His velocity was up, he worked the ball well on the corners. He was tough."

Along the way, Millwood guaranteed his \$12 million salary for next season by eclipsing the 180-innings mark for the year, turning that trick as the Rangers turned a double play in the fifth inning.

"That's a \$12 million pitch," Suzuki said.

The Rangers scored an unearned run in the first inning after an error by A's third baseman Adam Kennedy, and the wheels started wobbling for Gonzalez in the second as Julio Borbon singled in two runs and a double by David Murphy made it 4-0.

Consecutive RBI singles by Murphy and Hank Blalock with one out in the fourth chased Gonzalez, and after rookie lefty Brad Kilby ripped through 2 2/3 perfect innings, striking out three, the Oakland bullpen's 12-game stretch of brilliance (1.68 ERA) came to a screeching halt.

Righty Jeff Gray, who'd posted a 1.86 ERA in 16 games since being recalled from Triple-A Sacramento on Aug. 6, gave up two runs on three hits -- Chris Davis' two-run triple was the killer -- in the seventh inning.

An inning later, righty Henry Rodriguez drew some appreciative hoots when he hit 100 mph on the stadium radar gun, but he also hit a batter, gave up a hit, walked one and allowed two runs.

Only one of them was earned, though as both scored when second baseman Eric Patterson overthrew Rodriguez covering first base with one out.

"His velocity was obviously very impressive, but his command of the strike zone wasn't there," Geren said. "He has a ways to go, based on what I saw tonight, but he's also got one of the best arms you'll see. You don't see the radar gun go to triple-digits very often around the league."

The A's scored an unearned run of their own in the sixth as Cliff Pennington was hit by a pitch, moved to third on an error by Rangers second baseman Ian Kinsler and scored on a sacrifice fly by Rajai Davis.

That was the extent of Oakland's offensive highlights until the bottom of the ninth, when rookie Matt Carson followed Davis' leadoff single with his first big league homer, a shot into the "BBQ Terrace" beyond the left-field wall off Eddie Guardado.

"There were a couple bright spots," Geren said.

Before the game, Geren spoke glowingly of his young team's effort over the past few months; Oakland is 34-30 since the All-Star break. Emboldened by the 12-2 run that peaked Sunday when the A's closed out a four-game sweep of the Indians, the skipper went so far as to speak of getting to .500 by the end of the year.

"Just finishing strong and playing well down the stretch is the main thing," he said, "but finishing at .500 would be a great feat."

Now eight games under, Oakland needs to go 10-2 from here on out to get there.

## **A's bullpen promises bright future**

### **Oakland (71-79) vs. Texas (82-67), 7:05 p.m. PT**

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's will have plenty of question marks heading into Spring Training 2010, but there won't be much uncertainty surrounding the constitution of their bullpen.

Heading into this week's series against the Rangers -- the second of three games is scheduled for Tuesday -- Oakland's relievers were sporting an American League-best 3.57 ERA, and every key member of the unit is expected back next season.

Even better for the cost-conscious club: They'll return on the cheap.

All-Star closer Andrew Bailey, right-hander Brad Ziegler and left-hander Craig Breslow aren't yet eligible for arbitration, and top setup man Michael Wuertz is a year from free agency.

Wuertz, 6-1 with a 2.80 ERA and 95 strikeouts against 22 walks in 74 innings over 70 appearances this year, figures to be the most expensive reliever next season, but he won't exactly break the bank. He'll get a nice raise over the reported \$1.1 million he's making this year, but nothing that'll make ownership choke on its wallet.

Better still: The A's are anticipating the return of projected 2009 closer Joey Devine, who suffered an elbow injury this spring and underwent Tommy John elbow ligament replacement surgery, ending his season before it started.

Devine won't be making much more than the Major League minimum in 2010, but he is expected to provide some bang for the bucks. His recovery is ahead of schedule, and he's planning to be ready for the start of camp in February.

"It's exciting," Devine said during a recent visit to the clubhouse. "I'm already on my throwing program, and I feel great. It's just awesome to be throwing a baseball again, and watching the way the bullpen's done this year, it gets you even more excited to be a part of it next year."

In its 12 games prior to Monday, when the Rangers snapped Oakland's seven-game winning streak, the A's bullpen compiled a 1.68 ERA, allowing nine runs in 48 1/3 innings.

Bailey, Wuertz, Breslow and Ziegler have handled most of the high-pressure innings, but prospects Jeff Gray, Jerry Blevins and Brad Kilby have been impressive of late, too.

Gray, a righty, posted a 1.86 ERA in his first 16 appearances after being called up from Triple-A Sacramento on Aug. 6. Lefties Blevins and Kilby were called up Sept. 1; Blevins had a 2.70 ERA in nine outings through Sunday, while Kilby hasn't allowed a run in seven games, including Monday's 2 2/3-inning stint.

"It seems like we talk about it every day, and we really should," A's manager Bob Geren said of the bullpen's excellence. "That's how good it's been."

Bailey, an American League Rookie of the Year candidate, thinks it will be even better next season.

"We've got a lot of guys who have shown what they can do this year," he said. "And the great thing is that everyone's improving as the season goes on. It's a lot of fun to be a part of."

#### **Pitching matchup**

##### **OAK: RHP Trevor Cahill (9-12, 4.54 ERA)**

Cahill is riding a three-game winning streak, and has a six-game unbeaten stretch. He's lowered his ERA from 5.13 to its current level over the course of the past eight games. He gave up one hit over seven shutout innings and recorded a career-high seven strikeouts in his last start, a 4-0 victory over the Rangers in Texas. He'll be making his fourth start against the Rangers, against whom he is 2-1 with a 2.70 ERA and an opponents' batting average of .192.




##### **TEX: RHP Brandon McCarthy (7-3, 4.97 ERA)**

McCarthy is coming off a 6-1 loss to the Athletics on Tuesday in which he allowed four runs in three-plus innings. He is now 2-1 with a 5.17 ERA in three starts since returning at the beginning of September after missing three months with a stress fracture in his right shoulder blade. He is 3-2 with a 6.10 ERA in seven starts on the road, where opponents are hitting .302 off him as opposed to .199 on the road. He is 1-4 with an 8.27 ERA in his career against the A's, his highest ERA against any opponent.

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

First baseman Daric Barton suffered a minor heel injury while trying to score from first base on a double in the sixth inning Sunday and did not play on Monday. He could return as early as Tuesday. Barton is 9-for-24 (.375) over his past eight games. ... Bailey has converted his past 20 save opportunities, an on-going Oakland rookie record. ... When John Meloan made his big league debut out of the bullpen Sunday, he became the 49th player to appear for the A's this season. The club record is 54, in 2007, and 51 players appeared last season. ... LPGA star Natalie Gulbis threw out the ceremonial first pitch and split the fairway.

#### **Up next**

- Wednesday: Athletics (Clay Mortensen, 2-2, 6.12) vs. Rangers (Tommy Hunter, 8-4, 3.25), 7:05 p.m. PT 
- Thursday: Athletics (Brett Anderson, 10-10, 4.21) vs. Rangers (Scott Feldman, 17-5, 3.62), 12:35 p.m. PT 
- Friday: Athletics (Gio Gonzalez, 5-6, 6.15) at Angels (Jered Weaver, 15-7, 3.87), 7:05 p.m. PT 

## **A's shut Tomko down for season**

### **Pinched nerve puts an end to righty's resurgence**

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- One of the better stories of the A's season, albeit a short story, came to an end on Monday when right-hander Brett Tomko was declared finished for the season.

Tomko, signed to a Minor League deal after being released by the Yankees in early August, went 4-1 with a 2.95 ERA in six starts with Oakland but hasn't pitched since earning his 100th career victory with a five-hit shutout against the host Rangers on Aug. 14.

A free agent this winter, Tomko, 37, told MLB.com on Tuesday that an MRI done that morning had revealed a pinched nerve in his right shoulder, causing discomfort and numbness throughout his arm.

"Tomko will not pitch again this season, that's for sure," A's manager Bob Geren said Monday before the opener of a three-game series against Texas at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

The A's haven't gone through the formality of putting Tomko on the 60-day disabled list, suggesting that Oakland has no plans to add any players not on the 40-man roster to the big league club for the season's final 12 games.

## **What will the 2010 rotation look like?**

### **Beat reporter Mychael Urban fields A's fans' questions**

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

**I know you answered a question similar to this one a while back, but now that we're at the end of the year, I want to throw it at you again? What do you think the starting rotation is going to look like next year? Is Brett Tomko a part of it?**

**-- Randy H., Walnut Creek, Calif.**

I don't think Tomko will be around next year. He's a great guy, and he's been a great story while he's been here, but he's likely to draw some pretty decent free-agent offers over the winter, and the A's have more than enough starting pitching to be just fine without him.

As for the rotation, I think Dallas Braden has a pretty good shot at again being the Opening Day starter; he's the leader of the rotation and has had the best season of any starter who pitched for most of the year. If he's healthy, I'd make him the No. 1.

That doesn't mean I think he'll be the ace, though. I like him as the No. 1 because (a) he's good enough to beat other No. 1s when he's on, and (b) it will give Trevor Cahill and Brett Anderson more favorable matchups in the Nos. 2 and 3 slots. So you open the rotation with left-right-left. Who's the ace? Flip a coin. Cahill or Anderson.

Josh Outman won't be back until well into the season, so you have two open jobs going into camp, and the top candidates are, in no particular order, Clayton Mortensen, Vin Mazzaro and Gio Gonzalez. Mazzaro will almost certainly win one of them, and to keep the left-right thing going, he's your No. 4. That leaves, ostensible, Gonzalez and Mortensen battling it out of the No. 5 spot, and while I think Gonzalez has better stuff, he probably has more to prove.

If he comes to camp in shape and throws strikes, the job will be his. But Mortensen is no slouch and has better command right now. There will surely be other candidates in the mix, too, so that figures to be one of the better battles of the spring.

**I watched Chris Carter play first base in the Triple-A playoffs and was not impressed, to say the least. He butchered at least two extremely routine plays. That said, what a hitter. He needs to be in Oakland next year. So the question is: at what position? Can he play left field at all?**

**-- Cory F., Davis, Calif.**

Yes, he can play in the outfield. He hasn't done a ton of it, but Bob Geren is fond of telling reporters that he's heard scouts liken Carter to Jermaine Dye. That's quite a stretch given that Dye is one of the better technical defensive outfielders in the game, but I think the point is that Carter has similar athleticism.

As I've noted in my blog, the A's have trotted out some pretty miserable defensive left fielders in the not-too-distant past, including Jeremy Giambi and Emil Brown. With some quality coaching, you'd like to think that Carter could at least get to -- and past -- that level of acumen.

Until the team truly commits to playing him out there, we have no way of knowing if it's a viable option, but I haven't heard great things about the kid as a first baseman, and he struggled in limited playing time at third base in the low Minors. It's a shot worth taking, because there's no question his bat is awfully close to being ready for the next level.

**What's the latest on Joey Devine's recovery from Tommy John elbow ligament replacement surgery?**  
-- Thomas K., Cupertino, Calif.

He's doing well. He started a throwing program a while back, and he's jazzed about being quite a bit ahead of schedule. The hope is that he'll be ready for the start of Spring Training, but the A's will bring him along slowly either way.

The goal is to have him ready for Opening Day, and barring a setback, that's realistic. And exciting for A's fans. A back end of the bullpen featuring Devine, Andrew Bailey, Michael Wuertz (arbitration-eligible) and Brad Ziegler would be awfully tough, and with a reliable lefty or two -- Craig Breslow has been solid, and he and Jerry Blevins are under club control next year -- in the mix, six quality innings is all the team would really need from the young starters.

**Bailey: American League Rookie of the Year?**  
-- Martin R., San Diego

I'd be surprised. He has more saves than Huston Street had when he won it, but the A's were still a pretty high-profile team in 2005. Being on a West Coast team doesn't bode well for Bailey, either. Nor does being a pitcher. I have a feeling Elvis Andrus of the Rangers is going to get the nod because he plays on a team that's been in contention until very recently, and he's an everyday player at a premium position.

**Would you trade Street, Carlos Gonzalez and Greg Smith for Mortensen, Brett Wallace and Shane Peterson? I wouldn't.**  
-- Andy H., Larkspur, Calif.

I see where you're going with this, and I think it's a little unfair. You left out getting three months of an unproductive Matt Holliday and all the money his jersey sales generated.

## **A's Show Signs Of Life, but Is It Sign of Bright Future in Oakland?**

By [Jeff Fletcher](#), aol.com, 9/22/09

OAKLAND -- The A's rebuilding plan may appear to be progressing quickly with the team's hot streak, but don't expect GM [Billy Beane](#) to make any big splashes on marquee players this winter to fill out the picture.

He tried that last winter. Didn't work.

Only after the A's got rid of [Matt Holliday](#), [Jason Giambi](#) and [Orlando Cabrera](#), essentially handing the wheel to the young players, did the team start to win. So the youth movement will continue.

"We'd look to add some guys, but we're going to be very disciplined," Beane told FanHouse. "We're trying to build something. We're not going to go crazy in the offseason."

That means the big power bat -- or bats -- that the A's seem to need to get to the next level are probably not going to come from outside the organization. It means they'll probably be waiting for guys like [Ryan Sweeney](#) and [Kurt Suzuki](#) to develop some more pop, or waiting for minor-league star Chris Carter (67 homers in his two seasons in the minors) to make his mark in the big leagues.

The A's also think Brett Wallace, acquired in the Holliday trade, can be a middle-of-the-order power hitter someday.

In the meantime, Beane is taking satisfaction in that a miserable season seems to be closing on a good note. The A's, who have been in last place every day since May 3, started turning it on slowly in the second half, and have been on fire for most of September.

They have won 12 out of 15, the best record in the majors in that span. Since June 29, the A's are 40-36.

"It's very encouraging," Beane aid. "I think it says a lot to have a young team in last place playing the way they are. I think it says a lot about the environment and the staff."

Is this really a sign of good things to come? Or simply a mirage? The Reds, you'll recall, won 13 out of 14 a few weeks ago.

Two of the A's rookies who give them hope that this is the start of a franchise turnaround are pitchers [Brett Anderson](#) and [Andrew Bailey](#), the latter is among the front-runners for Rookie of the Year. Bailey, an All-Star, has 25 saves and a 1.95 ERA, after pitching only one game above Double-A.



"If you'd told me in spring training that this is what he'd be doing, we'd all tell you we'd be surprised," Beane said. "But once he got in a couple major league games at the beginning of the year, we all realized we had something pretty special. The second half he's been phenomenal."

Anderson is 10-10 with a 4.21 ERA, and he has a 3.72 ERA in the second half.

"He just keeps getting better and better," Beane said. "We think he's got a chance to be one of the better guys in the league."

Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez and Vin Mazzaro have been a cut below Anderson. Each has shown flashes of potential, mixed with some rough games. Josh Outman and Dallas Braden were the two best starters in the first half, but both got hurt. Outman had Tommy John surgery and will be out until the middle of next season.

The A's seem to have enough quantity of arms that they'll likely let the same group roll into next year. The tough issue for Beane is going to be deciding which of the position players that have carried the team in September are going to be here for the long haul.

Shortstop Cliff Pennington, who took over after the Cabrera trade, appears to have won a job for 2010. Suzuki, a potential All-Star, also has his spot locked up next year, as does veteran second baseman Mark Ellis.

The most interesting case is center fielder Rajai Davis. He's 29 years old, having been a fringe big-leaguer for the past two years, but he's hitting .316 with 40 stolen bases. Over the past 25 games he has hit .381. The A's will go into the winter planning on bringing Davis back as the center fielder in 2010.

"He's taken the opportunity and, for lack of a better term, has run with it," Beane said. "He's a major reason we've played so well in the second half."

## **Rangers put brakes on A's 7-game streak**

Associated Press

OAKLAND -- Kevin Millwood needed to break out of a pitching slump just as Texas needed to shake free from an offensive meltdown.

Millwood threw seven strong innings and the Rangers scored more runs in one game than their last seven combined in beating the Oakland Athletics 10-3 on Monday night.

"There's no doubt that scoring in double digits says something good for our offense," Rangers DH Julio Borbon said. "It's not just scoring a lot of runs, but scoring early and helping your pitcher. It helps put us in a better spot as we look ahead."

David Murphy had three hits and drove in two runs to help the Rangers hang on to their slim playoff hopes. Borbon and Chris Davis both drove in two runs as the Rangers won for the second time in eight games, moving within seven games of the Boston Red Sox, who lost 12-9 to Kansas City, in the AL wild card.

"We're going to keep going until there's no more schedule," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "All I know now is that we're not going to finish with a losing record. We have 13 games left and we still have some more wins to get."

Millwood (11-10) gave up an unearned run and three hits, walking one and striking out two. He needed to pitch 4 1-3 innings against Oakland to reach 180 for the season and kick in the fifth and final season of his contract, which is worth \$12 million.

"I'm glad I was able to finally go out there and give the team a chance to win," Millwood said of his best game in over four months. "I knew what I had to get but I wanted to go deep in the ballgame. That other stuff takes care of itself."

Millwood skipped a start after allowing five runs in four of his previous five starts. He threw three bullpen sessions between starts to work on a mechanical flaw, which was something as simple as arcing his back too much.

"I've felt fine every time I've pitched," Millwood said. "I just wasn't pitching well. My bullpens don't tend to be too short. I got a lot of work in. That helped me get the ball to go where I wanted easier."

Matt Carson hit a home run for the A's, who had their season-high seven-game winning streak end. Rajai Davis also drove in a run.

Edgar Gonzalez (0-3) lasted 3 1-3 innings, giving up six runs and nine hits. He walked two and struck out three.

"I'm not even positive he was actually struggling with his command," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He was maybe being a little too fine, trying to be on the corners too much. There were a couple of times where he heated up to 92 mph and finished a couple guys off."

Millwood allowed two hits in the first inning but then did not allow a runner past first base until a throwing error by second baseman Ian Kinsler sent Chad Pennington to third. Davis followed with a sacrifice fly.

"That was the best I've seen him in a long time," Geren said of Millwood. "His velocity was up, he worked the ball real well on the corner, especially inside. It just wasn't our night."

The Rangers scored in three of the first four innings.

Hank Blalock singled home a run in the first and Texas added three runs in the second on a two-run single from Borbon and Murphy's RBI single.

"The way we have been swinging the bats the last seven or eight games is not what we expected," Borbon said. "This is something we can build from."

Murphy and Marlon Byrd added run-scoring singles in the fourth to make it 6-0.

After the A's scored, Davis tripled home two runs in the seventh and Blalock drove in a run in the eighth.

## **A's and Padres really worth watching this time of year**

By Steve Berthiaume, ESPN

At this point in the baseball season, a piece about the A's and Padres usually comes to bury those teams not to praise them, but since nothing written here should ever be confused with Shakespeare, we'll flip the script.

This weekend the leads in both the AL Central and NL wild card dipped below three games (though the Tigers were able to push the lead back to three with a win against the Twins on Sunday and the Rockies extended their advantage by to four over the Giants by weekend's end).

Every [Zack Greinke](#) or [Chris Carpenter](#) start means a Cy Young discussion while we make our daily check of [Joe Mauer's](#) batting average (for the record, it's .374). Even Nationals fans can at least enjoy [Ryan Zimmerman's](#) Web Gem points lead.

With all that going on, I'm guessing you haven't checked an A's box score lately or looked for a Padres highlight, but let's give credit where it's due: with almost nothing to play for and few people showing interest, the A's and Padres have managed to extract some meaningful baseball from otherwise meaningless games. It's these kinds of efforts that put integrity into the full 162-game schedule, especially when you consider it comes from two teams which began the 2009 season among the five lowest payrolls in the majors.

Let's start with the A's. Last week they faced two teams fighting for postseason survival and won both series, taking two of three at Minnesota before going to Texas where they swept the Rangers, outscoring Texas 19-1. (That series turned out to be a continuation of last week's disastrous offensive slide for the Rangers, during which Texas scored exactly one run in five games and was shut out four times.)

[Trevor Cahill](#) completed Oakland's sweep of the Rangers this past Wednesday with seven innings of one-hit ball, retiring 16 straight batters at one point. As he heads into this week, Cahill is 3-0 over his previous six starts with a 2.57 ERA. Cahill is getting big outs: In his past four starts, opponents are 1-for-19 with runners in scoring position against him. Two nights later, [Brett Anderson](#) used his slider and curveball to strike out a career-high 10 batters in six innings against the Indians. Anderson, who like Cahill is just 21 years old, has 139 strikeouts this season and is now only three more strikeouts from breaking Rick Langford's A's rookie record set in 1977. Take a moment to go back and look at the past dozen or so games the A's have played; they're rolling. As Tim Kurkjian said this weekend about Oakland, "they've developed some young players despite all the losing. It's not a wasted year for the A's."

The Padres' season looked like a lost cause almost immediately. It got so bad even [Jake Peavy](#) finally agreed to grab a parachute and jump out over Chicago. However, the Padres have made their September mean something, and they deserve all the credit in the world for it. Starting on Aug. 25, San Diego won two of three in Atlanta and then two of three in Florida (both road series wins against NL wild-card contenders), then closed the month by sweeping Washington. Following that, the Padres played three more series against teams fighting for NL postseason spots; the Dodgers, Giants and Rockies. San Diego won two of three in Los Angeles, won two of three in San Francisco and then went back home to Petco Park and stopped the Rockies' eight-game winning streak cold by taking two of three from Colorado. Who would

have thought for even a moment back in mid-August that the team that would inflict the most damage on NL postseason contenders over the next four weeks would be the [San Diego Padres](#)?

Since July 28, the Fighting Sons of Nate Colbert have played at a pace that's about 10 games over .500. Last season, San Diego finished a miserable 63-99. This year, if the Padres can just play .500 ball from here on in, they can better their 2008 win total by about 10 games.

The A's and Padres just show you what is so great about baseball. Even with two seemingly lost seasons there are always reasons to watch, always players in whom to take an interest or get excited about and one lesson that applies to pretty much everything in life: If you play the full 162 like they all mean something, good things will happen.

**Past Baseball Tonight Clubhouses:** [Sept. 17](#) | [Sept. 16](#) | [Sept. 15](#) | [Sept. 14](#) | [Sept. 13](#)

## WEB GEMS SCOREBOARD

This season, "Baseball Tonight" will be tracking Web Gems. We'll publish a leaderboard on the Baseball Tonight Clubhouse page each Monday. In addition to listing the leaders in appearances (both players and teams) on "Baseball Tonight," we'll offer up the leaders in Web Gem points.

Web Gem points will be calculated by awarding five points for the night's top defensive play, four points for second, three for third, two for fourth and one for fifth. Scoring will be based on the Web Gems from the last "Baseball Tonight" show to air on a given night.

|                                 |    |
|---------------------------------|----|
| <a href="#">Ryan Zimmerman</a>  | 54 |
| <a href="#">Mark Reynolds</a>   | 43 |
| <a href="#">Jack Wilson</a>     | 37 |
| <a href="#">Brandon Inge</a>    | 36 |
| <a href="#">Carlos Gomez</a>    | 27 |
| <a href="#">Jacoby Ellsbury</a> | 27 |
| <a href="#">David Wright</a>    | 26 |
| Three tied                      | 25 |

|                               |                    |            |    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|----|
| Ryan Zimmerman                | Washington         | Third base | 17 |
| Brandon Inge                  | Detroit            | Third base | 12 |
| Mark Reynolds                 | Arizona            | Third base | 11 |
| David Wright                  | New York Mets      | Third base | 10 |
| Jack Wilson                   | Pittsburgh-Seattle | Shortstop  | 9  |
| <a href="#">Chone Figgins</a> | L.A. Angels        | Third base | 8  |

|              |    |
|--------------|----|
| Pittsburgh   | 40 |
| Washington   | 37 |
| Cincinnati   | 33 |
| Philadelphia | 29 |
| Minnesota    | 29 |
| L.A. Angels  | 29 |
| Texas        | 29 |

## TOUCH 'EM ALL

Who went deep? Keep track of all the home runs hit each day on "Baseball Tonight" and on the Baseball Tonight Clubhouse page.

For more, check out the [Home Run Tracker](#) page.

Home Run Tracker

| NAME                                 | HR | OPP       | SITUATION                   |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----------|-----------------------------|
| <a href="#">Prince Fielder</a> , MIL | 40 | Paulino   | Bot 1: 3-2, 1 Out. None on. |
| <a href="#">Jason Bay</a> , BOS      | 35 | Waters    | Top 4: 3-1, 1 Out. None on. |
| <a href="#">Andre Ethier</a> , LAD   | 31 | Lincecum  | Bot 3: 3-2, 2 Outs. 1 on.   |
| <a href="#">Luke Scott</a> , BAL     | 24 | Matsuzaka | Bot 4: 3-1, 1 Out. 1 on.    |

|                                       |    |             |                              |
|---------------------------------------|----|-------------|------------------------------|
| <a href="#">Juan Rivera</a> , LAA     | 23 | Holland     | Top 4: 2-2, 1 Out. None on.  |
| <a href="#">Joey Votto</a> , CIN      | 22 | Wood        | Bot 7: 2-0, 0 Outs. 1 on.    |
| <a href="#">Ken Griffey Jr.</a> , SEA | 16 | Chamberlain | Bot 2: 1-2, 2 Outs. 2 on.    |
| <a href="#">Carl Crawford</a> , TB    | 14 | Halladay    | Bot 1: 0-0, 0 Outs. 1 on.    |
| <a href="#">Ryan Raburn</a> , DET     | 13 | Liriano     | Top 8: 1-0, 0 Outs. None on. |
| <a href="#">Jason Giambi</a> , COL    | 13 | Haren       | Top 8: 2-2, 2 Outs. 1 on.    |

**The complete list of Sunday's homers**

**BBTN ON THE AIR: MONDAY**

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| TIME              | WHO'S ON?   |
| <b>12 a.m. ET</b> | Host: Karl Ravech                                 |
| <b>ESPN2</b>      | Analysts: John Kruk, Peter Gammons, Dave Winfield |

**BBTN MINUTE: TIGERS RECOVER VS. TWINS**

**SIMON SAYS**

ESPN researcher Mark Simon digs deep, looking for the night's best baseball numbers.

Tonight, he looks at the difference in the Tigers on days when [Placido Polanco](#) produces, which was the case in his 2-for-4, three-RBI day in Detroit's win Sunday against the Twins:

|              | When Tigers win | When Tigers lose |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>BA</b>    | .326            | .229             |
| <b>HR</b>    | 9               | 1                |
| <b>RBI</b>   | 58              | 10               |
| <b>Games</b> | 75              | 65               |

**WEB GEMS**

**SUNDAY'S BEST AND WORST**

**BEST**

- [Howie Kendrick](#) had four RBIs all month heading into the Angels' series finale with the Texas. Then he dropped five on the Rangers. Kendrick went 3-for-5 with a homer and five RBIs in a 10-5 Angels win that pushed Los Angeles' lead in the AL West to 7½ games and reduced their magic number to win the division to seven.

**WORST**

- [Tim Lincecum](#) was hit hard and struggled with his control in a short outing against the Dodgers. Lincecum gave up four hits and five runs in four innings of San Francisco's 6-2 loss. He also issued four walks in those four innings, which contributed to him running his pitch count to 87 in the brief appearance.

**ON DECK: MONDAY'S BEST MATCHUPS**

**Cardinals at Astros, 8:05 p.m., 8:05 p.m. ET**

A pair of under-the-radar pitchers who are having solid seasons, even if their records aren't overwhelming. Houston's [Wandy Rodriguez](#) (13-10, 2.77 ERA) has a 2.25 ERA in four starts against the Cardinals this season, but just a 1-2 record. [Joel Pineiro](#) (14-11, 3.31 ERA) is 2-0 with a 2.46 ERA against the Astros this year.

**Twins at White Sox, 8:11 p.m. ET**

The Twins couldn't finish off a sweep of the Tigers on Sunday and still stand three back of Detroit in the AL Central. The White Sox are a bit farther back with time running out; they trail the Tigers by 6½. [D.J. Carrasco](#) is set to make his second start for the White Sox. [Nick Blackburn](#) has had good success against the White Sox this season, going 3-1 with a 2.67 ERA in four starts.

**Yankees at Angels, 10:05 p.m. ET**

After skipping a start to rest a tired shoulder, [Andy Pettitte](#) returns to the mound. Pettitte has won his past five decisions, going 5-0 in eight starts since July 30. [Joe Saunders](#) is on a similar run. He is 4-0 in his past five starts.

For the rest of Monday's schedule, [click here](#).

## NUMBERS TO KNOW

[Victor Martinez](#) takes a 19-game hit streak into Monday's game against the Royals. The big key to Martinez's recent success has been his ability to connect on off-speed pitches, especially changeups.

He has feasted on pitches on the outside part of the plate during the hot streak. And with the confidence Martinez has in his swing, he's been jumping on pitches early in the count.

|                 | During hit streak | Before hit streak |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| vs. off-speed   | .389              | .161              |
| vs. changeup    | .571              | .155              |
| Pitches away    | .424              | .275              |
| Pitches/innings | 16.9              | 18.8              |
| On first pitch  | .667              | .333              |

-- ESPN Stats & Information

## FANTASY: PREVIEW OF MONDAY'S GAMES

Adam Madison examines the 10 games on Monday's slate.

Madison ranks the pitchers scheduled to take the mound and supplies loads of other information that could help shape your roster for Monday. [Daily Notes](#)

## HUNT FOR OCTOBER

Here's the latest in the wild-card races:

| TEAM    | W-L   | GB  | POFF  |
|---------|-------|-----|-------|
| Rockies | 85-65 | --  | 90.9% |
| Giants  | 80-69 | 4.5 | 5.2%  |
| Marlins | 80-70 | 5.0 | 1.3%  |

| TEAM    | W-L   | GB  | POFF  |
|---------|-------|-----|-------|
| Dodgers | 90-60 | --  | 99.9% |
| Rockies | 85-65 | 5.0 | 90.9% |
| Giants  | 80-69 | 9.5 | 5.2%  |

| TEAM      | W-L   | GB  | POFF  |
|-----------|-------|-----|-------|
| Tigers    | 79-70 | --  | 77.5% |
| Twins     | 76-73 | 3.0 | 21.4% |
| White Sox | 73-77 | 6.5 | 1.1%  |

## Hairston finds his place with A's

By [Malaiika Bobino](#), Oakland Post, September 21, 2009

Oakland, CA - All of the pieces to the puzzle now seem to be in place. The Oakland A's have a good solid, young team and one of the new additions is outfielder Scott Hairston. He was drafted by the Arizona Diamondbacks in the third round of the 2001 MLB draft. On July 27, 2007, the Diamondbacks traded him to the San Diego Padres. Two years later on July 5, 2009 Hairston was traded to the Oakland A's in exchange for minor league pitchers Ryan Webb, Craig Italiano and Sean Gallagher. Coming from the National League has been no easy adjustment for Hairston.

"I like being here in Oakland," said Hairston! "I went from the National League to the American League for the first time in my career." "In the NL, you have the pitcher hitting where in the AL you have the designated hitter." "It's going to be

great to experience their style of play." "I guess the biggest challenge is going to be the pitching." "I haven't faced many of the pitchers in this league." "You can watch video all day but once you get in that batters box it's a completely different story."

Scott Hairston's definitely finding his place with the Oakland A's. Nine of his last 17 RBI's have either tied the game or put the A's ahead. He has made each of his last 39 starts on defense in left field after making his first 12 starts with the A's in center field. Adept in both defense and offense Hairston's no stranger to baseball. He comes from one of the biggest families in MLB, his older brother Jerry Hairston, Jr. now plays with the New York Yankees, his father is Jerry Hairston, Sr. played mostly with the Chicago White Sox. Scott is also the nephew of Johnny Hairston (who played for the Chicago Cubs in 1969) and lastly, he is the grandson of Sammy Hairston who is a former Negro Leaguer. Scott talks about playing against his brother Jerry.

"We've faced each other before so it's really no big deal," said Hairston. "He's been in the league at least 10 years which is 6 years longer than me." "We talk a little trash, compete and go on the field without any emotion." "I think the most important thing is that we encourage each other to get better."

Hairston's been a huge asset to the A's, in which he was the "clutch" player during the Chicago White Sox series. Hairston hit a home run to get the A's on the score board. He also hit a double and brought in Rajai Davis to tie the game 2-2, before they won the game 3-2. Many of his teammates are very pleased with him being traded to the A's. "Scott is definitely an asset to this organization," said Rajai Davis. "Not only does he have power and can play defense, he can also run fast too!" "We're both outfielders and I've seen him run for some infield hits." "It's going to take him some time to adjust to our style of play, coming from the National League is not always an easy transition." "Scott, is going to be a huge for us, he's aggressive on the bases and from where this team is going, he'll fit right in." Scott Hairston knows the focus is to win games and he is not shy about his role. "I came from a team that was struggling," said Hairston. "I like that this organization is headed in the right direction with young pitchers." "The outlook is really good and there's a lot to learn in playing this game." "I always look at the positives as I enjoy what I do!"

## **A's Continue Winning Streak**

By [Malaika Bobino](#), Oakland Post, September 21, 2009

Oakland, CA - The winning streak continues as the A's handed the Cleveland Indians their second loss of the series 2-1. It's mind blowing how well the A's have been playing! Game two, the pitching was unbelievable as A's rookie Brett Anderson allowed no hits during seven innings. He had a career high 10 strikeouts in six innings and has won his past three starts.

"My sliders were good tonight, probably the best all year," said Anderson." "It's a good win for us, we've been playing good team ball and hopefully it'll continue." "I had good defense behind me and I felt like I had good rhythm." Adam Kennedy had the night off and Rajai Davis replaced him as the lead-off hitter. He began a two run rally in the third inning with a single to right, moved to second on Kurt Suzuki's walk and scored on Nomar Garciaparra's double to right. Mark Ellis then singles and brought Suzuki home to put the A's up 2-0.

The lead-off hitter carries a lot of responsibility and Davis gave his thoughts on being selected, "I think it's another opportunity to showcase what I can do on the field and how I can help our ball club win, said Davis." "I'm just excited to be able to play!"

The A's are playing so well right now that it's disappointing they will not make the playoffs. It was a "up and down" season that led to a lot of trades and player movement. The players are enjoying themselves and very focused on next season. They've accomplished the first goal and that's winning ball games. On the field and in the locker room, players are jovial, exchanging banter all while keeping smiles on their faces. The A's are a young talented team that will continue to get better.

Notes - Oakland A's pitcher Dallas Braden and catcher Kurt Suzuki have been named the co-recipients of the 2009 Dave Stewart Community Service Award, which is given annually to an A's player in recognition of charitable contributions throughout Northern California and across the nation. Dave Stewart presented Braden and Suzuki with the awards before the game.

The Dave Stewart Community Service Award originated in 1996 to honor Stewart's many years of community service in the Bay Area. Throughout the years, Stewart has been involved in many non-profit organizations including the Oakland Boys & Girls Club and Team-Up for Youth. A program that supports healthy development for young people living in low income communities.