



**TEXASRANGERS.COM**

**Millwood's gem locks up deal for 2010  
Rangers rightly stymies A's, secures \$12 million next season  
By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com**

OAKLAND -- Apparently Kevin Millwood wasn't too tired, injured or obsessively worried about his contract for 2010.

Turns out he really did just need a little extra time with pitching coach Mike Maddux to iron out a few of those ever-mysterious mechanical flaws in a delivery. Something about too much arch in his back throwing off his balance.

Anyway, Millwood and Maddux will have plenty of time to review all of that and any other issues that might arise during Spring Training next year.

Millwood assured he will back with the Rangers in 2010 after delivering seven strong innings in a 10-3 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Monday night at the Coliseum.

Millwood's seven frames of work gives him 182 2/3 on the year. By passing the 180-innings mark, Millwood guaranteed his \$12 million contract for 2010.

"I knew what I had to get to," Millwood said. "But I wanted to get deep in the game and win the ballgame. If I do that, everything else will take care of itself."

The Rangers, despite remaining 7 1/2 games behind the Angels in the American League West, did achieve one team milestone. The victory was their 82nd of the season, assuring them of only their second winning season in 10 years and first under manager Ron Washington. The other came in 2004, when they were 89-73 under Buck Showalter.

"I'm not thinking about that right now," Washington said. "We've still got 13 games left. I want to win as many as we can until there are no more on the schedule and see what that is. It would be tough to be 82-80."

Millwood's performance came against a team that is in last place in the AL West but began the night with a seven-game winning streak. That included three wins over the Rangers last week in Arlington.

But Millwood held them to just one unearned run on three hits, a walk and two hit batters. He struck out two. Millwood was 2-5 with a 6.29 ERA in 12 starts prior to this outing.

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

Millwood said it came down to being able to command his fastball. He said has been his biggest problem of late and had nothing to do with being physically tired or wounded.

"Locating my fastball, that's the biggest thing," Millwood said. "When I wanted to throw it away, I threw it away, when I wanted to go in, I went in. I was able to keep the ball down. When I'm able to locate my fastball, I'm able to pitch pretty well."

Millwood last pitched on Sept. 13. He spent the next nine days working with Maddux on his delivery and was pushed back in the rotation. Maddux, after studying the video, figured out that Millwood was arching his back too much. That kept Millwood's head from going directly toward home plate in his delivery.

That apparently was the solution.

"That helped me a lot," Millwood said. "That made it easier to get the ball where I wanted it. I got out of it a couple of times, but I was able to correct it quickly and get it right back."

Two of the three hits came in the first inning, but catcher Taylor Teagarden threw out Adam Kennedy trying to steal and that helped him escape some early trouble. A hit batter, second baseman Ian Kinsler's throwing error and a sacrifice fly resulted in an unearned run in the bottom of the sixth. By that time, though, the Rangers were sitting on 6-1 lead.

The Rangers scored one in the first on an RBI single by Hank Blalock and three more in the second against Oakland starter Edgar Gonzalez. Julio Borbon had a two-run single and David Murphy had an RBI double to give the Rangers a 4-0 lead.

"The biggest thing was getting some runs early, finding a comfort zone and being able to build on that," Borbon said.

The Rangers had 15 hits on the night, four more than they had in the three-game series against the Athletics last week. Borbon, Murphy and Blalock all had three hits. Blalock is 5-for-12 with four RBIs in the three games since he was inserted back in the lineup.

"It was nice to break out," Washington said. "But we've got to keep playing and put it together again tomorrow night."

**Washington touts Andrus for top rookie  
Rangers skipper favors shortstop over pitching contenders  
By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com**

OAKLAND -- There are some pretty good pitchers who have a real shot at the American League Rookie of the Year Award.

Oakland closer Andrew Bailey has a 1.95 ERA and 25 saves, Detroit starter Rick Porcello is 13-9 with a 4.22 ERA and Tampa Bay starter Jeff Niemann is 12-6 with a 3.80 ERA.

Manager Ron Washington has his own opinion.

"The guys who strap it on every day are the ones that deserve that award," Washington said.

Washington's bias is obvious, but he favors Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus.

"He should win it," Washington said. "In my opinion, he's held us together."

As the Rangers fade from contention in both the American League West and Wild Card races, individual accomplishments start coming into focus. In the matter of postseason awards, Andrus has a strong chance to be the first Rangers player to win Rookie of the Year since Mike Hargrove in 1974.

Washington's endorsement aside, other American League managers bear witness to what Andrus has meant to the Rangers, especially in how much their pitching and defense has improved this year.

"The big thing for me is Elvis Andrus has probably made the biggest difference on that pitching staff," Mariners manager Don Wakamatsu said. "There have been several moves made that have had a big impact on the pitching staff. But I think Andrus is the biggest factor."

Oakland manager Bob Geren favors Bailey but has been obviously impressed with Andrus.

"He's played very well against us, I know that," Geren said. "He's made a big jump [from Double-A] this year, which makes what he's done even more impressive. Defensively, he's got a lot of athletic ability and range; he gets to a lot of balls other guys might not be able to make plays on.

"He can really run, too -- he's quick and he's fast. Offensively, he's dangerous. Like a lot of young players, he has some weaknesses, but if you miss your spots with him, he's got the bat speed to really hurt you. He's having a heck of a first year. He really is."

Andrus appears to be the leading candidate among position players. He is the only American League rookie to have enough at-bats to qualify for the batting title, although that is not a prerequisite for being considered for the award.

Andrus went into Monday's game hitting .272 with 65 runs scored, 14 doubles, eight triples, six home runs, 34 RBIs and 28 stolen bases in 131 games and 430 at-bats. Others who could get consideration include a pair of White Sox infielders.

Third baseman Gordon Beckham is hitting .266 with 12 home runs and 54 RBIs in 92 games and 338 at-bats, and Chris Getz is hitting .269 with 49 runs scored and 25 stolen bases in 103 games and 361 at-bats.

Andrus' biggest impact has been on defense. That could be the separator between him and all other candidates. Andrus has given the voters and anybody else watching a steady diet of highlight-worthy defensive plays.

Andrus is averaging 5.17 chances per nine innings this season, the highest by an AL shortstop. It's also the seventh-highest by an AL shortstop since 1954. The top two were Toronto's Alfredo Griffin, who had 5.51 chances per nine innings as a rookie in '79, and Baltimore's Ron Hansen, who had a 5.49 mark in '60.

Both were named AL Rookie of the Year.

"For me, to win the award would be great," Andrus said. "I put it in my mind when I came to the big leagues that I wanted to make a good first impression and stay here. Then things started going good for me and the team and I knew I had a chance to win it. That's my second goal. My first goal is to make the playoffs."

There have been errors. He has made 21, tying him with Twins shortstop Orlando Cabrera for the most in the American League. Part of that is letting his focus stray on occasion. Andrus has admitted that the mental part of the game has been his toughest adjustment in his first full season in the Majors.

"If you're in the big leagues, that means you have the physical skills and ability," Andrus said. "But you have to be mentally tough. You have to focus on every play. Sometimes I make an out at the plate with a runner in scoring position and I'm still thinking about that in the field. Omar Vizquel has talked about that with me: being prepared every day."

Experience has also been a factor. In a game earlier this season in Seattle, Andrus went after a slow-hit ground ball and rushed his throw to first. The throw was off the mark, and the batter was safe. The batter was Ken Griffey Jr., who no longer runs well. Andrus didn't realize he had more time to make an accurate throw.

"Those are the kinds of things you learn with experience," Washington said. "You have to understand the situation, the speed of the ball, who hit it and who is running to the next base. How fast are they? Those are the kind of things that will separate him from the rest because the best don't screw those plays up."

It's part of being a rookie. From that standpoint, Andrus has been among the best.

**Hamilton gearing up for return**  
**Texas (82-67) at Oakland (71-79), 9:05 p.m. CT**  
**By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com**

OAKLAND -- Josh Hamilton could find out on Tuesday how soon he will be ready to return to the Rangers lineup. It could be a big day for him.

Hamilton, who has been sidelined since Sept. 2 with a pinched nerve in his lower back, resumed workouts on Monday after backing off for four days. He took some swings off a tee and off soft-toss pitching in the batting cage, and did some running in the outfield.

All went well. He will try to increase his baseball activities on Tuesday to include on-field batting practice against live pitching.

"It feels all right," Hamilton said. "The biggest thing is after I do some baseball activities tomorrow, to see how I feel. The last time I tried to do something two days in a row, it wasn't good. "

That happened last week in Arlington, which is why Hamilton backed off for four days.

"The second day was not good," Hamilton said. "We'll see tomorrow. Hopefully it will let me play some."

The Rangers have been without Hamilton and third baseman Michael Young for most of September. Young, who had a setback last week when he aggravated his left hamstring muscle, is not ready to return.

He did some running in the outfield on Monday but did not take batting practice. He is not expected to play on Tuesday and probably won't play during the Rangers' four-game series in Oakland.

"I don't know yet when I'll be ready," Young said. "I re-aggravated it last week. This time I want to get it right."

#### Pitching matchup

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 Athletics, his highest ERA against any opponent.

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.

#### Tidbits

Justin Smoak hit his ninth home run in the IBAF World Cup tournament in Italy on Monday. The United States is now 8-1 after a 4-3 victory over Australia and has advanced to the final round. Smoak's nine home runs are the most all-time by an American player in the World Cup. ... Jarrod Saltalamacchia underwent surgery on Monday for thoracic outlet syndrome. Saltalamacchia had a bone removed from his right rib cage that was pressing on a nerve and causing pain and numbness in his arm and fingers. A two- to three-month recovery time is expected. ... Matt Harrison, who had similar surgery on July 27, pitched an inning without problem in the instructional league on Monday.

#### Tickets

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#### On the Internet

MLB.TV

Gameday Audio

- Gameday
- Official game notes

#### On television

- FSSW HD

#### On radio

- 105.3 The Fan, KFLC 1270 (Español)

#### Up next

- Wednesday: Rangers (Tommy Hunter, 8-4, 3.25) at Athletics (Clay Mortensen, 2-2, 6.12), 9:05 p.m. CT
- Thursday: Rangers (Scott Feldman, 17-5, 3.62) at Athletics (Brett Anderson, 10-10, 4.21), 2:35 p.m. CT
- Friday: Rangers (Derek Holland, 7-12, 6.17) vs. Rays (James Shields, 10-11, 4.09), 7:05 p.m. CT

## ***FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM***

### **Millwood earns win, and more, vs. A's**

**By JEFF WILSON**

OAKLAND, Calif. — The performance of the Texas Rangers' starting pitcher Monday night held different significance for Kevin Millwood than it did for the club's 2010 finances.

Millwood wanted to go deep in the game, not because of what would happen for him contractually by logging 4 1/3 innings but because he wanted to give the Rangers a chance to win.

He hadn't done that lately, but he said that logging seven strong innings at McAfee Coliseum meant as much to him contract he secured for next season.

The right-hander allowed only an unearned run on three hits in a 10-3 victory over Oakland, and by reaching 180 innings on the season, the fifth year on his contract automatically vested for \$12 million in 2010.

"I knew what I had to get to, but I wanted to get deep in the ballgame and I wanted us to win the game," Millwood said. "If I do that, then everything else takes care of itself."

The win was the Rangers' 82nd, guaranteeing they will finish above .500 for the first time since 2004.

The outing ended two weeks' worth of speculation on whether the cash-strapped Rangers would limit Millwood's innings the rest of the season to save money next year. Club brass insisted they wouldn't, and they didn't even though his start Monday had been pushed back four days.

Millwood locked up the \$12 million in the fifth inning after the first out was made on a double-play grounder by Mark Ellis.

Now, the drama is behind all parties involved. Millwood admitted that he was relieved, but more so because of the way he pitched and so that he didn't have to answer any more questions from the media.

Manager Ron Washington is glad that Millwood will be back next season, and will be thrilled if he can pitch in 2010 like he did against the A's.

Millwood (11-10, 3.79 ERA) pitched around a pair of hits in the first inning and allowed only one over the rest of his 90-pitch outing as the Rangers snapped the A's seven-game winning streak.

The effort was Millwood's longest start since June 21 and his best since June 16, and it marked a vast improvement over his previous five starts in which he had gone 1-3 with a 7.62 ERA.

Millwood said the mechanical adjustments he made since his last start Sept. 12 accounted for the progress. He worked to stay more upright during his delivery instead of arching his back, and it helped him locate his fastball better than in recent starts.

"I think it helped a lot," he said. "It made getting the ball where I wanted to get it easier. There were a couple times I got out of it, but I was able to stick with it and get back on track."

An offense that had produced nine runs in the previous seven games banged out 15 hits and reached double-digits in runs for the 13th time this season.

David Murphy, Julio Borbon and Hank Blalock had three hits and two RBI apiece. Chris Davis also drove in two.

The Rangers' bats started rolling from the start, as they scored an unearned run in the first on a two-out single from Blalock. Borbon had a two-run single in the second and later scored on a double by Murphy to make it 4-0.

They struck for two more in the fourth against Edgar Gonzalez on hits by Murphy and Marlon Byrd. That was it for Gonzalez, who allowed the only Rangers run during a 48-inning stretch last week.

Davis added a two-run triple in the seventh, and the Rangers scored twice on an error in the eighth.

"When you put double-digits up there, it says something good about our offense," said Borbon, who also stole his 16th base. "The way we've been swinging the bats the last seven or eight games has been tough, so this is something to build off."

The run Oakland scored in the sixth came after an errant toss by Ian Kinsler attempt to cut down the lead runner at second base. They got two in the ninth on the first big-league homer by Matt Carson.

How Rangers hitters fared: David Murphy had three off the Rangers' nine hits off Edgar Gonzalez to help build a 6-0 lead. Marlon Byrd had two doubles, giving him 43 on the season. That's nine shy of the club record Michael Young set in 2006.

How Rangers pitchers fared: Kevin Millwood shined as he locked up his contract for next season. He allowed only an unearned run on three hits in seven innings, and needed only 90 pitches to do it. Eddie Guardado tied Cy Young for 21st all-time with 906 career appearances.

**Josh Hamilton closer to returning from injury**  
**By JEFF WILSON**

OAKLAND, Calif. — Josh Hamilton and Michael Young each ran in the outfield at McAfee Coliseum on Monday afternoon as they tested injuries that have kept them out of all but one inning since Sept. 3.

Hamilton has made the most progress with a pinched nerve and strained muscle in his lower back. In addition to running, he hit off a tee and took front flips in the cage.

Up next is a few rounds of early batting practice today. Hamilton is withholding any optimism until after he sees how he feels then.

"The last time I did two days in a row, it was not good," said Hamilton, who took four days off from baseball activities. "The last time after the first day, I felt optimistic. The next day was not good, so we'll just see."

Young did some light jogging but still feels soreness in his pulled left hamstring. He compares the state of the injury to where he was in Cleveland a week after being hurt.

He won't try to hit today.

"Hitting's not going to be a problem," he said. "When I start feeling comfortable with my leg, that's when I'll start hitting."

Andrus top rookie?

Shortstop Elvis Andrus would be the American League Rookie of the Year if manager Ron Washington were allowed to vote for the award. He's not, but Andrus remains one of the front-runners in media voting.

He entered Monday's series opener against Oakland as the top AL rookie in games (131), at-bats (430), runs (65), hits (117), triples (seven) and steals (28). Andrus was also the major-league leader among shortstops in total chances, at 5.17 per nine innings.

The top two on the list, Alfredo Griffin (5.51) and Ron Hansen (5.49), were selected as the Rookie of the Year in 1979 and 1960.

"In my opinion, he should," Washington said. "He's held us together."

Washington believes Andrus is the best rookie everyday player, but a pitcher could take the award. Oakland closer Andrew Bailey could be Andrus' top competition, along with Chicago third baseman Gordon Beckham, Baltimore outfielder Nolan Reimold, Tampa Bay right-hander Jeff Niemann and Detroit righty Rick Porcello.

"I think they should have a separate thing for pitchers," Washington said.

Harrison to return?

Left-hander Matt Harrison, who had surgery last month to correct thoracic outlet syndrome, has been dispatched to Arizona to pitch in the instructional league.

He hit 93 mph on the radar gun Monday in Surprise, Ariz., during an inning of work, which came three days after having no complications from a simulated game in Arlington.

It's possible that he might pitch for the Rangers again this season. For now, though, he needs to face more hitters in a game setting, even if it's against low-level minor leaguers.

"I don't know if he can go down there and face some kids out of Rookie ball and A ball and then face big-league hitters," Washington said. "That's a pretty big difference. Let's let him get through his first test and see how he progresses."

Briefly

Catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia underwent surgery in Dallas to correct thoracic outlet syndrome. Dr. Greg Pearl confirmed his diagnosis during the procedure, which includes the removal of a rib, and Saltalamacchia is expected to be ready for spring training.

Justin Smoak continues to slug his way through the IBAF Baseball World Cup. He homered again Monday in a 4-3 victory over Australia.

## **Millwood, Feldman only guarantees for 2010 rotation**

Kevin Millwood hit his magic number Monday night when he got Oakland second baseman Mark Ellis to bounce into a double play in the fifth inning. The right-hander reached 180 innings to automatically earn a \$12 million contract for next season and lock up a spot in the Rangers' 2010 rotation.

After Millwood and 17-game winner Scott Feldman, though, there are no guarantees for the rotation. Sure, Tommy Hunter and Derek Holland are strong candidates, but manager Ron Washington said that that rookie duo will have to earn a spot during spring training.

"Once we get to spring training, everyone's going to be competing," he said. "Hunter and Holland, they've still got to compete. Doing good the first time around, the challenge comes the second time around to repeat."

The Rangers will have plenty of arms to evaluate. Brandon McCarthy, who is scheduled to start tonight, is one of five others who could contend for a spot.

Included in the group is Neftali Feliz, who projects as a starter long-term; Matt Harrison, who was in the rotation to start this season; Dustin Nippert, who might be a better fit as a reliever; and Eric Hurley, who missed the season after surgery for a torn rotator cuff.

"Hurley will be on the radar if he's deemed ready to go," Washington said. "We're definitely going to have some depth. Now, it's a matter of getting five of them out of it." — Jeff Wilson

## **Former agent Dennis Gilbert identified as one bidder to buy Texas Rangers** **By JEFF WILSON**

OAKLAND, Calif. — A former agent to some of baseball's biggest stars is serious about buying the Texas Rangers, and Dennis Gilbert won't be a silent partner should his group land the winning bid to purchase the club.

Baseball sources have identified Gilbert as the front man for investors who have been approved by Major League Baseball and have submitted a bid to Hicks Sports Group with the help of the consulting group Game Plan LLC.

Gilbert and Game Plan executives were in Dallas in late July to seek local investors, holding a series of meetings with the hope of raising a chunk of the total bid.

A minimum contribution of \$5 million was sought from potential local investors, who were told that the winning bid for the club could fall between \$450 million and \$525 million.

A call to Gilbert at his office in Beverly Hills, Calif., was not returned because of strict non-disclosure agreements in place concerning the sale. Rangers owner Tom Hicks also declined comment.

But a source said Gilbert's group isn't among the front-runners to land the club. He has made one of six offers, and the potential buyers are expected to meet with commissioner Bud Selig this month.

That would mesh with the timeline Gilbert presented during meetings in Dallas. He also said that a sale would be completed by the end of the year, according to a source, but that timetable appears to have been pushed back.

Gilbert, 62, presented some of the ideas he has for the club: His business model is based on increasing attendance, and the Rangers saw a boost this year as they flirted with the postseason; a regional TV network similar to the Yes Network that televises New York Yankees games; and a baseball academy in Mexico that is stocked with amateur players from Japan.

A source said it was clear that Gilbert would be active in helping run the team.

"He doesn't want to be a silent partner," the source said. "He feels like he has the skins on the wall in baseball to make this a profitable enterprise."

Stakes in the Rangers first became available in spring training, when Hicks said that he was seeking investors while maintaining majority ownership. But he admitted in May that he was willing to sell the club outright.

Among those not interested in buying the Rangers is former President George W. Bush. He previously owned a piece of the club before pursuing his political aspirations, but he said Monday that he isn't in the running this time.

"I love the baseball team, followed them when I was president," Bush told KTCK/1310 AM on Monday. "Hicks has been a good steward, but I'm not interested in getting back to baseball. One reason? My checking account is a little empty."

Gilbert, whom sources said doesn't have the financial resources to make a solo bid, is a former minor-league player who found business success in insurance.

He wrote policies for some stars in the entertainment industry and also started to dabble as an agent in the 1980s when he nabbed George Brett to represent.

Gilbert's client base took off with the Beverly Hills Sports Council, and at one time in the late '80s and early '90s he represented Barry Bonds, Jose Canseco and Bobby Bonilla, among others.

Though he is no longer an agent, Gilbert continues to work in insurance and estate planning as a co-founder of Gilbert-Krupin LLC in Beverly Hills.

He hasn't cut his ties to baseball. Gilbert is an executive with the Chicago White Sox, overseeing contract negotiations and reviewing deals.

Gilbert would rather be known for community projects he has spearheaded, including helping to create the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation and build an inner-city ballpark for RBI Youth program.

He might have another project on his hands if his offer is strong enough to purchase the Rangers.

## **So, who's running the Rangers? Just try asking Pat Courtney** **By JENNIFER FLOYD ENGEL**

"Major League Baseball, how may I help you?" a very nice voice at commissioner Bud Selig's office said Monday.

"Yeah, can I talk to whoever owns The Texas Rangers?" I asked.

Either she did not get the joke or she did not care because next thing I know I heard a beep and I was being transferred to another nice woman saying "Major League Baseball" and asking to help.

"My name is Jennifer Floyd Engel, a columnist with the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and I am looking to talk to whoever is running The Texas Rangers?"

"Let's see if Pat Courtney is in his office," she said before transferring me again.

It was 12:45 EST so I figured Mr. Courtney to be eating lunch and probably unavailable. But at the very least I now knew who is running the Texas Rangers, someone named Pat Courtney.

After exhaustive Google research, I learned that Pat Courtney is Major League Baseball's vice president of public relations. This obviously is an important man and certainly he'd have answers for scared and confused Rangers fans desperately wanting to know what this off-season may bring for this team.

So I left a message for Courtney, saying something to the effect of: "My name is Jennifer Engel, I am a columnist for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. I have a ton of Ranger fans e-mailing and wondering what is going on with their team. There are a ton of rumors. I figured instead of repeating them ad nauseam I would go to the people who know."

Tom Hicks is normally the man to call on such matters, but what is the point nowadays? Everybody knows The Texas Rangers are at least partially funded by and possibly run by MLB, with someone named Pat Courtney apparently being a go-to guy.

Mr. Courtney never called back Monday, likely gagged like everybody else about this Rangers business. All joking aside, though, what I want to ask Courtney, and his boss, is who is running the Texas Rangers and thereby in charge of big decisions facing them?



Who sets the Rangers' budget for 2010? Who decides what free agents the Rangers can or cannot pursue? Who decides whether ticket prices will be increased?

Are the Rangers going to try to re-sign Marlon Byrd? Who makes the call about an extension on Josh Hamilton? Is there an MLB-imposed ceiling on this like there apparently was for Matt Purke?

What are they doing to ensure Nolan Ryan does not say 'Enough of this junk. I'm gone'? When are the Rangers going to be sold? What effect does that timeline have on next season?

We all know such decisions are very much determined by money, and all major money decisions regarding the Rangers are at least somewhat made by Major League Baseball. So it is only right that MLB be accountable, like a real owner.

Rangers fans have been paying for fireworks and dollar hot dog night for nearly a decade. And now they finally have a season that genuinely generates legit hope for next season and they have no idea where this team is going. They deserve more for their patience and loyalty. What they deserve are answers.

Are the Rangers going to build on what they did in 2009 and make a serious run at the Angels and first place in the AL West? Or are they in danger of becoming a ward of the league for another off-season and thus becoming a joke until a buyer is found?

According to S-T beat man Jeff Wilson, six groups have put in bids with Selig meet and greets to supposedly commence shortly. But nobody expects anything to be done before next season starts and all we keep hearing from the guys everybody wants to buy the Rangers saying they aren't interested or involved.

Dubya is the latest, following disappointing news that Rangers legend and president Nolan Ryan was not a bidder.

"I'm not interested [in the Rangers ownership]," former President George W. Bush said in an interview with Norm Hitzges on The Ticket on Monday. "I love the baseball team, followed them when I was president. [Tom] Hicks has been a good steward, but I'm not interested in getting back to baseball. One reason? My checking account is a little empty. He's been a good owner and they have a good nucleus. I'm excited for the club's future."

Everybody is, if only somebody at MLB would clue us into what is going on. My Star-Telecolleagues Mr. Randy and Revo have far better sources in Selig's office than I ever will. I think they covered the Rangers before I was born and are on a first-name basis with the commish. But I figured the least I can do is call and try to talk to whoever is running The Texas Rangers?

Maybe, it is Pat Courtney. And, maybe, he'll call me back.

If not, I'll keep calling and asking to speak to whoever is running your Texas Rangers until I get an answer.