



***Clips***  
*(October 3, 2009)*

*From the Los Angeles Times*

ANGELS 5, OAKLAND 2

### **Jered Weaver sharp, Kevin Jepsen shaky in Angels victory**

Weaver throws five shutout innings with five strikeouts, but Jepsen gives up two runs in the ninth inning.

By Mike DiGiovanna  
*October 3, 2009*

Jered Weaver's spark plugs, air filter and brake fluid look fine. The right-hander looked sharp in his final tuneup for the playoffs Friday night, throwing five shutout innings with five strikeouts and no walks in the Angels' 5-2 victory over the Oakland Athletics.

But the check-engine light came on for setup man Kevin Jepsen, who suffered his second shaky outing in seven days, giving up singles to three of the four batters he faced and two runs in the ninth inning.

"I feel like I'm out there trying to work on things instead of doing what I normally do, which is go after guys and let it all hang out," Jepsen said. "My velocity is fine, my slider is good, and I'm throwing strikes. I'm just lacking that go-after-them mentality."

Jepsen, who could play a vital role in the American League division series against the Boston Red Sox, gave up four runs and three hits to Oakland on Sept. 26 in Anaheim but threw hitless innings in his last two outings.

But after Friday night's rocky outing, the right-hander will have one more appearance Sunday to straighten himself out.

Closer Brian Fuentes replaced Jepsen and, after giving up a run-scoring single to Daric Barton, retired Mark Ellis and Nomar Garciaparra for his major-league-leading 47th save.

Weaver, expected to start Game 2 of the division series, closed the season with a 16-8 record and 3.75 earned-run average, throwing a career-high 211 innings.

#### Milestone night

Bobby Abreu led off the eighth inning Friday night with a single and stole second, making him the second player in Angels history to drive in 100 runs and steal 30 bases in the same season. Bobby Bonds had 115 RBIs and 41 stolen bases in 1977.

Abreu also played in his 150th game Friday to become only the fifth player in major league history to play at least 150 games in 12 consecutive seasons.

The others were Willie Mays (13 seasons from 1954-66), Billy Williams (12 seasons from 1962-73), Pete Rose (12 seasons from 1969-80) and Cal Ripken Jr. (12 seasons

from 1982-93).

Juan Rivera hit his 25th home run of the season, a solo shot in the fourth inning, and Mike Napoli (double), Torii Hunter (single) and Gary Matthews Jr. (single) drove in runs for the Angels.

The Angels also scored on a fluke double steal in the second when Napoli, after getting caught too far off second base, was caught in a rundown.

Kendry Morales, who was on third, broke for home and tip-toed over the tag of catcher Kurt Suzuki to score.

#### Pitching in

As expected, Manager Mike Scioscia said the Angels will go with a 10-man pitching staff against the Red Sox.

The rotation will consist of John Lackey, Weaver, Scott Kazmir and Joe Saunders, with Ervin Santana going to the bullpen.

The bullpen will also feature Fuentes, Jepsen, Darren Oliver and Jason Bulger and, most likely, Matt Palmer. Santana could bolster an area some consider a weakness: middle relief.

"He has the possibility of being versatile, whether he pitches early in a game, in the middle or in extra innings," Scioscia said. "He's done it before. We'll see."

#### On the mend

Second baseman Howie Kendrick, who is undergoing treatment for a staph-like infection below his right knee, and shortstop Erick Aybar, who has a bruise on the back of his right hand, are expected to return to the lineup today.

Kendrick, who has received several injections and is on antibiotics, hit in the cages Thursday and went through a regular pregame routine and batting practice Friday.

"It's getting better," Kendrick said. "I've been feeling good. It's just a matter of getting into a game."

Aybar, injured when he was hit by a pitch Wednesday night, missed his second straight game, but he has been throwing and hitting. He said he could have played Friday night if he needed to.

#### Short hops

The Angels this season joined the 2007 Detroit Tigers as the only teams since the 1930 St. Louis Cardinals to have 10 players with at least 50 runs batted in. They are Morales

(107), Abreu (102), Hunter (88), Rivera (87), Maicer Izturis (65), Kendrick (61), Aybar (58), Napoli (54), Chone Figgins (54) and Vladimir Guerrero (50).

*From the Orange County Register*

Friday, October 2, 2009

### **Jepsen wants attitude adjustment**

The Angels reliever says he needs to focus more on going after batters

By BILL PLUNKETT

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

OAKLAND – Kevin Jepsen has had enough of spring training in October.

The Angels will be counting heavily on the rookie right-hander as the final link to closer Brian Fuentes in the postseason. But Jepsen has had a couple of ragged outings down the stretch, including tonight, when he retired just one of the four batters he faced in the ninth inning of a 5-2 Angels victory over the Oakland A's.

"I feel like I'm going out there trying to work on stuff and not doing what I really do — go after guys," Jepsen said after giving up three singles and losing a chance at the Angels' third shutout in the past five games.

"Velocity is fine. Breaking ball's good. It just feels like I'm lacking a 'go-after-them' attitude. I'm going out there working on trying to put this pitch here and that pitch there. "I was just sitting here thinking about it. You know, this isn't me. I'm not a guy who's going to go out there and work on things."

In four outings since getting a week off with a tired shoulder, Jepsen has retired just half of the 18 batters he has faced, giving up two doubles, four singles and walking three (leading to six runs).

But Jepsen said the shoulder and the layoff are not the issue. It's the attitude — pitching like it is spring training — which he intends to address in his final tuneup this weekend. "Absolutely. I'm getting tired of it," he said.

Tonight's starter, Jered Weaver, was much better at the tuneup game than Jepsen. He threw five shutout innings, allowing three hits and walking none. His next start will be in Game 2 of the ALDS against the Boston Red Sox next Friday.

### **ABREU MILESTONES**

Bobby Abreu went 1 for 4 with an RBI single and a stolen base tonight, reaching a couple of milestones along the way.

It was his 150th game played this season, a plateau he has reached in each of the past 12 seasons. Just four players in baseball history can match that: Willie Mays (13 consecutive seasons), Billy Williams, Pete Rose and Cal Ripken Jr.

"I guess that just shows you're healthy the whole season," Abreu said. "Thank God for that."

The stolen base was his 30th, a number Abreu said he was hoping to reach before the season ended. It is his first 30-steal season since 2005 with the Philadelphia Phillies and he becomes just the second player in Angels history to have at least 30 steals and 100 RBIs in the same season.

Bobby Bonds had 41 steals and 115 RBIs in 1977.

"I was looking for that stolen base," Abreu admitted. "I wanted to be in that club. "It means a lot to me because those two guys — Bobby Bonds and Barry Bonds — everybody knows who those two guys are. That's pretty special to me."

#### SATURDAY

LHP Scott Kazmir (9-9, 5.06) opposes A's LHP Dana Eveland (2-3, 7.09) at 1:05 p.m. The game will be broadcast on FSN delayed at 4 p.m. It will be live on KLAA/830 and KWKW/1330 (Spanish) radio.

*From the Press Enterprise*

### **Weaver sharp in final tuneup**

ANGELS 5, ATHLETICS 2 He pitches five scoreless innings for his 16th win. Abreu steals 30th base.

The Associated Press

OAKLAND - Juan Rivera hit his 25th home run to help Jered Weaver end a three-start losing streak as the Angels sent the Athletics to their fifth straight loss, 5-2, Friday night. Mike Napoli doubled in a run, and Torii Hunter added a run-scoring single for the AL West champions, who have won five of six.

Bobby Abreu stole his 30th base in the eighth inning, joining the late Bobby Bonds as the only players in club history with at least 100 RBI and 30 steals in the same season. Bonds had 115 RBI and 41 steals in 1977.

Abreu also became just the fifth player in major league history to play 150 games in 12 straight seasons. The others: Willie Mays, Billy Williams, Pete Rose and Cal Ripken Jr.

Weaver (16-8) pitched five scoreless innings. He had previously lost three straight starts for the first time in his career.

He struck out five and didn't walk a batter.

"I wanted to go one more, but it was enough work to take it into postseason and have everything feel good," said Weaver, who regained confidence in his slider.

"He was definitely on top of his game," Oakland's Rajai Davis said.

Weaver will pitch Game 2 in the division series against Boston on Friday.

Weaver has three more wins than his previous best season (2007) and has career highs with 33 starts, 211 innings and 174 strikeouts.

Gio Gonzalez (6-7), though not as sharp as when he outdueled Weaver recently, struck out a season-high 10 and walked none.

After Oakland scored in the ninth and threatened, Brian Fuentes entered and gave up Daric Barton's run-scoring single before recording the final two outs for his majors-leading 47th save.

Napoli got caught in a rundown after taking too big a lead off second base in the second inning. During the ensuing pickle, Kendry Morales headed for home and jumped over the tag by catcher Kurt Suzuki for the Angels' second run. It was ruled a double steal.

"We've been working on that on the back fields of Tempe for a while, and we got a chance to break that one out," Scioscia said.

## NOTES

Today's 1 p.m. game will not be televised. The game is being played at 1:05 p.m. Fox, which has exclusivity in that time slot, did not pick it up as a regional game.

Scioscia said he is still considering a couple of different playoff roster options. He said he'll likely carry 12 pitchers.

Angels shortstop Erick Aybar (bruised right hand) and second baseman Howie Kendrick are expected to be back in the lineup today. Kendrick missed his third straight game with a staph-like infection below his right knee.

*From angelsbaseball.com*

## **Abreu's body of work not lost on Angels**

Beneath-radar star touted as Hall of Famer by teammates

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

10/03/09 1:00 AM ET

OAKLAND -- If it is a mystery to Bobby Abreu, he's not alone. Angels teammates share his bewilderment.

They couldn't understand how he fell into their laps through the free-agency cracks, ignored all winter while less-productive, less-durable players drew much heftier contracts.

Months later, having seen the man play and lead on a daily basis, these same players shake their heads and wonder why he never has been given his due.

Why isn't Abreu among the big names in their game?

Chone Figgins, who has teamed with him to provide an unmatched top-of-the-order tandem, has developed a fine appreciation of Abreu's talent, personality and commitment.

"I've learned a lot being around Bobby," Figgins said. "He helped me improve an important part of my game [on-base percentage] with his discipline and approach. He's just a great guy to be around, always in a good mood, always willing to help you out."

Figgins, the Angels' leadoff man, was stunned to learn that the highest Abreu has finished in a Most Valuable Player balloting is 14th. That was in 2005 with the Phillies. Abreu has collected votes five other times, most recently in 2007, when he finished 17th with the Yankees.

"That's crazy," Figgins said. "Bobby's done things only the true elite have done.

"You look at the numbers he's putting up and the names of guys he's grouped with, and you're talking about Hall of Famers: Willie Mays, Barry Bonds, Rickey Henderson. That's the elite of the elite right there, and Bobby's doing things only they did.

"I think he's having a Hall of Fame career, and nobody seems to even notice. I wish I could tell you why, but I have no idea."

With his eighth-inning steal against the Athletics on Friday night, Abreu joined Bonds as the only players in history with five seasons combining at least 30 steals and at least 100 RBIs.

In Philadelphia (after a brief fling in Houston) and the Bronx before landing with the Angels for a \$5 million, one-year deal right before Spring Training, Abreu performed the same multiple acts that have convinced manager Mike Scioscia the new guy has been the team's MVP amid a stellar cast.

"It's just the way it is," Abreu said with a shrug and a grin when asked about the relative

lack of national acclaim. "I don't know. I just go out and play and try to help my team win."

Scioscia cited "the balance he's brought to the offense" with his dual abilities to get on base and drive in runs, calling him a "swing man."

Abreu takes pride in his dependability. Reaching 150 games for the 12th consecutive season on Friday night against the A's, he joined Mays, Billy Williams, Pete Rose and Cal Ripken Jr. in another impressive club.

"I'm always going to play 156 games," said Abreu, who has visited the disabled list only once, in 1997, with a fractured hamate bone in his right hand. "Just give me one day off a month. That's all I need."

For a dozen seasons, Abreu has gone about his steady business: driving pitchers to distraction with his patience, scoring and driving in runs, running the bases with passion and intelligence, playing solid defense in right field with a powerful, accurate arm.

In his spare time, he's been a teacher, showing young teammates the nuances of the game. His efforts have been reflected in dramatically improved play by a variety of young Angels.

When Scioscia called Abreu the team's MVP, he was really saying something.

Figgins, Kendry Morales and Torii Hunter all have had brilliant seasons, Hunter's marred only by a month-long interruption with a groin injury caused by crashing into walls that don't give.

Hunter has a theory on why Abreu has flown under the radar while joining Mays, Bonds, Henderson, Joe Morgan and Craig Biggio as the only players in history to surpass 250 homers, 2,000 hits, 1,000 runs, 1,000 RBIs and 300 steals.

"Bobby came up in the home run era, with Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa, Barry," Hunter said. "The big bomb, that's all anybody cared about. Bobby's game is more subtle. He was left out in the cold with his singles, doubles, walks.

"He's quiet but deadly -- a deadly assassin."

Hunter was with the Twins when he became acutely aware of Abreu's penchant for the big hit during his 2 1/2 seasons with the Yankees.

His .361 average this season with runners in scoring position is fourth-best in the American League, and since May 25 he's second in the league in RBIs with 86, reaching triple digits for the seventh year in a row.

"Believe me, nobody wants to face Bobby in clutch situations," Hunter said. "When I was in Minnesota, he was the guy we didn't want to beat us in the clutch.

"You see everything Bobby's done, the kind of teammate he is, he's got to be a Hall of Fame candidate. It's nice to see him start to get the recognition and respect he's deserved



all along.

"I know he gets much respect from players. They know who can play. And Bobby's always been one of the best."

## **Weaver looks playoff-ready as Angels roll**

Righty delivers scoreless tuneup; Abreu joins elite club

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

10/03/09 2:00 AM ET

OAKLAND -- It was a night for the American League West champions to stay sharp -- and, for one distinguished performer, to celebrate.

After Jered Weaver delivered five scoreless innings in preparation for his postseason start against the Red Sox and Juan Rivera homered to power the Angels' attack, Bobby Abreu capped a 5-2 victory with a stolen base in the eighth inning that gave him 30 for the season.

This was a significant milestone for Abreu, who joined Barry Bonds as the only players in history to combine 30 steals with at least 100 RBIs in five seasons.

Weaver, who turns 27 on Sunday, yielded three hits and no walks while striking out five, throwing 77 pitches as the Angels clinched the season series against the Athletics in front of 14,554 at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

"He's one of the better pitchers in the game," A's manager Bob Geren said, "and he was on tonight."

Weaver snapped a three-game losing spin with excellent snap on his breaking ball to go with a fastball that was alive and landing in the right places.

"I felt good," Weaver said. "I was working on my slider. It hadn't been as sharp as I want it the last couple times out. I was letting it go too early instead of getting out front.

"I wanted to go maybe another inning, but it was enough to take into the postseason having everything feel good."

Finishing 16-8 with a 3.75 ERA in 33 starts with career highs in innings (211) and strikeouts (174), the crossfiring right-hander is in line to work Game 2 of the American League Division Series against Boston at Angel Stadium.

Abreu will be batting second, behind Chone Figgins, and trying to jump-start an attack that has produced more runs than any offense in franchise history.

"That means a lot to me," Abreu said of his 30 steals alongside his 102 RBIs. "I was looking for that stolen base. I wanted to be in that club with Bobby Bonds [the only other Angels player with 30 steals and 100 RBIs in a season] and with Barry Bonds, too, doing it five seasons. Those two guys, everybody knows who they are. That's a special club."

His streak of 11 consecutive seasons with at least 20 steals is the longest in the Majors.

He most recently reached 30 steals in 2006 when he divided time between the Phillies and Yankees.

Appearing in his 150th game on Thursday, Abreu reached yet another milestone, joining Willie Mays, Billy Williams, Pete Rose and Cal Ripken with at least 12 consecutive seasons with at least 150 games. Mays did it 13 times in a row.

"That's another special club," Abreu said, beaming.

Brian Fuentes nailed down his Major League-high 47th save by getting the final two outs after Kevin Jepsen had faltered in the ninth, yielding three singles while facing four men.

"I feel good, really good," Jepsen said. "I just have to get the right mentality back. That hasn't been me the last few times out."

Gio Gonzalez (6-7) struck out a career-high 10 for the A's, but the Angels managed to make hard contact.

Consecutive singles by Vladimir Guerrero, Kendry Morales and Mike Napoli produced two runs in the second.

After Napoli drove in Guerrero, Morales was credited with a steal of home, jumping over Kurt Suzuki's tag attempt, as the A's botched a rundown.

Rivera launched his career-best 25th home run in the fourth. Singles by Freddy Sandoval, Figgins and Torii Hunter produced another run in the fifth, with Hunter producing his 89th RBI.

Abreu scored his 96th run of the season after his steal on Gary Matthews Jr.'s pinch-hit single.

Rookie right-hander Sean O'Sullivan relieved Weaver and kept the A's in check with some excellent defense from Brandon Wood at shortstop and Sandoval at second base, and Darren Oliver worked a scoreless eighth. Run-scoring singles by Suzuki and Daric Barton in the ninth enabled the A's to avert a shutout.

The Angels are 10-7 against the A's, taking six of seven in Oakland, heading into the season's final two games.

Geren likes the chances of the division champs moving forward.

"I think they're always a strong contender, because they're so balanced," Geren said. "They can do everything. You run into tough pitching in the postseason, but they can manufacture runs; they go first-to-third better than anyone in the game, they steal bases. They have a nice formula."

## **Kazmir to face A's in search of slider**

Los Angeles (95-65) at Oakland (75-85), 1:05 p.m. PT

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

10/03/09 1:00 AM ET

OAKLAND -- Scott Kazmir isn't greedy. He won't ask his teammates for runs, even though they've provided precious few (eight) for him while he's been on the mound in his five starts since arriving from Tampa Bay, fashioning a 2.01 ERA.

What Kazmir wants is something he can control: his slider. It's been an ongoing search of late, his pursuit of that crisp, clean breaking ball that complements his 92-96-mph heater and can break hitters' backs -- and hearts -- with two strikes.

"It'd be nice to get the slider back, to help me finish off some hitters," Kazmir said.

Nice and timely.

His next start, after he finishes this business with the Athletics on Saturday, will be at Fenway Park in Game 3 of the American League Division Series, unless something unforeseen happens between now and then.

Kazmir has thoroughly enjoyed his time with the Angels, which began on Aug. 28, when he was shipped to the opposite coast for three prospects, including a potential star in Sean Rodriguez.

"It's great being part of this staff," Kazmir said, "with a chance to get back to the World Series."

He was there with the amazing Rays last October, when they ran into the sizzling Phillies.

Like three of his partners (excluding Jered Weaver) in the rotation Mike Scioscia calls the best in his 10 years in Anaheim, Kazmir spent part of the season (33 games) on the disabled list while with Tampa Bay, but he's healthy -- and armed and dangerous.

Since the 2006 season, Kazmir leads Major League starters with an average of 9.5 strikeouts per nine innings.

"He knows what he's doing out there," John Lackey said of his fellow Texan. "He's been there, and it shows."

Pitching matchup LAA: LHP Scott Kazmir (9-9, 5.06 ERA) Kazmir has a 2.01 ERA in five starts with the Angels, but they have given him only eight runs while he's been on the mound, accounting for his 1-2 record. He has 23 strikeouts while yielding 25 hits and nine walks in 31 1/3 innings. His fastball command has been exceptional, but he has had trouble getting good bite and location on his slider.

OAK: LHP Dana Eveland (2-3, 7.09 ERA) Eveland struggled against the Angels on Saturday, allowing eight runs, five earned, on five hits over 3 1/3 innings. Eveland also

struggled with his command as he walked four batters and struck out just one. But he still was only saddled with a no-decision as the A's erased a seven-run deficit over the next three innings. He'll face the Angels again in Oakland on Saturday, hoping for a better result. He's is 0-3 with a 6.66 ERA in his career against the Angels.

Tidbits Howard Kendrick (infected cut on his right knee from sliding into home plate) and Erick Aybar (bruised right hand) are expected back in the lineup on Saturday, Scioscia said, and both should be primed for the Red Sox next week. ... Juan Rivera upped his career-high home run total to 25 with a solo shot on Friday night. ... It went down officially as a double steal by Kendry Morales and Mike Napoli, and a steal of home for Morales, but what happened in the second inning was the A's botched a rundown play, and Morales jumped over the tag of catcher Kurt Suzuki, despite Suzuki's protest that he caught Morales' leg with a tag. ... Morales is second in the AL in RBIs since the All-Star break with 58 and has 107 overall, ranking second in the league in slugging and third in extra-base hits.

### **Scioscia advocates harder road for Wild Cards**

Mike Scioscia's 2002 Angels won the franchise's only World Series as a Wild Card, but that was not really such an exception.

Since 2000, teams with the best record in their league have been eliminated in the first round of postseason play more often (10 times) than Wild Cards (six times).

In that nine-year time frame, Wild Cards have reached the World Series eight times, winning it all on three occasions.

There's more: Wild Card teams since 2000 have a combined 102-82 record compared to 78-78 by clubs that fashioned the best records in their leagues.

Going back to 1995 and the advent of the current system, Wild Cards have reached nine World Series and won four.

Clearly, going into the postseason as a second-place club is not such a bad deal at all.

Scioscia thinks Wild Card entries should enter the tournament with a more decided handicap rather than having the same path to travel as one of the three division champions.

"I'd like to see a 1-4 setup in the first round for the Wild Card teams," Scioscia said. "Let them play the first game at home and then finish the series on the road. Or go to a 2-1-2 format.

"The way it is now, not enough weight is being given to division winners. Wild Cards should not be on the same ground."

Scioscia always has attached more value to winning divisions across six months and 162 games - "the toughest challenge," he calls it -- than getting hot at the right time and winning 11 postseason contests.

Scioscia pointed out that this has nothing to do with the Angels facing a Wild Card in Boston next week for the second season in a row.

The Red Sox last year won the first two games in Anaheim, losing Game 3 at Fenway Park before claiming the series in Game 4.

Scioscia's idea has merit. It should be more difficult for Wild Cards to make it through the opening round. You can win 100 games across six months and find your season over before you know what hit you.

The way it is now, all the Wild Card team needs to do is split the first two games on the road, and suddenly it is in the driver's seat. Going home 1-1, two wins by the Wild Card eliminate a division champion.

This is the route Scioscia's Angels took in '02 when they won Game 2 of the American League Division Series at Yankee Stadium and carried the momentum home to finish the job.

Giving the Wild Card the opener at home and then finishing the series in the house of the division winner also makes economic and environmental sense.

If the Angels and Red Sox split the first four games, they'll return to Anaheim for Game 5 - two cross-country flights for a whole lot of people in the space of four days.

There's no denying the success of Wild Cards in postseason play. But Scioscia, an independent thinker, will argue that it should have been even more difficult for his '02 Angels to eliminate the Bronx Bombers en route to the Promised Land.

### **Angels to go with 10 pitchers in ALDS**

Scioscia carrying fewer arms to allow for bench depth

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

10/02/09 10:00 PM ET

OAKLAND -- Angels manager Mike Scioscia is playing it close to the vest, as usual, with regard to his American League Division Series roster in preparation for next week's showdown with the Red Sox.

Scioscia hinted that the AL West champions three years running will go with 10 pitchers, which opens a spot for another position player.

"That scenario is not as likely," Scioscia said when asked if he's considering 11 pitchers.

This appears to make Jose Arredondo the odd man out with starter Ervin Santana joining the relief corps.

Assuming versatile veteran Robb Quinlan is active, there would be two spots available for three candidates: catcher Bobby Wilson, outfielder Reggie Willits and infielder Brandon Wood.

The likely choices are Wilson and Willits. Wilson, a quality defensive catcher who spent most of the season at Triple-A Salt Lake with Willits and Wood, would give Scioscia the option of holding Mike Napoli back for pinch-hitting duties when Jeff Mathis is starting behind the plate.

Willits has value in the late innings in multiple areas. He's a disciplined switch-hitter and a deft bunter. He also is a smart and aggressive baserunner, and he is capable of handling all three outfield roles.

Wood, with raw power rivaling Napoli, would provide the ability to turn a game around with one swing. Wood has handled shortstop, third and first base for the Angels with sure hands and an accurate arm.

"We've got a couple different rosters we've narrowed it down to," Scioscia said. "We won't announce it until Sunday."

With Jon Lester poised to face the Angels' John Lackey in Game 1, Howard Kendrick is the likely starter at second base, moving Maicer Izturis to the bench, along with Gary Matthews Jr. and Napoli.

Matthews, with three hits and two homers in six at-bats against Lester, likely would get first call in a pinch-hitting situation against the lefty. Izturis is 3-for-8 against him with two doubles and two RBIs, and Willits has two singles and a walk in three plate appearances against Lester.

## **The envelope, please ... the 2009 MLB awards**

Stan McNeal – Sporting News

So many deserving candidates, so few awards. That's good because finding a worthy winner is easy. That's bad because finding the most worthy candidate is as tough for voters as negotiating a ninth-inning lead is for the Phillies.

Here's one attempt:

### **AMERICAN LEAGUE**

Joe Mauer and Albert Pujols are the obvious choices for MVP.

**MVP: Joe Mauer, C, Twins**

As productive as Mark Teixeira has been, as steady as Derek Jeter has been and as spectacular as Mariano Rivera has been, Mauer has been better. Don't buy into the argument that his team hasn't won enough, either. Mauer has risen above that. He leads the majors in hitting (.367) and is the best defensive catcher in the AL. The only legitimate knock against him is that he missed the first month of the season. Still, he already has established career highs in homers (28) and RBIs (95). Also, Mauer is second in the majors to Albert Pujols in on-base percentage (.442) and on-base plus slugging percentage (1.035). Mauer ranks behind only Pujols and [Prince Fielder](#) in slugging

percentage (.593).

**Cy Young: Zack Greinke, SP, Royals** The way Blue Jays ace Roy Halladay finished the season -- his three September shutouts include a one-hitter against the Yankees and a three-hitter against the Red Sox -- makes a tough call even tougher. However, Seattle's Felix Hernandez is the biggest reason the choice is so difficult. His 2.48 ERA is better than the past eight AL Cy Young winners, and Hernandez has two more wins and has worked nine more innings than Greinke (both will start once more this season). Greinke's most significant edge is his ERA -- his 2.06 mark is the best in the AL since Pedro Martinez (1.74) in 2000. Greinke also has the edge over Hernandez in strikeouts, strikeouts to walks, batting average against, complete games and baserunners allowed per nine innings. No matter what you think about the importance of a pitcher's wins total, Greinke's 16-8 record for a last-place team doesn't hurt his chances.

**Rookie of the year: Elvis Andrus, SS, Rangers** This is another crowded field that includes Tigers righthander Rick Porcello, Rays righthander Jeff Niemann, A's closer Andrew Bailey and White Sox third baseman Gordon Beckham. Andrus is most deserving in part because of the expectations placed on him. The Rangers moved All-Star shortstop Michael Young to third base against his original wishes because the club believed the then-20-year-old Andrus would be a defensive upgrade. By the end of spring training, Andrus had silenced all doubters. He has provided highlight-reel defense all season and also held his own offensively, scoring 72 runs with 33 stolen bases, a .266 average and a .329 OBP.

**Manager of the year: Mike Scioscia, Angels**

When the Angels started the season with three-fifths of their projected rotation on the disabled list, everyone figured they still would win the AL West. When rookie righthander Nick Adenhart died tragically the first week of the season, everyone figured the Angels still would pull together and win the AL West. When the Rangers and Mariners showed they were legitimate contenders, everyone figured the Angels still would come out on top. The Angels did, of course, and they somehow made it look almost routine. That is the Scioscia way. His rock-steady approach kept the team together through the Adenhart tragedy and myriad challenges on the field.

## NATIONAL LEAGUE

**MVP: Albert Pujols, 1B, Cardinals** The lone slam dunk of these awards. The only question: Should the vote be unanimous? The answer: Absolutely. Brewers first baseman Prince Fielder has put up MVP-like numbers and Phillies first baseman Ryan Howard has enjoyed his usual huge finish, but they aren't on the same level as Pujols. He leads the league in runs (122), home runs (47), OBP (.445), slugging percentage (.663), OPS (1.055) and times being called the best player on the planet (countless). If all of that isn't enough, he is hitting .328 and leads the Cardinals with 16 stolen bases.

**Cy Young: Adam Wainwright, SP, Cardinals**

The closest call of all, with two other deserving candidates in ERA leader Chris Carpenter and 2008 Cy Young winner Tim Lincecum. Wainwright took the lead with a workhorse-like, eight-inning outing that clinched the Cardinals' division title last Saturday. Carpenter and Lincecum were sharp in their final starts Thursday, so

Wainwright needed another strong outing Friday. Carpenter dropped his ERA to 2.24 on Thursday, Lincecum went to 2.40 and Wainwright was at 2.58. UPDATE: Wainwright was charged with three earned runs in six-plus innings during a no-decision Friday night, pushing his ERA to 2.63. Wainwright leads the NL in innings (233) and wins (19); Lincecum leads in strikeouts (261) and is second in batting average against to Dodgers lefthander Clayton Kershaw (.201 to .206).

Rookie of the year: Chris Coghlan, LF, Marlins Expect this vote to be closer than it should be because of the lack of attention given to Coghlan's team. The other top candidates -- Phillies lefthander J.A. Happ, Braves righthander Tommy Hanson and Rockies center fielder Dexter Fowler -- play for teams that have been on national TV at least once this season. The Marlins haven't. What you might have missed: Coghlan leads the majors in hits (107) and the NL in average (.368) since the All-Star break. For the season, he leads all rookies in average (.318) and OBP (.387). Making his rookie effort even more impressive: Coghlan had played one game in left field and never had batted leadoff until he joined the Marlins in early May.

Manager of the year: Jim Tracy, Rockies Tony La Russa guided a Cardinals club that no one figured would run away with the NL Central. Joe Torre kept the Dodgers atop the NL virtually all season, including through the 50-game suspension of left fielder Manny Ramirez. But those feats don't match up to what Tracy accomplished after taking over a last-place club in late May. With Tracy preaching accountability and finding -- and sticking with -- a lineup that clicked, the Rockies reeled off 17 victories in 18 games shortly after he replaced Clint Hurdle. The Rockies have barely slowed, with the NL's best record (71-39) since June 1. Their 91 wins are the most in franchise history.



*From the Los Angeles Times Blogs*

## **Did Mike Scioscia prevent brawl between Angels and Rangers on Thursday?**

October 2, 2009 | 12:34 pm

What appears to have been a proactive move by Manager Mike Scioscia may have prevented hostilities between the Angels and Texas Rangers on Thursday.

With Ian Kinsler on second base in the second inning in Angel Stadium, Texas designated hitter Chris Davis hit a two-run home run off John Lackey. Davis appeared to take his time around the bases, and television cameras caught Lackey barking something at Davis as the hitter neared second base.

Davis had a leg injury and had trouble running the bases all afternoon. Lackey, apparently unaware of this, voiced his displeasure with Davis, and Kinsler yelled something at Lackey, appearing to challenge the Angels ace to a fight.

Kinsler has been an irritant to the Angels all season, and not just because of the home runs he has hit and the fine defensive plays the second baseman has made against them.

After completing a three-game sweep of the Angels in Texas on May 17, Kinsler, while he was high-fiving teammates, could be seen mouthing the words, "Get the [heck] off our field."

In the opener of that series, Kinsler hit two home runs in the Rangers' 10-8 victory. The next day, Lackey, in his first start of the season, threw his first pitch behind Kinsler's head. Lackey's second pitch hit Kinsler, and Lackey was ejected from the game without warning.

Kinsler was due to be the fourth batter of the third inning on Thursday, but Scioscia pulled Lackey, the Angels' expected Game 1 playoff starter, after the second inning, perhaps fearing the pitcher might retaliate. Though Lackey was scheduled for an abbreviated start, he threw only 40 pitches.

Reliever Rich Thompson replaced Lackey, and there were no further incidents in the Rangers' 11-3 victory. Several scouts who were seated behind the backstop and witnessed the incident said they thought Scioscia pulled Lackey to prevent a brawl that could have resulted in suspensions or injuries on the eve of the playoffs.

┆ Mike DiGiovanna in Oakland

## **Bobby Wilson appears to be in Angels' playoff plans**

October 2, 2009 | 12:16 pm

The fact that Bobby Wilson played six innings at first base against Texas Thursday afternoon is a strong indication that the Angels will carry the reserve catcher on their playoff roster, though it leaves the post-season status of Robb Quinlan and Brandon Wood a little murkier.

The Angels appear to be leaning toward carrying three catchers -- Jeff Mathis, Mike Napoli and Wilson -- so they can pinch-hit for Mathis and have a stronger late-game defensive presence -- Wilson -- than Napoli.

But if the Angels are looking at Wilson as a potential emergency first baseman in case they want to pinch-run for Kendry Morales late in a close game or if Morales were to suffer an injury, they are probably also considering using their last roster spot to carry another pitcher instead of Quinlan or Wood, who both play first base.

Wilson played 12 games at first base for triple-A Salt Lake this season, but Thursday marked his first big league action at the position. He was not really tested, though he did handle the two ground balls and the one popup that were hit to him.

Neither Wood nor Quinlan helped their cause Thursday; both committed errors, Quinlan at third base and Wood at shortstop. It should be noted, though, that both played sparingly in the final month of the season, and they are obviously rusty.

┆ Mike DiGiovanna in Oakland

*From the Orange County Register Blogs*

### **Angels' rookies wear it**

October 2nd, 2009, 8:43 pm by **BILL PLUNKETT, OCREGISTER.COM**

For a guy who had to parade through a packed stadium, two major airports and a downtown San Francisco hotel wearing a red Teletubby costume, Sean O'Sullivan had a pretty good attitude.

"It was actually kind of fun," the Angels' rookie right-hander said. "It's going to be as fun or as embarrassing as you make it.

"The way I look at it -- I'd rather have to do that once than never get here (to the big leagues)."

O'Sullivan was one of the victims of an annual baseball rite Thursday -- rookie hazing. He and Matt Palmer, Chris Pettit, Rafael Rodriguez and Trevor Bell each found new outfits in their lockers after Thursday's game in Anaheim, replacing their traveling suits for the trip to Oakland.

It's a tradition that rookies have to wear the outfits (the more embarrassing the better) on

the last road trip of the season. They aren't allowed to change back into street clothes until they check in to the hotel in the next city.

"Mine wasn't so bad," said catcher Bobby Wilson who had to wear a tennis skirt during last season's hazing. "I only had to go from here (Oakland) to Dallas. They had to walk through a rally."

Because the Angels held a playoff rally following the final regular-season home game at Angel Stadium Thursday, the rookies had to walk from the home dugout out to right field where the team bus was loading.

Thousands of people got a good look at O'Sullivan in his Teletubby costume, Pettit in a short pink dress, Rodriguez in some kind of ostrich outfit, Bell in 'Reno 911' short-shorts and 30-year-old rookie Palmer in a big baby outfit (giant bottle included).

"At least I don't have to shop for a Halloween costume this year," said Bell who had to stop more than once to ... adjust the costume.

"It's something you figure everyone goes through so you might as well have a good attitude about it," Pettit said. "At least I was cool on the plane."

Pettit said he did get some curious looks walking through the airport.

"Walking through the airport, people didn't know what was going on and we kind of got stretched out," he said. "I kind of fell behind and was walking by myself. I saw a few heads turn."

### **Abreu joins exclusive company (lineups)**

October 2nd, 2009, 6:19 pm by BILL PLUNKETT, OCREGISTER.COM

When Bobby Abreu steps into the batter's box in the top of the first inning tonight, he will be stepping into a pretty impressive club.

It will be Abreu's 150th game of the season. This is the 12th consecutive season Abreu has played at least 150 games.

Only four other players in baseball history can match that — Willie Mays (13 seasons, 1954-66), Billy Williams (12 seasons, 192-73), Pete Rose (12 seasons, 1969-80) and Cal Ripken Jr. (12 seasons, 1982-93).

And Abreu still needs just one stolen base to reach 30 for the season and become only the second player in Angels history to steal 30 bases and drive in 100 runs in the same season. Bobby Bonds had 41 steals and 115 RBI in 1977.

Erick Aybar (bruised right hand) and Howie Kendrick (staph infection, right knee) are unavailable tonight but Angels manager Mike Scioscia said both would probably play tomorrow.

## BALTIMORE ORIOLES INSIDE PITCH

Breathe easier, Dave Trembley.

The Orioles picked up his 2010 option Friday, meaning the hot seat has cooled for the third-year manager.

Trembley's club ended a 13-game losing streak Thursday, but still has the potential to lose 100 games for just the third time in franchise history. It's been a trying year for Trembley, who is completing his second full season after taking over on an interim basis in 2007.

"He was charged with nurturing and developing and bringing along a lot of what we think are young, talented players, and trying to introduce them in the proper environment where they can enjoy some success," club president Andy MacPhail told reporters Friday. "In my view, he has accomplished that mission."

MacPhail granted Trembley the first two years as a building period, but stated Friday that the 2010 season is one in which he'd like to see his club climb the standings.

Trembley credited his players for standing behind him even while his future was uncertain. He seems open to adjusting his style to MacPhail's altered expectations.

"They're in for a little bit different approach in spring training," Trembley said with a chuckle.

**ORIOLES 13, BLUE JAYS 7:** The Orioles won for a second straight night after snapping a 13-game losing streak, and they need one more win in the season's final weekend to prevent a 100-loss season. RHP Jason Berken ended his rookie campaign with a victory as the offense belted three home runs.

### NOTES, QUOTES

—1B Michael Aubrey is making a serious bid for a roster spot in 2010. Aubrey, known for his glove, hit his first career grand slam and added another home run on a six-RBI night. Aubrey has four homers.

—C Matt Wieters went 2-for-5 with his ninth home run of the season, and his numbers are suddenly worthy of Rookie of the Year consideration. Wieters is hitting .295 with nine homers and 43 RBIs. His three-RBI performance leaves him just five RBIs behind veteran Melvin Mora, who has played 30 more games than the rookie — many of them in the No. 5 slot in the order.

**BY THE NUMBERS:** 18 — Losing seasons in the last 24 years for the Orioles, including

12 in a row.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "If I go in 10 days and be a free agent, I'll go with my head up. That I did everything I was supposed to do with the Orioles. Whatever I am going to be next year, I'll never get tired of thanking the Orioles, because I made my career here." — 3B Melvin Mora, to The Sun, on the likely culmination of his career upon the conclusion of the 2009 season.

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## BOSTON RED SOX

### INSIDE PITCH

Daisuke Matsuzaka wasn't perfect, but the 29-year-old righty made another strong statement Friday night. He appears to be a valuable part of Boston's playoff roster after putting together four consecutive solid outings since coming off the disabled list in mid-September.

Matsuzaka is 3-1 with a 2.22 ERA in those four starts, and he's regained touch and feel on his devastating slider while building up his arm strength. He could be a postseason X-factor in the rotation behind Josh Beckett, Jon Lester and Clay Buchholz.

"He continues to look like he's getting stronger and building instead of going the other way. Which is a very good trend," said manager Terry Francona. "I can't sit here and tell you we all knew what he was going to do over a long time."

Matsuzaka allowed five hits and two runs in six innings Friday against Cleveland. He said afterward he was happy to work on "the finer points" in preparation for the playoffs.

That meant refining his pitches, but it also allowed for some vintage Matsuzaka on the mound — loading the bases in the fifth inning and then finding a way to wriggle out of the jam without incurring any damage.

Since landing on the disabled list early in the season because of a strained right shoulder, everything about Matsuzaka's year was about returning with a vengeance for October baseball. Matsuzaka, an 18-game winner, last season is right on track.

"From the time I came back to the point that we clinched our playoff spot, I wanted to do my best to contribute," Matsuzaka said. "But during the whole time I was on the (disabled list), I trained with October in mind. I still have some work to do."

RED SOX 6, INDIANS 2: RHP Daisuke Matsuzaka battled through six innings of two-run ball and took home his third win since coming off the disabled list in September. Victor Martinez and Jason Bay each had two hits, and Kevin Youkilis smashed a two-run double in the third inning that carried Boston to victory.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—SS Nick Green had another difficult day Friday as he attempted to work through a bulging disk in his back that's causing weakness in his right leg. Green took ground balls, ran in the outfield and took batting practice, but still hasn't progressed to his liking. The middle infielder feels like he needs to play against the Indians this weekend to prove his worthiness for a postseason roster spot, but it could be a race against time at this point. SS Jed Lowrie and SS Chris Woodward are both available as potential solutions should Green's back continue to be an issue.

—OF Rocco Baldelli was forced to exit Friday night's game in the fourth inning after hurting himself while running out a ground ball. Baldelli reached on an infield error and was immediately pulled for OF Josh Reddick. The Sox announced that Baldelli suffered a left hip flexor injury and would be considered day-to-day. Given his strong right-handed bat and outfield versatility, Baldelli seemed like a shoo-in for the postseason roster, but that is now uncertain. Manager Terry Francona said Baldelli passed all the medical tests after the game and would be closely monitored by the medical staff.

BY THE NUMBERS: 26 — Major league-leading number of home runs that

DH David Ortiz hit from June 6 through Sept. 25.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "He's literally been our MVP. He's delivered big hit after big hit for us. He's run the bases well. He's been our staple, pretty much all year." — C Jason Varitek, talking about OF Jason Bay, who has set career highs in home runs and RBI in his first full season with the Red Sox.

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## CHICAGO WHITE SOX

### INSIDE PITCH

Manager Ozzie Guillen took exception to the idea that he held back Jake Peavy in the Cleveland series to save him for Detroit.

The fact was that Peavy was feeling a bit under the weather in Cleveland, so they gave him extra rest with Thursday's off day.

"I'm going to make this clear to all those freaking people out there," Guillen said.

"The only reason we pitched Peavy here is because that was his turn. It's Freddy (Garcia's) turn (Saturday) and John Danks' turn (Sunday)..."

"I see a lot of comments about we bring the best guys to face Detroit. I don't care if we face Detroit or not. I don't. I wish we played a tripleheader (on Friday) and we leave

tomorrow from this town. That's my hope. We play three games — I would go for it. I take care of my players and that's the only reason we do it."

It seemed to work, as Peavy made an impressive final statement in his last start of the season. Peavy, acquired from San Diego in a trade-deadline deal, showed no signs of the ankle injury or then the bruised elbow that kept him on the shelf until Aug. 19.

While his Sox showing has been a brief one, it has been an eye-opener. The former Cy Young Award winner won all three games he started, allowing three runs in 20 innings for a 1.35 ERA.

He held Detroit scoreless in eight innings, allowing just two hits. That left Peavy looking forward to next season.

"I think it's big for the organization and fans," Peavy said of his final outing.

"I owed it to (general manager Kenny Williams) for getting me over here. ...It's nice to go into the winter with a couple wins and let's get it on next year.

"I certainly would have loved to make more starts than three, but it was a battle, it was a grind to even get where we're at today," Peavy added. "I'm happy to be back out there, happy the fans can relate that next year we're coming in expecting big things — from myself, Johnny (Danks), Gavin (Floyd), and hopefully Mark (Buehrle) does what he's done his entire career. We're going to run some pretty good guys out there at you."

WHITE SOX 8, TIGERS 0: RHP Jake Peavy was dominant against a playoff-caliber team. He allowed just two hits in eight shutout innings, and said afterward he still wasn't 100 percent. The Sox scored eight runs on nine hits. OF Scott Podsednik went 3-for-4, including his seventh home run of the season.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—Ozzie Guillen considers Twins manager Ron Gardenhire one of his few friends among major league managers, but that doesn't mean the Sox skipper came into Motown to play favorites. Gardenhire joked he was going to leave a message for Guillen in the visiting manager's office at Comerica Park after the Twins split a four-game series there this week, but it was either well-hidden or didn't happen. "He had his shot," Guillen said of Gardenhire and the Twins. "Don't be looking for me. He had his chance and they blew it. He didn't leave me any message."

Guillen then said, "Gardy knows and Jim Leyland knows that we come here to win. Not to help Minnesota or beat the Tigers. We come here because we have a job to do and we have to get it done." Guillen will play most of his regulars, as he did on Friday, when Jermaine Dye, Carlos Quentin and Paul Konerko were back in the lineup after getting breathers against Cleveland.

—Manager Ozzie Guillen said he was "shocked" that the city of Chicago was snubbed Friday as the host of the 2016 Olympic Games. "I was shocked because I never thought Chicago would be eliminated in the first round," he said. "I think everyone in the States was shocked. Don't give up. Keep fighting for the future and hopefully one of these days, we'll have it. I was shocked."

BY THE NUMBERS: 5-1 — Record for Jake Peavy over his last seven starts — two with the Sox and the rest in San Diego — through Sept. 25. Peavy also had a 3.62 ERA over that time.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It wasn't supposed to be. The names are good. They haven't performed up to expectations and they know that. Sometimes with relief pitching, the ebb and flow of it is ridiculous." — GM Ken Williams, on the inconsistencies of the bullpen.

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## CLEVELAND INDIANS

### INSIDE PITCH

The Indians have had pretty good luck in making trades with the Seattle Mariners for infielders through the years.

In 1993, the Indians traded Felix Fermin and Reggie Jefferson to Seattle for Omar Vizquel.

In 2006 the Indians traded Eduardo Perez to Seattle for infielder Asdrubal Cabrera, who has emerged as a .300-hitting shortstop. And last winter, as part of a three-team trade, the Indians acquired second baseman Luis Valbuena from the Mariners.

Valbuena has teamed with Cabrera as the Indians' double play combination. Valbuena isn't at Cabrera's level as a hitter yet, but he did have had three hits in a 6-2 loss to Boston on Friday.

Valbuena is hitting .248, but 37 of his 87 hits have been for extra bases. Valbuena has 25 doubles, three triples, and nine home runs in 359 at-bats.

In addition to showing some extra-base power, Valbuena has been solid defensively. Valbuena and Cabrera, both 23 years old, could potentially be the Indians' middle infield for the several years.

RED SOX 6, INDIANS 2: The Indians scored two runs in the fifth inning to snap their consecutive scoreless innings streak at 24, but they still lost for the 19th time in their last 24 games. LHP Jeremy Sowers only lasted three innings as his record fell to 6-11.

### NOTES, QUOTES



—OF Shin-Soo Choo needs one more home run to join Ian Kinsler, Nelson Cruz and Curtis Granderson as the only players in the American League with 20 home runs and 20 stolen bases. Choo has 19 home runs and 21 stolen bases.

—The Indians' 6-2 loss to Boston on Friday was their club record 13th consecutive loss on the road. The previous club record for most consecutive road losses was 12, set in 1963 and matched in 1991. The Indians haven't won a game on the road since Aug. 30 at Baltimore.

BY THE NUMBERS: 12 — The Indians' team record, set in 1931, for longest losing streak. The Indians came within one of tying the record before beating Baltimore 4-2 on Sept. 25 to halt their losing streak at 11 games.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "No matter how often you get your butt handed to you, you've got to go out there the next day with confidence." — Manager Eric Wedge, during the Indians' 11-game losing streak in September. Wedge will be dismissed after the season.

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## DETROIT TIGERS

### INSIDE PITCH

Manager Jim Leyland is sending a rookie out Saturday to make one of the most critical starts of Detroit's season. It's very likely, though, that right-hander Alfredo Figaro will be on a two-inch leash.

"I know he's going to compete," Leyland said. "I know he's not afraid. That's a pretty good combination.

"We've still got to score runs."

Leyland has his bullpen all lined up so he can use it all if necessary. He is very likely to treat the game like a must-win playoff contest.

He has his safety net, right-hander Justin Verlander, scheduled for Sunday if Detroit needs to win a game to either clinch an outright division championship or a playoff for the AL Central Division title. Leyland knows Verlander can go to the seventh or eighth inning if he's right.

Figaro pitched 2 2/3 scoreless innings of winning relief at Chicago last weekend and showed a better slider and a changeup to go with his good live fastball. But he had mixed results in two June starts — one a win and the other a thumping.

Leyland stretched out right-hander Zach Miner a little Wednesday and gave him two games off just to set him for a possible early or mid-game relief job Saturday.

Left-hander Bobby Seay got his first action in a week on Thursday to serve as a weekend tune-up. Right-hander Ryan Perry is rested and has looked good. At the end, Leyland has right-handers Brandon Lyon and Fernando Rodney.

"I did tell them after the game, 'You're not going to get any help,'" Leyland said of the division title. "If you want to win the division, you gotta win two games. It's that simple."

WHITE SOX 8, TIGERS 0: RHP Edwin Jackson's third pitch of the game was swatted for a home run by CF Scott Podsednik. Jackson served up a leadoff home run in the fifth, and Chicago scored five runs in the sixth, all charged to Jackson. Detroit got a first-inning single by 2B Placido Polanco but didn't get another hit off RHP Jake Peavy until C Alex Avila singled with one out in the eighth.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Edwin Jackson had a sharp slider and struck out five against Chicago on Friday, but he again got behind too often and opted for fastballs instead of breaking pitches. His third pitch of the game went for a home run and he also gave up a leadoff home run in the fifth. "Edwin had a bad outing," manager Jim Leyland said. "He probably made as many bad pitches as he made all year in a game. They were just in the middle of the plate."

—RHP Jeremy Bonderman was suspended for three games Friday for hitting Minnesota LF Delmon Young with the first pitch of the ninth Thursday. Bonderman said he would appeal. He also drew a \$1,500 fine.

—C Gerald Laird drew a \$500 fine, apparently for arguing with home plate umpire Angel Hernandez after RHP Jeremy Bonderman hit Minnesota LF Delmon Young with the first pitch of the ninth inning Thursday. Laird started Friday night but was one of several Tigers who came out late in the game once Chicago took an 8-0 lead after the sixth.

BY THE NUMBERS: 4 — Pitchers who have won 14 games in a season before their 21st birthday since 1970 after rookie RHP Rick Porcello won his 14th on Sept. 23 in Cleveland. RHP Bert Blyleven won 16 for Minnesota in 1971, LHP Don Gullett won 16 for Cincinnati in 1971 and RHP Dwight Gooden won 17 as a teenager in 1984 and 24 for the New York Mets the following year.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It's like I told the guys when I was congratulating them after the game. 'You have to keep grinding. You can't let up mentally or physically.' This is like October baseball in September." — Manager Jim Leyland, following Detroit's 6-5 win at Cleveland on Sept. 24.

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#### KANSAS CITY ROYALS

#### INSIDE PITCH

Right-hander Zack Greinke will get a final chance to campaign for the American League Cy Young award when he starts Saturday at Minnesota in a game with playoff implications for the Twins.

The Twins are only a game behind the Tigers in the AL Central.

Greinke has not lost since Aug. 19 at Chicago. He is 5-0 with a 0.72 ERA in his past seven starts. His 2.06 ERA is the best in the majors. Greinke is 16-8 on a club that is in last place and has lost 95 games.

Greinke beat the Twins on Sunday in the Royals' home finale, allowing one run and seven hits in seven innings, while striking out eight and walking two.

Greinke has struck out 237 and is within range of the club record — 244 by right-hander Dennis Leonard in 1977. Greinke has fanned eight or more 16 times in 32 starts.

Need more Greinke credentials for the Cy Young?

He has made 10 starts without allowing an earned run, which is the most in the majors this season. That ties past Cy Young winners, Pedro Martinez in 2000 and Randy Johnson in 2002.

In 10 of his 17 starts at Kauffman Stadium, he gave up one or zero earned runs.

Greinke has pitched seven or more innings in 20 starts. He has not surrendered a home run since Aug. 25 against the Indians and only 11 in 223 1/3 innings.

Royals manager Trey Hillman said for him it is a "no brainer" that Greinke should win the Cy Young. He gets one more opportunity to showcase his talents before the ballots are cast.

TWINS 10, ROYALS 7: The Royals trailed 10-0 after four innings, but made it interesting, cutting the lead to three runs in the eighth after a two-run Mitch Maier single. The Royals had the tying run at the plate in the eighth, but RHP Matt Guerrier struck out Billy Butler and got Brayan Pena to fly out to center to end the inning. The Twins batted around in a five-run first off LHP Lenny DiNardo, with Delmon Young hitting a grand slam. The Royals stroked 14 hits, but Alex Gordon's double was their lone extra-base hit.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—LF David DeJesus rejoined the club Friday in Minneapolis, but did not play. DeJesus has missed seven straight games with a virus that caused him to lose seven pounds. "He's definitely less than 100 percent," manager Trey Hillman said. "We'll see how he is in the workouts. I'm hopeful (he could play Saturday), but we'll hold off until we see how he does and how he recovers." DeJesus is so weak, however, he might not play in the final two games.

—SS Yuniesky Betancourt fouled a ball of his foot before his fifth-inning single. INF Luis Hernandez ran for Betancourt and remained in the game at shortstop.

BY THE NUMBERS: 12 — Starting pitchers used by the Royals in 2009.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It was a sloppy defensive game and it very well could have been the difference in the game. It was poor focus and concentration. Obviously with the numbers of errors we've had, it's disappointing." — Royals manager Trey Hillman, on the club making five errors, leading to six unearned runs, in a Sept. 24 loss to the Red Sox.

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## LOS ANGELES ANGELS

### INSIDE PITCH

Angels manager Mike Scioscia says this is the deepest lineup he has taken into the playoffs since the 2002 team that won the World Series.

There are numbers to back him up.

The Angels go into Saturday having scored a club-record 874 runs (second in the majors). They lead the majors in batting average (.285 — also on pace for a club record) and are second in hits (1,571).

"I think we're much deeper than we've been entering any playoff situation since 2002," Scioscia said.

"One through nine, as far as everything — the situational aspect, batter's box offense — we've been very productive. We've managed to put the most runners in scoring position of anyone in baseball. That's all important to getting some offensive continuity."

The Angels also have cashed in those runners at a better rate than any team in baseball. They lead the majors with a .296 average with runners in scoring position and are only the second team since the 1930 Cardinals to have 10 players with 50 or more RBIs.

But the Angels have not been able to carry their regular-season offensive production into the postseason in recent years.

"The potential is there," Scioscia said. "We just have to bring our game onto the field."

ANGELS 5, A'S 2: RHP Jered Weaver threw five shutout innings in his final regular-season tune-up, holding the A's to just three hits while striking out five and walking none. Weaver is in line to start Game 2 of the ALDS against the Red Sox on Friday. The Angels got a home run from Juan Rivera (his career-high 25th) and RBI singles from Torii Hunter, Mike Napoli and Gary Matthews Jr.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—SS Erick Aybar (bruised right hand) and 2B Howie Kendrick (staph infection, right knee) were unavailable Friday, but Angels manager Mike Scioscia said both are expected to start Saturday's game in Oakland.

—OF Bobby Abreu played in his 150th game of the season Friday. This is the 12th consecutive season in which Abreu has played in at least 150 games. Only four other players in baseball history can match that streak — Willie Mays, Billy Williams, Cal Ripken Jr. and Pete Rose.

BY THE NUMBERS: 0 — Grand slams hit by the Angels this season (the only AL team without one this season). The Angels have not gone through a whole season without a grand slam since 1974.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "We try to fly flags. We don't talk." — RHP John Lackey, responding to the Texas Rangers' trash-talking earlier this season.

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## MINNESOTA TWINS

### INSIDE PITCH

Once again, the Twins are taking the Central Division down to the wire. Their victory Friday pulled them within one game of Detroit, with two games remaining.

Last year the Twins swept the White Sox in their final series to force a 163rd game, which the White Sox won 1-0 at U.S. Cellular Field. If the Twins win their next two, and the Tigers split, the teams would play a one-game playoff Tuesday at the Metrodome.

In 2006, the Twins swept the White Sox in the final series to edge Detroit for the division by one game.

Minnesota is 14-4 in its past 18 games and hasn't lost a series since Sept. 11-13 against Oakland. How do they keep doing it?

"We don't have a choice," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "I mean, really, there's not much of a choice. You just have to win."

The Twins knew the White Sox had beaten the Tigers before their game was over, but finishing off the Royals proved difficult. Despite taking a 10-0 lead after four innings, the Twins needed six relievers to lock it down.

"We've been playing catch-up for a long time here, and it's not easy," Gardenhire said.

"This last road trip seemed like a must-win every day, so it's definitely not easy playing

from behind. It's draining. I mean, (Friday night) was really draining. You're watching it and you've seen (comebacks) happen... and you're just trying to get outs.

"It seems like every game, all those (bullpen) guys are out there, and you're just trying to see who's got anything in the tank."

TWINS 10, ROYALS 7: Delmon Young gave the Twins a 5-0 first-inning lead with his first career grand slam, but Minnesota needed six relievers to hold off the Royals at the Metrodome. Jason Kubel drove in two runs with a homer and a single, and Joe Nathan pitched the ninth for his 46th save. Young, hitting .415 over his past 10 games, also singled in a run in a three-run fourth inning that gave the Twins a 10-0 lead.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—LHP Jose Mijares was contrite a day after starting a bench-clearing ruckus in Thursday's 8-3 victory at Detroit. His purpose pitch to Adam Everett in the eighth inning earned a retaliation beaming of LF Delmon Young in the ninth, after which Young stormed not the mound but his own dugout, pointing at Mijares. Mijares appeared to be protesting the fact that Detroit was running while trailing late, but Friday he insisted the pitch was retaliation for a hard slide from Marcus Thames. "I was just protecting my guys, the way he (slid) into second base, you know?" he said. "I'm protecting my guys. I'm sorry for my guys' team; it's my fault."

—LF Delmon Young, who hit his first career grand slam Friday, has hit safely in nine of 10 games, batting .415 (17 for 41) with two homers, seven runs scored and 10 RBIs. When RF Michael Cuddyer moved to first on Sept. 14 to fill in for injured 1B Justin Morneau, Young finally got regular time in left. Since then, he is batting .344 (22 for 64) with 10 runs and 13 RBIs. "When 'Mornie' went down, I knew I was going to be in there, so it was a lot easier to not put pressure on yourself to do too much one day," he said. "You can go in there and just feel comfortable and move guys over, take a walk, see some pitches, not feel like you're trying to get hits every at-bat so you can stay in there."

BY THE NUMBERS: 56 — Consecutive games CF Denard Span had led off before missing two games last week after being hit by a pitch.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I don't believe they were trying to hit me. But even if they were, I don't think anyone would try to hit me in the head. I haven't done anything to that team or anybody." — CF Denard Span, explaining he had no hard feelings for White Sox reliever Randy Williams after his beaming.

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NEW YORK YANKEES

INSIDE PITCH

The Yankees hadn't lost a CC Sabathia start since July 28 and wanted to get him his first 20-win season.

Instead, Sabathia lost a piece of the invincibility he spent the past two months building, as Tampa Bay knocked out the ace in the third inning.

Whether the look of disappointment and frustration on Sabathia's face in the postgame clubhouse will carry over to the games that matter next week in the division series remains to be seen.

"Just one of those games," Sabathia said after Friday's 13-4 loss in which he allowed nine runs — five earned — and eight hits. "Just couldn't get anything going. Couldn't get into a rhythm. It is frustrating, but I'll be ready for Wednesday."

Other than Friday's start, Sabathia has been every bit as dominant and reliable down the stretch as the Yankees had hoped he would be. That hint of frustration on his face is not an uncommon October look for Sabathia. He said he has expected too much of himself in previous postseasons, which partly explains his 7.92 ERA in the playoffs.

He said he would shake off the final start and get back to work. The Yankees have to hope he can do just that.

"I'll be ready," Sabathia said. "I'll be working, go out there on Wednesday and give it my best start."

RAYS 13, YANKEES 4: CC Sabathia's bid for his first 20-win season ended with him knocked out in the third inning after allowing nine runs (five earned) and eight hits. The Yankees lost with him as a starter for the first time since July 28. B.J. Upton hit for the cycle for Tampa Bay, becoming the first Ray to do so, and he added six RBIs. Juan Miranda hit the first home run of his career for the Yankees.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—1B Mark Teixeira got a scare when he was hit by a pitch on his shoulder in the first inning. He left the game in the fourth inning, but manager Joe Girardi said he wasn't injured. "He's OK, that's the biggest thing," Girardi said. "Physically he's fine." Girardi said Teixeira had wanted to play in each of the weekend games, so he planned to give him a few at-bats a game.

—LHP CC Sabathia didn't just fail in his bid for 20 victories, he offered one of his worst starts of the season Friday. The poor performance, which came on the cusp of next week's Game 1 playoff start, could bring back questions of Sabathia's postseason struggles, but manager Joe Girardi said it didn't cause him concern. "None for me," said Joe Girardi, who added that Sabathia lost command of his fastball. "I feel good about CC. Felt good about him all year." Girardi had dubbed Sabathia's attempt at his first 20-win season an "important game" and started most of his regulars, but the ace gave up nine runs (five

earned) and eight hits in just 2 2/3 innings.

BY THE NUMBERS: 6 — Stolen bases Sept. 25 against Boston, a season high.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "The team's playing well. We wanted to come in and play well tonight and we did." — 3B Alex Rodriguez, after the win over Boston on Sept. 25.

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## OAKLAND ATHLETICS

### INSIDE PITCH

The A's are finishing in a funk.

Oakland lost its fifth in a row Friday night, and the offense, which produced so well last month, has scored 12 runs in the losing streak. The A's have scored only four runs in the past three games.

Since Oakland's emphasis is on pitching as the season winds down, the offensive fizzle isn't too alarming for the club, but it does highlight the team's need for more consistent scoring — and power — next year. Even while Oakland led the league in runs in September, the team wasn't hitting a lot of homers, with 25, tied for ninth.

Oakland is at the bottom of the heap overall when it comes to power, with 135 homers for the season, and the A's hit the third-fewest in the league last season.

The team is unlikely to add a slugging free agent in the offseason, and even the A's recent trend of signing former stars on the downside of their careers is probably over; team owner Lew Wolff has said he's seen enough of that.

So, prospects such as Chris Carter and Brett Wallace might have to supply much of the team's power, especially if Jack Cust — the team's top home run hitter — is non-tendered.

ANGELS 5, A'S 2: Oakland couldn't get on the scoreboard until the final inning on Friday at the Coliseum, recording only three hits in Jered Weaver's five innings. Daric Barton drove in both of the A's runs with a single off closer Brian Fuentes.

### NOTES, QUOTES

—LHP Gio Gonzalez went six innings for the seventh time in 17 starts, and he allowed eight hits and four runs while striking out a career-high 10. Gonzalez finished 6-7 with a 5.75 ERA and he has a good chance of being in the A's rotation again next year — at least until Josh Outman returns from "Tommy John" surgery, which could be at



midseason.

—OF Ryan Sweeney will not play again this season, manager Bob Geren announced Friday. Sweeney has missed the past three games with knee tendinitis. He finished the season with a .293 average, second-highest among Oakland regulars, along with six homers, 53 RBIs and 68 runs.

BY THE NUMBERS: 26 — Pitchers used by the A's this season, tying the Oakland record. The A's have used 51 players overall, matching last year's total, which is the second highest in Oakland history behind 2007's 54.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "Kind of a bummer. They authenticated the bat I used, though, so I'll do something with that. It would have been nice to have the ball, and I would have been happy to give him a bat and signed it — that's (worth) more than a baseball, anyway. But that's OK, I have a souvenir, I'm happy." — Outfielder Matt Carson, telling the San Francisco Chronicle that the fan who caught Carson's first big-league home run wouldn't return the ball without a large payoff, which the team would not provide.

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## SEATTLE MARINERS

### INSIDE PITCH

Right fielder Ichiro Suzuki has 221 hits with two games left. It's the fifth time in his career that he's had at least 220 hits in a season. And he's the only player in major league history to do that.

Ichiro had 242 hits in 2001, a big-league record 262 hits in 2004, 224 hits in 2006 and 238 hits in 2007.

Rogers Hornsby and 19th-century star Jesse Burkett had four seasons with 220 hits or more. Seven players — Bill Terry, Chuck Klein, George Sisler, Joe Medwick, Lloyd Waner, Stan Musial and Ty Cobb — had done it in three different seasons.

All nine of those players are in the Hall of Fame, and it seems likely that Ichiro, who has a record nine consecutive 200-hit seasons, will eventually join them in Cooperstown.

Ichiro has hit at an exceptionally high level this year, even by his lofty standards. Only once has he gone consecutive games without a hit, and that was just last weekend in Toronto. He's not going to take the batting title from Minnesota catcher Joe Mauer, but Ichiro is at .350 with two games to go.

RANGERS 7, MARINERS 4: The Mariners needed to sweep the Rangers in this final series to pull into a tie for second place with Texas, but now the Mariners are guaranteed a third-place finish. RHP Mark Lowe gave up a two-out hit in the eighth that let a 4-3

lead slip away from Seattle. In the ninth, RHP David Aardsma easily got the first two outs, then didn't get anybody else out as the Rangers scored three times to rally for the win.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Ian Snell left with the lead Friday for the second game in a row, but wound up with a no-decision. Snell was 5-1 with a 3.00 ERA in his final nine starts with Seattle, including three quality starts in his final four outings.

—1B Mike Carp had a 3-for-3 night Friday, a new career high for the rookie. He drove in two runs in a game for the first time.

BY THE NUMBERS: 33-18 — The Mariners had won 33 of 51 one-run games this year, through Sept. 25. That was the best record in Major League Baseball this season.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "If it happens, it happens. And if I had a vote, I'd vote for Greinke. He's had a great season." — RHP Felix Hernandez, talking about possible Cy Young Award competition with Kansas City RHP Zack Greinke.

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## TAMPA BAY RAYS

### INSIDE PITCH

B.J. Upton's strong finish to the season included a bit of history.

Upton became the first Ray to hit for the cycle, and he tied the team record with five hits in Friday's win over the Yankees.

Upton said it was his first cycle at any level, and it extended what has been a good couple of weeks for him.

"That was phenomenal," starter David Price said. "Hopefully he can carry that into next year. The way he was swinging the bat is what everybody saw in the postseason last year."

Upton tripled in the first, doubled in the third, laced a two-run homer in the fourth and completed the cycle with a two-out single in the fifth, getting a nice ovation from fans and teammates.

"It was definitely comforting," Upton said. "We're a family together here. We stick together. To get that kind of applause feels good."

RAYS 13, YANKEES 4: B.J. Upton became the first Ray to hit for the cycle as Tampa Bay rapped 17 hits and spoiled the Yankees' hopes to get CC Sabathia his 20th win.

Upton tied the team record with five hits.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—OF Fernando Perez hit ninth as the designated hitter for the Rays, and C Jose Molina did the same for the Yankees, marking only the third time that's happened since the 1973 introduction of the DH. It occurred on May 4, 2009, in the Cleveland-Toronto game, and July 25, 2005, in a Cleveland-Oakland game.

—C Shawn Riggins and OF Justin Ruggiano are the only players on the 40-man roster who have been assigned to play winter ball.

BY THE NUMBERS: 1 — American League teams to have more home runs (187) and stolen bases (182) than the Rays did (through Sept. 25) for a season — the 1998 Blue Jays, who hit 221 homers and stole 184.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I'm on vacation, a paid vacation." — LHP J.P. Howell, after being shut down for the rest of the season, and being teased by teammates.

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## TEXAS RANGERS

### INSIDE PITCH

The Rangers on Friday officially clinched second place in the AL West for the second straight season.

The Rangers did so with a 7-4 win over Seattle. It pushed Texas' record to 87-73 with two games left. Seattle fell to 83-77.

The win was the Rangers' second in a row after they were eliminated from playoff contention earlier in the week.

A year ago, Texas broke an eight-season streak of not finishing higher than third in the AL West. In 2008, however, the Rangers finished 79-83, 21 games back of Los Angeles. This season, the Rangers went into the final week of the season still in contention in both the division and the wild card races.

It wasn't until the Angels rolled off consecutive wins to start that four-game series that the playoff race was ultimately decided. When the Rangers lost on Wednesday, it eliminated the chance of the team's first 90-win season since 1999.

Manager Ron Washington maintained, however, that there was still something to play for — and that was second place in the division. That is accomplished. Now, by winning the final two games, the Rangers would finish 89-73, matching their 2004 record for the best in a decade.

RANGERS 7, MARINERS 4: 3B Michael Young singled home pinch runner Esteban German in the eighth inning to give the Rangers the lead for good in Seattle. The Rangers added a pair of two-out runs in the ninth to put Seattle away. 1B Chris Davis, who had his second consecutive three-hit game, started the ninth-inning rally with a two-out single. German, C Taylor Teagarden and SS Elvis Andrus each followed with hits to score the two insurance runs.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—OF Julio Borbon got his first career start in center field. Borbon, who came up for good in early August, has spent most of his time in left field or as the designated hitter. The Rangers think Borbon could have a future as a center fielder, but his arm strength and his routes require work.

—The Rangers have struck out 1,240 times, setting a franchise record for strikeouts in a season. The previous mark of 1,224 had been set in 2007. With 10 more strikeouts over the final two games, the Rangers would become only the third AL team to whiff at least 1,250 times in a season.

BY THE NUMBERS: 907 — Career appearances for LHP Eddie Guardado through Sept. 27, putting him past Cy Young for the 21st most games pitched all-time. Guardado has started talking about retiring after this season. He has struggled for much of the year and has pitched in pain for several seasons.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "If you can tell me why, I would appreciate it. Mechanically, he is repeating his delivery exactly as the last time." — Pitching coach Mike Maddux, on the mysterious drop in velocity for rookie RHP Neftali Feliz, who threw 100 mph in his August debut but is currently sitting in the 95 mph range.

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#### TORONTO BLUE JAYS

##### INSIDE PITCH

Interim CEO Paul Beeston arrives in Baltimore on Saturday. He originally had planned on meeting the Blue Jays in their final road trip to thank them "for their efforts" as the way former chairman of the board Peter Hardy used to do.

Now Beeston will be facing a meeting with players to hear their laundry list of complaints against manager Cito Gaston.

After starting the season 27-14, the Jays lost 70 of the next 118. On the morning of Game 159, news broke that there was almost a mutiny in the clubhouse and Gaston had lost control.

The player delegation, led by Vernon Wells, Rod Barajas and Aaron Hill, has asked for and will receive an audience with Beeston. The obvious inference is that they would prefer to play for a new manager next season. The original intent was to quietly deliver their complaints to Beeston this weekend, but FoxSports.com broke the story, citing anonymous sources.

"There are issues," Wells said Friday.

"(When) something of that magnitude comes out, obviously there is some truth behind it. It's tough for something like that to be stirred up and be completely fabricated. The issues need to stay in here and be taken care of as a group. It will play itself over these next three days and the course of the offseason.

"Whatever goes on, I'm going to be in the middle of it. Roy Halladay and I have been here for the longest time. We've gone through our share of managers and coaches. Whatever talks need to be made, we'll be at the forefront of those meetings and discussions."

Halladay was succinct.

"I've got nothing on that," he said. "Any concerns I have will be expressed to the right people."

The players were reluctant to delve into specific beefs and would describe the problems only in broad strokes, citing "communication," an "old-school" style of managing and "negativism" emanating from the manager's office.

Wells made it clear that this is not about transferring blame to the manager and away from the players for what happened this season.

"I've (stunk), period," the center fielder said.

"It's not his fault. Not anybody's fault. It's my fault. As you look around at a team full of guys, listen as things go on, it's not about the winning and losing. We're a family. It's about family issues.

"I'm not in a position to tell other people's stories and try to bash Cito. This is not about bashing anybody. This is about issues that we're having as an organization and issues that need to be taken care of as an organization."

Gaston has been an almost regal figure, returning after a 10-year absence to take over as manager from John Gibbons in June 2008. Fans reacted warmly to the move, and the players responded on the field. They finished with a 51-37 flourish and began this year 27-14.

Since then, the Jays have fallen as far as 17 games below .500 and only showed a pulse

with a recent upswing in which they won nine of 10 games.

ORIOLES 13, JAYS 7: Baltimore's Michael Aubrey homered against Josh Roenicke and hit a grand slam off Dirk Hayhurst. The Orioles scored three runs in the first inning off starting LHP David Purcey, who lasted only 3 2/3 innings and took the loss to drop to 1-3. Toronto had tied the game at 4 in the top of the fourth inning before the Orioles chased Purcey.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—Manager Cito Gaston was mystified and more than a little hurt to be blindsided by what amounts to a player mutiny within the Blue Jays clubhouse. "I think I've treated everybody fairly," he said. "I haven't misused anybody. Some guys haven't pitched as much as they'd like to, but everybody has gotten playing time. I've treated everybody with respect. I'm not sure what their (beef) is. I would always hope they would come to me and not go to you guys (the press)... I'm not sure what the problem is." Gaston has another year on the contract he signed in June 2008 when he was hired to replace John Gibbons.

—1B Lyle Overbay has hit safely in 13 of his last 16 games. His 16 homers are the most since he hit 22 in 2006.

BY THE NUMBERS: 1 — Win in his last three starts for Roy Halladay at Rogers Centre, through Sept. 25. He had a 1.33 ERA in that stretch.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "We're going to need a catcher. I hope not, he's been great for this organization. He's done everything he could here. But if he moves on, we certainly hope he moves on, out of this division, and out of this league, so we don't have to face him." — Manager Cito Gaston.