

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, October 14, 2009

### October can be a cruel month

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle

It took just a handful of unsettling moments to wreck Matt Holliday's ascent. Huston Street stood up to every question, then dwelled upon his demise via replay. The postseason has a way of testing people, none more so than these onetime members of the A's.

By December, Holliday will be back at the forefront of the free-agent market, buoyed by relentless agent Scott Boras and pursued by every team in search of power. Just now, though, he's the guy who couldn't get the bat off his shoulder (in his first at-bat against the Dodgers, bases loaded), basically dropped Game 2 of that series with an error in left field, and wound up 2-for-12 at the plate.

"Ain't no free lunch," said Cardinals manager Tony La Russa in the gloom of the series' aftermath. "Matt's going to take some hits for this." In the TBS studio, where he worked as an analyst for first-round games, Dennis Eckersley noted that though Holliday's Game 2 error didn't end the series, "That doesn't take away from the fact that it was devastating. He has to take that with him wherever he goes. Nobody needs that kind of humbling, but that's how this game can grab you at any time."

Street had a sensational season in relief for the Colorado Rockies, but he was on the mound for the three-run, ninth-inning rally that clinched the series for Philadelphia on Monday night. Some have likened him to Eckersley, both in style and demeanor, and the comparison was apt in Street's postgame reaction.

"You don't cry, you don't go home and lay in bed for two weeks," he told reporters in Denver. "This game is played by men. Take responsibility when you get beat. I think it's foolish to keep it with you, but I also think it's foolish to forget."

Once his interviews were done, Street went into the Rockies' video room and watched the awful sequence: the walk to Chase Utley, the double by Ryan Howard, the go-ahead single by Jayson Werth. "That's how I deal with it," he said. "I want to see exactly what happened. I guess it helps me move past it ... but it doesn't feel good."

Other notes on the postseason:

-- Speaking of Werth: As the Giants hash out the Randy Winn-Nate Schierholtz debate, here's a guy with big-time power, a great arm, tremendous instincts and a knack for the clutch hit. That's what a right fielder looks like.

-- A rash of blown calls has stirred the demand for more instant replay in the postseason. Bud Selig doesn't like the idea, and he's right: As soon as you allow replays of calls on the bases, the inevitable next step would involve balls and strikes - and complete removal of the human element.

One thing that must change, in any case: Forget having the umpires disappear for 5-8 minutes to study replays. Set up a three-man panel of umpires in every press box, taking the initiative to check every questionable play and announce a ruling within about 30 seconds.

-- Fearing that wild-card teams have too much status, and that the system often diminishes the postseason races, people are calling for two wild-card teams in each league, facing each other in one-game playoffs to determine the final spots. A "wild-card shootout," as it's being called.

Terrible idea. What, you play 162 games to reach the postseason, and it's one game? On the road, as likely as not? Nice deal for the home fans. Your team got to October, and here's your one-game spectacular. If anything, the first round should be expanded to a best-of-seven, but only if ...

-- Selig and the owners come to their senses and start the season in late March. Selig used the World Baseball Classic as an excuse for this year's abomination, but he simply wasn't being truthful. Next year's schedule starts inexcusably late (April 5) once again.

-- Looks like Brad Lidge found his slider just in time, saving the Phillies' last two wins against Colorado after a horrific September. Pitchers were challenging Manny Ramirez with fastballs for three solid weeks, but his stroke has returned.

-- The Vicente Padilla acquisition seemed ludicrous from here, but Ned Colletti's gamble just might carry the Dodgers into the World Series. Give credit to Randy Wolf, a former teammate of Padilla's, and coach Larry Bowa for suggesting that Padilla (banished in Texas) deserved another chance.

-- Love Fenway Park and the whole New England scene, but sorry, Red Sox fans, most of us won't miss Jonathan Papelbon staring at the hitter with that ridiculous look on his face.

-- Maybe the A's can live with the absence of Street, Holliday, Jason Giambi, Orlando Cabrera, Joe Blanton and Nick Swisher, but not Andre Ethier of the Dodgers or Carlos Gonzalez, so poised and productive for Colorado. That should be two-thirds of the A's outfield, and it will haunt them for years.

## **A's staff remains intact for 2010**

Wire services

The A's coaching staff will return in the same roles for the 2010 season, the club announced Tuesday.

Curt Young returns for a seventh consecutive season as pitching coach, and Ron Romanick returns for a third season as bullpen coach.

Tye Waller returns for his fourth season on the staff and second consecutive season as bench coach for manager Bob Geren.

Jim Skaalen (hitting coach), Mike Gallego (third base coach) and Todd Steverson (first base coach) all return for the second straight season.

Dodgers: Joe Torre said he doesn't plan on managing the team after his contract expires. "I have one year on my contract and I don't anticipate it being more than that," he said two days before the Dodgers open the NL Championship Series against Philadelphia. However, he noted, "I've said that before and my wife doesn't believe me at all."

Phillies: By closing out its NL Divisional Series against Colorado on Monday, Philadelphia got to rest pitcher Cole Hamels for a few more days. The left-hander didn't even make the trip to Colorado, staying behind after the birth of his son.

New York: The Yankees may go with a three-man rotation against the Los Angeles Angels in the ALCS. CC Sabathia is scheduled to start Friday's opener, with A.J. Burnett and Andy Pettitte as New York's other two primary starters. The shortened rotation would allow manager Joe Girardi to keep Joba Chamberlain in the bullpen.

Cardinals:

Chairman Bill DeWitt Jr. attended a meeting at Busch Stadium with general manager John Mozeliak, manager Tony La Russa and his staff and other front office personnel to project the team's needs for 2010. La Russa remained in town and will continue to meet with Mozeliak. His contract expires after the season.

Indians: General manager Mark Shapiro and assistant GM Chris Antonetti began phone interviews with candidates, the next step in finding a successor for fired Eric Wedge. Unlike Houston, which has publicly disclosed its managerial contenders, Cleveland is keeping its search confidential. After the phone interviews of eight to 10 candidates, the Indians plan to bring a final group of three to five to Cleveland for formal interviews. On Monday, the Indians received permission from Boston to interview Red Sox pitching coach John Farrell, widely believed to be one of Cleveland's top choices.

Blue Jays: Dana Brown was hired as a special assistant to new general manager Alex Anthopoulos. Brown spent the past eight seasons as director of scouting for Montreal/Washington.

Mariners: Catcher Rob Johnson is scheduled to have surgery Friday on his left hip and have the same procedure three weeks later on his right hip. After three or four weeks of rehab he'll have surgery on his left wrist. Seattle expects Johnson will be recovered for spring training.

Nationals: Closer Mike MacDougal had surgery on his right hip but is expected to be recovered by spring training.

## **Eventually, they played ball**

By Bud Geracie, Mercury News Columnist

This column appeared in the Mercury News on Oct. 16, 1994 — the year the World Series was canceled because of a labor dispute between players and owners.

A baseball season without a World Series: It nearly happened five years ago, for reasons far more worthy and understandable than those that exist today.

"Five-o-four p.m.," said former Giants outfielder Brett Butler, and is there a more meaningful half-sentence in Bay Area history? "After that, baseball was just a game."

"I still can't put into words what that Series was," said Bob Brenly, then a Giants player. "It was something from hell. That was a big-time punishment for something. That was more than just geological."

At 5:04, on the evening of Oct. 17, 1989, with the Giants and the A's preparing to play Game 3 of the World Series, the ground shook and our world changed. Away from Candlestick Park, in places like Oakland and Santa Cruz and points in between, there was no foot-stamping applause when the earth finally stopped rumbling. There were only fallen bridges, burning buildings and dying people.

The 1989 World Series arrived in the Bay Area as a gift from the heavens: Giants vs. A's, an entirely local affair, a charming and exciting throwback to the 1950s, when New Yorkers were only a subway ride away from every Series game.

The 1989 World Series was a wolf dressed in sheep's clothing.

The casualties of the disaster would come to include baseball, because even though the Series resumed 10 days after the quake, it was never the same. There's no way it could have been.

"That Series is like a faded memory, like it didn't really happen," said Dave Henderson, then the A's center fielder. "People don't remember the '89 World Series at all."

They remember that the A's won, maybe they remember that the A's won in four games. Few people, even among the men who played in those games, remember that Dave Stewart pitched a shutout in Game 1, or that Terry Steinbach broke open Game 2 with a three-run homer, or that Henderson in Game 3 came within inches of duplicating Reggie Jackson's signature moment, his third home run of the night bouncing off the top of the outfield wall and back into play for a double.

What they remember is 5:04 p.m.

Brenly was standing outside the Giants' dugout talking to the Gatlin Brothers. Butler was running sprints in the outfield and suddenly felt "like I was drunk, like I was going to fall down." Jose Canseco was out there too and he got "so dizzy I thought I was getting a migraine."

"I was sitting in our dugout," said A's Manager Tony La Russa, "and I hear this rumbling. I immediately thought some people had gotten onto the roof of our dugout and were stamping their feet. I thought, 'Wow, it's gonna be loud here tonight.' "

"The first thing I remember," said Robby Thompson, the Giants' second baseman, "was the lights going out, and I saw everybody in the stands looking up. I thought somebody was parachuting in or something. Then we felt it underneath us."

The light standards were swaying like palm trees in a storm. The upper deck was rocking like a boat in rough seas. Inside the A's clubhouse, Henderson was acting like the California native/quake veteran that he is, telling his teammates to be cool, that the bad vibrations would cease in a moment.

"When dust started coming through the heating vents, that's when I knew this was more than a normal quake," Henderson said.

"Then we lost the lights, and there was a sprint for the door, in the dark. We all ended up in the parking lot, out there with a bunch of Giants — half of our team and half of theirs."

For those at home who were settling in to watch the game on television, the lasting image is of the picture going bonkers. For those of us who were at Candlestick, the picture is of the players gathered at the backstop, peering up into the seats behind home plate, trying to locate their loved ones and motioning for them to come down on the field.

"It was a parade of the bizarre," said Brenly, recalling the procession of fur-coated women and jersey-wearing parents and kids who filed onto the field. Many of the players' children had been left at home with baby sitters, and to tell you how drastically things have changed in five years, only a few players had cellular phones with them. Out in the parking lot, the A's and the Giants took turns trying to phone home, mostly without success. For many of them, it was hours before they knew their children were safe.

"There were no Giants or A's in that parking lot," Henderson recalled. "We were all just people."

There were stories that went untold in that World Series, stories that fell through the cracks, so to speak, stories that in view of the death and destruction all around us were too trivial to mention.

For one, when the resumption of the Series was announced and La Russa took the A's to Phoenix for workouts, it upset the Giants less than it upset his own players. In fact, the Giants weren't upset at all.

"I don't think it ever even crossed our minds," said Butler.

It crossed the A's, though.

"Everybody was pretty upset with Tony at first," said catcher Terry Steinbach. "I mean, you had all this uncertainty with your families — people staying in hotels, people you were sending home, and then he comes up with this Phoenix thing. 'What the heck is he doing?' At first, it met with a lot of adversity."

More startling is Bob Welch's story.

Welch was scheduled to pitch Game 3 for the A's, but because of the quake and La Russa's decision to go with Stewart and Mike Moore when play resumed 10 days later, Welch never made an appearance in the Series. Nor did he, unlike teammate Storm Davis, make a fuss about it.

Here, finally, is why: Welch couldn't pitch.

The day before the earthquake, he strained a groin muscle while running in the outfield. La Russa had Welch warm up that day at Candlestick — he was in the bullpen at 5:04 p.m. — but both men expected that Curt Young would end up starting the game.

Welch became known as the guy who lost a starting assignment and a home in the earthquake. But one perception is incorrect and, in Welch's mind, both are inconsequential.

"A house, you can fix," said Welch, whose damaged house in San Francisco's Marina District was rebuilt and now serves as his in-season residence. "Some people lost their lives and their families in that earthquake. It ruined a lot of people's lives."

If there were lessons to be learned from that experience, surely we have forgotten them by now. If there were promises we made, surely we have broken them.

"We put such a high priority on athletics in this country," said Butler. "If we put as much priority on life as a whole, this country would be a lot better off than it is."

Today we should remember those lessons, those promises we made to ourselves. Be thankful, be happy, be kind. Live life to its fullest today, even though there is no World Series game to watch.

## **A's bring back all six coaches for 2010**

### **Young returns for seventh season as pitching coach**

By Steve Gilbert / MLB.com

All six of the A's coaches will return for their same roles in 2010, the team announced Tuesday.

Curt Young, the longest tenured member of the staff, returns for his seventh season as pitching coach. The former big leaguer received praise for his work with a rotation heavy on rookies, while also getting consistency out of the bullpen.

Speaking of the bullpen, Ron Romanick returns for his third season as bullpen coach.

Hitting coach Jim Skaalen, whose charges got better as the year went along, will be back for his second season.

Tye Waller will return for his fourth season on the staff and second consecutive as Bob Geren's bench coach. Third-base coach Mike Gallego and first-base coach Todd Steverson will return in their roles for the second straight year.

The A's finished the season in fourth place in the American League West at 75-87.