

A's News Clips, Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Inbox: Compensation for free agents?

A's beat reporter Mychael Urban fields fans' questions

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

Now starts the busy part of the offseason. The annual GM Meetings opened Monday in Chicago, the awards season kicks off in earnest Tuesday with the announcement of the American League's Gold Glove winners, and free-agent rumors are already running rampant. That's a lot to cover, so we're going with a quick-hit approach to the Inbox for the time being. Enjoy.

Are any of Oakland's free agents this offseason classified as Type A or B? If the A's have one, what does that mean if the free agent signs elsewhere?

-- Roland Y., Salinas, Calif.

The rankings are done by the Elias Sports Bureau, and they're based on the past two seasons. Thus, right-hander Justin Duchscherer came away ranked 35th among AL starters in the most recent rankings -- good for a Type B designation, which means the A's would get an additional Draft pick between the first and second rounds next June if Duchscherer signs with another team before Dec. 1, or declines an offer of arbitration.

Duchscherer, to whom offering arbitration might be risky for the A's, is the only free-agent Athletic to earn an A or B ranking.

Have you spoken to Jason Giambi since he was released by the A's? I'd love to get his thoughts on the direction of the team, and I'd like to hear if he plans to keep playing?

-- Paul F., Sacramento, Calif.

I last spoke to Giambi on the day before he was released, and my attempts to reach him this offseason have thus far failed. I do know he'd like to keep playing, though, and given the way he performed for the Rockies at the end of the year, I'm sure he'll get some sort of offer.

I read a blog suggesting that the A's might be interested in Chone Figgins and Vladimir Guerrero. Thoughts?

-- Davis G., Stockton, Calif.

First of all, the blog you read was apparently based on the comments of a national "reporter" who likes to throw a bunch of goo at walls and claim to be prescient in the very rare event that one of the globs actually sticks.

Figgins would be a nice fit on the A's because he's versatile, fast, smart, a great teammate and can hold down third base for the short- or long-term, but he'll almost surely be way too expensive for Oakland. As for Vlad, I don't see the A's taking another stab at a declining performer in his mid- to late-30s. He won't be cheap, either. And please hold the Carlos Delgado e-mails. You'll get a very similar answer.

Would the A's consider trading for Adrian Gonzalez of the Padres? We need a big bat, his contract is cheap for the next two seasons, and we have the prospects to do it.

-- Matt B., Vacaville, Calif.

A lot of teams -- maybe *every* -- team would consider trading for Gonzalez, and you're right about the A's needing a big bat and having a fair share of prospects. But there are a lot of teams with the same need and just as many prospects, so the Padres are going to have a lot of potential trade partners. I'd be surprised if Billy Beane traded the type and quantity of prospects for which the Padres will be looking in exchange for two years of a player who'll then be out of Oakland's price range.

I am a journalism major at San Jose State University, and I am really interested in getting into sports journalism after college. How did you get your start, and what do you recommend I do?

-- Michael C., Alameda, Calif.

I got my start working at a series of small newspapers. From there I moved on to the Contra Costa Times for a year as a desk jockey, and then I made the online leap to a company called Quokka, which folded in the dot-com crash. I was

lucky to land at MLB.com shortly thereafter. My advice is to work on your school paper, hustle as much freelance work you can get while still in school, and start networking with more experienced people in the business.

With newspapers folding and cutting back and flooding the job market with great sports journalists, it's not a great time to be one of "us," but if you *really* want this, it can be done. Don't let people discourage you. Good luck.

Bailey may cap fine debut with AL ROY

Flamethrower sets Athletics rookie record with 26 saves

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Less than a month after his whirlwind of a first season in the big leagues came to an end, A's right-hander Andrew Bailey was back in the gym, "getting after it" with fellow Oakland reliever Craig Breslow.

Working out four times per week at a baseball facility roughly 20 minutes from the offseason apartment he shares with his fiancée, Amanda, in Hamden, Conn., Bailey hasn't yet spent any time throwing a baseball -- he won't crank his money-maker back up before mid-December.

He hasn't spent much time thinking about his chances of being named the American League's Rookie of the Year, either.

"If it happens, it happens," Bailey, 25, told MLB.com by phone. "But I don't have any control over that kind of stuff. I'm pretty busy planning our wedding and working out, so that takes up most of my time."

Bailey, whose nuptials are scheduled for next November, is one of the front-runners in the AL ROY race, the winner of which will be announced Nov. 16.

Having enjoyed a remarkable ascent from struggling Minor League starter (June 2008) to All-Star closer (July 2009), Bailey finished his stunning season with 26 saves, an Oakland rookie record, a 1.84 ERA with a 0.88 WHIP over 68 appearances and 91 strikeouts against 24 walks in 83 1/3 innings.

A's manager Bob Geren lobbied hard on Bailey's behalf whenever talk turned to the ROY Award late in the season, often bringing up the topic himself, but shortstop Elvis Andrus of the Rangers appears to be the favorite at this point.

A's teammate Brett Anderson, a lefty starter, infielder Gordon Beckham of the White Sox, catcher Matt Wieters of the Orioles and righty starters Rick Porcello of the Tigers and Jeff Neimann of the Rays also are among the candidates.

"There were a lot of good rookies in the league this year," Bailey said. "But to be mentioned as one of them is pretty cool."

In the event that Bailey upsets Andrus, a 21-year-old acrobat who emerged as one of the best defensive shortstops in the league and posted a .267 batting average with six homers, 40 RBIs and 33 stolen bases, he'll travel to the Bay Area for a formal press conference and related media appearances.

"The A's told me they want to fly me out for a couple of days," Bailey said. "It'd be crazy."

In the meantime, he'll continue to work on getting his body ready for another long season. He pitched in the Arizona Fall League last year, so there wasn't much of a break between the end of his 2008 season at Double-A Midland and the start of his first big league Spring Training in med-February.

"It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be," Bailey said of the grind. "I held up pretty good. It wasn't easy, though, especially being my first year relieving and having to be ready to throw every day instead of every four or five [as a starter]. There were a lot of ups and downs; kind of a roller coaster with how my arm felt day-to-day.

"But I was pretty lucky. On the bad days, when my arm didn't feel good, it seemed like those were the days I didn't have to get out there."

Bailey, who grew up in Haddon Heights, N.J., about 15 minutes from Philadelphia, grew up a Phillies fan and watched the 2009 World Series with great interest, but he watched it from a completely different perspective than he had in the past.

"Now that I've pitched against some of the guys playing and know some of them, I don't look at it the same," he explained. "I was a little bummed [when the Phillies lost to the Yankees], but it's not like it was when I was in high school, when it's life and death to you."

That's essentially the same attitude he has on the ROY race.

"Obviously it'd be awesome to win it," he said. "But I'm not going to be [staring at] my phone that day. ... My phone's always next to me, though, so I'll find out when I find out, and I'll be happy for whoever wins."

Oakland A's MLN: Rule 5 Preview

Melissa Lockard
OaklandClubhouse.com

Nov 9, 2009

Over the past few weeks, the Oakland A's have made a number of adjustments to their 40-man roster, designating players for assignment to make room for prospects who have to be added to the team's 40-man roster to be protected from this December's Rule 5 draft. In advance of this activity, we preview the players who could be protected from the Rule 5 draft in the upcoming weeks.

The Rule 5 Draft Rules

Any player not on a team's 40-man roster who signed his first professional contract in 2006 or earlier who was at least 19 years old at the time he signed and any player who signed his first professional contract in 2005 or earlier who was at least 18 years or younger at the time he signed is eligible for the Rule 5 draft this December.

Teams select in draft order until all teams have declined to select players. Once a player is selected from an organization, that organization can pull back another eligible player to be protected. Teams that select a player must keep that player on their 25-man roster for the entire regular season or offer him back to his original team. Teams generally set their rosters in advance of the 40-man roster in late November. There is a minor league portion of the draft, but determining what players are exposed to that draft is tricky because it involves knowing whether players have been placed on a Triple-A or Double-A roster during the post-season, information that is usually kept secret by most organizations, so we won't address that part of the draft in this article.

Below we highlight some of the players who could be exposed to the Rule 5 draft this December and divide them up into three categories: likely to be protected, likely in the conversation to be protected and other names of note.

Likely To Be Protected

Chris Carter: Carter was drafted and signed by the Chicago White Sox in 2005 out of a Las Vegas area high school. He is the definition of a player who will certainly be protected from the Rule 5 draft this off-season. Arguably the A's top prospect (and certainly one of the top two), Carter has hit 67 regular season homeruns in two minor league seasons since being acquired by Oakland from the Arizona Diamondbacks before the 2008 season. The first-baseman/outfielder is one of the top power prospects in all of baseball and is expected to challenge for a spot on the A's 25-man roster at some point during the 2010 campaign.

Fautino De Los Santos: Despite being injured most of the past two seasons, De Los Santos is almost certainly going to be protected by the A's. If he isn't, then it should be taken as a sure sign that the set-backs De Los Santos has experienced from his Tommy John surgery are more serious than anyone has let on (which would be an unexpected development). Although he has never pitched above the A-ball level and he is coming off of a serious injury, De Los Santos has a premium arm that would make him attractive to a number of teams, especially teams not expected to contend who could hide De Los Santos in the bullpen for the season. The right-hander was acquired by the A's before the 2008 season from the Chicago White Sox. At the time of his acquisition, De Los Santos was considered one of the top right-handed pitching prospects in baseball. When healthy, he throws his fastball in the mid-90s and has an above-average slider.

Pedro Figueroa: Figueroa was actually eligible for the Rule 5 last season, but he was a low-profile prospect and the A's were able to sneak him through the draft without losing him. He isn't as likely to slide under the radar this season. The left-hander from the Dominican Republic has always had a good low- to mid-90s fastball, but his development through the A's system was slowed by a lack of command and trust in his stuff. A strong campaign with short-season Vancouver in 2008 translated into a breakthrough year for Figueroa in 2009, when he went 13-6 with a 3.38 ERA and had a 145 strike-outs in 152 innings for the Low-A Kane County Cougars and the High-A Stockton Ports. Although Figueroa is at least a year away from truly being major league ready, his arsenal of an above-average fastball, slider and change-up from the left-side could make him attractive to a team looking to stockpile young arms since he could probably be hidden as a seventh man in a major league bullpen relatively easily. Although the A's have a lot of good, young pitching, hard-

throwing left-hander don't grow on trees, so the A's aren't likely to risk letting Figueroa be picked.

Likely In The Conversation

Graham Godfrey: Godfrey was drafted and signed by the Toronto Blue Jays in 2006 out of the College of Charleston. Oakland acquired the right-hander before the 2008 season as part of the [Marco Scutaro](#) trade. As a prospect, Godfrey isn't as high profile as a Fautino De Los Santos or Chris Carter, but he has been a player with a good reputation around baseball since being signed above-slot by the Blue Jays in 2006 (it was reported at the time of the signing that Godfrey received a bonus commiserate with a fourth-round pick). He posted only average numbers his first season in the A's organization in 2008 (5.05 ERA in 140.2 innings, mostly for High-A Stockton), but he rebounded with a solid campaign for Double-A Midland in 2009, when he went 11-8 with a 3.50 ERA in 159.1 innings and was a Texas League Post-Season All-Star. Those high on Godfrey will point to his solid four-pitch mix and his mental make-up, which gets good marks from scouts around the league. Those who aren't as high on the right-hander will point to his low strike-out totals this season and the fact that none of his four pitches is considered a truly plus pitch. Godfrey will be 25 for much of next season and while he probably could use another season in the minor leagues, his pitching repertoire is polished enough that he could be considered by a non-contending team for a fifth starter or long reliever spot.

Even though Godfrey could generate some interest in the draft, he may not be protected by the A's if the organization feels that it is deep enough with young starting pitching already on its 40-man roster. One reason Godfrey might be protected: he profiles similarly to former A's prospect [Ryan Webb](#) (although he doesn't throw quite as hard as Webb) and Webb was protected by the A's last off-season despite having an inconsistent statistical track record. The A's moved Webb into the bullpen during the 2009 season and he eventually made the big leagues, albeit with the San Diego Padres after a mid-season trade.

Jared Lansford: Big things were expected of Lansford coming into the 2010 season. Selected by Oakland out of high school in 2005, Lansford will be eligible for the Rule 5 this year for the first time. If this draft were being held at this time last season, Lansford would have been a pretty sure bet to be protected by the A's. In addition to being a high-investment pick for Oakland (he was taken in the second round), Lansford had an outstanding season in 2008, his first as a reliever. He posted a 3.34 ERA and struck-out 94 in 89 innings for Stockton and Midland. Lansford was then sent to the Arizona Fall League and was a non-roster invitee to major league spring training. He was assigned to Triple-A Sacramento to start the 2009 season and struggled out of the gate. In 11 innings with the River Cats, Lansford walked 12, struck-out only one and generally looked lost with his mechanics. He was sent to Arizona to work with A's pitching rehab coordinator (and former Stockton Ports' pitching coach) Garvin Alston and, after some work in the desert, was sent to Midland, where he spent the rest of the season. Lansford had an odd year with Midland. He saved 12 games for the Rockhounds, allowed less than a hit per inning and posted an excellent ERA of 2.36, but he also walked 20 and struck-out only 29. He was so erratic at the end of the season that he was pulled from his closer's role, but he did regain it at the tail-end of the Rockhounds' post-season run and threw some solid innings in pressure situations.

Lansford comes from a high-profile baseball family and has been heavily scouted throughout his high school and professional careers. He is a groundball pitcher with a low-90s fastball who projects to be a solid reliever in the major leagues. However, he has struggled with his mechanics at various points during his career, including most obviously during the 2009 season. Those recent struggles might be enough to keep Lansford protected even if the A's don't add him to the 40-man roster, but it would still be a risk to expose him to the draft. The A's have tremendous bullpen depth at the major league and minor league levels, but many other teams are looking for good relief arms. If the A's don't protect Lansford, it will probably be more of a reflection of the organization's depth at his position than their feelings on his future with the club.

Anthony Recker: Recker was eligible for the Rule 5 draft last season but went unclaimed. After a solid campaign for Midland and Sacramento in 2009, Recker might be in a better position to be claimed if he isn't protected by the A's. In 94 games, Recker batted .267 with 15 homers and an 804 OPS, solid offensive numbers for a backstop. What makes those numbers more impressive are the facts that Recker got off to a very slow start with Sacramento at the plate and he was acting as a back-up catcher for much of the season, meaning that his at-bats weren't as regular as they could have been. Being a back-up catcher could work two ways for Recker when it comes to the Rule 5 draft. On the one hand, teams might not be interested in a player who wasn't even the primary catcher for another organization's Triple-A club. On the other hand, if Recker is selected, he will be taken by a team looking for someone to fill the role of back-up catcher, more than likely. That he has proven he can handle that role may be a plus for teams looking for an economical solution for their back-up catcher role.

Since being drafted by the A's in 2005, Recker has had a good track record at the plate, collecting double-digit homers in each of his four full professional seasons. He began his career with the reputation for being a below-average defensive catcher, but he has improved his work behind the plate by a considerable amount and has had good success working with some of the A's most talented young arms. Despite this good resume, Recker might be a long-shot to be protected by Oakland this season. Given how many young players the team has to protect, the A's may not feel like they have the luxury of carrying three catchers on their 40-man roster (especially given that the two currently on the roster are young catchers). Oakland has top prospect [Josh Donaldson](#) and Mexican League import [Joel Galarraga](#) available to them in

Triple-A next season should anything happen to A's catchers [Kurt Suzuki](#) and [Landon Powell](#) and neither Donaldson nor Galarraga need to be protected from the draft this season. The catcher position is one of the deepest in the A's chain right now.

Other Names of Note

Jason Fernandez: Fernandez is a favorite of many members of the A's coaching staff and he has intriguing stuff, but his stats were unimpressive enough with Midland this season that the A's can likely get away with not protecting him.

Jermaine Mitchell: Mitchell is still one of the top athletes in the A's system and was considered a top prospect as recently as early 2008. However, two sub-par seasons with Stockton make it unlikely that he would be another team's major league Rule 5 target.

Jamie Richmond: Acquired in the [Mark Kotsay](#) deal before the start of the 2008 season, Richmond has an impressive minor league track record (he walked only eight and struck-out 67 in 76.2 innings this season, for example), but he has yet to pitch above High-A and doesn't have the big fastball or unusual delivery that teams usually look for when taking a flier on an A-ball level pitcher in the Rule 5 draft.

Jose Guzman: Guzman was signed by the A's out of the Dominican Republic in 2005. He had an outstanding 2008 season, making the post-season Northwest League All-Star team by saving 15 games for Vancouver. His 2009 got off to a slow start when he posted a 7.00 ERA in 10 pre-All-Star appearances for Low-A Kane County before being sidelined by injury. He returned after the All-Star break with Vancouver and posted a 2.61 ERA before returning to Kane County, where he had a 4.24 ERA in 23.1 innings over the final five weeks of the season. Guzman has a strong arm and has had a good minor league track record, but he hasn't pitched much above Low-A, making him an unlikely Rule 5 target.

Alexander Valdez: Valdez was actually set to be a minor league free agent this off-season, but he re-upped with Oakland. The switch-hitter posted a .273 average and a 747 OPS in 111 games with Stockton and Midland and is off to a terrific start with Escogido in the Dominican Winter League. A big winter season could make Valdez a player of interest for some teams, but the fact that Oakland could have already added him to the 40-man roster and instead signed him to a minor league deal is a decent indication that he isn't a top candidate to be protected this winter. This was his first season playing above the High-A level.

Jeff Baisley: Baisley was on the A's 40-man roster all of last off-season and through spring training before being designed for assignment at the start of the regular season. He struggled with the River Cats in 2009 (695 OPS) and didn't receive consistent playing time, so he isn't likely to be protected by the A's despite the fact that he plays a position (third base) where the team isn't particularly deep. Working in Baisley's favor going into the Rule 5 draft are the facts that he plays solid defense at third, has some major league experience, hits left-handed pitching well (1025 OPS in 2009), had a solid second-half of the season (782 OPS) and hit .311 with a 909 OPS on the road.

Franklin Hernandez: Hernandez was considered an up-and-coming prospect going into the 2009 season, but he posted only a 612 OPS in 121 games with Kane County. He hasn't played above the Low-A level yet in his career and isn't likely to be selected this winter.

Steve Kleen: Kleen hit .312 with an 856 OPS for Kane County and Stockton this season after missing all of the 2008 campaign with a shoulder injury. He was old for his level (26), however, and doesn't likely have the profile around the league to be selected in the major league portion.

Mike Madsen: Madsen was a Futures Game participant in 2007, but arm injuries the past two seasons and his age (he'll be 27 later this month) make him an unlikely candidate to be protected, despite his talent.

Jason Ray: Ray was one of the A's more promising pitching prospects as recently as 2007, but arm injuries cost him most of 2007 and all of the 2008 seasons. He pitched well in 2009 (2.25 ERA in 44 innings for Kane County and Stockton), but he is 25 and hasn't pitched above High-A, so he isn't a likely candidate to be selected in the major league portion of the draft.

Matt Carson: Carson was recently dropped from the A's 40-man roster after being added late in the 2009 season and making his major league debut with the team in September. He was re-signed by Oakland to a minor league deal and is likely to compete for a spot on the major league roster next spring. However, given that the A's have already removed him from the 40-man roster, they aren't likely to add him back onto it before the draft.

Yusuf Carter: Carter was taken by the A's in the minor league portion of the Rule 5 draft last off-season (he had been with the Cubs) and he played well during his first year in the A's chain, batting .318 with an 867 OPS for Stockton and making the Cal League Mid-Season All-Star team. He also made the switch from outfielder to catcher with mixed results. The A's are deep with catchers and Carter unfortunately had to miss the A's Instructional League with a broken finger, so he isn't likely to be protected this winter.

Scott Deal: Deal was selected out of high school in the same draft class as Jared Lansford. He has pitched well since being drafted, but has yet to progress above the Low-A level, making it unlikely that he will be protected in this draft.

Hector Garcia: Garcia, a native of the Dominican Republic, has a lot of talent in his right arm, but it has yet to translate to good numbers. He has only pitched six innings above the short-season levels in his career, so he isn't a likely target by teams in the major league portion of the Rule 5 draft despite his good arm.

Christian Vitters: There were high expectations for Vitters when he was drafted in the 10th round by the A's in 2006, but he has yet to post an OPS above 700 for a full-season affiliate.

Toddric Johnson: Johnson posted only a 707 OPS for Stockton in 2009 after having an 807 OPS for Kane County in 2008. A corner outfielder, he doesn't have enough power to draw a major league team's attention for this draft.

Mike Affronti: Affronti has been a valuable utilityman defensively since being drafted, but he posted only a 619 OPS in 66 games for Stockton and Midland this season, so he isn't likely to be selected in the big league portion of the draft.

Derrick Gordon: Gordon had a good season for Stockton (3.78 ERA and 90 strike-outs in 85.2 innings), but he is 26 and has only one inning of experience above A-ball and doesn't have a big fastball, so he isn't a prime candidate for selection.

Larry Cobb: Cobb spent some time at Triple-A this season, but he finished the year on the suspended list after testing positive for a banned substance.

Gabriel Ortiz: Ortiz spent time with three A's affiliates this season, but only appeared in 46 games. He posted a 643 OPS and is not likely to be selected despite being a solid defensive catcher.

Josue Selenes: Selenes was a minor league Rule 5 pick by the A's last season and he pitched well in 2009, posting a 3.34 ERA in 56.2 innings. He's left-handed and has decent stuff, but he has limited experience above the Low-A level and is likely a safe bet not to be selected in the major league portion.

Future A's, Giants get chance to shine in Arizona Fall League

By HARRELL MILLER, Napa Valley Register, 11/10/09

PHOENIX — It had all the prospects of being a perfect Arizona Fall League day for Bay Area baseball fans.

The Scottsdale Scorpions, with six young San Francisco Giants on their roster, were in Phoenix to play the Desert Dogs, whose roster includes seven hopefuls from the Oakland Athletics. A real preview of coming attractions. At least, that's the way it shaped up until the starting lineups were announced.

On this balmy Friday afternoon, there was only one player in the orange and black and one in the green and gold.

The rest of the boys from around the bay would take the day off, with the exception of a small handful of pitchers who would make brief appearances.

Thomas Neal, a 22-year-old from Riverside, who had been picked by the Giants in the 37th round of the 2005 draft, was at first base for the Scorpions. It was Neal's 13th AFL game.

Neal's doing well this fall. He has collected 13 hits in 43 at-bats, including two doubles and one home run. That's good enough for a .302 batting average. However, when you throw in his eight walks, he has been on base 42 percent of the time. While on base, he has stolen seven times, tying him for second in the league.

All but one of Neal's other AFL games have been in the outfield — the position for which he was signed four years ago. In 2006, however, he had a shoulder injury, missed all of the 2007 season and played first base most of 2008.

One of Neal's claims to fame is that in two of his three professional seasons, he has been a member of a league championship team. In 2006 he was in the outfield for Salem-Keizer, the Northwest League champion. In 2008, he was at first base for Augusta when they won the South Atlantic League championship.

He spent all of last year with the Giants' Single-A San Jose team in the California League. Neal appeared in 128 games, hit safely 158 times in 470 trips to the plate for a .336 batting average. His hits included 41 doubles, four triples and 22 home runs.

Before the afternoon was over, Neal bounced a double to the centerfield wall in the third and singled in the eighth. His two hits bumped his AFL batting average to .313.

Grant Desme was the only Oakland hopeful in the Dogs' starting lineup. Before coming to the AFL in October, Desme had spent all of the 2009 season in Single-A, half the year in Kane County and the other half in Stockton.

His numbers were impressive with 140 hits, 31 home runs, 89 runs batted in and 40 stolen bases. However, it turns out that the season in Kane County and Stockton was just a warm-up for his performance since arriving in Arizona.

Every day the AFL publishes cumulative notes for the media and scouts that summarize player performances to date. Here's what the notes had to say about Desme before the game on Friday: "Grant Desme (OAK) went 1-for-5 (yesterday) with 1 double, 1 walk and 2 runs scored....leads the league with 10 home runs, 23 runs, .827 slugging percentage and 14 extra-base hits...tied for the league lead with 23 RBIs...second in hits (28)...sixth in average (.373)...hit .511 with 10 homers and 22 RBI's during an 11-game hitting streak from Oct. 14-28...homered in eight of 10 games, October 15-28...sits only four home runs shy of the Arizona Fall League record of 14."

Not bad for a 23-year-old from Bakersfield. He was signed by the Athletics after being drafted in the second round of the June 2007 draft out of Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo. He played a bit for Vancouver in 2007 but missed most of 2008 with injuries. So far this fall, Desme has not missed a start in the Desert Dogs' outfield and has more at-bats than any of his teammates.

As you might imagine, I was ready to see the phenom from Single-A do his stuff. Oh well, it wasn't going to happen today. 0-fer it's called – no hits in four at-bats. He struck out three times and bounced one to short. Maybe next time.

Actually, there was a small parade of Bay Boys from both bullpens as the game wound down.

Two pitchers in their San Francisco grays shut the Dogs down completely in the 7th and 8th.

Danny Turpin who appeared in 46 games at San Jose in 2009, pitched a perfect seventh. Turpin was born in Corvallis,

Ore., and attended Oregon State where he was signed by the Giants in the eighth round of the 2007 draft.

Steve Edlefsen took care of the eighth with equal aplomb. Edlefsen finished the regular season at Triple-A Fresno. He is from Minneapolis, Minn., and attended University of Nebraska where he was drafted by the Giants in the 16th round of the 2007 draft.

Two young A's pitched the last two innings allowing three hits and one run between them. Justin Friend worked the seventh allowing two hits and one run. Sam Demel pitched the eighth.

Friend was born in Tracy. He was attending Oklahoma State when the Athletics picked him in the 13th round of the 2007 draft. He spent most of 2009 at Single-A Stockton with late season trips to Midland and Sacramento.

Demel was chosen in the third round of the June 2007 draft. At the time he was attending Texas Christian University. He was born in Channelview, Texas. He split 2009 between Double-A Midland and Triple-A Sacramento.

The game was never seriously in doubt with Scottsdale (and the Giants) in control from the second inning on. Phoenix (and the A's) got close in the fifth with a minor outburst off a young pitcher from Japan, but had no offense for the rest of the game.

The final score was 8-4 before a typical AFL crowd of 517.

There are 10 more days on this year's regular schedule with a championship game set for Nov. 21.

Before Friday's game, Phoenix was leading Scottsdale by 4.5 games in the league's Eastern Division. But, as they say, there's a lot of time left and anything can happen.

Baseball: Catawba retires Thomas' number

Dispatch.com, 11/10/09.

Catawba College retired David Thomas' number on Saturday during halftime ceremonies Saturday during the Indians' football game.

The former Ledford star, who now plays professionally for the Oakland A's organization, wore No. 7 for the Indians.

Thomas hit .388 for Catawba and holds eight school records. A Division II All-American, Thomas scored 281 runs in his four-year career at Catawba from 2005-08, a figure that ranks second all-time in Division II. His 344 hits are third all-time.