

A's News Clips, Thursday, November 12, 2009

Breslow helps kids through foundation

A's lefty hosts event to raise money for cancer research

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Labeled last June by no less of an authority than the Wall Street Journal as "the smartest man in baseball, if not the entire world," A's left-hander Craig Breslow gets a lot of attention in the clubhouse for his academic pedigree.

A 29-year-old reliever who went 8-7 with a 3.36 ERA, 15 holds and a 1.11 WHIP over 77 appearances in 2009, Breslow graduated from Yale in 2002 with a degree in molecular biophysics and biochemistry.

So when former Red Sox teammate Josh Beckett wanted to know how many times a baseball thrown at 95 mph makes a full revolution on its trip to home plate, Breslow was his man.

Of course he was. And of course he came through, and then some.

Breslow didn't just provide an answer to the original question -- 12 -- but also answers based on a curveball and a slider.

"It's rather simple once you do it," Breslow said.

Maybe for a brainiac. Not so much for the majority of baseball players; the Journal last June reported that only 26 current players or managers had earned a college degree.

"Breslow knows everything," A's lefty Dallas Braden said. "I seriously want to be Craig Breslow when I grow up. He knows things most baseball players wouldn't even *try* to think about. ... I'm not saying we're all a bunch of rockheads, but if we were, he'd know how to build some kind of laser to break up the rocks and turn them into something way cooler."

Breslow doesn't shy away from discussing his intellect, and he graciously plays along with any tongue-in-cheek queries that come his way. But he's dead serious when it comes to his passion for helping children through medicine, and to that end he started the Strike 3 Foundation in 2008.

Twelve years old when his older sister, Lesley, was diagnosed with pediatric thyroid cancer, Breslow uses the foundation to honor her in hopes of helping scientists find a cure. Lesley has been in remission for 15 years.

"Something as traumatic as that has a lifelong impact," Breslow said of his sister's battle. "It confirmed my interest in medicine. Being a doctor went from being a prestigious profession to something that changes people's lives."

According to the Strike 3 Web site (strike3foundation.org), Breslow's mission is to heighten awareness, mobilize support and raise funds for childhood cancer research.

And that's exactly what Breslow and several of his big league buddies, as well as Grammy Award-winning reggae/pop star Shaggy, were doing Saturday at the Omni Hotel in New Haven, Conn., during the foundation's second charity event.

Nomar Garciaparra was the featured speaker at the event, support for which was lent by several other A's teammates, including outfielder Rajai Davis, righty Vin Mazzaro, designated hitter/outfielder Jack Cust and All-Star closer Andrew Bailey.

Former Mets manager Bobby Valentine and Twins righty Kevin Slowey were there, too, and free-agent first baseman/up-and-coming musician Ben Broussard, like Shaggy, performed on stage.

Live and silent auctions, featuring items such as "Green Monster" seats for a game at Fenway Park, a tour of new Yankee Stadium and signed memorabilia donated by players all around the game, generated most of the money raised. Last year's event brought in more than \$100,000, and Breslow expects to find that this year's event eclipsed that mark -- strong numbers in a depressed economy.

"It was awesome," Breslow told MLB.com by phone Tuesday. "It couldn't have gone any better."

Breslow, who likely will attend medical school when his playing career comes to an end, has been active toward his cause for some time.

In August, he toured the Research Institute at Children's Hospital in Oakland, and that night he hosted one of the facility's patients, 13-year-old Hudson Davis, at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum to throw out the ceremonial first pitch.

"I started the Strike 3 Foundation," Breslow said, "to ensure that every child is afforded the opportunity to prosper. ... We're really happy with the way things have gone."

Wednesday's AFL roundup

Mets prospect Davis collects four RBIs in losing effort

By / MLB.com

Solar Sox 9, Rafters 8

Mets prospect Ike Davis hit his fourth AFL homer and drove in four runs, but Surprise squandered a late lead in a 9-8 loss to Mesa. The former first-round pick has hit safely in nine of his last 10 games, with six RBIs in that span. Ryan Kalish slugged a three-run homer and scored the winning run on fellow Red Sox prospect Jose Iglesias' ninth-inning single for the Solar Sox, who have won six straight.

Javelinas 8, Saguaros 1

Andrew Lambo drove in three runs and scored three times to lead the Javelinas' rout of the Saguaros. Mired in an 0-for-12 slump, the Dodgers outfield prospect gave the Javs a quick lead with a two-run double in the first inning and came home on a triple by Casper Wells (Tigers). Wells added a bases-clearing double in the ninth for the Javelinas, who have taken five of six meetings from their Peoria neighbors. Padres farmhand Lance Zawadzki extended his hitting streak to eight games, stole two bases and scored the lone run for the Saguaros.

Desert Dogs 12, Scorpions 3

Rays catching prospect Nevin Ashley tripled twice, doubled, scored three runs and extended his season-long hitting streak to 13 games to help the Desert Dogs snap a three-game losing streak. Blue Jays farmhands Brad Emaus and Darin Mastroianni both added two RBIs for first-place Phoenix. Phillies prospect Domonic Brown tripled, singled and drove in two runs for the Scorpions.

Oakland A's MLN: Henry, Casilla Debut

Melissa Lockard
OaklandClubhouse.com

Nov 11, 2009

With the winter season reaching November, more and more players with big league experience are debuting in their respective leagues. Two Oakland A's relievers made their debut recently. We have those details, as well as other action around the winter leagues, inside...

Rodriguez, Casilla Debut

Two of the hardest throwers in the Oakland A's system made their winter league debuts over the past week. Henry Rodriguez and Santiago Casilla both debuted for their respective teams.

Rodriguez, who annually plays for the Aguilas del Zulia of the Venezuelan Winter League, had a rough first outing. He allowed four runs (three earned) on four hits and one walk in 1.1 innings pitched. There has been some speculation in the Venezuelan media that Rodriguez may be used as a starter at some point during the VWL season, but his first outing came in relief. He was exclusively a reliever in the A's organization in 2009 after acting as a starter for his entire career up until mid-season 2008.

Casilla has made three appearances for his annual winter league club, the Leones del Escogido of the Dominican Winter League. Casilla was perfect in his first two outings, striking out two in two innings. However, he was roughed up on Wednesday, giving up three runs on two hits and two walks in only a third of an inning. Casilla had a disappointing 5.96 ERA for the A's in 48.1 innings this past season.

Carter Homers; Padron Continues To Roll

Chris Carter connected for his fifth homerun of the Mexican League season on Wednesday night. It was his first since returning from battling a stomach ailment, which sidelined him for nearly three weeks. Since returning to the field, Carter has appeared in six games and has reached base in all six contests. He has also driven-in four runs and scored three times. Overall, Carter is batting .235 with five homers, 10 RBIs and an 888 OPS in 13 games for Guasave.

Raul Padron has been one of the top stories in the Venezuelan Winter League this season. He is batting .308 with six homeruns and 13 RBIs and he has a 1000 OPS in 21 games for the Leones del Caracas, and he has been splitting his time defensively between catching and playing first base. Padron is currently a minor league free agent after six years in the A's chain. His manager on the Caracas squad is former A's hitting coach Dave Hudgens.

Other Winter Notes:

* The Phoenix Desert Dogs hold a 1.5 game lead over Mesa in the Arizona Fall League's Eastern Division. Phoenix is attempting to win its sixth consecutive title. The Dogs dropped a 2-0 decision on Wednesday to Scottsdale. James Simmons got the loss, as he allowed single runs in each of the first two innings. He finished the game with four innings pitched and five hits, two runs and one walk allowed. Simmons struck-out two. He has a 3.43 ERA in 21 innings this fall.

* Justin Friend threw two scoreless innings in the Dogs' Wednesday defeat. He has allowed only one run over his last 5.1 AFL innings with three strike-outs and one walk. Overall, Friend has a 4.82 ERA in 9.1 innings.

* Mickey Storey had an outstanding outing for Phoenix on Monday. The right-hander tossed two perfect innings, striking out five of the six batters he faced. Storey has 11 strike-outs and only two walks in eight AFL innings. He allowed four runs in two-thirds of an inning in an outing on October 23rd. In the rest of his outings this AFL season, Storey has allowed only a run in 7.1 innings and he has 11 strike-outs and four hits allowed.

* The homerun totals have leveled off for Grant Desme in the AFL, but he is still getting on-base. Over his last six games, he has not homered, but he has reached safely in all but one game and he has seven hits, has scored five runs, doubled twice, driven-in two, stolen a base and walked three times. Overall, he is batting .370 with a 1260 OPS in 20 games.

* Former top A's prospect Javier Herrera has resurfaced in the Venezuelan Winter League. Herrera was released by the A's this past season after struggling with injuries over the last several seasons. Herrera remained unsigned by a major league club all season and he was also let go by Caracas of the VWL, for whom he had played the past several years. Herrera has signed on with Lara of the VWL and has four hits in his first 14 at-bats.

* Alexander Valdez is second behind Arizona Diamonbacks' starter Conor Jackson in hitting for the Leones del Escogido of the Dominican Winter League. Valdez, through 14 games, has a .327 average with a 947 OPS and three stolen bases.

Tuesday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Marlins' Petersen collects three hits, four RBIs for Sox

By MLB.com

Solar Sox 6, Rafters 4

Bryan Petersen continued his torrid fall with three hits, including his third AFL homer, and four RBIs as Mesa extended its winning streak to five games. The Marlins prospect raised his average to .419 and has hit safely in 15 of 16 games. Michael Brenly (Cubs) added two hits and scored a run for the Solar Sox. Yankees farmhand Colin Curtis went 3-for-4 with an RBI and a run scored for Surprise, which has lost four in a row.

Scorpions 2, Desert Dogs 0

Diamonbacks prospect Bryan Augenstein tossed four innings of three-hit ball for his first fall win as Scottsdale blanked first-place Phoenix. Red-hot Rockies shortstop Hector Gomez had a pair of doubles and scored twice for the Scorpions. Josh Bell (Orioles) and Adam Loewen (Blue Jays) both singled and walked for the Desert Dogs, who have dropped three straight.

Javelinas 9, Saguaros 5

Dodgers prospect Russ Mitchell fell a homer shy of the cycle, scored three times and drove in a run to lead the first-place Javelinas to their third straight win. His triple in a three-run third inning gave him 24 RBIs and a share of the league lead.

Dustin Ackley (Mariners), the second overall pick in the 2009 Draft, chipped in a two-run single and Brent Morel (White Sox) went 3-for-3 with an RBI and a run scored for the Jays. Lance Zawadzki (Padres) had two hits and drove in two runs for the Saguaros.