

A's News Clips, Monday November 16, 2009

A's Bailey hopes to pull ROY upset

Award would cap storybook season for emerging closer

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Andrew Bailey's rise from Minor League obscurity to Major League limelight is a story that won't soon be forgotten.

It'll turn historic if Bailey upsets Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus when the American League Rookie of the Year Award is handed out Monday at 11 a.m. PT. But even if the announcement plays out as expected -- Andrus is the clear favorite -- it will do nothing to diminish Bailey's fairy-tale of a season.

Strikingly similar to that of fellow A's reliever Brad Ziegler, who took the baseball world by storm in 2008, Bailey's rags-to-riches story was among the feel-good highlights of 2009 -- and not just for A's fans.

So compelling was Bailey's ascent -- from struggling Double-A starter to Arizona Fall League phenom to Spring Training sensation to All-Star big league closer -- that even President Barack Obama took notice.

Sweeping through the AL clubhouse this July before the Midsummer Classic at Busch Stadium in St. Louis, President Obama stopped at the locker of Bailey, the only first-year player named to either team, and smiled.

"Hey," President Obama said. "You're the rookie, right?"

Bailey, 25, was blown away.

"Come on," he said. "The president of the United States knows who I am? That's ridiculous."

You could say the same about Bailey's stats. Moved from the starting rotation to the bullpen at midseason 2008 while with the Midland RockHounds of the Texas League, Bailey didn't just make a successful transition to relief work.

He made the transition look like a breeze. Like he was born for relief work.

"This is, I think, what Andrew was kind of meant to do," said A's pitching coach Curt Young. "His makeup, his demeanor, his stuff ... he's meant for this."

Bailey, who dominated during the second half of the 2008 season at Midland, followed suit in the prestigious Arizona Fall League and did the same in his first trip to big league Spring Training to make the A's roster, posted an Oakland rookie-record 26 saves (in 30 chances) and a 6-3 record with a 1.84 ERA, a 0.88 WHIP (walks and hits per inning pitched) and 91 strikeouts against 24 walks in 83 1/3 innings over 68 appearances.

"Andrew," said A's catcher Kurt Suzuki, "was amazing."

Amazing enough to earn the AL ROY? Bailey hasn't given it much thought.

"If it happens, it happens," Bailey told MLB.com. "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."

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 Niemann 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 news 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 ... obviously, it'd be awesome to win it."

Oakland A's plan: Build off second half of 2009 season

By Joe Stiglich_Oakland Tribune 11/16/09

The A's created some waves last winter by trading for Matt Holliday and signing free agent Jason Giambi.

It remains to be seen how active they'll be this offseason. But general manager Billy Beane reiterated his team's agenda this week while he was in Chicago attending the GM meetings.

"Our priority is to maintain and continue to get as many young players as we can and expand on what we did in the second half of the season into the offseason," Beane said. "All the decisions we make this offseason will be based on that."

That leaves veteran third baseman Adam Kennedy's status uncertain.

Kennedy is one of four A's who have filed for free agency, along with infielders Bobby Crosby and Nomar Garciaparra and right-hander Justin Duchscherer. Only Kennedy and Duchscherer are realistic possibilities to return to Oakland.

Teams have exclusive negotiating rights with their own free agents until Friday. At that point, players can talk contract with any team.

The A's have spoken with the agents for Kennedy and Duchscherer, but it's clear that neither player would be re-signed before hitting the open market.

Deciding whether to retain Kennedy is important, as the A's need some sort of contingency plan at third base next season. They're hopeful Eric Chavez will be healthy enough to start, but he's coming off his second back surgery.

They can't predict if prospect Brett Wallace will be ready to handle third base by Opening Day, or if Wallace might be better suited long-term to first base or outfield.

Given that, the A's could try dealing for a young third baseman in what's expected to be an active trade market this winter.

The A's also hope to add depth to the rotation, so re-signing Duchscherer is a consideration. Duchscherer missed the entire 2009 season with elbow and back problems, then in August was diagnosed with clinical depression. But his agent, Damon Lapa, said Tuesday that Duchscherer is doing well.

"He has absolutely dedicated himself to getting back on the field in 2010," Lapa said.

Expect the A's to explore free agency for starters even as Duchscherer remains on their radar.

Oakland has until Dec. 12 to decide whether to tender contracts to six arbitration-eligible players — Santiago Casilla, Jack Cust, Rajai Davis, Joey Devine, Scott Hairston and Michael Wuertz.

Casilla is a strong non-tender candidate considering Oakland's bullpen depth. And the A's have a tough call with Cust, who made \$2.8 million last season and would appear due another raise for 2010.

Unsigned players who aren't tendered contracts by Dec. 12 become free agents.

Wide-open race for AL Rookie of the Year

Plenty of worthy candidates makes it a tough decision

By Rhett Bollinger / MLB.com

With no clear-cut favorite, it's anyone's guess who will take home the American League Rookie of the Year Award this season.

But this much is certain -- there is no shortage of quality arms in the race with starting pitchers such as Tampa Bay's Jeff Niemann, Oakland's Brett Anderson and Detroit's Rick Porcello having performed like seasoned veterans this year.

All three of those starters made at least 30 appearances while also winning at least 11 games each. Porcello's 14 wins were the most among the trio, Niemann's 3.94 ERA was the best of the three while Anderson set the bar with 150 strikeouts.

But they're not the only rookie starters who put up quality numbers, as Toronto's Ricky Romero and Baltimore's Brad Bergesen are right behind that trio.

Then there's A's right-hander Andrew Bailey, who flew under the radar this season despite being one of the best closers in the American League with a 1.84 ERA and 26 saves.

And, of course, it wasn't just rookie pitchers who impressed this season, as perhaps the favorite in the race is Elvis Andrus, the 21-year-old shortstop who forced Gold Glove-winning shortstop Michael Young to move over to third base in Texas.

Andrus immediately emerged as one of the top defensive shortstops in the game while also putting up solid numbers offensively for a shortstop with a .267 batting average and 33 stolen bases.

So while Andrus has proved to be a defensive wiz, there are a few candidates who showed a bit more offensively this season, including two position players in Baltimore -- outfielder Nolan Reimold and catcher Matt Wieters -- who both had fine rookie seasons. Reimold led all AL rookies in home runs, slugging percentage and on-base percentage while Wieters, a future superstar behind the plate, led all AL rookies in batting average by hitting .288.

And if it's slugging percentage you're looking for, the White Sox's Gordon Beckham is your man as he finished second in that category despite playing out of position at third base instead of his natural position of shortstop. Beckham led all AL rookies with 28 doubles en route to an impressive .466 slugging percentage.

So it appears to be just a matter of preference in this year's AL Rookie of the Year race, but here's a look at favorites, contenders and dark horses:

The Favorites

Elvis Andrus, Rangers: The Venezuela native is already regarded as one of the best defensive shortstops in the game even though it was just his first year in the Majors. He also led all AL rookies in hits, triples and stolen bases.

Andrew Bailey, A's: Bailey finished in the top 10 in the AL in saves and had more strikeouts than innings pitched. He was also the only rookie to make the AL All-Star team.

Gordon Beckham, White Sox: Beckham led all AL rookies in RBIs and doubles by a large margin and had plenty of long-ball power to boot as he ranked second among AL rookies in homers.

Jeff Niemann, Rays: Niemann surprisingly led a strong Rays rotation in wins this season with 13 and had an impressive 3.94 ERA as well, despite pitching in the AL East. The right-hander also led all AL rookies with two shutouts.

The Contenders

Brett Anderson, A's: The left-hander arguably has the best stuff of any rookie starter, evidenced by his 150 strikeouts in 175 1/3 innings. He also struck out more than three times as many batters as he walked.

Rick Porcello, Tigers: Porcello emerged as one of Detroit's top starters despite being just 20 years old. He led all rookie starters with 14 wins and he did it all while pitching for a contender in the AL Central.

The Dark Horses:

Matt Wieters, Orioles: If the award went to the player with the most potential, Wieters would likely win in a landslide. But the catcher struggled with the bat early before turning it around late to finish with a .288 batting average.

Ricky Romero, Blue Jays: Romero, like Anderson, has elite stuff as he had 141 strikeouts in 178 innings to finish second behind Anderson in strikeouts by an AL rookie.

The Field: Nolan Reimold, Orioles; Brad Bergesen, Orioles; Brett Gardner, Yankees.

Oakland A's AFL Q&A: Mickey Storey, RP

Melissa Lockard
OaklandClubhouse.com

Nov 16, 2009

One of the biggest surprises in the Oakland A's system in 2009 was the rise of reliever Mickey Storey, who went from being an unknown mired in extended spring training to one of the organization's brightest relief prospects. Storey's outstanding season has continued into the Arizona Fall League. We caught-up with Storey at the AFL for a Q&A...

FREE PREVIEW OF PREMIUM CONTENT

At the start of the 2009 season, Mickey Storey was a forgotten man. A 2008 31st round pick out of Florida Atlantic University, Storey had a relatively nondescript professional debut in 2008 when he posted a 3.27 ERA in 22 relief innings for the A's Rookie League team. When Storey was assigned to extended spring training at the start of 2009, it appeared that his career with the A's might be stalled before it even really got started.

Storey quickly changed the minds of the powers-that-be in the A's organization, however. He was given a shot at full-season baseball in mid-May with the Low-A Kane County Cougars and he got off to a terrific start with the Cougars, saving nine games and allowing only one run and one walk in 17.1 innings. From that moment on, Storey was a player on the rise. He moved up to High-A Stockton, where he posted a 2.28 ERA with nine saves in 23.2 innings. Storey also made two shut-out appearances with Triple-A Sacramento and then was sent to Double-A Midland for the final few weeks of the season.

He helped to stabilize the Rockhounds' bullpen by tossing 7.2 shut-out innings in the season's final few weeks. Midland clinched a spot in the post-season during the season's final weekend and wound-up winning the Texas League championship. Storey played a big role in the Rockhounds' post-season success, as he pitched in six of the team's eight games.

All in all, Storey finished the regular season with a 1.22 ERA, 18 saves and 71 strike-outs with only eight walks in 51.2 innings. Storey was scheduled to attend the A's Instructional League after the season was over, but when a spot opened in the Arizona Fall League, Storey once again was given an opportunity to raise his profile. Thus far, Storey has found similar success in the AFL to what he found during the regular season. In 10.1 innings, Storey has struck-out 12 and has walked three. His ERA is 4.35, but four of the five runs he has allowed came in one outing that lasted two-thirds of an inning. In the remaining 9.2 innings, he has given up only five hits, one run and no homeruns with those 12 strike-outs.

We spoke to Storey on Friday about his AFL experience, his journey through the A's system this season and more...

OaklandClubhouse: Congratulations on having a great season. How has the AFL gone for you? What has the experience been like?

Mickey Storey: First off, it's been an honor to be invited to the league. I'm thankful that the A's wanted to put me in this league. That says a lot in itself. The league is really good. Everybody who plays in it is supposed to be really good. It's been tough at times, but it's a good learning experience also.

OC: Pretty much every outing you've had in the AFL has been a successful one except for one (October 23rd when he allowed four runs in two-third of an inning). Then you had an outing on November 9th when you struck out five out of the six guys you faced. What was the big difference for you between the two outings?

MS: As far as the bad outing, it was just one of those days when I couldn't get the ball down in the strike zone. It just goes to show you that the hitters here will really capitalize on you making mistakes and that was one of those days when I made a ton of mistakes and things didn't go my way. The difference in the outings since is just being able to command the strike zone like I did for most of the regular season.

I have felt more like I did during the season the last couple of days and the last couple of outings. I have felt really in tune with things. The biggest difference is that during the regular season you are working more on a daily basis, whereas here it's more the case where you can get three or four days off and you just don't have the reps out on the mound and your mechanics can falter a little bit and your quality isn't always there. But that's what you have to do, you have to keep with your routine on a daily basis and make quality pitches. That's the only difference.

OC: Are you scheduled to pitch on certain days in this league, or is it still more that you are going into a game not knowing if you are going to pitch?

MS: Yeah, that's pretty much how it is. It's pretty much like the real season, but during the real season, you have roles. During the season, you can see how the game is going and know pretty much whether or not you are going to get in. Here, if you pitch in a game, you get an automatic day off, which turns into two days off because there are extra pitchers here. So

you pretty much get an automatic two days off and after that, you are never really sure if you are going to pitch on that third or fourth day. There have been times where I have gotten in on five days rest or four days rest, just depending upon sometimes if another team's front office is in town and they want their guy to pitch when those guys are in town or things like that.

OC: You pitched a full season and then in the playoffs with Midland. Has fatigue been an issue at all in this league or were the few weeks off in-between the playoffs and the AFL enough to rest and rejuvenate?

MS: I think we had two weeks off, which was really only a couple of days off because you had to keep yourself up to get ready for the Fall League. So I only got a couple of days off but it was plenty of rejuvenation because I have felt good and strong out here the entire time. I was just mentioning to another guy in the league that the last few weeks my arm has felt more crisp than it has in awhile. It feels like I'm just kicking it into gear almost, but that obviously isn't really the case because it's been a long season. But I have felt strong the whole way through and hopefully I'll get through another week and I'll stay strong and healthy.

OC: Going back to the start of the season, you began at extended spring training, but then made it through four affiliates. How motivated were you after having to start the season at extended?

MS: It made me extremely motivated because I really took it as not a good thing. I told myself that there was not a lot of faith in me right now and every time I get the ball, I'm going to have to show these people what I can do. Every time I took the mound, I kept that mindset that I was going to have to pitch well or I wasn't going to get the chance again. I actually pitched good on most occasions and that allowed me to continue to get opportunities and helped me to build the faith from people within the organization.

They took it from there. They didn't have to move me up, but I guess they saw something and they kept moving me up and I kept succeeding, which was great. But it was definitely a real wake-up call to start at extended when I thought I was going to be able to compete for a job right away. But everything has turned out great.

OC: I got to see you pitch a couple of times this year. The curveball is obviously a really good pitch for you. What other pitches are you comfortable with?

MS: I feel pretty comfortable with all three – the fastball, curveball and a change-up. The change-up being my third pitch. I have thrown the change-up a lot more in the Fall League just to give these guys a different look and to try to get a little work on it. I feel really comfortable with that and I can throw it in pretty much any count now. Before I would shy away from it because I wasn't as comfortable with the pitch, but now it's sort of a go-to pitch also. I have also been working on a cutter.

OC: Does Gil [Patterson, A's minor league pitching coordinator] insist on everyone throwing that pitch [laughs]?

MS: [laughs] Yeah, Gil loves the cutter. It has been a work-in-progress for me so far. But I have been throwing it in bullpen sessions and everyday on the side to try to get a feel for it. Hopefully by next season it will be another pitch added to the repertoire.

OC: You were a pretty accomplished starter in college. Would you like to go back to starting at some point, or are you happy in the late-inning relieving role?

MS: I'm happy. I like relieving. If they were to tell me, 'hey, we'd like you to take a chance at starting,' I wouldn't turn anything down, but I am comfortable with relieving now and I feel like I have made the adjustment pretty well. A lot of people had always told me that they thought I'd be a good reliever and this has been my first season as a full-time reliever and I feel like I have adjusted well. I like the role actually. I'd be open to anything, but I like relieving for now.

OC: You got a chance to pitch with Midland for a few weeks before the post-season and then you pitched pretty extensively during the post-season. What was that experience like to pitch in the post-season and win it all?

MS: It was great. It was really exciting. When they called me up, it was one of those things where they wanted me to help the team make the playoffs. As soon as I got up there, I got to pitch right away and I pitched well. That gave me a role going into the playoffs as a go-to guy.

The team morale was great. They all wanted to win. You could tell that they had been winning all year, so for them to have not clinched the playoffs yet, there was a sense [among the guys who were on the team all year] that they had to make the playoffs because we were the best team in the league. When we clinched it, we said, 'alright, we've clinched it, there is no sense now in not winning the whole thing.' Then when we did, it was great. It was my first championship, my first ring at any level. I'm really excited to get that ring on ring day.

OC: You got up to Double-A and even had a few appearances in Triple-A. Were there things that you learned from playing at the higher levels that you think you are going to bring into next season?

MS: Oh, sure. Not so much on the field, but off the field. In the clubhouse and in a way to look at things. Just really

understanding the business and the game because this is my first season in professional baseball, so I'm still naive. I learned a lot from those guys.

On the field, the season went fast for me. When things are rolling, it goes fast. When I was on the field, it just flew by, so I'm not sure how much I learned or didn't learn. I really just learned that at every level, it's tougher. There is a reason that there are levels. Every level, the hitters get better and stuff like that.

OC: Is this competition in the AFL the toughest of the levels that you have faced thus far?

MS: I would say so just because it is a mixture of Double-A, Triple-A and some big leaguers and it is the best of all of those. From what they say, a good percentage of the guys in the Fall League are going to be big leaguers. So you are facing pretty good guys from the lead-off hitter through the ninth hitter. Every out is a tough out. In Triple-A, I didn't have enough time to go through a bunch of batting orders for those guys to see me, so I feel like I snuck up on those guys a little bit. Double-A I thought was really tough, but I think that this league, yeah, it's tough because if you make one little mistake, they'll capitalize on it.

OC: What are your plans for the off-season? Are you going to take some time off or do you have a throwing program that you are going to jump right into?

MS: I'll probably take some time off from throwing just until they get together with me and let me know whether I am going to go to big league camp or minor league camp. But I'll definitely be conditioning. Working out is something that I'll be doing a lot more this off-season because I definitely think I can get a little stronger and I feel like that can help me to stay healthy and maybe help with the velocity a little bit. So I'll probably take a couple of days off from throwing, but I'll jump right into running and lifting weights.

Oakland's Bailey recalls 'incredible' journey to big leagues

By [Jack Minogue](#), Staten Island Advance 11/14/09

When Oakland Athletics' closer Andrew Bailey returned to Staten Island two weeks ago for the Wagner College baseball alumni game, he had no interest in talking about his chances of being named American League Rookie of the Year, a selection which will be announced Monday.

Bailey may be in the major leagues, but he's still about the game and especially his teammates.

Go back to 2005 when Tommy John surgery on the 6-foot-3, 230-pound right-hander's elbow put him on the sidelines for the season.

A casual observer wouldn't realize Bailey had been relegated to spectator.

When he wasn't in Atlanta for a checkup, Bailey not only was in uniform, but also was one of the first players out of the dugout when there was cause for celebration, be it a dominating performance by left-hander Joe Testa or a key hit by Joe DiGeronimo.

No surprise to coach Joe Litterio, then or two weeks ago. "A complete player," said Litterio whose definition of complete starts with commitment to team.

"After the alumni game, we went out to lunch and you couldn't tell the difference, whether Andrew was playing major league baseball or working in the city."

Sound too good to be true?

So does Bailey's journey from the Wagner College dugout to his being the only rookie selected for the 2009 All-Star Game and being named A.L. Rookie of the Month in August when he was 2-0 and 7-for-7 in saves with a 0.00 ERA.

His journey has ended, for now, with a 6-3 record, 26 saves in 30 chances, 91 strikeouts and 24 walks in 83 innings, and a 1.84 ERA, second only to Mr. Automatic, the Yankees' Mariano Rivera. Bailey's perspective also sounds somewhat unreal.

Tommy John surgery notwithstanding, he was drafted in the 16th round by the Milwaukee Brewers.

He decided instead to return to Wagner not only for his final season, but also for some long-term insurance: A degree in business administration.

It was a baby-step 2006 season at Wagner: One, maybe two batters, one or two innings, and then, three weeks from the end of the season, his first start.

"It was obvious Andrew had a big future," Litterio said. "We weren't going to do anything to jeopardize that."

How big a future was questionable early in the 2008 season, Bailey's third in the minor leagues after being drafted by Oakland in the fifth round of the 2006 draft.

Pitching for Midland in the Double-A Texas League, Bailey won his first start, then went 0-8 with a 6.75 ERA.

"Incredible," he said yesterday from Hamden, Conn., his residence while his fiancé, Amanda Scalzo, a former Wagner lacrosse player, finishes graduate school.

"I didn't think I'd be where I am today. Mentally, it was really difficult. I tried to battle through it at Midland, and it did make me tougher mentally."

Then came a visit from Gil Patterson, the A's pitching coordinator. He gave Bailey two options.

"I could move down to high-A and stay a starter, or I could move to the bullpen.

"He told me, 'It's not permanent, but let's see what happens.'

"The other thing is when Patterson saw the action on my four-seam fastball, he asked me if I ever tried a cutter. I added it to my repertoire, and it got me over the edge.

"I can throw it to both sides of the plate, and when it's at its best, I throw it 92-93 miles an hour with late-cutting action."

The rest is unreal, even for a Hollywood script.

Bailey posts a 4-1 record and an 0.92 ERA the remainder of the 2008 Midland season, is not on the A's 40-player roster at the start of spring training, but a 0.66 ERA in 12 appearances changes that.

Three days into the season, he earns his first major league win, and a month later, on May 8, he picks up his first save.

Now, all that remains of the 2009 season are the postseason awards. Texas shortstop Elvis Andrus may be favored for Rookie of the Year, but don't count out Andrew Bailey. His selection would be far from unreal.

Saturday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Making first start in 12 days, Strasburg notches fourth win

By MLB.com

Desert Dogs 1, Saguaros 0

Nationals prospect Stephen Strasburg, who missed the Rising Stars Showcase due to neck pain, allowed one hit over 3 2/3 innings as Phoenix blanked Peoria. The No. 1 overall pick in this year's Draft struck out six and walked two en route to his league-leading fourth win. Matt Angle (Orioles) homered in the second to provide all the offense Strasburg and the Desert Dogs needed.

Scorpions 4, Rafters 2

First-round pick Aaron Crow retired the last 11 batters he faced and gave up one hit over four shutout innings in Surprise's loss to Scottsdale. It was the best outing of the fall for Crow, who was selected by the Royals with the 12th overall pick in this year's Draft. Giants Minor Leaguer Brandon Crawford blasted a two-run homer for the Scorpions.

Solar Sox 4, Javelinas 2

Twins prospect Chris Parmelee homered, doubled twice and drove in his team-leading 18th and 19th runs as Mesa doubled

up Peoria. Josh Vitters, the Cubs' first-round pick in the 2007 Draft, cranked a two-run shot for the Solar Sox, who got five innings of one-hit pitching from five relievers. Tigers Minor Leaguer Cale Iorg accounted for the Javelinas' offense with a two-run homer. Despite the loss, Peoria clinched the AFL West title.

Weeks' patience paying off in AFL

A's prospect homers, has hit in 11 of last 13 games

By Robert Emrich / Special to MLB.com

Jemile Weeks' patience and hard work are beginning to pay off.

The former first-round pick hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the eighth inning Friday as the Phoenix Desert Dogs outslugged the Mesa Solar Sox, 9-7.

Weeks, selected 12th overall by the Athletics in the 2008 Draft, also scored twice for the Desert Dogs (16-11), who have won three in a row. The Florida native ended a 1-for-16 slump with his first Arizona Fall League homer and credited focus at the plate.

"Lately, I think I have been getting out of the zone a little and swinging wild," Weeks said. "I went with the mind-set to be patient and wait for my pitch."

Weeks, who batted .278 between Class A Advanced Stockton and Double-A Midland, has hit safely in 11 of his last 13 games. He stole a base and scored a run in last weekend's Rising Stars Showcase and said baserunning is something he plans to work on next season.

"Defensively, I want get better," he said. "Guys are hustling down the line to take you out, there's a quicker and more consistent way to do things. [I want to] come out next year and have a healthy season and steal some bags, where I felt I lagged. Definitely, stealing bases and being more consistent on defense [are priorities]."

Fellow Athletics prospect Grant Desme broke a 10-game home run drought with a two-run shot in the fourth and scored twice. Nevin Ashley (Rays) went 2-for-4 with an RBI, extending his season-long hitting streak to 15 games for the first-place Desert Dogs.

Steve Singleton (Twins) slugged a three-run homer and AFL batting leader Bryan Petersen (Marlins) collected three hits, including a pair of triples, and scored twice for the Solar Sox (12-14).

Justin Friend (Athletics) walked one and struck out one in a scoreless eighth for his third win and Eddie Gamboa (Orioles) pitched a perfect ninth for his first save.

Red Sox farmhand Chris Province (0-2) took the loss after allowing two runs on two hits in two innings. Spencer Steedley (Twins) scattered three hits and fanned one over two innings of scoreless relief.

Friday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Ackley, Javelinas clinch West Division title, despite loss

By MLB.com

Rafters 5, Javelinas 4

Mariners prospect Dustin Ackley hit his first professional homer for Peoria, which clinched the AFL West title, despite losing to Surprise. Russ Mitchell (Dodgers) had a pair of hits, including a double, to raise his average to .333 for the Javelinas, who locked up a spot in the Championship Game. Royals Minor Leaguer Jarrod Dyson went 3-for-4 for the Rafters, who scored the go-ahead run in the ninth inning on a throwing error.

Desert Dogs 9, Solar Sox 7

Former first-round pick Jemile Weeks hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the eighth inning as Phoenix outslugged Mesa. Fellow A's prospect Grant Desme smacked a two-run homer in the fourth and Nevin Ashley (Rays) went 2-for-4 with an RBI, extending his season-long hitting streak to 15 games for the first-place Desert Dogs. Twins Minor Leaguer Steve Singleton slugged a three-run homer and AFL batting leader Bryan Petersen (Marlins) collected three hits, including a pair of triples, and scored twice for the Solar Sox.

Scorpions 9, Saguaros 2

Chase d'Arnaud went 3-for-4 with two stolen bases and two RBIs to help Scottsdale cruise past Peoria. The Pirates infield prospect has hit safely in 13 of 16 AFL games and shares the league lead with eight thefts. Thomas Neal added a two-run triple, while fellow Giants farmhand Joe Martinez struck out seven over four strong innings for the Scorpions. Reds prospect Mike Leake yielded just one hit and exited after giving up an unearned run over four innings for the Saguaros.