

A's News Clips, Tuesday, November 17, 2009

A's reliever Bailey wins rookie of the year

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A's closer Andrew Bailey was driving back from his morning workout Monday, chatting with one of his agents on the phone, when a call came in on the other line, a blocked number.

Bailey picked up, thinking it was his mother, Lori, calling from her workplace. Instead, it was Jack O'Connell of the Baseball Writers' Association of America telling Bailey he'd been named the American League Rookie of the Year.

"At first I thought it was a crank call," Bailey said. "I thought, 'Which one of my friends is playing a practical joke on me?'"

No joke: Bailey's 26 saves and 1.84 ERA were enough to make him the third Oakland player to earn rookie honors in the past six years, joining closer Huston Street in 2005 and shortstop Bobby Crosby in 2004.

Bailey's save total topped Street's team rookie record, and his ERA was third best among all AL relievers. He didn't blow a save after June 16 and finished the season with 21 consecutive saves, the second longest saves streak in Oakland history.

"Andrew had a dominant year, whether he was a rookie or a 10-year veteran," Oakland general manager Billy Beane said. "Sometimes, this award is subject to who the other rookies are that year, but Andrew was also an All-Star."

Bailey, 25, wasn't expected to make the team after coming to spring training as a non-roster invitee. He'd never pitched above Double-A, and he'd only converted from starter to reliever during the 2008 season. He was the last man to make the team, largely because of injuries.

"It's been a fun ride," Bailey said. "You've got to take advantage of opportunities when they're given to you."

Bailey was named first on 13 of 28 ballots and finished with 88 points. Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus was second with 65 points, Detroit starter Rick Porcello had 64 and Oakland starter Brett Anderson was sixth with four votes. The NL award went to outfielder Chris Coghlan of the Marlins.

A's manager Bob Geren said he'd listened to a sports-talk show the previous night that didn't mention Bailey as a candidate when discussing the award.

"I was positive in my mind that he should win," Geren said. "Andrew was dominant in every aspect. There are a lot of playoff teams who would trade their back three (bullpen) guys for ours, with Andrew leading the way."

Bailey credited the rest of the bullpen for helping him, given his lack of relief experience, particularly setup man Michael Wuertz (who said he felt as if his "little brother" had won the award) and veteran Russ Springer.

"I knew Andrew was something special in spring training," Springer said. "I really liked what I saw. With his New Jersey mentality, he wasn't scared, that was part of his success. And he wanted the ball, even when his knee was bothering him so much a lot of guys would have shut it down."

Bailey will appear at a news conference this morning at the Coliseum.

Ynoa update: Beane recently returned from the Dominican Republic, where he saw top prospect Michael Ynoa, 18, pitch in a simulated game. Beane said that Ynoa, who was sidelined by an elbow strain most of the year, looked terrific, and is likely to start next season at extended spring training.

Another notable pitching prospect, Fautino De Los Santos, also impressed Beane in a simulated game. De Los Santos probably will work out of the bullpen in the minors next season after a slow recovery from Tommy John surgery.

The A's front office scouted several players in the Dominican, including some Cubans who are working out there.

Oakland Athletics' Andrew Bailey is voted American League Rookie of the Year

By Joe Stiglich _Oakland Tribune

A's closer Andrew Bailey's storybook 2009 season ended in fitting fashion Monday, when he was voted the American League's Rookie of the Year.

The award caps an improbable ride for Bailey, a roster long shot in spring training who wound up making the All-Star team and setting an Oakland rookie record with 26 saves.

Many considered Texas Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus the favorite for the award. Detroit Tigers starting pitcher Rick Porcello also had strong credentials. Both played instrumental roles on teams that challenged for the postseason, unlike the last-place A's.

But Bailey received 13 of 28 first-place votes from the Baseball Writers Association of America. His 88 points easily outdistanced Andrus (65) and Porcello (64). A's starting pitcher Brett Anderson finished sixth.

Bailey, a New Jersey native who recently moved to Connecticut with his fiancée, was driving home from the gym when he received a call from BBWAA secretary Jack O'Connell and got the news.

"At first I thought it was a prank call, I didn't want to take my eyes off the road. But it was pretty crazy," Bailey said. "When I got home, I called my fiancée and she was going nuts. I called my mom and she was crying. My dad was pretty stoked. My whole family on the East Coast is thrilled."

Bailey is the eighth Athletic (seventh in Oakland) to win the award and the fourth in the past 12 seasons.

He became the unlikely star of a bullpen that turned out to be the A's biggest strength of 2009. Bailey was struggling as a starter for Double-A Midland when he converted to relieving midway through the 2008 season.

The change paid quick dividends. He led AL relievers with a .167 opponents' batting average this season to go with a 1.84 ERA. He didn't blow a save after June 16, and his 26 saves tied for the sixth-most ever by an AL rookie.

Bailey pitched much of the season with soreness in his left knee. He underwent surgery after the season to repair cartilage in the knee, and the A's expect him to be ready for spring training.

"I was hopeful he would win because he was the most deserving candidate," A's manager Bob Geren said. "For what he had to do as a short reliever and closer, compared to an everyday player or starting pitcher, he definitely dominated in his role better than any other rookie. It was not even close."

The A's had planned to fly Bailey to Oakland immediately if he were to win the award, so he could take part in a news conference this morning. But Bailey admitted he wouldn't allow himself to even think about packing a bag unless he learned he had won.

He spoke Monday on a nationwide conference call just an hour before boarding his plane.

His humble nature was a constant throughout the season even as his profile rose.

"He was home a couple weeks ago for four or five days, and people say, 'He's the same old Andrew,'" Bailey's father, Bill, said by phone Monday. "I honestly believe (the award) made him happy, because he really was not expecting anything. He says that he doesn't read stuff, but he does. It's just amazing this year, you couldn't write it any better."

Note: Florida Marlins outfielder Chris Coghlan was voted National League Rookie of the Year. Called up from the minors in May, Coghlan batted .321 with nine homers and 31 doubles in 128 games, scoring 84 runs and driving in 47. He topped NL rookies in batting average, runs, hits (162), total bases (232) and on-base percentage (.390).

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

Youth is served

Andrew Bailey becomes the seventh Oakland Athletics player to be selected American League Rookie of the Year.

1986: Jose Canseco

1987: Mark McGwire

1988: Walt Weiss

1998: Ben Grieve

2004: Bobby Crosby

2005: Huston Street

2009: Andrew Bailey

On the tube

A's Rookie of the Year Andrew Bailey's news conference will be broadcast live this morning on Comcast SportsNet California. It begins at 10 a.m.

Bailey captures AL rookie award

Righty reliever recorded 26 saves to go with a 1.84 ERA

By Mychael Urban / MLB.com 11/16/09

OAKLAND -- A's right-hander Andrew Bailey's rise from Minor League obscurity to Major League limelight turned historic Monday when he was named the American League's 2009 Rookie of the Year.

Moved from the starting rotation to the bullpen at midseason 2008 while with the Double-A 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, dominating during the second half of the 2008 season at Midland, following suit in the prestigious Arizona Fall League and doing the same in his first trip to big league Spring Training to make the A's roster.

Handed a low-stress role in the season's first several weeks, Bailey, 25, steadily climbed the ladder of responsibility in Oakland and eventually took over the closer's role on the way to a stunning final stats line.

2009 AL roy voting

Player	1st	2nd	3rd	Points
Andrew Bailey	13	6	5	88
Elvis Andrus	8	6	7	65
Rick Porcello	7	8	5	64
Jeff Niemann	x	5	6	21
Gordon Beckham	x	2	4	10
Brett Anderson	x	1	1	4

Named the Athletics' lone representative at the All-Star Game in St. Louis this summer, Bailey rolled to an Oakland rookie-record 26 saves (in 30 chances) and posted a 6-3 record with a 1.84 ERA, a 0.88 WHIP and 91 strikeouts against 24 walks in 83 1/3 innings over 68 appearances.

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

Bailey told MLB.com last week that he wasn't expecting the win the award, for which Rangers shortstop Elvin Andrus was considered the frontrunner.

"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."

Bailey, who wasn't immediately available for comment, said last week that in the event he won, the A's were planning to fly him to the Bay Area for a press conference.

Bailey is AL Rookie of the Year

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle, 11/16/09

Andrew Bailey has been pinching himself a lot this year.

The A's pitcher, who emerged from struggles as a starter at Double-A to become one of the majors' top closers, experienced another thrill in his fairy-tale rise to prominence when named the American League's Rookie of the Year on Monday.

"It's crazy," Bailey told The Chronicle's Susan Slusser. "This has been one thing after another, and it just continues. It's an honor with the guys who were nominated with me. There are a lot of great young rookies in baseball. To get this is absolutely incredible."

Bailey, who has been called a "poor man's (Mariano) Rivera" by the minor-league pitching coach who taught him the cut fastball, Gil Patterson, might need a loftier title than that. In voting by 28 members of the Baseball Writers Association of America, Bailey was a surprising winner over Rangers shortstop Elvis Andrus and Tigers pitcher Rick Porcello.

Bailey received 13 first-place votes, six seconds and five thirds for 88 points, finishing ahead of Andrus (eight firsts, 65 points) and Porcello (seven firsts, 64 points). Tampa Bay's Jeff Niemann was fourth, and Chicago's Gordon Beckham was fifth.

A's pitcher Brett Anderson was sixth.

Asked about winning the award after failing as a starter in Double-A, Bailey said, "It's crazy. It's been a fun ride. That's a great aspect of this organization. They give young guys a chance. They put me in the bullpen, and I took advantage of the opportunity."

Bailey had 26 saves (no other AL rookie had more than two), and his 1.84 ERA was tops among the league's rookies. In 83 1/3 innings, he struck out 91 and walked 24. Opponents hit .167 off him.

A's reliever Michael Wuertz was effusive in his praise of Bailey, and told Slusser he feels like his little brother won the award.

"I don't think a lot of people got to see him, being in Oakland, but what he did and where he came from, it's absolutely amazing," Wuertz said. "Considering where he came from, where he started the season, what he's done in one year, you don't see very often. ... Taking over the closer's job and becoming an elite closer in the league, it's just fantastic."

It was the eighth time an A's rookie won the award, matching the Yankees for most in the league. The last was another closer, Huston Street in 2005. Sixteen Dodgers have been named the National League's top rookie.

Bailey was 1-8 with a 6.18 ERA as a starter for Double-A Midland before he was moved to the bullpen. Patterson, once a coach in the Yankees' system, taught Bailey the cut fastball, and Bailey's game changed overnight out of the bullpen.

He impressed the A's in the Arizona Fall League and in spring training and eventually was appointed closer.

Bailey made the All-Star team, picked over catcher Kurt Suzuki to represent the A's, but Rivera had never heard of him until a reporter brought up his name one day before the All-Star Game. Bailey didn't appear in the game but was thrilled he was able to hang with Rivera, the guy he tries to emulate, for two days.

President Obama recognized Bailey in the clubhouse at Busch Stadium in St. Louis, but Rivera drew a blank.

"Personally, I don't know who he is," Rivera told The Chronicle at the time.

He knows now. The entire baseball world knows now.

A's Bailey, of Paul VI, named rookie of year

By Marc Narducci, Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/17/09

Andrew Bailey of the Oakland A's, a relative unknown at the beginning of the season, capped a whirlwind year yesterday by being named the American League's rookie of the year.

The pitcher, a 2002 graduate of Paul VI High School in Camden County, received 13 of 28 first-place votes for 88 points in the balloting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Texas shortstop Elvis Andrus was second with 65 points.

For someone not expected to make the team coming out of spring training, Bailey, 25, had quite a year.

He started in long relief, eventually won the closer's role, and was named to the league's all-star team.

"I didn't think I was going to win this," Bailey said yesterday by telephone before boarding a plane for Oakland. "It's such an honor considering all the great players who won it in the past."

Bailey - who also drew six second-place and five third-place votes - was 6-3 with a 1.84 ERA and 26 saves in 30 chances. His career changed in 2008 when he was switched from a starter to a reliever at midseason while pitching for double-A Midland, in Texas.

In 15 starts with Midland, he was 1-8 with a 6.18 ERA. After becoming a reliever, he was 4-1 with a 0.92 ERA in 22 appearances.

Bailey then had a banner spring, posting a 0.66 ERA in 12 appearances.

He kept improving, and both his confidence and statistics continued to soar.

"It's crazy, from where I was last year to now," Bailey said. "The key is it shows that you have to take advantage of your opportunities."

So much has happened in such a short time, and Bailey is enjoying it and trying to let it all sink in.

"My manager said to me that you will always be rookie of the year and nobody can take that away from you," Bailey said, referring to Bob Geren. "I don't think this whole year has hit me yet. It's been fast-paced from the beginning."

Bailey's parents, Bill and Lori, still live in Cherry Hill. Naturally, they were ecstatic about their son's latest honor.

"This whole year has been overwhelming," Lori Bailey said. "From making the roster to the All-Star Game to now this. We've had a smile on our face all day."

A's closer Bailey voted AL rookie of year

AP, 11/17/09

NEW YORK — Andrew Bailey, who had 26 saves and a 1.84 ERA for the Oakland Athletics in the 2009 season, was selected first on 13 of 28 ballots and finished with 88 points to win the American League Rookie of the Year award.

Texas shortstop Elvis Andrus was the runner-up with 65 points, one more than Detroit pitcher Rick Porcello.

Bailey, a surprise All-Star in July, was driving when he got word that he won.

"At first I thought it was a prank call. Which one of my friends is playing a prank on me?" he said. "I didn't want to take my eyes off the road."

Once he realized the news was legit, Bailey passed it along to his family.

"My mom was crying and my dad was stoked," he said.

Bailey went 6-3 and had 24 more saves than any other AL rookie.

He also led the league's rookies in ERA.

He is the eighth A's player to win the award, tying the New York Yankees for most in the AL.

"I can't feel disappointed," Andrus said. "Andrew Bailey is a great player, He had a great season, too."

Bailey was scuffling as a starter in Double-A last year when the A's moved him to the bullpen. Turned out to be a terrific decision.

In his first big league camp, Bailey made the Oakland roster and soon got an opportunity to close partly due to injuries. He took full advantage of it, earning a trip to the All-Star game as the team's lone representative.

"I had never been a reliever in my life, so the opportunity to just go in for an inning and let loose was something I had never experienced before," Bailey said. "It's been a learning experience, this whole year."

The 25-year-old right-hander was a quick study, striking out 91 and walking 24 in 83½ innings. He yielded only 47 hits, holding opponents to a .167 batting average.

"Certainly the first credit goes to Andrew. It's also a credit to our staff and the people who saw the change to the bullpen being a good step," general manager Billy Beane said. "He had always been a prospect, but as a starter he hit a wall. There was a suggestion to move him to the bullpen and he hasn't looked back.

Since he made the switch to the 'pen he's been dominant."

Bailey became the third Oakland player in six years to win the award, joining closer Huston Street (2005) and shortstop Bobby Crosby (2004).

After getting the news, Bailey packed a bag and rushed to the airport to catch a flight to Oakland for a news conference Tuesday.

He said he heard from manager Bob Geren and got congratulatory text messages from about 10 teammates.

"It's been a crazy day," he said.

Actually, the entire fall has been hectic for Bailey. He moved to Connecticut with his fiancée, Amanda, and they've been planning their wedding for next offseason.

And now, when he stops home in New Jersey, Bailey is often recognized.

"It's kind of strange to go out in the mall and have somebody come up to you and ask for your autograph and you're in street clothes," he said. "It's kind of surreal."

The AL Cy Young Award winner will be announced Tuesday.

AL Rookie of the Year: A's Andrew Bailey

Jeff Fletcher, aol.com, 11/17/09

For the second time in five years, an A's closer has won the American League Rookie of the Year, but this one came as a bit of a surprise.

Andrew Bailey, who was a longshot to even make the team out of spring training, followed 2005 winner Huston Street in taking the award. Bailey had 26 saves and a 1.84 ERA for the A's, earning an All-Star berth along the way. Despite those numbers, he was considered by many to be behind Texas shortstop Elvis Andrus and Tigers pitcher Rick Porcello in the race.

Bailey earned 13 first-place votes among the 28 ballots cast, from two writers in each of the 14 American League cities. Based on a 5-3-1 voting system, Bailey totaled 88 points. Andrus came in second with eight first-place votes and 65 points, followed by Porcello, with seven and 64.

Bailey, 25, was the only rookie in the league to have more than two saves. He led all rookies in ERA, and he allowed opponents to hit just .167. He struck out 91 and allowed 47 hits in 83 1/3 innings.

Bailey, a sixth-round pick in 2006, had pitched just one game above Double A coming into this spring. He was not considered one of the A's better prospects, and he was struggling as a starter in June 2008 at Double A, but then he learned the cut fastball from A's roving pitching instructor Gil Patterson, who had been with the Yankees when Mariano Rivera developed the pitch.

Bailey and Rivera were teammates at the All-Star Game in St. Louis. Bailey had hoped to talk to Rivera about the cutter, but he told FanHouse's Ed Price in July that he didn't get the chance.

"I just kind of sat there and was listening to his conversation with the other guys," he said. "I didn't want to bother him."

"I didn't get a chance to pick his brain. But hopefully there will be a chance down the road. ... We were there to have a good time and experience that."

Andrus, who joined the White Sox Gordon Beckham as the only position players to receive any votes, led all AL rookies in hits (128), runs (72), triples (8) and total bases. One of the players acquired in from the Braves in the 2007 Mark Teixeira deal, Andrus also established himself as an excellent defensive player. The Rangers thought enough of him to move All-Star Michael Young to third before the season began.

Porcello was the best starting pitcher among the AL rookie class, going 14-9 with a 3.96 ERA at age 20.

Bailey is the third A's player in the past six years to win the Rookie of the Year, joining Bobby Crosby (2004) and Street. The A's have now had eight players win the Rookie of the Year, tying the Yankees for the most in the American League. Other closers to win the award include Street, Baltimore's Gregg Olson in 1989 and Seattle's Kazuhiro Sasaki in 2000.

Monday's Arizona Fall League roundup

How They Voted				
Voting for 2009 AL Rookie of the Year (5 points for a first-place vote, 3 for second, 1 for third):				
Player, Team	1st	2nd	3rd	Pts
Bailey, A's	13	6	5	88
Andrus, Rangers	8	6	7	65
Porcello, Tigers	7	8	5	64
Niemann, Rays		5	6	21
Beckham, W.Sox		2	4	10
Anderson, A's		1	1	4

Astros' Lopez tosses four hitless frames for Saguaros

By MLB.com

Saguaros 8, Scorpions 0

Right-hander Wilton Lopez, who reached the Majors with Houston in August, struck out three over four hitless innings as Peoria held Scottsdale to only a pair of hits. Saguaros reliever Connor Graham (Indians) surrendered a leadoff single to Thomas Neal (Giants) in the fifth to end the no-hitter bid. Matt McBride plated two and fellow Indians prospect Carlos Rivero homered.

Desert Dogs 11, Solar Sox 1

Led by a four-RBI performance by Nationals prospect Danny Espinosa, Phoenix scored 11 unanswered runs in a rout of the Solar Sox. The victory gave the Desert Dogs (18-11) the top winning percentage in the AFL and also handed Phoenix the regular season crown with three games still to play. Espinosa went 3-for-4 with an RBI triple to raise his AFL average to .329 in 22 games.

Rafters 6, Javelinas 4

Cardinals right-hander Mike Parisi allowed one run on three hits on 50 pitches in five innings in what was likely his final start of the AFL season as Surprise defeated Peoria. Zach Kroenke gave up one run on two hits with two strikeouts in the ninth en route to his second save for the Rafters (13-16), while fellow Yankees prospect Brandon Laird went 3-for-3, including a double, and scored a run for the Rafters (13-16).

Athletics' Weeks, Giants' Posey shine in Arizona

By HARRELL MILLER, Napa Valley Register, 11/17/09

PHOENIX — I had the opportunity to talk with both Buster Posey and Jemile Weeks — hot properties for the Giants and the Athletics, respectively — when the AFL Scottsdale Scorpions and the Phoenix Desert Dogs met for the fifth time in Phoenix earlier this month.

Both players have similar baseball backgrounds. Both played college ball in Florida — Posey for Florida State and Weeks for the University of Miami. Both played in the 2008 College World Series where Weeks' Hurricanes eliminated Posey's Seminoles before going on to lose to the Stanford Cardinal.

Both were drafted and signed at the end of their junior years in the first round of the June 2008 Draft — Posey was the fifth pick overall, Weeks the 12th.

Both had their first full minor league seasons this year (2009). Weeks appeared in 50 games for Single-A Stockton in the California League and 30 games with Double-A Midland in the Texas League. Posey played in 80 games for Single-A San Jose in the California League and 35 games for Triple-A Fresno in the Pacific Coast League.

At the end of this season, however, when the Giants were faced with injury problems in their catching staff, Posey was called up from Fresno. He was in San Francisco for about a month where he started four games and appeared in three others.

Finally, both were selected by their organizations to play in the prestigious Arizona Fall League. Both are looking forward to returning to the Valley of the Sun in February for spring training.

I sat down with Jemile Weeks a few minutes before the 24th game of the AFL's 32-game schedule. He had the afternoon

off but assured me that he really wasn't hurt.

"It's just a hammy thing that has been nagging me a little bit."

I assumed that was baseball jargon for a hamstring problem.

Actually, Weeks had been on a 10-game hitting streak that ended the day before we talked. During that time he collected 15 hits in 41 trips to the plate for a sizzling .366 batting average. Included in his 15 hits were four doubles and three triples. He knocked in six runs, scored 12 and stole three bases.

I asked what it was like to play in the Fall League after his year at the Single-A and Double-A levels.

"I know I'm playing with the best of the best," he answered. "These are guys who are going to be major leaguers. You're getting a taste of the top talent in minor league baseball.

"Since I've been playing in college and professionally, this is the best talent I've seen. These guys are more consistent with their actions. Like with groundballs and balls to the outfield, there are not as many mistakes as you would see at other levels."

In an earlier conversation with Buster Posey, he had much the same reaction to being selected for the Arizona Fall League.

"I was extremely excited," he said. "I had heard a lot of things about the league and knew that it was known for having really good competition."

Of course, his month up with the Giants gave him a different perspective than Weeks, who is still waiting for "the call."

"I had a great experience in San Francisco," Posey explained. "I had four starts and came in late in the game three or four times. In addition, I had a chance to catch a lot of the guys in the bullpen before I actually went in the game. That helped a lot."

Of course, it's hard to talk about being on "the farm" when you've been to "the show;" nevertheless, both players had positive things to say about their minor league experiences.

"I liked Fresno," Posey explained. "They have good fans and a really good place to play. However, it's hot. Coming up to San Francisco was really quite a change in more ways than one."

At the time I talked with them, both players had appeared in 15 AFL games. Weeks had 18 hits in 64 plate appearances, Posey 13 in 58. Weeks' speed helped him to six doubles and three triples. Posey's power got him a couple of home runs.

Both Weeks and Posey are typical of a phenomena in baseball today in which players have spectacular college careers only to find themselves having to hustle for a chance to play in an environment where everyone plays at the level that brought them national recognition.

Certainly, outstanding college players frequently become outstanding professionals, but, not always. For Posey and Weeks, who both turned 22 this year, it's all out there in front of them. They have a great deal they could look back on, but, that's not the direction in which they are focused.

Nothing would please them more than to play on both sides of the Bay and continue the parallel universe that has been their baseball careers. Here's hoping their dreams all come true.