

## A's News Clips, Friday, December 11, 2009

### A's part ways with Casilla after a decade

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer 12/11/09

After spending 10 years in the A's organization, including parts of six in the majors, reliever **Santiago Casilla** was released to make room for Rule 5 draftee **Bobby Cassevah**.

Casilla, 29, was largely ineffective after a knee injury one month into last season. The end was near, anyway. He was eligible for salary arbitration, and the A's had no plan to tender him an offer.

"We have a number of candidates to fill that role," assistant general manager **David Forst** said.

One might be Cassevah, 24, who was selected from the Angels' system. He's a sinkerballer who surrendered just six homers in five minor-league seasons and has a 4-to-1 strikeout-to-fly out ratio. Last season, he was 3-7 with a 3.68 ERA in 57 games at Double-A Arkansas.

Cassevah must remain on the A's big-league roster all season or be offered back to the Angels.

Once known as Jairo Garcia, Casilla supplied false paperwork when signing with the A's in 2000, and his actual name was revealed years later. His actual birth date was revealed, too, making him nearly three years older than listed by the A's.

**Giants pick reliever:** The Giants lost **Brian Horwitz**, an outfielder from Cal who beat the odds to play 21 games in 2008, and gained a reliever in the Rule 5 draft: **Steve Johnson** from the Orioles' system. He's the son of former big-leaguer and current O's broadcaster **Dave Johnson** and was a combined 12-7 with a 3.41 ERA at Single-A and Double-A in 2009.

Horwitz was selected by Cleveland in the draft's Triple-A phase. He originally joined the Giants as an undrafted free agent.

"He's a good hitter and needs a change of scenery. He did good things for us and himself. Now he's reborn," vice president of player personnel **Dick Tidrow** said.

The Giants also lost a reliever to Baltimore: **Ben Snider**, who had a 2.88 ERA at Double-A Connecticut.

**Awards:** At a banquet here Thursday, the Giants received an award from Topps for having baseball's top minor-league system. A's director of player development **Keith Lieppman**, 60, received the Sheldon "Chief" Bender Award, a lifetime achievement honor presented by Minor League Baseball for accomplishments in player development.

### Oakland proposed three sites for A's stadium

Carolyn Jones, Chronicle Staff Writer 12/11/09

Oakland came out swinging Thursday in its bid to keep the Athletics, offering three sites for a waterfront ballpark in hopes of enticing the team to stay put.

All three sites are near Jack London Square, within walking distance of BART and the ferry terminal and close to Interstate 880. The team would pay for the stadium, while the city, through redevelopment funds and federal grants, would pay for the land, parking and infrastructure.

"We're willing to fight to keep our A's in this city," said city Councilman Larry Reid. A's owner Lew Wolff said there's no viable stadium sites in Oakland. Well, we've proven him wrong."

A's owners had no comment, pending a review by a Major League Baseball committee on the viability of stadium sites in Oakland, San Jose and Fremont. The committee is expected to complete its review within the next month.

Wolff, a Southern California real estate developer, has been trying for years to relocate the A's, saying his team suffers by sharing the Coliseum with the Raiders football team. He also wants to build a shopping and housing complex to accompany a new stadium, but has said no sites in Oakland fit his needs.

Thursday's announcement is Oakland's attempt to convince Major League Baseball and the Athletics that the city can offer everything the team needs: a choice of any of three aesthetically appealing, centrally located ballpark sites that are close to public transit, restaurants and commercial areas.

Any plans to build a ballpark would require the league, the team and the city to reach agreement, which could be months away, if it happens at all.

The A's attempt to move out of Oakland and to Fremont fell through in February after the real estate market collapsed and local officials, residents and environmentalists opposed the development, which was slated for a site near Auto Mall Parkway adjacent to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

### **Major League panel**

In March, Oakland officials asked Major League Baseball to intervene. Commissioner Bud Selig appointed a three-person committee that has been meeting with city staff, as well as looking at the possibility of the A's moving to Fremont or San Jose, for which Major League Baseball has granted the Giants territorial rights.

Keeping the A's in Oakland would bring thousands of jobs and boost economic revitalization along the waterfront, where investors have recently poured in \$3 billion, said Eric Angstadt, deputy director of the city's community and economic development office.

Dozens of housing developments, restaurants and shopping areas are under way in the Jack London Square area, including the \$55 million Jack London Market, a high-end culinary mart slated to open in April.

### **The three locations**

The proposed ballpark sites are 50 acres at the Port of Oakland's Howard Terminal; 20 acres at Embarcadero and Oak Street known as Victory Court, where the city owns a fire training facility; and 20 acres at Jefferson and Second streets, known as Jack London North.

The Oak Street site would be linked to Lake Merritt by a walkway along the Lake Merritt Channel.

The Jefferson Street site is composed of about 30 private properties. The infield would be where Markus Supply Hardware has been located since the 1950s.

"They want to put a stadium right here? We wouldn't like that," said owner Dan Altwarg. "We would fight that, and most property owners around here would, too."

The city has not begun negotiations on any of the sites. Staying at the Oakland Coliseum is also an option for the A's, staff said Thursday.

The new stadium would be complete within four or five years and modeled on AT&T Park in San Francisco and other modern urban ballparks, with little parking but plenty of restaurants, entertainment and bars nearby.

Mayor Ron Dellums said Oakland offers the A's economic vitality, a solid fan base and great baseball tradition.

"Oakland and baseball are synonymous," he said. "If baseball is a game of the people, then what better place than this magnificent city that has embraced everyday people from all over the world?"

## **Oakland officials unveil waterfront ballpark sites for the A's**

By Kelly Rayburn\_Oakland Tribune 12/11/09

The city is placing its hopes of keeping the A's in Oakland on three sites near the Bay where officials believe a new baseball-only stadium can be built.

As Major League Baseball continues to study the feasibility of keeping the team in Oakland or moving it to either Fremont or San Jose, city officials broke months of silence Thursday by publicly unveiling the sites — and declaring their belief that baseball officials are taking Oakland seriously in its attempts to keep the franchise.

"We believe that this has been a real process, that this has not been a sham," said Mayor Ron Dellums, of the city's work with a committee appointed by MLB Commissioner Bud Selig. "This has not been a game. This has been quite for real. All of us have felt that on both sides of the table."

Dellums said any new stadium would be built with money either from Major League Baseball, the A's or both.

Land, parking and infrastructure upgrades would be the city's responsibility and likely would be paid for with redevelopment money and, possibly, federal assistance.

The sites in play are Howard Terminal at the Port of Oakland; Jack London Square North, an area bounded by Jefferson, Market and Second Streets and Interstate 880; and Victory Court, between Oak Street and the Lake Merritt Channel and Interstate 880. The latter two sites have not been studied previously by the A's, and the Victory Court site could be the favored location.

The current Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum site, where some had discussed the possibility of building a new stadium, is on the back burner.

Oakland A's co-owner Lew Wolff has signaled his hopes to move the team to San Jose after saying repeatedly the team has "exhausted" its time and resources in Oakland.

The A's released the following statement Thursday: "The report is in the hands of the committee and the commissioner. We will be prepared to comment once they have finished their overall study of our ballpark situation and made a decision."

The baseball committee is expected to complete its report in January. Their work to identify potential sites for a new ballpark in one of the three cities began after plans to move to a separate Fremont site fell apart earlier this year.

Dellums joined City Council President Jane Brunner in writing Selig earlier this year, saying they were prepared to do everything "reasonably possible" to keep the club.

"There's no doubt in my mind that the Oakland A's future in Oakland was in serious jeopardy when they sent that letter to the commissioner," said Doug Boxer, a planning commissioner and one of the leaders of a group called Let's Go Oakland!, dedicated to keeping the A's in the city. At this point, Boxer said, "We are now in the game. We're in the mix."

## **Oakland A's pick up reliever Cassevah in Rule 5 draft from Angels, drop Santiago Casilla**

By Joe Stiglich, Bay Area News Group, 12/11/09

The A's cut ties Thursday with reliever Santiago Casilla, a member of their bullpen off and on since 2004.

Casilla, 29, was released to clear a spot on the 40-man roster for right-handed reliever Bobby Cassevah, whom the A's chose in Thursday's Rule 5 draft that concluded baseball's annual winter meetings.

Cassevah, 24, was plucked from the Angels organization and pitched at Double-A in 2009. The A's will pay the Angels \$50,000 for Cassevah's rights. The right-hander must remain on Oakland's 25-man roster for the entire 2010 campaign or be offered back to the Angels for \$25,000.

Cassevah is 11-21 with a 4.33 ERA in five minor league seasons, and he's allowed just six homers in 270 innings.

"We felt like he had a good shot to come in and compete in our bullpen," A's assistant general manager David Forst said. "He had a phenomenal year in the Texas League, a 4-to-1 ground ball ratio. Randy Johnson (one of the A's lead scouts) saw him in July and said it was one of the best sinkers he's ever seen."

Oakland's bullpen has depth, so Cassevah will be challenged to stick.

Casilla had stints on the DL in each of his past two seasons and wasn't nearly as effective each time after his return. He went 1-2 with a 5.96 ERA in 46 appearances last season.

Casilla was unlikely to be tendered a contract by Saturday's 9 p.m. deadline for teams to decide whether to retain arbitration-eligible players.

"He obviously struggled at times last year," Forst said. "It's just unfortunate he never really regained the form we saw early in '08 and even the first month of (2009)."

The A's selected right-hander Beau Vaughan, a Texas Rangers prospect, in the Triple-A phase of the Rule 5 draft.

None of the A's own prospects was chosen Thursday.

Oakland must tender contracts to four players by 9 p.m. Saturday or risk losing them to free agency — outfielder/DH Jack Cust, center fielder Rajai Davis, left fielder Scott Hairston and reliever Michael Wuertz.

Davis and Wuertz are squarely in the A's plans. Oakland gave up three pitchers to obtain Hairston in a trade from San Diego in July, so he figures to return, although left field is believed to be an area where the A's are considering upgrading.

Cust is a strong nontender candidate even though he's led the club in homers for the past three seasons. He made \$2.8 million in 2009 and would seem to command a raise to the \$4-5 million range.

The A's may find that steep for a player who's led the AL in strikeouts for three straight years.

Keith Lieppman, the A's farm director, was to be honored Thursday night for receiving the "Chief" Bender Award, given in recognition of excellence in player development.

## **Oakland officials identify four sites for new A's Stadium**

Blanca Torres, San Francisco Business Times 12/10/09

In the ongoing saga of trying to keep the A's baseball team in Oakland, city officials have identified four sites, two of which had not been considered previously, that could accommodate a new stadium for the team.

The sites include the current Oakland Coliseum location and three sites near the Jack London Square waterfront: Howard Terminal in the Port of Oakland, another parcel at Jefferson and Market and a site called Victory Court between Oak Street and the Lake Merritt Channel. The last two are the new sites under consideration.

"We went to the MLB and said 'We want the As in Oakland,' and we're comfortable with all of these sites," said Eric Angstadt, director of planning for the city's **Community and Economic Development Agency**.

City leaders have been working since March to find ways to keep the As in Oakland and sent a letter to **Major League Baseball**. A few weeks later, the league then created a three-member task force to revisit the team's options to stay in Oakland. The league laid out criteria for a new site, including a size of at least 20 acres and proximity to amenities such as transportation and restaurants. Angstadt said the city added two new waterfront locations because most new baseball stadiums built in the last several years have been near waterfronts.

Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums, City Council President Jane Brunner, Vice Mayor Ignacio De La Fuente, Councilmember Larry Reid of District 7, Angstadt, Victoria Jones of **Clorox** and Douglas Boxer of Let's Go Oakland, a non-profit, held a joint press conference Thursday to announced the sites.

Dellums said the city's goal is to inform the team leadership and the MLB that there are viable sites for a new stadium in Oakland. The city, which faces a major budget deficit, cannot pay for the stadium, but would agree to support the effort with land, infrastructure and parking. Dellums emphasized that the process has not been a negotiation with MLB, but rather a "fact-finding mission."

"Right now baseball is the one controlling the timeline," Angstadt said. "We've done what we can at this point."

The announcement comes at a time when the team's head representative, Lew Wolff has stated he wants the team to move to San Jose and that the team has already considered and rejected any options to stay in Oakland.

"Lew Wolff said he did due diligence in Oakland and found no sites and we have proved him wrong," Reid said.

The A's, which said a new stadium will generate more money, have played in Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum since 1968. The baseball team shares the facility with the **Oakland Raiders**. The A's lease in the coliseum expires in 2010 with three, one-year options to extend.

Reid said if the As were to leave the Coliseum, the Raiders would continue to use the facility. The football team has also proposed a building a new stadium.

## **A's Take Two In Rule 5; Drop Casilla**

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Dec 10, 2009

The Oakland A's have made it an annual tradition to take a player in the major league portion of the Rule 5 draft and that tradition continued on Thursday, as Oakland snagged right-hander Bobby Cassevah from the Los Angeles Angels. The team also took a right-hander from the Texas Rangers' organization in the Triple-A portion, Beau Vaughan, and parted ways with reliever Santiago Casilla.

The Oakland A's have one of the most effective and deepest bullpens in baseball, but that didn't stop them from adding a reliever in the major league portion of the Rule 5 draft on Thursday. With the draft's ninth overall pick, the A's took right-hander Bobby Cassevah out of Los Angeles Angels organization. The A's also selected a reliever in the minor league portion of the draft, right-hander Beau Vaughan of the Texas Rangers. The A's didn't lose any players in the major or minor league portions.

Rule 5 picks must be kept on a team's 25-man roster for an entire season or be offered back to their original organization. Consequently, Cassevah was automatically added to the A's 40-man roster after being drafted. Going into Thursday, the A's had a full 40-man roster. To make room for Cassevah, Oakland dropped right-hander Santiago Casilla. Casilla was arbitration-eligible and was a candidate to be non-tendered next week at the deadline for when teams had to offer contracts or non-tender their arbitration-eligible players.

Cassevah comes to Oakland after spending the 2009 season with Double-A Arkansas of the Texas League. A native of Jacksonville, Florida, Cassevah went 3-7 with a 3.68 ERA and four saves for the Travelers in 2009. He held opposing batters to a .236 average and allowed only two homeruns. His K:BB ratio was unimpressive (45 strike-outs to 37 walks), but Cassevah was among the minor league leaders in inducing groundballs last season, a trait the A's like in their relief pitchers.

Cassevah was originally a 34th round pick of the Angels out of Pace High School in 2004. Coming out of high school, Cassevah was considered a first-round talent, but he dropped in the draft because he underwent Tommy John surgery as a senior. The Angels signed him to an above-slot bonus of \$175,000. Cassevah was a two-sport star in high school and turned down the opportunity to play quarterback at LSU to sign with the Angels.

The 24-year-old had moved slowly through the Angels system, not reaching Double-A until his fifth professional campaign. He isn't overpowering, with his fastball mostly sitting in the low-90s/high-80s, but he can reach back and hit 93-94 MPH on occasion. Cassevah's best pitch is his slider. He was an extreme groundball pitcher for Arkansas in 2009, inducing groundballs on more than 70% of balls hit in play.

Cassevah will join the A's major league spring training camp and will have to remain on the A's roster all season or be offered back to Los Angeles for \$25,000 (the A's paid \$50,000 for the right to draft Cassevah). Last year, the A's took outfielder Ben Copeland from the San Francisco Giants organization. Copeland started the season on the A's major league disabled list and was briefly on the team's major league roster, but he was offered back to San Francisco, who reclaimed him, before appearing in a game with the A's.

Vaughan split his season between Triple-A Oklahoma City and Double-A Frisco in the Rangers' chain. The right-hander had a 3.77 ERA and eight saves in 2009. The 28-year-old struck-out 57 in 62 innings pitched. He was originally a third-round pick of the Boston Red Sox in 2003 out of Arizona State. Vaughan spent six seasons in the Red Sox chain before joining Texas last year in a trade that sent Wes Littleton to Boston.

Vaughan has a career 3.65 ERA and has struck-out 395 in 402 innings over seven seasons. Vaughan was a starter early in his career, but he has been a reliever since 2006. He is a side-armed and a sinker, slider pitcher who gets a lot of groundball outs and has good command. Vaughan became well-known around the blogosphere last season when he started a popular blog on the MLBlogs network called "Beau Knows Diddy," where he interviewed his teammates.

Unlike players selected in the major league portion of the Rule 5 draft, players taken in the minor league portion are not required to stay on a particular roster all season. Nevertheless, Vaughan's veteran experience in minor league baseball makes it likely that he will spend the 2010 season with Triple-A Sacramento.

Whether or not Cassevah makes the A's roster, Oakland's bullpen will have a different look in 2010 without Casilla. The right-hander has been a member of the A's bullpen for each of the past three seasons, appearing in 46 or more games for Oakland in each of those years. One of the hardest throwers in the A's organization, Casilla struggled with his command in 2009, allowing six homers in 48.1 innings and a .303 BAA. He also saw his strike-out total dip to only 35 after whiffing 43 in 50.1 innings in 2008.

Casilla was one of four arbitration-eligible players on the A's roster and he was a strong candidate to be non-tendered because of the depth in the A's bullpen and the rise in his ERA in 2009 to 5.96. The A's other arbitration-eligible players are Jack Cust, Rajai Davis and Scott Hairston.

Casilla had a long and winding history with the A's. Signed out of the Dominican Republic in 2000, Casilla was one of the A's top prospects in 2004 when he rose three levels in the Oakland system and struck-out 102 batters in only 61.2 innings. At the time, Casilla was going by the name Jairo Garcia and he was believed to be only 21 years old. Casilla made his major league debut in 2004. During the spring of 2006, Casilla revealed his true name and that he was actually three years older than previously believed. After shuttling back-and-forth between Triple-A and the big leagues for much of 2005 through early 2007, Casilla became a regular in the A's bullpen by mid-season 2007. At times, Casilla was dominant for Oakland, but he struggled with intermittent elbow problems that impacted his control and sometimes sapped the effectiveness of his out-pitch: the slider.

Given Casilla's ability to throw in the mid-90s and his good slider, it is likely that he will sign a major league deal with

another team for 2010.

## **Lieppman to be honored**

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle blog 12/10/09 from the winter meetings in Indianapolis . . .

Several A's execs are staying extra night to attend an awards banquet in which organizational lifer Keith Lieppman, 60, will be honored.

Lieppman won this year's Sheldon "Chief" Bender Award, a lifetime achievement honor presented by Minor League Baseball for accomplishments in player development.

"Best guy in the business for me," director of player personnel Billy Owens said. "Great guy to learn from. Tremendous person. Outstanding worker. Character guy."

The 2010 season will be Lieppman's 40th with the A's. He has been director of player development since succeeding his mentor, Karl Kuehl, in 1992.

"He's the guy who really makes the entire minor-league system go," assistant GM David Forst said. "Nothing at the major-league level happens without going through Keith first. It shows how invaluable he is in the organization."