

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, December 16, 2009

### Group to fight public funding for A's stadium in San Jose

By Tracy Seipel, Mercury News, 12/16/09

After months of sharp rhetoric against the proposed Oakland A's move to San Jose, backers of the San Francisco Giants have started swinging.

Today, a group of San Jose Giants fans — with support from the minor league team and, perhaps, its big league partner — will unveil a coalition called Stand For San Jose to oppose public funds or subsidies that would bring the A's to a new downtown ballpark.

The group plans a public relations campaign to argue the stadium would divert scant city resources from schools, police and fire services — something San Jose officials say is untrue.

Lawyers for the group members also plan to file a letter with the city today challenging a revised environmental impact report for the stadium.

At a meeting Monday night at Municipal Stadium, San Jose Giants president and Chief Executive Jim Weyermann met with a handful of neighborhood residents to discuss strategy.

The team is partly owned by the San Francisco Giants, who took a 25 percent stake earlier this year in what was widely seen as an effort to strengthen their claim to the South Bay.

The Giants own Major League Baseball's territorial rights to the area and say the A's move to San Jose would steal a significant chunk of their revenues.

Weyermann declined to say what role the San Francisco Giants are playing in the campaign, referring questions to the club. Officials there did not immediately return calls for comment.

Asked who is paying for the law firm and the San Francisco public relations agency that's assisting the fledgling group, Weyermann would only say the San Jose Giants were not footing the bill.

Most of the group's 60 members live in Santa Clara County, Weyermann said.

San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed said the group is "certainly welcome" to challenge the supplemental environmental impact report, which is slated to be discussed at a public "scoping meeting" this evening at City Hall.

The meeting will let residents and public agencies offer feedback about the report, which is expected to be finished early next year. San Jose Giants officials and members of the new group say the document — initially prepared in 2006, before current talks with the A's began — doesn't take full account of traffic impacts and other issues.

But Reed said the group's efforts appear to be misguided.

"They probably ought to take a look at the economic impact analysis we did that shows the project will generate money for the city's general fund and redevelopment agency," he said.

That analysis, prepared by a city-hired consulting firm in September, said the development of a 32,000-seat downtown ballpark would lead to \$130 million in annual spending throughout the local economy — and \$2.9 billion over a 30-year period.

The report established a set of negotiating principles that insists the A's— and not taxpayers — would be responsible for financing and building the stadium and financing all stadium operating costs.

But experts say the analysis doesn't mention the cost of the land needed for a ballpark, nor the cost of infrastructure — upgrading the adjacent intersections around the site, for example.

Reed said he believes the vast majority of people in San Jose would see an A's stadium "as a big plus for the city."

A June poll of 400 Santa Clara County voters by Oregon pollster Rick Lindholm showed that 45 percent would approve of the A's moving to San Jose, with 39 percent disapproving.

A more recent poll by Lindholm in October showed a closer vote of city residents: 45 percent who would approve of the move, compared with 44 percent who would not. Support countywide was 45 to 37 percent, Lindholm said.

Lindholm told the Mercury News on Tuesday that he had conducted the polls for free and that no one had hired him to do them.

Reed said he was aware of another poll, commissioned earlier this year by the booster group Pro Baseball for San Jose, that showed substantial support for the A's move. But that group did not publicly release the results of its poll, said Santa Clara County Assessor Larry Stone, a member of the group.

Earlier this year, Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig appointed a commission to study the A's stadium options. That committee has met with San Jose officials at least once, but members will not comment on their work or say when they expect it to be finished.

Oakland officials are fighting to keep the team, but A's owner Lew Wolff — a college fraternity brother of Selig's — wants to move the team to San Jose, saying it has exhausted its options in Oakland.

It would take a vote of three-quarters of baseball's owners to terminate the Giants' territorial rights and let the A's move to San Jose.

Weyermann said the new coalition is not anti-baseball. "The question is," he said, "is this the time that public money ought to go to subsidize this particular project at a time when we are closing libraries, schools, and public safety issues are not being addressed?"

Weyermann added that county residents don't want to see the San Jose Giants disappear, as team officials have pledged will happen if the A's relocate.

In 2009, the San Jose Giants set all-time attendance and revenue records, drawing more than 200,000 fans for the first time.

## **Wallace traded to Toronto**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer 12/16/09

Five months ago, Brett Wallace was seen as the A's future at third base.

Now, Wallace is Toronto's property - dealt away as part of the Roy Halladay trade between the Blue Jays and Phillies - and Oakland's newest darling is former Stanford outfielder Michael Taylor, picked up from Philadelphia as part of the multi-team trade.

The deal has been completed, a major-league source told The Chronicle, but Halladay's veteran status creates an automatic delay because he has the right to refuse any trade.

Oakland obtained Wallace in the high-profile Matt Holliday deal with St. Louis in July, and though the team has no reservations about his bat, Wallace's defense was another matter. The A's apparently came to doubt the stocky Wallace's ability to play third at the big-league level, and the team already has plenty of young first basemen, including Daric Barton, Chris Carter and Sean Doolittle.

In addition, the team recently acquired third baseman Jake Fox from the Cubs, and he is not considered a top-notch defensive player, either. Therefore, Oakland is planning to move second-base prospect Adrian Cardenas to third base full time, especially with Jemile Weeks, the team's top pick in the 2008 draft, performing well at second.

Taylor, who turns 24 on Saturday, is a 6-foot-6, 250-pound right-handed hitter. He was a fifth-round pick by the Phillies out of Stanford in 2007 and has blossomed in the pros, hitting .346 with 19 homers and 88 RBIs at two stops in 2008. He hit .320 with 20 homers, 84 RBIs and 21 steals in two levels last season. Wallace, 23, hit .293 overall last year with 20 homers and 63 RBIs.

Scouts have raved about Taylor's development and he is considered close to major-league ready, so he has a good chance to make the roster out of spring training. If so, Taylor would start at one of the corner outfield spots.

## **Oakland A's prospect Brett Wallace could be traded for former Stanford star Michael Taylor**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 12/16/09

Just when all appeared quiet on the A's trade front, they jumped back into the fray.

Oakland is poised to deal highly rated third baseman Brett Wallace to the Toronto Blue Jays in exchange for outfielder Michael Taylor, two sources confirmed to Bay Area News Group on Tuesday.

The move would be a swap of two of the top prospects from each organization.

Details were still falling into place Tuesday, as this trade is an offshoot of the three-team blockbuster that would send Toronto ace Roy Halladay to Philadelphia and Phillies ace Cliff Lee to the Seattle Mariners.

Taylor, a member of Philadelphia's farm system, would be shipped to Toronto as part of that deal before being flipped to Oakland for Wallace.

Halladay was scheduled to take a physical Tuesday to set the wheels in motion on the deals.

An A's announcement could come as soon as today.

ESPN reported Tuesday morning that Oakland and Toronto were negotiating a Wallace-Taylor trade. A's general manager Billy Beane hardly issued a denial when asked if a deal involving Wallace were in the works.

"We're not in position to comment right now," Beane told Bay Area News Group.

As recently as last week's winter meetings, Beane said trade dialogue was slow and that any significant moves for the A's likely would come through free agency.

But the A's long have coveted Taylor, a 6-foot-6, 250-pound Stanford product who split 2009 between Double-A and Triple-A and hit a combined .320 with 20 homers and 84 RBI.

To get Taylor, they're willing to part with Wallace just five months after obtaining him from St. Louis as the centerpiece to the Matt Holliday trade.

Wallace, who grew up in Sonoma, is a lifelong A's fan who talked enthusiastically about learning from his favorite player, third baseman Eric Chavez, and perhaps someday replacing him.

Wallace, 23, was expected to join the big league roster at some point in 2010 along with first baseman Chris Carter, the A's other top prospect.

But although Wallace is considered one of the top pure hitters in the minors, the A's weren't convinced he could handle third defensively.

They also recently acquired Jake Fox, a versatile player whose primary position is third base.

There was thought Wallace might move to first base, but the A's already have a logjam of prospects there with Carter, Sean Doolittle and incumbent starter Daric Barton.

Entering 2009, ESPN rated Taylor as the Phillies' No. 4 prospect and Baseball America rated him No. 6. Baseball America also ranked Taylor as Philadelphia's best power-hitting prospect, and adding power continues to be one of the A's top priorities.

Taylor, who turns 24 on Saturday, is considered close to being major league ready. He's played left and right field in the minors.

The A's appear set with Rajai Davis in center field. They believe Ryan Sweeney shows promise in right, and they recently offered arbitration to left fielder Scott Hairston. But Beane has said Oakland needs more power at the corner outfield spots.

If it turns out Fox is more suited to a position other than third, the A's still are without a long-term answer there with Chavez entering the final year of his contract. Even before the Wallace trade surfaced, Beane said he hoped to acquire another young third baseman this winter.

Note: A's representatives traveled to Houston to watch left-hander Aroldis Chapman throw a bullpen session. Chapman defected from Cuba and is widely considered the top international amateur player available this winter.

## **Seven prospects involved in blockbuster**

### **A look at the Minor Leaguers in Halladay, Lee deal**

By Jonathan Mayo and Lisa Winston / MLB.com 12/15/09

Leading up to the official announcement of the four-team deal that will see Roy Halladay go to Philadelphia and Cliff Lee go to Seattle, just about every top prospect from the Mariners and Phillies was mentioned in one report or another.

When the dust clears, it appears the Phillies will deal their top pitching prospect, one of their better position prospects and their top catching prospect to the Jays, but get back the Mariners' top pitching prospects. The Jays, in turn, take the Phillies outfielder and flip him over to the A's in return for one of the better pure bats in their system, a guy who was just traded to Oakland last July.

Confused? Don't worry, here's a clearer picture on the seven Minor League prospects reportedly involved in this deal.

#### **From Mariners to Phillies:**

##### **Phillippe Aumont, RHP**

Taken in the first round of the 2007 Draft (No. 11 overall), the 20-year-old Aumont still had a tremendous amount of upside. The 6-foot-7 Canadian has a plus fastball he can throw in the mid-90s and complements it with an above-average breaking ball, a slider he throws in the low-80s that can be a plus pitch as well at times. He's shown a feel for a changeup at times over the past couple of years, but it's far from a perfected pitch.

Playing for travel teams in Canada as a high schooler, Aumont was limited somewhat in the amount of work he could get in. That's continued to an extent as a professional. He signed late in 2007, so he wasn't able to make his debut until the 2008 season. He only saw 55 2/3 innings of work during that debut as the Mariners were extremely cautious with their first-rounder and shut him down for two months when he had a sore elbow. Still, he was a Midwest League All-Star and had a 2.75 ERA and .224 batting average against.

The Mariners, partially because of durability concerns and partially because his two-pitch power mix seemed perfect for the role, turned Aumont into a full-time reliever in 2009. After pitching very well for Team Canada in the World Baseball Classic, he saved 12 games and had a .195 batting average against while pitching in a very hitter-friendly High Desert park in the California League. That led to a promotion to Double-A. He was a bit more hittable there, though he still finished the season with 16 combined saves and 59 strikeouts in 51 innings. He did miss time with a broken left hand when he punched a wall following a blown save. He made up some time in the Arizona Fall League, where he gave up 19 hits and eight walks in 12 innings, but also struck out 18.

##### **Tyson Gillies, OF**

Anyone who watched the Futures Game knows what Gillies is about: speed, speed and speed. The Canadian center fielder is a plus, plus in scouting parlance and on the scouting scale, he'd be at least a 70 (80 is the best). He stole 44 bases in 2009

while also hitting .341 for High Desert to finish third in the Class A Advanced California League. He was second with his .430 on-base percentage, drawing 60 walks along the way. His 14 triples (second in the league) are a testament not only to his speed, but also to his makeup. He breaks out of the box thinking three every at-bat. He can play all three outfield spots and has a very good arm.

The 25th-rounder out of the 2006 Draft is a true inspiration. Gillies is hard of hearing, though he speaks clearly and uses hearing aids in both ears. Sometimes, he takes them out when he is playing. He does not shy away from being a role model for others.

### **J.C. Ramirez, RHP**

If you like raw arm strength, Ramirez might be your guy. The 21-year-old was signed by the Mariners out of Nicaragua back in the summer of 2005 and he'd been making his way slowly up Seattle's ladder. In 2008, he pitched for Low Class A Wisconsin. This past year, it was up to High Desert, where the friendly confines of his home ballpark clearly didn't help him. Ramirez had a 6.78 ERA in 17 outings in High Desert. That number dropped to 3.09 in his 11 road starts.

Ramirez still has some projection and upside to him at 6-foot-3. He's already got a pretty good fastball he can crank as high as 97 mph to go along with a very good hard slider. His changeup lags behind, never surprising for a young pitcher, and it's possible he could be a dynamo short reliever when all is said and done.

### **From the Phillies to the Blue Jays**

#### **Kyle Drabek, RHP**

The "untouchable" back in July when the Phils talked to the Jays about Halladay, he was now suddenly available and perhaps that was the key to the deal. The 2006 first-rounder (18th overall) missed almost all of the 2008 season following Tommy John surgery, but looked very much like the guy who was the top high school arm in the '06 Draft class during the 2009 season.

The son of former big league hurler Doug, Drabek split time between the Florida State and Double-A Eastern Leagues at age 21. Combined, the right-hander went 12-3 with a 3.19 ERA, a .239 batting average against and 150 strikeouts over 158 innings. He was electrifying during his Futures Game performance, an exclamation point to the statement that he was back 100 percent as one of the better pitching prospects in the game.

Drabek has a fastball he runs up regularly to 92-93 mph, but his best pitch is one of the better power curveballs in the Minors. It's a breaking ball he commands with precision. His changeup still needs some work, but his competitive nature and athleticism should allow him to maximize his stuff. He's likely to need some time in Triple-A to start the year, but he could very well see some time in Toronto's rotation at some point in 2010.

#### **Michael Taylor, OF**

Of the two top outfielders in the Phillies system, Domonic Brown had the more dynamic upside, but Taylor was more polished and advanced. Taken in the fifth round out of Stanford in the 2007 Draft, there were initially some concerns about his plate discipline and pitch recognition when he was coming out of college.

He's answered many of those questions by hitting .312/.383/.512 over the course of his Minor League career. He split time between Double-A and Triple-A in 2009 and finished with a .320 average to go along with a .395 on-base percentage, .549 slugging percentage, 20 homers and 84 RBIs over 116 games. He also stole 21 bases, a testament to his baserunning skills as much as his decent speed. Defensively, he's got a good arm and should be fine as a corner outfielder in the big leagues. And he's not too far away. Even if he starts the season back in Triple-A, he's a pretty good bet to see his first big league action in 2010.

#### **Travis d'Arnaud, C**

A supplemental first-round pick in the 2007 Draft out of high school, d'Arnaud receives raves for his work behind the plate and showed some signs of life with the bat during his first taste of full-season ball in 2009. He hit .255 for Class A Lakewood in the South Atlantic League, but he upped that to .302 in the second half. He also racked up 38 doubles and 13 homers, showing hints of fulfilling some of his power potential.

When all is said and done, though, d'Arnaud won't have to hit a ton to make it to the big leagues. He works hard on his defense, handles a staff very well and has all the tools to be an above-average backstop, including excellent arm strength. How much he hits might determine whether he's a very valuable backup or a really good everyday catcher down the road in the big leagues.

### **From the A's to the Blue Jays (For Michael Taylor)**

### **Brett Wallace, 3B**

Wallace is changing organizations for the second time in less than six months, amazing considering he just finished up his first full season after going in the first round of the 2008 Draft. He was the key prospect the Cardinals sent to Oakland in the Matt Holliday deal. The Futures Gamer began the year in Double-A, quickly got promoted to Triple-A and hit pretty much everywhere he was. He finished the season with a .293/.367/.455 line, and he actually was at his best with Sacramento following the trade (.302/.365/.505).

Coming out of ASU, the hope was that Wallace's bat would carry him quickly to the big leagues and that's proven to be the case. He hit 20 homers in 2009 and there's more power there. The offensive side of the game is ready for a shot at the big leagues. The main question surrounding Wallace is where his home will be defensively. He played third all year, though the A's worked him in at first base a few times after the trade. Heading into the Draft, few felt he'd be able to stay at the hot corner, but Wallace has worked hard on his defense and was intent on proving people wrong. Currently, the Jays have Edwin Encarnacion at third and Lyle Overbay at first, so something would have to give in order for Wallace to get a shot at either corner.

## **Doctor Under Inquiry Has Treated Baseball Players**

By MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT, New York Times, 12/15/09

After Mets shortstop Jose Reyes injured his right leg last May, his season deteriorated into a series of physical setbacks. As the frustrations mounted about the injury — first diagnosed as calf tendinitis and then as a torn hamstring tendon — Reyes's agent, Peter Greenberg, came to the Mets with a proposal.

Greenberg wanted Reyes to travel to Toronto to receive platelet-rich plasma therapy — a procedure that does not violate baseball's performance-enhancing drug policies — from Dr. Anthony Galea, according to several people with direct knowledge of the matter.

Greenberg was not the only agent who asked teams to send their players to be treated by Galea. Several people within baseball said Randy and Alan Hendricks insisted to a skeptical Oakland Athletics in 2007 that their client, reliever Huston Street, visit Galea because of an elbow injury. That same season, John Patterson, a pitcher for the Washington Nationals and also a Hendricks client, also traveled to Toronto to be treated by Galea.

Those with knowledge of the interactions with Galea spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing the medical treatment of players.

Galea, who has also treated prominent athletes like Tiger Woods, Donovan Bailey and Dara Torres, is now under investigation by authorities in the United States and Canada who are seeking to determine if he distributed performance-enhancing drugs. Galea has acknowledged providing human growth hormone to clients over 40, and says he uses it as well, but has denied ever providing professional athletes with banned substances.

Within professional sports, Galea has become well-known among some agents and athletes as a doctor who is adept at aggressively treating injuries, and some even refer to him as "Miracle Man." Galea, himself, boasts of his success rate, saying, "All these athletes come to see me in Canada 'cause I fix them." But like the A's, the Mets were concerned about sending Reyes, a two-time All-Star, to Galea because they knew little about him.

Although team officials tried to change Greenberg's mind about using Galea, they ultimately relented because under the collective bargaining agreement, players have a right to see a doctor of their choice. Greenberg and an official from the Mets' medical staff then traveled to Toronto with Reyes, where he received plasma therapy from Galea.

The Mets insisted on having a member of the medical staff on the trip because they wanted someone to be in the present with Reyes and Galea at all times. Uneasy with the situation, they wanted to be sure that Galea did not give Reyes any types of substances that were banned under baseball's drug-testing program, said the people with knowledge of what occurred.

In the end, it is unclear if Galea's treatment benefited Reyes in any way. He never did return to action during the 2009 season and ultimately aggravated his hamstring tear in late September while still trying to rehabilitate his injury. He later underwent surgery, and he is expected to be ready for spring training.

In the case of Street, the A's team doctors and Lewis Yocum, an orthopedist for the Los Angeles Angels, separately concluded that Street had an irritated ulnar nerve in his right elbow. Both recommended several weeks of rest.

Despite that diagnosis, the Hendricks brothers urged the A's to send Street to Toronto. One person in baseball said Alan Hendricks in particular insisted on using Galea because Hendricks thought he had had great success in treating elbow injuries.

"Our understanding was that Dr. Galea was a well-known doctor in Canada who had worked extensively with well known professional tennis players, football players and hockey players," Randy Hendricks said in an e-mail message to The New York Times.

Randy Hendricks said that he and his brother had not previously met Galea when they decided to send Huston to see him. Hendricks said that after Galea examined Street, he reached the same conclusion that the A's doctors had — that Street had a nerve problem.

Galea recommended extensive oxygen therapy, Hendricks said, and Street remained for 18 days in Canada being treated by Galea, according to an article in The Toronto Sun in July 2007. Not long after, he began pitching again. He now plays for the Colorado Rockies.

As for Patterson, he was the opening-day starter for the Washington Nationals in April 2007, but he, too, came down with a nerve problem in his elbow. That June, Nationals Manager Manny Acta told reporters that Patterson was traveling to Toronto to see a doctor for treatment that was "not approved here in the states yet."

The doctor was Galea. The Nationals said it was Patterson and his agent who sought the treatment but declined to say what type of therapy the pitcher would be receiving.

Ultimately, Patterson had surgery in September that year to decompress the radial nerve in his right elbow. He was released by the Nationals in March 2008 and has not pitched in the major leagues since then.

Meanwhile on Tuesday, representatives of Woods at the International Management Group of Cleveland disputed Galea's claim that I.M.G. referred Woods to him for treatment after becoming concerned about the pace of his rehabilitation following knee surgery in June 2008.

"No one at I.M.G. has ever met or recommended Dr. Galea, nor were we worried about the progress of Tiger's recovery," Mark Steinberg of I.M.G. said in a statement.

In Toronto, Galea's lawyer, Brian H. Greenspan, said Galea's assistant, who was stopped as she was attempting to drive his car to the United States from Canada, was charged after authorities found four drugs, including human growth hormone, in his medical bag in the trunk.

Greenspan did not specify what charges were filed against the assistant, who has been identified only as a 26-year-old woman. She no longer works for Galea and is cooperating with authorities, he said.

## **Report: A's Deal Wallace For Taylor**

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Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Dec 15, 2009

After flying under the radar during the recently concluded winter meetings, the Oakland A's made headlines on Tuesday when they inserted themselves into the Roy Halladay-Cliff Lee deal. According to multiple on-line reports, the A's are set to trade top prospect Brett Wallace for outfield prospect Michael Taylor, who went from Philadelphia to Toronto to Oakland in the four-team deal.

"Challenge trades," or trades that involve two teams trading each other top prospects, are rare in baseball. Generally speaking, when a prospect is traded, it is usually in return for an established major league veteran. However, on occasion, a team will deal a top prospect in exchange for another top prospect with the challenge being which prospect will have a better future long-term.

The last true challenge trade the A's were involved with came in 2002 when Oakland dealt then top-prospects Gerald Laird and Ryan Ludwick (among others) to the Texas Rangers for Carlos Pena. Ironically, neither team reaped the ultimate benefits of that trade, although Pena and Ludwick, in particular, have turned into All-Star caliber major league players for different teams in recent years and Laird has had a long major league career.

Only time will tell whether Brett Wallace or Michael Taylor have the better career. For now, this trade - which was first reported by ESPN.com's Buster Olney and has been confirmed by several on-line outlets since that report - can be summarized as a deal of two of the top 20 position player prospects in baseball.

The deal involving Taylor and Wallace is reportedly part of a much larger set of deals involving four different teams: the A's, the Toronto Blue Jays, the Seattle Mariners and the Philadelphia Phillies. In this four-team trade, former Cy Young award winners Roy Halladay and Cliff Lee are moving teams. Other top prospects in addition to Wallace and Taylor are also reportedly on the move.

From the A's perspective, the deal is rather simple. Oakland is sending a premier corner infield prospect to Toronto for a premier corner outfield prospect.

Wallace departs the A's organization after only five months with the team. He was acquired by the A's as part of another blockbuster deal - the Matt Holliday trade with St. Louis in July 2009. A first-round selection in 2008 by the Cardinals (13th overall) out of Arizona State, Wallace hit .293 with 20 homers, 63 RBIs and an 822 OPS in 138 games between Double-A Springfield, Triple-A Memphis and Triple-A Sacramento in 2009. It was his first full professional season. Wallace hit .337 with a 957 OPS in 54 games at the Low-A and Double-A levels in 2008. He was a participant in the MLB Futures Game in St. Louis this past summer and was recently named the A's number one prospect by Scout.com. Wallace is a native of the Bay Area and grew up an Oakland A's fan.

Taylor also has a Bay Area connection, having played his college baseball at Stanford. As part of the reported four-team deal, Taylor will come to the A's via Toronto, who will acquire the outfielder from Philadelphia in the Roy Halladay trade.

Taylor was a fifth-round selection of the Phillies in 2007. After a lackluster 2007 debut in professional baseball, Taylor had a breakthrough 2008 campaign, batting .346 with a 968 OPS in 132 games at the Low-A and High-A levels. He followed that up with another outstanding season in 2009 when he batted .320 with 20 homers, 84 RBIs and a 944 OPS in 116 games for Double-A Reading and Triple-A Lehigh Valley. Taylor was named the Phillies' top minor league hitter for 2009 by the organization and was widely considered to be one of Philadelphia's top two or three prospects.

Wallace is almost a year younger than Taylor, but both players are on the verge of being major league ready. The two prospects came into professional baseball with solid backgrounds having competed collegiately for elite baseball programs in the Pac-10. Wallace was considered a more polished player coming out of college, but Taylor has quickly worked away many of the rough edges to his game that caused him to have inconsistent production at Stanford. Both players have reputations for being intelligent and hard working, as well as coachable, and both were able to maintain outstanding performances during the 2009 trade deadline despite regularly being the subject of trade rumors.

From the A's perspective, they are giving up a possible heir to Eric Chavez at third base for a possible answer to their gaping hole in the number three position in their line-up. Oakland has had difficulty finding a consistent right-handed power source since Miguel Tejada left the team via free agency after the 2003 season. Frank Thomas provided that power in 2006 and Holliday did to some extent at the start of the 2009 season, but the team otherwise has struggled in that area. With Taylor on-board and top prospect Chris Carter (a right-handed hitting first-baseman/outfielder) on the cusp of the big leagues, the



A's could soon be boasting their most powerful right-handed middle of the order since the days of the Bash Brothers.

In addition to power, Taylor brings with him a strong throwing arm, speed on the basepaths (21 stolen bases in 26 chances in 2009) and the ability to hit for average. Coming out of college, scouts were concerned that Taylor would be extremely vulnerable to the strike-out because of his massive frame (he is 6'6" with long arms). However, since 2008, Taylor has struck-out in 15% of his total at-bats, not a particularly high number for a power-hitter. He is considered a strong defensive corner outfielder.

This trade, if completed, does leave the A's depth chart unsettled. While there were significant questions as to whether Wallace would be able to stay at third base defensively, the fact remained that at the present moment, Wallace was far-and-away the team's top third base prospect and the only prospect in the organization's higher levels who could possibly replace Chavez this season. Chavez is coming off of three straight injury-plagued seasons and it isn't clear that the A's can count on much, if any, production from him in 2010. He is a free agent after the 2010 season. Oakland does have two prospects at the Triple-A level that they can move to third base: Adrian Cardenas and Josh Donaldson. Cardenas has played more second base in his career, while Donaldson has primarily been a catcher, although both have recent experience playing at third. However, while both are good hitters, neither is the hitter that Wallace is at the moment.

The addition of Taylor also muddies the A's outfield depth chart. Oakland tendered contracts to two outfielders this past weekend, Scott Hairston and Rajai Davis, meaning both will return to the team in 2010 unless they are traded. Both are right-handed hitters. Davis is a centerfielder, but Hairston is a corner outfielder who was acquired by the A's to play much the same role that the team hopes Taylor will play as a middle-of-the-order bat. Ryan Sweeney returns to the A's in 2010 coming off of two solid seasons during which he was one of the A's most valuable players from both an offensive and defensive perspective. The A's also have Travis Buck, Aaron Cunningham and Eric Patterson on their 40-man roster, outfielders who have all proven themselves at the Triple-A level and are vying for regular at-bats in the major leagues.

Behind the major league depth chart, Oakland has a number of minor league outfield prospects coming up the pipeline, as well. Grant Desme was recently named the Arizona Fall League's MVP and he was a 30 homer-40 stolen base player during the regular season. While he hasn't yet played above A-ball, Desme is a strong candidate to reach Triple-A by the end of the year. Corey Brown is another outfield prospect who brings power and speed to the table. He struggled through injuries in 2009, but played well when healthy for Double-A Midland and was a strong performer at the AFL. In addition, top prospects Sean Doolittle and Chris Carter have seen time in the outfield, although both are primarily first baseman.

From a talent perspective, it is hard to argue with the decision of either the Blue Jays or the A's to make this deal, as both Wallace and Taylor look poised for outstanding major league careers. However, for the trade to make sense for the A's more immediate future, one would have to assume that the team will be looking to move one or more of its outfielders, perhaps in a deal to acquire a long-term solution at third base, which is clearly the most pressing organizational need at the moment.

**Stay tuned for more off-season hot stove in the coming days...**