

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, January 20, 2010

### A's agree to deals with Kouzmanoff, Davis; Among teams scouting Ben Sheets

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 1/20/2010

The A's avoided arbitration with two players expected to play key roles this season, agreeing to one-year contracts with third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and outfielder Rajai Davis on Tuesday.

Kouzmanoff, obtained Saturday in a trade from the San Diego Padres, will make \$3.1 million. Davis will get \$1.35 million but can earn more if he hits incentives based on plate appearances.

The A's are left with one unsigned arbitration-eligible player — reliever Michael Wuertz, who made \$1.1 million in 2009 and enjoyed a strong season as Oakland's setup man.

Teams were required to exchange salary figures Tuesday with their arbitration-eligible players. According to AOL Fanhouse, Wuertz asked for \$2.9 million and the A's offered \$1.9 million.

The sides can continue negotiating in the weeks ahead, and A's assistant general manager David Forst said he's optimistic the team will find middle ground with Wuertz and avoid a formal hearing in February.

Davis, who made \$410,000 last season, hit .305 with 41 stolen bases and played his way into a starting role. He's likely to shift from center to left field this season to make room for Coco Crisp.

"I'm just thankful I'm going back to a team that's familiar," Davis said.

Kouzmanoff is expected to be Oakland's everyday third baseman with Eric Chavez trying to rebound from back surgery. Kouzmanoff made \$432,400 last season but was in line for a significant bump after averaging 19

homers and 82 RBI over the past three years with San Diego.

As the A's take care of contractual affairs, they're also exploring options to bolster their starting rotation.

Forst said the team scouted a throwing session by free agent right-hander Ben Sheets on Tuesday in Louisiana. Sheets missed the entire 2009 season because of elbow surgery.

A dozen or so teams were expected to watch Sheets throw. He is thought to be seeking a one-year deal in the \$10 million range, and it's likely he'd have to come down in price for the A's to consider signing him.

## **A's avoid arbitration with Kouz, Davis**

### **Wuertz remains sole arbitration-eligible player yet to sign**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 1/20/2010

OAKLAND -- The A's avoided arbitration and agreed to one-year contracts with newly acquired third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and outfielder Rajai Davis on Tuesday.

Kouzmanoff, traded from San Diego on Saturday in a deal that sent outfielders Scott Hairston and Aaron Cunningham to the Padres, will make \$3.1 million.

The 28-year-old third baseman was due a substantial raise from the \$432,000 he made a year ago after finishing second to the Nationals' Ryan Zimmerman in voting for the Gold Glove Award thanks to a .990 fielding percentage. Kouzmanoff also averaged 18 or more home runs in each of his three seasons with the Padres.

"It's definitely comforting having a deal done and knowing now that all I have to worry about is playing baseball," Kouzmanoff told MLB.com from his home in Denver on Tuesday. "At first I was a little unsure about the trade, but I feel good about the whole thing because the A's want me to be a part of their club, so I'm excited about their support."

The speedy Davis, who made \$410,000 last season, during which he was fifth in the American League with 41 stolen bases, accepted a \$1.35 million offer with incentives.

The 29-year-old Davis began the 2009 season as the club's fourth outfielder before quickly earning a permanent spot in the lineup, which allowed him the opportunity to hit .305 in 125 games. Always one to count his blessings, Davis happily admitted feeling a sense of calmness following Tuesday morning's news.

"I'm thankful for another opportunity to go to a place that's familiar to me," Davis told MLB.com. "And I'm thankful to the Lord for taking all the waiting away, and the worries, and all the negative things that could come up in the process."

Said A's assistant general manager David Forst: "I think anytime you get a deal done before numbers are exchanged, it's in everybody's best interest. We have good relationships with both of their agents, so I think those relationships always make the conversations easier."

The club will now turn its focus toward reliever Michael Wuertz, the only remaining A's player eligible for arbitration. Both sides exchanged salary figures Tuesday with the result being a \$1 million difference.

Oakland offered \$1.9 million to the reliever, who made \$1.1 million in 2009 while posting a 2.63 ERA in a team-high 74 appearances. The 30-year-old pitcher put \$2.9 million on the table, and Forst told MLB.com he is optimistic a deal will be reached before a February arbitration hearing is necessary.

"I think those numbers are pretty much what we expected," Forst said. "We'll hopefully continue talks tomorrow and get something worked out soon."

## **A's agree with Kouzmanoff, Davis**

Associated Press 1/19/2010

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Third baseman [Kevin Kouzmanoff](#) and outfielder [Rajai Davis](#) have agreed to one-year deals with the [Oakland Athletics](#) and avoided salary arbitration.

Kouzmanoff will make \$3.1 million this season and Davis will get a \$1.35 million contract plus incentives. The deals were reached before Tuesday's deadline to exchange contract figures.

Right-hander [Michael Wuertz](#) is the only A's player remaining eligible for arbitration.

Kouzmanoff was acquired in a trade over the weekend from San Diego. He hit .255 with 18 homers and a career-high 88 RBIs last season with the Padres.

Davis became the starting center fielder in Oakland last season, hitting .305 and stealing 41 bases. He is expected to play left field this season following the signing of [Coco Crisp](#). Davis can earn an additional \$150,000 in performance bonuses: \$25,000 each for 435, 450, 500 and 550 plate appearances, and an additional \$50,000 for 600 plate appearances.

## Jenkins: Rex Ryan, from clown to crown

[Bruce Jenkins](#), San Francisco Chronicle, 1/19/2010

Headlines for a Tuesday morning:

Once the New York media has labeled someone a clown, the recovery process can take years. For Jets coach Rex Ryan, it took about two months - a development as wild and improbable as the Jets' playoff run itself.

The Jets' season was cascading into oblivion after their 24-22 loss to Jacksonville on Nov. 15. Ryan had called a couple of apparently pointless timeouts in the second half, and with two minutes remaining, he had none left. Jacksonville had the ball at the New York 14-yard line, and in a stunning decision that seemed to contradict everything players are taught, he ordered his defense to let the Jaguars score.

It seems the message wasn't properly delivered. On a running play, Maurice Jones-Drew was brought down at the 10. Then, in a wise but even more unsightly bit of strategy, Jones-Drew took a knee at the 1-yard line when he could have scored with ease. Here was a scene where nobody wanted to tackle *or* score, and as the Jets took their fourth loss in five games, Ryan was roundly criticized for being cocky (his trademark) and overmatched.

It hardly helped Ryan's public image when, the next day in practice, he began crying during an impassioned speech to his players. Ryan got slammed by the press, now fully convinced he was the wrong man for the job, but his players found it inspiring. Ryan didn't back off his rollicking, wise-cracking public stance, and today we find him the most compelling coach among the four remaining in postseason play.

The Colts' Jim Caldwell might yet prove to be the smartest man in the room, but he remains a villain in some quarters for pulling his starters in Week 16, easing off the accelerator of an unbeaten season and giving the Jets an inside track. Minnesota's Brad Childress not only made the senseless decision to let Brett Favre play to the finish of the Vikings' rout of Dallas, but had Favre throw a rub-it-in TD pass with less than two minutes left - a rather tacky finish to an already awful game.

Sean Payton is on a tremendous roll in New Orleans, but like several coaches in the NFL, he needs to get over this nonsense of "freezing" the opposing placekicker a split-second before the snap. Once again, we saw a kick sailing through the air, about to be nullified by amateur-hour deceit. (Surely, we're in for a rules change before the start of next season; this can't continue.)

In the end, we had Ryan making a courageous, old-school decision to run the ball on that 4th-and-1 with 1:09 left in San Diego. Ryan wasn't about to let his rookie quarterback (Mark Sanchez) throw a pass at that stage, and everyone in the country knew what was coming. Thomas Jones got the yardage to spare, game over, take that. Beautiful.

-- The A's can't hope to replicate the Bash Brothers days, and in many ways that's a good thing, but they're a couple of good breaks away from gaining a distinct edge in their publicity jabs with the Giants.

While the Giants struggle to add significant power to their lineup, the A's added burly third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff to the mix last week. Jack Cust, for all his faults, hits some of the most awe-inspiring shots in baseball. Jake Fox, acquired

from the Cubs, hit 28 homers between the majors and minors last year. Chris Carter and Michael Taylor will be two of the most closely watched hitters in the A's system this year, each projected to be an impact hitter at the highest level. At some point, late in the season, it would be fascinating to watch the A's get all five of those guys into the lineup.

Quick note on Kouzmanoff: He set a National League record with his .990 fielding percentage at third base for San Diego, but you won't be looking at Mike Schmidt or Brooks Robinson over there. Kouzmanoff's range is limited at best; he catches what comes his way. But he certainly fits into the team's new image. Perhaps we have the makings of an A's campaign: "East Bay: Where the Power Is."

-- Sometimes the key to survival in sports is pure arrogance, and there's no better example than the Mark McGwire-Tony La Russa partnership in St. Louis. People have called for a second McGwire confessional, getting to the heart of steroid benefits instead of dancing around the subject, but that's not going to happen. McGwire had his say, and as preposterous as it was, he has moved on. Nothing more to hear. Time for public adulation and autographs, while the media stews and does, in fact, move on.

La Russa has come up so lame on McGwire/steroid issues in recent years, you hardly know where to start. Like McGwire, he has transformed insincerity into genuine belief. It's locked in a little compartment of weirdness in his head, and there is no key. It's Mark and Tony Stonewall, for your dancing and listening pleasure, and everyone else is wrong.

## **49ers beat A's in economic impact survey**

**Silicon Valley / San Jose Business Journal 1/20/2010**

A move to Silicon Valley by the **San Francisco 49ers** would have a greater economic impact than the **Oakland A's**, according to the most recent Business Pulse survey.

There was plenty skepticism about whether either move will actually materialize, however, in the survey conducted between Jan. 12 and Jan. 19 by the Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal.

About 37 percent of readers said neither the 49ers stadium in Santa Clara nor the A's ballpark in San Jose will happen.

About 33 percent said the 49ers would have a greater impact than the A's, who garnered about 28 percent of the poll.

Reader Robert Hightower figures the A's schedule offers more potential: "While I love football, there are only eight or so home games a year while baseball has 81 home games a year. The economics of baseball have to be better."

Donald Reiman agreed, saying, "Let me see, 80 plus home games in downtown San Jose versus nine home games next to an amusement park. No contest; the A's move is a much better for the local economy."

Robert Barry, however, thinks the 49ers would showcase the region better: "Everyone is right that more games will make more fiscal impact in the short term. but the 49ers in Santa Clara will really put San Jose on the major map and establish us in national minds as a real professional sports city. That will have major fiscal impact also and those tailgate parties sure cause the buying of a ton of food."

A reader who only identified himself as SJ Bob was skeptical of that argument, though, saying, "Yeah, just look at East Rutherford, NJ. Having both the Giants and the Jets play there has really established East Rutherford, N.J., in national minds as a real professional sports city."

### **My Word: Oakland A's fans deserve better ownership**

By Garth Kimball, Guest commentary, San Mateo County Times, 1/20/2010

GUY SAPERSTEIN and the A's ownership continue to distort the truth in an attempt to destroy the A's fan base and to get Major League Baseball approval to move out of Oakland.

Saperstein's Jan. 8 letter to the editor, "Need business plan," about A's ballpark sites failed to disclose that he is an A's co-owner. He also wrote that Oakland does not have a ballpark business plan. Yet, Oakland officials recently announced that the city and MLB officials together have fully analyzed three waterfront sites and provided detailed ballpark and economic redevelopment plans to MLB's Blue Ribbon Committee.

Saperstein mentioned the Jack London Square sites are just a few parcels of land and not very attractive for a stadium. Those three proposed sites total more than 90 acres and are ideal MLB stadium sites. Also, since when is a waterfront ballpark with wonderful transit options and beautiful views not attractive?

Saperstein also claims the A's are losing \$30 million per year. According to Forbes magazine, the A's are one of MLB's few teams that regularly turn a profit, due to their low payroll and their sweetheart Coliseum lease from the city of Oakland and Alameda County.

Meanwhile, A's co-owners Lew Wolff and John Fisher have done nothing but depress attendance and hurt their own bottom line by providing poor customer service, trading away fan-favorite players, threatening to move every year and excluding many fans by tarping off the third deck.

Wolff has repeatedly stated he exhausted all efforts in Oakland. Yet, city officials last year quickly found two new excellent waterfront ballpark sites. All it took was effort and working with, not against, city leaders.

A new ballpark in Oakland certainly would be successful. However, what we need even more is ownership like the Haas family provided; an A's ownership that will reach out to the entire East Bay and an ownership that will be committed to staying in Oakland and winning.

Oakland is a wonderfully diverse city with great transportation options. We deserve better than Wolff, Fisher and Saperstein, who whine instead of trying to win. The team should be put up for sale and a new ballpark should be built in Oakland.

As the 31,000 people (and growing) who have joined the "Let's Go Oakland" Facebook page illustrate, A's fans are yearning for MLB to grant the city of Oakland its first real chance since the Haas years to retain its team and return it to glory.

Saperstein warns about misleading the public. Unfortunately, if A's fans and the public have been misled by anyone, it's Wolff, Fisher, Saperstein and their fellow A's co-owners. We deserve better.

