

## **A's News Clips, Wednesday, February 10, 2010**

### **Oakland A's release outfielder Willy Taveras**

Oakland Tribune wire services

The Oakland A's released recently acquired outfielder Willy Taveras, the club announced Tuesday.

Taveras was acquired from the Cincinnati Reds along with infielder Adam Rosales for infielder Aaron Miles of Antioch and a player to be named later on Feb. 1 but was immediately designated for assignment.

The speedy Taveras batted .240 with a home run and 15 RBI in 102 games with Cincinnati last year.

The 28-year old right-handed hitter has a .276 career average in 643 games with Houston (2004-06), Colorado (2007-08) and Cincinnati (2009).

### **OF Willy Taveras released by Oakland Athletics**

San Francisco Chronicle, 2/10/2010

Speedy outfielder Willy Taveras has been released by the Oakland Athletics, eight days after he was acquired from Cincinnati with infielder Adam Rosales for infielder Aaron Miles and a player to be named.

Taveras had been designated for assignment immediately following the Feb. 1 trade. The Athletics owe his \$4 million salary in the final season of a \$6.25 million, two-year contract that he signed with the Reds, but that would be reduced by the \$400,000 minimum if he signs with another team.

Taveras hit .240 with one homer and 15 RBIs for Cincinnati last season.

### **A's release outfielder Taveras**

### **Decision on what to do with Petit on tap**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 2/10/2010

OAKLAND -- The A's on Tuesday released outfielder Willy Taveras, who had been designated for assignment last week after being acquired from the Reds along with infielder Adam Rosales.

Taveras and Rosales were traded for infielder Aaron Miles and a player to be named later in a significant transaction for the A's, who received a much-needed utility infielder in Rosales.

The 28-year-old Taveras was never part of Oakland's plans, as the club will enter camp with an abundance of outfielders, led by expected starters Ryan Sweeney, Coco Crisp and Rajai Davis.

The A's are on the hook for the \$4 million remaining on Taveras' deal, which he signed before last season. He hit .240 with a home run and 15 RBIs in 102 games with Cincinnati in 2009.

Taveras was designated on the same day as left-handed pitcher Dana Eveland and infielder Gregorio Petit. Eveland was traded to Toronto on Saturday for cash or a player to be named later. Meanwhile, the A's have one day to trade, release or send Petit to the Minors.

## **30 in 30: Oakland Athletics**

Tony Paul, Detroit News, 2/9/2010

### **OAKLAND ATHLETICS**

**Manager:** Bob Geren, 4th season (226-259)

**2009 record:** 75-87, 22 games back in AL West

**2009 hitting leaders:** HRs -- Jack Cust, 25; RBIs -- Kurt Suzuki, 88; Average -- Rajai Davis, .305

**2009 pitching leaders:** Wins -- Brett Anderson, 11; Strikeouts -- Anderson, 150; ERA -- Andrew Bailey, 1.84; Saves -- Bailey, 26 in 30 chances

**2009 payroll/projected 2010 payroll:** \$62.3 million/\$55 million

**Offseason losses:** RP Santiago Casilla (released), SS Bobby Crosby (Pirates), RF Aaron Cunningham (Padres), RP Dana Eveland (Blue Jays), 1B Tommy Everidge (Mariners), RP Jeff Gray (Cubs), LF Scott Hairston (Padres), 3B Adam Kennedy (Nationals), 2B Aaron Miles (Reds), SP Ronny Morla (Cubs), LF Matthew Spencer (Cubs), 1B/3B Brett Wallace (Blue Jays)

**Offseason additions:** RP Cedrick Bowers (Phillies, 1 year, minor league), RP Bobby Cassevah (waivers from Angels), CF Coco Crisp (Royals, 1 year, \$5.25 million), SP Lenny DiNardo (Royals, 1 year, minor league), P Michael Feliz (Dominican Republic, no terms announced), 3B Jake Fox (traded from Cubs), RF Gabe Gross (Rays, 1 year, \$750,000), RP Fernando Hernandez (White Sox, 1 year, minor league), 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff (traded from Padres), RP Marcus McBeth (Red Sox, 1 year, minor league), 3B Dallas McPherson (Giants, 1 year, minor league), 3B Adam Rosales (traded from Reds), SP Ben Sheets (DNP in 2009, 1 year, \$10 million), 2B Eric Sogard (traded from Padres), OF Michael Taylor (traded from Blue Jays), CF Willy Taveras (traded from Reds), IF Steven Tolleson (waivers from Twins), 1B Matthew Whitney (Nationals, 1 year, minor league), SP Matt Wright (Royals, 1 year, minor league)

**Remaining free agents:** 1B Nomar Garciaparra, SP Brett Tomko

### **Projected starting lineup (2009 statistics)**

1. CF Coco Crisp (3 HRs, 14 RBIs, .228/.336 OBP/.378 SLG, 29 BBs/23 SOs)
2. LF Rajai Davis (3 HR, 48 RBIs, .305/.360 OBP/.423 SLG, 29 BBs/70 SOs)
3. C Kurt Suzuki (15 HRs, 88 RBIs, .274/.313 OBP/.421 SLG, 28 BBs/59 SOs)
4. 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff (18 HRs, 88 RBIs, .255/.302 OBP/.420 SLG, 27 BBs/106 SOs)
5. DH Jack Cust (25 HRs, 70 RBIs, .240/.356 OBP/.417 SLG, 93 BBs/185 SOs)
6. 2B Mark Ellis (10 HRs, 61 RBIs, .263/.305 OBP/.403 SLG, 23 BBs/54 SOs)
7. RF Ryan Sweeney (6 HRs, 53 RBIs, .293/.348 OBP/.407 SLG, 40 BBs/67 SOs)
8. 1B Daric Barton (3 HRs, 24 RBIs, .269/.372 OBP/.413 SLG, 26 BBs/25 SOs)
9. SS Cliff Pennington (4 HRs, 21 RBIs, .279/.342 OBP/.418 SLG, 19 BBs/46 SOs)

### **Projected starting rotation (2009 statistics)**

1. RH Ben Sheets (DNP in 2009; 2008 stats: 13-9, 3.09 ERA/1.150 WHIP, 158 SOs/47 BBs in 198.1 IP)
  2. LH Dallas Braden (8-9, 3.89 ERA/1.361 WHIP, 81 SOs/42 BBs in 136.2 IP)
  3. RH Trevor Cahill (10-13, 4.63 ERA/1.438 WHIP, 90 SOs/72 BBs in 178.2 IP)
  4. RH Vin Mazzaro (4-9, 5.32 ERA/1.741 WHIP, 59 SOs/39 BBs in 91.1 IP)
  5. LH Brett Anderson (11-11, 4.06 ERA/1.283 WHIP, 150 SOs/45 BBs in 175.1 IP)
- Closer. RH Andrew Bailey (6-3, 1.84 ERA/0.876 WHIP, 91 SOs/24 BBs in 83.1 IP, 26saves/30 chances)

**Whatever happened to ....** Joey Devine, 1B. If Andrew Bailey was the right choice for American League rookie of the year in 2009 (he wasn't), then it's a mystery how Devine fared no better than fifth a year earlier -- behind Armando Galarraga! I know, I know, closers always get more love than all other relievers, and Devine missed a couple months with an elbow injury. But what he accomplished in 2008 was really something special. In 42 appearances, he allowed a mere three earned runs. Three! And none in the final 26 games. All that for an ERA of 0.59, to go with a WHIP of 0.832. In 45.2 innings, the side-arming right-hander struck out 49 and walked 15. The deal that brought him to Oakland from Atlanta for Mark Kotsay was looking like an absolute fleecing -- it still does, actually, even though Devine, projected to be last year's closer, missed all of 2009 after having surgery on his right elbow in late April. So how's it looking for 2010? "All thumbs up," manager Bob Geren told us at the winter meetings in early December. Devine, 26, spent much of the offseason working out in Atlanta, with a physical therapist focusing on his arm and throwing. The A's doctors flew out to check in on him, and returned with their positive prognosis: That he should be in the Oakland bullpen early in the season, if not to start the season. "He thinks that by the end of spring training, he'll be ready to face live batters," his bullpenmate, Brad Ziegler, said in a recent interview on Sirius Radio. If that's the case, the A's could feature one of those most automatic back ends of any bullpen in baseball -- with Bailey, who became the second A's closer in five years to win rookie of the year (Huston Street); Ziegler, who made headlines in 2008 when he set a major league record with 39.1 scoreless innings to start his career; as well as Michael Wuertz (2.63 WHIP, 0.953 WHIP) and lefty Craig Breslow (2.60 ERA, 0.994 WHIP. "I don't really think we need much improvement there," Geren said. The Athletics also will be able to move somebody from the starting rotation -- for which there are no fewer than seven solid candidates -- to the bullpen. Reliever-turned-starter Justin Duchscherer, back on a one-year, \$2 million deal after missing all of 2009 with shoulder and back injuries as well as a battle with depression, would figure to be the obvious choice. But he has dealt with injuries the last four years and might be a better bet to stay healthy as a starter with a set routine; plus, he made great strides when he joined the rotation in 2008, going 10-8 with a 2.54 ERA and 0.995 WHIP in 22 starts.

**Get ready to meet ...** Chris Carter, 1B. He's just 23, and is a good bet to start the season at Triple A, where he's logged only 13 games. But at some point in 2009, it's likely Carter will be in the major leagues " and possibly contributing big-time to an offense that's been lackluster for several years. Carter, a former late-round pick by the White Sox who came to the A's by the way of the Diamondbacks (traded for Carlos Quentin, then for Danny Haren), he has displayed big-time power in the minor leagues. He's averaged 31 homers and 104 RBIs the past three years, with highs of 39 and 104 at high Class A in 2008, his first year in the organization after being traded twice in less than a month the previous offseason. He opened up some eyes last year at Double A, where he was Texas League MVP after hitting .337 with 24 homers, 41 doubles and 101 RBIs in 125 games; before his promotion, he also logged 82 walks (to 119 strikeouts) and even stolen 13 bases. His time at Triple A was brief, which is why it's a near-certainty he won't make the major league club out of spring training. "In a perfect world, he could get some more Triple-A at-bats and kind of dominate that league like he's dominated every other league he's been in," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Goes to Triple A and does that again, then you have to say he's ready.

Ready for a shot anyway." Of course, necessity might earn up a shot sooner than that. The A's aren't overly content with their first-base situation, because former first-round pick Daric Barton (No. 23 in 2003) hasn't impressed. As the starter for most of 2008, he fell flat, hitting just .226 in 140 games. On the eve of Opening Day in 2009, he was demoted to Triple A because Jason Giambi was back to play first base, and Barton, 24, wasn't seen in the major leagues again until early June. Barton, who came to the A's in the trade that sent ex-MSU star Mark Mulder to the Cardinals in December 2004, got off to another horrible start, hitting .163 in his first 20 games, but redeemed himself with a productive September and October. For the final month of the season, he hit .306 with 18 RBIs in 28 games, making him, once again, the front-runner for the job. "Without a doubt," Geren said. His prime contenders in spring training figure to be Carter and former Michigan Wolverine Jake Fox. The club also might experiment with Eric Chavez at first, too, though Geren said several weeks ago that if the oft-injured Chavez is healthy enough for base, he's healthy enough for third.

**Analysis:** The Athletics definitely are slumping " they have lost 76, 75 and 75 games the last three years, after averaging 94 wins the previous eight years, when they made the playoffs five times (including the ALCS in 2006, when they were swept by the Tigers). But they've got a chance to be better than some folks think in 2010, and it all starts with pitching. Their starting staff wasn't anything to sing and dance about in 2009, but it wasn't horrendous, either -- which it could've been, considering its youth. Three of their starters " Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson and Vin Mazzaro -- never pitched in the majors, yet stayed afloat in combining for nearly half (79) of their starts last season. Their other three starters -- Dallas Braden, Gio Gonzalez and Josh Outman -- had 40 starts between them entering 2009 and, again, were nothing to sneeze at. The talent is there and, the theory goes, with that year under their belt, look out world in 2010! And the staff will be led this year by Ben Sheets, the former Brewers ace who was a curious signing by GM Billy Beane, considering he sat out all last season after elbow surgery. Plus, he cost \$10 million, which is a huge commitment from the cost-conscious A's -- for a little perspective, that's about double the combined salaries of all 14 pitchers who started a game for the Athletics last season. The first thought was Beane was sticking with his recent hobby of acquiring high-price talent, just to spin it off ahead of the trade deadline for a bag of prospects, like he did last summer when shipping Matt Holliday to the Cardinals. Sheets, though, with that price tag, is a much larger risk than anyone Beane's taken on, considering there's no knowing what to expect from a fella who hasn't pitched in the major leagues since Sept. 27, 2008 (he didn't even pitch in the NLDS). Plus, the three years before guiding the Brewers, along with CC Sabathia, to their first playoff appearance since 1982, he averaged just 21 starts a year because of injuries. If Sheets is back, however, he could net the Athletics a huge haul at the deadline -- assuming the Athletics are out the race, which they figure to be since they play in baseball's on-the-rise division. (The Mariners had arguably the best offseason in all of baseball, the Angels have won three straight division titles and the Rangers' young pitching is all the rage.) Plus, while their pitching is decent at worst and potentially great -- that bullpen should be even more lights-out with Joey Devine back, and Justin Duchschere's return should give the rotation a nice boost -- that offense, despite some pretty solid additions in 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff and CF Coco Crisp (coming off shoulder surgery), is underwhelming.

**Still on the to-do list:** They don't figure to do much adding the rest of the spring -- the \$10 million they plunked down for Ben Sheets likely put them smack dab up against their payroll ceiling (for a payroll that's almost certain to be lowest in the American League, mind you). GM Billy Beane probably has some housekeeping to do, though. To acquire infielder Adam Rosales last week from the Reds -- Rosales has major league experience and can play all four infield positions -- the A's had to take outfielder Willy Taveras and his \$4 million salary, too. Well, Taveras' future with the A's became apparent immediately, when they swiftly designated him for assignment. So they're waiting for a club to claim him off waivers or work a trade; Taveras' stock isn't exactly soaring after his stolen bases dropped 43 in a year and his average 80 points in two

years, so there's a good chance the A's will end up simply releasing him and eating his salary. They also have to come up with a plan for outfielder Travis Buck, the 36th overall pick in 2005 who seems to have quickly fallen out of favor with the Oakland front office. In his three years in the majors, his average has gone from .288/.226/.219 on on-base percentage .377/.291/.287 -- with very little pop -- while he's a career .312 hitter in the minors. He began the offseason down on the depth chart behind Rajai Davis, above, and Ryan Sweeney, then Beane got busy adding outfielders. In mid-December, he sent infield prospect Brett Wallace to the Blue Jays for outfield prospect Michael Taylor, a .312 hitter with speed in the minors who plays all three positions; the Blue Jays acquired him from the Phillies in the Roy Halladay deal hours earlier. Then GM Billy Beane signed veteran CF Coco Crisp just before Christmas and, more recently, Gabe Gross, who can play all three outfield positions, but the corner spots are most ideal. The moves have left Buck a little uneasy as suddenly there's a mountain of competitors with spring training looming. "I'm always going to try to take the high road, but this has definitely lit an even bigger fire under my ass," Buck told CSNBayArea.com. "I'm gonna go into spring training with a vengeance and try to force their hand." The good news for Buck is, apparently, the Athletics still have him in their plans, per a report in the San Francisco Chronicle. Beane has told the Chronicle's Susan Slusser, "I love Travis Buck," numerous times. So maybe he stays, after all. But even if he does remain in Oakland, somebody else probably will have to go -- meaning clubs finding themselves with depleted outfielders, for whatever reason, as Opening Day nears will know exactly where to go to start their shopping.

**Diamond digit:** 31 -- Games A's third baseman Eric Chavez has played in the club's past 383 games. The last two-and-a-half seasons have been a mess of surgeries -- multiple operations on his back and right shoulder. He is entering the final year of a six-year, \$66 million contract, a controversial signing at the time, because GM Billy Beane chose him to invest in while letting MVP's Jason Giambi and Miguel Tejada walk.

**He said it:** "I said, 'I'm not holding my part of the bargain.' He told me, 'I know you want to be out there more than anybody. It's not like this is sitting well with you and you're happy to be making money and living life. I know how much this bothers you.' That meant a lot to me. At that point, I knew I could look him in the eye." -- Eric Chavez, Athletics oft-injured third baseman, talking to the Oakland Tribune, recalling a conversation with general manager Billy Beane.

**Offseason grade/early projection:** B/4th place in AL West

## **Picking up where we left off**

By Dan Shaughnessy, Globe Columnist | February 10, 2010

Picked-up pieces while wondering whether Bill Belichick plans to name himself Patriots special teams coach and strength and conditioning coordinator before the start of two-a-days.

Across the nation, the 2010 Super Bowl goes down as the story of the rise of the Saints and the rebuilding of the city of New Orleans. Typically, our take is a little different here in Greater Boston, where the game will be remembered as the night Peyton "A-Rod" Manning choked and coughed up the win.

Got to love Colts general manager Bill Polian. In a lengthy (pre-Super Bowl) Q&A with the Indianapolis Star, Polian was asked if Manning might be the Johnny Unitas of this era. Polian answered, "No question about it. He maybe eclipses Roger Brown." I called Bob Ryan to check on this and it turns out Roger Brown was an ABA legend with the Indiana Pacers.

Manning no doubt will be flattered to learn that he's almost at Roger Brown's level in terms of Indiana fame. Brown died in 1997.

Inexcusable for the free-falling Bruins to stand still (gotta love those draft picks) while Lou Lamoriello puts together a package for Ilya Kovalchuk.

The Pontiac Silverdome sold for \$583,000. That's a lot of history for a mere \$583K. The Silverdome played host to Super Bowl XVI. Pope John Paul II said Mass for 90,000 at the Dome in 1987. The Lions and Pistons called it home. Elvis left the building after performing at the Silverdome in 1975. Wish I'd gathered some rich friends and made a bid for it.

It's a disgrace that Marvin Miller keeps failing to win election to baseball's Hall of Fame.

ESPN has no video of Tiger Woods in those commercials begging you to watch the first two days of the Masters on the Worldwide Leader. Did you know that Tiger made the front page of the New York Post for 20 consecutive days after Thanksgiving? The previous record was 19 consecutive days dedicated to the 9/11 attacks.

It never will be possible to appreciate or comprehend the dominance of UConn women's basketball. How can you be that much better than everyone else? The Huskies win every game by 40 points, even when they are playing top-10 teams. In a rematch of last year's NCAA championship game, the Huskies beat Louisville, 84-38, Sunday. They've won 62 in a row, threatening the NCAA record of 70 straight. The record, of course, is held by Connecticut.

Nomar auditioned on ESPN and MLB Network yesterday. What a fraud. Nobody hated the media more with less cause than our guy Nomie.

Globe movie critic Wesley Morris made me laugh when he described John Travolta in "From Paris With Love" as a character who "looks like the illegitimate child of Freddie Mercury and Charles Barkley."

I take it all back. Jose Offerman turned out to be a pretty good guy, after all.

Grant Desme, a 23-year-old outfield prospect for the A's, quit baseball to become a Roman Catholic priest. A second-round pick in 2007, Desme hit 31 homers and stole 40 bases in A ball last season.

Sean Payton had numerous conversations with mentor Bill Parcells in the days leading up to the Super Bowl.

According to [CoachCal.com](http://CoachCal.com), Bob Kraft addressed the Kentucky Wildcats after a win over the Florida Gators. The website claims Kraft said, "Spending time with Coach Cal, we share a similar philosophy. If you want to win, it's about having good people around you."

Speaking of Kentucky, DeMarcus Cousins is pretty good, no?

Any Kevin Garnett sightings in your neighborhood? We don't know him and we never will. Has there ever been a more invisible superstar in the Hub? Seriously, how does a 7-foot black man spend three years playing for the Celtics without a single random appearance in a local establishment? It's as if KG goes to and from work in an underground tunnel.

I've said it before and I'll say it again: Basketball coaches and announcers need to stop saying "length" when they are actually talking about "height." A player is not 7 feet long. He is 7 feet tall.

Former Red Sox owner/gadfly Les Otten is running for governor of Maine. As a Republican.

Bet Gene DeFilippo was rooting for the Jets to beat the Colts. DeFilippo's son, John, is the Jets quarterbacks coach, which puts him in charge of Mark Sanchez and Erik Ainge, nephew of Danny Ainge.

The Patriots announced last night that Bill Belichick has assumed duties as director of public relations and game-day music presentation.

Did Cuban lefty Aroldis Chapman sign with the Cincinnati Reds because he thinks they're communists?

I want Bill Hall's agent. Really. Take a good look at the Sox utility infielder's contract.

Derek Jeter's full name is Derek Sanderson Jeter. Got to get to the bottom of that.

A statue of Bud Selig will be dedicated outside Miller Park in August. The punch lines are endless.

You will enjoy Steve Buckley's "Wicked Good Year." Also Jeff Pearlman's book on Roger Clemens, "The Rocket That Fell to Earth." Meanwhile, Needham's James Hirsch has done the impossible, getting Willie Mays to cooperate for his 600-page tome, "Willie Mays: The Life, the Legend."

Former Cathedral and Don Bosco legend Kevin Mackey is scouting for Larry Bird's Pacers. Mackey's great fame came when he coached No. 14 seed Cleveland State to a victory over Bobby Knight's third-seeded Hoosiers in the 1986 NCAA Tournament.

The Sox are going to miss scouting director Jason McLeod.

Doc Rivers's son Austin scored 41 for Winter Park (Fla.) High School in a nationally televised game last weekend. USA Today ranks Winter Park No. 12 in the nation.

The Mets cut 8 feet from the top of the center-field wall at Citi Field.

Who would have believed that "Dwight Freeney" and "Baba O'Reilly" would ever be mentioned in the same sentence?