

A's News Clips, Thursday, March 18, 2010

Two more Oakland A's relievers -- Andrew Bailey and Craig Breslow -- hampered by injuries

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

With Opening Day less than three weeks away, the A's are trying to nurse several of their key relievers back to health.

Manager Bob Geren revealed Wednesday that closer Andrew Bailey and left-hander Craig Breslow recently underwent MRIs for pain in their throwing elbows.

The right-handed Bailey was diagnosed with inflammation around the elbow and will be shut down for five to seven days.

Breslow has tendinitis near his elbow joint and won't throw for three to four days.

Both pitchers expressed optimism they'll return to the mound in plenty of time to be ready for Opening Day, April 5.

"We're encouraged by where they're at," Geren said before a 6-1 loss to the Giants at Phoenix Municipal Stadium.

Also on the bullpen injury list are setup man Michael Wuertz, who has soreness in the back of his right shoulder, and Joey Devine, who has yet to resume throwing after coming down with right forearm tendinitis.

Bailey was an All-Star in 2009, his first full season pitching in relief. He thinks he's simply experiencing the aftereffects of appearing in 68 games.

"It's probably the heaviest workload I've ever had on my arm," Bailey said.

Breslow expressed relief that his injury isn't more serious, and he thinks he'll be back on the mound shortly.

Wuertz's shoulder problem is one he encounters often during the spring, he said.

He has yet to appear in an exhibition, and it was thought the A's were simply breaking him in slowly after he logged 74 appearances last season. Wuertz was scheduled to throw to minor league hitters Wednesday and was scratched.

But he was hopeful of pitching as soon as today, and he believes four or five outings could have him ready for the regular season.

"It's happened in the past, where I've thrown a lot of innings the previous year and I come back and fight through some fatigue," Wuertz said.

There was positive news for the A's on the pitching front — Justin Duchscherer pitched three innings (45 pitches) in a minor league intrasquad game and came out of it well.

That lines him up to possibly make his Cactus League debut Monday against Seattle, when Duchscherer said he would increase to 60 pitches.

Duchscherer said his current schedule could allow him to make three exhibition appearances. It's conceivable he could be in the season-opening rotation.

"That's our goal," said Duchscherer, who had a minor procedure done on his lower back in February.

Brett Anderson turned in his best start of the spring with four shutout innings against the Giants. But San Francisco got to reliever Justin Souza for three runs in the seventh to break a 1-1 tie.

The A's had Anderson concentrate mainly on his fastball and changeup, the pitch he's trying to feature more this season. But he did ring up Bengie Molina swinging on a slider, and Anderson said he'll get the green light to throw more breaking balls in his final three spring starts.

Rajai Davis was a late scratch in center field because of soreness in an abdominal muscle. He estimated he'll miss another game or two. Eric Patterson replaced him in the leadoff spot and notched his third stolen base of the spring in the first inning.

The A's and Giants drew a crowd of 8,758, the A's first sellout of the spring.

Chin Music: Andrew Bailey, Craig Breslow shut down temporarily with elbow pain; other A's reliever updates

By Joe Stiglich, Contra Costa Times, 10:47am, 3/17

Lots of news today regarding A's relievers, so I'll get right to it ...

—Andrew Bailey and Craig Breslow both had tender elbows and were sent to Phoenix-area specialist Dr. Doug Freedberg for MRIs. Bailey was found to have lateral epicondylitis. You might know it better as “tennis elbow,” basically inflammation and pain in the outer elbow. He'll be shut down for approximately 5-7 days, according to manager Bob Geren.

Breslow has medial tendinitis, or pain and inflammation of the inner elbow. He won't throw for 3-4 days. Geren said he expects both relievers to still be ready for the start of the season barring any more setbacks.

I haven't had a chance to talk to either guy yet, so can't say how long this has been an issue for them.

—You might have noticed Michael Wuertz has yet to appear in a spring game. He was scheduled to appear in a minor league game today but was scratched, according to Geren, because “his shoulder wasn't bouncing back.” As with Bailey and Breslow, Geren isn't worried about Wuertz's readiness for Opening Day. But it will be interesting to hear what Wuertz has to say.

—Still don't have your fill of A's reliever updates? Joey Devine was supposed to resume throwing today, but that's also been pushed back.

No, this isn't the most encouraging news for the A's bullpen with 19 days left before Opening Day. At this point, I'm not sure how much of a setback these injuries are for Bailey, Breslow and Wuertz. I don't think the A's are banking on Devine being ready for the start of the season anyway. But if all of these guys are delayed in getting back to the mound, the depth of the A's bullpen (which is a strength) will definitely be tested ...

—On to today's lineup against the Giants. A sellout crowd is expected at Phoenix Muni ...

Rajai CF
Ellis 2B
Suzuki C
Kouzmanoff 3B
Chavez 1B
Cust DH
Sweeney RF
Buck LF
Pennington SS

Anderson P

Newhouse: De La Fuente says A's, 49ers aren't moving

By Dave Newhouse, Oakland Tribune columnist

Lew Wolff could use a refresher course on Bay Area Ballpark History 1A while he schemes to uproot the Oakland A's and move them east of Eden.

Oakland doesn't look like Eden to the wanderlust Wolff at the moment, but it might in time after he brushes up on local stadium mishaps.

About 20 years ago, Santa Clara County rejected two ballot efforts to build a ballpark for the Bob Lurie-owned San Francisco Giants. The unlucky, misguided Lurie also lost two ballpark initiatives in San Francisco.

So much for the public financing of baseball stadiums. It will take private money, or a similar form of creative financing, to build a ballpark these days.

If Wolff remains convinced that San Jose wants the A's, then he must have been hang gliding in Bora Bora when a recent poll of South Bay residents showed a definite split in that regard.

The San Francisco 49ers received the same down-the-middle split in a separate poll. Thus, it could be that neither the Niners nor the Athletics are going anywhere pending two South Bay stadium ballot initiatives affecting their future this year.

In addition, San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed hardly sounded optimistic when he discussed his city budget a month ago. "The bottom line? We are in a deep hole," he said.

Wolff's Eden might be the friendly confines of Oakland. And Oakland is even willing to overlook his disingenuousness. That's because the A's are worth it in the long run. Now if we can just find Haas-like ownership again.

"I believe we can deliver a (ballpark) site," Oakland City Councilmember Ignacio De La Fuente said. "But the reality is that Lew Wolff has been very public about it, that the last place he wants to be is in Oakland."

Wolff has been offered three more ballpark locations in Oakland after rejecting every previous site presented to him in the city. The only site he pinpointed himself, across 66th Street from the Coliseum, was occupied by a group of businesses that had no interest in being displaced — which Wolff may have known all along.

"He has spent a lot more energy and resources in other places than he has spent in Oakland," said De La Fuente, referring to Fremont as well as San Jose. "He's never really had the intention to do anything in Oakland. He just complained."

De La Fuente admitted that constructing a ballpark on any of the three latest sites presented to Wolff involves "challenges." That's true, he added, of any city nowadays that aims to attract or retain a major sports franchise.

"The biggest challenge is Lew Wolff," said De La Fuente. "He bought this team with the whole intention of moving them to the South Bay ... because he is from the South Bay."

My favorite ballpark site in Oakland is the available, aesthetic Oak-to-Ninth location abutting the Estuary and Interstate 880. It would require an overpass between the ballpark and freeway, and over the railroad tracks because freight trains rolls by regularly.

De La Fuente thinks that building an overpass is doable, but Wolff is the problem.

"The reality is that Lew Wolff has not lost money, even when the A's have one of the lowest attendances in baseball," he said. "They have one of the lowest payrolls. They sell very good players. They share in the TV and radio revenue. They still make money, so what?"

De La Fuente predicts, boldly, that San Jose won't get the A's, territorial rights notwithstanding, and that Santa Clara won't get the 49ers.

"Those (two) polls show that voters are getting smarter," he said. "I don't believe Santa Clara voters are going to approve \$100-plus million for the 49ers. And I don't think San Jose voters are going to approve millions of dollars for the A's."

He hasn't been proved wrong yet.

Bailey's injured elbow further thins bullpen

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's believe their bullpen is among the best in the majors - if everyone's present and accounted for. Wednesday, four relievers were out of commission.

Closer **Andrew Bailey** will shut it down for five to seven days with lateral epicondylitis, commonly known as tennis elbow, and will need to throw on the side a couple of times before reappearing in games.

"Better now than when the season starts. We have time to take care of it," Bailey said. "Last year was my first year of relieving. Getting up, getting down (in the bullpen), I wasn't used to that. It's probably the heaviest workload I've ever had in my life. This is probably a little side effect from that. But I'm very optimistic I'll be there for the start of the season."

Bailey said he felt elbow discomfort his last two outings and wanted to have it checked after pitching Sunday. **Craig Breslow** felt elbow soreness after his Monday outing, and an MRI exam showed medial tendinitis. He's out three or four days.

On top of that, **Michael Wuertz** (shoulder) was scratched from pitching in a minor-league intrasquad game (he still hasn't appeared in the Cactus League), and **Joey Devine** (returning from Tommy John surgery) was to play catch for the first time in a week, but it was canceled.

Duchscherer's day: Justin Duchscherer threw three innings and 45 pitches in a minor-league intrasquad game and still anticipates opening in the rotation. He should have three more spring training outings, including Monday, when he hopes to reach 60 pitches.

"This is the best I've felt in a spring training in a long time," he said.

Briefly: Rajai Davis was scratched with a sore abdominal muscle. Replacement **Eric Patterson** doubled, stole a base and scored the only run in a 6-1 loss to the Giants. ... **Brett Anderson** gave up two hits in four scoreless innings.

Ex-coach Ron Washington's cocaine use stuns A's

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Ron Washington's flunking of a drug test last summer didn't cost him his job. Nolan Ryan and Texas Rangers officials kept him aboard - even though Washington offered to resign - because they believed he was the right man to manage the Rangers, who had their first winning record since 2004.

Wednesday, when the positive test for cocaine became public, the Rangers continued to express support for Washington, who's entering the final year of his contract.

It remains to be seen how revelations of cocaine use by a baseball manager will be received in Texas and whether it would have greater impact there than Tim Lincecum's pot bust did in the Bay Area.

"Hopefully, it's over quick and people don't make too much of a big deal," A's infielder Eric Chavez said of Washington, an A's coach from 1996 to 2006 who helped develop Chavez into a six-time Gold Glover. "Obviously, the Rangers are supportive and behind him, and that's the stand I'm going to take and hopefully everyone will."

Second baseman Mark Ellis, who also was tutored by Washington, added, "He's a great man, and hopefully people can get past this."

Washington, 57, was tested near the All-Star break - unlike players, all coaches and managers are subject to testing for recreational drugs. Before the results were known, he contacted Ryan (the Rangers' president), general manager Jon Daniels and the commissioner's office to provide a heads-up on his cocaine use.

The Rangers had exercised Washington's 2010 option shortly before the test. It was a first-time offense, and he wasn't suspended by Major League Baseball. Washington said that it was the only time in his life he used cocaine and that he entered MLB's drug treatment program, which includes tests at least three times a week.

Evidently, he passed them.

"I am truly sorry for my careless, dangerous and, frankly, stupid behavior last year. ... I made a huge mistake, and it almost caused me to lose everything I have worked for all of my life," Washington said in a statement he read at a Wednesday news conference.

At the Rangers' camp in Surprise, Ariz., he apologized to his team and asked for forgiveness.

Ryan told reporters he hopes Rangers fans "understand we're very disappointed and upset we were put in this position. But we felt because of Ron's sincerity, we wanted to move forward with him as our manager. We feel he is very capable."

Chavez is so fond of Washington, who was a respected and likable coach in Oakland, that he gave him one of his Gold Glove awards.

"The message that people seem to forget is, and I think you see it more with Tiger Woods, regardless of what we're doing, we're still real people, and there are still real issues behind the uniforms," Chavez said. "We're not excused from any of the trials and temptations, but (an important part is) what we do to handle the situations. There's no doubt in my mind it'll never happen again."

A's broadcaster Ray Fosse said Washington's positive test "didn't seem to fit his personality or the person we've known. It was a mistake, and he admitted it. He's a stand-up guy. He's a great teacher, one of those guys who should be in baseball forever."

Drumbeat: Bullpen taking a hit

John Shea reporting from A's camp . . . (10:11am, 3/17)

Andrew Bailey, the A's prized closer and the American league's top rookie in 2009, will be shelved for five to seven days with elbow soreness, manager Bob Geren said today.

Also, left-handed setup man Craig Breslow is out three or four days with another elbow issue.

"Those are loose estimates," Geren said.

Both relievers had MRIs. Bailey, who has tossed four scoreless innings in spring training, was diagnosed with lateral epicondylitis, more commonly known as tennis elbow.

Breslow has medial tendinitis.

Not a good day for A's relievers. If that wasn't enough, Michael Wuertz (shoulder) was scratched from pitching in a minor-league intrasquad game this morning (he still hasn't appeared in a Cactus League game), and Joey Devine (returning from Tommy John surgery) was supposed to throw for the first time in a week, but his session was called off.

So who's left? Here's the list of relievers following Brett Anderson in today's game against the Giants: Justin Souza, Brad Kilby, Marcus McBeth and Lenny DiNardo.

Today's lineup: CF Davis, 2B Ellis, C Suzuki, 3B Kouzmanoff, 1B Chavez, DH Cust, RF Sweeney, LF Buck, SS Pennington.

Here's the Giants' lineup: CF Torres, SS Renteria, 3B Sandoval, 1B Huff, LF DeRosa, C Molina, 2B Uribe, DH Posey, RF Schierholtz. Zito is pitching.

Justin Duchscherer is to pitch in a minor-league intrasquad game today.

Crisp close to return to action

A's outfielder says strained hamstring is 'good to go'

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Outfielder Coco Crisp, sidelined for the past week with a strained left hamstring, could be back in the A's lineup as early as Thursday, he told MLB.com on Wednesday.

The 30-year-old center fielder, who signed a one-year contract worth \$5.25 million in December, appeared in only three games this spring before suffering the hamstring injury.

"It's fine," Crisp said. "I haven't been going 100 percent on it, especially when trying to lunge off the bag when I'm running, but other than that, it's good to go."

Crisp entered A's camp already nursing both of his surgically repaired shoulders, which forced him to miss all but 49 games with the Royals last season. He has been on a throwing program all spring but served as the team's designated hitter -- going 4-for-8 -- during the trio of games in which he played so as to properly take caution with his shoulders.

The outfielder had five pins put into his right shoulder and seven in his left, the latter giving the left-handed thrower more cause for concern. But Crisp says the continual rehab process has gone well and, at this point, believes he's being held back mentally more so than physically.

"I think when I first got here, the distance was a little intimidating because I haven't really pushed myself that far in so long," he explained. "Now that I've been doing it awhile, it's starting to feel more comfortable."

"I think it comes from a mental standpoint. I think I can go a little further than I'm actually going right now, but every time I try to take a step further, it's not that my arm can't make a throw, it's just that it seems so far."

The always entertaining Crisp said he's coming to terms with the lengthier distances by simply talking to his shoulder when out on the field.

"Every time I go to throw, it's like, 'Wow, OK, here we go,'" he said while glancing at his left shoulder. "And then it's fine, so it's all about getting past that mental barrier."

If Crisp doesn't make it into Thursday's lineup against the visiting D-backs, he hopes to at least see playing time Friday. However, the A's are slated to play Colorado in Tucson, Ariz., that day, so it's possible his return could be delayed yet another day to spare him the two-hour road trip.

"I'm trying to approach everything so it all comes together around the same time," he said. "I'd like to DH one game and then the next game play defense."

Both Crisp and manager Bob Geren have noted that the A's new addition should be up to full speed come Opening Day, when Crisp is expected to join predicted starters Rajai Davis and Ryan Sweeney in what the Oakland skipper has deemed "one of the best defensive outfields in the league."

Anderson strong in outing vs. Giants

Kouzmanoff slugs RBI double among two hits

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

San Francisco 6, Oakland 1

Giants at the plate: Juan Uribe, who collected two hits, homered in the fifth and represented the Giants' lone run through the first six frames before San Francisco tacked on three in the seventh and two more in the ninth to take the lead. Darren Ford and Ryan Rohlinger were both 2-for-2 and combined for three RBIs while Nate Schierholtz also drove in a run.

Athletics at the plate: After Eric Patterson led off the game with a base hit, Kevin Kouzmanoff put the A's on the board early with an RBI double. Oakland's new third baseman was 2-for-3 on the day, as was Ryan Sweeney. Shortstop Cliff Pennington was the only other A's player to collect a hit, as the team tallied just six total.

Giants on the mound: Making his third spring start, southpaw Barry Zito tossed 3 1/3 innings against his former team, surrendering one run, four hits and three walks while fanning one before being relieved by Tony Pena Jr. The right-handed reliever combined with Todd Wellemeyer, Jeremy Affeldt, Henry Sosa and Santiago Casilla for 5 2/3 shutout innings.

Athletics on the mound: Left-hander Brett Anderson made quick work of the Giants in four shutout innings of work, scattering just two hits while striking out one with an economical 50 pitches. Lefty Brad Kilby immediately gave up a homer to Uribe in the fifth but then settled down and didn't allow another hit through the sixth. Right-hander Justin Souza gave up three runs on four hits and a walk in just two-thirds of an inning before Marcus McBeth came in and pitched one-hit ball in 1 1/3 innings. Sam Demel also gave up a run and three hits.

Worth noting: A's outfielder Rajai Davis was scratched just minutes before Wednesday's game due to tenderness near the left side of his stomach. He was replaced in center field by Eric Patterson, who went 1-for-2 with a walk.

Cactus League records: Athletics 6-7-1; Giants 11-6

Up next: Left-hander Gio Gonzalez will continue to make his case for the final rotation spot as he takes to the mound Thursday against the visiting D-backs at Phoenix Municipal Stadium beginning at 1:05 p.m. PT. The A's southpaw, 1-1 with a 3.60 ERA in two games this spring, will look to outduel Arizona starter Kevin Mulvey. Gonzalez will be joined on the field by Eric Chavez, who is expected to play back-to-back days for the second time this spring.

Thursday will be the Giants' only scheduled off-day of the spring. Manager Bruce Bochy also gave the club a break on March 2, the day before the exhibition opener, and the Giants responded by winning seven of their first eight Cactus League games. The Giants' next day off will be April 8, the first Thursday of the regular season. San Francisco will resume action Friday against Cleveland, with Jonathan Sanchez confronting Indians right-hander Justin Masterson.

Duchscherer: 'I'm on my way back'

A's righty could make Cactus League debut Monday

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- A rather battered Oakland pitching corps received a dose of good news Wednesday in the form of a seemingly healthy Justin Duchscherer, who threw three innings of a Minor League intrasquad game and reported he "felt good physically."

The right-handed Duchscherer, recovering from a February nerve ablation procedure after missing all of 2009 due to minor elbow surgery and a bout with clinical depression, tossed 45 pitches -- most of which were fastballs with a few cutters and breaking balls making their way in the mix.

"I'm on my way back to what I want to do," Duchscherer said. "My command is not terrible. I thought it was pretty good, almost in midseason form."

The next step for Duchscherer, who has yet to make his Cactus League debut, is a potential four-inning stint against the host Mariners on Monday.

"I felt sharp enough to where I could be ready for a game," the 31-year-old pitcher said. "That's our goal. It's hard to say, but this is the best I've felt in spring in a long time. There are no setbacks right now. Ever since the procedure, my back feels good, and my elbow feels great -- the best it's felt in years."

Duchscherer said he gave up three singles in the three-inning performance, only one of which was hit hard.

"They asked who I wanted to face," he said, "and [Anthony] Recker faced me last time, so he came out, and of course he hits an absolute blast off me his first at-bat.

"I'm pretty sure I boosted his ego today."

Despite being more than a couple of weeks behind the other pitchers, Duchscherer still believes he'll be ready to go come April. He'll attempt to throw four innings or 60 pitches in Monday's game and gradually work up his pitch count in his final two spring starts.

Bailey, Breslow added to bullpen injury list

A's relievers still expected to be ready for Opening Day

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- An already depleted A's bullpen suffered another pair of hits Wednesday with the news that right-hander Andrew Bailey and lefty Craig Breslow are out for a few days due to elbow soreness.

Both pitchers visited Dr. Douglas Freedberg this week and underwent MRIs that revealed the elbow injuries.

Bailey, expected to be down five to seven days, was diagnosed with lateral epicondylitis, a condition usually caused by overuse that involves soreness on the outside of the upper arm near the elbow.

"It's just a little discomfort," the reigning American League Rookie of the Year said. "I felt something after my last outing [Sunday], so I figured I should have it checked out. I'll just be doing some therapy and give it some rest.

"Last year was probably the heaviest workload on my arm, so this is probably just from kicking it back up and my arm trying to get used to it again."

Meanwhile, Breslow won't be throwing for three to four days as he recovers from medial tendinitis, which is giving the southpaw pain near the elbow joint. The 29-year-old mentioned he felt "relieved" after hearing the results, knowing that the setback is "a little disconcerting, but nothing serious."

Both are still expected to be ready by Opening Day, as manager Bob Geren noted that "everything sounded encouraging."

Bailey and Breslow join right-handers Joey Devine and Michael Wuertz on the team's very own bullpen injured reserve list. Devine, experiencing tendinitis in his surgically repaired right arm, was slated to play catch Wednesday but will instead give his arm one more day of rest before picking up a ball.

"I'll just be playing light catch up to about 80 feet," Devine said. "Free and easy -- that's the goal."

Along the same lines, Wuertz was expected to join Justin Duchscherer in throwing in a Minor League intrasquad game Wednesday. Instead, he'll give his shoulder yet another day off while Geren said there's a "chance for tomorrow" for him to take the mound.

Aside from Devine, Wuertz is the only A's reliever yet to appear in a game. However, just like Bailey and Breslow, Geren said Wuertz "feels he'll be ready" by the start of the season.

"His shoulder wasn't bouncing back like he wanted it to," the A's skipper said, "but he should get in a game soon."

Bailey, Breslow and Wuertz served as key members of a 2009 bullpen that combined for the American League's lowest ERA (3.46). The three relievers, who all appeared in at least 60 games, tallied a total of 19 wins to go along with an average 2.36 ERA.

Lee's Leftovers: Wednesday postgame notes

When speaking to manager **Bob Geren** following the A's 6-1 loss to the Giants today, I learned that **Rajai Davis'** injury isn't actually quad-related, as the team originally announced, but rather tied to abdominal pain near the left side of his stomach. Davis was missing from the clubhouse during the times I was down there throughout the game, but the injury doesn't sound too serious and I'll make sure to get you all an update tomorrow morning.

As for the game, I think **Brett Anderson** made everyone forget about the countless team injuries for an hour while he pitched four solid innings of two-hit ball -- three of which he retired Giants hitters in order. While talking to media after his performance, Anderson seemed very pleased, and rightfully so, with the command he showed using all of his pitches. The most notable difference between the Brett Anderson of 2009 and the Brett Anderson of what **Dallas Braden** likes to refer to as "oh-ten" is the strides he's made with his changeup. That one pitch allowed Anderson to really keep his pitch count down today. In fact, he only threw 50 through four. "Last year I was throwing too many pitches," he said, "so I could never really go very deep in a game." Geren was also impressed with his pitcher, saying he was "outstanding" and did a "great job of using his pitches all over the plate."

Kevin Kouzmanoff made his second throwing error of the spring in the third inning, but made up for the mistake by going 2-for-3 at the plate with an impressive RBI hit to left-center that he turned into a double. The A's new third baseman, who entered the game with a career .273 regular-season mark against starter **Barry Zito**, is looking more and more comfortable at the plate every time out there.

Kouzmanoff, along with fellow scheduled Opening Day starters Mark Ellis, Kurt Suzuki, Ryan Sweeney, etc., will get a second consecutive start against the visiting Diamondbacks tomorrow at Phoenix Muni. Fifth-starter candidate **Gio Gonzalez** is slated to take the mound, and he'll be followed by **Tyson Ross**, **Henry Rodriguez** and **Brad Ziegler**.

That's all I've got for you... Happy St. Patty's Day to all!

Baseball notes: Texas Rangers manager, former Oakland A's coach Ron Washington admits having used cocaine

Associated Press

Texas Rangers manager Ron Washington admitted he made a "huge mistake" when he used cocaine and failed a Major League Baseball drug test last season.

In his first public acknowledgment, Washington apologized Wednesday for his behavior, eight months after he told Rangers president Nolan Ryan, who turned down the manager's offer to resign.

"I made a huge mistake and it almost caused me to lose everything I have worked for all of my life," Washington said at a news conference Wednesday. "I am not here to make excuses. There are none."

Washington said he used cocaine only once and called it "stupid" and "shameful."

The failed test first was reported by SI.com.

Washington said he told the commissioner's office and Rangers officials about using cocaine before he had a routine drug test.

"He came forward and said he would resign," Ryan said. "He understood the consequences. We had a lot of discussions and a lot of soul-searching on it."

Washington was an A's coach before becoming Rangers manager. When A's infielder Eric Chavez won the Gold Glove award in 2004 he gave it to Washington as a gesture of appreciation.

Of Washington's current situation, Chavez said, "I support him. He's pretty much said it will never happen again. One thing he always taught me: If you make a mistake, own up to it, move on and make sure it never happens again."

"He's a great man and he'll get through this," said A's second baseman Mark Ellis. "I hope the Rangers stick behind him like they have so far. Obviously he made a mistake, but he owned up to it. It surprised me a lot, but it can happen to anybody. Nobody's immune to this stuff."

Mariners: Pitcher Cliff Lee has been suspended for the first five games of the regular season for throwing a pitch over the head of Arizona's Chris Snyder in an exhibition game this week.

Nationals: Outfielder Elijah Dukes was released, a sudden move with 2½ weeks left in spring training.

Rockies: Closer Huston Street likely will miss the season opener after experiencing tightness in his right shoulder.

Diamondbacks: The team agreed to terms with pitcher Kris Benson on a minor league contract.

Schedule: A three-game series between the Mets and Marlins in June has been moved from Miami to Puerto Rico, a person familiar with the decision told the Associated Press.