

## A's News Clips, Friday, March 19, 2010

### A's prospect Corey Brown soaks up information in first big league spring training camp

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Corey Brown braced himself for the first round of A's roster cuts, figuring there was a good chance he'd be called in for a discussion with manager Bob Geren.

But Brown, an outfielder who spent the 2009 season with Double-A Midland, remains one of 48 players left in Oakland's spring camp. He plans to milk all he can out of his first trip to major league spring training.

"For the few days I might have left here, I'll take advice from the guys that have been here awhile," Brown said. "Ask them about how they relax at the plate, how they go about things, what they do to get ready. I'll kind of try to (incorporate) that into how I play."

Players such as Brown know their chances of making the 25-man roster are slim. But the A's consider this time as crucial to the development of their young prospects.

Twenty-one of the 63 players who were invited to Oakland's camp have no major league service time. But spending a few weeks in spring training can serve as an ice-breaker.

Geren believes that when a player gets his feet wet during the spring, he's less likely to be intimidated if called up during the regular season.

"You get them experience against major leaguers and it builds their confidence," Geren said. "With some of the things that go through your mind as a young player, if you have any doubts, a lot of those questions are answered (in spring training)."

Adrian Cardenas took part in big league camp last season, so the butterflies have worn off some. But Cardenas, primarily a second baseman before this season, is learning to play third base.

He's soaking up all he can by watching veteran infielders such as Eric Chavez and Mark Ellis.

"I don't bug them too much, but I'd be lying if I said I didn't hover around them and pick up on what they do," Cardenas said. "It's a big cliché, but it's true. The game does speed up a little bit."

The accommodations of big league camp — from the high-quality food they're served to the attention they're given by the clubhouse staff — can also be an eye-opener for young players.

"Seeing how well you get treated provides quite a bit of incentive relative to the conditions in the minor leagues," general manager Billy Beane said. "I think there is some value in the lifestyle and creating that incentive."

Notes: Right-hander Tyson Ross struck out seven in three innings of relief Thursday, earning the victory as the A's notched a 7-3 win over Arizona in Phoenix. "... Gio Gonzalez started and was sharp through three innings but couldn't make it through the fourth, when he walked three. Controlling his emotions is key for Gonzalez, and his frustration was apparent. He wasn't searching for excuses afterward. "I have to get that first-pitch strike. Falling behind on these guys should not happen." Said Geren: "He was unhittable, and then he lost command. "... A couple calls didn't go his way, but he needs to shake that off." "... Eric Patterson (three RBIs) put the A's ahead for good with a two-run double in the sixth. "... Michael Wuertz faced six hitters (21 pitches) in a minor-league game and said his right shoulder was fine. When he makes his exhibition debut depends largely on how he feels today, Geren said. "... Reliever Justin Souza was optioned to the minors.

## **Chin Music: Michael Wuertz throwing today, Coco Crisp returning soon, and Bob Geren's thoughts on baserunning**

By Joe Stiglich, Contra Costa Times, 3/18/2010 10:41AM

Lots of talk about the NCAA Tournament inside the A's clubhouse this morning. These guys might be professional baseball players, but when it comes to other sports, they're fans just like all of us. Same thing happens when the NFL season kicks off in the fall.

As for the morning's news ...

–Michael Wuertz is throwing in a minor league game at 11 a.m., so it'll be interesting to see how he comes out of that.

–Manager Bob Geren said Rajai Davis will likely be out at least three days, but it's mainly as a precaution. His abdominal injury is mild, and since Davis has played just about every game and looked sharp, the A's don't see the harm in giving him a few days off to recuperate. This gives Eric Patterson some time in center field, and any action this guy sees is very important. Patterson is out of options, meaning it'll be tough to send him to the minors without another team snatching him off waivers. So the A's need to see what he's got.

Patterson singled in the first inning yesterday, stole a base off Barry Zito and came around to score the A's only run. And speaking of baserunning ...

–Geren always gets jazzed to talk about aggressiveness on the base paths. He wants the A's to be the best baserunning team in the majors. "We went from one of the worst, to middle of the pack, to being one of the best last year, and we want to be the best. (Good baserunning) never slumps."

Rickey Henderson is back with the team for the next week or so to help in that area.

–Coco Crisp, nursing a sore hamstring, will be back in action in a few days, Geren said. That could either be at DH or center field. The most important thing: His right shoulder is coming along well and Crisp is throwing at about 180 feet. He had surgery on both shoulders last summer.

–Reliever Justin Souza was optioned to the minors this morning. He's a hard thrower with good movement on his pitches. I wouldn't be surprised if we see this guy in Oakland at some point this season.

–And one last note: Jason Jennings will start Saturday's split-squad game in Goodyear against Cleveland. It's a nice audition to see what he can do. Ben Sheets will pitch in Phoenix against the Cubs that day.

Whew, that's all for now. There's a stadium worker dusting off the seats in front of me, and he's singing along to "House of the Rising Sun." I like the enthusiasm, but he won't be winning many "American Idol" votes.

I'll leave you w/that ....

## **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.

## **Injured A's aim to be healthy by Opening Day**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Reliever **Michael Wuertz**, who had not yet appeared in a spring game, threw 21 pitches in a minor-league game, throwing three sliders and the rest fastballs and changeups. Wuertz's slider is his best weapon, but he said he needs full arm strength to throw it. He'll be to that point by the Bay Bridge series in early April, he said.

Wuertz struck out two, got two groundball outs and walked a man. He believes the earliest he'd next pitch would be Sunday against the Reds.

**Justin Duchscherer** believes he'll pitch the following day, against Seattle; he'd come in after starter **Brett Anderson**.

Left-hander **Craig Breslow** (elbow) reiterated that he should be able to go in a few days, while **Andrew Bailey** is confident that his case of tennis elbow is mild. "I'm optimistic I'll be ready on Opening Day," the A's closer said.

Right-hander **Joey Devine** (tendinitis) is looking like far less of a sure thing for Opening Day, but he said he believes he'll be able to throw within a few days.

The A's have not made any calls on free-agent reliever **Joe Beimel**, but their recent injuries might lead them to do so.

Outfielder **Coco Crisp** (hamstring) could play this weekend, most likely Sunday, and outfielder **Rajai Davis** will be out three or four days with an abdominal strain. Davis said the problem is slight, and manager **Bob Geren** said that this is a good time to get Davis rest.

**Mateo tries out:** The A's held a tryout for 17-year-old Dominican outfielder **Wagner Mateo** on Tuesday, numerous sources told The Chronicle; Mateo hit against several pitchers, including **Dallas Braden** (who struck him out).

The Cardinals signed Mateo to a \$3.1 million deal last year, but the contract was voided when he failed the physical. Mateo has tried out for several Cactus League teams and now is expected to try out in Florida before making any decisions.

**Briefly:** Reliever **Justin Souza** was optioned to Double-A Midland. ... Fifth starter candidate **Gio Gonzalez** walked four in 32/3 innings in the A's 7-3 victory over Arizona, and he seemed upset he wasn't getting more strike calls in the fourth. "That's part of the game," Geren said. "A couple of close calls didn't go his way, and he didn't shake it off the way you need to." Before that rough patch, Geren said, Gonzalez was "unbelievably good." ... Former Cal starter **Tyson Ross** struck out seven in three innings. ... **Adam Rosales**, pushing hard for the shortstop spot, had two more hits, and he's 8 for his past 15. ... **Eric Patterson** hit a three-run double.

## **Souza sent out, injury updates and more**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Phoenix 10:05AM

Right-hander Justin Souza was optioned to Double-A Midland this morning, which is a little surprising considering the way relievers are falling this week - someone's going to have to pitch the late innings. Souza said he expects to be back soon, which is always the attitude clubs like to see, and he believes in his first-ever big-league camp he was just trying to be a little too fine in the strike zone. I hope he lands at Triple-A Sacramento very soon so he can be near his family, including his younger brother, Cory, the recipient of a double lung transplant.

Manager Bob Geren suggested that outfielder Coco Crisp is close to returning from a hamstring injury; Saturday, or more likely Sunday, could be the day. Crisp might DH first, but he's also close enough with his throwing program (he had two shoulder surgeries last year) that he'll be in center field Sunday or early next week.

Rajai Davis will be out at least three or four days with an abdominal strain. Geren said Davis has played so much this spring that an extra day or two won't hurt him from a baseball perspective, but probably will do him a lot of good.

Caution is definitely the watchword this week, particularly in the bullpen. Michael Wuertz's throwing session was delayed a day (he'll throw in a minor-league game this morning) and Craig Breslow is taking a few days off because of elbow discomfort; he reiterated today that it is a minor problem. Andrew Bailey's tennis elbow isn't expected to keep him off the mound more than a week, and, Bailey told me this morning, he figured better to miss a week now than during the regular season.

Joey Devine had the same sentiment - his elbow tendinitis is 90 percent gone and he can definitely throw right now, but he wants to make sure it's entirely knocked out now after working so hard to rehab from Tommy John surgery. Devine told me that Tim Hudson tried to pitch through a similar case of almost-gone tendinitis last year and wound up missed eight weeks as a result; Hudson told Devine to take more time now and not risk a bigger setback during the season.

It's no secret that the A's began to up their baserunning game last year, largely because of Davis. Geren has been hammering the importance of good baserunning since he became the A's manager, and the team is now at the point, he said this morning, where the goal is now to be "the very best baserunning team." Not good, not improved, but the very best. And he means not just Davis and Crisp, but everyone; he noted Jack Cust taking second on a ball in the dirt with ease this spring and Kevin Kouzmanoff going to second with some aggressive baserunning on a ball to left center yesterday.

Today's lineup vs. Arizona: Patterson CF, Ellis 2B, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Chavez 1B, Sweeney RF, Cust DH, Gross LF, Rosales SS, Gonzalez P

## Outfielders lead A's past D-backs

### Patterson, Sweeney, Gross pick up slack for ailing Davis

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

#### **A'S 7, D-BACKS 3**

*at Phoenix*

*Thursday, March 18*

**D-backs at the plate:** Mark Reynolds, who hit a home run in his final at-bat of Wednesday's game and signed a contract extension Thursday, put the D-backs on the board in the first with a solo homer to left-center. He also doubled, going 2-for-2 with a walk on the day. Justin Upton scored Arizona's other two runs, one on a double-play ball hit by Conor Jackson in the fourth and the other courtesy of a wild pitch in the sixth frame. Gerardo Parra had the D-backs' only other hit, a fifth-inning single.

**Athletics at the plate:** Ryan Sweeney and Adam Rosales both enjoyed two-hit days, the former collecting an RBI with his fourth-inning base hit. Gabe Gross went 1-for-3 with an RBI single and represented one of three runs to score on a double by Eric Patterson in Oakland's four-run sixth inning. Mark Ellis, Kevin Kouzmanoff, Eric Chavez, Travis Buck and Michael Taylor all had hits, as well.

**D-backs on the mound:** Right-handed starter Rodrigo Lopez allowed just one hit and struck out one through three innings of work, quickly retiring the A's in order in two of those frames. Righty Bob Howry, who tossed a single inning, allowed Oakland's first two runs of the game before right-hander Kevin Mulvy watched four runs -- none of them earned -- cross home plate in the sixth. Southpaw Zach Kroenke also gave up a run.

**Athletics on the mound:** Making his third appearance and second start of the spring, lefty Gio Gonzalez struggled with his command, walking four while giving up one hit -- a solo homer to Upton -- through 3 2/3 innings. He gave up two runs total while also striking out four. Right-hander Brad Ziegler followed with 1 1/3 innings of one-hit ball before Tyson Ross came in for three innings. The right-hander scattered three hits and a run, but also struck out seven while hitting a batter and allowing a run on a wild pitch.

**Worth noting:** Rosales has now reached base in nine of his 10 games, and Sweeney is 8-for-18 over his past six games after tallying just one hit in his first 10 at-bats of the spring. Also of note, Gross has seven RBIs on seven hits.

Before Thursday's game, the D-backs officially announced a three-year contract extension with Reynolds. The deal will pay the third baseman \$14.5 million through 2012, with a club option for 2013.

**Cactus League records:** Athletics 7-7-1; D-backs 9-7-1

**Up next:** The A's will make their second trip to Tucson, Ariz., of the spring on Friday, this time facing the Rockies at 1:05 p.m. PT. Right-hander Trevor Cahill, looking to secure a rotation spot, gets the starting nod and will be followed by Lenny DiNardo, Jerry Blevins and Fernando Hernandez. Most of the team's regulars, including Mark Ellis, Kurt Suzuki and Kevin Kouzmanoff, will not be making the hour-plus trip, but will be back in the lineup Saturday.

The D-backs will head back to Tucson on Friday to take on the Royals at 1:05 p.m. MST. Several regulars will not make the trip. Shortstop Stephen Drew and outfielders Jackson, Chris Young and Upton will get to stay in the Phoenix area where they have homes. The four will be back in the lineup Saturday when the D-backs play in Peoria against the Mariners.

### Davis sidelined by sore ab muscle

### Speedy left fielder likely to miss at least three games

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- The seemingly unstoppable Rajai Davis, who already has three stolen bases this spring, will have to stay off the bags for a few days.

Manager Bob Geren announced Thursday morning that Davis will miss a minimum of three days with what has been deemed a sore abdominal muscle near the left side of his stomach.

"He'll be out for three days, and then we'll take it from there," the A's skipper said. "We'll be cautious with him, because a few days won't set him back for the season. He hasn't had many days off, so we have the luxury of taking our time with him."

The 29-year-old Davis -- a late scratch just minutes before Wednesday's game against the Giants -- is in the middle of transitioning from center field to left, where he is slated to start Opening Night alongside Coco Crisp and Ryan Sweeney. In nine games, Davis has a .233 batting average and has also impressed with his glove at his new position.

While sidelined, Davis will be replaced by the likes of Eric Patterson and Gabe Gross -- both of whom are fighting for roster spots as an extra outfielder.

Patterson, who is out of options, has a .222 average in 11 games this spring, while newcomer Gross -- signed as a free agent this offseason -- boasts a .286 mark with two errors through nine games.

"Both are capable of playing anywhere in the outfield," Geren said. "That's what nice."

## **Rehabbing Wuertz sharp in Minors game**

### **Righty might make Cactus debut soon, depending on shoulder**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Michael Wuertz inched one step closer to making his Cactus League debut by throwing 21 pitches in a Minor League game Thursday.

The A's right-hander -- trying to overcome a sore shoulder -- faced six batters, throwing mostly fastballs and changeups, didn't allow a hit, walking one and striking out two.

"It was nice to get into game-mode," said Wuertz, who had previously only thrown live batting practice.

He tossed just three sliders in the game and noted that he needs to develop almost full arm strength in order to reach complete potential on that pitch.

"It's not like throwing a curveball," he said. "Usually I get up to full arm strength by the last week of camp."

Wuertz's throwing schedule will heavily depend on how his arm -- and, more importantly, his shoulder -- feels Friday morning. If deemed healthy, the A's reliever said he'd preferably like to see game action as early as Sunday, when the team is scheduled to host the Reds.

"We'll wait and see how I feel," he said, "but everything was coming out good. My mechanics felt good, and I felt good physically.

"Hopefully I can take a few days off and then throw Sunday."

Manager Bob Geren echoed his pitcher's thoughts, saying it's too soon to tell exactly what day will call for his Cactus League debut.

"He pitched well last time [in live batting practice], and it just took him awhile to recover," the A's skipper said. "We just want to make sure he's ready."

Wuertz, 31, was one of the league's top setup men last year with a 6-1 record and a 2.63 ERA in a team-leading 74 appearances for the A's. He also led American League relievers and tied for second in the Majors with a career-high 102 strikeouts.

That workload, previously matched in 2005 and '07, has played a significant role in delaying Wuertz's return to the mound. However, the right-hander is still confident he'll be ready by Opening Day -- even if he is slightly sore.

"I can be sore all spring, but once the real thing happens, the adrenaline takes over," he said. "That's how it's always been for me."

## Lee's Leftovers: Thursday postgame notes

Manager **Bob Geren** described left-handed starter **Gio Gonzalez** as "unhittable" during the first three innings of Thursday's game against the visiting D-backs, who drew a sold-out crowd of over 9,000. (Despite announced attendance, that's more than the A's get at some regular-season home games in Oakland.) Anyway, Gonzalez all but fell apart in the fourth frame, surrendering three of his four walks in that inning while appearing more than a little frustrated. After exiting with one on and two out in that inning, he talked with reporters and -- without coming out and saying it directly -- expressed discontentment with what he called "a touchy subject" on some of the calls he was getting. However, Geren said that happens sometimes and doesn't excuse his mound composure. "I agree (with the calls), but that's part of the game," Geren said. "There were a couple close calls I told **Curt (Young)**, but you need to shake that off." Aside from that inning, Gonzalez said he was pleased with the way his changeup is coming along, noting that it got him plenty swings and misses, along with ground balls.

After **Brad Ziegler** induced a groundout to end the semi-ugly fourth frame, **Tyson Ross** came in and quietly tossed three solid innings, giving up one run on two hits while walking one and striking out seven. "He's really come a long way in the past 10 months," Geren said. "Today he showed just how dangerous his slider and sinker can be."

This morning, Geren confirmed what **Coco Crisp** told me yesterday: The A's center fielder could be back in the lineup by weekend's end. You can read the full story from Wednesday here.

Also of note: **Adam Rosales** continues to get a good amount of playing time and productive at-bats, making it harder to imagine him not being on the 25-man roster come Opening Night. He was 2-for-3 in the win and has now reached base safely in nine of his last 10 games. So I'm wondering: How many of you genuinely see Rosales making a true competition out of the starting shortstop job? **Cliff Pennington** is 3-for-7 over his last three games and still seems to have the vote for the starting job from A's management, but Rosales' consistent play this spring is hard to ignore. At the same time, Rosales is not out of options. **Eric Patterson** is, but will that even factor into Oakland's roster decisions in less than two weeks? Let me know what you think.

## Oakland A's MLN: Early Days Of Camp

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Mar 18, 2010

With position players reporting on Sunday, the Oakland A's minor league camp has been going full bore for three days now. The game schedule begins on Thursday. We have a few notes from the first days of minor league camp...

This week marks the first full week of minor league spring training in Oakland A's camp, as position players reported to Papago Park on Sunday. We touched base with Oakland A's Director of Player Development Keith Lieppman, who gave us some progress reports from the first few days of camp.

\* **Matt Sulentic:** Over the past few years, Sulentic has become known for his rigorous off-season work-out programs, which have included a variety of activities, including boxing. Lieppman noted that Sulentic "looks to have improved his speed following a rigorous off-season training program." The A's 2006 third-round pick hit .288 with seven homers and 21 stolen bases (30 chances) in 113 games for Double-A Midland last season.

\* **Max Stassi:** The A's catching phenom made a strong impression on the A's brass during his stay in major league camp earlier this spring and he has carried over that impressive play into minor league camp. According to Lieppman, Stassi has been throwing and receiving well behind the plate in intrasquad games.

\* **Michael Ynoa:** Ynoa pitched an inning in an intrasquad game. Lieppman noted that the Dominican right-hander had good life on his fastball and a sharp curveball.

\* **Sean Doolittle:** Doolittle is in camp and is working out, but isn't yet 100 percent recovered from his off-season knee surgery to correct a torn patella, according to Lieppman.

\* **Andrew Carignan:** Carignan is in camp and following his throwing program and has yet to suffer any set-backs, according to Lieppman. Carignan missed nearly all of last season with right elbow/forearm issues.

\* **Dusty Coleman:** According to Lieppman, the infielder is progressing with his rehab and should be hitting within a week. Coleman had surgery on a broken wrist this off-season.

\* **Brett Tomko:** Lieppman also indicated that the veteran Tomko's rehab from a nerve problem in his throwing arm will take him into extended spring training and there is no timetable for his return to the mound.

## **Ron Washington fallout: Of blackmail, support, job security and his future**

Gabe Lacques, USA Today, 3/18/2010

It was a secret the Texas Rangers and Ron Washington hoped would never come to light. But when details of Washington's cocaine use emerged Wednesday -- Washington claimed it was a one-time offense -- it was immediately clear a detail buried in 2009 would shape the narrative for the Rangers' 2010 season.

Unfair? Perhaps.

But a flap like this is so unusual, questions linger long after the parties involved attempt to answer them.

- Can Washington have credibility in the clubhouse?
- If the Rangers struggle, how long does he keep his job? Will the revelation mean front-office patience runs shorter with Washington in a year team president Nolan Ryan expects 92 wins?
- How could Washington possibly not let this affect his managerial decisions this year?

As it turns out, the Rangers knew this elephant was hovering in the room for almost half of the '09 season. It's just now, everyone else knows it, too.

As the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram's* Randy Galloway writes, the club has reason to believe it was blackmailed by a disgruntled former employee who may have been the source of the story leaking. *Dallas Morning News* columnist Tim Cowlshaw notes that Washington was barely holding on to his job as it was, while the clubhouse mood suggests that Washington's stature has not been diminished.

That's the brave public face the club will put on, and a party line they'll attempt to toe, even through the first five-game losing streak this year.

Given the delicate balancing act the club must pull off this season, tell us: **Should Washington have been fired** to avoid the whole mess? Many around the game don't think so.

Washington was loved as a bench coach for a decade with the Oakland Athletics; third baseman Eric Chavez gave him his Gold Glove trophy when he earned the honor for the first time. The A's were stunned, but supportive.

Brewers manager Ken Macha: Shocked.

White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen: Just don't test for vodka and Corona.

Fox's Ken Rosenthal says it's simple for Washington: Win or else.