

## **A's Daily News Clips; April 10-12, 2010**

### **A's energetic backup infielder Adam Rosales has four RBIs in win over Angels**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

04/12/2010

ANAHEIM — Sunday was a day of rest for some A's regulars, and that made it a day of opportunity for Adam Rosales.

Getting the start at second base, and drawing his first at-bats of the season, Rosales drove in four runs to key the A's 9-4 victory over the Los Angeles Angels before a crowd of 40,601 at Angel Stadium.

Much was written about Rosales' high-energy style of play before Oakland obtained him from Cincinnati in February. Now the A's are experiencing it for themselves.

In his first at-bat, Rosales lined a 1-0 pitch from Joe Saunders for a solo homer in the second inning. Sprinting immediately after contact, Rosales seemed to reach first base before the ball cleared the left-field wall.

"He's someone who probably needs to take a nap," A's starting pitcher Dallas Braden said amusedly.

"He plays like he hasn't slept in four days. I relish players like that. He doesn't know any other speed. You get somebody to play with that kind of energy, it gets you going."

It's early, but the A's are a confident bunch after opening the season 5-2 against division foes Seattle and Los Angeles. Today marks their fifth consecutive day atop the American League West. The last time they occupied first place was May 12, 2008.

With a day game after a night game, A's manager Bob Geren rested catcher Kurt Suzuki, designated hitter Eric Chavez and left fielder Travis Buck. Starting second baseman Mark Ellis served as DH.

Joining Rosales in the lineup were reserves Jake Fox at catcher and Eric Patterson in left field.

Braden (1-0) gave up two runs in the first, but he and Saunders (0-2) both found a groove, with each retiring 13 straight at one point.

The A's trailed 3-1 but took the lead with a three-run seventh.

Ellis' ground-rule double scored Ryan Sweeney. After Kevin Jepsen relieved Saunders, Rosales came up with runners on second and third and went the other way for a two-run single to give the A's a 4-3 advantage, lining up Braden for the victory.

Oakland scored five times in the final two innings to break the game open.

Rosales played all over the infield in 87 games with the Reds last season. The A's will ask the same of him, and he said he's learned how to be ready when called upon.

"The experience I had last year has helped me this year," he said. "I feel more calm."

Geren echoed Braden's sentiments, saying Rosales' enthusiastic play is infectious.

"It just does something to the other guys," Geren said.

"And he's not trying to show the other team up. That's just his natural style of play. He runs on a walk."

Braden, who struck out a career-high 10 in his first start, settled down after his shaky beginning Sunday and lasted six innings, allowing three runs on five hits.

Rookie Tyson Ross took over in the seventh, charged with protecting a one-run lead.

The A's added plenty of cushion for him, and Ross worked the final three innings to notch his first career save.

Geren has said he'll be careful to give the right-hander plenty of rest between outings. Ross made the team as a reliever but had been solely a starter before this season.

He allowed his first career run on Juan Rivera's homer in the ninth.

## **A's update: First baseman Daric Barton contributes with his glove in win over Angels**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

04/11/2010

First baseman Barton contributes with glove

ANAHEIM — Left-hander Dallas Braden earned the victory Sunday, and Adam Rosales was the offensive hero for the A's.

But Braden said the biggest contributor in a 9-4 win over the Los Angeles Angels was first baseman Daric Barton.

Barton made several standout plays with the glove and laid down two sacrifice bunts, no small feat for a team that can struggle moving runners over via that route.

In the second inning, Barton leapt high to snare Brandon Wood's liner. Then he hustled toward the A's dugout in the sixth and made a lunging catch of Kendry Morales' pop-up, running hard into the rail as he made the play.

In the ninth, Barton made a diving stop of Morales' grounder down the line and got the out.

His glove work impressed manager Bob Geren, who worried that Barton might take a tumble on his catch near the dugout.

"I feel more comfortable when they're doing it with their teammates there," Geren said.

Pitcher Ben Sheets joked afterward that he was one of those players.

"I almost elbowed your nose," Barton told him.

Brad Ziegler hardly is a strikeout pitcher, but the submariner fanned three hitters in a scoreless eighth inning Saturday night against the Angels.

Don't expect people to start hanging "K" signs at the Oakland Coliseum when he pitches. But Ziegler is trying to vary his approach.

"I'm trying to mix more of my pitches this year — throw the breaking ball earlier in the count, the fastball later in the count," Ziegler said.

The A's are relying on Ziegler even more with setup man Michael Wuertz on the disabled list. Wuertz threw a 28-pitch bullpen session but will throw at least one more before going on a rehab assignment.

Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff had a good-sized cheering section all weekend at Angel Stadium.

His brother, Ky, who lives in nearby Newport Beach, brought a bunch of buddies from his softball team to one game. Several other friends of Kouzmanoff's were scattered throughout the lower deck.

What sounded like boos when he came to the plate were actually calls of "Kooooz!," which Coliseum fans also have picked up on.

Kouzmanoff went 1-for-4 Sunday with two runs.

## **Matsui, Angels halt A's win streak**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

04/11/2010

ANAHEIM — Extra seating has been added to the Angel Stadium press box to accommodate the 40 or so Japanese reporters who have been dispatched to cover Hideki Matsui this season.

So far, the Los Angeles Angels' new designated hitter has given them plenty to write about. Matsui delivered his first game-winning RBI with his new team Saturday, and it burst the bubble on the A's four-game winning streak.

His ninth-inning walk-off single against lefty Craig Breslow dropped just inside the right-field line, scoring Bobby Abreu and giving the Angels a 4-3 victory to even this three-game series heading into this afternoon's finale.

Given how things had gone for the A's, it appeared they might notch their fifth straight win after erasing a two-run deficit and tying the game in the eighth.

But Abreu doubled to right with one out in the ninth. A's manager Bob Geren ordered Torii Hunter intentionally walked to bring up Matsui, who doubled in the Angels' first run in the third and homered Friday in the series opener.

He worked the count to 2-0 and then turned on a Breslow fastball.

"I tried to go in and it wound up cutting back over the plate," said Breslow (0-1).

The Angels watched impact hitters Chone Figgins and Vladimir Guerrero leave via free agency in the offseason. So Matsui's effectiveness as the Angels' cleanup man will have a lot to do with whether the A's — or Texas or Seattle for that matter — can unseat the three-time defending division champs.

He's hitting .417 (10-for-24) this season.

"They've got more than (Matsui)," A's starting pitcher Ben Sheets said. "I don't know if there's one guy that stares at you and you worry about, like Barry Bonds in San Francisco. But they can do it 1 through 9."

Sheets, in his second start as an Athletic, allowed 10 hits and three runs over six innings. He walked three and struck out just one.

That's improvement over Monday's opener, when he labored through five innings. But the right-hander, who missed last season with an elbow injury, said he's still lacking his putaway stuff.

He hit 95 mph on the stadium radar gun with one fastball but generally was in the low 90s.

"Right now I don't feel like I have the ability to rare back and blow somebody away," Sheets said. "But you've just got to keep making pitches, keep battling early and when it comes, it comes."

The Angels, who had six doubles, lined several balls to the gaps off Sheets. Others weren't hit so hard.

But for not having his "A" stuff, Sheets limited the damage and showed some competitive fire.

With the A's trailing 3-1 in the bottom of the fifth, he escaped a bases-loaded jam by getting Howie Kendrick to ground into a 6-4-3 double play, then walked off the mound shouting into his glove in celebration.

Kevin Kouzmanoff's first homer as an Athletic — a fourth-inning drive that cleared the bullpens in left field — pulled the A's within a 1-1 tie.

Trailing 3-1 in the seventh, Eric Chavez doubled and scored on Travis Buck's groundout. Kouzmanoff's fielder's choice grounder in the eighth scored Daric Barton to tie it.

Besides those moments, the A's generally were bottled up by Angels starter Jered Weaver, who gave up four hits in six innings and struck out seven.

## **A's notebook**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

04/11/2010

Durable Suzuki to get rare day off from catching

ANAHEIM — Manager Bob Geren keeps in good communication with catcher Kurt Suzuki about his playing time.

But when it comes to discussing a day off, typically it's a one-way conversation.

"I'd never go to him to ask for a day off," Suzuki said before Saturday's game against the Los Angeles Angels. "He has to come to me, he knows that. I just feel I'm here to play. I come to the field every day to play. If my body allows me to, then why not?"

As Suzuki has developed into one of the majors' most well-rounded catchers, it's easy to take his durability for granted.

He's led American League catchers in games started and innings caught each of the past two seasons. Since previous starter Jason Kendall was traded to the Chicago Cubs on July 16, 2007, Suzuki has started 324 of the A's 393 games (82.4 percent).

He's scheduled for a rare day off today — sort of. Geren said he'll give backup Jake Fox a start behind the plate but that Suzuki may serve as designated hitter.

Suzuki, 26, has held up well to this point with the heavy workload. But it stands to reason that as he gets older, more rest will be important for his body to recuperate.

"I would love to (keep up his current pace)," he said. "Realistically, I don't know if it can happen, but I'll do it as long as I can."

Fox converted from being a full-time catcher in 2007 while with the Cubs organization. He's appeared in three major league games at catcher but has never started behind the plate.

His ability to play multiple positions was one reason he was kept as Suzuki's backup over Landon Powell.

DH/outfielder Jack Cust has decided to report to Triple-A Sacramento.

After being designated for assignment April 3, Cust had until Saturday to decide whether to go to Sacramento or become a free agent. He gets his full \$2.65 million salary but would have forfeited it had he opted for free agency.

Sacramento beat Portland 10-5 Friday. Steve Tolleson hit a grand slam, and top outfield prospect Michael Taylor and third baseman Dallas McPherson also homered.

## **Daric Barton, A's are picking up steam**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

04/10/2010

ANAHEIM — Los Angeles Angels catcher Jeff Mathis was the one wearing protective gear when Daric Barton came barreling down the third-base line in the top of the first inning Friday. Judging by the wallop Barton delivered, you'd have thought he had the body armor.

The A's are playing with the pedal to the floor right now, evidenced by Barton's plowing into Mathis to score their second run in a 10-4 victory at Angel Stadium, their fourth straight win after losing the season opener.

They ran the bases with abandon, delivered key hits with runners on base and watched left-hander Gio Gonzalez attack hitters once he was given the early lead.

In short, the A's won with the kind of aggressive play that was talked about in spring training.

"I think the most impressive thing is the way we're swinging the bats," A's manager Bob Geren said.

The A's lead the American League with 53 hits, including 13 doubles, through five games.

It was Rajai Davis and Barton, the top two hitters in the lineup, who dictated the pace in this one. They combined to go 6-for-9 with four RBIs and four runs.

Davis led off the game with a single and came around to score on Barton's double to the left-center gap. With one out, third-base coach Mike Gallego waved home Barton on Kurt Suzuki's ground single to left.

The one-hop throw from Juan Rivera was in time to nail Barton, but Mathis, perhaps anticipating a collision, let the ball get by him before Barton crashed into him.

"That's pretty much our game right now," Barton said. "Make things happen."

With two outs in the second, Davis grounded a hit up the middle and legged out a double when Angels center fielder Torii Hunter didn't charge hard to field it. Barton scored him with another double.

Barton is now 7-for-16 (.438) with seven RBIs in five games. The first baseman also managed to dodge a serious injury in the bottom of the fifth.

As he took a cutoff throw from left fielder Travis Buck, Barton's right knee buckled inward as he lost his footing, an image that looked gruesome on TV but turned out to be minor.

"It hurt, don't get me wrong," said Barton, who added that his hip is what ached the most. "But it was probably more scary than anything."

Staked to an early cushion, Gonzalez (1-0) threw six-plus innings, allowing two runs with six strikeouts and one walk. He said he continues gaining confidence with his changeup. But it was his specialty — the curve — that he used to strike out Bobby Abreu in the fifth and strand two runners with the score 5-2.

The A's led 7-2 in the seventh when No. 9 hitter Cliff Pennington pounded a three-run homer to right to make it a laugher.

Some sloppy play in the bottom of the ninth, including two A's errors, helped the Angels score twice and account for the final margin. Edwar Ramirez, who started the ninth, threw wildly to first for an error, helping lead to one run. Later in the inning, Davis dropped an easy fly ball to let another run score.

## **A's notebook: Front and center has been Rajai Davis' defense**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune  
04/09/2010

Front and center has been Davis' defensive prowess

ANAHEIM — Rajai Davis prepared for a switch to left field like a college student cramming for finals. He squeezed in every ounce of study time he could during spring training, reading countless balls off the bat during batting practice to judge properly the angles.

So much for that plan.

Coco Crisp, the A's expected center fielder, fractured his left pinkie three days before the season opener and is expected to miss three to eight weeks.

So Davis, whose supposed move to left was to accommodate Crisp, once again is patrolling center. He's played there almost exclusively since joining the A's in April 2008.

He's already turned in a few highlight-worthy catches, including his robbery of Milton Bradley's near home run for the Seattle Mariners on Thursday.

"I think it's a little bit easier than going to left," Davis said of playing center. "It's something you get used to, but it takes preparation."

Davis saw time in center during spring training when Crisp was hampered by a hamstring injury. With Crisp's current absence, manager Bob Geren said he takes comfort having an experienced Plan B in center.

"We felt coming out of spring training that we had four guys who could play center," said Geren, pointing out that Ryan Sweeney and Gabe Gross also have experience there.

Jack Cust's agent, Bobby Barad, said the slugger hadn't decided as of Friday afternoon whether to accept a minor league assignment with the A's.

Cust, who was designated for assignment last Saturday, cleared waivers Wednesday and was outrighted to Triple-A Sacramento. He has a 72-hour window, expiring today, to decide whether to join the River Cats or become a free agent.

The A's are on the hook for his \$2.65 million salary if he goes to Sacramento, but Cust forfeits the money if he elects free agency.

A's director of team travel Mickey Morabito is not with the team on this current six-game road trip because of an illness. An A's official said it's the first road trip Morabito will miss since joining the organization in 1980.

The Angels called up reliever Bobby Cassevah, who was a Rule 5 pick of the A's in December but was sent back during spring training.

## **Feds give Fremont \$333,000 to study reuse of NUMMI land**

By Matthew Artz, Oakland Tribune, 04/10/2010

NEWARK — Commerce Department officials chose a forum on export and manufacturing growth to award Fremont a grant to find new uses for the former NUMMI auto plant.

The \$333,000 in federal dollars will help the city pay for four studies to determine how best to redevelop the 370-acre south Fremont site and whether the factory should be demolished or repurposed.

"It's a huge, important piece of land and we don't want to jump into it haphazardly," Fremont Mayor Bob Wasserman said after receiving the oversized check from deputy assistant commerce secretary Brian McGowan.

The city, which had expected to receive the grant, asked consultants to bid on the studies earlier this week.

The Commerce Department organized the forum at Ohlone College's Newark campus in response to last week's closure of NUMMI — the state's lone automaker, which had employed 4,700 workers.

It was no coincidence that Fremont received the grant at an event focused on boosting exports and manufacturing growth, said Ro Khanna, a Commerce official who lived in Fremont before joining the Obama administration.

"What we hope is that they will see a commitment to building manufacturing, particularly including green technology and biotechnology and that they will create well-paying union jobs in the area," he said.

Wasserman doubted another auto manufacturer would take over the plant, but said the land, which is about as large as downtown San Francisco, wouldn't just be converted to housing or retail.

"If I'm going to be insistent on anything, it's that we don't put all our eggs in one basket," he said. "That land has to accommodate many needs."

The site, owned by New United Motor Manufacturing Inc., has tremendous development potential given that it's sandwiched between interstates 680 and 880 and adjacent to more than 100 acres of vacant or underutilized land as well as a BART station scheduled to open in 2014.

The city, which already has spend about \$158,000 on studies aimed at luring the Oakland A's to a portion of the site, expects the consultant reports will be completed by early next year.

The studies will include an economic analysis of future uses, a study on how best to zone the property and an analysis of needed infrastructure improvements.

City Council members also will discuss the NUMMI site at their Tuesday evening meeting.

Friday's forum included presentations by labor leaders, politicians and several executives with Bay Area technology firms, including solar panel-maker Solyndra, which has received federal help in building a new Fremont plant.

Rep. Pete Stark, whose district includes the NUMMI site, was unable to attend the meeting because doctors said he should not fly because of an illness.

## **\$20M land deal could help San Jose assemble final pieces for A's ballpark**

By Tracy Seipel, San Jose Mercury News, [tseipel@mercurynews.com](mailto:tseipel@mercurynews.com)

04/09/2010 10:10:31 AM PDT

Banking on millions of dollars from a pair of land sales, San Jose is closing in on its quest to buy the final pieces of property for a downtown baseball stadium — even before Major League Baseball decides whether the A's can move to the South Bay.

The city's Redevelopment Agency plans to stash \$20 million in proceeds from a pending deal to sell two parking lots in its piggy bank to attract the A's, San Jose's Redevelopment Agency Chief Harry Mavrogenes said Thursday. The RDA is also negotiating to sell Adobe Systems the land beneath one of the tech company's downtown towers in a deal that could add millions more to the ballpark effort.

San Jose has been cobbling together 14 acres between Diridon Station and the HP Pavilion for a ballpark but is two parcels short of completing the puzzle. Mavrogenes said the agency would also kick in millions of dollars more for demolition to prepare the site for a \$461 million ballpark built and financed by the A's.

The land-dealing comes at a critical point in the A's search for a future home: While A's owner Lew Wolff has expressed his desire to relocate the team, a high-level Major League committee must clear the way for a move to the South Bay because the San Francisco Giants plan to protect the territorial rights to Santa Clara County that were given to the team by MLB.

"We have disclosed to MLB that we have acquired most of the site, but that there are two parcels left," Mavrogenes said. "They understand that they may not be purchased immediately, but that we have the funds to buy the land."

Mayor Chuck Reed was quick to defend the plan as a sound investment for economic development — not a senseless subsidy for a wealthy professional sports owner. Even though San Jose faces layoffs and massive service cuts and a \$116 million hole in its general fund, proceeds from any RDA land deals can only be spent on redevelopment projects, not everyday city services, Mavrogenes stressed.

"The strategy for funding the ballpark is land for land," Reed said. "That's how we got land over at the ballpark in the first place — we can sell land to buy land."

Buying the rest of the ballpark site makes sense even if Major League Baseball blocks any efforts by the A's to move to San Jose, Reed said, because of plans for high-speed rail, BART and other development in the area.

"We started acquiring the land before a possible ballpark deal and we would continue buying land over there because it's excellent for development," he said.

The RDA has been busy assembling the land parcels in the past four years and has spent \$26 million so far for nine pieces of the site. The last two — a 4-acre parcel owned by AT&T and sixth-tenths of an acre owned by the Havens family — are currently under negotiations, Mavrogenes said.

Nailing down the final two parcels for the ballpark site will not be automatic. AT&T spokesman John Britton told the Mercury News on Thursday their land is not for sale, although he did acknowledge discussions with the city.

On April 20, city council members will discuss the sale of the parking lots that will help fuel the city's run at the A's: The Sobrato Organization has agreed to buy the two downtown lots for \$20 million that the RDA bought over the years for a combined \$4.3 million. One lot is at 285 S. Market St., across from the Sainte Claire Hotel. The other is at 8 E. San Fernando St., across from the Gordon Biersch brewery restaurant.

The agency began purchasing downtown properties in the 1960s and continued through the early 1980s — part of an eight-block area the RDA has developed over the years and now includes the Fairmont Hotel, the San Jose Repertory Theatre, government buildings and housing.

Like many other redevelopment agencies in the state, San Jose's remains challenged by the recession and by the state budget raids that have forced it to scale back its mission and lay off staff. While the RDA has leeway to spend redevelopment dollars on a host of programs — from freshening up facades on small businesses to attracting companies through subsidies to San Jose — the city council is making the ballpark and the city's flagging convention center a priority.

Brian Mundy doesn't disagree. RDA money helped beautify the facade of his family's business, Schurra's Fine Confections on The Alameda, and he knows other businesses could benefit from such programs, too.

Still, he said the RDA's plan for the \$20 million will eventually help small businesses like his. "If it does prove successful in getting the baseball stadium, I think it will be an almost slam dunk in recruiting companies like Adobe downtown."

## **CHIN MUSIC: Joe Stiglich A's Blog**

### **Sunday pregame update for A's-Angels finale**

By Joe Stiglich  
Sunday, April 11th, 2010 at 11:28 am in

You'll see a different look in the A's lineup today, not surprising with a day game after a night game. Kurt Suzuki, Eric Chavez and Travis Buck get days off, with Mark Ellis the DH. Adam Rosales draws his first start at second base (a chance to play another right-handed bat vs. Angels lefty Joe Saunders). And Eric Patterson, 4-for-5 lifetime against Saunders, gets his first start in left field. As I mentioned in this morning's notebook, Jake Fox will make his first big league start at catcher. Manager Bob Geren had mentioned the possibility of DH'ing Suzuki today, but he instead gave him the full day off. Probably a good idea, as Suzuki is 1-for-13 over his past three games.

### **Jack Cust accepts assignment, to join Triple-A with A's**

By Joe Stiglich  
Saturday, April 10th, 2010 at 11:09 am

Just an update that Jack Cust accepted the A's minor league assignment, so he'll report to Triple-A Sacramento. Cust had the option of becoming a free agent and forfeiting his \$2.65 million salary. Now he'll get paid that money while in the minors.

After he was designated for assignment last Saturday, Cust said he expected he would end up joining Sacramento. It wasn't a great time to catch on with another team considering most opening day rosters had been set. And that's a pretty steep salary for a team to take on.

Cust paid some serious dues working his way through the minors — nearly 10 full seasons — before establishing himself over three years with the A's. I'm curious how his competitive fire will burn now that he's returning to the minors. But it's very possible he makes a return to Oakland this season if the A's are struggling for power. Cust would have to be added to the 40-man roster in that scenario ...

### **Daric Barton update, and recap of A's 10-4 victory over Los Angeles Angels**

By Joe Stiglich  
Friday, April 9th, 2010 at 11:50 pm

OK, take 2 on this blog after I finished an entire entry only to see it disappear when I got logged off the Internet here at Angel Stadium. Not that you all care about that, nor should you. There's A's news to recap:

Nice start to this road trip for the A's, who beat the Angels 10-4 tonight. After posting 13 more hits, the A's lead the AL with 53 hits overall. But if you're an Oakland fan, I think you have to be most encouraged w/the manner in which they won. They dictated things w/aggressive baserunning, keyed by Rajai Davis and Daric Barton atop the lineup. Those two had quite a night, combining to go 6-for-9 with four RBIs and four runs.

Did you catch the replay of Barton's right knee caving on him in the fifth? Anyone else get a Joe Theismann flashback? Barton said he actually hurt his right hip on the play, not his knee. And he stayed in the game, so as long as he shows up to the ballpark feeling good tomorrow, I'd say the A's dodged a bullet.

With all the offense, I think it was easy to overlook Gio Gonzalez's solid six innings of work. I know that we reporters usually jump on the "Gio sure seems to be maturing" theme whenever he pitches well. But really, isn't this the kind of start you wanted to see from him in this type of game? Not dazzling, just solid and efficient once he was given a lead.

6:05 p.m. start tomorrow, as Ben Sheets goes against Jered Weaver.

That's all for now ...

### **Lineups and updates before A's-Angels series opener**

By Joe Stiglich  
Friday, April 9th, 2010 at 6:14 pm

We're about an hour from first pitch here at Angel Stadium. There's always a good atmosphere for baseball here, and maybe the best press box from which to cover a game. It's open-air, right above the first deck. Can't beat it ...

-Coco Crisp may be on the disabled list, but he's still in pretty good spirits. He walked by me in the clubhouse and sprayed me with some of his Zegna cologne. Either he's a very generous fellow, or there was an odor I wasn't aware of. I choose to believe the former ...

-Not a whole lot of pregame A's news to report. Michael Wuertz threw 20 pitches from the mound and everything went well, according to manager Bob Geren. Wuertz (shoulder tendinitis) has said he's shooting for the middle of the next homestand to return from the DL.

## **A'S LEADING OFF**

Susan Slusser, SF Chronicle, Monday, April 12, 2010

**Ambidextrous:** Even with a fractured left pinkie, Coco Crisp is shagging fly balls - using a left-hander's glove. Crisp can do everything with both hands (write, bowl) except throw, so he takes off the glove and throws the ball in "Jim Abbott style," he said.

## **Rosales' first A's start is a winner**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Anaheim** -- This past winter, Oakland took on outfielder Willy Taveras and his \$4 million salary in order to acquire infielder Adam Rosales from the Reds. The A's immediately dumped Taveras, though they're still paying him - an indication of how much they like Rosales.

On Sunday, Rosales made his first appearance in Oakland's starting lineup, and he fueled the A's 9-4 victory over the Angels every which way with a career-high four RBIs. Oakland has won each of its first two series and has spent four days in first place, the team's first time at the top since May 12, 2008.



Rosales had Oakland's only hit through the first six innings, a two-out homer to left off Joe Saunders in the second that sent Rosales tearing around the bases.

"I knew he'd show some energy, he always does," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He just flew around the bases, and that does something to the other guys. They get fired up when Rosales runs around. He's not trying to show up the other team, that's just his style."

Rosales, who maintains he's done that since Little League, said, "That's the little kid in me."

After Mark Ellis' RBI single in the seventh pulled the A's within 3-2, Rosales delivered again, putting Oakland ahead with a two-run single to right. In his next at-bat, Rosales walked to force in a run, and again, he chose to sprint rather than trot.

"He plays like someone who probably needs a nap," A's starter Dallas Braden said. "He plays like he hasn't slept in four days. Going, going, going - I relish a player like that. He doesn't know any other speed. It's to the wall with him."

"I had to calm myself down," Rosales said. "I have to bring it down a few notches."

Braden allowed three runs in six innings and got the victory, even though Oakland only scored its usual one run while he was still in the game. He'd received one run of support in 11 of his previous 23 starts, including his first outing last week, but he was still the pitcher of record when Rosales provided Oakland with the lead Sunday.

The A's took two of three from the Angels, outscoring the defending AL West champs 22-12 in the process, and they put up eight runs in the final three innings Sunday.

"That speaks volumes about the kind of resilience we're going to bring to the table every day," Braden said. "Obviously, the West is up for grabs, but we don't feel that way - we feel like we're the front-runner. We stack up well with everyone and if we can win series, we'll be OK. This is a great way to start the month, a great way to start the season."

The Angels are 2-5, their worst start since 2004.

"Sometimes you're the bug, sometimes you're the windshield," Angels center fielder Torii Hunter said. "I guess we're the bug."

## Rookie Ross notches save in solid 2nd outing

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, Monday, April 12, 2010

**04:00 PDT Anaheim** -- **Tyson Ross** just might be the new **Andrew Bailey** - and although there aren't even the remotest plans for Ross to supplant Bailey as closer, he did earn his first big-league save faster than Bailey did last year.

Ross, the A's only rookie, worked three innings in relief of Dallas Braden on Sunday and he wound up getting the save. It took Bailey until May 8 last year to get the first save of his AL Rookie of the Year season.

Ross, 22, did give up his first run; Juan Rivera belted an 0-1 pitch out to left in the ninth. That's the only run Ross has allowed in 51/3 innings.

"Tyson came up big for us again," infielder **Adam Rosales** said. "He's pitching huge for us."

Like Bailey last year, Ross joined the A's bullpen having never pitched above the Double-A level.

**Duke on tap: Justin Duchscherer** will make his second start of the season this afternoon, and he wasn't overly pleased with his first effort, when he allowed five runs in 52/3 innings vs. the Mariners at the Coliseum. That was Duchscherer's first outing since Aug. 18, 2008.

Duchscherer's last victory came against Seattle, a two-hit shutout on July 8, 2008. Lifetime, he's 1-5 with a 3.90 ERA against the Mariners.

**Briefly:** If there'd been a game ball, starter **Dallas Braden** would have handed it to **Daric Barton** for leaping to spear a liner by **Brandon Wood** and leaning over the railing of the A's dugout to catch a foul popup by **Kendry Morales**. Barton also had two sacrifice bunts and a walk, and scored a run. "The game was won because of his effort with the team game," Braden said. ... **Michael Wuertz** threw a 28-pitch bullpen session and will throw at least once more before going on a rehab assignment. ... There is rain in the forecast in Seattle, so the roof is likely to be closed today and possibly Tuesday night. ... **Jack Cust** went 0-for-2 with two walks, a run scored and one strikeout in his first game back at Triple-A Sacramento since 2005.

## State's high-speed rail plan is up in the air

Phillip Matier, Andrew Ross, SF Chronicle, Monday, April 12, 2010

Is it a high-speed rail ride to the future or a Bay Bridge boondoggle times 10? That's what lawmakers are wondering as more and more questions arise about the plan to build a multibillion-dollar bullet train between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

"I'm all for high-speed rail, but I want it to be high-speed rail done right," says state Sen. **Joe Simitian**.

Simitian has plenty of reasons to be concerned. Not only will the rail line go right through his Peninsula district, but also he chairs the Senate budget subcommittee that oversees the \$9 billion in voter-approved bonds for the project.

In addition to worries about how many backyards will be torn up for the line, he and other key legislators are asking question's about the High Speed Rail Authority's business plan - which remains murky at best.

For example, no sooner had voters approved the bond package than the initial \$33.6 billion price estimate jumped to \$42.6 billion because the authority had failed to account for inflation. And that cost could climb even higher if the rail goes underground through the Peninsula, as many communities are now requesting.

Then there is the estimated ticket price for a trip from L.A. to San Francisco, which has jumped to \$105 one way - making the line much less competitive with the price of an airline ticket.

There are also questions being raised about the bullet train's ridership projections.

For example, San Francisco is expected to have 24,100 bullet riders a day, a realistic number given the business ties between San Francisco and Los Angeles. But does anyone really think that the town of Gilroy will have 4,700 bullet train riders a day? Or that Redwood City will have 3,900, or Merced 5,300?

One of the biggest fears, however, is that the state will not be able to keep the explicit promise made to voters that they would not be on the hook if the finances fall short.

"Private-sector investors are going to want a guarantee," Simitian said. "It's hard to imagine how that guarantee will be provided."

Then there is the route itself - which is already raising hackles in the South Bay and Peninsula, where a consortium of leaders from Palo Alto, Belmont, Menlo Park, Atherton and Burlingame is raising protests about a 120-mph bullet train racing past their backyards or on an overhead line that will split the communities.

The towns want the line dropped below street level.

**Richard Katz**, who sits on the High Speed Rail Authority, admits the two business plans submitted so far need work, but said "you have to understand that for years the authority had only a skeletal staff working for voter approval."

In other words, the authority was more involved with selling the concept of high-speed rail than the nuts and bolts of building it.

Katz said better business numbers and a clearer outline of the actual route will come into focus as a full staff is brought on board.

But even if the deal doesn't pencil out for high-speed rail, Katz said the plan is being structured so that the voters' \$9 billion will be used to upgrade existing rail lines and routes. That way, he said, the money will be put to the public's benefit whatever the outcome.

Simitian, however, isn't ready to hop on board.

"Their argument is essentially, 'Don't worry, you will still get a half dozen improvements to existing rail,' " he said. "But the voters were told we are building a statewide system."

**Box score:** For those wondering how the A's move play is going, all we can say is check out the calendar of Major League Baseball reps who were in town for the team's Opening Day:

San Jose Mayor **Chuck Reed** got a sit-down lunch with MLB's president and chief operating officer **Bob DuPuy**. Oakland Mayor **Ron Dellums** got a phone call. The beleaguered town of Fremont, which had a yearlong courtship with the team, didn't get anything.

"I check my phone messages pretty regularly," said Fremont Mayor **Bob Wasserman**, "and there wasn't one."

Indeed, insiders tell us the tug-of-war over the A's appears to be coming down to a choice between the ball club's current Oakland home and San Jose, which is actively trying to lure the team south.

Word is, baseball is looking very favorably on Oakland's two proposed waterfront sites but questions whether the city has the corporate sponsors needed to fill a new ballpark's skyboxes. It's a challenge that has Oakland boosters scouring the East Bay for enough Chevrons, Safeways and Cloroxes to make the town competitive with the Apples and Ciscos of Silicon Valley.

Meanwhile, the San Jose Sharks have shot off a 39-page letter raising questions about the impact a new A's ballpark would have on their game days.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser. SF CHRONICLE, Sunday, April 11, 2010

**Gonzalez a gem:** Scouts were raving about Gio Gonzalez's performance Friday, saying he might be the top fifth starter in the league. Angels outfielder Torii Hunter said Gonzalez has "the best left-handed curveball in the game."

## **ANGELS 4, A'S 3**

**Angels try the basics, end A's 4-game streak**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Sunday, April 11, 2010

**Anaheim** -- The talk after Friday night's game was how, in the words of one scout, the A's were "out-Angel-ing the Angels." Oakland was doing all the running, pushing the action, and the Angels were the station-to-station team.

On Saturday, the Angels reverted more to their usual mode in a 4-3 victory over the A's. Oakland lost for the first time since Opening Night when Hideki Matsui poked a pitch from left-hander Craig Breslow down the right-field line to drive in Bobby Abreu with no outs in the ninth.

"He's definitely swinging the bat really well," Breslow said of Matsui, the Angels' new DH who homered Friday night and had three hits Saturday. "I tried to go in on him and got more of the plate than I wanted."

The Angels, who had started the season 1-4, the opposite of Oakland's record, hit six doubles, including five off A's starter Ben Sheets. They did not trail in the game, although the A's did tie it in the eighth when Kevin Kouzmanoff sent in Daric Barton from third with a groundout.

Sheets, the A's \$10 million offseason acquisition, allowed 10 hits, three walks and three runs in six innings.

Oakland manager Bob Geren thought Saturday was an improvement on Sheets' first start, and the right-hander, who missed all of last season following elbow surgery, said he continues to be a work in progress. He didn't like his fastball much Saturday night, but he was happy he limited the damage, particularly in the fourth inning, when he held the Angels to one run.

"There were a lot of baserunners in a short time, but the objective is to keep them off the board," he said.

Sheets does like the way the A's are playing. The team is 4-2, and both losses came on runs in the ninth inning. Asked about the Angels, Sheets, a newcomer to the American League, said, "They do a lot of different things well, but I think we stack up right with them. That's what I take out of this so far."

Another addition to the team, Kouzmanoff, hit his first homer as a member of the A's, a line shot to left off Jered Weaver with two outs in the fourth.

Oakland's former third baseman, Eric Chavez, doubled and scored in the seventh, and he also singled for his first multi-hit game since June 20, 2008. Chavez has missed much of the past two-plus years with back and shoulder injuries.

Rajai Davis, who had four multi-hit games in the first five games, was kept off the bases entirely Saturday.

Before the game, Angels center fielder Torii Hunter was still shaking his head about a play the night before when Davis stretched a bouncer up the middle into a double. Hunter said he tried to deke Davis into running, but, Hunter said, "Rajai is so fast, he closed the gap really quickly. He's so fast, my plan went to boo-boo. I was ticked I baited him, and he beat me, but I respect that, actually."

## Cust reports to Sacramento

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, Sunday, April 11, 2010

**(04-10) 20:30 PDT Anaheim** - -- **Jack Cust** is back with the A's organization, reporting to Triple-A Sacramento one week after being designated for assignment, and the team feels good about that. Cust, after all, led the club in homers in each of the past three seasons.

"Ultimately, I think given the structure of the team and the need for power, Jack swinging the bat well would be exactly what we need," general manager **Billy Beane** said by phone Saturday. "We hope he goes down there, gets some at-bats, gets his swing going and comes back up here."

"I'm glad," second baseman **Mark Ellis** said. "I've been here long enough to know that he'll probably be back here sooner than later."

The A's rejiggered their roster plans at the last second a week ago when **Coco Crisp** unexpectedly landed on the DL with a broken pinkie. With Crisp out, the team kept **Travis Buck** on the roster, and the decision at that point was that **Eric Chavez** and Cust couldn't both serve as DH.

After Cust cleared waivers Wednesday, the only way for him to collect his \$2.65 million salary was to accept the assignment.

"It was a tough decision, but that would have been a lot of money for Jack to turn down," said Buck, who is good friends with Cust. "He'll go down, get his at-bats, and he'll be back. We all know what he can do."

Cust was not in Sacramento's starting lineup Saturday. Beane said he will primarily DH there.

**Barton better:** **Daric Barton** avoided a potentially significant injury Friday; he appeared to twist his knee when slipping while taking a cutoff throw, but as it turns out, it was his surgically repaired right hip that briefly hurt.

Saturday, the first baseman said his right leg - hip, knee, everything - felt better than it had even *before* the previous night's game.

"I'd been tight for three days," he said. "I couldn't get stretched out. Now I feel good."

## Giants dwarf A's on financial value list

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer, Sunday, April 11, 2010

**20:33 PDT** -- Twenty-nine and nine.

Quite a difference between the Giants and A's, by far the biggest gap in any two-team market.

In Forbes' annual glance into baseball teams' finances, the magazine ranks the Giants ninth in franchise value at \$483 million and the A's 29th at \$295 million.

Every other franchise in two-team markets is ranked in the top 10 - New York (Yankees 1, Mets 3), L.A. (Dodgers 4, Angels 7) and Chicago (Cubs 5, White Sox 10) - along with the Red Sox (2), Phillies (6) and Cardinals (8).

The A's are the oddball team, but they'll tell you there's no facility as poor as Oakland's in any two-team market. Any market, for that matter. Which is why they'll also tell you they're last in the American League in payroll.

According to USA Today, the Giants are ninth in payroll at \$98.6 million, the A's 28th at \$51.7 million - pretty much where they stand in Forbes' franchise value rankings.

The value of the A's took an 8 percent dive (from Forbes' 2009 estimates), tied with the Blue Jays for the majors' biggest one-year drop. The mag cited decreased attendance and TV ratings.

Forbes has the Giants' revenues at \$201 million, the A's at \$155 million - and the operating income about the same, Giants \$23.5 million and A's \$22.1 million. It tells us no matter how big the disparity in franchise value, teams will make money, thanks to baseball's revenue sharing in which the Giants pay a lot and the A's get a lot.

Team officials don't ordinarily comment on Forbes' findings other than to say the numbers aren't accurate. Then again, clubs keep their finances confidential. If they prefer more accurate numbers, they could release them themselves.

## Should Ichiro start slugging?

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Sunday, April 11, 2010

**20:32 PDT** -- The Mariners figure to contend this year and hope their slow start is an aberration. As expected, though, they seem thin in the 3-4-5 lineup spots as they're thin in the 3-4-5 rotation spots.

Most of the Mariners, including middle-of-the-order newcomers **Milton Bradley** and **Casey Kotchman**, aren't hitting. **Chone Figgins** has joined **Ichiro Suzuki** atop the lineup to provide an unparalleled 1-2 punch, but who'll drive them home?

The Mariners' lineup isn't as deep as the Angels' or Rangers', without as many run producers. That could change, but track records suggest otherwise. So if the Mariners consider themselves American League West contenders, is it time to consider Ichiro a No. 3 hitter?

We've heard Ichiro could do whatever he wants on a diamond, including hit for power. He shows it on occasion in games and regularly in batting practice, though his focus is collecting hit after hit - 200-plus for nine straight seasons, a record.

Teammate **Eric Byrnes** called Ichiro "my favorite player because of his ability to do everything. He's the most talented player in the game today, in all facets." Byrnes was asked, without the Mariners' slow start in mind, if Ichiro could succeed as a third hitter.

"Absolutely. I don't know if he wants to do it, but in my opinion, he'd be very productive in the middle of the order," Byrnes said. "It would be fun to watch him try to hit 25-plus home runs, because I know he could do it. He's got as much power in batting practice as any other guy on this team."

With Figgins, there's some redundancy. He batted first for the Angels last year, stole 42 bases, led the league in walks and posted a .395 on-base percentage - nine points higher than Ichiro's even though Ichiro had 42 more hits.

Even as a leadoff man, Ichiro knows about producing runs and is a .339 hitter with runners in scoring position. He has a small sample size as a No. 3 hitter - only three RBIs while batting .353 in 51 at-bats, but it was only 13 games, none since 2004.

That was under **Bob Melvin**, four managers ago. General manager **Jack Zduriencik** said there has been no talk of moving Ichiro away from leadoff.

"If at some time Ichiro decides to change his game a little bit, that'll be Ichiro's decision," Zduriencik said. "He has such a comfort level in what he does, and he has such an effect on the game with his skill set, whether it's hitting or bunting or running or throwing to a base.

"I don't think you can tell any player we want to change his game, especially if he's on the way to the Hall of Fame. It would be hard to demand a player to change his game, nor would I want to be the guy who does it. I have the utmost respect for what he does."

Ichiro hit third for the legendary **Sadaharu Oh** on the Japanese team that won the 2006 World Baseball Classic. In Seattle, Ichiro seems to be ambivalent to change, but at 36 and with no playoff appearance since 2001, perhaps he could be persuaded if there's a need.

## Leading off

Susan Slusser, Saturday, April 10, 2010

**Streak at an end:** Mickey Morabito, the A's travel secretary extraordinaire for the past 31 years, missed his first trip that anyone with the team can ever remember. Equipment manager Steve Vucinich is subbing while Morabito is out with an illness.

## Chavez appears rusty, but bat speed seems OK

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer Saturday, April 10, 2010

**Anaheim -- Eric Chavez** entered Friday night's game 2-for-13, and he didn't pull any balls during the season-opening series against Seattle.

Scouts say that Chavez's bat speed doesn't appear to be lagging much, though, and the general impression is that Chavez is simply rusty after playing only eight games last year and 23 the year before.

Chavez agrees, and he noted that most of his hits during the spring were to right field.

"I feel like I'm taking some good swings and seeing the ball well," Chavez said. "I'm getting a lot of good pitches to hit, and I'm missing a lot of them, but I've missed a lot of games the last few years. I know this year, I feel good and I feel like I have a shot - there were years before when I couldn't hit a heater.

"I've told them, 'If my bat speed is terrible, just let me know,' but I feel like I'm barely missing balls. I've just got to stick with my approach."

Chavez pulled a double to right-center in his third at-bat Friday evening.

**Cust decision today:** **Jack Cust** and his agent, **Bobby Barad**, both said Friday that he has not yet accepted an assignment at Triple-A Sacramento after clearing waivers.

Cust must inform the A's today, and there is every likelihood he will accept unless another club were to have a power hitter suddenly injured. Cust will not receive his \$2.65 million salary unless he accepts the assignment; should he decline, he'd be a free agent.

**Adenhardt remembered:** Today is the one-year anniversary of **Nick Adenhardt's** death in a car crash hours after throwing six shutout innings against the A's at Angel Stadium.

"It's going to be in the back of everyone's minds," said catcher **Kurt Suzuki**, whose friend **Jon Wilhite** was severely injured in the crash. "That's going to be a little weird."

Suzuki said that Wilhite visited him for a week this spring in Arizona, and he's doing well.

**Briefly:** **Michael Wuertz** threw a 20-pitch bullpen session and he expects to go on a rehab assignment next week. ... Suzuki might DH on Sunday rather than catch.

## A'S 10, ANGELS 4

## ***Hard luck to no luck required***

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, Saturday, April 10, 2010

**Anaheim** -- Steamrolling the Angels, dodging apparent injury - what team is this exactly?

The A's, perhaps the most hard-luck club in the league when it comes to the disabled list the past three years, saw one of their top contributors of the first week go down in a heap in the fifth after seemingly twisting his right knee. While his teammates were holding their breath, Daric Barton gingerly rose to his feet ... and resumed playing first base.

Barton also had three of the A's 13 hits, including two doubles, and he scored two runs and drove in two as Oakland thumped the Angels 10-4 on Friday. Every player in the starting lineup had at least one hit, and Cliff Pennington added his first homer of the year, a three-run shot in the seventh. The A's have won four of their first five games and stand first in their division.

"We're playing real well as a team," Barton said. "We're taking advantage of runners on base. We put bats on the ball, not just me. Everyone contributed."

Last year, the Angels won the AL West for the fifth time in six years and they took 12 of 19 games from the A's, outscoring Oakland 96-75 in the process.

A healthy Oakland team and a rare hot start might change the complexion of the division. The A's are showing a flair for several things, including aggressive baserunning, and Friday, Barton and Rajai Davis turned in hustle doubles. Davis also had three hits, and he missed a fourth when Torii Hunter made a plunging grab on his dying liner to end the seventh. Combined, Davis and Barton, batting 1-2, were on base seven times.

The Angels' first run off fifth starter Gio Gonzalez was a homer that new Angels DH Hideki Matsui crushed to center in the second inning. In the fifth, with men at the corners, Maicer Izturis knocked an RBI single to center off Gonzalez with two outs.

That's when Barton slipped on the infield grass, cutting off the throw to the plate, and the replay showed his right leg buckle and his knee bend awkwardly.

"Someone in the dugout said, 'He twisted his knee,' and when I ran out there, I could hear fans watching the replay and giving that real ugly 'Ooo,' " Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "Right then, I knew it must have looked ugly. But he said he was fine."

Barton said his hip, on which he had surgery in 2008, was what hurt initially. He stayed down a few moments, and given the A's injury history, there was plenty of reason to believe it was something major. The team has used the DL 70 times since the start of 2007.

"I didn't know what happened," Barton said. "It hurt, don't get me wrong, but it was more scary than anything. ... I didn't like it."

## **A's park possible at Nummi site in Fremont**

Carolyn Jones, Chronicle Staff Writer, Saturday, April 10, 2010

Fremont's bid to lure the Oakland Athletics got a boost Friday when the city won a federal grant to study new uses for the former Nummi auto-manufacturing site, including the possibility of building a ballpark.

The \$333,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce allows Fremont to look at economic, land use and planning issues surrounding development of the 370-acre site, vacant since Nummi closed its doors April 1.

Ironically, complaints from Nummi were one of the key factors killing the Athletics' previous attempt to move to Fremont. Factory executives said a ballpark - at the time, proposed for an area near Auto Mall Parkway - would choke traffic on Interstate 880, slowing deliveries to and from the plant.

Since Nummi closed, the city has heard pitches for everything from a NASCAR track to an electric car factory for the site.

"You name it, everyone's got an idea," said Mayor Bob Wasserman. "The problem is, everyone wants the land for nothing."

The ballpark idea was in response to a request from a Major League Baseball task force looking into possible future homes for the A's. The task force is also considering San Jose and three sites near Oakland's Jack London Square. The Oakland Coliseum is also a possibility, but A's owner Lew Wolff has said he would rather move the team than share quarters with the Oakland Raiders.

The task force has been studying the issue since summer 2009, not long after Wolff scratched his plan to build a "baseball village" near Auto Mall Parkway. Major League Baseball has not said when a decision will be made.

Fremont has proposed a 36,000-seat stadium on 120 acres in the northwest corner of the Nummi property, near the Warm Springs BART Station, which is scheduled to open in 2014. The City Council is expected to decide how, or whether, to proceed on April 13. The city has already spent about \$150,000 studying the issue.

The council appears split on the topic. Councilwoman Anu Natarajan said she felt Major League Baseball was "stringing us along." She said delays are complicating Fremont's planning process for the Nummi site.

"Everything's on hold until they make a determination," she said. "I think it would be imprudent for us to spend any more money on the ballpark idea until we know what the league wants to do. Right now we're getting all these mixed messages."

Wasserman said a ballpark would give the city the kind of economic and cultural jolt it needs after its largest private employer shut its doors.

"It's a super location, and it'll be a super ballpark," he said. "The logistics are all there. It's an ideal plan."

Nummi still owns the property and would have to agree to any plan the city adopts.

City Councilman Bob Wieckowski said the city should be more creative. Ideally, he said, the site could be used by a new University of California campus, a biotech hub or a "troika of brain trusts from UC, Stanford and high technology."

"If a baseball stadium fits into that, great," he said. "But I really think we should be thinking of bigger ideas."

Fremont meeting focuses on how to rebuild region's industrial base after Nummi closure. **D1**

## **A's DRUMBEAT: Susan Slusser A's Blog**

**Sunday, April 11, 2010**

### **Different looking lineup vs. Angels**

**From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Anaheim**

I had one Drumbeat blog entirely done only to see it disappear from my screen never to be seen again, so this one, sadly, will have to be a little short.

Jake Fox is making his first major-league start at catcher, and Kurt Suzuki gets a full day off, so manager Bob Geren put Mark Ellis at DH to save some wear on the second baseman's legs. (Ellis is the team's oldest player. He's all of 32.) Adam Rosales makes his first start for Oakland, playing second.

Geren didn't totally loan up on right-handed hitters against lefty Joe Saunders, though: Eric Patterson is in left, his first start of the season, because he's 4-for-5 lifetime against Saunders.

Here's the lineup: Davis CF, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Ellis DH, Fox C, Rosales 2B, Patterson LF, Pennington SS, Braden P



If you missed this morning's paper, some scouts are comparing the A's to the Angels of recent years, and Torii Hunter has heaps of praise for Gio Gonzalez.

**Saturday, April 10, 2010**

**Beane's pleased to have Cust back in the fold**

**From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Anaheim**

Jack Cust officially accepted an assignment at Triple-A Sacramento this morning, and general manager Billy Beane said he had a good conversation with the DH/outfielder, who'd been designated for assignment one week earlier.

Cust's decision wasn't unexpected, but the A's are still happy to have him back in the organization - they'd hoped he'd clear waivers and elect to return, which is what Beane had said when the move was made.

"Ultimately, I think given the structure of the team and the need for power, Jack swinging the bat well would be exactly what we need," Beane told me by phone. "We hope he goes down there, gets some at-bats, gets his swing going and comes back up here."

Oakland was taking a slight gamble by designating Cust, but with teams setting their rosters on Opening Day, the day after the Cust transaction, and with most teams at full healthy, the risk was minimized. Plus, the A's knew interest in Cust had been limited when he was a free agent during the season.

Really, Cust remains the best fit for Oakland, which is why it was so surprising that the team designated him, but Coco Crisp's unexpected fractured pinkie and subsequent DL move necessitated some re-thinking of the roster that Saturday, and that's when the decision was made that Eric Chavez and Cust both might be sharing DH at-bats, which would be redundant. So the A's kept Travis Buck because of Crisp's injury and out went Cust.

His time in Sacramento might be brief, though. As well as Oakland is playing, at some point, the team is going to need a power threat in the lineup.

Cust is driving to Sacramento right about now, according to Beane, and he'll be mostly DHing, but Beane expects he'll get some time in the outfield, just in case he's needed out there on the big-league level as he was the final few days of the exhibition season.

Beane is also enthusiastic about another Sacramento-bound player, outfielder Jai Miller, acquired on waivers on Thursday. Miller is a corner outfielder, so he's essentially taking the Buck spot.

"He's got a lot of talent, he's a good athlete," Beane said. "The hope is that he's just about to take off."

In other Sacramento news, Adrian Cardenas is doing some baseball activity after a thumb injury that is expected to keep him out several more weeks, and right-hander Fautino De Los Santos has remained at extended spring training because of some achiness in his surgically repaired elbow.

If you didn't see Sacramento's box score last night, Michael Taylor, Dallas McPherson and Steve Tolleson all went deep for the River Cats in a 10-5 win over Portland. McPherson and Landon Powell had DH'd so far for Sacramento, but now Cust will do the honors.

**Friday, April 09, 2010**

**Cust has not yet accepted assignment**

**From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Anaheim**

Conventional wisdom says that Jack Cust will accept a minor-league assignment with the A's - after all, he won't get his \$2.65 million salary unless he does so - but when I checked with Cust late this morning, he had not yet accepted the assignment and he and his agent, Bobby Barad, say that Cust has not yet made a decision.

It's more than likely that Cust will take the full 72 hours allotted before informing the A's of his plans - why not at least let the team sweat a bit after first getting non-tendered this offseason and then getting designated for assignment the day before MLB's Opening Day?

Plus, there's always a chance that someone loses a power bat during the three days, and that could change things entirely - a team without a DH or without left-handed power might be very happy to find Cust on the market. So any suggestion that he's already made up his mind - sensible though that might sound, given the money involved - is not quite accurate. He's more than likely to take the money.....if there isn't an obvious landing spot should he decline to accept the assignment.

Cust must inform the team of his decision tomorrow, and I'm trying to find out if there is a particular time exactly he must do that.

I'll try to add the starting lineup when I get this afternoon, but it might be found faster on my Twitter postings, @susanslusser, because I probably won't be back at my laptop until right before the game starts.

## **Duchscherer, Rowland-Smith get early rematch**

**By Doug Miller / MLB.com 4/12/10**

A's righty Justin Duchscherer and Mariners lefty Ryan Rowland-Smith faced each other last week in Oakland and will face each other again Monday afternoon in the Safeco Field home opener. Neither got a decision, so both are once again gunning for their first win.

After missing portions of 2009, Duchscherer and Rowland-Smith are counted on to be big parts of their teams' starting rotations this year. It can start on Monday, when both are looking to rebound from uneven starts in Wednesday's game, which was eventually won by the A's, 6-5, in walk-off fashion in the ninth inning.

Duchscherer, who missed all of last season following elbow surgery and a bout with clinical depression, described his last start -- 5 2/3 innings, seven hits, five runs, four strikeouts -- as "average."

"I never felt good," he said. "I felt like I was battling. I was battling trying to get people out."

Rowland-Smith, meanwhile, used the same word to describe his outing, one in which the Australian gave up four runs (three earned) on eight hits in five innings.

"I battled and stayed away from the big inning," he said. "I got the count to 3-and-2 on some guys and they would foul off a few pitches and that got my pitch count up a bit. But, overall, I felt fine and thought I was throwing strikes. I left the ball up a couple of times and got hurt."

Rowland-Smith will have to battle not only the A's, but adrenaline on Monday, when Safeco is expected to be packed for Seattle's much-anticipated home opener after a flurry of moves by general manager Jack Zduriencik in the offseason. The southpaw said he's looking forward to it.

"It's going to be cool," he said.

**A's:** Designated hitter Jack Cust was added to Triple-A Sacramento's roster on Sunday, a day after accepting an outright assignment following being designated on April 3. Cust was in the River Cats' lineup on Sunday afternoon game against Portland. ... Duchscherer is 1-5 with a 3.90 ERA in 32 games in his career against Seattle, although only five of those appearances were starts.

**Mariners:** Seattle fans are gearing up for the return of the beloved Big Unit at Safeco on Sunday when former Mariners lefty and future Hall of Famer Randy Johnson throws out the ceremonial first pitch. Johnson won 130 games during his 10-year career with the Mariners and remains a crowd favorite. "What he means to the city of Seattle and all that he's done here and done for the game, it's a pretty special thing," Mariners lefty Jason Vargas said last year after the two dueled each other in Seattle while a member of the San Francisco Giants. "Whenever you get a chance to be a part of something like that, it's pretty special. He is one of the greatest and there is a lot of respect here." ... Cliff Lee and Erik Bedard gave the Mariners very good news during Sunday's bullpen sessions. Lee threw 47 pitches and Bedard tossed 45, impressing manager Don Wakamatsu. "Both looked really good," Wakamatsu said. "Both of the guys feel absolutely no pain."

**Worth noting:** A's veteran Eric Chavez continues to shatter club records. On Saturday, Chavez passed Danny Murphy for seventh on the club's doubles list after recording a two-base hit -- the 276th of his career -- in the seventh inning against the Angels. Chavez also compiled his 525th extra-base hit, which tied Jimmy Dykes for sixth in A's history. ... There's plenty of fun on tap for the Mariners' home opener aside from Johnson and Rowland-Smith. Seattle band Death Cab for Cutie will sing a pair of songs, the national anthem will be performed by Navy Band Northwest, the Gold Glove and Silver Slugger Awards will be presented to Ichiro Suzuki and the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum "Rube" Foster American League Executive of the Year Award will be presented to Zduriencik. In addition, there will be a moment of silence to remember officers Tina Griswold,

Ronald Owens, Greg Richards, Sgt. Mark Renninger, deputy Kent Mundell and officer Timothy Brenton, who were police officers killed in the line of duty last year.

## **A's ride Rosales' all-out style to series win**

### ***Super sub, lefty Braden sink rival Angels in rubber game***

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/11/10 8:55 PM ET

ANAHEIM -- The A's like to call it green-collar baseball, but Adam Rosales doesn't need a name for his all-out, speedy style of contagious play.

It's simply what he's brought to the diamond since he was a kid.

Either way, it's got everyone in the A's clubhouse wanting more of it. After all, it's what ultimately guided a 9-4 series-clinching victory over the Angels on Sunday.

Rosales, making his first start of the season, tallied a home run and a career-high four RBIs, and starter Dallas Braden hung around just long enough to tally a win and watch his club notch its fifth victory in seven days.

Rosales' homer came in the second off Angels starter Joe Saunders, who delivered a 1-0 fastball that ended up in the left-field seats. And Rosales, like he's done since Little League, rounded the bases in a speedy trot.

"I've done that ever since I could hit a home run," said Rosales, who also runs at full speed when walked. "It's the little kid in me."

It's also what jump started an A's comeback after Braden found himself down, 2-0, after the first. The southpaw then retired 13 in a row before allowing a run in the sixth, but Rosales put him in winning position for the first time all day courtesy of a go-ahead single in the seventh that brought home Kevin Kouzmanoff and Mark Ellis -- the latter also tallied an RBI on a ground-rule double in the frame.

"That just speaks to the kind of resiliency we're going to try to bring to the table every day," Braden said. "We're going to persevere. We're going to play our brand of baseball. We've seen it pay off thus far, and it's always encouraging coming out of the game and watching your team put some up quickly out there."

The A's combined to score five more runs in the final two frames to walk away with a valiant team effort in tow, and Rosales' name bounced around the A's clubhouse as energetically as his style of play afterward.

"He's somebody who probably needs to take a nap," Braden joked. "I feel like the guy plays like he hasn't slept in four days. I relish players like that because he doesn't know any other speed. Literally, it's to the wall with him."

"I think any team at any point in their season at any time of the day can feed off a guy like that, no matter what the scoreboard says. You get someone with that kind of energy and passion to play for your side, that gets you excited. You want to pitch in front of a guy like that. You want to root for a guy like that."

A laboring six innings gave Braden a line that had three runs, five hits, a walk and a pair of strikeouts attached to his name. He received support of one or zero runs in 10 of his 22 starts last season, so the fact that his team didn't start adding to the scoreboard until after he left didn't surprise him one bit.

"There might be a correlation there," he quipped. "Maybe I just need to not pitch, right?"

Braden admitted he struggled throughout the game before getting into what he deemed a "proverbial groove," but manager Bob Geren was impressed with the less obvious aspect of his pitcher's performance.

"He did a real nice job getting back into the game," Geren said. "It seemed like [the two runs] didn't bother him. Looking back to a few years ago, that would have rattled him a little bit, and he would have started throwing faster and harder, but he didn't panic. He actually slowed down and battled through."

Meanwhile, Saunders kept the A's in check through the first six frames, the only Oakland run coming on Rosales' solo shot before Saunders, too, retired 13 consecutive batters. But a pesky A's offense forced him out quickly in the seventh and an even peskier Oakland bullpen, led by rookie Tyson Ross, put the game away for good.

Ross, who made his Major League debut last week, recorded his first career save after tossing three innings of one-run ball while adding his name to a rather bountiful list of A's contributors in Sunday's rubber match.

Near the top of said list, perhaps even above Rosales, stood the unassuming Daric Barton, Braden argued. The A's first baseman laid down two sacrifice bunts in the game and also made more than one defensive highlight.

One of his more impressive catches came in the sixth when Kendry Morales popped up into foul territory, where Barton leaned over the A's dugout railing to record the out.

"Ridiculous," Braden said. "He kind of stole my thunder there on that one. I was probably going to make an even better play, but he did fine."

"I didn't want him to get hurt," Barton said in response.

Barton and the A's will carry their 5-2 record into Seattle, where they begin a three-game set against the Mariners on Monday. Oakland notched a 3-1 series victory over Seattle last week, and Braden is no believer in a fluke.

"Obviously the West is up for grabs, if you will," Braden said. "We don't feel that way. We feel like we're a front runner, and we feel we can compete with anybody. If we can continue to do what we've done so far, which is win the series, we'll be OK. It's a great way to start the month and obviously a great way to start the season."

## **Cust back in A's mix, joins Sacramento**

### **Slugger accepted outright assignment, cleared waivers**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/11/10 3:17 PM ET

ANAHEIM -- Jack Cust was officially welcomed back into the A's fold Sunday when he was added to Triple-A Sacramento's roster.

Cust, who on Saturday accepted an outright assignment to Sacramento after being designated April 3, suited up for the River Cats' Sunday afternoon game against Portland and went 0-for-2 with two walks. He was outrighted Wednesday when he cleared waivers and had 72 hours to accept the assignment or become a free agent, the latter option which would have forced him to forfeit a \$2.65 million salary.

Coincidentally, Cust last played in the Minors in 2007 with Portland while he was still in the Padres organization before being traded to Oakland in May of that year. He has 200 homers with five different teams in 11 seasons in the Minors.

He'll look to regain his stroke and rejoin an A's team that saw him lead the club in home runs (25), walks (93) and strikeouts (185) for the third consecutive season last year.

### **Lineup shuffled for series finale vs. Halos**

ANAHEIM -- A's manager Bob Geren gave his lineup quite a makeover Sunday in an effort to give a handful of his starters some rest while putting out a team he believed could secure a win in the series rubber game against left-handed starter Joe Saunders and the Angels.

The A's four-game winning streak was snapped Saturday by Los Angeles, which received a walk-off hit from Hideki Matsui in the bottom of the ninth inning.

As expected, catcher Kurt Suzuki received his first day of rest after manning the plate for six consecutive games. He was replaced in the lineup by Jake Fox, who had only appeared in one game as designated hitter before Sunday.

"He needed a day off, in my opinion," Geren said. "He's a manager's favorite type of player because he wants to play every day. You have to admire that. He's caught six straight, including a day after a night game. That's pretty hard on him, so he needed this."

Geren placed Fox in the sixth spot behind Mark Ellis, who was selected to DH for just the third time in his career -- the last coming five years ago -- to "give half his body a rest," Geren said.

Adam Rosales got his first starting nod at second base, one of five positions Geren feels comfortable placing him. He made his A's debut Friday night, entering the contest as a defensive replacement for Ellis in the bottom of the ninth inning while representing the last Oakland player on the Opening Day roster to appear in a game.

Also getting a rare start in left field was Eric Patterson, who has tallied three appearances this season as a pinch-runner in late innings, including Tuesday night when he scored the winning run in the 10th frame against Seattle. Geren felt the need to rest Buck while at the same time giving Patterson a chance to knock around Saunders, against whom he's 4-for-5 in his career.

"He's our most successful outfielder against Saunders," Geren said. "It's a small sample size, but he brings a lot to the team and hits for a high average.

"He was pretty much our most productive player in the Minors last year and achieved everything he could at that level, so he just needs an opportunity at this level."

Patterson batted .284 with four doubles and two triples in a team-leading 27 games this spring while appearing 17 times in center field, 10 at second base and four in left field. His solid versatility left the A's no choice but to give him his first Opening Day roster spot.

"It makes it a little more difficult when you're always switching positions like he was doing," Geren said, "but he's aggressive and doesn't lay back. That's a good thing."

Meanwhile, Gabe Gross will have to wait for his first outfield start while Rajai Davis and Ryan Sweeney continue to put up consistent numbers at the plate, where they have combined to rack up 16 of the club's American League-leading 59 hits.

"Raj is playing real well, and Sweeney has been very consistent, so it's hard to take someone out of the lineup who's swinging the bat well," Geren said. "[Gross] is a good worker and has a good attitude. It's a long season, so his time will come."

### **Chavez climbing in team record books**

ANAHEIM -- When Eric Chavez made his 11th Opening Day start last week, he tied Jimmy Dykes for the second-most such starts in franchise history.

And in less than a week's time, the A's franchise player has made his way up several other ranks.

The 32-year-old Chavez moved past Danny Murphy for seventh on the A's all-time doubles list after recording a two-base hit -- the 276th of his career -- in the seventh inning Saturday. At the same time, Chavez compiled his 525th extra-base hit, which tied Dykes for sixth in A's history.

Oakland's six-time Gold Glove Award-winning third baseman is expected to serve as the club's primary designated hitter this season in an effort to preserve his surgically repaired back and shoulders from overuse. He recorded his first multihit game Saturday since June 20, 2008, and is batting .227 in his 13th season in an A's uniform -- a mark that sits second next to Rickey Henderson, who donned green and gold for 14 years.

The left-handed-hitting Chavez received the day off Sunday with southpaw Joe Saunders on the mound for Los Angeles. He is 2-for-9 with a strikeout against the Angels' lefty in his career.

### **Worth noting**

ANAHEIM -- Right-handed pitcher Michael Wertz (shoulder) threw a 28-pitch bullpen session Sunday, and manager Bob Geren reported that all went well. The A's relief pitcher will throw at least one more side session in the next couple of days before having a Minor League rehab outing. ... Ryan Sweeney, who went 2-for-4 with an RBI in Sunday's game, is the only A's player to hit safely in all seven games. ... Oakland's 5-2 record has led it to first place in the American League West, the first time since May 12, 2008.

### **A's lose on Matsui's walk-off hit**

### **Four-game winning streak snapped by ninth-inning single**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/11/10 1:22 AM ET

ANAHEIM -- The way A's manager Bob Geren sees it, his team proved victorious over Jered Weaver on Saturday night.

The box score may tell a different story. And Hideki Matsui's game-winning single in the ninth led to a 4-3 Oakland loss to the Angels.

But a rather optimistic Geren could only think about his team's ongoing efforts against Weaver despite the late-inning results.

"I was proud of our offense," the A's skipper said. "Early in the game, they were patient and grinding out at-bats. I thought they controlled the strike zone and battled really hard."

The A's didn't get a runner on base until the third inning, but their outs didn't go for naught.

"It was a good situation having their Opening Day No. 1 starter approach 80-100 pitches before the fifth inning," Geren said. "That's a good recipe to get guys out of the game."

The formula worked, as the A's forced Weaver out after 111 pitches through six frames, during a time in which the Angels' ace surrendered just four hits and a run while walking one and fanning seven.

The lone run came on Kevin Kouzmanoff's first homer of the season in the fourth, and Oakland's ability to run up Weaver's pitch count led to a comeback against the Halos' bullpen.

Eric Chavez, who went 2-for-4 with a single and double, scored the team's second run in the seventh on an RBI groundout by Travis Buck against Kevin Jepsen. The A's then tied the game at 3 on an RBI double by Ryan Sweeney in the eighth off Scot Shields before Matsui spoiled Oakland's bid for a fifth straight win in the ninth.

Craig Breslow began the inning by inducing a flyout by Erick Aybar before allowing the Angels' sixth double of the game to Bobby Abreu. After intentionally walking Torii Hunter to put runners on first and second with one out, Breslow handed Matsui a fastball on a 2-0 count.

The result was a hard-hit ball down the right-field line that easily scored Abreu and brought the rest of the Angels crew out on the field in celebration of their first win in their last five games.

"I tried to go in on him, but I ended up getting a little more of the plate than I wanted," Breslow said, "and he put a good swing on it."

"I've faced him a few times in the past," Matsui said via a translator. "I was just waiting for a pitch I could put a hard swing on. Fortunately, the count was to my favor and I got a good pitch to hit."

"Basically, I was waiting for a fastball or fastball-type pitch in that situation -- something I could swing hard at."

It was a sour ending to a tight contest that had Oakland starter Ben Sheets laboring hard through six innings of work -- four of which had the A's right-hander working out of jams.

Sheets technically tossed a quality outing by surrendering three runs in six innings, but he also scattered 10 hits and walked three while striking out just one in a performance that left him longing for his next start.

"My fastball just didn't have that little extra," Sheets said. "It was kind of so-so. I had a lot of baserunners from time to time, but I battled to keep them off the board."

"I felt my stuff probably wasn't as good as it was the other day. It's definitely a work in progress. I got into a little bit of trouble in the fourth and made a lot of bad pitches in a row, but I kept us in there and got out of the fifth with no damage, which was huge. They could have took a commanding lead right there, but that allowed us to tie it up."

Sheets had the bases loaded in the fifth after surrendering hits to Matsui and Kendry Morales and a walk to Maicer Izturis, but Sheets got Howard Kendrick to ground into a 6-4-3 double play to end the inning and allow himself a chance to re-enter the game in the sixth.

"He definitely put us in a position to win," Geren said. "Today was a significant step from his last start, and I think we'll probably talk about this a lot at the beginning of the year from start to start. I think he's getting better every start."

Sheets couldn't help but tip his cap to an opponent he's only faced three times in his nine-year career and noted that Matsui -- despite all the buzz surrounding the former Yankee on Saturday -- is not the Angels' lone threat.

"The thing about them is that it's a complete lineup," he said. "There's not one guy who stares at you and you worry about, kind of like Barry Bonds over in San Francisco. They can do it 1 to 9.

"They're a good team, no doubt, but I think we stack right up with them."

## **A's, Angels clash in rubber game**

**By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com 4/11/10**

The wild, wild AL West could get even wilder in the series finale between the Angels and Athletics on Sunday in Anaheim.

The A's, who lead the division with a 4-2 record, will send Dallas Braden to the mound. The Angels, who sit at the bottom of the standings with Seattle with a 2-4 record, will counter with Joe Saunders.

The Texas Rangers are in second place in the division with a 2-3 mark.

Saunders could be the difference Sunday. The Angels sure hope so. Normally close to unbeatable in April, Saunders didn't have it in his season debut against the Twins on Tuesday, yielding five runs in five innings, with three homers among the eight hits he allowed. He wasn't able to put his two-seam fastball where he wanted it, and the Twins made him pay for his mistakes.

"Instead of throwing the ball, I was trying to place the ball," Saunders said. "When you do that, you leave it out over the plate. What I'm going to take from it is the fifth inning, when my tempo was better. I was aggressive in the strike zone, throwing strikes. That's what I have to do to be successful -- pick up the tempo and attack guys. It's just a matter of putting my aggressiveness into things and doing it inning to inning. "

Saunders was 10-1 with a 2.51 career ERA in April entering this season, and he expects to rebound against the Athletics with more aggression and better tempo. He's 9-3 in 14 career starts against the A's, with a 3.99 ERA.

"I'll build on this and move on," Saunders said after his first outing. "What I'm going to take is the fifth inning. My tempo was better; I was throwing strikes, aggressive in the strike zone. That's the Joe Saunders we all know and love."

Braden dazzled in his 2010 debut against the Mariners, surrendering one run and four hits while tallying a career-high 10 strikeouts en route to settling for a no-decision in his first start since July 31, 2009.

The A's southpaw, who is pitching with a numb left foot, boasted what Oakland manager Bob Geren deemed one of his best changeups. Braden was praised for his ability to tab first-pitch strikes.

"I think anytime you can put the pressure on them and plant the seed that you're going to fill up the strike zone early and often, I think that changes their approach," Braden said.

In five career starts against the Angels, Braden is 1-3 with a 4.36 ERA.

"The approach I'm taking is I'm going to see how human I can be," Braden said. "And by that, I mean show up, do what I need to do as a baseball player, and if I feel anything or feel it's going to be cause for concern, I'll take necessary action. Until then, I'm a normal dude with a little less feeling than some other guys."

### **A's: Oakland behind the plate**

Jake Fox will make his first start of the season at catcher Sunday, but Kurt Suzuki is likely to still be in the game at DH. Of the 45 games in which

Fox appeared for the Cubs last season, three of them had him behind the plate. This will mark the first time he's caught Braden, as his only battery mates during the spring were Gio Gonzalez and Brett Anderson.

### **Angels: LA gearing for finale**

Brandon Wood was out of the lineup on Saturday night against right-hander Ben Sheets, but Angels manager Mike Scioscia said his young third baseman will be back on the field on Sunday along with catcher Mike Napoli, who will make his second start of the season. Jeff Mathis got the call behind the plate for five of the first six games.

### **Worth noting**

Hideki Matsui is 13 hits shy of 1,000 in his Major League career. He collected 1,390 hits in his 9 1/2 seasons with the Yomiuri Giants of Japan's Central League, where he was a three-time MVP.

Matsui made his first start in the outfield Thursday.

"We think he's totally healthy. No issue there. There's a stamina issue," Scioscia said. "He's going to be effective, fine. The importance is what he does in the batter's box."

### **Davis, Barton providing A's offense**

#### **Top two hitters have combined for 16 of club's 53 hits**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/10/10 11:35 PM ET

ANAHEIM -- Table setters Rajai Davis and Daric Barton have combined to give the A's quite an appetizing 4-1 season start.

The A's 1-2 punch at the top of the lineup tallied a total of 16 of the A's American League-leading 53 hits, heading into Saturday's contest against the Angels.

Davis recently joined Mark Kotsay as the only players in Oakland history to record four multiple-hit games over the first five contests. He also entered the game tied for most hits (9) in the AL after posting a dismal .217 spring average.

"Raj started off a little slow," manager Bob Geren said, "but he's been rolling ever since. He's done some impressive baserunning too. A lot of people haven't seen what he can do, but I think people are going to start realizing how good he is at the top of the lineup."

Davis was slated to be the team's primary No. 2 hitter behind Coco Crisp on most days, but a fractured pinkie finger left Crisp out of the mix and has paved the way for Barton's presence in the two-hole.

The 24-year-old Barton, who has yet to play one full season in the big leagues due to seemingly inconsistent performances, has compiled back-to-back three-hit and multiple-RBI games for the first time in his career. He's also reached base safely via hit or walk in all five games while leading the AL in times on base (13).

Barton, who entered Saturday with seven hits this season, insists his hot start has been the product of an overall club effort.

"We're playing good as a team," he said. "We're taking advantage when guys are on base and getting good hits. Everyone's contributing. Obviously, we're not going to go out and hit a bunch of home runs, but we're going to get guys in scoring position and feel confident that we can drive in runs."

### **Fox getting first start at catcher Sunday**

ANAHEIM -- Jake Fox, who has spent parts of seven seasons in the Minors, is far from content right now.

Sure, he made the big league club this year.

Staying there, though, is key.



"What I'm trying to do is earn more time," Fox said, "and not gain it all in one day. In baseball, more than any other game, you have to slow things down, stick with the game plan and remember how you got here in the first place."

Fox's journey was an unusually long one, but the 27-year-old right-handed hitter is only concerned about the present, which will find him behind the plate for his first start at catcher Sunday.

Fox will team up with lefty Dallas Braden for the team's three-game series finale against the Angels, subsequently providing everyday starter Kurt Suzuki time to rejuvenate.

However, manager Bob Geren noted Saturday that Suzuki will likely stay in the lineup as a designated hitter against projected Los Angeles left-handed starter Joe Saunders.

For Fox, Sunday's contest will mark just his fourth Major League start in catcher's gear. He made his A's debut in the DH spot Wednesday against Seattle and spent most of his past playing time with the Cubs in the outfield, but was heavily relied upon this spring to aid the club's pitching staff.

Fox, out of options, batted .151 with three homers and nine RBIs in 25 games this spring and broke camp as the team's backup catcher, leaving Landon Powell out of the mix.

## **Cust accepts Minors assignment**

### **Slugger will begin season at Triple-A Sacramento**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/10/10 8:54 PM ET

ANAHEIM -- Exactly one week following the surprising news of Jack Cust's designation, the A's learned Saturday that the slugger has accepted an outright Minor League assignment and will report to Triple-A Sacramento immediately.

Cust, 31, had 72 hours to accept the assignment or become a free agent. Had he chosen the latter option, he would have foregone the \$2.65 million salary awarded to him by Oakland in January.

Considering the timing of his designation came just a day before baseball's official Opening Day, it was highly expected that Cust would wait without any offers in hand unless news of an injury surfaced around the league.

By the end of the week, though, all was quiet at Cust's camp, and manager Bob Geren expressed his satisfaction with the power hitter's rather quick return to the organization.

"I'm very happy he's with us," the A's skipper said. "It's nice to have him in the organization, and I wish him well to obviously get off to a good start. He's a good guy and a good player."

His spring start is what mainly influenced the A's to name Eric Chavez the team's primary designated hitter on the same day Cust struck out three times against the Giants and was designated. He struck out 20 times in 51 at-bats and hit .216 in just 18 spring games.

Cust is all too familiar with the Minors, having already spent 10 full seasons with five different teams there before finally breaking through with the A's in 2007 at the age of 28. Last season in Oakland, he hit .240 with 25 home runs and 70 RBIs while once again representing the club's lone power threat.

## **A's crush Angels for fourth straight win**

### **Barton drives in two; Gonzalez goes six strong**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/10/10 2:55 AM ET

ANAHEIM -- Daric Barton felt right at home Friday -- literally and figuratively.

Playing just 15 minutes from his nearby offseason abode in Corona, Barton appeared perfectly comfortable at the plate against the Angels, racking up three hits and a walk for the second consecutive day.

Not even a fifth-inning hip scare could stop him from staying in the game to aid the A's in a 10-4 series-opening victory over Los Angeles -- especially since 20 friends and family members were watching with wide eyes in the stands.

With runners on first and second in the frame, the Angels' Maicer Izturis lined a single to left field as Howie Kendrick came home and Barton raced to the left side of the pitcher's mound to cut off a throw from Travis Buck. As Barton turned to make a throwing action toward second base, he fell to the ground with what first appeared to be a knee injury.

"When it first happened, I don't know what happened really," Barton said. "It hurt, don't get me wrong, but it was probably more scary than anything. I didn't want to get up and feel the pain. ... I don't know. I didn't like it, though."

Whatever happened didn't sit well with the skipper, or with anyone else watching the constant replays.

"He gave me a pretty good scare when he slipped," manager Bob Geren said. "It didn't look good, and somebody said he twisted his knee, so I ran out there.

"As we're talking, you can hear the fans watching it on replay, and they were giving that ugly 'oooooh.' About five seconds later, you hear it again, and they must have shown a different angle. Right then, I knew that it must have looked ugly on TV."

Maybe so, but not much else was ugly about Oakland's fourth consecutive win versus an Angels team against which they were 7-12 last season. The A's tallied 13 hits in support of left-handed starter Gio Gonzalez, who tossed six-plus innings of two-run ball in his first start since claiming the fifth starter position less than a week ago.

He limited Los Angeles to six hits and one walk while improving to 2-1 with a 2.95 ERA in his last three starts against the Halos -- during a time in which he's walked just two while fanning 23.

"I felt like I was pounding the strike zone," Gonzalez said. "[Kurt] Suzuki did a great job behind the dish ... and the bullpen came in and shut it down."

As much as Gonzalez (1-0) impressed in his 2010 debut, the A's offensive ways, bolstered by a motivational running game, had both managers singing even higher praise.

"We were not surprised," Angels skipper Mike Scioscia said. "They've been running a good year-and-a-half now. We saw it in Spring Training. It's definitely part of their package again. They have some guys who can put pressure on us when they have the opportunities. They ran the bases well tonight."

"It's not just aggressive," Geren said. "It's smart and aggressive. I don't want guys running wild just to run. So far, though, it's been great baserunning."

Both Barton and Rajai Davis stretched singles into doubles in the second frame, and both walked away with three hits and two RBIs attached to their names. Cliff Pennington also added a three-run homer in the seventh while Eric Chavez, Kevin Kouzmanoff and Suzuki all tabbed run-scoring hits.

"I think the most impressive thing has been the way we've swung the bats," Geren said. "I anticipated good defense -- we've won some games that way. I anticipated solid, aggressive baserunning. We've seen that, but I'm just happy the way we're swinging the bats."

Much of Friday's pounding came against Angels starter Matt Palmer, who exited after five frames. He gave up eight hits and seven runs (five earned) while walking two and fanning three before the A's snagged three off Jason Bulger thanks to Pennington's homer.

## **A's, Angels heading in opposite directions**

**By Tom Singer / MLB.com 4/10/10**

Two teams who left the starting gate in opposite directions turn to their respective right-handers who have gone off on their own. The A's hope Ben Sheets reverses course. The Angels, meanwhile, need Jered Weaver to stay on his.

In Monday's season openers, Sheets started and Oakland lost, and Weaver also started and the Angels won.

Neither team has done that since, leading to them coming into Saturday afternoon's game brandishing contrasting benchmarks.

The A's are 4-1 for the first time since 2004, when they were coming off four straight postseason appearances, three of them as American League West champs.

Conversely, the 1-4 Angels are staring at their worst getaway in 18 years in the wake of their worst back-to-back games in five years.

Until Thursday's 10-1 loss to Minnesota and Friday's 10-4 defeat by the A's, the three-time defending division champs had not surrendered runs in double-digits in consecutive losses since July 7-8, 2005, when the Mariners took them 10-2 and 10-4.

Not since being born as the original Los Angeles Angels in 1961 have the Halos begun a season 1-5. If they want to avoid that undesirable flashback, they'll have to find some holes with men in scoring position. Friday night's 1-for-7 under those circumstances left them 7-for-37 (.189) for the young season.

And, of course, the Angels will need Weaver to be as sharp as he was on Monday, when he held the Twins to five hits and three runs for six innings.

"Everything felt great," Weaver said in recalling that effort. "I feel stronger. I had a little more velocity -- 88 to 94 [mph]. I feel my body is just getting used to every five days. It takes time for your body to get adjusted to pitching every five days. I'm getting in the right routine between starts.

"I've had some pretty decent games against Oakland in the past. We'll see what happens."

"Decent" about covers it. Weaver has a 2.71 ERA in 11 career starts against the A's, albeit the record resulting from that is merely 3-3.

#### **A's: Sheets' next win a long time coming**

Sheets' Opening Night performance (two earned runs and four hits in five innings) was a major upgrade over his Spring Training struggles. He is still looking for his first victory since Sept. 6, 2008, when he led Milwaukee to a 1-0 shutout of San Diego. The Athletics are trying to get four games above .500 for the first time since being 52-48 on July 22, 2008. They have not been plus-five since three days prior to that, when they stood 51-46.

#### **Angels: Kazmir on the horizon**

Scott Kazmir (hamstring and left shoulder) stretched out to 6 1/3 innings Friday night in a rehab outing with Triple-A Salt Lake, allowing three runs on eight hits while striking out six. Kazmir, able to log only 11 1/3 innings in the Cactus League, could be activated for next week's series in New York against the Yankees.

#### **Worth noting**

The one-sided A's-Angels affair was extremely rare. Of the prior 75 games between the division rivals, 42 have been decided by two or fewer runs, 24 of them by one run. ... Angels reliever Bobby Cassevah made his Major League debut -- against the team which had taken him in the Rule 5 Draft during the Winter Meetings, then returned him to Los Angeles.

#### **Suzuki could get day off Sunday**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com, 04/10/10 3:16 AM ET

ANAHEIM -- Kurt Suzuki isn't slowing down.

That much was certain Thursday afternoon when he slid into the visiting Mariners dugout to snag a foul ball -- a play manager Bob Geren is willing to bet few, if any, other catchers could have made.

Suzuki was back in the lineup yet again Friday for his fifth straight start behind the plate, and Geren said the A's catcher likely will receive his first off day Sunday afternoon when Oakland rounds out a three-game set in Anaheim.

Still, Geren noted that Suzuki could potentially still be in the game as the club's designated hitter while Jake Fox gets his first start at catcher.

Off days aren't exactly all that common for the 26-year-old Suzuki, who led American League catchers in games started (132) for the second consecutive season last year. He has also started 328 of the A's 397 games behind the plate -- 82.6 percent -- since Jason Kendall was traded on July 16, 2007.

### **Buck errorless in his career**

ANAHEIM -- When Travis Buck made his way to Arizona State in 2003, former Sun Devils coach Pat Murphy warned him.

"I came as an infielder and Dustin Pedroia was playing shortstop at the time," Buck recalls, "so Murphy told me, 'We're going to get you on the field, just not on the infield.'"

Outfield became the obvious solution for Buck, who said, "I had no idea what I was doing out there" during the first couple of transition months. His natural athleticism took over, and sooner than later, he found a comfort zone in his new position.

"I've definitely come a long way since college," Buck said with a laugh.

That's probably an understatement. As he prepared to man left field against the Angels on Friday night, Buck was informed that he has never committed an error in his big league career.

"I don't have an error?" Buck asked with surprise. "Really?"

Really. In fact, he has a 153-game errorless streak -- the third longest mark by an outfielder in Oakland history.

"I've always taken a lot of pride in my defense, especially since I haven't been an outfielder my whole life," he said. "I'm still learning every day."

The fact that he's currently learning in a big league uniform says even more about Buck, who has jumped between the Minors and Majors more than a handful of times in the past three seasons. He didn't expect to make this year's Opening Day roster, but a rather wide door was opened following the news that Coco Crisp was starting the season on the DL and Jack Cust was being designated.

Buck's rollercoaster journey has seemingly been the result of much scrutiny surrounding his inconsistent performance at the plate. For that reason, he credits his solid defensive work with keeping him in the loop.

"Obviously, being a position player, they're going to look at your hitting, but if anyone has confidence in their ability to play the outfield, that's going to help your chances so much more," he said. "Just knowing that they can count on you, even if you're struggling at the plate, is important.

"Letting those struggles affect your play in the outfield has never been the case with me. I take two different mindsets, whether I'm at the plate or in the outfield. Obviously, I'm trying to do my best at both, but not carry one into the other."

So far, so good. Buck entered Friday's contest as the only A's player to reach base safely via hit or walk in all four games to start the season.

"The biggest thing for me going into my rookie year was knowing that I could hit [and] learning how to put it all together and be a complete player with my defense," he said. "Balancing it all is sometimes hard, but I feel I've worked hard to be successful at both."

### **Wuertz throws 20 pitches off mound**

ANAHEIM -- Right-hander Michael Wuertz, currently on the 15-day disabled list with shoulder tendinitis, threw 20 pitches off a mound Friday.

Manager Bob Geren said the bullpen session went "all right" for the reliever, who appeared in just two games during the spring as a result of shoulder soreness.

Wuertz's bullpen work followed what Geren deemed a "semi-side session" Wednesday, when he threw off the mound at a shorter distance than the usual 60 feet, 6 inches. The A's skipper is realistic about Wuertz potentially seeing time in a Minor League rehab game between April 14-16 at the earliest.

The 31-year-old Wuertz was placed on the DL for the first time in his career April 3, retroactive to March 26. He made a team-leading 74 appearances while compiling a 2.63 ERA in 2009, but the A's have been more than satisfied with their current bullpen staff, which posted a 1.35 ERA in the season-opening four games against Seattle this week.

### **Worth noting**

Right-handed pitcher Bobby Cassevah, who was chosen by the A's in December's Rule 5 Draft and then returned to the Angels, was at Angel Stadium on Friday after being called up from Triple-A. He made his Major League debut in the seventh inning. ... Daric Barton, who enjoyed his first career three-hit day Thursday, compiled another one Friday by going 3-for-4 with a walk. ... The A's have three consecutive three-double games and lead the American League with 12 two-base hits. ... Vin Mazzaro threw 4 1/3 innings of no-hit ball and struck out seven for Triple-A Sacramento on Opening Night. In the same game, outfielder Michael Taylor made his River Cats debut and went 2-for-4 with a triple and a run scored.

## **LEE'S LEFTOVERS: Jane Lee A's Blog**

### **A's lineup gets a new look for series finale**

**April 11, 2010**

ANAHEIM -- Manager Bob Geren gave his lineup quite a makeover Sunday morning in a combining effort to give a handful of his starters some rest while putting out a team he believes can lock up a winning three-game set against left-handed starter Joe Saunders and the Angels.

The A's entered the game 1-1 against Los Angeles, who received a walkoff hit from Hideki Matsui in the bottom of the ninth inning Saturday evening to shatter Oakland's four-game winning streak.

As expected, catcher Kurt Suzuki received his first day of rest after manning the plate six consecutive days. He was replaced in the lineup by Jake Fox, who had only appeared in one game as designated hitter before Sunday.

"He needed a day off in my opinion," Geren said of Suzuki. "He's a manager's favorite type of player because he wants to play every day. You have to admire that. He's caught six straight, including a day after night game. That's pretty hard on him, so he needed this."

Geren placed Fox in the sixth spot behind Mark Ellis, who was elected to DH for just the third time in his career -- the last coming five years ago -- to "give half his body rest," the A's skipper said.

Adam Rosales got his first starting nod at second base, one of five positions Geren feels comfortable placing him. He made his A's debut Friday night, entering the contest as a defensive replacement for Ellis in the bottom of the ninth inning while representing the last Oakland player on the Opening Day roster to appear in a game.

Also getting a rare start in left field was Eric Patterson, who has tallied three appearances this season as a pinch runner in late innings, including Tuesday night when he scored the winning run in the 10th frame against Seattle. Geren felt the need to rest Buck while at the same time giving Patterson a chance to knock around Saunders, against whom he's 4-for-5 in his career.

"He's our most successful outfielder against Saunders," Geren said. "It's a small sample size, but he brings a lot to the team and hits for a high average."

"He was pretty much our most productive player in the Minors last year and achieved everything he could at that level, so he just needs an opportunity at this level."

Patterson batted .284 with four doubles and two triples in a team-leading 27 games this spring while appearing 17 times in center field, 10 at second base and four in left field. His solid versatility left the A's no choice but to lend him his first Opening Day roster spot.

"It makes it a little more difficult when you're always switching positions like he was doing," Geren said, "but he's aggressive and doesn't lay back. That's a good thing."

Meanwhile, Gabe Gross will have to wait for his first outfield start while Rajai Davis and Ryan Sweeney continue to put up consistent numbers at the plate, where they have combined to rack up 16 of the club's American League-leading 59 hits.

"Raj is playing real well and Sweeney has been very consistent, so it's hard to take someone out of the lineup who's swinging the bat well," Geren said. "[Gross] is a good worker and has a good attitude. It's a long season, so his time will come."

## **Stellar defense, great pitching lifts Athletics past Mariners 6-2**

By Jorge L. Ortiz, USA TODAY

OAKLAND – A renewed focus on fielding helped the Seattle Mariners boost their record by 24 wins last season, by far the biggest improvement in baseball.

The Oakland Athletics, looking to bounce back from their worst mark since 1998, are taking a page from that game plan.

The A's got sparkling defensive plays from center fielder Rajai Davis, catcher Kurt Suzuki and third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff in Thursday's 6-2 victory against Seattle, and they took their season-opening series three games to one.

GAME REPORT: Athletics 6, Mariners 2

Left-hander Brett Anderson, at 22 the youngest player on an Oakland club with the lowest average opening-day age in the majors (27.16), benefited from the stellar defense in holding the Mariners to three hits over six shutout innings.

"You don't really expect guys to rob home runs for you or make sliding plays in the dugout. Those are just an added bonus," Anderson said. "Whenever you give up a would-be hit and they make those plays to get outs for you, it gives you that much more confidence to throw strikes."

Davis might have prevented a Milton Bradley home run in the second inning by racing deep into center field and leaping to make the catch just as the ball was approaching the top of the fence. Bradley doffed his helmet in appreciation of the spectacular grab.

"I think it might have hit the top of the fence and bounced over. It was pretty close," Davis said. "It kept carrying and carrying. I wasn't convinced it was going to go that far."

Kouzmanoff robbed Franklin Gutierrez of a hit with a diving stop in the fourth, and Suzuki topped them all with his play an inning later.

Sprinting toward the Seattle dugout in pursuit of Jose Lopez's popup, Suzuki made a sprawling grab and somehow kept from crashing down the steps.

"It would be really hard for anybody to try to pick out another catcher in baseball who can make that play," A's manager Bob Geren said.

The victory assured the A's (3-1) of a longer stay above the break-even mark than at any point last year, when they started 2-1 and never again got over .500 on the way to a last-place finish at 75-87.

Nursing a 2-0 lead in the sixth, Oakland padded its cushion with Cliff Pennington's run-scoring double and the second of Daric Barton's three RBI singles. His line shot in the eighth gave him a career-high four RBI and lifted his average to .333 after a 1-for-8 start.

Barton, who has walked five times, said he's benefiting from a more positive mental outlook after disappointing results the last two seasons.

"A lot of times I don't start off hot, but that's part of the game," said Barton, 24. "When they do make a mistake, you have to capitalize, and luckily today I did that."

## **Rosales homers in 1st AB for A's, has 4 RBIs**

Sunday, April 11, 2010

(04-11) 17:09 PDT Anaheim, Calif. (AP) -- Adam Rosales and the Oakland Athletics are off and running.

The backup infielder sprinted around the bases after homering in his first AL at-bat, added a go-ahead single and finished with four RBIs Sunday in a 9-4 victory over the Los Angeles Angels.

"I had a lot of energy. I almost had to calm myself down and take it down a couple of notches. It's the little kid in me," Rosales said.

Rosales spent portions of the previous two seasons with Cincinnati before being dealt to the A's in February.

"At first, I was shocked and heartbroken when I got traded. My mind was set on making my way up through the Reds' organization and sticking there. But these guys really welcomed me to the club and I'm enjoying it here," he said.

The A's, who finished 22 games behind the Angels in the AL West last season, have started off 5-2.

The Angels went 2-5 on their season-opening homestand. They begin a road trip on Tuesday at New York, where the Yankees will receive their World Series rings. So will Angels new DH Hideki Matsui, the Series MVP, who spent his seven previous big league seasons in the Bronx. The Yankees beat the Angels in the AL championship series.

"You're always going to watch something like that with interest. That's what all of us are playing for," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "I guess we're a little jealous because they beat us last year and went on to win the World Series. But I don't think we need to see a ring ceremony to understand the magnitude of it and what we're playing for, and to be motivated to get to that final step."

Rosales hit a solo homer in the second inning into the front row of the seats in the left-field corner. That was Oakland's only hit through the first six innings against Joe Saunders.

Saunders (0-2) retired 13 in a row before giving up three straight hits to start a three-run seventh. Rosales capped the rally with a two-run single. He also drew a bases-loaded walk in the eighth as the A's pulled away.

Dallas Braden (1-0) allowed three runs and five hits over six innings. In his season debut last Tuesday against Seattle, the left-hander struck a career-high 10 in seven innings.

Rookie Tyson Ross pitched three innings for his first major league save.

"We feel like we can compete with anybody, and we stack up well against the entire division," Braden said. "It's a great way to start the season. We're just full of confidence right now. I knew today was going to be a day that we were going to have guys in there who were going to be anxious and ready, and I knew it was going to pay off if I could keep us in the game."

The A's trailed 3-1 going into the seventh. Singles by Ryan Sweeney and Kevin Kouzmanoff put runners at the corners for Mark Ellis, who delivered the first of his two RBI doubles.

Kevin Jepsen relieved Saunders and struck out Jake Fox. But Rosales, the Athletics' No. 7 hitter, lined the next pitch to right field for a 4-3 lead.

Rosales hit four home runs in 259 at-bats over the previous two seasons with the Reds.

"I thought it was pretty obvious what my role was going to be here," Rosales said. "But the opportunity and the experience I had last year I think has helped me know what my role is this year and know how to handle it."

The A's tacked on three more runs in the eighth, all unearned because of third baseman Brandon Wood's throwing error. Wood, a perennial prospect who has taken over as the Angels' regular third baseman after the departure of free agent Chone Figgins, is 1 for 19 with seven strikeouts through his first five games. The error was his first of the season.

Bobby Abreu hit a solo home run in the Angels' first. The two-time All-Star snapped a drought of 25 at-bats without an RBI, the longest of his 15-year career to start a season.

NOTES: Angels pitchers have allowed at least one homer in each of their first seven games for the first time in the franchise's 50-year history. The previous longest streak from the start of a season was five, in 1969 and 1981. ... Juan Rivera homered in the ninth for Los Angeles, which has been outscored 29-9 in its last three losses. ... Braden was 0-3 with a 6.35 ERA in his three starts against the Angels in 2009.

## *Athletics need an assist from Bud Selig*

**Club desperately wants to build a stadium in San Jose and leave the disastrous Oakland Coliseum, but commissioner is still waiting, 13 months later, for a report from a task force to say where the A's could go.**

By Bill Shaikin, LA TIMES April 10, 2010

Is Bud Selig trying to kill the Oakland Athletics?

The Oakland Coliseum has been a disaster for 15 years, at least for baseball, destroyed by the return of the NFL's Raiders. The A's sold the fewest tickets in the major leagues last year.

On the day after opening day, this was the turnstile count at the Coliseum: 5,200. That's a good crowd, if you're the Lake Elsinore Storm.

It has been 13 months since Selig appointed a task force to tell him where the A's could build a ballpark. The wait goes on, and on, for so long that we wonder whether the commissioner would prefer to wait another year for an answer.

By that time, negotiations on a new collective bargaining agreement should be well underway. The A's and Tampa Bay Rays are the only clubs desperately seeking new ballparks, and Selig could use the threat of killing those two teams — "contraction" is the euphemism — as leverage in talks with the players' union.

Selig wouldn't discuss that, or much of anything else regarding the A's, in a brief telephone interview Friday. However, according to high-ranking baseball sources granted anonymity because of the sensitivity of labor issues, Selig has no intention of playing the contraction card.

All Selig would say is that he awaits word from his task force.

"I don't know yet what they're going to report," Selig said. "These are very complicated things."

On the surface, this is not very complicated. The A's want to move to San Jose, and Selig either provides his blessing or gives Oakland one last shot.

Yet, Selig craves nothing so much as consensus, and good luck with that. The task force is expected to deliver its report within weeks, but there might be nothing final about it.

San Jose is the largest city in the Bay Area, in the region with the broadest base of fans and corporations. If the San Francisco Giants aren't going to play there, the A's ought to.

The more money the A's make, after all, the less welfare other owners have to provide in revenue sharing. Once Selig shares those numbers, the other owners might well vote to strip the Giants of their territorial right to San Jose.

Not so fast, the Giants say. If the Giants lose many of their San Jose customers to the A's, then the owners might have to redirect those welfare savings to propping up the Giants.

You don't have to be Judge Judy to figure out the solution: The A's move to San Jose, and they cut the Giants a check for any losses.

However, the task force has not discussed specific assessments with either the A's or other clubs, according to two major league executives not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

That leaves Oakland in a cautiously optimistic mood, quite an upgrade from one year ago, when city officials assumed the task force would simply offer cover for A's owner Lew Wolff to leave town.

San Jose has the land, but voters would need to approve giving that land to the A's. Oakland could transfer land to the A's without a public vote, but the city would need to buy out some private property owners to deliver its preferred waterfront site.

Can Selig endorse San Jose and risk losing an election? Can he endorse Oakland without land in hand? Does he spend a few more months trying to pacify the Giants, who vow not to go quietly, or the A's, who say they exhausted their efforts in Oakland years ago?

Wolff has pursued a new ballpark for seven years, at first as the point man for the previous owners, who gave up and sold him the team. His frustration is evident, but his words are measured. On this issue, Selig — his college fraternity brother — has all but slapped a gag order on him.

He says the A's would not strike it rich in San Jose, not when they would build the ballpark themselves and face what he says would be \$18 million to \$20 million per year in mortgage payments, but could do well enough for fans to develop a rooting interest in Brett Anderson and Kurt Suzuki rather than watch General Manager Billy Beane trade them away.

"We're in this so I can give Billy enough money to keep players," Wolff said. "We're still not going to be in the free-agent market."

As he sits in his Los Angeles office, Wolff swivels his chair and retrieves a white three-ring binder, the kind a high school student might use to present a term paper.



The sheets inside include names and pictures of this year's Oakland players, the easier for him to identify them when he sees them at Angel Stadium this weekend.

"I'm the only owner that has to carry this kind of book around," he said, "because we don't have the ability to keep our players around."

If this goes on much longer, he could fit all of the paying customers into one of those binders.

## **Giants' revenue up, A's down, Forbes says**

Sacramento Business Journal - by ERIC YOUNG San Francisco Business Times  
Monday, April 12, 2010, 9:43am PDT

Despite the recession, the San Francisco Giants increased revenue and income last season, according to an annual Forbes magazine report on the business of baseball.

Attendance dipped less than 1 percent but the Giants boosted gate receipts to \$82 million in 2009 from \$78 million the season before, the business magazine reported. That helped overall revenue increase 2.5 percent to \$201 million.

Income rose to \$24 million from \$22 million, the magazine said.

The Giants declined comment on the Forbes report.

Like the rest of baseball, both the Giants and Oakland A's have sought to combat the affects of the recession with added perks to ticket buyers, reductions to merchandise prices and even offering payment plans to fans who had trouble coming up with cash for season tickets.

The fog may be lifting for local baseball. Executives with both the Giants and A's said they are optimistic that the local economy is on the mend.

That could bode well for boosts in attendance for the 2010 season, which started this week.

Attendance is the single largest source of money for baseball teams.

The Oakland A's, according to Forbes, saw a decline in revenue. Slumping attendance helped push revenue to \$155 million in 2009 from \$160 million. The A's drew 1.4 million fans last year, a decline of 16 percent from the previous season.

The A's declined comment on the Forbes report.

The Sacramento River Cats are the Triple A affiliate of the A's. The team has also been the minor-league leader in attendance the past 10 seasons.