

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, April 20, 2010

### Oakland Athletics' Andrew Bailey aims to 'stay the course'

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Being named the American League's Rookie of the Year was nice for Andrew Bailey. But it hardly did anything to change his personality.

Bailey is the same easygoing person he was last season, and the A's can only hope he's the same pitcher as well. But he has no surprises up his sleeve as he settles in for his second season as the team's closer.

"I think it's just kind of staying the course," Bailey said of his philosophy for 2010.

Who wouldn't aim for the status quo after posting the type of season Bailey did in 2009? He was the only rookie in either league to make the All-Star team and became the seventh Oakland player to be named the AL's top rookie.

No evidence exists that a sophomore jinx might apply for major league closers. Then again, not many relievers from recent seasons can be compared with Bailey, period, because few have assumed full-time closing duties as a rookie.

One exception was Huston Street, who took over as the A's closer in 2005 and was Rookie of the Year. He came back and saved 37 games in 2006, but he also had 11 blown saves.

Jonathan Papelbon notched 35 saves in 2006 for the Boston Red Sox in what officially was his rookie season. But Papelbon got his feet wet with 17 appearances in 2005 (14 in relief), so he's not a direct comparison to Bailey.

"There's always going to be bumps in the road (for young pitchers)," one major league scout said of Bailey's chances to repeat his rookie success. "But stuff is stuff. (Bailey's) got three pitches, and they're all plus-pitches. Last year he looked like one of the top five closers in the game. He took the ball and ran with it, and I don't see why he couldn't do it again."

Bailey posted 26 saves last season with a 1.84 ERA in 68 appearances. He didn't convert from starting to relieving until midway through the 2008 campaign, so his biggest challenge was simply conditioning his arm for frequent use.

Bailey missed two weeks this spring with elbow inflammation, which he has said was probably a byproduct of last season's heavy use.

So perhaps it's a good thing the A's have used Bailey only five times through the first 14 games. He's converted his only save opportunity.

Since joining the bullpen, Bailey said he's begun studying closers such as Papelbon and Mariano Rivera, whose New York Yankees begin a three-game series with the A's tonight. Bailey throws a mid-90's fastball, a slow curve and a cut fastball, and he marveled at Rivera's mastery of the cutter.

"I like Papelbon's aggressiveness, that's kind of the mentality I have," Bailey said. "And I love watching Mariano's kind of like, finesse, just spotting up with that cutter. It's unbelievable. He can put it where he wants it."

Bailey participated in several media engagements this winter. But baseball remained his focus, according to teammate Craig Breslow, who worked out with him regularly.

"Getting his work in and throwing, that kind of remained a priority," Breslow said. "I was impressed with how level-headed and grounded he was."

Note: An MRI exam on Daric Barton's right elbow was negative, and the first baseman was diagnosed with a contusion. Barton was hit by a pitch in the elbow from Baltimore Orioles starter Brian Matusz on Sunday.

## **Starting pitching is key in Yankees-A's series**

Gwen Knapp, Chronicle Staff Writer

The best possible pitching showdowns won't happen this week in Oakland. CC Sabathia isn't scheduled to face the A's Ben Sheets, his former Milwaukee teammate, when the Yankees visit the Coliseum. The venerable Andy Pettitte won't meet the dewy Brett Anderson. They both pitched on Sunday.

But the starting matchups for this three-game series should provide sufficient drama. The Yankees constitute a proving ground for any team, and the A's early lead in their division will receive a heavy dose of credibility if they can cope with the New Yorkers.

Oakland's three walk-off wins have made quite an impression, but if the A's are to be taken seriously, it will be because of how they begin games. The starters are 6-1, and the entire pitching staff takes a 2.90 ERA into tonight's series opener. That places the A's second in the majors, behind only the Cardinals' minuscule 2.45, achieved on a diet free of designated hitters.

The Yanks have a 3.63 ERA and rank seventh in the majors, not far from where they finished last season. They were ninth, the A's 11th.

In the opener, the A's face Javier Vazquez, so far the weakest piece of the Yanks' rotation. On a 9-3 team, he has an 0-2 record, supported in full by a 9.82 ERA. The Yankees traded Melky Cabrera to Atlanta over the winter to reclaim Vazquez, who pitched for them in 2004, rather infamously surrendering two home runs to Johnny Damon, including a grand slam, in Game 7 of Boston's American League Championship Series win.

He went 15-10 with a 2.87 ERA last season, and seems unlikely to continue in his current slump. But it's worth noting that his ERA blew up the last time he moved to New York, going from 3.24 with the Expos in 2003 to 4.91 in '04. He hasn't topped that number since he left the Bronx in '05.

But Vazquez was acquired by an administration that has developed a certain finesse in choosing new players who, unlike some of their predecessors, can wear the pinstripes comfortably. (See Sabathia, Nick Swisher, Mark Teixeira, A.J. Burnett, and now apparently Curtis Granderson.)

Gio Gonzalez seemed unfazed when he threw against the world champs for the first time, beating them in their palatial stadium last year. He held them to two hits and a run. Like all of the A's, he has started out impressively, although the second outing against Seattle, in which he allowed six hits and walked four in 42/3 innings, didn't quite duplicate the steadiness of his season debut against the Angels.

In the second game of the series, Sheets will meet the 23-year-old Phil Hughes, who walked an uncharacteristically high five batters in his only other start of the year. For Sheets, this game could bring great vindication, for both him and the A's front office. He threw two competent starts at the beginning of the season and then shut out the Orioles for six innings last week.

Now he has a shot at the world champions, and a win would erase thoughts of the March 15 spring-training debacle against the Reds, when he faced 10 batters without recording an out. The coverage was alternately grave and mocking, especially in references to the A's decision to offer a \$10 million contract to a pitcher who had missed the entire 2009 season because of a bum elbow.

Beating the Yankees virtually guarantees a tone of retraction from all of the March skeptics. If he were facing Sabathia, the Yankees' new ace and Sheets' comrade in the Brewers' playoff run of 2008, the hype would be hard to contain, even for a West Coast night game. Sabathia spent the final month of the '08 season asserting himself as a pitcher worthy of a hefty contract, while Sheets wore out his elbow.

But Sabathia is listed as the Thursday starter, in a getaway afternoon matchup with Dallas Braden. Sabathia, who went through wobbly Aprils the last two years, has turned into a spring terror, nearly no-hitting the Rays and striking out nine Rangers in six innings of a rain-shortened game.

Vallejo's favorite pitcher made progress toward ending his Coliseum curse with a win last year, but his numbers at the creaky old park remain an unsightly 2-4 with a 6.35 ERA in nine starts. Braden has a similar profile at the moment: a strong April, but fairly unattractive career stats against the Yankees: 1-4 with a 7.71 ERA in four appearances, one of them a start.

On the surface, the \$161 million, Cy Young Award-winning Sabathia and Braden, working for baseball's minimum wage, couldn't be more different. But neither could the Yankees and A's, except for the fact that they are both having their best starts in years, leading their divisions and generally watching their starters conduct themselves like maestros on the mound. For the next three days, surface appearances don't mean a thing.

## **Barton's MRI is OK, but his elbow hurts**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Monday was the first day off of the season for the A's, and much needed it was: Oakland is banged up after the longest stretch of games to open the season in the majors, two solid weeks.

The A's announced Monday night that an MRI on **Daric Barton's** right elbow was negative, so the first baseman is listed with a contusion. One team source said that Barton is hopeful that he can play tonight or Wednesday night against the Yankees but he does have a deep bruise. If he were only to miss a game or two, the A's are unlikely to place Barton on the disabled list; he's been a primary offensive contributor. But the team has some other iffy injuries (**Mark Ellis'** hamstring, **Cliff Pennington's** wrist), so there remains some possibility the team will make a move to bring in some depth.

In addition, **Michael Wuertz** (rotator-cuff tendinitis) could be activated for the Yankees series after two scoreless rehab innings at Sacramento. That decision isn't likely to be made until today, when the A's check on how Wuertz is feeling.

The last time the A's opened the season with as many as 14 consecutive games was in 1991, when they played 16 in a row.

"You always look forward to an off day, but it's only April," shortstop Pennington said before Sunday's game. "In August, those days are a little more valuable. Right now, we're feeling good. We have a lot of momentum."

Pennington also was banged up Sunday; his right wrist was stepped on as he dived back to first base. X-rays were negative, and he's not expected to be put on the DL, but he might not be available tonight.

**Champs in town:** The Yankees enter the three-game series at the Coliseum on a four-game winning streak, and they are catching the A's while the team is playing well, Sunday's loss to Baltimore aside.

"We'll see where we stand with one of the best," Pennington said.

"Obviously, they're a very good team and they're playing well," manager **Bob Geren** said. "It's good to be playing your best when you're playing the world champions; it gives you your best chance to succeed."

**Briefly: Brett Anderson's** loss Sunday was the first by an A's starter this year. ... Assistant general manager **David Forst** confirmed that the A's signed five international players this month: right-hander **Andres Avila**, 19, and shortstop **Hiram Martinez**, 17, from Mexico; **Rodolfo Penalo**, 17, Dominican Republic; catcher **Dionicio Ramirez**, 17, Venezuela; and shortstop **Chih-Fang Pan**, 19, Taiwan.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle, 4/20/2010

**A ring for spring:** A's relievers **Chad Gaudin** and **Edwar Ramirez** played for last year's world champion Yankees team, so with New York in town, they're hoping to get their World Series rings.

## **Inbox: Where will Cahill go when healthy?**

### **Athletics beat reporter Jane Lee fields fans' questions**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

**What happens when Trevor Cahill comes off the disabled list? Does he take Gio Gonzalez's spot in the rotation, or does he go to the bullpen?**  
-- John N., Sacramento, Calif.

I don't think you'll find Cahill in either place. The most likely scenario, it seems, is to have the right-hander continue to tally innings down in rehab outings with Triple-A Sacramento -- the first of which came Monday. Even though he started 32 games as a rookie last year, Cahill is very young (he turned 22 in March) and could potentially learn quite a bit from a stay with the River Cats. He's also said that he'd rather get work in as a starter in Sacramento than be placed in Oakland's bullpen, which is pretty crowded these days, anyway.

Meanwhile, Gonzalez has been doing a fine job in the fifth spot, and he's really improved on everything that caused him to struggle last year -- mainly confidence, composure and an inability to harness his changeup. There's no sense in tinkering with the lefty's role at a time when he's not only finally feeling comfortable in the rotation but also dealing with some personal issues on the side. His girlfriend is currently in a San Diego hospital following a car accident that has left her with serious injuries.

**How many bases is Rajai Davis going to steal this year? Can the A's really rely on speed and baserunning to win games?**  
-- Mark G., San Leandro, Calif.

If you asked Davis, he'd probably flash a wide grin and say 100. His mentor, Rickey Henderson, would likely do the same. I'm going to go with a more reasonable guess of 62. Right now he has seven, which puts him on pace for 81. Either way, anything above 40 is highly respectable. That's 40 times Davis is giving his team a better chance to score and 40 times he's making the opposing pitcher question his game plan.

That said, I very much believe in the power of speed and baserunning, and the A's have no choice but to rely on it to offset a rather lackluster offense. If Davis isn't on a roll, Oakland's offense is sure to find itself at a standstill, as we already saw happen last week. It's never fair to put a team's offensive output all on one guy, but the A's aren't exactly the most conventional team. When Davis is on base, opposing pitchers are worried about him, thus resulting in meaty pitches for the guy at the plate. Said batter gets on base, the trend continues and, if all goes according to plan, runs start crossing home plate.

**What's the deal with Mark Ellis? Every day it seems that Bob Geren is saying he's getting better, but if that's the case, then why is he still not in the lineup after a week? Why not put him on the DL?**  
-- Byron L., Stockton, Calif.

I don't think Geren or Ellis knew at the time he went down that he'd be out as long as he has been. At the onset of the injury, the general timetable for his recovery seemed to be two days. Obviously those two days, along with a few more, have passed, and still no Ellis. The club was hopeful for a Tuesday return, but even that's not certain. However, I don't think

the DL will come up in conversation unless Daric Barton and Cliff Pennington -- injured in Sunday's game -- are unavailable, as well. The A's simply can't afford to allow three players on the 25-man roster sit on the bench without freeing up a spot.

**In your opinion, who has been the biggest surprise for the A's this year?**

-- Carl T., Spokane, Wash.

I'd have to say Barton, who has provided the club's most consistent offensive production after entering the season with modest expectations. Not only has he been a catalyst at the plate, but he's also represented one of the team's most steady defensive presences.

I've lost track of how many e-mails I've gotten wondering when Chris Carter will get the call to Oakland, and as much as I'm psyched about his big league debut someday, I think it's a shame people are too worried about a Triple-A player to really take notice of Barton. He's one of just three guys to have played every game through Sunday, and he's given the A's a steady No. 2 hitter while Coco Crisp's fractured finger heals.

**Does Ryan Sweeney have a chance of winning a Gold Glove this year?**

-- Lori W., Antioch, Calif.

Sweeney is an outstanding defensive outfielder, as evidenced most recently by his spectacular diving catch on Sunday. However, there are a handful of similarly impressive defensive outfielders in the American League, chief among them Ichiro Suzuki and Torii Hunter, both of whom have won nine consecutive Gold Glove Awards. Voters are notorious for turning to familiar standbys, so it could be tough for Sweeney to break into the ranks of the elite while the aforementioned players are still in their primes and turning in web gems on a regular basis.

**Any big personalities on the team this year? What's the clubhouse atmosphere like? I always enjoy hearing about that kind of stuff.**

-- Ben R., Tracy, Calif.

There are no Jason Giambi or Nick Swisher types to speak of, but a rowdy Ben Sheets sure knows how to fire up a clubhouse. His Southern voice carries pretty well, and he's intent on being buddies with everyone rather than stick close by just one or two teammates. He likes making new friends, and he's hoping the Golden State Warriors' Monta Ellis eventually becomes one of them. During Spring Training, Sheets made it known that he firmly believes he could score on the Warriors' quick-moving guard. I spoke to him the other day while he was sporting a Warriors' T-shirt, and he's still hoping a one-on-one game is in his near future.

In the meantime, Sheets and several other A's players have been practicing their jump shots with a couple of mini basketball hoops, which are staged around the clubhouse right now. All in all, though, it's a pretty low-key scene most days -- unless Dallas Braden is spraying one-liners all around while Barton shows off his singing skills.

**Early success stories in A's, Yanks collide**

By Jonathan Mayo / MLB.com

One team was expected to be in this position, the other, well, not so much.

That the Yankees sit atop the American League East should shock no one. They are, after all, the defending World Series champions. That their opponent on Tuesday, the A's, are in the same position in the AL West isn't exactly what people predicted, even this early in the season.

"When people don't talk too much about you, it's fun to fly under the radar," said A's outfielder Ryan Sweeney, whose game-winning hit on Saturday was the A's third walk-off victory of the season.

Both teams have been getting it done with starting pitching. A's starters went 6-0 through 13 games with an AL-leading 2.30 ERA before Brett Anderson gave up six runs -- five earned -- over five innings on Sunday. The Yankees aren't too far behind, with a 7-2 record for their starters and a 3.41 ERA.

The Yankees are coming off a sweep of the Rangers in which their staff allowed just six runs all weekend. One of the few who has not enjoyed early success gets the ball on Tuesday night. Javier Vazquez has lost each of his first two starts, allowing 12 runs on 14 hits over 11 innings of work. According to the right-hander, it's been about timing and rhythm.

During his bullpen session on Saturday, he worked on that in the hopes that when the juices are flowing during the game, he'll be able to calm himself down.

"In the game, you get the adrenaline going and start rushing a bit," Vazquez said. "It's easily correctable."

The A's will send two lefties to the mound during the three-game series, starting with Gio Gonzalez on Tuesday. This will be Gonzalez's first start at home after two on the road against AL West opponents. He won his 2010 debut against the Angels and then battled to pitch into the fifth inning of an eventual A's loss to the Mariners. The often-combustible young lefty is still shaking off the impact of some personal loss and adversity.

"It's a tough pill to swallow," said Gonzalez, who lost a close friend in a car accident a few weeks ago and learned his girlfriend was involved in a different serious accident a week and a half ago. "I've been trying to bounce back. ... It's too much to deal with in a matter of two weeks."

### **Yankees: Thames ready for West Coast**

As the part of the left-field platoon that faces left-handed pitching, Marcus Thames has picked up just 10 at-bats so far this year. He's acquitted himself well in that limited time, picking up five hits. But it's been Brett Gardner who's gotten most of the time, with 30 ABs.

Things should be a little more equitable during the Yankees' six-game swing out west. Two of the three games in Oakland will feature lefty starters for the A's, Gonzalez and Dallas Braden. He'll get one more start in Los Angeles against the Angels.

"I'm just trying to take one game at a time and have some good at-bats," Thames said. "I prepare myself like I play every day. That's the way I've always been. I always know my role, and whenever my name is on the lineup card, I'll be ready to play."

### **A's: Ellis expected back for Yankees**

Second baseman Mark Ellis should be ready to go when the Yankees come to town. He's been out of the lineup for seven straight games with a sore left hamstring, but he tested it on Sunday and will receive treatment during Monday's off-day before a final determination for Tuesday is made.

"He's been getting better every day," manager Bob Geren said. "We're shooting for Tuesday."

Ellis, who experienced sore hamstrings during Spring Training as well, has been taking batting practice and doing agility drills to stay sharp. Adam Rosales has started in his place and hit .364 during that time heading into Sunday's finale against the Orioles.

### **Worth noting**

The Yankees' 9-3 start is their best since 2003. They finished their first homestand 5-1. ... Yankees starting pitching went 5-1 with a 2.17 ERA during the recently completed six-game homestand. ... When Gardner got thrown out stealing on Sunday, it broke a streak of 15 straight successful steal attempts, going back to last season. ... The A's were also off to their best start in a long time. They were 9-4 heading into Sunday's game, their best record after 13 games since 1992. ... Oakland has had three walk-off wins this season, after having just five for all of 2009.

# MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

## **Sacramento and Aces split series**

By Abbie Ellis / Sacramento River Cats

On a night when Raley Field celebrated Brooklyn Dodgers legend Jackie Robinson, it's fitting a steal home helped decide the outcome.

Unfortunately for the host Sacramento River Cats, it was the Reno Aces who were a step quicker on the base paths.

Jeff Bailey took off from third to score the go-ahead run in the sixth inning en route to a 5-3 Aces victory over Sacramento on Monday night. In the 1955 World Series, it was Robinson who famously stole home in Game 1 against the New York Yankees.

Two River Cats errors in the second led to two unearned runs, and Brandon Allen hit a two run homer increase the Aces lead 5-2 in the eighth. In what started as 2-0 series lead for the River Cats, ended in a series split with Reno capturing the final two games.

In his first appearance with Sacramento on an MLB rehab assignment, Trevor Cahill allowed two runs (both unearned) before leaving after 62 pitches (39 strikes). Graham Godfrey took over in the fourth and allowed three earned runs.

A throwing error on catcher Josh Donaldson and left fielder Michael Taylor in the second inning gave the Aces an early 2-0 lead. Matt Carson gave River Cats fans some hope when he doubled down the left-field line, scoring Eric Sogard and Corey Wimberly, tying the game 2-2.

The Aces regained their lead in the sixth when Allen took off for second base with Bailey itching down the line at third. When Donaldson elected to try and throw out Allen at second, Bailey sprinted to the plate for a 3-2 lead.

Jack Cust answered Allen's blast in the eighth when he singled on a line drive to center field that scored Carson.

Chris Carter ended his seven-game hitting streak going 0-for-4, but Carson extended his to four with two hits. Wimberly singled in the fifth to extend his hitting streak to five.

Before Monday's action, the River Cats celebrated the anniversary of Jackie Robinson breaking the Major League Baseball color barrier with a pregame presentation from former Negro League players Elmer Carter and Don Porter. Branch B. Rickey III, President of the PCL and grandson of Branch Rickey, who signed Jackie Robinson with the Dodgers in 1947, also spoke before the game.

The River Cats next welcome the Portland Beaver to town Tuesday to kick off a four-game series. Lenny DiNardo will start for the River Cats against Beavers right-hander Cesar Carrillo.

Kids Eat Free Tuesday (kids 12 and under) will kick off the Portland series.

## **Valdez Goes 5-5, Leads In 7-6 Win**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The RockHounds had achieved a 6-4 record through 10 games, despite four (Double-A) veterans hitting just above (or just under) .200. After Sunday's 13-0 loss at Springfield, "Bushy" shuffled his line-up, and the middle third of the order delivered, led by Alex Valdez, who went 5-for-5 as the 'Hounds defeated the Cardinals, 7-6.

Valdez, Steve Kleen and Anthony Recker went a combined 8-for-12, scoring four runs and driving in seven, as the 'Hounds built a 7-1 lead before holding off the Cardinals. Springfield had drawn to within one run in the seventh inning, and had the tying run in scoring position with one out in the ninth before Beau Vaughan closed the door. Vaughan earned his third save in as many opportunities.

After Valdez collected the first hit of his perfect night ... a single in the second ... Kleen ripped a 2-run home run, giving the RockHounds a lead they would not relinquish, bending but not breaking through the Cardinals' rally.

In the fifth, Valdez sent a bases-loaded triple to deep right-center, extended the lead to 6-1. He then came home on Kleen's sacrifice fly, scoring what would be the eventual game-winner.

Recker (who entered the game 6-for-34) went 2-for-4, driving in the other 'Hounds run, adding a walk and a stolen base (Valdez also stole a base).

The RockHounds are 3-2 with one game remaining on their current, 6-game road trip. The 'Hounds and Cardinals play the "rubber game" of the 3-game series at Springfield Tuesday at 12:10.

## **Ports pound Sixers for first home win**

**STOCKTON, Calif.**--The Stockton Ports offense, dormant for the first half of a weeklong home stand, burst to life Monday evening against the Inland Empire Sixty-Sixers. The Ports slugged three home runs on their way to a 10-5 victory, their first of the 2010 season at Banner Island Ballpark.

Second baseman Tyler Ladendorf began the barrage in the second inning, launching an Aaron Miller fastball over the left-centerfield wall for his first home run of the season and a 1-0 lead.

Stockton increased the margin in the third inning, as catcher Ryan Ortiz led off with a walk and centerfielder Jermaine Mitchell reached on a bunt single. Shortstop Grant Green lined a single up the middle, where Sixers centerfielder Nick Buss had trouble corraling it. Ortiz scored to make it 2-0, while Mitchell advanced to third to put runners on the corners with no one out. Mike Spina bounced into a 6-4-3 double play, scoring Mitchell for third and pushing the lead to 3-0.

The Sixers would get right back into it in the fifth. Left fielder Preston Mattingly doubled off of Ports starter Shawn Haviland to begin the frame, and after Buss struck out, shortstop and former Port Justin Sellers singled him home. Right fielder Kyle Russell tied the game with a two-run home run to the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch in right field.

The game would not remain tied for long though, as the Ports struck four times in the bottom of the inning. Ortiz once again led off with a walk, and after a Mitchell strike out, Green reached safely when Sixers third baseman Pedro Baez misplayed a ground ball. First baseman Mike Spina singled to left, bringing Ortiz home and giving the Ports a 4-3 lead. Right fielder Jeremy Barfield followed with a three-run blast to left field, his second home run of the season, staking Stockton to a 7-3 advantage.

Tempers flared after the home run, as the Sixers' Miller knocked Ports third baseman Stephen Parker down with a 3-1 fastball that ran high and inside. The Ports' Haviland seemed to respond the next half inning, when with two outs and nobody on base, he threw behind Sixers' designated hitter Andres Perez. Haviland was issued a warning, and proceeded to strike out Perez to end the inning, his last inning of work.

The Ports blew the game open in the bottom of the sixth inning. Facing Sixers' reliever Robert Boothe, Ports left fielder Shane Keough doubled and Ortiz followed with his third walk of the night. Mitchell proceeded to launch his first home run of the year to left field, expanding the lead to 10-3.

The Sixers would add two runs in the eighth inning on a Tony Delmonico single. Relievers Scott Hodsdon and Daniel Sattler combined to strike out four hitters in the inning after the Sixers' Sellers struck out but reached on a passed ball.

Haviland (2-0) earned the victory, allowing three runs (all earned) on seven hits in six innings. He walked one and struck out a season best eight. Highly regarded Dodgers prospect Aaron Miller (0-1) absorbed the loss, surrendering seven runs (five earned) on six hits in five innings. He walked four and struck out six.

The Sixty-Sixers and Ports continue their three game series Tuesday at 11:05am. Right hander Murphy Smith (1-1, 8.64) gets the nod for Stockton while the Sixers will hand the ball to right hander Ethan Martin (2-0, 3.00). The game can be heard on 1280AM KSWX and at [stocktonports.com](http://stocktonports.com)

## **Cougars Drop Homestand Finale**

**GENEVA, III.** - The Kane County Cougars were unable to hold the lead Monday afternoon and lost, 6-3, in 10 innings to the Cedar Rapids Kernels in front of 5,743 at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars rallied for three runs in the sixth to take a lead but couldn't hold it, finishing their nine-game homestand with a 5-4 mark and losing two of three to the Kernels.



Rob Gilliam delivered a second straight quality start and got a no-decision. He gave up two unearned runs -- one in the first and one in the sixth -- on three hits over six innings and sent down 11 in a row at one point. He left after the top of the sixth down, 2-0, and then had a chance for a win, as Chris Affinito notched a sacrifice fly in the bottom half and Franklin Hernandez roped a two-run double for a 3-2 lead.

Ryan Quigley took over for Gilliam in the seventh and yielded a run, and after two scoreless innings from A.J. Huttenlocker, Jose Guzman (1-1) allowed three runs in the top of the 10th for the difference. Buddy Boshers (1-1) won it for the Kernels (6-6), and Johnny Hellweg saved his second game.

The Cougars (6-6) start a six-game road trip Tuesday night at 6:30 CT with the first of three against their intrastate rival Peoria Chiefs. Dan Straily (1-0, 3.38) will face Jeff Antigua (0-0, 3.60).