

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, April 21, 2010

### New York Yankees get early jump on Oakland A's, Gio Gonzalez

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

If there was a rewind button available to the A's on Tuesday night, they would have utilized it.

Early.

Things didn't go their way from the outset as the New York Yankees took the opener of a three-game series 7-3 at the Oakland Coliseum.

A's starter Gio Gonzalez retired the first two batters of the game but gave up three runs before the top of the first ended.

Alex Rodriguez's mammoth three-run homer in the fifth off Craig Breslow put the A's in a 6-0 hole they couldn't climb out of.

Oakland pitchers issued 10 walks to a Yankees lineup that's known for grinding out at-bats against opponents.

"We outhit them, we out-homered them," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Obviously the walks told the whole story tonight."

This three-game series against the defending World Series champs is viewed as a stiff test for the A's, the surprise early leaders in the American League West.

But Tuesday's opener drew just 19,849 fans, an astonishingly low turnout considering the Bronx Bombers are usually a big draw.

Gonzalez (1-1) was cruising through an uneventful first before allowing a two-out double to Mark Teixeira and walks to Rodriguez and Robinson Cano to load the bases.

Then Jorge Posada hit a chopper that caught first baseman Daric Barton on an in-between hop. The ball bounced off Barton's chest, and he stumbled as he tried picking up the ball.

Posada was credited with a bizarre RBI single.

Ex-Athletic Nick Swisher followed with a two-run single to right-center for a 3-0 Yankees lead.

The A's put runners on second and third with no outs in the second but came up empty.

Gonzalez walked five and was pulled with two on and one out in the fifth.

Geren summoned Breslow, a left-hander, to face Rodriguez, who entered the game 4-for-11 against lefties.

The move backfired, as Rodriguez crushed a 2-1 pitch that landed just below the luxury suites in left-center for a six-run Yankees lead.

"You don't match up left-right in the fifth inning or you'll run out of pitchers real quick," Geren said. "Ideally, (Breslow retires) A-Rod and there's a nice string of lefties (in the order after him)."

Travis Buck's homer in the fifth and Kurt Suzuki's two-run shot in the sixth brought the A's to within 6-3.

Down 7-3 in the seventh, Oakland loaded the bases with two outs, but Kevin Kouzmanoff struck out, one of three strikeouts on the night for the A's cleanup man.

Gonzalez has walked nine over his past two starts.

His girlfriend, Valerie Mathias, has been in a San Diego hospital since April 10 recovering from serious injuries stemming from an auto accident, but Gonzalez refused to use that as an excuse.

"That had no effect on what happened today," Gonzalez said. "Today was just an issue of throwing strikes."

Mark Ellis, who missed the A's previous seven games with a strained left hamstring, left after five innings when he aggravated the same injury. His status is unknown.

Adam Rosales replaced him at second.

Barton, shortstop Cliff Pennington and right fielder Ryan Sweeney, who all suffered minor injuries Sunday against Baltimore, started Tuesday.

The game was delayed 13 minutes in the sixth inning when home plate umpire Ed Rapuano caught a foul tip in the face and had to leave. The Associated Press reported Rapuano was alert when he left the ballpark.

He was taken to a nearby hospital for a CT scan.

Second-base umpire Ron Kulpa replaced him.

TODAY: Yankees (Phil Hughes 1-0) at A's (Ben Sheets 1-0), 7:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM, 1640-AM

## **Chad Gaudin, Edwar Ramirez get World Series rings from New York Yankees**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Gaudin, Ramirez get World Series rings

Chad Gaudin said the New York Yankees welcomed him with open arms when they traded for him last August.

Gaudin is with the A's now, but his former teammates treated him like he was still in pinstripes before Tuesday night's game at the Oakland Coliseum.

Gaudin and fellow A's reliever Edwar Ramirez, who also pitched for New York last season, received their World Series rings in an informal ceremony on the field during batting practice.

According to Gaudin, who signed with the A's during spring training after being released by the Yankees, the gesture exemplified the camaraderie that helped carry the Yankees to their 27th World Series title last fall.

"Once you become a part of their team, you're as special as they are," said Gaudin, who began last season with San Diego. "When you have a group of big-money players, you assume it'd be tough for them to get along. But it doesn't happen because everybody pulls together."

The rings were made from white gold and encrusted with 119 diamonds.

Ramirez, who hails from the tiny town of El Cercado, Dominican Republic, said he'll keep his ring stashed away for safekeeping.

"Every baseball player, especially in the major leagues, is looking for something like that," he said. "It's amazing for me, my family and my hometown."

The A's activated right-hander Trevor Cahill from the 15-day disabled list and immediately optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento. Cahill spent all of 2009 in the A's rotation as a rookie. But Oakland's current five starters have pitched well so far, so it looked as if he was ticketed for the minors once he recovered from a stress reaction in his left shoulder. Manager Bob Geren said he talked to Cahill about getting tougher against left-handed hitters, pitching to the inside part of the plate more and working on his breaking ball.

Reliever Michael Wuertz, on the DL with shoulder tendinitis, doesn't appear as close to returning as he hoped. The right-hander threw a scoreless inning for Sacramento on Sunday in his second rehab outing but said he's not as sharp as he needs to be. He's scheduled to pitch again today. "We'll see how I come out of it, and if there's got to be another one, there has to be another one," Wuertz said.

## **Peterson: Yankees are still setting the standard**

By Gary Peterson, Oakland Tribune columnist

Nick Swisher began his career with the A's. Then he spent a season with the Chicago White Sox. As a kid he likely heard stories about life in the bigs from his father, Steve, who was a catcher with the Chicago Cubs, St. Louis Cardinals and San Diego Padres.

Young Swisher is currently in his second season with the New York Yankees, the first having resulted in a World Series championship. So he seems like a good candidate for a quick game of Compare and Contrast:

What makes the Yankees different from other major league teams? I mean, besides the obvious?

"The Yankees?" Swisher said Tuesday afternoon as he pulled on his socks before his current team's game against his first team. "The obvious is the answer."

It's difficult to dispute that kind of logic. Especially when you're standing in the middle of the team's clubhouse and Andy Pettitte walks past, ram-rod straight and looking taller than his program height of 6-foot-5. And then Derek Jeter saunters past CC Sabathia's locker and pats the big pitcher on the back.

And over there, the guy in the fedora coming through the door. Isn't that Reggie Jackson?

Of course it is.

It's an ostentatious display of top drawer talent and A-list personalities, even for the hard-bitten souls who spend their work days around professional athletes. There's Alex Rodriguez, checking out a teammate's bat. Nick Johnson happens by — had the Giants been able to sign him last winter, he'd be one of the team's offensive alpha males. He bats second on the Yankees.

This doesn't exactly put the "new" in New York. The Yankees have been compiling jaw-dropping collections of talent since Prohibition. Reggie was once part of a team so volatile, both athletically and emotionally, it was known as the Bronx Zoo.

They've always had the most money and the biggest appetite. That's how you play in 40 World Series before any other team reaches 23, and win 27 before any other team can get past 10.

But this room is a stunning piece of work even by their standards. That starting lineup, for example. The nine offensive players who started against Oakland's Gio Gonzalez on Tuesday had played in a combined 31 All-Star Games and logged 16 top 10 finishes in the MVP voting. Average salary: \$13 million. And that includes Brett Gardner's paltry \$452,000.

Combined, the Yankees' five starting pitchers and closer Mariano Rivera have appeared in 16 All-Star Games. Four have received Cy Young votes. Average salary: \$13.2 million. And that includes Phil Hughes' barely livable \$447,000.

Fair? Of course it isn't fair. There is no way the A's can run with that kind of stupendous largesse. Not that they try. The ownership group that touted itself as the third-wealthiest in baseball when it assumed ownership of the team five years ago operates on such a penurious budget you'd think it was trying to sabotage the product. But that's another discussion for another day.

More to the point, no team can compete with the Yankees. Baseball's luxury tax, instituted in lieu of a salary cap to provide a mechanism for wealthy teams to share revenue, might as well be called the Steinbrenner tariff. Last season the threshold was \$162 million — the Yankees exceeded it by more than \$30 million; no other team came close.

So is it a good thing that baseball allows a team like the Yankees to amass such a wealth of superachievers? You bet your Babe Ruth bobblehead.

Standard-bearers are good for every business. They push accepted limits and redefine possibility. The NFL is a better league when a team such as the 49ers, Cowboys or Patriots is nurturing a dynasty. Interest in golf has exploded since Tiger Woods turned pro.

Besides, while unspeakable prosperity gives you an undeniable advantage over the competition, it doesn't guarantee success. George Steinbrenner bankrolled the Yankees to five postseason appearances in six years from 1976-81. The 13 seasons after that — nothing, even though Steinbrenner continued to spend with blue-blooded abandon.

The past 15 years, of course, have been kind to the Yankees and affirming to their business model, with 14 playoff appearances and five World Series victories. You could say the empire has never been in better health. It boasts a quarter-billion-dollar payroll, a billion-dollar stadium, loyal fans the world over.

Tuesday's crowd at the Coliseum, by an unscientific survey, was split about 50-50 — one group rooting for the best team it can reasonably expect given the circumstances, the other basking in the glow of a gold-plated ideal.

## **Big media interest for A's-Yankees opener; Cahill sent to Triple-A; Ellis, Barton both in lineup**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/20/2010 5:50PM

I thought the A's clubhouse was more crowded than usual with some extra reporters here tonight. Then I ducked my head into the Yankees clubhouse ... Holy cow, there were probably more media members than there were players. The Yankees still have a pretty huge traveling press corps, and combined with the extra Bay Area media on hand, it's quite the scene. I'll be interested to see how many fans show up (and which team they'll be rooting for) ...

—A pretty nice moment just took place down on the field, as A's relievers Chad Gaudin and Edwar Ramirez were surrounded by the whole Yankee team and given their World Series rings. Both were with New York last season (Gaudin was traded to the Yankees in August). Playing in pinstripes left a pretty big impression on Gaudin, who said he was amazed at the camaraderie when he joined the team. And Ramirez said he's still tight with Mariano Rivera. I just saw the two of them chatting for a few minutes.

Some news to report as well ...

—The A's activated Trevor Cahill from the DL and optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento. No surprise there, as all five Oakland starters have looked pretty good so far. Manager Bob Geren said he talked with Cahill about things the young right-hander needs to work on. "Overall strike percentage, we talked about that going up," Geren said. "A few more ways to combat left-handers — pitching to the inside part of the plate, keep working on his breaking ball ..."

—Good news for the A's, as Mark Ellis, Daric Barton, Cliff Pennington and Ryan Sweeney are all back in the lineup. Ellis had a seven-game layoff with his strained left hamstring.

—Things don't seem as positive for reliever Michael Wuertz, who told me he's still shaking off rust during his rehab appearances. Wuertz is on the DL with shoulder tendinitis, and it was thought that maybe a couple of minor league outings might have him ready. But he's not at that point yet, and he said he's got to keep reminding himself he doesn't have nearly enough innings under his belt. "For me, this is about how I normally feel the last couple of weeks of spring training," he said.

Wuertz will throw again Wednesday for Triple-A Sacramento. "We'll see how I come out of it," he said. "If there's got to be another (rehab outing), there's got to be another one."

The lineups:

A's  
Davis CF  
Barton 1B  
Sweeney RF  
Kouzmanoff 3B  
Suzuki C  
Chavez DH  
Ellis 2B  
Buck LF  
Pennington SS  
Gonzalez LHP

Yankees  
Jeter SS  
Johnson DH  
Teixeira 1B  
Rodriguez 3B  
Cano 2B  
Posada C

Swisher RF  
Granderson CF  
Gardner LF  
Vazquez RHP

## **World champs take a walk in the park**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Gio Gonzalez put up perhaps his best-ever major-league performance last year at Yankee Stadium, allowing two hits and one run in 62/3 innings.

On Tuesday night, things came apart quickly for Gonzalez and the A's against the world champion Yankees, who scored three times in the first inning, all with two outs. New York added to that with, among other things, a three-run homer by Alex Rodriguez in a 7-3 victory before 19,849 at the Coliseum.

Oakland pitchers walked 10 batters and five of those men scored. "Walks told the story tonight," A's manager Bob Geren said.

A's second baseman Mark Ellis, playing for the first time in a week, left the game in the sixth with a reoccurrence of a hamstring problem; the team will know more about his condition today. Home-plate umpire Ed Rapuano left in the bottom of the inning, one batter after getting drilled in the face mask by a foul tip by Kevin Kouzmanoff; Rapuano was alert when he left and he was taken to Summit Medical Center for a CT scan.

In the first inning, Mark Teixeira doubled with two outs, then Gonzalez walked Rodriguez and Robinson Cano on full counts. Jorge Posada hit a hard bouncer that first baseman Daric Barton knocked down, but he overran the ball as it rolled toward the bag, and he couldn't recover in time. Teixeira scored, and former A's outfielder Nick Swisher followed with a two-run single to center.

Gonzalez retired 11 of the next 12, but walks hurt him again in the fifth, when he put Nick Johnson and Teixeira on first.

"There were a couple of minor things I could have adjusted," Gonzalez said of his location.

Gonzalez's girlfriend, Valerie Mathias, remains in a San Diego hospital, recovering from a car accident. "That had no effect on what happened tonight," Gonzalez said. "The main issue was throwing strikes."

Geren replaced the left-handed Gonzalez with left-hander Craig Breslow to face Rodriguez, a right-handed batter - and Rodriguez hit his second homer in five career at-bats against Breslow.

"You don't match up left/right in the fifth inning or you'll run out of pitchers real quick," Geren said.

The A's got a solo homer by Travis Buck in the fifth and Kurt Suzuki added a two-run shot in the sixth. Oakland loaded the bases with two outs in the seventh, but Joba Chamberlain struck out Kouzmanoff.

Barton was back in the A's lineup, despite being told Sunday that he had a fractured elbow. X-rays showed a break after he was hit by a pitch, but an MRI exam did not.

"They told me it was fractured and I didn't want to believe it," Barton said. "I asked if maybe I'd had a previous fracture, but they said no, because it hadn't calcified. So I was a little bummed out. I wanted an MRI to make sure, because it was sore, but I thought, 'It can't be fractured.' "

## **Cahill goes from DL to Sacramento**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

He was in Oakland's rotation all of last year, but now **Trevor Cahill** must head to Triple-A Sacramento and wait for another shot at a starting slot with the A's.

On Tuesday, the A's activated the right-hander from the disabled list and sent him to Sacramento, where he'd thrown 32/3 innings the previous night, giving up two unearned runs on two hits and three walks.

"I felt good, but then I got tired," Cahill said. "That's to be expected. I'm trying to get back to where I was, get my pitch count back up."

Cahill, 22, had missed two weeks with soreness behind his left (non-pitching) shoulder, and **Gio Gonzalez** had outpitched him much of the spring and was awarded the fifth spot in the rotation.

"He's going to go there and raise his game," manager **Bob Geren** said of Cahill's demotion. "He did a nice job last year and he's got a bright future with us, but I'm very happy with the five starters we have right now."

The plan, Cahill said, is to work on whatever he can to improve, particularly his changeup, which he believes is not as effective as it was last year. Geren said that the A's would like Cahill to keep polishing up his new curveball and to get better against left-handed hitters, as well as upping his strike percentage.

**Wuertz continues rehab:** **Michael Wuertz** is heading back to Sacramento for an inning late this morning - the game starts at 11:35 a.m. - as he works to return from rotator-cuff tendinitis. This will be Wuertz's third outing for the River Cats.

"I'm not ready," he said. "This is the third time I've thrown in three or four weeks. I'm just getting a feel for everything. This is about where I'd expect to be in the middle of spring training, and this is still spring training for me."

**Briefly:** **Ryan Sweeney's** major-league-best 13-game hitting streak came to an end. ... The A's have lost 13 of their past 16 against New York.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle, 4/21/2010

**Power source:** Cliff Pennington is the A's top home run hitter, with two, and RBI man, with 10. "I don't think I'll be leading the team in homers by the end of the year," the shortstop said with a chuckle. "Probably not."

## **Cahill sent down, plus injury updates**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 4/20/2010 5:59PM

I spoke to Trevor Cahill before batting practice and he said that he wasn't sure what the team had planned for him after his rehab outing at Triple-A Sacramento on Monday night (two unearned runs, 64 pitches) but he figured that he'd just keep working to improve no matter what.

Less than 30 minutes later, the team sent Cahill back to Sacramento for real, not on a rehab assignment. He'll be at the top of the list to be recalled if the A's have a need in the rotation, clearly; he didn't miss a start for Oakland as a rookie last year and he had a decent first year. It would be tough to crack the A's rotation right now, though - everyone is performing well and everyone's healthy.

Cahill, who was out for two weeks with soreness in the back of his left (non-pitching) shoulder, said he'd like to get his changeup back to where it was last year; manager Bob Geren mentioned that the team would like Cahill to continue to work on his new curveball and to improve against left-handed hitters, working inside more. As Geren noted, Cahill is young, he's intelligent, and he's talented - he'll be back, and probably fairly soon.

Michael Wuertz will continue his rehab assignment at Sacramento tomorrow...morning? The River Cats play at 11:30 a.m. Wuertz feels he needs at least one more outing and maybe two to be effective in a big-league game. This is like spring training for him - he missed three-plus weeks and he'd only appeared in two Cactus League games as it was. He just needs work.

The A's banged-up position players are all back in today: First baseman Daric Barton said his right elbow is still sore, but he's just happy it's not fractured and it shouldn't hamper him any. Cliff Pennington still has a nice cleat mark on his right wrist, but ditto: He's good to go. And second baseman Mark Ellis is back in after missing a week with hamstring tendinitis.

Here's the lineup: Davis CF, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Suzuki C, Chavez DH, Ellis 2B, Buck LF, Pennington SS, Gonzalez P

If you missed my note the other day, Gio Gonzalez, tonight's starter, didn't visit his girlfriend in San Diego yesterday because she was scheduled for surgery for continued blurry vision after a car accident on April 10.

It very much looks as if the A's fans are outnumbered by Yankees fans tonight. It's pretty close, at least - lots and lots of blue here.

## **Blown away by Yanks' rings, homers**

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle, 4/21/2010

You hate to break this news to the ill-tempered, but the New York Yankees are cool. Not always, to be sure. Not over too many years of arrogance, internal conflict and reckless spending. Just know that they have arrived in Oakland as a model of comportment. One would be foolish to view it any other way.

There isn't a hint of Bronx-style controversy on this club, only the glow still burning from a world championship. Roles are established, positions are set, future Hall of Famers are in place, and the once-paranoid manager, Joe Girardi, has his feet up on the desk.

Maybe you can't imagine the Yankees sharing this tranquility, this sense of supreme satisfaction. They've always been the ones to hoard the gold and laugh derisively at the downtrodden. Let's not mistake them for small-market scrappers, but these Yankees know how to act. Chad Gaudin and Edwar Ramirez, a couple of obscure faces from their recent past, can attest to that.

You might have seen video clips from the Yankees' Opening Day, when the players lined up to receive their championship rings. The Angels were in town, and the crowd was told that one last ring was to be presented. Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez and Mariano Rivera led a group of joyous Yankees swarming around Hideki Matsui, the MVP of the World Series and now wearing a Los Angeles uniform. I can't recall anything comparable in the realm of player fraternization, and in a sport that often frowns on such things, the scene was truly heartwarming.

The rings are gorgeous and properly ostentatious, and the Yanks have spared no expense. Everybody gets one. That includes Jose Veras, an ineffective reliever sold to Cleveland in June, and Freddy Guzman, little more than a pinch-runner in a 10-game stint. So it was that Gaudin and Ramirez, a couple of A's who briefly were with the Yankees last year, were handed rings by Girardi in front of the visitors' dugout before Tuesday night's series opener, complete with a crowd of Yankee players offering smiles and handshakes.

"Blew me away," said Gaudin, who appeared in 11 games after being purchased from San Diego in August and pitched a scoreless inning in the ALCS against the Angels. "It was so great how all the players came over. I wouldn't expect anything different. They're first-class all the way, from the time I stepped on board to the time I left.

"Gorgeous," marveled Gaudin as he gazed upon the ring. "I don't know if I'm even going to wear it."

It's one thing to so richly honor Matsui, one of the great Yankees of recent vintage and a man of exceptional dignity. These Yankees are truly spreading the wealth, and it's a well-conceived notion. By making such a big show of it, for both kings and paupers, they get to bask in that glow a little longer.

It was left to Gio Gonzalez, the A's youthful and emotionally vulnerable left-hander, to keep the Yankees at bay before a gravely disappointing crowd (19,849). Right off the bat, Gonzalez got squeezed out of several key strikes by Ed Rapuano, who worked home plate in an especially stingy mood. Gonzalez got a bad break when first baseman Daric Barton, after getting his chest in front of Jorge Posada's two-out, bad-hop grounder, couldn't pick up the ball as a run scored.

Gonzalez walked off the field trailing 3-0 after the first inning, knowing he deserved better and, to his credit, ready to settle down over the next three innings.

The A's wound up making a couple of loud statements against Javier Vazquez in this 7-3 loss, but it came down to a baffling episode in the top of the fifth. With two runners on, one out and Gonzalez on the ropes, manager Bob Geren defied the percentages and summoned a left-handed reliever, Craig Breslow (no Tyson Ross?), to face the foreboding Rodriguez. Disaster seemed almost preordained, and A-Rod made it official with a titanic three-run blast into the left-center-field bleachers.

## **Slow start offsets A's homers**

### **Yankees' three-run first inning sets Gonzalez up for loss**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Gio Gonzalez needed just five pitches and three minutes to retire the first two Yankees batters on Tuesday.

What followed, though, was a series of events that foreshadowed something of a snail-paced rhythm.

Gonzalez gave up a double to Mark Teixeira before walking two to load the bases. A seemingly sure groundout to first baseman Daric Barton followed, but the ball took a bad hop and a run scored. Two more runs came in on a single from former A's outfielder Nick Swisher.



By the time Gonzalez walked off the mound after the first inning, he had thrown 36 pitches and given up three runs.

Approximately three hours later, just before the 11 o'clock hour hit, Gonzalez was long gone and a combined 364 pitches had been thrown by both teams, 15 of which resulted in walks and 21 of which forced strikeouts.

The result -- an oddly dragged-out contest that left the A's on the losing end of a 7-3 decision against the visiting Yankees, who patiently tested four Oakland pitchers en route to tallying 10 of the walks -- five of which resulted in runs.

"Walks told the whole story today," manager Bob Geren stated.

Not much else could be said in a loss that had the A's not only out-hitting but out-homer a loaded Yankees lineup -- one that has won 13 of its past 16 games against the A's.

Gonzalez couldn't make it out of the fifth inning for the second successive outing, as he surrendered five runs on three hits and five walks while fanning five through 4 1/3 innings.

"I was missing by a couple inches," Gonzalez said. "I was trying to make minor adjustments, but I just couldn't put it all together. You have to attack them. You have to throw strikes, and I wasn't doing that."

The obstacle that was the first inning disappeared until New York powered its way onto the scoreboard in the fifth. Gonzalez (1-1) walked two to start the frame before being relieved by lefty Craig Breslow, who quickly surrendered a three-run home run to Alex Rodriguez to make it a 6-0 game.

After the game, Geren defended his decision to use Breslow, against whom the right-handed-hitting Rodriguez is now 2-for-5 with two homers.

"You don't match up lefties and righties in the fifth inning," the A's skipper said. "You're going to run out of pitchers that way. You can't bring a guy in to face one batter that early in the game."

Breslow's offering came just minutes before Travis Buck got the A's on the board in the bottom half of the inning with his own home run -- a solo shot off Yankees starter Javier Vazquez, who improved to 1-2.

Oakland then added two in the sixth on another homer -- a two-run blast off the bat of Kurt Suzuki -- that led to Vazquez's exit. But the damage stopped there, as the A's managed just two hits off New York's bullpen, which combined for 3 2/3 shutout innings.

Meanwhile, former Yankees righty Edwar Ramirez surrendered New York's final run in the seventh on an infield grounder that scored Nick Johnson, who represented the first of three straight walks in the inning.

"They're obviously good hitters," said Geren, "but they're obviously patient hitters as well. If you don't throw strikes, they'll make you pay for it."

Yet in the midst of New York's dominant presence on the bases, the A's had their chances -- the first of which came in the second inning.

Suzuki walked to lead off the inning and advanced to third on a double by Eric Chavez, who tallied two hits as the designated hitter. Suzuki then dashed for home as Mark Ellis directed a ball to Rodriguez at third base, putting the A's catcher in a rundown until he was tagged out by catcher Jorge Posada, clearing a potential run-scoring threat.

"They had their infield playing pretty far back," Geren said, "so in that situation, I think he did what he thought was right."

By night's end, the A's had left seven runners on base -- four of whom were stranded by Kevin Kouzmanoff, who struck out three times and ended a bases-loaded threat in the seventh by recording his final K of the night.

A handful of missed opportunities opened the door a little too wide for the defending World Series champs, who are now riding a season-high five-game winning streak following Tuesday's walkathon.

"They're known as high-walk hitters," Geren said. "We knew that going into the game. That's part of the reason their offense is so good."

"You can't win games by walking 10 guys."

## **After starting, Ellis exits with injury**

## **A's second baseman aggravates left hamstring injury**

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 4/21/2010

OAKLAND -- Mark Ellis left Tuesday's A's game against the Yankees with a sore left hamstring -- the same injury that forced the Oakland second baseman to be sidelined the past seven games.

Ellis was 0-for-2 at the plate through five innings before being replaced by Adam Rosales at second base at the start of the sixth frame.

The 32-year-old Ellis was making his first start since April 11 at Anaheim, where he experienced hamstring soreness while running to first base on a grounder. He also missed a handful of Spring Training games with tightness in both hamstrings.

### **Back from DL, Cahill sent down**

OAKLAND -- Trevor Cahill will have to wait a little while longer to build on a 2009 rookie season that saw him lead the A's staff in starts and innings pitched.

The right-hander, who made a rehab start for Triple-A Sacramento on Monday, was optioned on Tuesday and thus will continue his stay with the River Cats.

The move came immediately following Oakland's decision to reinstate Cahill from the 15-day disabled list, where he started the season due to a left shoulder stress reaction. Cahill was 1-1 with a 5.95 ERA in six games -- including four starts -- during Spring Training before revealing a neck injury that bothered him late last season.

In his first rehab outing, which came on Monday, Cahill allowed two unearned runs on two hits and three walks in 3 2/3 innings while being monitored on a limit of 60 pitches. Before the transaction news surfaced on Tuesday, Cahill said he'd continue building up his arm strength again by increasing his pitch count in increments of 20.

"I felt good," Cahill said. "I felt a little fatigued after I was done, but I know that's all part of getting my strength back."

The 22-year-old right-hander was very much in the mix for the No. 5 spot in the A's rotation throughout Spring Training until his injury surfaced -- news that played a role in the club's decision to go with lefty Gio Gonzalez.

"I'm happy with the five starters we have right now," manager Bob Geren said as Gonzalez, Tuesday's starter, prepared to take on the visiting Yankees. "This will allow Cahill to raise his game up a bit. He did a nice job for us last year."

Cahill spent the entire 2009 season in the A's starting rotation, posting a 10-13 record with a 4.63 ERA. He joined lefty Brett Anderson in making the jump from Double-A Midland to the big leagues, where he made 32 starts and compiled 178 2/3 innings.

Geren on Tuesday went through a to-do list of improvements Cahill can work on to earn another starting nod in green and gold, chief among them being a better "overall strike percentage."

"That will obviously reduce the number of walks," the A's skipper said. "He'll continue to work on his breaking ball, and if he can combine all those improvements, it won't take him long to get back here."

### **Banged-up Barton, Pennington start**

OAKLAND -- A pair of battered A's infielders gave the club what manager Bob Geren deemed "good news" on Tuesday.

First baseman Daric Barton and shortstop Cliff Pennington, who both exited Sunday's 8-3 loss to the Orioles with injuries, were back in the lineup for Oakland's first game against the visiting Yankees.

Barton, hit by a pitch above his right elbow by Baltimore starter Brian Matusz in the fourth inning on Sunday, chose to play on Tuesday despite healing from the contusion.

The infielder, who has started all 15 A's games this year, underwent X-rays on Sunday before having an MRI on Monday -- both of which came back negative.

Pennington, meanwhile, was the No. 9 hitter on Tuesday after exiting Sunday's game in the seventh inning. He underwent X-rays -- which came back negative -- near the area of his right hand and wrist after being stepped on while diving back to first base in the third inning.

Both Barton and Pennington were afforded the luxury of resting their respective injured bodies on Monday, as the team enjoyed its first off-day of the season.

### **Wuertz nears end of rehab stint**

OAKLAND -- A's right-hander Michael Wuertz is scheduled to make his third rehab appearance with Triple-A Sacramento on Wednesday, when the River Cats are slated for an unusual 11:30 a.m. PT start.

Wuertz, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list on April 3 with right shoulder tendinitis, has allowed just two hits and a walk with one strikeout in two innings of rehab work so far.

Following a 2009 season in which he made a team-leading 74 appearances while compiling a 2.63 ERA, Wuertz appeared in just two Spring Training games due to the sore shoulder.

The 31-year-old Wuertz is in the midst of his first career stint on the DL and said on Tuesday that he may undergo one more rehab outing following Wednesday's outing, depending on the results.

### **Worth noting**

Daric Barton has reached base safely via a hit, walk or hit-by-pitch in 14 of his 15 games this season. ... Kurt Suzuki has an 11-game hitting streak against the Yankees dating back to July 18, 2008, a span during which the A's catcher is 20-for-47. He is a career .403 hitter against the Yankees -- his best mark against any American League team. ... Ryan Sweeney had his 13-game hitting streak snapped on Tuesday. The streak matched a career high and is tied for the second-longest season-opening streak in Oakland history. ... Dallas McPherson, who had 12 RBIs in his first seven games with Triple-A Sacramento, is on the disabled list with a strained hamstring.

### **Yanks' five-game streak on line**

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com 4/21/2010

The season is slightly more than two weeks old, but the division leaders in the American League East and the AL West are already streaking.

Following Tuesday's 7-3 victory over the A's, the Yankees are riding a season-high five-game winning streak and have won eight of their past nine games. Oakland, meanwhile, has lost back-to-back games and is 5-5 in its past 10 games.

Recent history appears to favor the Yankees. New York has defeated Oakland in 13 of its past 16 meetings. Moreover, the A's are 3-2 on their current 10-game homestand.

The Yankees will look to Phil Hughes to keep their winning streak alive on Wednesday against A's righty Ben Sheets. Hughes was solid in his 2010 debut against the Angels but pitched only five-plus innings because the five walks he issued led to a high pitch count.

Wednesday's matchup will mark Hughes' first career start against the Athletics. He does have three relief appearances against Oakland that add up to 4 1/3 scoreless innings.

The good news for Hughes is that he is still a bit of an unknown -- at least to the A's. No Athletics hitter has more than two career at-bats against the right-hander. They probably have not seen much of his cutter or his changeup, a pitch the righty worked on during Spring Training.

"The cutter is something I've worked on for a while now, and it felt good [against the Angels]," Hughes said. "I threw it when guys were looking for fastballs, and it was really effective. Sometimes in a fastball count, I almost prefer the cutter because it's moving away from the barrel, where a changeup sometimes fades toward the barrel."

Sheets, on the other hand, is a relatively known commodity.

In his first two starts this season, Sheets allowed a combined 14 hits and six runs, five of which were earned. He walked seven and struck out only four. In his last outing, against the Orioles, Sheets showed progress, tossing six scoreless innings.

"I think he'll keep getting better," said A's manager Bob Geren. "I do. He's a four-time All-Star. He had a surgery and he missed an entire year. It's like anybody -- if you see him getting better, getting closer to his All-Star-caliber self, then it's encouraging. Six scoreless innings -- you can't do a lot better. I guess nine, seven, eight."

Sheets will face the Yankees for the first time since he blanked them across seven innings in 2005, but the right-hander said he views the Bronx Bombers the way he would any other team. The veteran's main focus is keeping his pitch count down so he can start pitching deeper into games.

### **A's on the offensive**

Second baseman Mark Ellis is questionable for Wednesday's game after exiting Tuesday's loss in the sixth inning with left hamstring soreness. It's the same injury that sidelined him for seven consecutive games. ... Daric Barton has reached base safely in 14 of 15 games. ... Kurt Suzuki has an 11-game hitting streak against the Yankees dating back to July 18, 2008, and he is a career .403 hitter against them -- his best mark against any AL team. ... Ryan Sweeney had his 13-game hitting streak snapped on Tuesday and is now batting .302 in 14 games. The hitting streak matched a career high and tied for the second-longest season-opening streak in Oakland history. Stan Javier set the club mark with 17 hits to start the 1994 season.

### **Yankees on defensive**

The Yankees have not committed an error in their past 11 games, the longest April errorless streak in franchise history. ... Derek Jeter had his 11-game hitting streak to start the season snapped on Tuesday and is now hitting .345 through 12 games. Still, he loves facing Oakland. The Yankees' captain is a career .311 hitter against the A's and has a .358 average at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum. ... The Yankees are 8-0 this year when leading after six innings.

### **Worth noting**

Alex Rodriguez hit his 585th career home run on Tuesday and is one homer shy of tying Frank Robinson for seventh place on the all-time list. ... Umpire Ron Kulpa replaced Ed Rapuano behind the plate in the sixth inning on Tuesday after Rapuano took a foul tip off the mask. He was transported by ambulance to Summit Hospital for a CT scan and was alert.

## **A's lose to Yankees, 7-3**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Alex Rodriguez hit a three-run homer, Javier Vazquez finally showed the form that made him a 15-game winner last season and the New York Yankees beat the Oakland Athletics 7-3 on Tuesday night for their fifth straight victory.

Nick Swisher hit a two-run single against his former team and Jorge Posada also singled home a run in New York's three-run first inning against Gio Gonzalez (1-1). The reigning World Series champions carried the momentum from a 5-1 homestand as they kicked off a nine-game, 10-day road trip that also takes them to Anaheim and Baltimore.

A-Rod's drive to the top of the elevated stands in left-center came against reliever Craig Breslow in the fifth, giving the slugger 585 career homers. Rodriguez's second of the year also moved him within one of tying Frank Robinson for seventh place on the career list.

Kurt Suzuki hit a two-run homer and Travis Buck had a solo shot for the surprising first-place A's, who were coming off their first off day of the season after playing 14 straight to start the year.

Vazquez (1-2), who entered his third 2010 start with a 9.82 ERA, allowed three runs and six hits in 5 1-3 innings, struck out six and walked three. Boone Logan relieved to make his Yankees debut, but the game was delayed 13 minutes right after he took the mound when plate umpire Ed Rapuano left after taking an earlier foul ball from Kevin Kouzmanoff on the chin. Rapuano was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital for a CT scan, but the A's said he was alert when he left the ballpark.

Joba Chamberlain entered with the bases loaded and two outs in the seventh and struck out Kouzmanoff. After Damaso Marte walked pinch-hitter Jake Fox to start the ninth, Mariano Rivera relieved and finished it.

Derek Jeter returned to the New York lineup after missing Sunday's series finale against Texas with a cold. He also came out of Saturday's game early because he felt ill. He went 0 for 5 with a strikeout.

Eric Chavez doubled and singled but Vazquez otherwise had his way with most of Oakland's lineup until Buck led off the fifth with his first homer of the year. Suzuki connected in the sixth.

A's first baseman Daric Barton, who left Sunday's loss to the Baltimore Orioles with a bruise above his right elbow, was in the lineup after an MRI exam Monday showed no structural damage. Second baseman Mark Ellis also returned after missing the previous seven games with a left hamstring injury but was replaced on defense in the sixth because of soreness in the hamstring.

The announced crowd of 19,849 — it wasn't nearly that high — was dismal considering the Yankees typically draw well when they visit the Bay Area. New York took last year's season series 7-2, winning two of three at the Coliseum. The Yankees return again July 5-7.

NOTES: A moment of silence was held before the game for Rockies president Keli McGregor, who was found dead in his hotel room in Salt Lake City on Tuesday. ... Coming into the game, Swisher was a lifetime .200 hitter vs. the A's with just two RBIs. He was 0 for 3 against Gonzalez. ... Yankees ace CC Sabathia, back home in his native Northern California, threw out the ceremonial first pitch Monday night at the North Vallejo Little League Spring Classic on a field his foundation helped rebuild. ... LF Brett Gardner started against the lefty Gonzalez. ... Oakland reliever Michael Wuertz, on the DL with shoulder tendinitis, will pitch a third rehab outing for Triple-A Sacramento on Wednesday. ... It was a chilly 50 degrees at the game's start. ... Golden State Warriors center Ronny Turiaf threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

## **Spander: Bad news Bay Area at it again**

By: [Art Spander](#), Special to The Examiner 4/21/2010

SAN FRANCISCO — It was another of those should have, could have days for the Bay Area, the ones overloaded with bad memories and worse possibilities.

There was Manny Ramirez standing at the plate for the Dodgers, two outs in the eighth and you knew what was going to happen.

You knew the Giants' great afternoon — Barry Zito's wonderful performance — would be trashed about as quickly as you sigh "Kirk Gibson." This wasn't a World Series, but it was Dodger Stadium. And it was inevitable.

Then not long after, there were the Sharks, flailing at pucks, shooting, shooting and shooting again. Finally, in a manner of speaking, they shot themselves in the skates against the Avalanche.

Their own man, Dan Boyle, put it in his own net in overtime. On the radio, Dave Maley, who does analyzing for the glib Dan Rusanowsky, kept mumbling, "I don't believe it ... the Sharks are the better team."

As they may turn out to be. But they had lost a game, 1-0, they seemed certain to win.

The way a few hours earlier the Giants had lost a game they — well, playing down in L.A., no Bay Area team ever is destined to win, so let's simply say they very well might have won.

Isn't it always that way? Don't we always hear the same refrain?

Cal could have beaten USC. The Niners could have had Aaron Rodgers. The A's should have kept Dan Haren. JaMarcus Russell could have been effective. (Yes, Stanford did whip USC, but we can't always be on the outside, can we? Can we?)

Essentially we are the bad news Bay. The NFL draft is Thursday, and somehow the Niners and Raiders will select the wrong guys.

The only thing we can feel good about is Ben Roethlisberger isn't employed locally.

If it can go wrong, for us it will go wrong. There was Gibson limping off the bench in 1988 to pinch hit against the A's. There was Ramirez hobbling off the bench in 2010 to pinch hit against the Giants. Same park, same result, if not with the same drama or meaning.

"I don't believe what I just saw," the late Jack Buck told his TV audience after Gibson homered off Dennis Eckersley. He might not have. Nor might Maley after the Sharks were stunned.

But we believed it. We believe anything and everything. We've seen it, suffered it.

"We play these kinds of games," Giants manager Bruce Bochy insisted after the Ramirez shot, "and we're going to be fine."

How are we supposed to interpret that? Blow a 1-0 lead in the eighth, and the world is delightful? Tommy Lasorda get to you, Bruce?

Sergio Romo, the reliever who pitched to Ramirez (déjà vu time; like Eckersley to Gibson, it was a slider) said, "The great thing about baseball is you never know what's going to happen."

We know. We've learned the hard way. The Dodgers will beat the Giants. On a pinch-hit home run or merely a sacrifice fly.

Was it coincidence hours before the Ramirez blast, the Dodgers dropped ex-Giant Russ Ortiz, he of Game 6 infamy? That misery was against the Angels, managed by a former Dodger.

There's no escape.

## **By Signing Anderson, Oakland Serves Notice It's Prepared to Contend**

By BENJAMIN HOFFMAN, New York Times, 4/21/2010

Signing a top young pitcher to a contract extension is not headline news for a lot of teams, but it tends to draw attention when you are the budget-conscious Athletics. Oakland did it with Tim Hudson, Barry Zito, Mark Mulder and Rich Harden, all of them standouts.

Such was the case for Brett Anderson, a hard-throwing, 22-year-old left-hander. On a team that as recently as last season was trading away its veteran players for groups of minor leaguers, Anderson's deal last week, which will carry him through his arbitration years and one year of free agency, may serve as notice that Oakland is ready to reassert itself as a contender.

The surprising Athletics, who face the Yankees in a three-game series starting Tuesday night, were off to a 9-5 start that put them in first place in the American League West. It was a start based largely on phenomenal starting pitching. And with the 6-foot-4 Anderson being the youngest and possibly the best of the bunch, his contract could be a building block for the future.

Based on his early results, Anderson was worth the gamble. His 11-11 record as a rookie in 2009 may not jump out as being overly impressive, but he has had a remarkably similar early career to Hudson, Zito and Harden, with a major advantage in age and control. Despite being the seventh-youngest player in the A.L. last season, his strikeout-to-walk ratio, 3.33, was good for eighth in the league. In three starts this season, he has pushed that ratio to 4.0.

"A lot of it has to be based on projection," David Forst, the team's assistant general manager, said of the decision to extend Anderson's contract. "We have a young kid with great stuff. Because of his walk rate, the strikeouts and how he's pitched in his early 20s, there may not be a ceiling of what he is capable of."

In some ways, it seems Anderson may do what most thought the man he was acquired for was destined to: become the ace of a perennial contender. When Oakland traded Mulder to the St. Louis Cardinals before the 2005 season, Dan Haren was set to be the Athletics' No. 1 starter of the future. But Haren's success in winning 43 games for the A's over three seasons did not correspond with the team's development, and he was traded to Arizona.

"It wasn't about Danny but where we were in the cycle as a team," Forst said. "The only way to maximize Danny's value was to turn him into six players."

It was through trades like Haren's that Oakland was able to build the young foundation that it is now benefiting from. Among the team leaders in batting average are outfielder Ryan Sweeney (acquired in the trade that sent Nick Swisher to the Chicago White Sox) and first baseman Daric Barton (acquired in the Mulder trade), and in the starting rotation are Anderson and Gio Gonzalez (Swisher deal).

Oakland, a team that is continually evolving, obtained a number of veteran players for 2009 in a failed attempt to help the team's developing young pitchers. The A's signed Jason Giambi, Nomar Garciaparra and Orlando Cabrera to free-agent deals, and traded prospects for Matt Holliday, a strategy that only resulted in a 75-87 record.

This season, it is more of a homegrown feel, with the stereotypical Oakland basher (think Jack Cust or Giambi) nowhere to be found, replaced by young, inexpensive and athletic players like Sweeney, Barton and center fielder Rajai Davis.

"The lumbering big-bodied guys are too expensive for us now," Forst said. "We got Rajai for a \$25,000 waiver claim."

There may be more help on the way, with prospects Chris Carter (first base) and Michael Taylor (outfield) knocking at the door at Class AAA Sacramento. Ranked No. 28 and 29 in the 2010 Baseball America list of Top 100 prospects, Carter and Taylor are power hitters, which is one area the team seems lacking. The A's had a team total of 7 home runs, No. 28 in the majors.

"It's never a problem to have too many good players," Forst said. "A lot of teams can compete for one year. Your goal has to be to try to build a team that can compete for four or more."

If the A's can, they are likely to again start tangling with the Yankees in the postseason, just as they did in 2000 and 2001. Finally winning one of those playoff series will be another challenge.

# MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

## Cats lose third in row

By Nick Hunte / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento was looking to get back on the winning track against the Portland Beavers on Tuesday, but instead the River Cats lengthened their losing streak to three with a 3-1 loss.

There were some familiar faces in the Beavers lineup as former River Cats outfielders Aaron Cunningham and Chris Denorfia and right-hander Ryan Webb played. Former River Cats catcher Eric Munson is also a Beaver but did not play.

The River Cats had a chance to take the lead in the bottom of the seventh. The bases were loaded for catcher Josh Donaldson (1-4, 1 RBI), who hit a single that got past Beavers shortstop Lance Zawadzki and scored a run with no outs. The Cats could not bring any more runners home after third baseman Steve Tolleson hit an infield fly ball and Jai Miller and Michael Affronti struck out.

Left-hander Lenny DiNardo (0-3, 6.00 ERA) made his third start for the River Cats this season and it resulted in a loss. He pitched 5.1 innings, threw five strikeouts and gave up six hits and three runs.

The Beavers offense came from Denorfia (2-4, 1 RBI, .396), who hit a ground ball to left field that scored designated hitter Mike Baxter in the top of the fourth. A soft-line single to center field by second baseman Sean Kazmar (2-2, 1 RBI, .300) scored third baseman Craig Stansberry in the top of the fifth, and a fly ball double to left field by Cunningham (1-4, 1 RBI, .261) scored Denorfia.

Beavers right-hander Cesar Carrillo (1-0, 1.15 ERA) pitched six innings, threw three strikeouts and allowed two hits and one run.

Webb pitched 2.0 innings and allowed two hits and threw two strikeouts and right-hander Ernesto Frieri pitched the last inning of the game to pick up the save.

Right-hander Kyle Middleton (1-0, 4.91 ERA) will start for the River Cats on Wednesday, facing off against the Beavers right-hander Will Inman (0-0, 2.70).

## River Cats come up short, lose to Portland 3-1

John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee, 4/21/2010

### **BEAVERS 3, RIVER CATS 1**

Turning point: After cutting Portland's lead to 3-1, the River Cats loaded the bases with no outs in the seventh. But Beavers reliever Ryan Webb, who pitched for Sacramento last year, retired Steve Tolleson on an infield fly and struck out Jai Miller and Michael Affronti.

Take a bow: Portland starter Cesar Carrillo (1-0) worked six-plus innings, allowing just one run and two hits.

Who's hot: Former River Cat Chris Denorfia contributed a single and a double.

Who's not: The River Cats managed just four hits.

Major league moment: Portland shortstop Lance Zawadzki made a superb catch of a Matt Carson pop-up, then held on after colliding with left fielder Denorfia.

Worth noting: The A's took RHP Trevor Cahill off the disabled list and optioned him to the River Cats. Cahill, 10-13 with a 4.63 ERA with Oakland last season, threw 62 pitches in a rehab start Monday, allowing two hits and two unearned runs in 3 2/3 innings.



Upcoming: Today, River Cats' RHP Kyle Middleton (1-0, 4.91 ERA) vs. Portland RHP Will Inman (0-0, 2.70), 11:35 a.m., Raley Field.

## **Hounds End Road Trip With Loss**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The stat sheet said Charlie Cutler was batting .143 entering Tuesday's game at Springfield, Missouri. The stat sheet didn't "lie," but it fibbed a little. Cutler had a couple of big hits ... and some hard outs ... against the RockHounds, so the average seemed misleading. It was.

Cutler sent a single to right field in the last of the ninth, driving home Curt Smith with the game-winning run as the Cardinals edged the RockHounds, 2-1, at Hammons Field.

Pitching for both clubs was outstanding, with a combined 21 strikeouts in the game. The Springfield bullpen, in this case Chuckie Fick and Eduardo Sanchez, was spectacular, going 4.2 innings of shutout, no-hit ball. Carlos Hernandez turned in a quality start for the 'Hounds, going 6.0 innings and allowing just one run on four hits. Justin Souza pitched well, but took the loss on a double by Smith in the ninth, followed by Cutler's game-winner.

Jemile Weeks tripled and scored the RockHounds run on Corey Brown's sac fly in the third, with Pete Kozma tying the game with a solo home run in the home half of the inning. The game remained tied at 1-1 until the ninth.

The RockHounds now return home for a quick, 4-game home stand against San Antonio, beginning Thursday. The 'Hounds will be no worse than tied for the top spot in the early going in the South Division when the first pitch is thrown Thursday evening (7:00) at Citibank Ballpark.

## **Ports Fall to 66ers, 9-5, in rainy game**

04/20/2010 8:08 PM ET

**STOCKTON, Calif.** - Despite a steady stream of rain showers that passed through Stockton on Tuesday, the Ports (5-7) managed to get in Game 2 of their three-game series against the Inland Empire 66ers (6-7). Stockton's offense kicked into high gear early, but the Ports had trouble scoring their baserunners in the last five innings, and fell 9-5 to the 66ers.

Catcher Petey Paramore had a solid day at the plate for Stockton, finishing 2x4 with a double and a two-run home run-his first home run of the season. He collected three RBI in the contest. Right fielder Jeremy Barfield also had a good outing, finishing 3x4 with a pair of runs scored. The Ports went 3x13 with runners in scoring position and left 10 on base, including seven over the last five innings.

Ports starter Murphy Smith worked for just three innings, as a nearly two-hour long rain delay ensued after he faced the first four batters of the game. After the delay, he came back to bear down on the 66ers, allowing just two hits and striking out two. Scott Deal picked up the loss, while Daniel Thomas collected a blown save for Stockton. Jose Pina and Lance Sewell also appeared in relief for the Ports.

For a few minutes it was clear to start the game before the rain came down. Shortstop Justin Sellers flew out to start the game for Inland Empire, and then third baseman Cesar Suarez and centerfielder Kyle Russell collected back to back hits. Suarez came around to score during Pedro Baez's at-bat on a wild pitch by Smith. An RBI single by designated hitter Pedro Baez put up the 66ers, 2-0.

Then the rain came pouring down, and both teams cleared for the grounds crew and Ports front office staff members, who quickly covered the playing field with a protective tarp. When play resumed, Austin Gallagher walked to put runners on first and second with one out. Tony Delmonico walked to load the bases for right fielder Alfredo Silverio. Silverio hit a two-RBI single to make it 4-0 66ers. Smith then struck out Chris Gutierrez and got Silverio out on a fielder's choice play while Preston Mattingly was at-bat to get out of the inning.

The Ports put up a quick three runs in the bottom of the first. Jermaine Mitchell walked to lead off the inning and stole second. He moved to third on a passed ball while Grant Green was batting. Green grounded out, and Mitchell scored on an RBI single by Stephen Parker. Barfield followed him on base with a hit, and Paramore drove home Parker with a double to right field. An RBI single by designated hitter Jason Christian brought home Barfield.

Smith retired the 66ers in order in the top of the second, and the Ports also were scoreless in the second. The Ports pulled ahead, 5-4, in the third inning on a two-run home run by Paramore to right field. It was their only lead of the game. The Ports held Inland Empire scoreless until the top of the sixth, when Deal was pitching.

With one out, Delmonico walked. Silverio then reached safely on a throwing error by Deal and Delmonico advanced to third. The Ports then called on Daniel Thomas to pitch. With runners on the corners, Gutierrez knocked a two-RBI single. Gutierrez came around to score later in the inning as Suarez hit into a fielder's choice play, to make it 7-5 in favor of Inland Empire.

The Ports were just about to start the top of the seventh inning when another storm rolled in. Both teams waited for the rain to pass, which it did after about half an hour.

Inland Empire added another run on a sacrifice fly by Silverio in the seventh inning and scored their final run in the ninth inning on an RBI single by Silverio. Silverio ended the game 2x4 with four RBI.

From the fifth to ninth innings, the Ports were able to get runners on base, but were unable to get the timely hitting to bring them home.

The Ports will look for the series win on Wednesday evening at 7:05 p.m. at Banner Island Ballpark. RHP Kenny Smalley (0-0, 1.86) will be on the mound for Stockton, while LHP Geison Aguasviva (0-1, 7.94) is scheduled to start for Inland Empire. Fans can also watch the game live on Comcast Hometown Network (Channel 104) as well as listen to the radio broadcast on KWSX 1280 AM or streamed at [www.stocktonports.com](http://www.stocktonports.com).

### **Cougars' Skid Hits Three**

### **Kane County has lost three straight games and series after Wednesday loss**

PEORIA, Ill. – The Cougars built a 2-0 lead through five and a half innings Wednesday afternoon but could not hold it, as they lost the Peoria Chiefs, 4-2, in front of 6,591 fans at O'Brien Field. The Cougars have lost a season-high three games in a row and also lost three series in a row. Peoria has won six straight.

Leonardo Gil gave the Cougars a 1-0 lead in the second when he singled home Max Stassi, and Rashun Dixon belted his first homer as a Cougar in the sixth to make it 2-0. Starter Chris Mederos was cruising along and vying for his third quality start in as many outings but ran into trouble in the sixth. The first three batters he faced reached with a hit, and an ensuing grounder tied it, 2-2. Mederos gave up two runs on six hits, walked one and fanned three in 5 1/3 innings in the no-decision.

Connor Hoehn replaced Mederos and struck out consecutive hitters to end the sixth but yielded two runs in the seventh. He hit Jesus Morelli and walked Jose Valdez before Matt Cerda roped a two-run single to make it 4-2, and that became the final. The Cougars stranded 10 runners, including two in each of the final three frames. Hoehn (2-1) suffered the loss, Steven Grife (1-0) picked up the win, and Jordan Latham registered his fifth save.

The Cougars (6-8) and Chiefs (9-5) conclude their three-game series Thursday night 6:30 CT. Justin Marks (0-1, 10.13) will face Su-Min Jung (2-0, 0.00). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com), with pregame coverage starting at 6:15 p.m.