



**New York Yankees Clips  
Thursday, April 22, 2010**

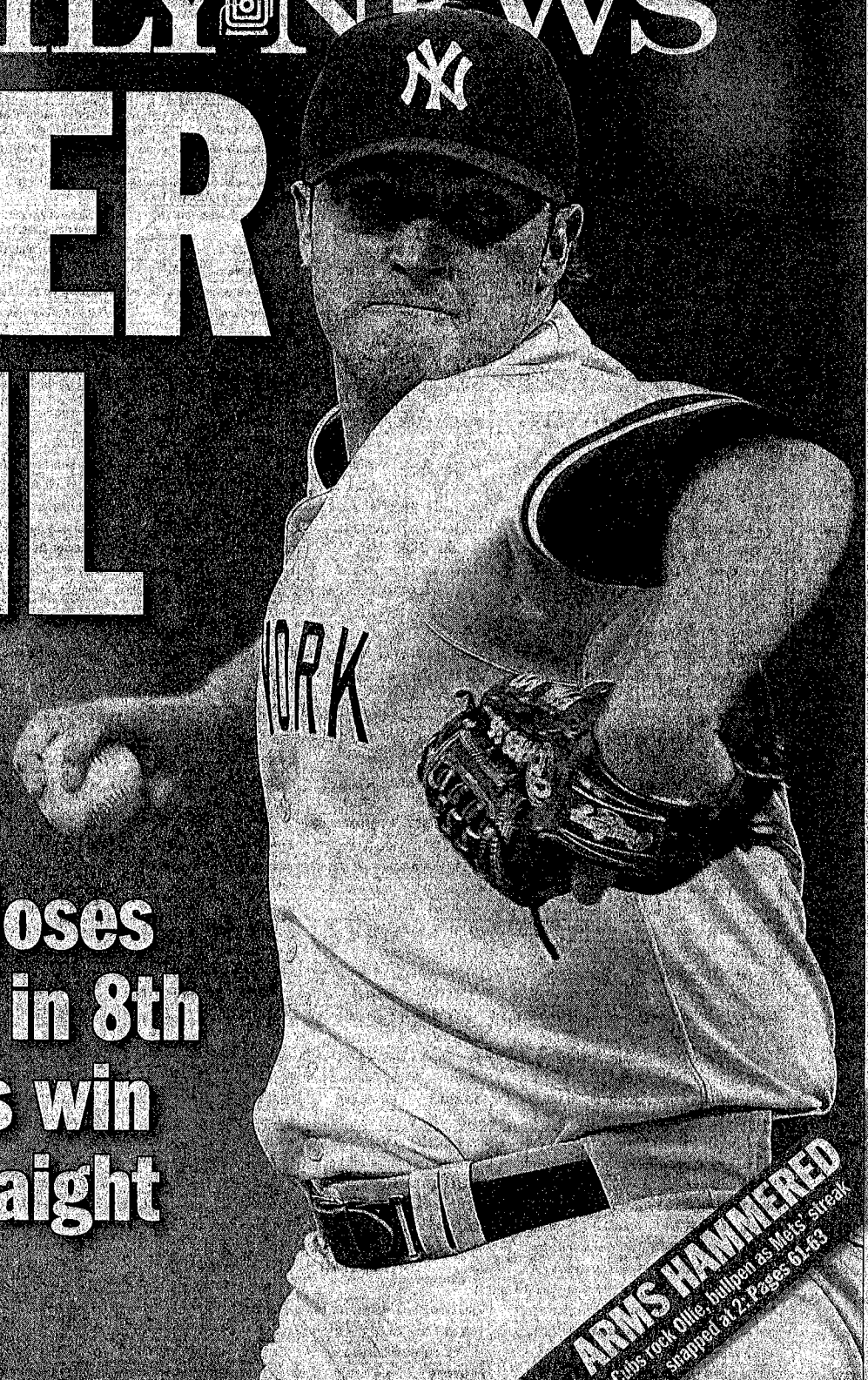


SPORTS  
FINAL

Thursday, April 22, 2010

# DAILY NEWS

# 1-DER PHIL



**Hughes loses  
no-hit bid in 8th  
as Yanks win  
sixth straight**

**ARMS HAMMERED**  
Cubs rock Ollie, bullpen as Mets streak  
snapped at 2. Pages 61-63

At 23, Phil Hughes nearly becomes youngest Yankee to throw no-hitter, striking out 10 A's as Bombers continue to roll with 3-1 win. **Pages 58-60**

## **BIG BAN! NFL SUSPENDS QB 6 GAMES**

Rumors have Steelers trying to trade Roethlisberger by tonight's draft: **P. 64-65**





# POST'S GUIDE TO SUPER THURSDAY

- JET, GIANT FORECASTS
- SERBY'S MOCK DRAFT

COMPLETE COVERAGE PAGES 83-76

THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2010 ★ ★ R

NEW YORK POST

www.nypost.com

## The Post Sports Town

Infield hit in 8th spoils Hughes' bid for history

OLIVE OIL OVERVIEW  
METS' STREAK ENDS IN 11 PAGES 91-99

**'NO' SO CLOSE!**

NEW YORK

Phil Hughes rears back in Oakland last night as he took a no-hitter into the eighth inning before Eric Chavez hit a grounder back to the mound that bounced off the Yank righty for a hit. Hughes was relieved after 7 1/3 innings, and the Yankees beat the A's 3-1. GEORGE A. KING III / PAGES 88-89

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# No-Hit Bid Is Spoiled, But Win Streak Isn't

By Jonathan Abrams

OAKLAND, Calif. — In one of the first starts of Phil Hughes's career, he flirted with a no-hitter all the way into the seventh inning against the Texas Rangers before fate cruelly intervened. Instead of finishing on the mound, he finished in the trainer's room with a hamstring strain that forced him from the game.

That night, history was lost, but not a telling glimpse into a promising future. Three years later, on a breezy evening, Hughes attempted to recreate the moment. Again, his body got in the way in a 4-1 victory against the Oakland Athletics on Wednesday.

Hughes deftly carried a no-hit bid into eighth inning, when Eric Chavez lined a one-hopper back to Hughes on his first pitch, a 91 mile-an-hour fastball.

The ball ricocheted back at Hughes, first off the heel of his glove and then off the "York" on his Yankees jersey. Hughes looked skyward as the ball fell to his side, and Chavez scampered to first base.

This time, though, Hughes remained in the game, his smile and a secure future with the organization intact. That would be the only hit the Athletics claimed off Hughes. In one stretch, he retired 20 straight hitters.

After being checked for injuries, Hughes struck out Kevin Kouzmanoff swinging his 10th strikeout of the game, a career high. He walked Gabe Gross, and Manager Joe Girardi replaced Hughes with Joba Chamberlain.

It was a reversal of the past. After Hughes was slow to return from his hamstring injury, the Yankees molded him into a setup reliever, where he was effective in getting the ball to closer Mariano Rivera last season, while the hard-throwing Chamberlain started.

In spring training, Hughes beat out Chamberlain for the final spot in the rotation, and he made his second start of the season with gusto.

Hughes departed with cheers from the 30,211 fans at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum. Chamberlain allowed a run to score on Jake Fox's pinch-hit single, the run tacked on to Hughes's impressive line of seven and a third innings, one hit and one run, while walking two. He threw 101 pitches, while pumping the zone for 70 strikes.

Chamberlain escaped the inning when Cliff Pennington grounded to Mark Teixeira at first base and Mariano Rivera pitched a scoreless ninth inning to preserve the win, although he allowed a single to Ryan Sweeney and beamed Kurt Suzuki. With Chavez representing the winning run, he grounded back to Rivera, who forced Suzuki out at second base.

Rivera closed the game on Kouzmanoff's broken-bat fly ball



Phil Hughes's bid for a no-hitter ended with Eric Chavez's infield single in the eighth.

to Curtis Granderson, notching his sixth save in as many opportunities this season.

The effort was needed as Ben Sheets, mostly handcuffed the Yankees through six innings. Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano broke through with consecutive triples in the fourth inning and Cano scored on Jorge Posada's groundout.

The Yankees added an insurance run in the ninth inning when Granderson scored on Brett Gardner's poke into left field off Oakland reliever Tyson Ross.

The victory is the Yankees' (11-3) sixth straight and ensured that they will depart here with their fifth consecutive series win, a streak that ties them with the 1926 team for the most at a season's start. C.C. Sabathia will take the mound in the sweep attempt in Thursday's afternoon game.

The Yankees have gone more than a decade since their last no-hitter, David Cone's perfect game in 1999 against the Montreal Expos. Already in this early season, they have twice come close. Less than two weeks ago, Sabathia came within four outs of a no-hitter against the Tampa Bay Rays before Kelly Shoppach disrupted the effort.

The game started with a hint toward what was to follow when Hughes struck out Pennington.

He struck out five of the first seven hitters, including striking out the side in the second inning. Hughes painted the corner with a fastball to Eric Chavez, threw a 93-mile-an-hour fastball past Kouzmanoff and got Gross to whiff on a loopy, 78 m.p.h. curveball.

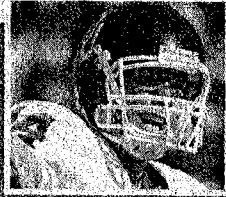
## INSIDE PITCH

NICK SWISHER received a scheduled day off. In his place, RANDY WINN started and played right field. XAVIER NADY is now with the Chicago Cubs and played in only seven games last season with the Yankees, yet he was still owed his championship ring. So, a day after the team presented Oakland's CHAD GAUDIN and EDUAR RAMIREZ with their rings, General Manager BRIAN CASHMAN awarded Nady his ring Wednesday before the Mets hosted the Cubs at Citi Field.



Derek Jeter was caught stealing third in the first inning. It was the Yankees' sixth consecutive victory and ninth in 10 games.

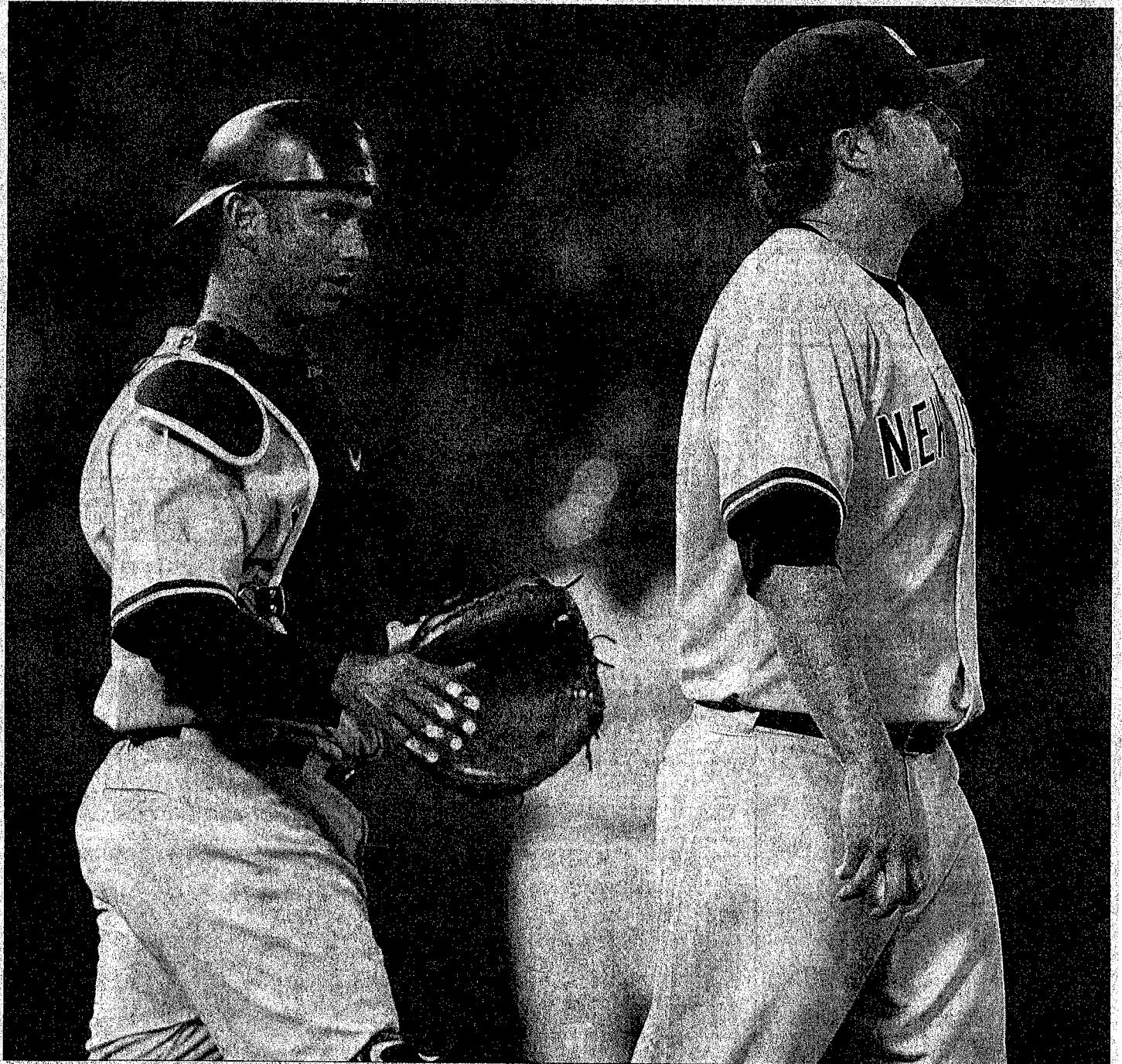
# SPORTS



## WITH THE FIRST PICK...

Gary Myers charts his selections for the first round of tonight's NFL draft  
Page 66

# HUGHES BIDS



Jorge Posada consoles Phil Hughes, who loses his no-hitter in the eighth after failing to snare smash off the bat of Eric Chavez. Photo by AP

★O

# COME ON IN!

Revis understands how ex-Dolphin Taylor wound up a Jet  
 Matt Gagne, Page 67



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# DAILY NEWS LIVE

We'll take one last look at tonight's NFL draft and keep an eye on baseball today at 5 p.m.  
 Today's guests: Bill Madden & Ralph Vacchiano

# BYE TO NO-NO

## Lasts into 8th in 2nd dance with destiny

BY MARK FEINSAND  
 DAILY NEWS SPORTS WRITER

OAKLAND — No-hitters remain a rarity in baseball, but the Yankees are making the near-misses seem routine this season.

Phil Hughes became the second Yankee to come within six outs of a no-no in the season's first 14 games, losing his bid last night on Eric Chavez's infield single in the eighth inning.

Hughes retreated to the bench two batters later, watching Joba Chamberlain and Mariano Rivera finish up a 3-1 win over the A's, the Yankees' sixth straight victory.

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't (thinking about the no-hitter)," Hughes said. "I knew I hadn't given up a hit, so to have it end that way was kind of a bummer, but that's the game."

This wasn't the first time Hughes toyed with a no-hitter, having taken one 6 1/3 innings in Texas on May 1, 2007 — his second big-league start. He left the mound that night with the no-no still intact, a hamstring injury forcing him to abandon his bid.

"That's as good as it gets," said Joe Girardi. "His stuff was great tonight. That's a brilliant performance."

Having thrown 87 pitches through seven innings last night, Hughes had his chance to join the ranks of the 11 other pitchers to throw no-hitters for the Yankees. But Chavez opened the eighth with a hard one-hopper back to the pitcher, the ball glancing off the heel of Hughes' glove before hitting him on the left forearm.

With his back to the plate, Hughes looked aimlessly for the

ball, which had settled a few feet in front of the mound, allowing Chavez to reach easily on an infield single. "It was unfortunate he didn't see where the ball landed," Girardi said. "We were all yelling, but sometimes the last place you look is in front of you."

Hughes was charged with one run on one hit and two walks, striking out a career-high 10 in 7 1/3 innings to improve to 2-0. But his flirtation with history will make it difficult for him not to wonder what might have been.

"It seemed like every inning, I just kept rolling," Hughes said. "It's so hard to throw a no-hitter and you don't get many opportunities to do it, so it's a little frustrating."

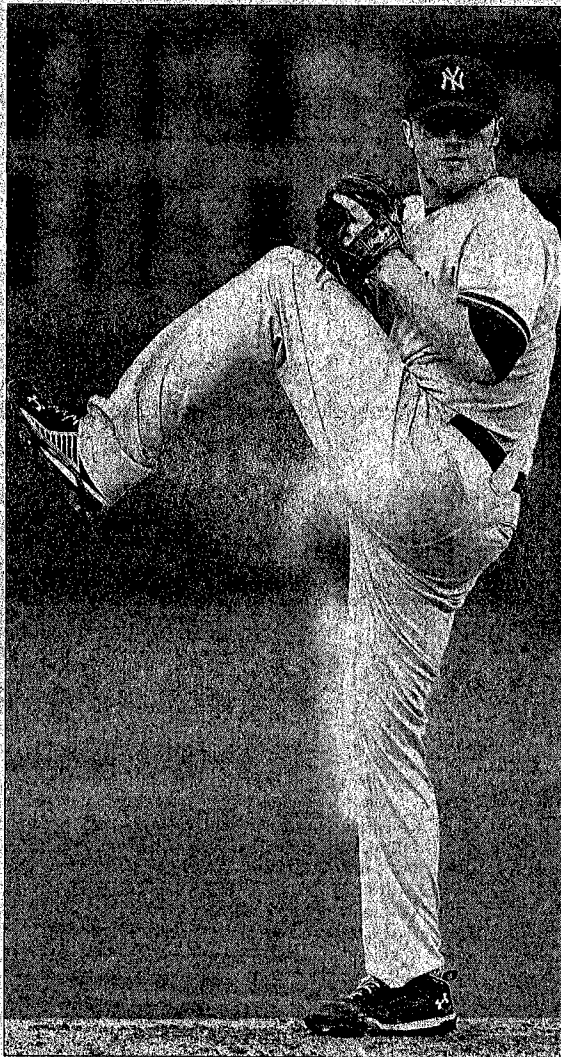
Hughes opened the game with a strikeout of Cliff Pennington, but he followed that up with a four-pitch walk of Daric Barton.

That was the last Oakland batter to reach base for quite some time, as Hughes worked his way through the A's lineup with ease, retiring 20 straight hitters before Chavez broke up his bid.

Hughes had five strikeouts through the first two innings, mixing fastballs and off-speed pitches like a veteran.

The Yankees gave Hughes a lead in the fourth as Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano opened the inning with back-to-back triples, then Jorge Posada brought Cano home with an RBI groundout to make it 2-0.

Hughes went back to work in the fourth, freezing Barton with a 93 mph fastball on the corner for his sixth strikeout of the night. Hughes breezed through the rest



### DR. PHIL

How Phil Hughes took apart A's last night, flirting with no-hitter into eighth inning.

7 1/3 Innings

1 Hits

1 Runs

10 K's

2 Walks

101 Pitches

Phil Hughes delivers last night en route to a career-high 10 strikeout performance in 7 1/3 innings in Yanks' victory over Oakland. Photo by AP

His manager was aware of a pending pitch-count controversy. "I'm thinking, OK here we go again," said Girardi, who added he would have let him go "between 110 and 115."

Hughes had a distraught look following the turn of bad luck, as Girardi and team trainer Steve Donohue ran to the mound to check on the righty, giving him a breather to collect himself after the hit. Hughes fanned Kouzmanoff to set a career-high with 10 strikeouts, but he walked Gabe Gross to put the tying runs on base.

Girardi came to the mound to remove Hughes, who received a nice ovation from the Oakland crowd. Hughes' parents, Phil Sr. and Dori, stood and applauded their son from the second row above the Yankees dugout, but all he could do now was watch from the bench to see if he would still collect a victory.

of the inning, then punched out Kevin Kouzmanoff during another 1-2-3 inning in the fifth.

Having retired 13 in a row as he took the mound for the sixth, Hughes appeared to get stronger. He struck out Adam Rosales with an 88 mph cutter for the first out, then picked up his eighth K when Eric Patterson swung through a 93 mph fastball on Hughes' 77th pitch of the game.

Only 11 days earlier, Girardi had watched CC Sabathia take his no-hit bid into the eighth in-

ning, but Kolly Shoppach rescued the manager from making the most controversial decision of his career, as he had planned on taking the ball from Sabathia before the ninth.

Last night, Hughes went back out for the seventh and recorded a quick, 10-pitch inning, leaving him with 87 pitches and a legitimate chance at history. But when Hughes came back out for the eighth, it took one pitch for his dream to end, thanks to Chavez's comebacker.

# PHIL'S ONE-DERFUL

## Hughes flirts with no-no in Yanks' win

By GEORGE A. KING III  
OAKLAND — For the second time inside two weeks a Yankees pitcher took a no-hitter into the late innings last night.

And had his heart broken but walked away with a victory.

Eleven days after CC Sabathia lost a no-hitter in the eighth inning, Phil Hughes' no-hit bid against the A's died in the eighth inning. It happened when Eric Chavez's leadoff smash off Hughes' glove struck his left arm and bounced in front of the pitcher, who didn't find the ball in time to make a play on Chavez.

"It seemed like I was looking for the ball for eight minutes," said Hughes, who threw the gem with parents Phil and Dori sitting two rows behind the Yankees' dugout.

Instead of basking in the glow of a no-hitter, the Yankees and Hughes (2-0, 2.19 ERA) settled for a 3-1 victory that was witnessed by an announced Coliseum crowd of 30,211.

It was the sixth straight victory for the 11-3 Yankees, and the win carried them to a fifth series win at the start of the season. That matches the 1926 Yankees for most series wins at the beginning of the year.

Chavez's infield single stopped a string of 20 straight batters retired by Hughes, who was so good with his four-seam fastball and cutter that he only threw 10 curveballs and no fastballs.

"My command was the best it's ever been," said Hughes, who fanned a career high 10 and improved to 2-0.

Trainer Steve Donohue and manager Joe Girardi checked on Hughes, who told them he was OK after Chavez's hit.

Hughes proved there was nothing wrong when he blew away Kevin Kouzmanoff with a 92-mph fastball. When Gabe Gross walked on a 3-2 pitch, Girardi sum-

### BOXSCORE / PAGE 72

Yankees	3
A's	1

moned Joba Chamberlain from the pen to face Adam Rosales.

Chamberlain retired Rosales on a harmless fly to right but gave up an RBI single to pinch-hitter Jake Fox that cut the lead to 2-1.

Chamberlain responded by retiring Cliff Pennington on a grounder to Mark Teixeira.

Mariano Rivera worked the ninth for his sixth save in as many chances.

Hughes went 7 1/3 innings, allowed one hit, a run, walked two and reached double digits in strikeouts totals for the first time as a big leaguer.

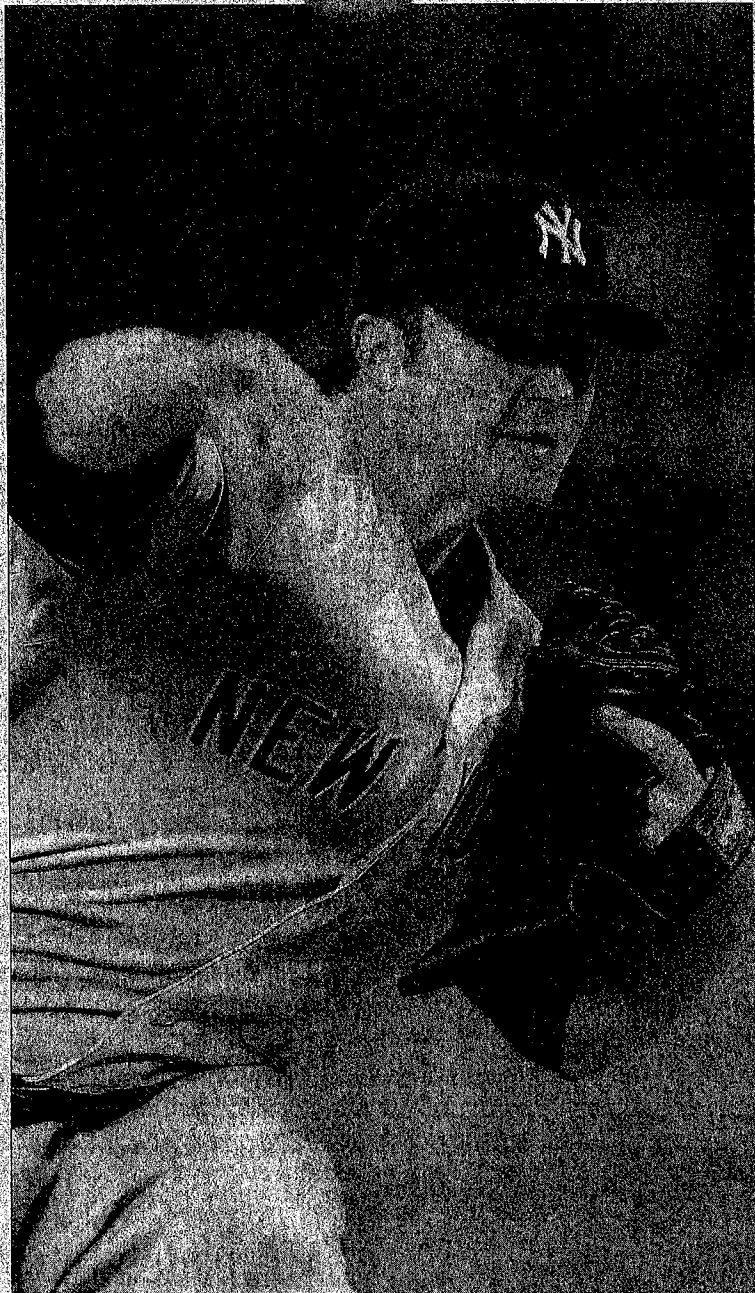
Sabathia lost a no-hitter with two outs in the eighth against the Rays on April 10 in St. Petersburg when Kelly Shoppach singled to left.

"To have it end like that was a bummer," Hughes said. "But I was happy to get the win."

Consecutive triples by Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano and an RBI ground out by Jorge Posada accounted for the Yankees' two runs in the fourth. Brett Gardner's two-out single to left scored Curtis Granderson in the ninth for a 3-1 cushion. It was the Yankees' first hit with runners in scoring position in six at-bats.

The crowd started to react to every pitch at the beginning of the home seventh. Groans showered plate umpire Tom Hallion when he didn't give Hughes a borderline strike. Silence covered the field when Ryan Sweeney's liner to center took off and stirred when it died in Granderson's leather. Cheers followed Kurt Suzuki's harmless fly to right for the final out.

Though the focus was on Hughes, Ben Sheets limited the Yankees to



**PHIL-LIN' GOOD:** Phil Hughes, who allowed one run and one hit in 7 1/3 innings, delivers a pitch during the Yankees' 3-1 victory over the A's last night in Oakland. AP

two runs and four hits in six innings. After 96 pitches, Sheets (1-1) was replaced by lefty Jerry Blevins. He left with one out in the eighth because

of back spasms. According to Hughes, last night was the third time his parents watched him in a big league start. "To have them here was

special," said Hughes, whose parents drove from Orange County. "I was hoping to give them something to cheer for."

george.king@nypost.com

**ON DECK**  
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Today — 3:35 p.m.  
CC Sabathia  
(2-0, 2.84 ERA) vs.  
Dallas Braden  
(2-0, 2.70 ERA)  
TV: YES  
Radio: WCBS (880 AM)

### INSIDE THE MATCHUPS

**YANKEES:** After a subpar first start of the year, Sabathia has been absolutely dominant in his past two games. He almost no-hit the Rays last week and followed it up by retiring 17 of the last 19 batters he faced — including nine strikeouts — in a rain-shortened win against the Rangers on Friday.

**ATHLETICS:** Braden is a talented 26-year-old lefty with a good fastball-changeup approach, and is now settling into his second season as a starter after last year was cut short due to a left foot injury. He shut down the Orioles in his most recent start, giving up two runs over seven innings, but has a spotty track record against the Yanks: 14 hits and eight runs in 9 1/3 innings as both a reliever and starter.

### WHO'S HOT

In the past four games, Alex Rodriguez was 6 for 11 with two home runs and four RBIs, as well as three walks.

### WHO'S HOT

Mark Teixeira went 0-for-4 with two strikeouts last night and is 6-for-52 (.115) with 14 strikeouts.

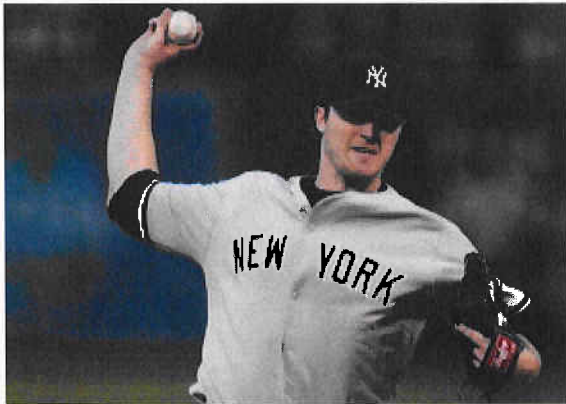
### STATS

In nine career starts at his hometown park of Oakland-Alameda Coliseum, Sabathia has held the A's to a .213 batting average but has found a way to go 2-4 with a 6.35 ERA.



# Hughes flirts with no-hitter in win over A's

April 22, 2010 by ERIK BOLAND / erik.boland@newsday.com



OAKLAND, Calif. - The last time Phil Hughes had been this close, a freak hamstring injury derailed him from a chance at history.

A fluky chopped grounder did Wednesday night.

Hughes pitched seven innings of no-hit ball against the A's in a 3-1 victory before Eric Chavez broke up the bid by leading off the eighth with a smashed chopper that caught Hughes on his left arm.

The 23-year-old righthander had time to get Chavez but could not immediately locate the ball, which bounced high after hitting him and landed about 10 feet in front of the mound.

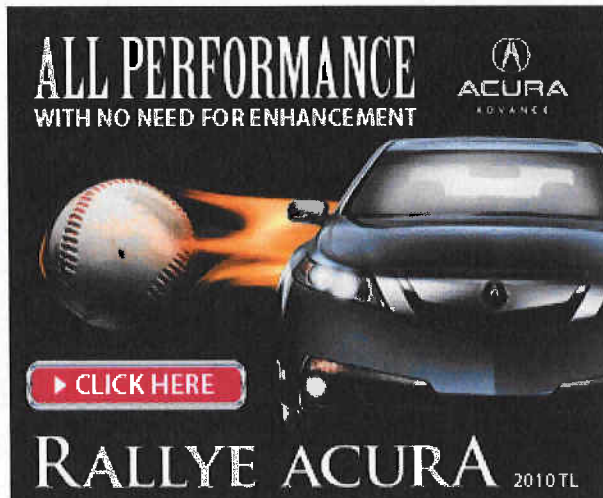
"First pitch fastball away," Hughes said. "Hit off my forearm. I thought it went straight up and obviously it didn't and I couldn't find it in time. Not really the way you want to give up a no-hitter but that's the way it goes."

Jorge Posada tried to help Hughes locate the ball, but to no avail.

"He couldn't see it. he thought it was up and the ball's right in front of him," the catcher said. "I'm screaming, down down, but he couldn't see it."

Hughes, who rarely shows emotion, looked down in disgust, his chance at recording the franchise's 11th regular-season no-hitter, and first since David Cone's perfect game against the Expos July 18, 1999, gone.

Unlike what many pitchers say, Hughes said he certainly was aware he was working on a



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no-hitter.

"I'd be lying if I said I wasn't," he said. "Obviously I knew I hadn't given up a hit. To have it end that way is kind of a bummer but it's the game and I'm happy to get out of here with a win."

Chavez's hit snapped a streak of 20 straight A's Hughes retired after walking Daric Barton with one out in the first.

With the Yankees holding only a two-run lead, Hughes needed to rebound quickly and he did in the short term, striking out Kevin Kouzmanoff, which was Hughes' career-best 10th strikeout.

But a walk to Gabe Gross put runners on first and second with one out and Joe Girardi brought in Joba Chamberlain, officially named Mariano Rivera's eighth-inning setup man before the game.

Hughes, the California native whose parents were in attendance, left the mound to cheers from the crowd of 30,211 - many of them Yankee fans, many of them not - which he acknowledged by briefly grabbing the bill of his cap before stepping into the dugout.

Chamberlain, whose fastball reached 96 mph in 11/3 scoreless innings Tuesday, retired Adam Rosales on a fly to right, but Jake Fox's pinch-hit single to right brought in Chavez to make it 2-1. The bad fortune gave Hughes an impressive final line but one that minutes earlier looked as if it would be far better: 71/3 innings, one hit, one run with two walks and 10 strikeouts.

Hughes, ahead strike one to seemingly every batter, threw 101 pitches, 70 for strikes.

Rivera allowed two runners to reach in the ninth but recorded his sixth save.

"That's as good as it gets," Girardi said of Hughes. "His stuff was great tonight. Ahead in the count all night and he put them on the defense. His cutter was outstanding to the lefties, his curveball was great. His fastball command was great. That's a brilliant performance."

It was the Yankees' second flirtation with a no-hitter this season. CC Sabathia no-hit the Rays for 72/3 innings April 10 before Kelly Shoppach broke up the bid. Girardi disclosed afterward that Sabathia, on a pitch count, would have been removed regardless of what Shoppach did.

Hughes, who threw a career-high 108 pitches in his first start last week against the Angels, probably wasn't going anywhere and his stuff suggested he might get to finish what injury prohibited him from doing nearly three years ago.

In Hughes' second career start, May 1, 2007, he no-hit the Rangers for 61/3 innings in Arlington before leaving with a strained left hamstring (then-Ranger Mark Teixeira was at the plate).

The righthander said he thought back to that night in Texas.

"After I got that first out in the seventh I was just hoping I didn't go down with something else," he said. "That's all I was thinking about it. It's always nice to have stuff like that [a no-hitter], but it's just so hard to do, any little thing can happen and it did."

The Yankees took a 1-0 lead in the fourth when Alex Rodriguez tripled to right-center, his second triple of the season, and Robinson Cano brought him in with his first triple of the season. Posada's slow groundout to first brought Cano home to make it 2-0.

Hughes struck out Cliff Pennington with a 90-mph fastball to lead off the game and walked Barton. Ryan Sweeney's fielder's choice moved Barton to second but Hughes struck out Kurt Suzuki with a 94-mph fastball to end the inning and the A's wouldn't have a runner at second again until Chavez reached in the eighth. The Yankees made it 3-1 in the ninth on Brett Gardner's two-out single.

[< back to article](#)

## Hughes carries no-hitter into eighth

OAKLAND, Calif. — Phil Hughes looked all around him. He looked up to the sky. He looked back to second base. He looked over to the infield corners. The baseball was nowhere to be found.

By the time Hughes looked in front of the mound, it was too late. An infield single in the eighth inning had broken up Hughes' no-hitter, and the Yankees' starter was left grimacing on the infield grass. Hughes' second start of the year was six outs from being historic, but he settled for a 3-1 win in Oakland that was the Yankees' sixth in a row. It assured the Yankees would win their first five series of the season for the first time since 1926.

The 23-year-old Hughes held the Athletics hitless through seven innings, but Eric Chavez led off the eighth by chopping the ball back to the mound. It hit off Hughes, and by the time he got to the ball between the mound and the plate, Chavez was jogging into first base.

Hughes became the second Yankees starter to carry a no-hitter into the eighth inning this season. Eleven days earlier, CC Sabathia had a no-hitter through 7½ innings only to lose it on a two-out single in the eighth.

Hughes' start was reminiscent of May 1, 2007, the second start of his major-league career, when Hughes no-hit the Texas Rangers through 6½ innings only to be removed in the seventh because of a strained left hamstring. That was three years ago — almost to the day — and in that time Hughes had sprained an ankle and fractured a rib. He had opened in the major league rotation and been demoted to Triple-A. He had been called back to

New York and moved into the bullpen.

All the while, that start in Texas stood as a fleeting snapshot of Hughes' enormous potential. Sustained major league success had eluded him as a starter, but he had the stuff to thrive in a major league rotation.

This spring, Hughes seemed to make himself better when he improved his changeup, the one pitch that seemed to have always eluded him. The improvement was enough that the Yankees gave him their fifth starter spot ahead of Joba Chamberlain.

"This is a young man that we believe is ready to do this," manager Joe Girardi said before Hughes' first season debut. "We expect him to pitch at a high level for us."

Hughes was good in his first start of the season, allowing only three hits against a powerful Angels lineup, but five walks pushed his pitch count so high that he lasted only five innings.

This time, pitch count was not a significant concern. Hughes was at 87 pitches through seven innings, and 61 of them had been strikes. His only base runner had come on a four-pitch walk in the first inning.

It was Hughes' first pitch of the eighth that ended the no-hitter. He used his next four pitches to strike out Kevin Kouzmanoff — Hughes' career-high 10th strikeout — but when he walked the next batter, Hughes' night was done. He left with a 2-0 lead and two runners on. Chamberlain allowed an RBI single, but ultimately kept the minimal lead intact. Mariano Rivera pitched a scoreless ninth for his sixth save.

Oakland starter Ben Sheets stranded four runners in

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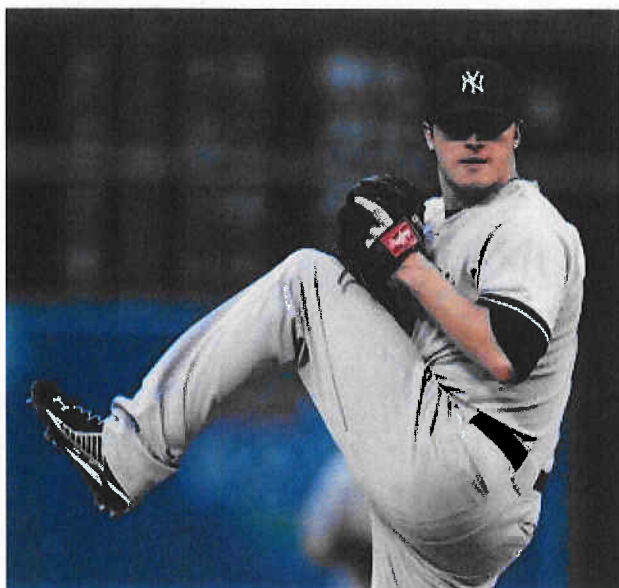


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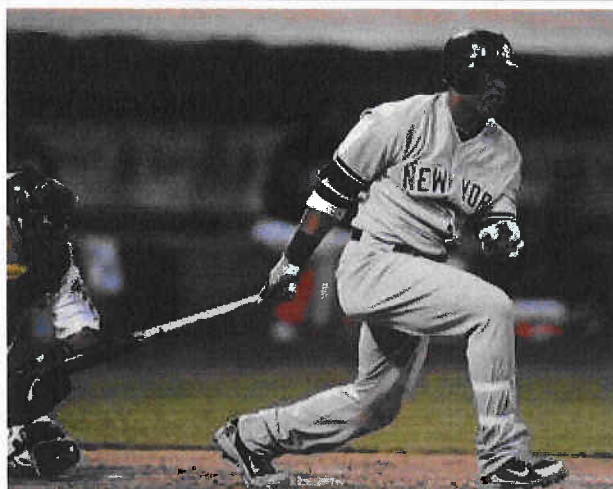
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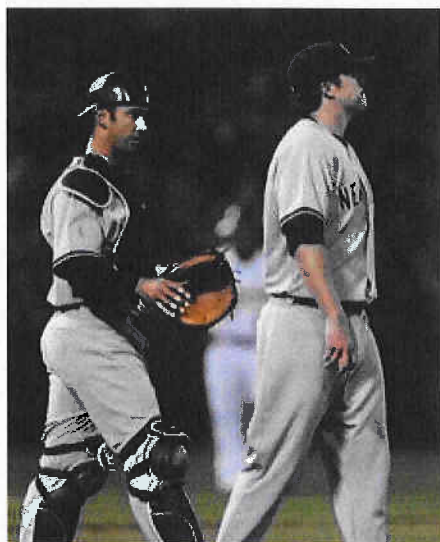
the first three innings, but he couldn't contain back-to-back triples in the fourth. Alex Rodriguez led off with a triple to right, Robinson Cano followed with a triple of his own. Cano scored on a groundout and the Yankees had the only two runs necessary. They added a run in the top of the ninth on Brett Gardner's RBI, two-out single.



Yankees' right-hander Phil Hughes was six outs away from a no-hitter in his second start of the season. (Photos by Ben Margot/The Associated Press)



The Yankees' Robinson Cano, right, swings for an RBI-triple off Oakland Athletics' Ben Sheets during the fourth inning Wednesday.



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## Phil Hughes flirts with no-hitter, Yankees top A's, 3-1

Thursday, April 22, 2010  
Last updated: Thursday April 22, 2010, 2:25 AM

BY PETE CALDERA  
The Record  
Staff Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. – The ball came hot off Eric Chavez’s bat, on a hard bounce toward the mound. That was the last good look Phil Hughes had at his bid for a no-hitter.

Leading off the eighth inning at Oakland Coliseum, Chavez’s bouncer ricocheted off Hughes’ left forearm and then his chest. Hughes first instinct was to gaze up for the ball.

“It seemed like I was looking for about eight minutes,” Hughes said. But the ball had rolled halfway between the mound and home plate for an infield single.

“To have it end that way was kind of a bummer. But that’s the game, and I’m glad to get out of here with a win,” Hughes said Wednesday night, after his memorable second start of the season led to the Yankees’ 3-1 victory over the Athletics.

In 7.1 innings, Hughes gave up just the one hit. Joba Chamberlain allowed that inherited run to score, but Hughes improved to 2-0.

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With his parents in the stands, having made the six-hour drive from Orange County, Hughes also struck out a career high 10 batters.

Hughes used only 101 pitches. And unlike CC Sabathia two weeks ago against Tampa Bay, the 23-year-old right-hander would have been allowed to continue his no-hit bid into the ninth inning. Hughes' limit was about 115 pitches, said manager Joe Girardi, who called the performance “brilliant.”

With sharp command of his four-seam fastball, cut fastball and curveball, Hughes retired 20 batters in a row after walking No. 2 hitter Daric Barton in the first inning. Barton was the last A’s batter to reach base until Chavez connected with a first-pitch fastball away.

After making hard contact with his forearm, “I thought (the ball) went straight up,” said Hughes, who never felt the ball bounce off his chest, too. “It’s not really the way you want to give up a no-hitter, but that’s the way it goes.”


Catcher Jorge Posada was screaming “down, down, down,” but “he really couldn’t see where the ball was.” By then, there was no

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chance for a play.

"I was a little frustrated," Hughes said, but he also had a 2-0 lead to protect.

After striking out Kevin Kouzmanoff, Hughes walked Gabe Gross, and Girardi went to Chamberlain – who retired one batter, then gave up an RBI single to pinch-hitter Jake Fox, cutting the lead to 2-1.

But Chamberlain retired Cliff Pennington on a grounder to end the threat. Brett Gardner's RBI single added a run in the ninth, and Mariano Rivera came on for his sixth save.

Winners of six straight games, the Yankees (11-3) have also taken the first five series of the season.

The Yanks scored twice in the fourth, as Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano opened with back-to-back triples against Ben Sheets (1-1). A-Rod's slicing drive was aided when right fielder Ryan Sweeney missed on a diving attempt.

Cano rifled his triple down the line, and Jorge Posada's RBI groundout made it 2-0.

And as Hughes' no-hit bid progressed, Girardi said he felt that "here we go again" feeling he experienced in Tampa Bay, as Sabathia's no-hitter crept into the eighth inning.

On April 10, Sabathia had a no-hitter going until two out in the eighth inning at Tropicana

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Field, when Kelly Shoppach delivered a sharp single to left.

But Girardi had already decided that Shoppach was Sabathia's last hitter; Sabathia would not have been allowed to continue pursuing a no-hitter in the ninth, due to his pitch count of 111.

Hughes was more economical. He had also been here once before.

Wednesday marked Hughes' 30th career start. But in his second start, May 1, 2007, Hughes took a no-hitter into the seventh inning at Texas. Hughes had gone 6.1 innings without allowing a hit when he suddenly strained his left hamstring and could not continue.

Hughes wound up earning his first big-league win in the Yankees' 10-1 victory over the Rangers, and he thought of that game as he entered the late innings on Wednesday.

Afterward, Hughes said he probably had his best fastball command as a big-league starter. He didn't throw a change-up all night, not wanting to get beat on that pitch.

"It tells you what kind of stuff he's got,"

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Posada said. "I'm proud of him. I'm really proud of him."

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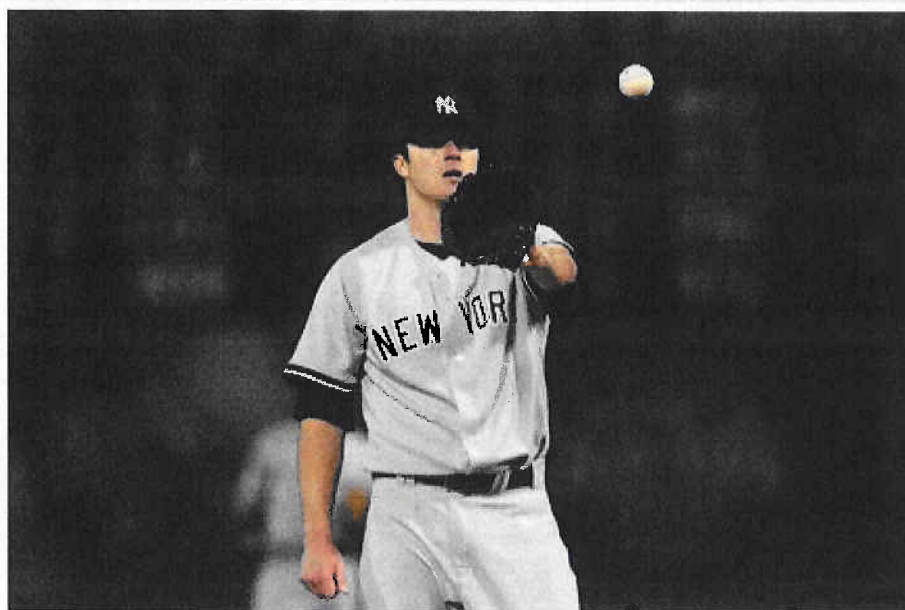


Everything Jersey

## Update: Behind Phil Hughes' brilliance, Yankees beat A's, 3-1

By Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger

April 22, 2010, 1:43AM



Cary Edmondson/US Presswire

Yankees pitcher Phil Hughes prepares to catch the ball after throwing a pitch against the A's in the seventh inning.

OAKLAND -- Phil Hughes began his bid for history on bended knee behind the pitcher's mound, where he recited a little prayer, just as he's done before every start of his career. He ended it with his eyes staring up at the heavens for a ball that unbeknownst to him, had come to rest harmlessly on the ground.

Had Hughes spotted the ball during that fateful moment in the eighth inning on Wednesday night, he would have had a chance to preserve his try at a no-hitter. Instead, Hughes' frantic search for Eric Chavez's comebacker proved fruitless.

"To have it end that way was kind of a bummer," Hughes said.

Still, Hughes came away with one of the most impressive starts of his big league career, which was more than good enough to lift the Yankees to a 3-1 victory over the A's.

"My command tonight was probably the best it's ever been," said Hughes, who spotted his fastball and cutter so effectively, he didn't need to throw a single changeup.

Chavez was credited with an infield hit when his hard comebacker struck Hughes on the fleshy part of his left forearm, then off his chest. Hughes said he didn't hear the screams from his teammates, who tried in vain to get the pitcher's attention.

"Down! Down!" catcher Jorge Posada yelled, as Hughes looked to the skies, his back to home plate.

"We're all yelling," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "But that's the thing: sometimes the last place you look is right in front of you"

After trainers checked him out, Hughes remained in the game long enough to record his career-high 10th strikeout. But he walked Gabe Gross to create a jam and end what had otherwise been a sterling performance.

Chavez then wrecked Hughes' consolation bid for a shutout, scoring on Andy Fox's pinch-hit single off reliever Joba Chamberlain.

But Chamberlain, appointed earlier in the day by manager Joe Girardi as the bridge to Mariano Rivera, ended the threat by inducing a meek grounder by Cliff Pennington.

The A's mounted a threat in the ninth when Ryan Sweeney singled with one out and Rivera hit Kurt Suzuki with a pitch, bringing the go-ahead run to the plate in Chavez. But Rivera shut the door, getting Chavez to bounce into a force out before inducing a fly out by Kevin Kouzmanoff.

For the Yankees , it was their sixth victory in a row.

The Yankees took a 2-0 lead on back-to-back triples in the fourth inning by Alex Rodriguez and Robinson Cano. Brett Gardner added an insurance run in the ninth, slapping a pitch to left field to score Curtis Granderson.

With the victory, the Yankees clinched their fifth series to star the season, matching the franchise record set in 1926.

Before allowing the hit, Hughes had retired 20 straight A's batters. Hughes walked Daric Barton with one out in the first inning.

Hughes once came close to throwing a no-hitter, during his second major league start against the Rangers in 2007. But a hamstring injury forced him to leave the game after 6 1/3 innings. Hughes admitted he thought back to that game when he realized around the fifth inning that he had not yet allowed a hit.

However, there was a big difference between the two starts. Said Hughes: "I felt more relaxed tonight."

Another difference? Unlike his no-hit bid against the Rangers, Hughes' parents were in the stands. Last week, they had considered coming to the game, but nearly scrapped their plans because they had trouble finding flights.

Hughes only learned yesterday that they would make the roughly seven-hour drive to the Bay Area from their home in Orange County.

As he walked off the field, Hughes found himself looking up again, this at his mom and dad. They watched the drama unfold from their seats behind the Yankees dugout. It was only the third times Hughes pitched in a big league game in front of his parents.

"They don't make it out much," Hughes said. "I had to perform."

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**yankees**

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04/22/10 2:45 AM ET

## Electric Hughes nearly no-hits A's

### Bid for history spoiled in eighth, but Yanks win sixth straight

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Phil Hughes couldn't help but know that he might be possessing no-hit stuff. If the Athletics' feeble swings and quick trips back to the bench weren't telling him, the scoreboard glaring into the Yankees' dugout surely was.

Hughes carried that bid into the eighth inning before settling instead for his second win in as many starts this season, walking away on the good side of a 3-1 victory at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum on Wednesday as the Yankees won their sixth straight game.

Relying on a fastball that consistently sat around 93-94 mph and a biting cutter, Hughes racked up a career-high 10 strikeouts and allowed just one hit -- an Eric Chavez comebacker that struck Hughes' left forearm and came to rest safely between the plate and the mound.

"Obviously, I knew I hadn't given up a hit," Hughes said. "To have it end that way is kind of a bummer, but that's the game. I'm just happy to get out of here with a win."

Pitching in front of a crowd of 30,211 that included his parents on a cool evening in the Bay Area, the 23-year-old Hughes issued a first-inning walk to Daric Barton -- the second batter he faced -- for the only blemish on his line through seven frames.

"That's as good as it gets," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "His stuff was great tonight. He was ahead in the count all night, he put them on the defense, and his cutter was outstanding to lefties. His curveball was great, his fastball command was great. It was a brilliant performance."

Toeing the rubber for the eighth inning at 87 pitches and with a healthy chance to go up to his prescribed limit of 110-115 if he kept the bid intact, Hughes threw a first-pitch fastball away to Chavez, who hit it right back up the middle.

"It seemed like I was looking for the ball for about eight minutes," Hughes said. "It hit off my forearm, which was angled in such a way that I thought it went straight up. Obviously it didn't, and I couldn't find it in time. It's not really the way you want to give up a no-hitter, but that's the way it goes."

"I'm yelling, 'It's in front of you!'" first baseman Mark Teixeira said. "I'm sure when he got hit, he just figured it was up in the air. It's unfortunate. He just pitched a great game. There's nothing we can do about it, but he hit the ball hard. If it doesn't hit Phil, it's up the middle for a hit anyway. It wasn't a cheap one, at least."

When Hughes exited later in the inning, he brushed the bill of his cap while looking up into the stands behind the first-base dugout. His parents, Phil Jr. and Dori, had made the drive from Santa Ana, Calif., and were his biggest fans -- among many -- on this evening.

"That was cool," Hughes said. "They weren't even going to come up, as it was. It's a pretty good drive from Southern California, so to have them up here was really special. I was happy I was able to give them something to cheer for."

Hughes was selected as the Yankees' fifth starter during Spring Training, outpitching competitors Joba Chamberlain, Alfredo Aceves, Sergio Mitre and since-released righty Chad Gaudin, who landed with the A's.

Hughes' improving changeup was pointed to at the time as a major factor in the decision, but his fastball and cutter were so good on Wednesday that catcher Jorge Posada didn't call for the changeup once, mixing in only a few curveballs along the way.

"When you look in the eighth, you understand and just hope he can get it done," Posada said. "He has worked hard, and I'm proud

of him. I'm really proud of him."

A first-round Draft selection of the Yankees in 2004, Hughes had flirted with history before. In his second Major League start -- on May 1, 2007 -- Hughes tossed 6 1/3 hitless innings against the Rangers in Texas before being removed with a strained left hamstring.

Unlike Yankees starter CC Sabathia, who ventured 7 2/3 hitless innings on April 10 against the Rays at Tropicana Field, Hughes saw his bid go into the late innings without the benefit of an outstanding defensive play.

Perhaps most memorably, Teixeira dodged a broken bat on Ryan Sweeney's first-inning grounder that Robinson Cano fielded, with Hughes covering first base for the out.

The one run charged to Hughes crossed the plate after he left the game in favor of Chamberlain, who allowed a Jake Fox single with two outs in the eighth, bringing home Chavez. Mariano Rivera pitched the ninth inning for his 532nd career save.

The Yankees struck A's starter Ben Sheets for two runs in the fourth inning to support Hughes. Alex Rodriguez opened the frame with a line drive to right field that Sweeney dove for and missed, allowing the ball to roll to the wall as A-Rod slid in safely with a triple.

Cano followed with another triple that hugged the right-field line as the Yankees scored their first run, and Posada knocked in the second run on a groundout. Sheets completed six innings, scattering four hits while walking three and striking out four.

Capping a six-pitch at-bat against Tyson Ross, Brett Gardner gave the Yankees their third run in the top of the ninth, lining a two-out single down the left-field line to score Curtis Granderson, who had reached on a forceout.

While satisfied with the win, Hughes admitted that he was "a little frustrated" by taking the no-hit bid so deep without actually getting to realize the dream. Girardi said that the experiences of Wednesday's effort could only help to serve Hughes well in the future.

"It's something that you know you have the ability to perform at a very high level," Girardi said. "I think he felt that going into this year because of what he did last year. He knew that he could pitch very well. He was very impressive for us last year, and he's started off great this year."

*Bryan Hoch is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.*

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# The Mercury News

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## Oakland A's spoil Phil Hughes' no-hitter but little else in New York Yankees' win

By Joe Stiglich  
[jstiglich@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:jstiglich@bayareanewsgroup.com)

Posted: 04/21/2010 10:32:48 PM PDT

Updated: 04/21/2010 11:43:52 PM PDT

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Tuesday's marathon game between the A's and New York Yankees featured 15 walks and was hideous to

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# The Mercury News

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the baseball purist's eyes.

Wednesday's follow-up couldn't have been more different.

Yankees right-hander Phil Hughes took a no-hitter into the eighth inning, and New York beat the A's 3-1 to claim the first two matchups of this three-game series.

The teams combined for just six walks one night after Tuesday's laborious 3-hour, 21-minute affair.

A's starter Ben Sheets pitched well enough to win, but he was outdueled by Hughes, who retired 21 of the first 22 batters he faced.

Daric Barton's first-inning walk was Hughes' only blemish as he took the mound for the bottom of the eighth.

Eric Chavez led off the inning with a sharp one-hopper back to the mound. The ball hit Hughes in the ribs and ricocheted back in front of the mound.

A disoriented Hughes looked everywhere but right in front of him, where the ball lay as Chavez reached on an infield single.

"To have it end that way was kind of a bummer," Hughes said.

The A's scored a run later in the inning off reliever Joba Chamberlain, as Jake Fox's pinch single scored Chavez to cut the A's deficit to 2-1.

But with runners at the corners and two out, Chamberlain retired Cliff Pennington on a grounder to first.

New York added a run in the ninth off Tyson Ross. The A's put runners at the corners with two out in the bottom half, but Mariano Rivera retired Kevin Kouzmanoff on a flyout to center to end it.

The A's have lost three straight for the first time this season.

Hughes (2-0) struck out a career-high 10 with two walks in 7 1/3 innings. His stuff certainly looked good enough to produce the first no-hitter at the Coliseum since the Baltimore Orioles used four pitchers to hold the A's hitless July 13, 1991.

That's the last no-hitter the A's have been involved in.

"He had two different fastballs," A's manager Bob Geren said of Hughes, "a cut fastball that was 88 to 91 (mph) and a four-seamer that was a good 4 to 5 mph harder. He pitched well."

Chavez said he and his teammates were thinking about a victory more than avoiding a no-hitter.

"When the ballgame is close, that's what you're thinking about, just getting on base," Chavez said.

The Yankees scored all the runs they would need in a two-run fourth, fueled by back-to-back triples.


Ryan Sweeney made a diving attempt on Alex Rodriguez's shallow fly ball to right field, but the ball skipped past him, allowing Rodriguez to reach third.

Robinson Cano pulled a ball just inside the first-base line for another triple to put the visitors on the

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# The Mercury News

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board. Cano scored on Jorge Posada's groundout.

But Sheets (1-1) appeared to take another step forward in his fourth start of the season. He allowed just two runs on four hits in six innings.

"I thought it was OK," Sheets said. "The stuff was better. With that stuff, I'd like to pitch better, throw more strikes and pitch deeper in the game."

A's reliever Jerry Blevins left the game in the eighth with back spasms but said he will know more about his condition after being examined today.

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04/22/10 3:00 AM ET

## Time remains for Hughes to finish bid

### Just 23, righty revisits '07 dominance with gem against A's

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- As Phil Hughes continued deep into another no-hit bid, it was impossible not to think back to the second start of his Major League career, the first time he offered such glimpses of promise and potential on this stage.

It was May 1, 2007, and Hughes had the ball for the Yankees at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington, similarly dominating Texas the way he seemed to be in complete control of the Oakland Athletics during Wednesday's 3-1 Yankees win at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

Backed by 10 runs in what would go down as his first Major League victory, Hughes saw the feel-good story end in the seventh inning that evening, as a strained left hamstring interrupted the drama.

So as Ryan Sweeney dug in for his third at-bat of the night on Wednesday, Hughes took a deep breath and tried his best to ignore the looming flashback.

"After I got that first out in the seventh, I was just hoping I didn't go down with something," Hughes said. "It's all I was thinking about. It's always nice to have stuff like that, but it's so hard to do. Any little thing can happen, and it did."

Hughes' night might have been spoiled by Eric Chavez's eighth-inning comebacker on Wednesday, but he'd sure take it over that 2007 start. After his last pitch against Texas, Hughes would be sidelined until August, missing 84 team games thanks to a sprained left ankle he suffered while performing agility drills in Tampa, Fla.

While Hughes has remained a prized chip in the time that has passed, it wasn't until Wednesday that he truly seemed all the way back to the level he was in 2007 -- and, he believes, probably better.

"I was much more comfortable and relaxed," Hughes said. "That was still coming off my debut -- I was nervous, anxious, all that stuff. I felt much more relaxed."

Despite several flirtations in the Minors, Hughes' last no-hitter came while he was wearing the uniform of Foothill High School in Santa Ana, Calif. Through seven innings, he seemed on the way to pitching another one, about seven hours up the California coast.

Hughes went further than he did on that steamy Texas evening, striking out a career-high 10 and wielding a much-improved arsenal than what he owned as a fresh-faced 20-year-old who had former manager Joe Torre on the edge of his seat for 19 Rangers outs three years ago.

"Then, I was strictly fastball-curveball," Hughes said. "Tonight, I threw a good amount of cutters. I wasn't really overthrowing at all -- I was letting my arm do the work. I would probably say my command tonight was the best it's ever been, just with the ability to throw to both sides of the plate and elevate to put guys away."

Maybe Hughes would have thrown a no-hitter that night against the Rangers had he stayed in, just as things might have progressed differently if he'd fielded Chavez's single in Oakland. Then again, maybe not.

"He commanded his fastball really well, and he kept us off balance with his curve," the Rangers' Brad Wilkerson said then. "He got in a groove throwing a lot of fastballs. I think he threw a great game, but hopefully, I think we would have made an adjustment on the fastball and gotten to him. We had some decent swings."

The last batter Hughes faced in that 2007 start was Mark Teixeira, who was looking at an 0-2 count when Hughes walked off the



mound.

"I honestly don't remember much of that game, but [Wednesday] is the best I've seen him," Teixeira said. "That's great to see with a young pitcher. It shows he's maturing. This early in the season, to be that sharp on a cold night, he was great."

The A's seemed late and overpowered by most of Hughes' arsenal, but if it all seemed a little bit familiar, there was probably a very good reason.

"I saw the same thing in Texas a couple of years ago," Posada said. "It tells you what kind of stuff he's got. It tells you that when he's on, he's got swing-and-miss stuff -- a lot of life. He goes out there and competes. That's all you can ask for."

When Hughes returned to the bench, he kidded CC Sabathia that the official scorer should have given an error on the Chavez ball, then settled in and allowed himself to daydream a little about what might have been.

"I was thinking about it -- why not?" Hughes said. "It's so hard to do that I guess you've got to fantasize about it sometimes, because it's probably not going to happen again."

If history is any guide, the Yankees would probably bet against that.

**Bryan Hoch** is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

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**ESPN**

Wednesday, April 21, 2010  
Updated: April 22, 4:08 AM ET

## Possible no-hitter sat at Hughes' feet

By Wallace Matthews  
ESPNNewYork.com

OAKLAND, Calif. -- There were 30,000 pairs of eyes on the baseball and not one of them belonged to [Phil Hughes](#).

That, in a nutshell, is what very well might have stood between Hughes and a slice of baseball immortality - his inability to locate a ball literally right under his nose.

That, in fact, was the only ball Phil Hughes failed to locate all night long.

For seven innings, he was Philth Hughes, throwing the nastiest fastballs and cutters any of his teammates could ever remember seeing him throw, putting the ball exactly where he wanted to, and setting down the [Oakland Athletics](#) one by one, three by three, inning after inning, the only blemish a four-pitch walk to [Daric Barton](#), the second batter of the game.

He had set down the next 20 batters, struck out a career-high 10, and now stood just six outs shy of throwing a no-hitter.

And then, [Eric Chavez](#) got his bat on a fastball, the ball took a hop off the grass in front of Hughes, smashed into the fleshy part of his left forearm, caromed off his chest and -- to Hughes, at least -- disappeared.

And while literally everyone in the ballpark stared and screamed and pointed, Phil Hughes was vainly searching the skies for a baseball that was lying right there at his feet.

"I'm yelling, 'It's in front of you, it's in front of you,'" [Mark Teixeira](#) recalled.

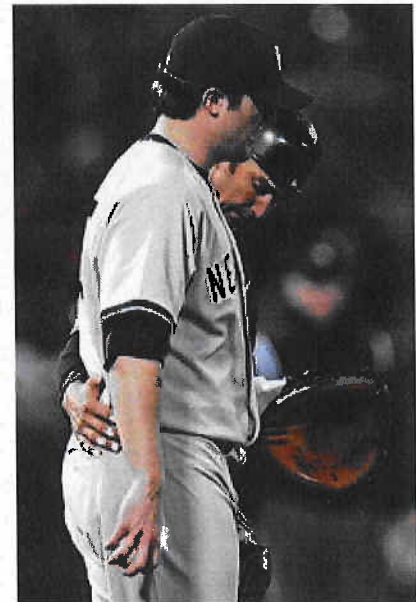
"I'm screaming, 'Down! Down! Down!,'" said [Jorge Posada](#).

"We were all yelling," [Joe Girardi](#) said. "But sometimes the last place you look is right in front of you."

There was no guarantee, of course, that had Hughes spotted the ball in time and threw out Chavez he would have gone on to complete the no-hitter, only that for at least one more batter, it would have lived on.

And in the overall scheme of things, it really didn't matter, because the Yankees held on to win, 3-1, despite some anxious moments from their two most reliable relievers, [Joba Chamberlain](#) and [Mariano Rivera](#).

“



Jorge Posada puts his arm around pitcher Phil Hughes after Hughes' no-hit bid was spoiled by Eric Chavez in the eighth.



To have it end that way was kind of a bummer. Not the way you want to give up a no-hitter, but that's the way it goes.

*" -- Phil Hughes, on losing his no-hit bid*

The important thing, of course, was that the Yankees had won again, and for the sixth straight time and the fifth consecutive series, and for the fourth time against a team that was expected to present a challenge to their defense of the World Championship they won last year.

But oh, for that agonizing moment, one of baseball's most elusive and impressive accomplishments was lying right there, if only Phil Hughes had been able to pick it up.

"To have it end that way was kind of a bummer," Hughes said. "Not the way you want to give up a no-hitter, but that's the way it goes."

Hughes had come this close before, of course, in the second start of his career in what seems like a lifetime ago. That was on May 1, 2007, the opponent was the [Texas Rangers](#) and Hughes was cruising along, hitless into the seventh inning when suddenly, he felt a twinge in his hamstring -- while pitching to a guy named Mark Teixeira, by the way -- and dropped out of sight until August.

In many ways, his career hasn't been the same since. He had to win his place in this starting rotation, the final spot available, after a spring training competition with four other guys, but when he pitches the way he did Wednesday night in Oakland, it makes you wonder what the point of the competition was in the first place.

"That's as good as it gets," Girardi said after Hughes' dominant performance in which he was credited with 7 1/3 innings, 10 strikeouts, two walks and one run, which scored when Chamberlain came in and surrendered an RBI single to pinch-hitter [Jake Fox](#) two batters after Hughes departed.

After working all spring on adding a changeup to his repertoire, Hughes did it solely with two kinds of fastballs, his four-seamer that hit speeds of up to 96 mph, and his cutter, that darted toward a hitter's ankles and left them flailing at the dirt. He mixed in a handful of curves, but for the most part, it was a night of heat, heat and more heat.

"He had an overpowering fastball," Posada said. "The ball was really jumping out of his hand."

Hughes got all the help he needed from his offense in the fourth inning, when [Alex Rodriguez](#) and [Robinson Cano](#) strung back-to-back triples together off [Ben Sheets](#), followed by a Posada ground out. That was all the Yankee scoring until [Brett Gardner](#) singled home a ninth inning run to provide a bit of breathing room, and still the Yankees had to hold their breath through a ninth in which Rivera allowed a runner to get to third before throwing one of his patented chainsaws to [Kevin Kouzmanoff](#), sawing off his bat and inducing a game-ending liner to center.

## Yankees blog



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But the story was Hughes, who although technically the fifth starter in the Yankee rotation turned in the most dominant performance of the season so far, better even than [CC Sabathia's](#) flirtation with a no-hitter against the [Tampa Bay Rays](#) in the fifth game of the season.

That one needed several great plays in the field to keep it going. This one needed only one freak play to shut it down. And unlike Sabathia's effort, which according to Girardi was destined to end after eight innings, no-hitter or not, Hughes, who had thrown only 87 pitches through seven innings, was going to get the chance to finish up.

"If he doesn't give up the hit," Girardi said. "We let him keep going."

As Hughes left the mound, he spotted his parents, who had driven up from their home in Orange County to see him pitch, sitting behind the Yankee dugout.

"I don't know how they got such good seats," he said, "but I'm glad I at least gave them something to root for."

Like everyone else in the ballpark, they, too, were pointing and shouting at the baseball. But the one guy in the park who needed to see it most of all had no idea where it was.

"I guess all you can do now is fantasize about it," Hughes said. "Because it's probably not going to happen again."

Not like that, anyway.

## Game notes

Girardi said he expected neither Chamberlain nor Rivera, both of whom pitched both Tuesday and Wednesday, would be available for Thursday afternoon's series finale. Asked if that meant Sabathia would be on a longer than usual leash, Girardi just laughed. "It means all of our other guys are going to have to step up." ... the last time the Yankees had back-to-back triples was in 2007 and the names were [Johnny Damon](#) and [Melky Cabrera](#).

*Wallace Matthews covers the Yankees for [ESPNNewYork.com](#). [Follow him on Twitter](#).*

# Hughes carries no-hit bid into 8th, Yanks win

SI.com

April 22, 2010

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) When the ball pounded off of [Phil Hughes](#)' left forearm, he thought it would go straight up in the air. It glanced off his chest and instead dropped several feet in front of the mound. He just plain lost track of it - and lost his no-hit bid, too.

Catcher [Jorge Posada](#) and others yelled to no avail. The pitcher finally saw [Alex Rodriguez](#) pointing. Too late.

Hughes took an impressive no-hit try into the eighth inning Wednesday night, losing it when [Eric Chavez](#) bounced a hard comebacker off the pitcher's forearm and chest in the [New York Yankees](#)' 3-1 win over the [Oakland Athletics](#).

``To have it end that way is kind of a bummer. That's the game," Hughes said. ``Yeah, frustrated. It's so hard to do, to throw a no-hitter. You don't get many opportunities to do it."

Hughes (2-0) struck out a career-high 10 in the Yankees' sixth straight win, with his parents Phil and Dori in the stands to see it after driving up from Orange County for his outing. Hughes was in complete control until Chavez opened the eighth with that one-hopper back to the mound.

Hughes had little time to react, and the 23-year-old righty searched for the ball as Chavez hustled for a single.

``Sometimes the last place you look is right in front of you, or you look down at your feet. He was looking for the baseball and just couldn't find it," manager [Joe Girardi](#) said.

Hughes said it would have gotten through for a hit had he not stopped the ball. Chavez had a good feeling when he made contact.

``I didn't see it hit him but I knew I hit decent enough," Chavez said. ``He didn't find it and that was good. You don't go up there in a close game thinking you need to break up the no-hitter. Everybody knows one swing of the bat and you're right back in the game. Maybe if it's 5-0, 6-0, yeah, it's 'somebody get a hit!'"

This was the second near-miss for the defending World Series champions this season. [CC Sabathia](#) held Tampa Bay hitless for 7 2-3 innings on April 10.

Colorado's [Ubaldo Jimenez](#) pitched the majors' only no-hitter of 2010 last Saturday night at Atlanta.

``From the get go I knew he had good stuff," Posada said. ``We talk about the command of his fastball, that was the difference."

Hughes was trying for the Yankees' first no-hitter since [David Cone](#)'s perfect game against Montreal on July 18, 1999.

Hughes had come close before - in 2007, during his second major league start, he had a no-hitter going through 6 1-3 innings at Texas before he suddenly hurt his left hamstring and had to leave the game.

``After I got that first out in the seventh I was just hoping I didn't go down with something," Hughes said, chuckling.

``That was all I was thinking about."

Hughes won the fifth spot in the Yankees' rotation by pitching well in spring training, and his outing at Oakland was his best performance this season. After a one-out walk to [Daric Barton](#) in the first inning, Hughes retired 20 straight batters before Chavez's infield hit.

Overall, Hughes gave up only one hit in 7 1-3 innings and walked two.

Two batters after Chavez got aboard, Hughes walked [Gabe Gross](#) and was done. He was charged with Oakland's lone run in the standout 101-pitch performance after pinch-hitter [Jake Fox](#) had an RBI single off [Joba Chamberlain](#).

``I'll take 28 to 30 more of these if I can," Hughes said.

[Mariano Rivera](#) finished the three-hitter for his sixth save in as many chances.

A-Rod and [Robinson Cano](#) hit back-to-back triples to start the fourth off \$10 million A's ace [Ben Sheets](#) (1-1). Posada followed Cano's hit with an RBI groundout. [Brett Gardner](#)'s RBI single with two outs in the ninth provided an insurance run.

``My stuff was a lot better but I should have been able to throw more strikes and get deeper in the game," Sheets said.

`` How Hughes pitched is irrelevant to me. You look back and, yeah, he pitched a great game."

New York matched the 1926 Yankees' franchise record by winning its first five series of the season.

Hughes shut down the A's by pounding the zone with his spot-on fastball and mixing in an effective curveball. He quieted the crowd of 30,211 for much of the chilly, breezy spring evening in the Bay Area. It was Hughes' first career start against Oakland.

``That's as good as it gets," Girardi said. ``His stuff was great tonight. Ahead in the count all night and it put them on the defense. His cutter was outstanding to the lefties. His curveball was great and his fastball command was great. It was a brilliant performance."

Hughes began last season in the minors then was called up April 28. He made seven starts before becoming a reliable reliever as closer Rivera's primary setup man over the final three months.

The Yankees have held opponents to three or fewer runs in each game during their winning streak.

Both managers mixed up their lineups for the middle game of the series. [Randy Winn](#) earned a start in right field for the Yankees in place of [Nick Swisher](#). Oakland manager [Bob Geren](#) rested leadoff hitter and center fielder [Rajai Davis](#) for part of the night, moving [Cliff Pennington](#) to the top of the order and putting catcher [Kurt Suzuki](#) in the cleanup spot.

The umpiring crew changed, too. Ed Rapuano was replaced for the final two games of the series after taking a foul ball off his facemask Tuesday night as plate umpire. The A's said Rapuano was taking a few days off as a precaution. Pacific Coast League umpire Mike Muchlinski was called up to take Rapuano's spot.

**NOTES:** New York last hit consecutive triples on Aug. 25, 2007, by [Melky Cabrera](#) and [Johnny Damon](#) vs. Detroit. ... A's LF [Travis Buck](#) was a late scratch with a strained right oblique muscle, replaced by [Eric Patterson](#). ... A's reliever [Jerry Blevins](#) was pulled off the mound after experiencing back spasms. ... A high school team from nearby Vallejo, the hometown of [Sabathia](#), hung out on the field before the game. [Sabathia](#) pitches Thursday afternoon's series finale. ... Harlem Globetrotter [Moo Moo Evans](#) threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

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File photo Elise Amendola/The Associated Press  
 Yankees relief pitcher Joba Chamberlain screams after striking out Boston Red Sox's J.D. Drew on April 6 in Boston. Chamberlain has settled into the setup role for the Yankees.

Journal News 4-22-10

## Joba tabbed as setup man

Chad Jennings  
 cjennings@ohiod.com

### YANKEES NOTEBOOK

OAKLAND, Calif. — When the Yankees broke camp this month, manager Joe Girardi said his relievers would have to earn their roles. Mariano Rivera would pitch the ninth inning, but the setup job was up for grabs.

Joba Chamberlain has grabbed it.

"I think he's done what most of us expected him to do," Girardi said. "I think he's enjoying himself and what he's doing."

On Wednesday, Girardi made official what was becoming increasingly obvious: Chamberlain will be his primary eighth-inning reliever, setting up for Rivera.

Chamberlain said that when he learned he wouldn't be the Yankees' fifth starter, he immediately turned his sights on the eighth inning.

"That's the first thing that came into my mind," Chamberlain said. "Knowing I've been in that situation before, but also knowing that I still have a lot to prove. Knowing it's not going to be just handed to me."

No Yankees reliever has been used more often or for more innings than Chamberlain, who pitched in seven of the team's first 13 games, striking out 10 while walking three.

Chan Ho Park is on the disabled list, Damaso Marte has been used primarily against left-handers, and Dave Robertson's overall numbers are inflated by the grand slam he allowed against the Angels.

Chamberlain, though, has been steady at the back of the

bullpen and he's been especially good since the end of the opening road trip, having gone four straight outings without allowing a run.

**Winn back in:** Randy Winn made his second start of the season Wednesday in Oakland, starting in right field in place of Nick Swisher, who broke an 0-for-16 slide on Tuesday.

Girardi said he entered the series planning to give Swisher Wednesday's game, off. Winn entered the game as the only Yankees position player without a hit this season.

"Just a day off for Swish," Girardi said. "And keeping everyone involved."

**Second lefty:** The Yankees made it clear in spring training that they would be unlikely to carry two left-handed specialists this season. If they were to carry two left-handers in the bullpen, one would need to be able to get out right-handers.

Boone Logan made a case for that role in his Yankees debut.

Pitching on Tuesday night for the first time since his weekend call-up from Triple-A, Logan retired the first four batters he faced — two lefties and two righties — and he pitched to a total of seven batters.

**Yankee clippings:** Reliever Robertson returned to the team after missing Tuesday's game to be at his grandmother's funeral in Alabama. Girardi said he hasn't decided on a lineup for today's game, but he "might" give Brett Gardner a second straight start against a lefty pitcher.

## Joba earns setup spot

By GEORGE A. KING III

OAKLAND — When Joba Chamberlain didn't beat out Phil Hughes for the No. 5 starter spot in spring training, many assumed Chamberlain automatically would return to being Mariano Rivera's setup man.

Nevertheless, the only man with a vote wasn't thinking that way.

"You have to earn everything in this game," manager Joe Girardi said. "When you produce you continue to pitch."

Fourteen games into the season Chamberlain has proven worthy of the valuable eighth-inning role.

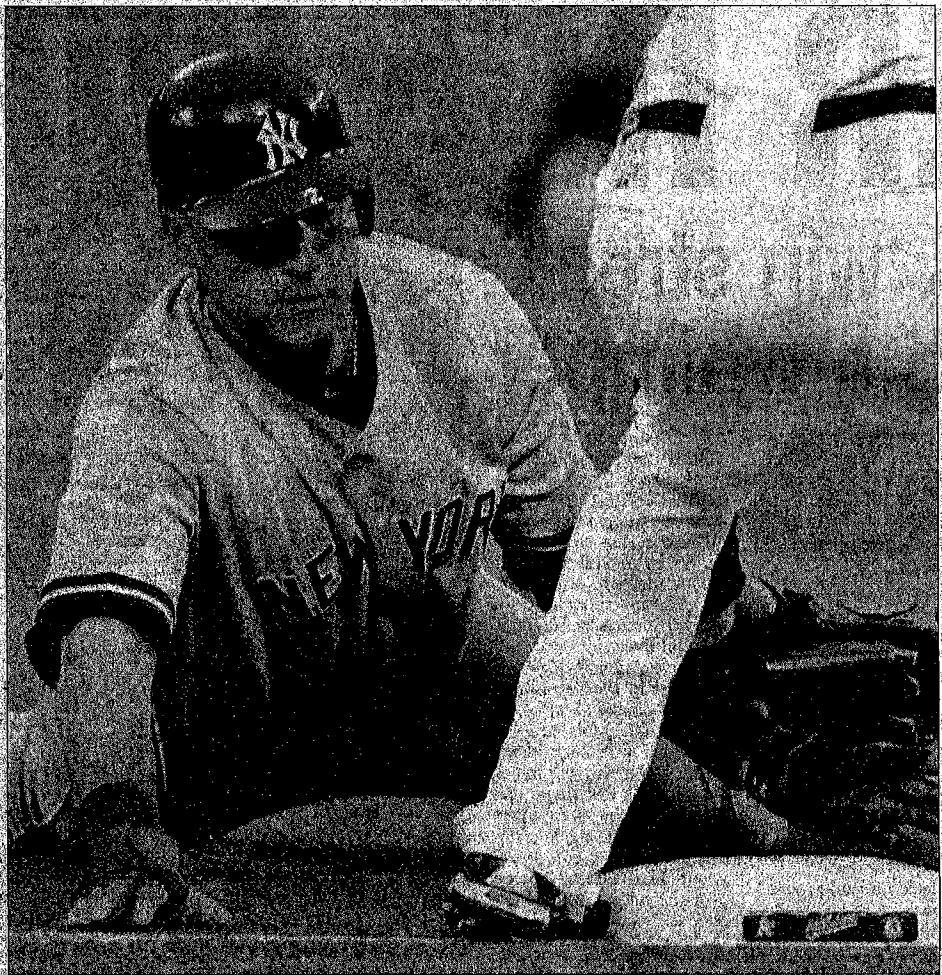
"I think you can say that," Girardi said before last night's 3-1 win over the A's when asked if Chamberlain was Rivera's setup man.

If Girardi had any doubts about Chamberlain, they were erased Tuesday night when he entered the game in the seventh inning got out of a bases-loaded jam with two outs. He then hurled a perfect eighth, notching two strikeouts.

When he didn't win a spot in the rotation, Chamberlain thought he was the eighth-inning arm.

"It was the first thing that came to my mind," he said. "I knew I had done it before but I knew I still had a lot to prove. I knew it wouldn't be handed to me."

In eight games, he has given up seven hits in 8 1/2 innings and fanned 10. He allowed an inherited runner to score last night, but had stranded seven others he inherited.



**CLOSE PLAY:** Derek Jeter is tagged out at third base by Kevin Kouzmanoff during the first inning of the Yankees' 3-1 victory last night in Oakland. Reuters

# CC copes with old demons

By GEORGE A. KING III

OAKLAND — The team he grew up watching from the seats of the Coliseum hasn't been kind to CC Sabathia. Nor has the building he used to travel to from his hometown of Vallejo, Calif.

Today, Sabathia attempts to continue a slight upward trend against the A's that started last year and the Coliseum when he closes a three-game series for the Yankees.

His big-league record is 138-81 and, at 29, he is laying the foundation for a possible Hall of Fame career. Nevertheless, against the A's — even with two wins against them last year — Sabathia is mortal. In 18 starts he is 5-7 with a 5.80 ERA. Inside the Coliseum he is 2-4 with a 6.35 ERA in nine outings.

"It's one of those things that is weird," Sabathia said about his struggles against the A's and at the Coliseum. "I am trying to turn it around."

Those numbers were worse until Sabathia joined the Yankees.

## YANKEES NOTES

last season. In three games against the A's last season, Sabathia was 2-0 with a 4.57 ERA. One of those wins came at the Coliseum.

In three starts this season (none against the A's) Sabathia is 2-0 with a 2.84 ERA and has been very impressive in his last two outings.

➤ **Xavier Nady**, now with the Cubs, received his 2009 World Series ring when GM **Brian Cashman** delivered it to him personally before the Mets' game last night at Citi Field.

Nady, who only played seven games for the Bombers last season before having season-ending elbow surgery, praised Cashman for bringing him the ring, which he called "gorgeous."

➤ **David Robertson** rejoined the team in time for last night's

game. The righty reliever spent Monday and Tuesday in Alabama attending the funeral of his grandmother who passed away Saturday.

➤ When **Joe Girardi** was asked if **Javier Vazquez** getting the win in Tuesday's 7-3 victory over the A's would get the Bronx boo-birds off Vazquez's back, the manager reacted as if he hadn't heard Vazquez get booed off the mound last Wednesday at the Stadium.

"We just worry about him pitching and doing what he does, that's what we worry about," Girardi said. "You don't worry about the other stuff."

Vazquez was far from dominant in 5 1/3 innings in which he allowed three runs, six hits, walked three and fanned six. And he admitted there is work to be done with his fastball that topped out at 91 mph.

"My mechanics are off, espe-

cially with the fastball," Vazquez said. "I am trying to rush it a bit but this was improvement over the first two games."

It certainly was considering Vazquez had given up 12 runs and 14 hits in his first two outings against the Rays and Angels, respectively.

➤ Umpire **Ed Rapuano** did not work last night's game after he was forced to leave Tuesday night after taking a **Kevin Kouzmanoff** foul tip off his mask. He was replaced by **Mike Muchlinski** last night.

➤ The Yankees open a three-game series against the Angels tomorrow night in Anaheim. **A.J. Burnett** (2-0, 2.37) draws **Ervin Santana** (1-2, 4.35). **Andy Pettitte** (2-0, 1.35) faces **Joel Poincello** (2-1, 1.77). Saturday and **Javier Vazquez** (1-2, 8.27) opposes **Scott Kazmir** (0-1, 13.50). Sunday. —With AP



## NOTEBOOK

# Cano's patience impresses

BY ERIK BOLAND  
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Robinson Cano didn't have a hit Tuesday night and struck out twice.

Yet for Joe Girardi it was still a good night for his No. 5 hitter as Cano, a self-described "free swinger," reached base three times by matching a career best with three walks.

"It is impressive," Girardi said yesterday. "We've talked about this young man that we think he's maturing and he has a better idea of what he needs to do and how to work pitchers and what to look for in certain at-bats and situations. He's growing up."

Cano, with five walks this season, is not the walk machine teammates Nick Johnson (16), Nick Swisher (11) or Mark Teixeira (11) are. But he has watched them closely, Johnson in particular.

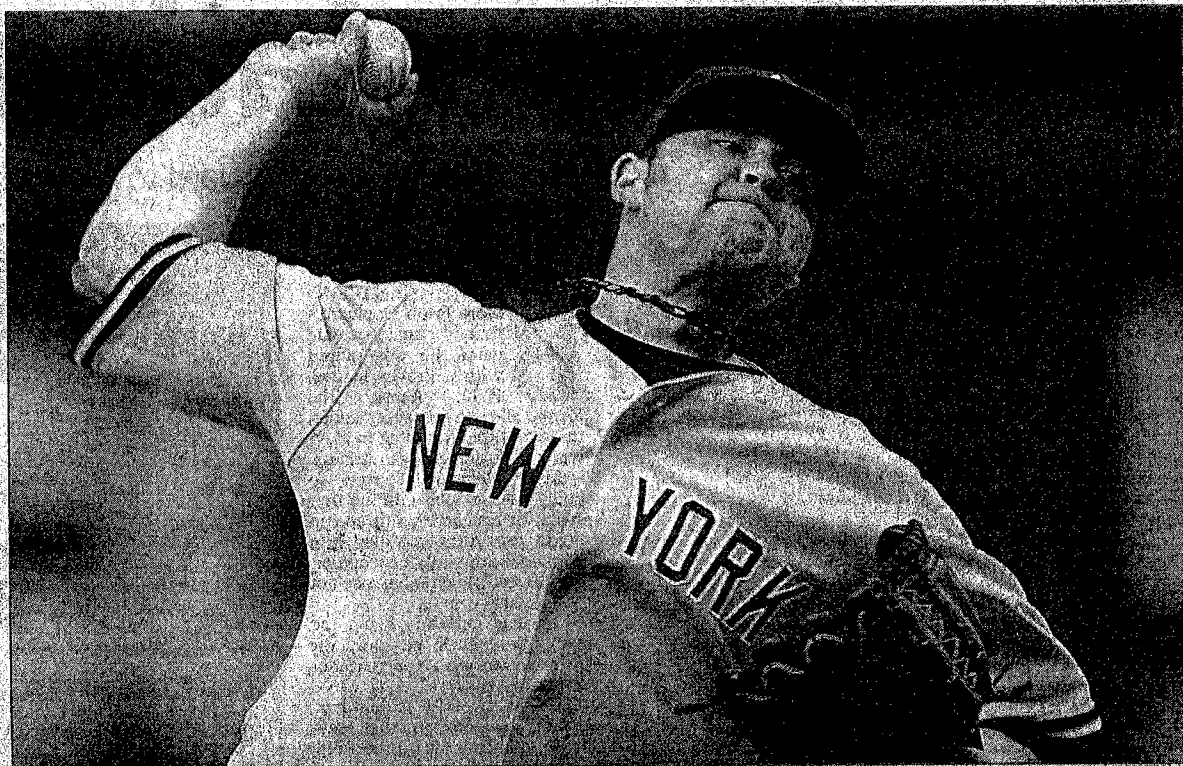
"I watch Nick Johnson, he doesn't chase pitches," Cano said. "If it's not what he wants, he doesn't swing. That's why he's so successful at getting on base. That's a guy you learn how to take pitches and how to walk."

It is a work in progress for Cano, who struggled last year with runners in scoring position because he was less selective with runners on, but still only struck out 63 times, second least among regulars (Melky Cabrera had 59).

"It's not difficult [trying to be selective]," said Cano, hitting .327 with a .375 OBP going into last night. "I'm a free swinger but you know what, it's not hard. This started in spring training, I've been swinging great so that's what I'm doing right now, just taking pitches, seeing what I want and if it's not [what I want], I take a walk. I swing at what I want."

## ■ Day off for Swisher

Randy Winn, with just six at-bats this season, got the start in rightfield in place of Swisher, who snapped out of a 0-for-16 slump Tuesday night with a two-run single. "Just a day off for Swish and keeping everyone involved," Girardi said. "Swish is fine."



Joba Chamberlain has been pitching well lately and received a passing grade from manager Joe Girardi to reclaim the setup role.

# Back in familiar role

■ Chamberlain locks up his old setup spot in pen

■ Joba needed to prove himself again to get job

BY ERIK BOLAND  
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Joba Chamberlain did exactly what the Yankees hoped he would after not winning the fifth starter's job.

He secured the role of primary setup man for closer Mariano Rivera, a not surprising announcement manager Joe Girardi made before last night's game.

"I think you could say that," Girardi said. "That's where we've been using him. Last night we brought him in with two outs in the seventh but I still consider that an eighth-inning kind of thing. I think you can say that [it's his role]."

After Girardi tabbed Phil Hughes as his fifth starter toward the end of spring training, he made a point of saying Chamberlain would have to earn his

Today



Yankees at Oakland  
TV: YES, 3:37 p.m.  
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## NOW ONLINE

Last night's Yankees game ended too late for this edition. For game story, go to [newsday.com/sports](http://newsday.com/sports)

bullpen role. The assumption was that Chamberlain automatically would reassume the role that made him a phenomena in 2007.

"That's the first thing that came into my mind," Chamberlain said. "Knowing I had been in that situation before but also knowing I still had a lot to prove, knowing that it wasn't just going to be handed to me. We had a lot of guys throwing the ball well, to understand that I had to go back

out there and prove myself again in that role."

Chamberlain, who has allowed just one run in six appearances since giving up a run in the season opener in Boston, has done that to Girardi's satisfaction. He all but locked up the role in Tuesday night's 7-3 victory, relieving Boone Logan with two outs in the seventh and the bases loaded.

Chamberlain struck out A's cleanup hitter Kevin Koussamanoff, who swung at an 89-mph slider to end the inning.

"To have that confidence in me to put me in that position is a good feeling," Chamberlain said.

Chamberlain then struck out Kurt Suzuki, who hit a two-run homer in the sixth, looking at a 96-mph fastball to start a 1-2-3 eighth and got Eric Chavez swinging at a 94-mph fastball for the second out.

"I think he's done what most of us expected him to do," Girardi said. "I think he's enjoying himself and what he's doing. I've liked the way he's went about his business."

Which mostly means pitching aggressively, something Cham-

berlain did inconsistently as a starter. Girardi also wanted to see how Chamberlain's body would react to the different routine of a reliever after preparing all spring as a starter.

"You have to see how guys respond going back-to-back," Girardi said. "You don't want to crown somebody before it's time."

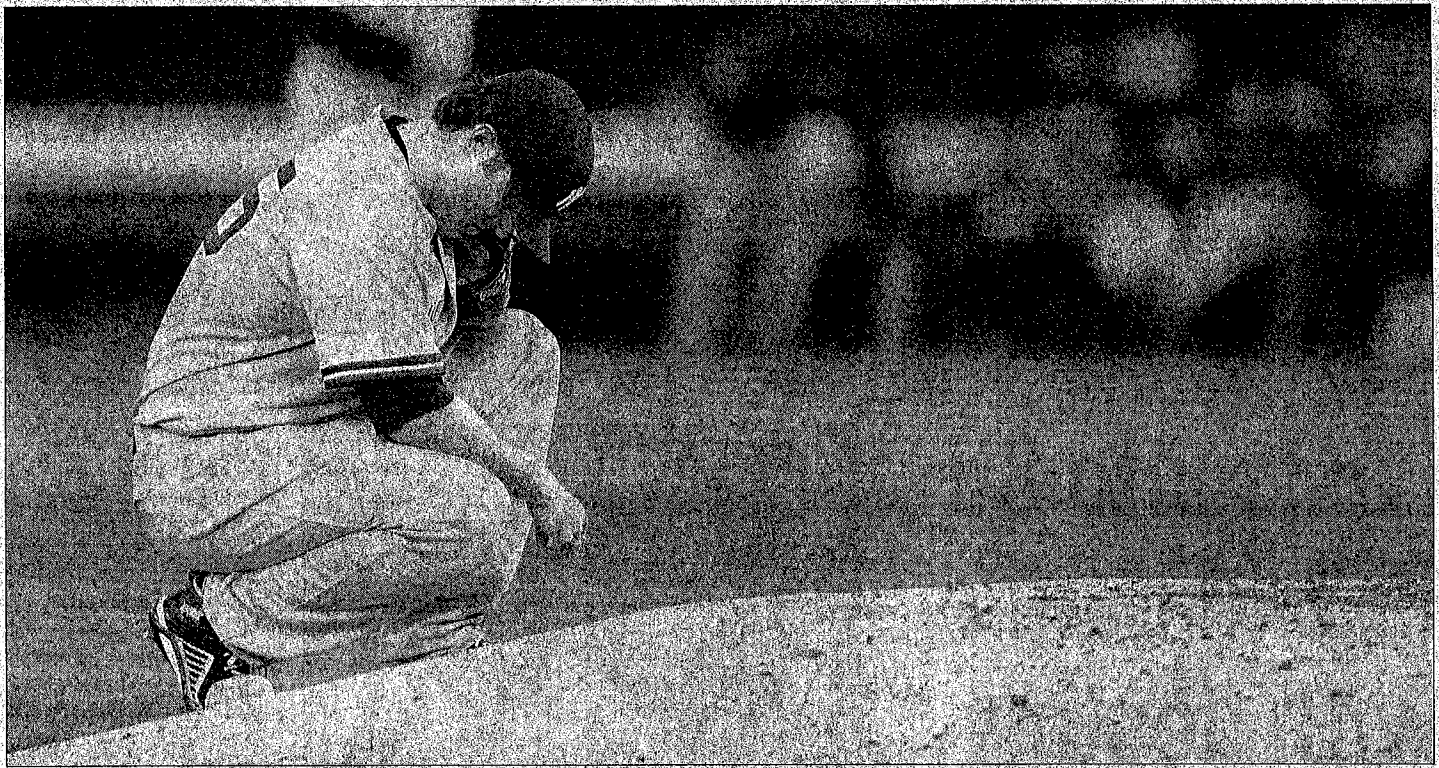
For Chamberlain, Girardi not crowning him out of spring training served as motivation.

"Joe does a tremendous job of challenging every one of his players," Chamberlain said. "I think that's an ability of a great manager that you can't teach and he does a fantastic job of that. Just to know that I had the opportunity to continue to be able to do that was something I looked forward to."

Chamberlain entered camp saying his goal was to start and, of course, he was asked last night if he saw the eighth-inning role as something for which he was best suited.

"It's my natural habitat right now," Chamberlain said. "I can't look at what it's going to be. I take it one day at a time."

**BASEBALL**



Phil Hughes is deep in his thoughts behind the mound before his first pitch of last night's game and he goes on to allow one hit and strikes out 10 in 7 1/3 innings. Photo by Reuters

**Yankees insider**  
BY MARK FEINSAND

**Joba wins game of 8-ball**

OAKLAND — The eighth inning is Joba-time once again.

Three weeks after declaring the eighth up for grabs, Joe Girardi said yesterday that Joba Chamberlain has landed back in the setup role, the same position in which he excelled when he burst upon the scene in late-2007.

"I think he's done what most of us expected him to do," Girardi said. "I think he's enjoying himself and what he's doing. It's nice when guys have roles and when the phone rings, they know it's them."

After giving up runs in two of his first three outings, Chamberlain made four straight scoreless appearances, including a crucial one in Tuesday night's 7-3 win over the A's in the series opener.

Chamberlain struck out cleanup hitter Kevin Kouzmanoff with the bases loaded to end the seventh to preserve a four-run lead, then hurled a perfect eighth.

"In that situation, one bad pitch can tie the game," Chamberlain said. "That he has the confidence to bring me into that situation, bases loaded and no room for error, it's a good feeling."

In his first seven outings, Chamberlain has struck out 10 and walked three in 7 2/3 innings, regaining the swagger that made

him a hero less than three years ago. When he lost the fifth starter competition to Phil Hughes toward the end of spring training, Chamberlain figured he would fill the eighth-inning role, but he knew he would have to prove himself before anything was handed to him.

"Joe does a tremendous job of challenging every one of his players," Chamberlain said. "To know that I had the opportunity to do that, it was something I looked forward to."

**WRESTLING WITH FAME**

When Javier Vazquez returned to the clubhouse after Tuesday night's game, he found a championship wrestling belt on his chair, a gift from Andy Pettitte for being the team's player of the game.

The only problem was Vazquez had no idea what it meant.

Unaware of the ritual started last year by Johnny Damon and A.J. Burnett, Vazquez thought his teammates were playing a prank on him.

"He thought it was a joke," Burnett said. "It took me a while to convince him it was a real thing. He gets it now."

Vazquez picked up his first win of the year on Tuesday, giving up three runs over

5 1/3 innings against the A's. Burnett was happy for his teammate, knowing how players want to make a good impression after joining a new team.

"Javy has nothing to prove, but deep down, he may feel he does," Burnett said. "It was great for him to get that first 'W.'"

**NO SWEAT FOR GIRARDI**

Major League Baseball reversed its stance on managers wearing hooded sweatshirts during games, an issue that had been raised when league officials told Rays manager Joe Maddon that the hoodie didn't meet MLB uniform standards.

Girardi joked this week that as long as he didn't have to wear a coat and tie, he was fine with any uniform rules the league passed down. Informed that the league had reversed course on Maddon's hoodie, Girardi — who was wearing one as part of his standard pregame outfit — was indifferent toward the decision.

"The hoodie is back," Girardi said. "They didn't say we couldn't wear it in BP and I don't ever wear it in games, so it didn't really change my life."

Boone Logan made his Yankees debut on Tuesday night, pitching 1 1/3 scoreless innings.

**EXTRA INNINGS**

**STAT OF THE GAME**

**7** The Yankees scored seven runs on Tuesday night despite recording only five hits, thanks largely to the 10 walks they drew against the A's. It marked only the second time since 1996 that the Bombers scored seven or more runs on five or fewer hits; the other coming on July 25, 2006 at Texas.

**TEST YOUR YANKEE IQ**

Everyone knows that Lou Gehrig is the only Yankee ever to wear No. 4 on his uniform. But who is the only player to sport No. 72 on his back for the Bombers?

**NEXT GAME**

Today, 3:35, at Oakland  
CC Sabathia (2-0, 2.84) vs. Dallas Braden (2-0, 2.70); TV: YES.

More fun for eight games in 2009. Answer: Juan Miranda, who

# NorthJersey.com

## Yankees notes: Joba the Eighth

Thursday, April 22, 2010  
The Record

### Joba the Eighth

Joba Chamberlain has about claimed the eighth-inning relief role. "I think you could say that," manager Joe Girardi said. Nearly a month after he lost the No. 5 starter's competition to Phil Hughes, Chamberlain has "done what most of us expected him to do."

In what Girardi considered an "eighth-inning type situation" on Tuesday night, Chamberlain entered with two out in the seventh and struck out cleanup hitter Kevin Kouzmanoff, representing the tying run. "Putting me in that position ... there's no room for error," said Chamberlain, who had 10 strikeouts in his first 7 2/3 innings.

While Chamberlain expected to resume his past role as Mariano Rivera's primary setup man, he also accepted Girardi's challenge to earn it. "[I understood] that I have to go back out there and prove myself again in that role," Chamberlain said. "I had no time to be disappointed because I had to prove to myself that I could still help this team."

Part of Girardi's strategy was to build back Chamberlain's stamina to throw in consecutive games, or three out of four days. "I don't want to push him too fast, just because he's adjusting," Girardi said. "That's

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why I really haven't said, 'Oh, this is going to be my eighth-inning guy.' "

### Take, take, take

With 10 more walks Tuesday, the Yanks led the majors with 71 walks (5.46 per game). "Be assertive in the strike zone. If not, just pass the baton," Alex Rodriguez said. "That's the big key for our offense, to stay patient." That theory has even taken hold with Robinson Cano, admittedly still a free swinger.

Cano saw 31 pitches in five at-bats Tuesday (0-for-2, 3 walks). Girardi said it was a sign of Cano's maturity, while Cano said he's following the lead of players like Nick Johnson. "If it's not what he wants, he doesn't swing," Cano said.

— Pete Caldera

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## Joba Chamberlain nails down job as Yankees set-up man

By Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger

April 21, 2010, 9:37PM



Jared Wickerham/Getty Images

Joba Chamberlain will serve as the bridge to Yankees closer Mariano Rivera.

OAKLAND -- It was mostly a formality.

But on Wednesday, Yankees manager Joe Girardi said for the first time publicly that the job of setting up for Mariano Rivera belongs to Joba Chamberlain.

"Joe having that confidence in me, putting me in that situation, it's a good feeling," Chamberlain said.

Since failing in his bid to land the final spot in the Yankees rotation, Chamberlain appeared to be a natural fit for the job, considering his track record there. On Wednesday, the right-hander admitted to thinking as much.

"That's the first thing that came to my mind, just knowing I'd been in that situation before," Chamberlain said.

Yet, Girardi left the job vacant. Leaving the competition open seemed to help Chamberlain refocus on a new goal quickly.

Said Chamberlain: "I had no time to be disappointed."

In his seven appearances out of the bullpen, Chamberlain has looked more like the flamethrower that dominated upon arrival in 2007, seizing the set-up job by posting a 2.35 ERA with 10 strikeouts in 7 2/3 innings.

"I think he's done what most of us expected him to do," Girardi said. "I think he's enjoying himself and what he's doing."

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## Girardi 'careful' in leaning on Joba Manager likes righty in setup role but won't rush progress

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com  
04/21/10 9:40 PM ET

OAKLAND -- On the spring day that Joba Chamberlain sat in his manager's office and was told he wouldn't be a starting pitcher for the Yankees this season, the right-hander immediately began thinking about the eighth inning.

If the Yankees weren't about to hand the job to him on a silver platter, which they wouldn't, Chamberlain made it his mission to prove that Joe Girardi should be giving him the ball in those key situations once again.

"That's the first thing that came into my mind," Chamberlain said. "Knowing that I've been in that situation before, but also knowing that I still had a lot to prove. It's not just going to be handed to me; we've got a lot of guys throwing the ball well.

"I had to go back out there and prove myself again in that role. There was no time to be disappointed, because I had to prove to myself that I could still help this team on the other side."

Chamberlain seemed like a natural fit for the role in Tuesday's 7-3 win over the A's, hurling 1 1/3 scoreless innings of relief with three strikeouts to help preserve Javier Vazquez's first victory of the season.

It must have been enough of an audition for Girardi, who finally seems ready to declare that Chamberlain has been anointed as his eighth-inning reliever.

"I think he's done what most of us expected him to do," Girardi said. "I think he's enjoying himself and what he's doing. It's nice when guys have roles and you can turn to them, and when the phone rings they know it's them."

Girardi prefers to keep his bullpen roles fluid, mostly because he likes to stay away from using pitchers three days in a row and anticipates that there will be days when someone else is asked to fill in. But Girardi noted that he likes the way Chamberlain has gone about his business, which is as close as a definitive statement as he has offered.

"The thing about Joba is [that] I don't want to push him too fast," Girardi said. "He's adjusting to going back-to-back and those sorts of things. That's why I haven't really said, 'Oh, this is going to be my eighth-inning guy.'

"We have to see how guys respond a few times going back-to-back and how they physically feel. You have to be careful that you don't crown someone before it's time."

Chamberlain entered Tuesday's game in the seventh inning, inheriting a high-pressure situation with the bases loaded and the tying run at the plate, and he escaped by striking out Kevin Kouzmanoff put an end to the Athletics' latest and greatest threat of the evening.

"One bad pitch to a great hitter could tie the game," Chamberlain said. "To bring me in that situation -- bases loaded -- you've got no room for error. There's no free base. To have that confidence to put me in that position is a good feeling."

While the Yankees have made it known that Chamberlain won't return to the starting rotation in 2010, the right-hander has not closed the door on the idea that he might someday log another big league start. But for now, he is a reliever, and that is where his focus needs to be.

"I can't look at what it's going to be," Chamberlain said. "I take it one day at a time. It's one thing where you've got to embrace your role and go with it. You can't look back, you can't look ahead. You've got to take it one pitch at a time and continue to go from there."

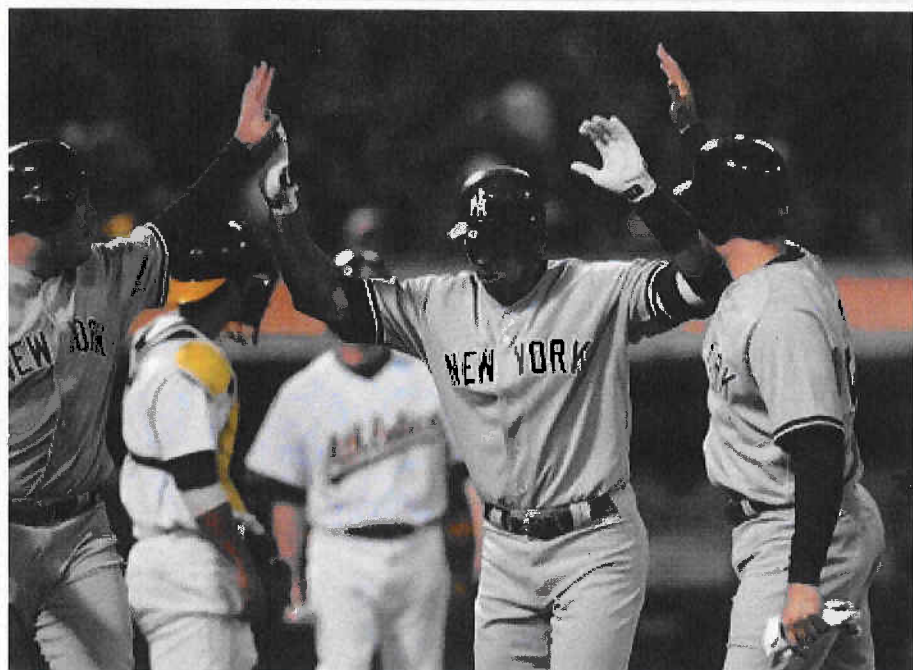


Everything Jersey

## Yankees wrapup: Javier Vazquez, Ed Rapuano and a bomb by Alex Rodriguez

By Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger

April 21, 2010, 10:07AM



Ray Chavez/Oakland Tribune/MCT

Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez is congratulated by teammates Nick Johnson, left, and Mark Teixeira at home plate after his three-run home run on Tuesday off A's pitcher Craig Breslow in the fifth inning.

OAKLAND -- From the Yankees' 7-3 victory against the A's on Tuesday:

### **A leap forward**

Put away the torches and pitchforks, folks. Sure, Yankees pitcher Javier Vazquez was far from dominant. But he was better than in his two previous outings. What Vazquez did against the A's might not have been enough satisfy those who still blame him for the collapse of 2004.

But, it was good enough for his first victory in his second stint with the Yankees.

"It was an improvement from my last couple of starts," said Vazquez, who allowed three runs in 5 1/3 innings.

Vazquez allowed six hits walked three and struck out six. He battled with mechanical issues that made it difficult to control his fastball, though he said his breaking pitches were crisper than they had been in his previous two starts.

"It's getting there," he said. "I was better today."

He left after making a bad pitch to A's catcher Kurt Suzuki, who jumped on the offering for a two-run homer.

### Smooth move

Vazquez bailed himself out of trouble in the second inning, snagging Travis Buck's hard liner back to the box before tossing to first, to double up Mark Ellis. The double play ended an inning that started with Vazquez allowing a single and double.

"He really settled in after that," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "I thought it was a huge play."

### Jumping on a break

A's first baseman Daric Barton probably should have come up with the hard first inning grounder that Jorge Posada hit with the bases loaded. And while Barton did a nice job knocking the ball down -- after it took a bad hop -- he stumbled as he tried to pick it up.

Posada got credited with a hit and an RBI. He also set the stage for Nick Swisher, who delivered a two-run single to give the Yankees and Vazquez an early 3-0 lead. Despite hitting the ball hard, Swisher had encountered some tough luck. He entered the game fresh off a brutal 1-for-19 homestand.

"When you come up in situations like that, you want to step up," said Swisher, who finally had something to show for taking a good swing.

### Going deep

Alex Rodriguez hit a three-run homer off A's reliever Craig Breslow in the fifth inning that according to **hittrackeronline.com** was the longest at the Coliseum this season. Though the A's don't do distance estimates, website measured Rodriguez's homer at 452 feet.

Rodriguez's homer sailed well over the 388-foot sign in left center and nearly hit the Plexiglas that shields a level of suites. It's **the longest homer hit at the Coliseum** this season, bumping the 420-foot bomb that Orioles infielder Ty Wigginton hit on Sunday.

"I just got a good pitch to hit and put a good swing on it," Rodriguez said.

### Feelin' blue

Home plate umpire Ed Rapuano was taken by ambulance to an Oakland hospital, where he underwent a CT scan, after taking a foul ball off his protective facemask. Rapuano left the game in the sixth inning shortly after he was struck by a foul off the bat of A's third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff.

Rapuano initially remained in the game. But two batters later, he walked off the field, unable to continue. Second base umpire Ron Kulpa took over behind the plate, but not before a 13-minute delay, which the umpire used to get into the gear needed to work behind the plate.

### Wearing 'em out

The Yankees stuck to a familiar formula to get to the A's, who entered play with the lowest team ERA in the American League. Though A's lefty Gio Gonzalez needed five pitches to get the first two outs of the first inning, the Yankees made sure he needed 31 more to get the third.

Despite settling into a bit of a groove after the first, Gonzalez didn't last past the fifth inning. The Yankees finished with 10 walks.

"It's one of the reasons our games are slow," Girardi said unapologetically before the game. "We make pitchers work. It's a plan. It's the type of hitters that we like. And it's worked very well for our organization."

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# Vazquez pointed in the right direction

Yankees' right-hander gets first victory of season after two losses

Journal News

Chad Jennings 4-22-10

cjennings@ohud.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Javier Vazquez had never heard of the championship belt, at least not the one that spent last season floating through the Yankees' clubhouse, going from player to player after each of the team's wins. Vazquez knew nothing of the tradition until the belt was his.

Vazquez had known nothing but disappointment in his first season back with the Yankees. He'd lost each of his first two starts, accounting for more than half of the Yankees' total losses for the year, and he'd been booted off the field at Yankee Stadium.

On Tuesday in Oakland, though, Vazquez finally won a game, and with that, he belonged. The Yankees gave him the championship belt as their player of the game.

"He's contributing, and everybody wants to feel like they're contributing," manager Joe Girardi said. "That's part of being a team, and he got his win tonight and we look forward to his next start."

Until Tuesday's 7-3 win, Vazquez was the only Yankees starter without a victory. At 0-2, he was also the only pitcher on the Yankees' active roster to have taken a loss. The team's other loss went to the injured Chan Ho Park.

On Tuesday, though, he turned things around with 5½ solid innings against the Athletics. His last pitch was a two-run home run by Kurt Suzuki, a mistake that the A's catcher punished, leaving Vazquez visibly disappointed on the mound.

"My mechanics are still a little off, especially on the fastball," he said. "I'm trying to rush a little bit, but I thought it was an improvement from

# YANKEES: Vazquez gets back on track

4/22/10  
CONTINUED FROM 1C  
Journal News

my first couple of starts."

Vazquez's fastball velocity wasn't up to the 93 or 94 mph that the Yankees expected, but he was hitting 91, which was an improvement. He also called his breaking pitches "crisper" and he was able to pitch out of a two-on, no-outs jam in the second inning.

"He started to seem to find his groove after that," Girardi said. "He was finding a way to get people out (the first two innings), but he really settled in after that."

For Vazquez, the frustration of his slow start to the season has revolved around his mechanics. He's rushed his delivery, especially on his fastball, causing his arm to drag behind. Not only has his velocity been lower than last year, but also his command has been off.

In his career, Vazquez has a nearly 3.5-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio. This season, it's been lower than 2-to-1.

"It's something that I've done, it's my weakness of my mechanics my entire career,"

he said. "It's just something that I do. I've just got to get back and get it better."

"It can happen at any point. I just need to get it back. It's about being consistent. I'm probably going to do it in every game, but instead of doing it 10 times in every game, maybe I'll do it once or twice. It's about being consistent with your mechanics."

Consistency was one of Vazquez's calling cards. He had the best year of his career last season, but the Yankees seemed more impressed by the fact he reached double-digit wins and pitched at least 198 innings each of the past 10 years. He had been rarely flashy, but he had been durable and reliable, two things the back of the Yankees' rotation lacked last season when Chien-Ming Wang went on the disabled list, Joba Chamberlain struggled with inconsistency and a rotating cast of fifth starters made spot starts.

"We think he's going in the right direction and I like the way he finished up," Girardi said.



# Lefties meet as Yanks go for sweep

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

April 22, 2010

Thursday's getaway game pitting the Yankees and A's is an unlikely tale of two dependable lefties.

Obviously, there's nothing surprising about Yankees lead dog CC Sabathia being put in the ace category. New York -- winners of six straight games -- shelled out big bucks to pry him from free agency before the 2009 season, and he won 19 games to help lead the Bronx Bombers to a World Series championship.

But on the other side of the diamond, Oakland southpaw Dallas Braden appears to be quietly emerging as one of the American League's more reliable starters.

Sabathia, who grew up in Vallejo, Calif., not far from Oakland, hasn't disappointed in early 2010. He was dominant in his last start, a brilliant -- albeit rain-shortened -- performance against the Rangers along the same lines as his previous outing, a near no-hitter against the Rays.

Sabathia gave up an early run in his last outing, but he retired 17 of his final 19 batters faced and struck out nine, including six in a row at one point.

"Usually I get off to a pretty slow start, but my stuff is right where I want it to be right now," Sabathia said. "I just need to keep it going -- keep working hard and try to keep it going the rest of the year."

Meanwhile, Braden is on a roll as well.

In his last start, Braden continued to dominate the Baltimore Orioles, as he's done throughout his career. Braden allowed two runs over seven innings while improving to 5-1 lifetime with a 1.57 ERA against Baltimore. He struck out four and walked one, moving to 2-0 with a 2.70 ERA on the season.

"Everybody's getting key hits in key situations," A's outfielder Ryan Sweeney said after playing behind Braden. "Our pitching's unbelievable. If we can go out there and put some runs on the board ... we've got a chance every night."

## **Yankees: Winn makes a start**

Randy Winn logged his second start with the Yankees on Wednesday, filling in for Nick Swisher, who received a scheduled day off. ... Brett Gardner started Tuesday against left-hander Gio Gonzalez and might start again on Thursday against Braden. ... Sabathia is 5-7 with a 5.80 ERA against his hometown team; that's his highest ERA against an AL team that he doesn't pitch for. He is 2-4 with a 6.35 ERA in nine starts at Oakland-Alameda Coliseum, but he did win in his one start there last season. The Athletics have hit a combined .213 against Sabathia.

## **A's: Ellis heads to DL**

A's second baseman Mark Ellis was placed on the 15-day disabled list on Wednesday with a strained left hamstring. Ellis had missed seven games because of the injury, which was aggravated in his first at-bat during Tuesday's 7-3 loss to the Yankees. He went 0-for-2 before leaving the game in the sixth inning, and manager Bob Geren said a recent MRI showed tendinitis near the back of Ellis' hamstring. ... In four career games (one start) against New York, Braden has allowed 14 hits and eight runs in just 9 1/3 innings. He's 0-1 with a 7.71 ERA against the Yankees.

## **Worth noting**

Over the Yankees' current six-game winning streak, they have held opponents to three runs or fewer in each game, outscoring opponents, 36-13. ... Derek Jeter needs two doubles to tie Don Mattingly (442) for second place on the franchise's all-time list. Mariano Rivera needs two strikeouts to tie Roger Clemens (1,014) for 10th place in franchise history. ... A's outfielder Travis Buck was a late scratch from Wednesday's lineup because of a right oblique strain. Buck was replaced in left field by Eric Patterson, who slid into the No. 9 spot in the lineup just minutes before the first pitch was thrown by Ben Sheets.

# NorthJersey.com

## Yanks in Nick Swisher's corner

Thursday, April 22, 2010

BY PETE CALDERA  
The Record  
STAFF WRITER

OAKLAND, Calif. – When he wasn't hitting baseballs in a batting cage last winter, Nick Swisher was hitting the speed bag and taking a few swings at a sparring partner.

Boxing became Swisher's off-season training method – a way to get a little quicker and a little lighter while having a little more fun in the gym.

"I just thought it would be so much fun to try it," said Swisher, who has lost 12 pounds since the Yankees' world championship parade.

What the Yanks' switch-hitting right fielder gained has been clear to hitting coach Kevin Long.

"I've seen him quicker to the ball. I've seen maybe some swings I didn't see a year [ago]," Long said of Swisher's added core strength. "I think [boxing training] did nothing but help him."

Swisher was not in the starting lineup Wednesday night against Oakland. "Just a day off," said manager Joe Girardi, who wanted to get veteran outfielder and Bay Area resident

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Randy Winn a start.

For Girardi, it was easier to sit Swisher after Tuesday night's game, when Swisher snapped an 0-for-16 streak with a hard, two-run single in the first inning of the Yanks' eventual 7-3 win. Long noted that Swisher, batting right-handed, lined the hit to right-center field.

Last year, "you didn't see him do that too often," Long said. "He was strictly a pull hitter right-handed."

At least Swisher's mind is clear of that hitless skid, though a mental break wasn't what he most needed. He needed a few breaks on the field.

"I feel like I'm putting the same swings on it. I'm just finally finding some grass," Swisher said. "You can't aim it."

That's pretty much how Long viewed things.

"Whatever he's hitting now, it should be 100 points higher," Long said of Swisher's .205 batting average (9-for-44) entering Wednesday. "That's how good he's been swinging the bat."

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"I don't consider him to be struggling right now. I don't consider him to need extra work," Long said. "If he just ... continues to do what he's doing, he's going to be a big part of our offense."

A big part of Swisher's winter was spent at the Los Angeles gym. Swisher worked with a trainer and did some light sparring, though the focus was on conditioning.

"I would never put myself in harm's way," Swisher said. "We had a blast. I want to continue to do that – that workout was unlike anything I've ever had, no doubt."

Swisher said he hadn't thought of boxing training until he felt his arms were heavier at one point last year.

"And I thought, man, the faster I can move my arms right now, the faster I'll be able to swing a bat, I guess," Swisher said. "It's all about velocity, speed."

Power comes from weight training, but "the quickness is what you get the opportunity to [develop through boxing training]," Swisher said.

Many would've sympathized if Swisher felt the urge last October to take out some frustration on a punching bag, as he batted .128 (6-for-47) with two RBI throughout the postseason. At the time, Long and Swisher began tinkering with Swisher's batting stance.

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The sessions intensified during the off-season in Arizona.

"Our focus was to eliminate moving parts, to get him in a more consistent position to attack the ball," Long said. "He's squared up now [to the pitcher]. He's got a better base."

"His hands are closer to the hitting position. His stride is a lot shorter. ... It's something he's adjusted to very easily."

And even with a .205 average, Swisher – partly due to Long's suggestions and a winter spent inside the ropes – is fighting himself less.

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## Cano's patience pleases Yankees

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com  
04/21/10 9:40 PM ET

OAKLAND -- If it seemed like Robinson Cano got a lot of face time during Tuesday's Yankees telecast, that wasn't by accident. The second baseman spent a lot of extra time at the plate, seeing 31 pitches in the span of five at-bats.

Yankees manager Joe Girardi not only volunteered that statistic a day later, but he marveled at it. Cano tied a career high with three walks and also struck out a pair of times, leading Athletics pitchers to put in a little extra work against him.

"It is impressive," Girardi said. "We've talked about this young man. We think he's maturing and he has a better idea of what he needs to do and how to work pitchers -- what to look for in certain at-bats and situations, and knowing if a pitcher is trying to make you chase. I think he's growing up."

Girardi noted that the stat probably isn't something that could have been said about Cano two or three seasons ago, and Cano acknowledged that might be true. He believes he is seeing better pitches now.

"It's not difficult," Cano said. "I'm a free swinger, but it's not hard. The good thing is that I started in Spring Training. I've been hitting the ball better. I'm just taking pitches, seeing what I want, and if it's not what I want I'll take the walk."

Cano worked extensively with hitting coach Kevin Long this spring, stressing plate selection, and Alex Rodriguez is also in his ear quite a bit. On the bench, Cano is also trying to steal a page from the Yankees' most patient observer.

"I watch Nick Johnson a lot," Cano said. "He doesn't chase pitches. It's got to be whatever he wants, and if it's not what he wants, he doesn't swing. That's why he's so successful. That's the kind of guy I take a little bit from."

## Hitting or not, Johnson helping Yanks

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com  
04/21/10 9:40 PM ET

OAKLAND -- Nick Johnson's line across the box score on Tuesday essentially explained his early run at the plate this season -- no hits, but a couple of walks and two runs scored in the Yankees' 7-3 victory over the Athletics.

So it goes for the notoriously patient Johnson, who was imported in large part due to his high career on-base percentage. Johnson may be batting just .146 through his first 41 at-bats upon returning to the Yankees, but entering Wednesday, he led the team and ranked second in the Majors with 16 walks and owned a .407 on-base percentage.

"I don't think anyone is complaining about how much he's on base," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "Sometimes you look at his batting average and you think that he's really struggling and maybe not helping the team, but you look at how much he's been on base, and he's helping us."

Maybe it's rubbing off on Johnson's teammates. The Yankees entered Wednesday leading the Majors with 71 walks and one walk per 7.25 plate appearances, having seen 2,070 pitches through 13 games -- an average of 159.23 per game.

Still, Yankees hitting coach Kevin Long has mentioned to Johnson that he needs to be more aggressive in hitters' counts. Johnson entered play Wednesday hitless in his past 12 at-bats and went 3-for-16 on the club's recent homestand.

 **[PRINT]** **ESPN.com:** Baseball[\[Print without images\]](#)

Wednesday, April 21, 2010

## Cashman brings '09 ring to Cubs' Nady

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Associated Press

NEW YORK -- Talk about an unexpected guest -- and what a treat, too!

Cubs outfielder Xavier Nady received his 2009 World Series ring on Wednesday when New York Yankees general manager Brian Cashman delivered the prize to Citi Field before Chicago faced the New York Mets.

"It was funny. I didn't know when I was going to get it so I was surprised," Nady said. "It was pretty special."

Nady praised Cashman for bringing it over himself and said the ring was "gorgeous."

Nady played in only seven games last season. He went on the disabled list in April with an injured right elbow that eventually required ligament replacement surgery. He signed a \$3.3 million, one-year contract with the Cubs in January.

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## Cashman delivers ring to Nady

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com  
04/21/10 9:40 PM ET

OAKLAND -- One day after the Yankees brought 2009 World Series rings across the country for Athletics pitchers Chad Gaudin and Edwar Ramirez, general manager Brian Cashman crossed from the Bronx to Queens to hand off another.

Cubs outfielder Xavier Nady received an unexpected surprise at Citi Field when Cashman delivered the glittering prize to the former Yankee before Chicago's game against the New York Mets. Nady told The Associated Press that he thought the ring was "gorgeous."

The Yankees' starting right fielder on Opening Day last season, Nady played just seven games for New York all year, going on the disabled list in April with a right elbow injury that eventually required Tommy John surgery.

### Worth noting

Randy Winn logged his second start with the Yankees on Wednesday, filling in for Nick Swisher, who received a scheduled day off. ... Brett Gardner started Tuesday against left-hander Gio Gonzalez and might start again on Thursday against left-hander Dallas Braden. ... Over the Yankees' current five-game winning streak entering play Wednesday, they had held opponents to three runs or fewer in each game, outscoring opponents, 30-11. ... Derek Jeter needs two doubles to tie Don Mattingly (442) for second place on the franchise's all-time list. Mariano Rivera needs two strikeouts to tie Roger Clemens (1,014) for 10th place in franchise history.

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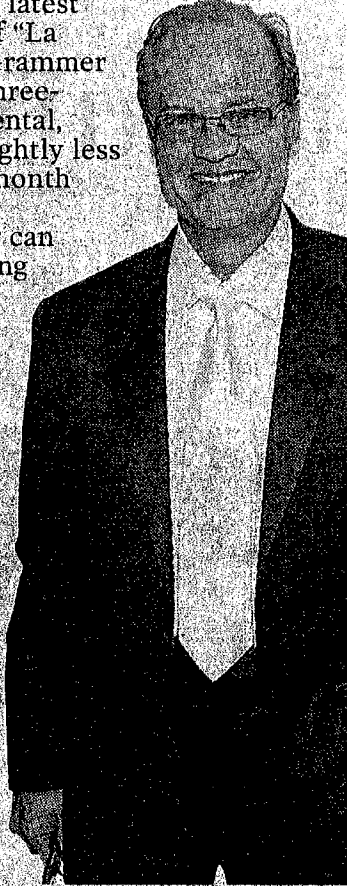
NY POST 4-22-10

**O**H la la! **Kelsey Grammer** is adding some glamour to master-of-the-universe-heavy 15 Central Park West.

While he is wowing the crowds in the latest Broadway revival of "La Cage Aux Folles," Grammer is living it up in a three-bedroom 15 CPW rental, which he got for slightly less than its \$29,000-a-month asking price.

Perhaps Grammer can scope out the building and talk some producers into backing a new musical on the storied 15 CPW itself. Residents include under-fire moguls like Goldman Sachs CEO **Lloyd Blankfein**, as well as notable philanderers like **Alex Rodriguez** and still-married billionaire **Henry Silverman**.

Broker **Penny Crone** of Prudential Douglas Elliman, who had the listing, declined to comment.



Paul Morici/WireImage



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Posted: Wednesday April 21, 2010 12:26PM; Updated: Wednesday April 21, 2010 12:26PM

**Joe Sheehan**>INSIDE BASEBALL[More Columns](#)[Email Joe](#)

## Competitive balance would look a lot different if MLB were like NFL

### Story Highlights

MLB teams play 162 games for eight playoffs spots; in the NFL it's 16 for 12. Under NFL rules, 22 of MLB's 30 teams would be alive for the playoffs right now.

MLB and its leaders should celebrate the differences that make its game great.

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The races have rarely been this close with just a few days left. In the AL, just three teams have locked up postseason berths, with five others battling for the last three spots. There's a great race between the Yankees and Rays in the East for a first-round bye, while tonight's Tigers/Angels game will serve as an elimination for one of the two teams. The National League is even more exciting: 14 of 16 teams remain alive, and no one, not even the league-best Cardinals, has clinched a spot. It's the kind of parity that **Bud Selig** has been looking for since he became commissioner over 15 years ago.

Confused? Well, don't be. What I'm describing is what the MLB playoff picture would look like if baseball was like the NFL, with 16 games in a season and 12 postseason berths. (The NFL advanced six teams per conference in a three-division structure with 28, then 30, teams from 1990 through 2002, before moving to the current four-division-per-conference setup.) Every team in baseball has played 13, 14 or 15 games, putting us at a comparable point to Week 16 of the NFL season, with two games left. And as is often the case in the NFL, there's little separation among them at this point. The entire NL, in fact, is separated by just 4 games, from the Cards at the top to the Astros at the bottom. Twenty-two of baseball's 30 teams would remain alive for the playoffs if MLB played by the NFL's rules.

For 17 years, the words "competitive balance" have been held over baseball like the hammer of Thor. From Selig's injection of the term into collective bargaining to the cries of media who have never grasped the economics of sports to the relentless praise of the NFL by its partners, competitive balance has been cited as one of pro football's biggest advantages over baseball. Every team has a chance to win in football, every season allows more teams to contend, no teams start the season without "hope and faith," and rarely are teams locked into postseason berths when camps break.

That balance, however, is merely an illusion created by the structure of the two leagues. The NFL never has baseball's September, never sees half the league playing out the string over the final sixth of the schedule, because when you play 16 games, you simply cannot get that kind of separation. By having just 16 games, the chance to recover from a bad start or a critical injury is limited; witness the Patriots, who had a perfect regular season in 2007, but missed the playoffs the next year after quarterback **Tom Brady** was injured in the season opener. On the flip side, winning a few close games has a disproportionate effect on your record when you play just 16 times. Last year the Cincinnati Bengals outscored their opponents by just 14 points in total, but by winning three early games by a field goal each, two of them road games over divisional rivals, they set the stage for a 10-6 campaign and a division title. No one injury or brief stretch of good fortune can impact a baseball team's record in quite the same way.

Moreover, by advancing 12 teams to its postseason, the NFL lowers the barrier for entry in a way that creates opportunity for lesser teams. In MLB, if you're 70-70 with 22 games left, you're clinging to life; in the NFL, if you're 7-7 with two games left, you probably control your own destiny. If you're 6-8, you may still have a chance at the playoffs, whereas a 60-80 MLB team is probably hearing that it should fire the manager, toss the GM, trade the veterans and, by god, lower ticket prices. More teams do have a chance to compete in the NFL,

but that's simply because "compete" has been defined as "stay around .500 for 14 games."

It's not that one league's structure is better than the other. It's that the two aren't comparable in any meaningful way. MLB plays 10 times the games that the NFL does and has a postseason that is more exclusive by a third. MLB has significant in-season roster turnover, both from a minor-league system and via trading; the NFL has virtually none. MLB teams are not reliant on any one player the way NFL teams are reliant on the health and performance of their star quarterbacks. If an NFL QB goes down in a game, that team is probably going to lose; if he goes down for the season, he can take the team with him. If the MLB season were just 16 games long, the top starting pitchers would make more than all of their teammates combined.

For too long now, MLB has tried to be like the NFL, emphasizing the postseason at the expense of the regular season while embracing the idea that every team should be competitive every year. It was a ridiculous notion in 1994, when MLB realigned and foisted a new round of postseason play on us, and it's a ridiculous notion now. MLB has raised a generation of fans who don't appreciate the idea of September, of a long, drawn-out pennant race in which there can be just one winner, who don't understand that sometimes a great team can fall short of the postseason or even be eliminated in it, without changing its greatness. The game has pandered to the modern idea that what matters isn't the 26 miles you run at a steady pace, but the 300-meter sprint to the finish.

That should stop. Instead of cowering when it's compared to the NFL, MLB and its leaders should stand up and brag about the differences that make its game great. It should note the math of the issue, that the NFL's competitive balance is the natural consequence of a short regular season and a larger postseason, and that MLB's competitive balance, considered in the context of its own sport, is good.

*Follow Joe Sheehan on Twitter.*

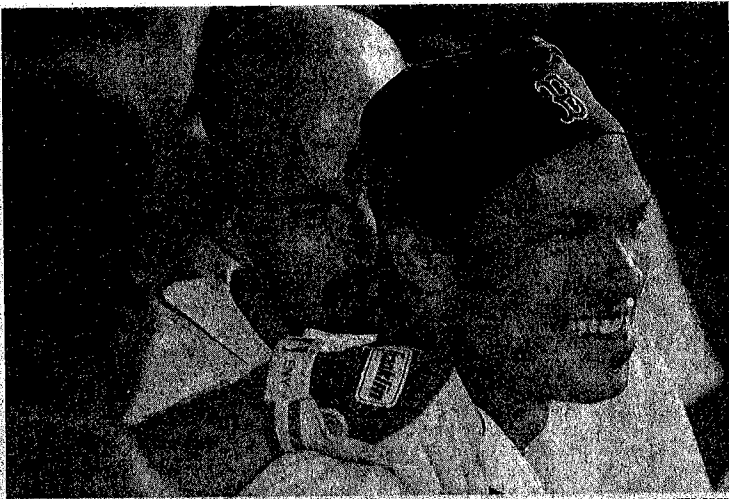
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Darnell McDonald was hugged in the dugout Tuesday by his Red Sox teammate Kevin Youkilis after hitting a two-run homer to tie the score against Texas.

NY  
Times  
4-22-10

## Boston Fans Discover Strange Feeling: Peace

**BOSTON**  
There is a new hero in town. His name is Darnell McDonald, 31, who has kicked around the minor leagues for much of his 13 years in baseball.

Boston Red Sox fans didn't really know McDonald until Tuesday, when he introduced himself in the bottom of the eighth inning, the reeling Red Sox trailing Texas, 6-4.

**WILLIAM C. RHODEN**  
**SPORTS OF THE TIMES**  
With two swings of the bat—a two-run homer in the eighth and a game-winning single off the Green Monster in the ninth—McDonald put the buzz back in Boston. He was the Red Sox starting center fielder Wednesday night, and he continued to make a great first impression, hitting another home run in Boston's 8-7, 12-inning victory.

After Tuesday's game, McDonald, who was summoned to Fenway Park 90 minutes before the game, described the moment as a dream come true. "I couldn't write a script any better than this," he said. Tuesday was chicken soup for Boston's sports soul.

While McDonald was performing his star turn at Fenway Park, the Boston Celtics were putting together an inspired performance against the Miami Heat in Game 2 of the N.B.A. playoffs. The Celtics were playing without Kevin Garnett, who was suspended a game for throwing an elbow in Game 1 to the head of Quentin Richardson, who was fined \$25,000 for taunting.

The Celtics' victory was uplifting, but the drama was at Fenway. The Red Sox were staggering toward a seventh consecutive home loss and reeling from an embarrassing sweep by Tampa Bay. The Rays and the Yankees have threatened to pull away in the American League East.

But something is different in Boston, and it has to do with the Red Sox. Boston fans celebrated two World Series championships in the past decade, but they lost something in the exchange: an edge, a chip on their shoulder, a passion, eternal agitation and a running feud with the baseball gods.

Even with the team's losing streak and the wretched offense, the sense of doom and gloom that defined Red Sox fans—and provided journalists with outstanding material—is not apparent.

Now wins and losses are simply that—wins and losses. Losing streaks are no longer connected to generations of crushed hopes and dreams.

"Winning a championship went from be-

ing an obsession to being a really good thing," Allan Elsner, a longtime fan, said Tuesday as he walked to Fenway. "At least we know that when the stars are aligned, when people do the right thing, a championship can be had."

Is this newfound peace a good thing? Not even the Yankees' gearing up for consecutive championships seems to have Red Sox fans on edge.

This is a period of transition for the Red Sox, the aging Celtics and the battered Patriots. It is a transition for the literature as well. So much of Red Sox lore was expressed by laments and odes to losing.

All of that is gone. The literature of losing describes a culture that no longer exists. For many Boston fans, the new challenge is embracing season-to-season success. Some have found themselves becoming less tolerant of their teams' foibles.

"I think now we're less patient with our losses; we get more annoyed," said Cindy Schlegel of Cambridge, Mass., a Red Sox fan since 1986. "Before it was like, 'We're so close, we're so close. We can get there, we can get there.' Now it's like, 'You've been there twice, now giddy-up.' We're not the underdogs anymore, so we're less tolerant of the bad play. We know we're capable of doing better."

On the other hand, Sherri Geller has become a more patient fan since 2004. Geller describes herself as a lifelong fan who lives and dies with the Celtics and the Red Sox.

"I felt there was such a sense of urgency, like, can we finally do it?" she said. "And now I feel more patient. O.K., if not this year, I hope we'll win another year."

Asked about the sense of peace, Geller conceded that she has been a changed fan since 2004.

"I love the Red Sox just as much, but I don't care in the same way," she said. "I don't feel in my heart every win and loss, every live-or-die moment the way I did before 2004. I just feel that now that the Red Sox have won, everything's right in the world."

It's a city at peace, at least from the fans' perspective.

Managers and head coaches seem to miss out on the tranquillity.

After Tuesday's exhilarating victory at Fenway, Terry Francona passed through the Red Sox clubhouse. He didn't feel the peace. He wasn't buying the idea that because of World Series championships in 2004 and 2007, there was a diminished sense of doom when the Red Sox lost.

Francona shook his head. "The sky is still falling," he said.

In center field, the newly arrived Darnell McDonald might catch it.

# Manuel May Shake Up Middle of Lineup

NY Times 4-22-16  
By DAVID WALDSTEIN

At a loss after watching the middle of his lineup struggle once again, Mets Manager Jerry Manuel made it clear late Wednesday night that he was getting

**CUBS** 9 ready to  
**METS** 3 make one  
or two bold  
moves with his struggling lineup.

The Mets had just lost to the Chicago Cubs, 9-3, and David Wright, Jason Bay and Jeff Francoeur, all right-handed hitters, had combined for two hits and were starting to hear boos from a small but noticeable group of fans at Citi Field.

Cubs left fielder Alfonso Soriano, who had a two-run home run, a triple and three runs batted in, had as many extra-base hits as the entire Mets lineup.

Manuel said he could not stand by much longer and do nothing. He indicated after the loss that he would give Wright, Bay and Francoeur one more chance Thursday before he would give one or more a rest, and he seems prepared to split them up to get a left-handed or switch-hitter somewhere between them.

He said he would wait until after Thursday's game because the Cubs will send a left-hander, Tom Gorzelanny, to the mound in the finale of a four-game series in which the Mets won the first two games.

"I know they will play tomorrow," Manuel said, "but I'll have to view it again as we go into the next series" against the Atlanta Braves.

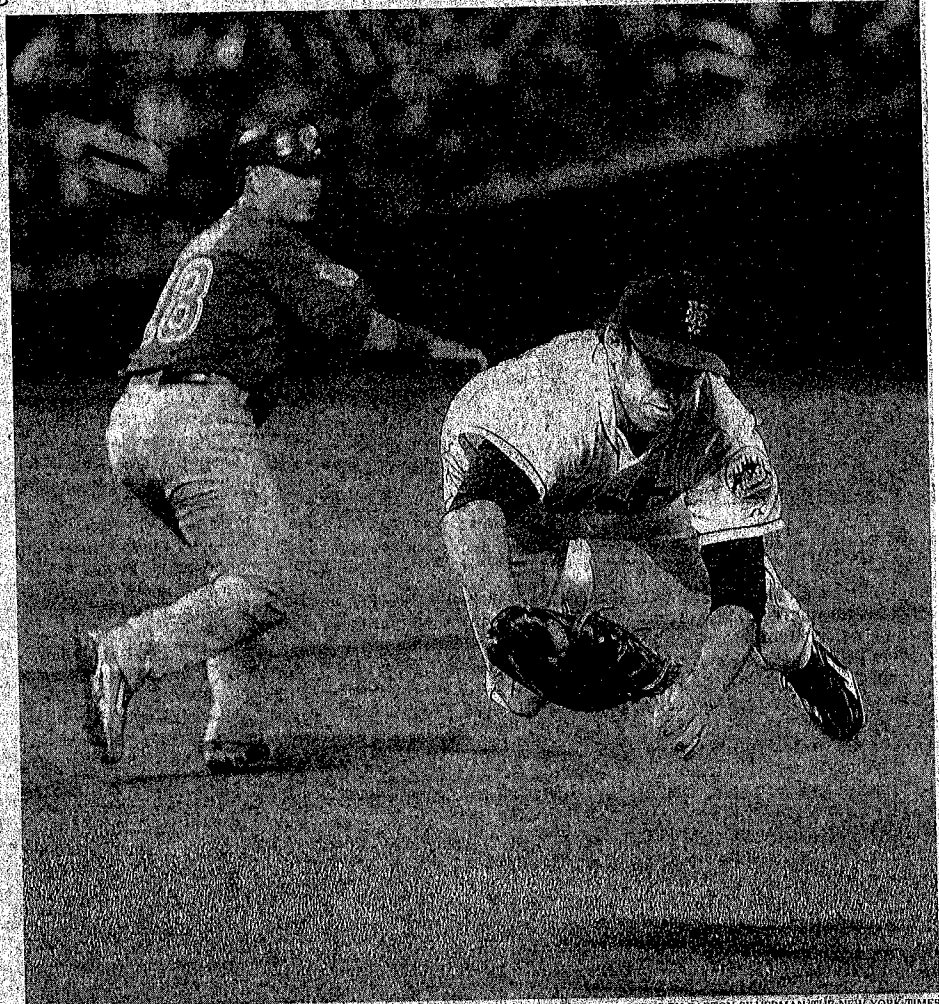
Clearly uncertain about what to do, Manuel has been tinkering with several different lineups, some of which include Jose Reyes batting third. But Reyes is still not completely comfortable at the plate, and Manuel does not want to make that move until he is.

He said he was also considering using the rookie Ike Davis somewhere in between those three right-handed hitters. Angel Pagan is another option who could be used in the No. 3 spot.

Manuel said he might do something to try to help Bay, who is batting .241 and has 22 strikeouts in 54 at-bats. One idea Manuel proffered is to bat Bay second as a way to get him more fastballs, ostensibly because there would be a potential base stealer on base in front of him.

"What I'll probably have to do is find a way to where, if his pitch is a fastball, I have to find a way to have some pressure on first base where he'll get that fastball," Manuel said. "I might have to bat him second, you know, I've got to find a way where he can at least get a look at his pitch while he's struggling to get him going."

After the game, Bay had left



PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARTON SILVERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ike Davis diving for Tyler Colvin's double in the seventh as the Cubs' Geovany Soto advanced.



Oliver Perez threw 97 pitches in five innings, allowing three runs and eight hits.

the clubhouse before reporters entered, but Wright, who continues to play terrific defensively, said that he would be perfectly happy to bat wherever Manuel put him, that he just wanted to win.

"It's time for me to get going and start feeling more and more

confident in the box," said Wright, who is hitting .240. "You can go up there and have good at-bats and not get the results you'd like, but I also feel like I've given some at-bats away."

The lack of hitting was not the only problem for the Mets on Wednesday, just the one that has been most enduring this season. The pitching has been impressive for the most part, but on Wednesday Oliver Perez could not last beyond the fifth inning, and four Mets pitchers issued nine walks.

But for Manuel, that was an anomaly, and the most pressing issue will be how and when to start juggling the lineup.

"Those are some things I'll be trying to sleep on the next couple of nights, if I get any sleep," he said.

## INSIDE PITCH

**JEFF FRANCOEUR**, who was hitting .457 entering last Saturday's game, has gone 0 for 22 since, and his average is down to .281. ... Just a week after being named

the Mets' eighth-inning setup man, **RYOTA IGARASHI** was placed on the 15-day disabled list with a strained left hamstring. The right-handed reliever **MANNY ACOSTA** was called up from Class AAA Buffalo. Manager Jerry Manuel said he would use **FERNANDO NIEVE** and **PEDRO FELICIANO** as setup men in Igarashi's absence. Igarashi said he had a similar injury two years ago and was out a month, but he said he did not think this one was as severe.

**IKE DAVIS** added to his young legend when he made a spectacular catch of a foul ball on the second batter of the game. The Cubs' **JEFF BAKER** hit a high foul ball into the Mets' dugout, and Davis reached well over the railing to make the catch. His momentum carried his head down and his feet straight up, and only some deft maneuvering prevented him from flipping dangerously over on his back. Davis turned his body sideways and came down on his feet with the ball in his glove. He went 1 for 4.

# Mets and Marines Share a Day

Bill Wisleski earned himself the nickname the Human Magnet over in Vietnam, for the way flying objects found their way to him twice when his vehicles hit land mines, once from direct rifle fire.

## GEORGE VECSEY

### SPORTS OF THE TIMES

In between, he tried to keep track of his hometown team, the Amazing Mets. It was not easy in those days before the Internet. Soldiers would ask each other for the latest scores, the current standings, but they were all a week or two behind.

When Wisleski left Queens and went into the Army in 1966, the Mets were a pathetic last-place team, but when he came home in 1968 with three Purple Hearts, they were almost respectable.

## GOOD FEELINGS TAKE NIGHT OFF

The Mets could not build on their first winning streak of the season, falling to the Chicago Cubs, 9-3. Page B15.

which was amazing in itself, and they had a kid pitcher named Tom Seaver.

Then it was the day of the Vietnam Moratorium — Oct. 15, 1969 — and Seaver was pitching for the Mets in the World Series, under immense pressure to make a statement about the war in Vietnam. Wisleski, with some of that steel still inside his body, found himself perturbed by the protests going on in his home borough.

"The protestors, what could you do?" Wisleski said the other day. "We fought for their right to protest."

The old soldier and the Hall of Fame pitcher were under the same roof Wednesday as six members of the Mets Alumni Association (Seaver, Bud Harrelson, Alvin Jackson, Ed Kranepool, Rusty Staub and Mookie Wilson) mingled with 25 members of the Wounded Warrior Project and their guests. This outreach to public-service groups, sponsored by Citibank, will continue five more times this season.

The Mets' ownership, Fred Wilpon and Saul Katz, is supportive of veterans with mental-health problems, through a group

Continued on Page B15



PHOTOGRAPHS BY KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES



At Cit Field on Wednesday, Rusty Staub, above left, Bill Wisleski and servicemen, left, posed over Mets memorabilia from the Vietnam era.

# Mets and Marines Share a Day, and Some History

From First Sports Page

called Welcome-Back Veterans. Characteristically unobtrusive at this event in the Mets' ballpark, Wilpon quietly seethed at the number of veterans who are homeless and otherwise in need of help.

There's a wonderful Johnny Cash song, "Drive On," that draws no moral about the war in Vietnam. But one part goes: "He said I think my country got a little off track. It took 'em 25 years to welcome me back." It's never too late to try.

The sight of the vets clearly touched Seaver, who enlisted right out of high school and credits his success as an adult to his stateside hitch. He could not help but single out the Marines in the audience — Semper Parati and all that — and was quick to note the

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## A world, and his team, changed when a vet came home.

difference between himself and all the veterans with their medals.

"I never had a bullet shot at me," Seaver said with visible respect toward people who paid a price in various wars.

Bill Wisleski considers himself lucky in that he came home standing up. "When we came back, we had nothing," he said. "We got off the plane in California with some bodies, and there were the protestors."

The last fragment worked its way out of his arm a few years ago; he keeps the shrapnel at



KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Vietnam veteran Bill Wisleski, left, with Tom Seaver, a member of the Marine Corps Sports Hall of Fame.

home, as a souvenir. He was able to drive for United Parcel Service for a long time, raise a family near Middletown, N.Y., and he now volunteers to drive less for

fortunate comrades with the Wounded Warriors.

Wisleski sees horrific head injuries to veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. "We would have

never survived," he said, referring to superior battlefield care that leaves many soldiers alive but severely damaged.

A few years ago, the Wounded Warriors let Seaver know they were guests at a Met game. "He could have gotten on the elevator and gone to the airport," Wisleski recalled. "He didn't. He came out to the parking lot and talked to us for a long time."

Seaver has been in everybody's field of vision since he broke in with the Mets in 1967. He was known to be a Marine, a proud one, but was also known to have thoughts about the war in Vietnam. On Wednesday, he said that he had agreed with the anti-war advertisement of 1969 that said, "If the Mets can win the pennant, why can't we end the war?"

Also on Wednesday, the proud Marine in Seaver said, "If those

guys are going to Vietnam, you've got to give 'em every bit of support." He meant that, too.

He had both sides of the debate working on him on Oct. 15, 1969, when he pitched the fourth game of the World Series. John Lennon and Yoko Ono were in Room 902 of the Amsterdam Hilton, staying in bed for a week as their statement while people around the world were singing the Plastic Ono Band's anthem, "Give Peace a Chance."

Seaver pitched all 10 innings that day and Rocky Swoboda made his fabled catch in sun-dappled right field and the Mets won 2-1. For many glory days and nights like that, Seaver, who owns a vineyard in California, is heralded as the greatest Met of them all. When he comes back to Queens, the old Marine stops to talk to vets like Bill Wisleski, who is, in Johnny Cash's words, "a walkin' talkin' miracle from Vietnam." Drive on.

## Inside the AL

**Lee's debut set:** Cliff Lee's long-awaited debut in Seattle is tentatively set for April 30.

Seattle Mariners manager **Don Wakamatsu** said Wednesday that Lee would make a minor league rehab start Sunday at Class AAA Tacoma (Washington). If all goes well, the Mariners will start Lee on normal rest April 30 against the Texas Rangers.

Lee, the former American League Cy Young winner and Seattle's big offseason acquisition, has been on the disabled list since March 26 with a lower abdominal strain. He threw a 70-pitch simulated game Tuesday without pain, the same day his five-game suspension from spring training was rescinded.

**No excuses:** Baltimore Orioles manager **Dave Trembley** says he's done covering for players who aren't getting the job done.



By Kyle Terada, US Presswire

**Trembley:** Says he's tired of covering for his players.

They set a major league record by losing their first 21 games.

Trembley took over as Orioles manager midway through the 2007 season.

**Umpire sits:** Umpire **Ed Rapuano** is sitting out the final two games of the New York Yankees-Oakland Athletics series after taking a foul ball off his facemask.

Rapuano was hit during Tuesday's game. The A's say Rapuano will take a few days off as a precaution. Pacific Coast League umpire **Mike Muchlinski** was called up to replace Rapuano.



By Jed Jacobsohn, Getty Images

**Rapuano:** Umpire was hit by a foul ball Tuesday.

was alert when he left the ballpark.

The game resumed with three umpires after a 13-minute delay.

**Stalled:** Rangers owner **Tom Hicks** says he feels caught in the middle and can only watch the stalled proposed sale of the club to **Chuck Greenberg's** group.

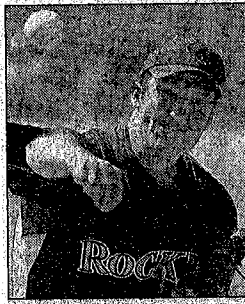
Hicks said the dispute was over the what lenders think the team is worth.

"The lenders have to agree with baseball and the buying group that it's the right price," Hicks said. "There is some concern that they think somebody will pay a higher price."

Baseball Commissioner **Bud Selig** doesn't seem to be happy with the slow pace. "Major League Baseball is currently in control of the sale process and will use all efforts to achieve a closing with the chosen bidder," he said.

## Inside the NL

**Street in fast lane to recovery:** Colorado Rockies manager **Jim Tracy** said injured closer **Huston Street** is



By Ed Andrieski, AP

**Raising hopes:** The Rockies' Huston Street has been throwing on the sidelines.

**Nady gets his ring:** Chicago Cubs outfielder **Xavier Nady** received his 2009 World Series ring Wednesday when New York Yankees general manager **Brian Cashman** delivered it to Citi Field before Chicago faced the New York Mets. Nady said he had no idea when he was going to get it. Saying the ring was "gorgeous," Nady praised Cashman for bringing it over himself. "It was pretty special."

Nady played in seven games last season. He went on the disabled list in April with an injured right elbow that eventually required ligament-replacement surgery. He signed a \$3.3 million, one-year contract with the Cubs in January.

**Zimmerman gets a hammy:** Washington Nationals third baseman **Ryan Zimmerman** left Wednesday's game against the Rockies in the seventh inning after appearing to hurt his right hamstring while running out a double.

Zimmerman pulled up and winced a few feet before reaching second on a hit off the wall in right field. The 2008 NL All-Star and Gold Glove winner then bent over and grabbed at his right hamstring, while manager **Jim Riggleman** and a trainer came out to check on him.

Zimmerman was out of the starting lineup for five games recently because of a strained left hamstring.

**Harang gets a ribby:** The umpiring crew changed a call and gave Cincinnati Reds pitcher **Aaron Harang** an RBI single Wednesday instead of an inning-ending out.

Harang batted with the bases loaded and two outs in the bottom of the fourth, with the Reds trailing the Los Angeles Dodgers 4-3. He hit a soft opposite-field liner to right.

**Andre Ethier** appeared to short-hop the ball while diving forward. First base umpire **Tim McClelland** — the crew chief — immediately signaled out, and Reds manager **Dusty Baker** came out to argue. The crew huddled and decided the ball had hit the ground. Harang was awarded a single and the Reds were credited with a run.

# Deals

## Baseball

### ► American League

**Baltimore Orioles:** Claimed P Pedro Viola off waivers from Cincinnati and optioned him to Norfolk (International/AAA). Transferred OF Felix Pie from the 15-day to the 60-day disabled list.

**Kansas City Royals:** Sent P Roman Colon outright to Omaha (Pacific Coast/AAA).

**Los Angeles Angels:** Activated P Brian Fuentes from the 15-day disabled list. Optioned P Francisco Rodriguez to Salt Lake (Pacific Coast/AAA).

**Oakland Athletics:** Placed 2B Mark Ellis on the 15-day disabled list. Recalled C Landon Powell from Sacramento (Pacific Coast/AAA).

**Toronto Blue Jays:** Placed P Brian Tallet and 3B Edwin Encarnacion on the 15-day disabled list.

### ► National League

**Arizona Diamondbacks:** Optioned P Jordan Norberto to Reno (Pacific Coast/AAA). Recalled OF Cole Gillespie from Reno.

**Cincinnati Reds:** Named Joe Morgan special adviser for baseball operations.

**Los Angeles Dodgers:** Activated P Ronald Belisario from the restricted list. Optioned P Jon Link to Albuquerque (Pacific Coast/AAA).

**New York Mets:** Placed P Ryota Igarashi on the 15-day disabled list. Recalled P Manny Acosta from Buffalo (International/AAA).

**Pittsburgh Pirates:** Recalled IF Argenis Diaz from Indianapolis (International/AAA). Optioned P Brian Burres to Indianapolis.