

## **A's News Clips, Monday, May 1-3, 2010**

### **A's update: No break in schedule as Texas Rangers invade Oakland**

By Joe Stiglich\_Oakland Tribune 5/3/2010

No break in schedule as Rangers invade Oakland

TORONTO — The A's are happy to return to the Oakland Coliseum tonight after their 1-5 road trip, not that they're getting much of a break.

The Texas Rangers arrive for the start of a three-game series, breaking a string of 16 straight games the A's played out of the division. The Rangers have won eight of their past 11 after Sunday's 3-1 victory over Seattle and should remain a factor in the American League West as the months go by.

But the A's are relieved to put the just-completed trip behind them, as injuries took their toll.

"It was a tough road trip," shortstop Cliff Pennington said.

"We didn't play as good as we wanted. We've got to regroup and get ready for Texas."

Helping that cause should be the return of reliever Michael Wuertz. The setup man has been on the disabled list all season with shoulder tendinitis, but manager Bob Geren said Wuertz is feeling good and could be activated tonight.

"It'll be nice to take somebody off (the DL) for one time, as opposed to putting somebody on it," Geren said.

Right-hander Justin Duchscherer will have his left hip examined in Nashville today, and it's possible the A's could have yet another addition to the DL.

Duchscherer's turn in the rotation comes Tuesday. Assuming he isn't available for that start, Geren said Triple-A right-hander Vin Mazzaro is "a candidate" to be called up. Tuesday would be Mazzaro's regular day to pitch.

But if Wuertz is activated, the A's could utilize an eight-man bullpen, and Geren said he could use a gang of relievers to handle Tuesday's game.

Adam Rosales remained a bright spot during a dismal road trip for the A's. Filling in for injured second baseman Mark Ellis, Rosales hit .476 (10 for 21) in six games. He had a two-run single Sunday and has played well at second, displaying a strong arm on a variety of throws.

Ellis, nursing a strained hamstring, is eligible to come off the DL on Thursday, and he'll reclaim second base when he's healthy. But Rosales, hitting .323 overall, can play every infield position, and it will be tough keeping his bat out of the lineup.

Josh Donaldson drew a second straight start at catcher and went 0 for 4.

### **Ben Sheets roughed up again; A's trip comes to merciful end**

By Joe Stiglich\_Oakland Tribune 5/3/2010

Ben Sheets walked off the mound in the fourth inning Sunday, closing the book on one brutal road trip for the right-hander.

It wasn't much prettier for his team.

Sheets was rocked for the second straight outing, surrendering 10 hits and nine earned runs in just 3 1/3 innings as the Toronto Blue Jays handled the A's 9-3 before a crowd of 14,725 at the Rogers Centre.

The A's finished 1-5 on the road and were outscored 46-21 by Tampa Bay and Toronto.

They lost two of their most indispensable players — catcher Kurt Suzuki and starting pitcher Brett Anderson — to the disabled list, and another starter, Justin Duchscherer, may join them.

But the question of the moment: What in the world is going on with Sheets?

"I don't think y'all brought enough pen for that," he told reporters when asked to pinpoint Sunday's problems.

Sheets (1-3) allowed three homers and eight extra-base hits — the latter of which is believed to be an Oakland record — as the Blue Jays sprayed line drive after line drive to all fields.

The damage from Sheets' past two starts — 7 1/3 innings pitched, 19 hits, 17 earned runs, five home runs. This after it appeared he was gradually improving over his first four starts.

"My breaking ball is absolutely getting walloped every time I throw it," Sheets said. " ... I wouldn't say my location has been this bad maybe since my rookie

year."

Sheets, manager Bob Geren and pitching coach Curt Young all said his problems boil down to poor location. But the question remains whether Sheets' arm is all the way back after he missed 2009 with elbow problems.

"I feel good, I feel healthy," Sheets said. "To keep leaning on that crutch is kind of getting old."

But in the same answer, Sheets said he hasn't fully regained his old stuff.

"People think, 'Oh, you're throwing 93 (mph),' but it's not the same," Sheets said. "Sometimes it's more forced than it is just settling in and pitching nice and easy and relaxed. For me, I can't even get a rhythm of having fun out there. Every pitch I've thrown so far this year has been bearing down, (me) worried about my pitch, worried about this, worried about that."

Said Young: "It's not so much of a mechanical thing as much as it is locating his fastball and sharpening up that breaking ball. I still think he's getting arm strength back from being out a year."

Toronto jumped on Sheets for four runs in the first. Alex Gonzalez hit a hanging curve for a two-run homer to highlight the rally.

The Jays tacked on two more in the second to make it 6-0. John McDonald doubled to lead off the fourth, and Fred Lewis and Aaron Hill mashed back-to-back homers for a 9-1 lead.

Sheets was pulled two hitters later, and Brad Kilby delivered 3 2/3 scoreless innings to stop the bleeding.

Despite Sunday's early deficit, the A's had a chance to jump back in the game in the top of the fourth trailing 6-0. They loaded the bases with no outs but mustered just one run, which came on Rajai Davis' two-out single.

Toronto's Shaun Marcum (1-1) allowed just one run over 6 1/3 innings.

Oakland's starting pitchers threw four innings or less in four of six games on the trip and posted an 11.98 ERA.

## **Ben Sheets struggling to get in groove with A's**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer 5/3/2010

Ben Sheets said he's healthy. He said that even though he's in a new league, he should be able to beat teams. And still, Sheets is struggling mightily after getting a one-year, \$10 million deal from Oakland during the winter.

On Sunday, the Blue Jays pounded Sheets in a 9-3 victory over the A's at Rogers Centre. Sheets allowed nine runs in 3 1/3 innings, and even many of the outs were rockets. Eight of Toronto's 10 extra-base hits were off him, including three homers.

"I wouldn't say my location has been this bad since my rookie year," Sheets said. "My location is so terrible, it makes it tough on the team and on myself."

In his previous start, at Tampa Bay, Sheets gave up eight runs in four innings. He's the first starter in Oakland history to allow eight earned runs or more in back-to-back starts; Mark Mulder allowed eight runs in consecutive starts in September 2004, but in the second game, at Texas, four of the Rangers' nine runs were unearned.

Sheets missed last season after surgery to repair his right flexor tendon, but he said Sunday that he feels fine. "I felt great, I felt healthy," he said. "I keep leaning on that crutch."

Are Sheets' mechanics off after missing so much time? A's manager Bob Geren said that's possible, and that pitching coach Curt Young will work with Sheets between starts. Sheets believes it's simply a matter of where he's putting pitches. Plus his curveball, usually one of the better breaking pitches in the game, "is getting walloped," he said. "I've got to keep working on that."

Sheets' fastball is in the high 80s to low 90s and fairly straight, but he's never really relied much on fastball movement, according to Geren.

Going from the National League to the American League is often a difficult transition for pitchers - there are a lot of good-hitting teams, and, of course, there is no pitcher hitting.

"There's definitely not a comfort level of facing a guy and every time he steps in, you've seen him before," Sheets said. "When you come to a new league, you're like a rookie all over again. ... But there are pitchers who can shut these teams down, and I believe that's what (the A's) expect me to do."

"With the stuff Ben Sheets has," Young said, "he can pitch in any league to any type of hitter."

Sheets isn't the only one unfamiliar with the league; Landon Powell, who caught him Tuesday, has limited experience in the AL, and Josh Donaldson, who caught him Sunday, has virtually none. Sheets' best starts have come with Kurt Suzuki behind the plate. "I definitely think the first couple innings, we weren't on the same page," Donaldson said.

Sheets was emblematic of the trip as a whole: The A's dropped all but one of the six games, and they were outscored 43-17 in the five losses.

## **Patterson is showing something**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer 5/3/2010

With all the injuries the A's have had the past several years, the one positive spin put forth is that when one player is out, someone else gets a chance.

With outfielders **Coco Crisp** and **Travis Buck** on the disabled list, outfielder **Eric Patterson** has finally gotten a good solid chunk of playing time, and though he had a poor day on Sunday, going 0-for-4, he was one of the few A's who'd had a good road trip up until that point.

Going into the finale at Toronto, Patterson had started seven games in a row and was hitting .308 with five RBIs in those games.

"My at-bats have been better, I'm seeing the ball better," he said. "It's all about timing, and the only way to get that is to be in the lineup every day - but to be in the lineup every day, you have to produce. It's kind of a catch-22."

Manager **Bob Geren** said Patterson has been having good enough at-bats that it's even tough to take him out against left-handed pitchers.

"He's done a really nice job," Geren said. "I thought he looked really good last September, and then he came in and had a good spring. I'm sure he just feels he needs an opportunity to see what he can do - and he's getting it."

**Briefly: Adam Rosales** went 10-for-21 on the trip. ... **Michael Wuertz** is likely to come off the DL today. ... **Ryan Sweeney** had his streak of reaching base safely end at 23 games, tied for sixth longest in A's history to start a season. ... **Josh Donaldson** got his second start in a row behind the plate, and Geren indicated that Donaldson will get plenty of work there. ... Geren acknowledged that **Vin Mazzaro** is a candidate to start Tuesday if **Justin Duchscherer** cannot, but he's also considering using several relievers to pitch Tuesday's game. Duchscherer (hip) will be examined by Dr. **Thomas Byrd** in Nashville today. ... Oakland has lost seven of its past nine games against Toronto.

### **Bay Area coaches: Whose seat is hottest?**

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer 5/3/2010

Will Bruce Bochy survive Timmygate? Will Tom Cable make it to training camp without getting the hook from his quirky boss?

By the end of this year, we could see a complete turnover in field/court leadership of Bay Area pro teams - six brand-new coaches/managers.

That's not surprising, considering that five of the six teams haven't sniffed the playoffs in about 100 years. So, to help you make the right picks in your Next to Be Fired office pool, here are the current rankings of guys on the hot seat, with hottest seat listed first.

**Tom Cable.** He's the anti-Kiffin, a coach who tries to get along with the boss, rather than poking at him with a sharp stick. And Cable works cheap, another factor in his favor.

However. The boss is 80 years old, and he never falls in love with his coach unless that coach just handed him a Vince Lombardi Trophy. Cable lobbied hard to bench JaMarcus Russell last season, but Al Davis hasn't given up on Russell, so hilarious high jinks could ensue, all of which would be blamed on the coach.

Cable is still handicapped by Davis' antiquated defensive philosophy and three years of ghastly No. 1 draft picks, but Davis won't cop to that.

Davis is quick to forgive ... himself. Another 11-loss (or more) season, and Cable is gone. If the Raiders get off to a real bad start, say 2-6, it could happen sooner.

Who's next? Who knows? Dirk Dinglehoffer. All we know is that it will be a guy nobody - not even Davis - knows.

**Whoever replaces Don Nelson.** The plan now is for Nelson to coach out his contract, one more season, but who knows? Not Nelson.

Under Plan A, Nelson will be succeeded by his hand-picked man, Keith Smart. But it's not like the Warriors are a stable situation. Nelson could quit at mid-season. Or a new owner could clean house.

Or how about this? Everyone gets healthy, the team makes the playoffs, and Nelson decides to come back and coach one more, outlasting everyone else on this list.

**Bochy.** I was just kidding about Timmygate - lifting Lincecum on Wednesday against Philadelphia - although it was as if Bochy asked himself, "What can I do to turn the fans against me?" However, the team's brass knows Bochy doesn't manage to please fans.

The brass, though, is a mystery. Bill Neukom speaks only in cliches, so nobody has any clear idea what his management style is, or how he feels about Bochy. Larry Baer apparently likes Bochy, but Baer listens to the paying customers, too.

If the Giants don't make the playoffs, with the best pitching staff in baseball and an MVP candidate in Pablo Sandoval, the status quo is going to start looking like a bad look.

Who's next: When changing managers, teams often look for a temperamental opposite. That would be someone fiery, kid-oriented and not conservative. I'll throw a name out there: Omar Vizquel. He's got charm and smarts, he's a baseball hard-ass, and he's already popular in San Francisco.

**Todd McLellan.** He saved his job by getting the Sharks over that Mount Everest first-round speed bump. Now, as long as the Sharks acquit themselves favorably in this series ...

**Mike Singletary.** Even though it looks as if Singletary has assumed all power in the organization by palace coup, this season could be make-or-break for Coach Sing's job.

The fans, and probably ownership, are expecting playoffs. If that doesn't happen, Singletary will have some 'splainin' to do. He got his draft picks, and he's got everything geared up for his style of coaching and his style of play - which are now fully on trial.

Who's next: If the 49ers blow up, the Yorks will be looking for an opposite type - a strong Xs-and-Os guy with an offensive flair. Jeff Tedford, please pick up the white courtesy phone.

**Bob Geren.** He might be the least outwardly dynamic guy in our group, but Geren faces the lowest expectations. How do you fire a manager who has half his roster on crutches?

Combine that with the fact that Geren is Billy Beane's pal and, like Cable, Geren doesn't have a problem listening to input from the boss.

There's no evidence that A's ownership cares about anything other than moving to San Jose, and the worse the team plays, the more likely that move.

Who's next? Nobody's warming up in the bullpen. Ron Washington would be a candidate if Texas fires him, although Beane likes the strong, silent type. Bochy?

Or maybe all the teams make the playoffs and I eat this column, word by word.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle, 5/3/2010

**Mr. Popular:** Other pitchers appreciate that Dallas Braden, tonight's starter, took Alex Rodriguez to task for running over the mound last month. Toronto's Dana Eveland called Braden "everyone's favorite player." Rays pitchers clapped when Braden walked onto the field.

## **Marcum finally wins as Jays rout Athletics 9-3**

AP, 5/3/2010

A second straight "terrible" start left Ben Sheets feeling like a raw rookie.

The Oakland starter was tagged for nine runs, three homers and eight extra-base hits in the Toronto Blue Jays' 9-3 victory over the Athletics on Sunday.

"My location was terrible," said Sheets, who dropped to 1-3. "You can't throw balls over the middle of the plate in the big leagues. I don't think I could throw it over the middle of the plate in Little League right now."

Fred Lewis, Alex Gonzalez and Aaron Hill homered to help Toronto right-hander Shaun Marcum (1-1) win for the first time since 2008.

"It's good to have him back and it was good to get him the run support and get him his first win," Hill said.

Hill went 3 for 4 with a walk and the Blue Jays pounded out 10 extra-base hits to win for the seventh time in nine games against the Athletics. Oakland has lost nine of 13 and saw its starting pitchers go 1-5 with an 11.96 ERA on a six-game road trip.

Sheets, who sat out the 2009 season after elbow surgery, gave up eight runs and nine hits in five innings in his previous start, April 27 at Tampa Bay, and was hit even harder in this one. He allowed nine runs and 10 hits in 3 1-3 innings, walked two and struck out two.

"I would say my location hasn't been this bad since my rookie year," Sheets said.

The switch to the American League this season has been tough.

"When you come to a new league its kind of like you're a rookie again," Sheets said. "There's no comfort zone."

Velocity and health aren't the problem, Sheets said, so he'll try to work on mechanical issues before his next start.

"My breaking ball is absolutely getting walloped every time," Sheets said. "I'm going to keep working on that, try to get it breaking like I know it should."

Marcum, who also missed all of last season after elbow ligament replacement surgery, won for the first time since Sept. 11, 2008, a road win over the Chicago White Sox.

Marcum allowed one run and six hits in 6 1-3 innings, walked four and struck out six. The crowd of 14,725 gave Marcum a standing ovation when he was replaced by left-hander Rommie Lewis in the seventh, and he tipped his cap as he entered the dugout. He was low-key after the game, claiming to have no special feelings about ending his long wait between wins.

"Maybe later," Marcum said. "I go grab some sushi later and maybe it will hit me then. Other than that, it's just a game we won. That's all I'm worried about."

Lewis worked 1 2-3 innings and Josh Roenicke pitched the ninth for the Blue Jays.

Toronto jumped on Sheets with a four-run first. Hill and Vernon Wells hit RBI doubles and Gonzalez drilled a two-run shot to left, his eighth home run of the season.

The Blue Jays added two more runs in the second. John Buck doubled and scored on John McDonald's triple, and Lewis hit a sacrifice fly that made it 4-0.

Oakland loaded the bases with nobody out in the fourth but managed just one run on a two-out single by Rajai Davis. Cliff Pennington ended the threat by grounding out.

Toronto chased Sheets by scoring three more runs in the fourth. Lewis hit a two-run shot to right, his first of the year, and Hill followed with a drive to left, his second. It's the third time this season the Blue Jays have hit back-to-back homers. Sheets struck out Adam Lind but left after Vernon Wells singled.

"They hit the ball hard," Sheets said. "The outs were hard, everything was hard. I'm not sure why except balls were in the middle of the plate."

NOTES: Oakland's Adam Rosales hit a two-run single in the eighth. ... Toronto OF Travis Snider was a late scratch with flulike symptoms and was replaced by McDonald, with Jose Bautista moving to right. ... Wells made a leaping catch up against the wall in center to retire Eric Chavez in the sixth. ... Buck went 3 for 4 with a career high three doubles, all to left. ... Gonzalez hit eight home runs in 291 at bats last season.

## **Sheets' short outing sends A's to finale loss**

### **Right-hander allows nine runs on 10 hits over just 3 1/3 innings**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 5/3/2010

TORONTO -- Perhaps the only thing worse than leaving an East Coast road trip accompanied by a 1-5 record is walking away with a 1-5 record *and* a crowded disabled list with more players on it than when the team first departed.

And perhaps the only thing worse than the latter situation is having to ponder it all on a five-plus-hour plane ride back to the West Coast.

Such was the case, though, for a depleted A's team, which fell, 9-3, in Sunday's rubber match against the Blue Jays at Rogers Centre.

As a result, said plane ride is sure to be a silent one. After all, Ben Sheets -- the club's unofficial vocal leader -- likely won't be doing much talking following his rough performance that brought back memories of another poor outing that came ... well, five days earlier.

The A's right-hander, who surrendered eight runs in five frames against the Rays on Tuesday, more than equaled that total against the Blue Jays while upping his ERA to 7.12. Sheets was lifted after just 3 1/3 innings, having given up nine runs and 10 hits -- eight of them for extra bases -- while walking two and fanning two. Sheets (1-3) offered up three homers in a

short-lived outing he deemed "really, really bad," and he has now given up five taters in his past two starts after surrendering just one through his previous four.

"My location is terrible," Sheets said. "You can't throw the ball in the middle of the plate in the big leagues. I don't think I could throw a ball that's not in the middle of the plate to a Little Leaguer right now. They hit the ball hard. Their outs were hard. Everything was hard.

"I wouldn't say my location's been this bad ever since my rookie year. I think if you've got stuff, you can [get away with not hitting your spots] a little more. My stuff's not bad, but it's not unbelievable either."

The last time the 31-year-old Sheets gave up nine runs was in August 2005 against the Rockies, when he surrendered 10 runs in six frames. He also gave up nine in 3 2/3 innings against the Padres in 2001. In his past two starts, the four-time All-Star has now given up 17 runs -- a number that accounts for almost half of the earned runs given up by A's starters during the road trip (35).

Manager Bob Geren echoed his pitcher's sentiments on the root of his struggles at the moment, also noting a positive in that Sheets' velocity and health are unquestionably very much present.

"I've tried to look at it and talk to everyone, and it just seems like his location is off," Geren said.

As desperately as Sheets wants to return to his old All-Star self -- the one that led a Milwaukee pitching staff in almost every category before undergoing elbow surgery last year -- he admitted he can't pinpoint why he's truly having to battle every single opponent.

"I don't know," he said. "I feel good, I feel healthy. I don't know what the difference is between me now and me then. I don't think my stuff's bounced all the way back. People see I'm throwing 93 [mph] and think I'm back, but it's not the same.

"I can't even get in a rhythm of having fun out there. Every pitch I've thrown out there, I've been buried down. I feel like if I can get location and get into a rhythm and get people out -- I don't care if they hit three bullets to the shortstop -- I think I could get into a groove and be a lot better."

Sheets also believes he'll walk a gradual path of improvement as he continues to find a comfort zone in the American League, a place that has appeared somewhat foreign to the new A's pitcher this year. At the same time, he's not about to make any excuses.

"Coming to a new league, it's kind of like you're a rookie all over again," Sheets said. "There's no comfort zone. You try to go off the scouting reports, but you also try to stay true to yourself. I feel like as I see them more, I'll be better. But I gotta be better than this.

"I feel like my stuff is right there. My stuff's fine. My breaking ball is not fine. My breaking ball is absolutely hitting a wall every time I throw it. I'll keep working on that and try to get it breaking like I know it should."

Sheets' rough go at it Sunday didn't exactly put his club in a winning situation early, but it's not like Oakland's offense lent him much help, either. Down, 6-0, entering the fourth frame, Rajai Davis finally put a run on the board with an RBI single. But the A's left the bases loaded in the inning against Blue Jays starter Shaun Marcum, who limited his opponents to one run, five hits and three walks while striking out six through 6 1/3 solid innings of work.

The A's again left runners in scoring position in the seventh before tagging reliever Rommie Lewis for two runs in the eighth courtesy of a two-run single from Adam Rosales, who went 2-for-2 with two walks in the game. That's all Oakland could muster off Toronto's bullpen, though, as A's relievers Brad Kilby and Craig Breslow combined for 4 2/3 shutout innings.

Oakland, which limps home to the Bay Area for a six-game homestand beginning Monday against division-foe Texas, currently has nine players on a crowded disabled list -- the most recent addition being catcher Kurt Suzuki (intercostal strain). Furthermore, the club will await news on Justin Duchscherer, who is scheduled to visit Dr. Thomas Byrd in Nashville, Tenn., on Monday to assess the damage done on his strained left hip.

Needless to say, home is sounding pretty darn good right about now for a team that has lost nine of its last 12.

"It's always nice to get back home," Geren said.



## **Harden vs. Braden kicks off set in Oakland**

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com 5/3/2010

It's never too early in the season for a division showdown, especially when the two teams -- the Rangers and the A's -- are battling for the top spot in the American League West standings.

Of late, however, the teams are seemingly headed in two different directions.

The Rangers are fresh off a series sweep over the Mariners on the road and starting to put together some consistent success, while the Athletics have lost four of five contests.

Both teams would like to get on a roll against their divisional foe and take control at the top of the standings.

The Rangers' starter in the first game of the series, Rich Harden, has never started against the Athletics. He played for them for six seasons before being traded to the Cubs in 2009. Harden admitted that he was excited for a return to Oakland, where he had a 2.98 ERA in 47 starts and two relief appearances at the Oakland Coliseum.

"It's nice pitchers' park, especially at night," Harden said. "It's a good place to pitch because of the big foul territory. I always liked pitching there. ... Anytime you play against an old organization, you want to do well."

It won't be all fun for Harden, who knows he has work to do on Monday night. Tops on the list is correcting his command issues. The Canadian right-hander has issued a Major League-high 23 walks this season, an issue that plagued him even as he picked up his first victory of the season in his last start against the Indians. He was credited with a quality start, allowing three earned runs in six innings, but he allowed five free passes.

His opponent in the series opener, Dallas Braden, also struggled with his control in his last start en route to his first loss of the season, an outing that saw him allow six earned runs in just four innings to go with three walks. His inability to get ahead of hitters was particularly noteworthy.

"Not too happy with Strike 1," said Braden, who had lasted at least six innings in each of his four starts before Wednesday's outing.

### **Rangers: Starters going deep into games**

The Rangers have gotten a lot out of their starting pitchers in recent weeks, and after Sunday's seven-plus-innings, one-run effort by C.J. Wilson, Texas starters have worked at least six innings in eight consecutive games, the longest such streak since the staff did it in 10 successive games in May of last year.

Wilson's 1.75 ERA in April, which he lowered to 1.65 on Sunday, was the sixth-lowest April ERA with 25 or more innings in the month in Rangers history. It was the lowest mark since Kevin Brown's 1.14 ERA for April 1993.

### **Athletics: Rosales swinging a hot bat**

In Sunday's loss to the Blue Jays, second baseman Adam Rosales provided a bright spot offensively, continuing his hot-hitting of late. With a 2-for-2 day at the plate, including a two-run single and two walks, Rosales finished the road trip batting .476 (10-for-21) and is hitting .437 (14-for-32) away from the Oakland Coliseum this year.

Starter Justin Duchscherer, who left Thursday's game in Toronto in the fourth inning with a strained left hip, will visit Nashville-based physician Thomas Byrd on Monday for an MRI examination. Byrd is the same doctor who performed both of Duchscherer's right-hip surgeries, the first of which came July 11, 2007, and the second which took place Sept. 29, 2008. According to A's manager Bob Geren, Duchscherer could potentially make his start Tuesday if there is no evidence of structural damage. However, even if the injury is written off as nothing serious, the club will most likely have him miss at least one outing.

### **Worth noting**

A's closer Andrew Bailey has a current and career-high 18 1/3-inning scoreless streak, which dates back to Sept. 6, 2009. ... The A's pitching staff has an 8.08 ERA (44 earned runs in 49 innings) in six games on their road trip after posting a 2.93

ERA over the first 20 games of the season. ... Rangers designated hitter Vladimir Guerrero didn't start Sunday's game against the Mariners, only the second game this season in which he's been on the bench. He pinch-hit in the eighth, recording a single. Guerrero was 1-for-5 on Saturday and now has two hits in his last 16 at-bats. He's also hitting .195 on the road this season.

## **Donaldson to get bulk of catching duties**

### **With Suzuki on the disabled list, A's to give rookie a shot**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 5/3/2010

TORONTO -- Less than 24 hours after notching his first Major League hit, a two-run homer that lifted the A's to victory Saturday, rookie Josh Donaldson was handed another task Sunday.

He played the role of batterymate with some guy named Ben Sheets.

Such was the responsibility given to Donaldson in the club's four-game series finale with the right-handed Sheets on the mound against the host Blue Jays.

"He did a nice job yesterday," manager Bob Geren said matter-of-factly.

The 24-year-old Donaldson, called up Friday to lend a depleted A's catching staff an extra body, caught Gio Gonzalez on Saturday while tallying four at-bats.

Donaldson watched three strikes pass his way without swinging in his first at-bat. However, he appeared comfortable facing Toronto starter Dana Eveland the second time around, pulling a ball over the left-field wall with Jake Fox on third base.

Donaldson was hitless in his other two at-bats, but Geren feels confident lending the rookie an extended look both at the plate and behind it while Kurt Suzuki (intercostal strain) regains full health.

"I think he'll play a lot," the Geren said. "I like what we've seen from him."

Donaldson spent a handful of time with Oakland's pitching staff during the spring, so he'll continue battling for playing time with 28-year-old Landon Powell, who has started just three games at catcher this year.

## **Duchscherer to be examined Monday**

TORONTO -- Justin Duchscherer needs to receive a perfectly clean bill of health Monday in order to prove his readiness for Tuesday's start against the visiting Rangers.

The probability of the A's right-hander making the start seemingly appears just as likely as someone other than righty Vin Mazzaro taking Duchscherer's spot, but manager Bob Geren isn't ready to make any decisions.

The 31-year-old Duchscherer, who left Thursday's game in Toronto in the fourth inning with a strained left hip, will visit Nashville-based physician Dr. Thomas Byrd on Monday for an MRI examination.

Byrd is the same doctor who performed both of Duchscherer's right hip surgeries, the first of which came July 11, 2007, and the second which took place Sept. 29, 2008.

Oakland's two-time All-Star, who said the pain in his left hip "feels identical" to that experienced in his surgically-repaired one, admitted he felt the pain a couple of starts ago but shrugged it off before it led to his early exit Thursday.

Duchscherer, said Geren, could potentially make his Tuesday start if there is no evidence of structural damage. However, even if the injury is written off as nothing serious, the club will most likely have him miss at least one outing.

Geren mentioned Sunday that Mazzaro -- 1-1 with a 2.59 ERA in five games with Triple-A Sacramento -- is a "strong candidate" for that slot, especially since the right-hander's rotation turn happens to land on that day. However, he also said the team could choose to simply go with an eight-man bullpen if Duchscherer needs to only miss one start.

If surgery is required, though, Duchscherer would probably miss the remainder of the season, as he did following his previous two hip operations.

## Worth noting

Manager Bob Geren said Sunday he's liked what he's seen from Eric Patterson, who has started each of the club's past eight games and entered Sunday's contest batting .308 with five RBIs during that stretch. "He's done a really good job," Geren said. "He's shown good discipline at the plate and he's been giving us good at-bats." ... The A's entered Sunday's matchup with a 7-2 record in day games, which is the best mark in the Majors. Meanwhile, they own a 6-10 record at night. ... As expected, Ryan Sweeney was back in the lineup Sunday after missing Saturday's contest due to soreness in his knees caused by playing four consecutive games on artificial turf. Sweeney had his streak of reaching base safely snapped Sunday at 23 consecutive games -- a mark that ties for the sixth longest in A's history to begin a season. The right fielder went 0-for-3 with a strikeout in the 9-3 loss.

## Sheets seeks more innings; Marcum wants runs

By John Schlegel / MLB.com 5/3/2010

The A's will wrap up a road trip that saw their injury woes mount rapidly when they face the Blue Jays in the Sunday finale of a four-game set at Rogers Centre.

The Jays, meanwhile, want to put a winning finish on what started as a rough homestand, and another victory would do that.

Ben Sheets, who missed all of last season with shoulder surgery but remains healthy while others around him in the Oakland rotation are not, will be on the mound for Oakland against Toronto's Shaun Marcum, who also missed last year recovering from surgery, on his elbow.

Sheets, an All-Star with Milwaukee, is hoping to get closer to his former ace self. Making quick work of the Blue Jays would be a step in the right direction.

"I haven't pitched a quick game all year," Sheets said. "It seems like I get stuck in almost every inning. I want to be able to go deeper in games."

Sheets enters his sixth start without having pitched into the seventh, but having gone six innings in three of his first four starts. He was roughed up in his last one against the Rays, allowing eight earned runs in three innings.

Going deep into games hasn't helped Marcum get on the winning side, however. With 34 innings pitched, he has the most of any pitcher without a victory.

Marcum couldn't have started off the season much better than he did, taking a no-hitter into the seventh inning at Texas on Opening Day before surrendering the lead. That was his first start since elbow surgery sidelined him for 2009. Including that outing, Marcum has pitched seven innings in four of his first five starts.

Marcum has logged at least six innings in each of his five starts, and the right-hander has four no-decisions (with a 2.89 ERA in those outings) and one loss for his efforts. In fact, Marcum has logged the most innings (34) of any big league pitcher without a win this season.

"There are going to be days when we'll come out and score a bunch of runs," Marcum said. "Then there are days that you don't. That's baseball, and that's life on a baseball field."

## **Athletics: Sweeney to return to action on Sunday**

Ryan Sweeney will be back in the lineup on Sunday after sitting on Saturday with sore knees, the result of playing on artificial turf for four consecutive days, starting in Tampa Bay and continuing in Toronto. "Anybody with a history of knee problems needs a day off occasionally on turf," manager Bob Geren said. "It's a little hard on them." Sweeney takes a 23-game on-base streak into Sunday's action, the longest in the Majors this season and tying the longest of his career. ... Closer Andrew Bailey ran his scoreless innings streak, which dates back to last Sept. 6, to 18 1/3 innings. With his third save of the season on Saturday, he also has converted his last 24 save opportunities, the second-longest streak in Oakland A's history.

## **Blue Jays: Toronto continues to pile up slugging stats**

The seven homers Alex Gonzalez hit in April marked the most ever in that month by a Blue Jays shortstop and tied his personal best for any month, matching July 2004 and May 2007. ... Though the Blue Jays did not add to their Major League-leading total of 35 homers on Saturday, they did notch a pair of extra-base hits -- doubles by Lyle Overbay and Fred Lewis - - to retain the lead in that department, with 103.

### **Worth noting**

While the Blue Jays have maintained strong starting stats, sitting atop the Majors in innings pitched (156 2/3) and second in strikeouts (128), the A's have had a very rough road trip in that department. Gio Gonzalez's two runs over six innings led to the first win by a starter on the trip, but through six games, the A's have a 10.32 ERA. A's starters entered the trip with a 9-3 mark and 2.65 ERA.

## **Monte Poole: Worst A's week during 42-plus years in Oakland?**

By Monte Poole, Oakland Tribune columnist 5/2/2010

Maybe it's time for each member of the A's to find some thong underwear.

Every man for himself, to each his favorite colors.

That's what former A's star Jason Giambi used to do, strapping on a shiny gold thong whenever he was desperate pull out of a slump. And none of Giambi's slumps was as comprehensive as that which the A's are experiencing.

Their week on the road consisted almost entirely of aches, agony, agitation, irritation and defeat. Nearly everything that could go wrong actually went wrong. On the field, the A's lost two key players to the disabled list, with a third likely to join them.

Off it, they were forced, in the wake of the April ejection of a fan displaying an unwelcome sign, to contend with public reaction to accusations of squelching dissenting voices from fans at the Coliseum.

They requested by Oakland city attorney John Russo to reconsider that particular stadium policy or face possible litigation.

They were presented with two more waterfront ballpark proposals by fans in Oakland, urging the franchise to stay within the city.

They had to ignore an independent study that concluded a new ballpark could provide a dramatic boost for the East Bay economy.

And finally, back on the field, they lost five of six games in Tampa Bay and Toronto by a cumulative score of 46-21.

The last of the five losses came Sunday, when ace right-hander Ben Sheets was hammered off the mound for the

second time in two starts in a 9-3 loss to the Blue Jays. It's possible Sheets, a reclamation project who missed the 2009 season, is rusty or achy. But it's certain he allowed 17 runs in 7 1/3 innings on the trip.

It's enough to make us forget the A's entered Sunday in first place in the AL West — or remind us of the insignificance of being in first place less than a month into the season.

Even though the A's return to the Coliseum tonight against the Texas Rangers comes in the wake of what might be the franchise's most forgettable week in 42-plus years of Oakland baseball, home looks no more than kind of, sort of good.

It has to be better than the road, even if there is a chance the action in the stands is more compelling than that on the field.

What the past week has done is kill the good vibe of the first three weeks, when the A's spent enough time atop the division to give their fans a boost of energy. They were an early-season surprise, with solid pitching and timely hitting and improved defense. They looked like a team that might force a few revisions of those 74-win forecasts.

It was enough to provide a facade of relative peace on the ballpark front. Even though A's fans know managing partner Lew Wolff would crawl to San Jose if it meant the team could come with him, the vast majority were too busy cheering for a surprisingly good and reasonably entertaining product.

Hell Week put an emphatic end to that. If the 13-13 A's start falling as fast as their players, it would precipitate a decline at the gate and unrest among those in the stands.

It's a distinct possibility. Sheets is out of sorts. Top left-hander Brett Anderson went on the DL Tuesday with a forearm/elbow injury. Catcher Kurt Suzuki, the rock of the team, went on the DL on Friday with a strained rib cage. Right-hander Justin Duchscherer left the game the previous day with a hip injury.

Duchscherer isn't on the DL yet, but he might be after he's examined today. If he is disabled, he'd join not only Anderson and Suzuki but also second baseman Mark Ellis and outfielders Coco Crisp and Travis Buck.

Yet today's game, being No. 27 on the schedule, represents one-sixth of the season, leaving plenty of time for the A's to rise and sink or wade in mediocrity.

Meanwhile, Wolff and his players may want to take action, seek a change in their fortunes.

Giambi's thong revelation two years ago, when he was a Yankee, was splashed all over the New York tabloids. Moreover, it was picked up by some of his teammates desperate to find bats with hits. Derek Jeter tried it. So did Johnny Damon.

It was a tool to snap a bad spell, and some say it helped.

The A's, in the midst of bad spell that extends far beyond the confines of the field, should remember that with Mother's Day coming up Sunday, this is as good a time as any to buy a thong.

Nobody needs to know who will wear it.

## **A's update: Closer Andrew Bailey gets some extra work and a save**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 5/2/2010

Closer Bailey gets some extra work and a save

TORONTO — Andrew Bailey hasn't had the opportunity for regular work, and his chances to earn a save have been even more rare.

But the closer was called upon in the eighth inning Saturday and recorded the final four outs of a 4-3 A's victory over the Toronto Blue Jays. It was save No. 3 for Bailey, coming in his team's 25th game.

Here's an oddball stat from April: The A's three save opportunities were their fewest in the month since 1981, when they had just one.

Manager Bob Geren made sure to have Bailey pitch the eighth inning in Thursday's 6-3 loss just because his closer had gone four days without throwing. One of those was a day off for the team.

"As long as I'm getting my work in, it doesn't matter what inning" Bailey pitches, he said. "The more layoff now, the better it will be for longevity."

Geren brought Bailey in to face Vernon Wells with two outs in the eighth and the A's leading by one. Wells flew out to deep left, then Bailey struck out two in a 1-2-3 ninth.

Bailey made 68 appearances in 2009, a heavy workload for a pitcher who was in his first season as a reliever. So less work early in this season might not be a bad thing.

"He won't have too many times when he takes four days off," Geren said.

Right fielder Ryan Sweeney was held out of the lineup to give his knees a rest, but he expects to play today. Sweeney had platelet-rich plasma injections in both knees after last season to help combat tendinitis. Playing four straight games on the synthetic turf surfaces in Tampa Bay and Toronto had taken its toll.

Sweeney has reached base in all 23 games he's played.

Rajai Davis was caught stealing in the fourth, the first time in 11 attempts he'd been thrown out. Then he got creative in the ninth, surprising the Blue Jays and swiping second on a throw back to the pitcher.

"I liked that — interesting stolen base," Geren said.

Provided his right shoulder feels OK, reliever Michael Wuertz could be activated from the disabled list as soon as Monday, when the A's open a six-game homestand against the Texas Rangers

## **Oakland A's battery gives team needed charge**

By Joe Stiglich\_Oakland Tribune5/2/2010

For two guys who didn't have much history together, Gio Gonzalez and Josh Donaldson formed a pretty nice tandem Saturday afternoon at the Rogers Centre.

Donaldson was behind the plate making his first major league start, and Gonzalez delivered a sterling effort on the mound to help the A's beat the Toronto Blue Jays 4-3 and halt a four-game losing streak. Donaldson also recorded his first career hit in style — a two-run homer off former Athletic Dana Eveland in the fourth inning.

That blast put the A's ahead 3-0, and they tacked on another run that inning before holding off the Blue Jays to claim their first victory through five games of this six-game road trip.

Gonzalez (3-1) allowed three hits over 62/3 innings with eight strikeouts, attacking hitters with a fastball he worked all over the strike zone.

"That was definitely one of the better games I've seen from Gio," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I thought his fastball was as good as I've ever seen it. "... And I thought (Donaldson) did a nice job catching Gio. For them to work like that (was impressive)."

Donaldson was called up from Triple-A Sacramento because starting catcher Kurt Suzuki went on the disabled list Friday with a strain in his rib cage. Donaldson took a red-eye flight Thursday night and entered Friday's game in the eighth inning for his major league debut.

He struck out swinging in his only at-bat that night, with nerves rattling through his body.

"I think by the third pitch I was ready to pass out," Donaldson said.

But he spent much of that game sitting with Gonzalez and chatting about their strategy for the next day.

"He said, 'This is what I do,' and he did it today," Donaldson said. "He was able to throw all three pitches for strikes. What I really liked about him today was it looked like he just challenged every hitter up there. It didn't matter who it was."

Donaldson took three called strikes in his first at-bat Saturday. But he jumped on the first pitch he saw from Eveland (2-1) in the fourth, cranking a two-run shot over the left-field wall. He said he planned to call his mother and girlfriend in Daphne, Ala., to share his experience.

His day included some adventure. Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff's throw deflected off Donaldson's glove in the bottom of the fourth, after Kouzmanoff fielded Vernon Wells' grounder and tried to cut down Fred Lewis at home.

"He's not a small guy and he can run a little bit," Donaldson said of Lewis. "I don't know what that collision would have been like."

In the seventh, Lyle Overbay's double off Tyson Ross scored Jose Bautista from first to bring Toronto within 4-2. Daric Barton's relay throw home was on the first-base side, and Donaldson spun completely around, with his back to the runner, and couldn't apply the tag.

But A's second baseman Adam Rosales came up with a huge play to end that inning. Lewis' drive to right-center scored Overbay to make it 4-3, but Rosales delivered a perfect relay throw to nail Lewis, who tried for a triple.

Andrew Bailey recorded a four-out save for the A's. But the day was defined not so much by how it ended for the A's but how it started. Their starters were 0-4 with a 13.23 ERA in the first four games of the trip before Gonzalez took the hill.

"What Gio did is what the starters were doing at the beginning of the season, going deep into games and keeping the opposing team off the board," Bailey said.

Today: A's (Ben Sheets 1-2) at Blue Jays (Shaun Marcum 0-1), 10:07 a.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM, 1640-AM.

## **Gio Gonzalez, Josh Donaldson team up to lead Oakland A's past Toronto**

By Joe Stiglich\_Oakland Tribune 5/2/2010

Donaldson was behind the plate making his first major league start, and Gonzalez delivered a sterling effort on the mound to help the A's beat the Toronto Blue Jays 4-3 and halt a four-game losing streak.

Donaldson also recorded his first career hit in style — a two-run homer off former Athletic Dana Eveland in the fourth inning that gave the A's a 3-0 lead.

They would tack on another run that inning and hold off the Blue Jays to claim their first victory through five games of this six-game road trip.

Gonzalez (3-1) allowed three hits over 6 2/3 innings with eight strikeouts, attacking hitters with a fastball he worked all over the strike zone.

"That was definitely one of the better games I've seen from Gio," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I thought his fastball was as good as I've ever seen it. ... And I thought (Donaldson) did a nice job catching Gio. For them to work like that (was impressive)."

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But he spent much of that game sitting with Gonzalez and chatting about their strategy for the next day.

"He said, 'This is what I do,' and he did it today," Donaldson said. "He was able to throw all three pitches for strikes. What I really liked about him today was it looked like he just challenged every hitter up there. It didn't matter who it was."

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Andrew Bailey recorded a four-out save for the A's.

Oakland starters were 0-4 with a 13.23 ERA for the road trip entering Saturday.

"What Gio did is what the starters were doing at the beginning of the season, going deep into games and keeping the opposing team off the board," Bailey said.

## **Sunday's pregame A's update — Josh Donaldson gets another start**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/2/2010 9:18AM

I'd call this a pretty important game for Oakland. Sure, a win only makes it a 2-4 trip. But considering what a downer the first four games were for this team, winning back-to-back games would be big as the A's return to divisional play with a three-gamer against Texas starting tomorrow night.

—It's not a huge surprise to see Josh Donaldson back behind the plate today. He had to be riding high after yesterday's game, so you might as well try to keep his confidence rolling. Ben Sheets is on the hill, and manager Bob Geren said Sheets is a pretty easy guy to catch because A) he throws two pitches primarily, and B) his pitches are consistent in their action. There aren't a lot of surprises for a catcher in their movement.

—Geren said Triple-A starter Vin Mazzaro is "a candidate" to pitch Tuesday if Justin Duchscherer can't go. I'd be very surprised if Mazzaro doesn't get the call. There's no way I see Duchscherer pitching considering he's getting his left hip examined Monday in Nashville (does anyone expect him not to go on the DL?). Plus, Tuesday would be Mazzaro's regular day to pitch, and the A's are very familiar with him based on last season. Geren mentioned he could just rely on an eight-man bullpen for Tuesday's game (the A's could have eight relievers once Michael Wuertz is activated if they send down a position player). But that's really only an option if Duchscherer doesn't join the DL and only has to miss one start. Whatever he finds out Monday in Nashville will dictate this decision.

—Toronto right fielder Travis Snider was a late scratch with "flu-like symptoms", so here's your current lineups:

A's: Pennington SS; Barton 1B; Sweeney RF; Kouzmanoff 3B; Chavez DH; Rosales 2B; Patterson LF; Donaldson C; Davis CF; Sheets RHP

Jays: Lewis LF; Hill 2B; Lind DH; Wells CF; Overbay 1B; Gonzalez SS; Bautista RF; Buck C; McDonald 3B; Marcum RHP.

### **Catcher's first hit in majors: 2-run homer**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer 5/2/2010

Gio Gonzalez opened the season as the A's fifth starter, but his role is increasing in importance in every outing.

Oakland is down one starter, and maybe two soon if Justin Duchscherer joins Brett Anderson on the disabled list. Gonzalez, meanwhile, seems to show constant improvement.

On Saturday at Rogers Centre, he allowed three hits and two runs in 6<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings, guiding the A's to their first victory in five games, 4-3 over the Blue Jays. With the win, injury-riddled Oakland regained sole possession of first place in the AL West.

"That was a very nice performance and one we needed as a team and as a pitching staff," said A's manager Bob Geren, whose pitchers had allowed 34 runs in the previous four games on the trip.

Gonzalez got a big assist from his batterymate, Josh Donaldson, who was making his first-ever start in a big-league game because Kurt Suzuki is on the DL with a ribcage strain.

On Friday night, Donaldson had gotten into the game late and was so nervous, he said, "I was in another area code. After the third pitch, I was about ready to pass out."

On Saturday, Donaldson didn't even swing in his first at-bat against former Oakland starter Dana Eveland, and struck out looking. In Donaldson's second time up, Jake Fox was at third base, so Donaldson was focused only on driving in Fox.

That he did, with his first major-league hit: a two-run homer to left.



"I've got to call my mom, even though calls are \$5 a minute," Donaldson said of trying to reach Alabama from Toronto.

When Donaldson got back to the dugout, though, he got the feigned silent treatment. "Fox got all the love at the beginning," Donaldson said with a laugh. "Everyone was, 'Way to go, Foxy!' I was like, 'Whatever, I don't need any credit, I'm just happy I'm here.' "

"He was the show today," Gonzalez said of Donaldson. "He was great. I told Josh he was going to get a hit, and his first hit was a home run - nice."

"Suzuki who?" starter Dallas Braden asked with a grin as he passed a knot of reporters clustered around Donaldson.

Donaldson has the ball, and he'd like to have the bat, except it shattered during his final at-bat. "I really liked that bat," he said. "I was very fond of it. I'm going to have to go find the splinters."

Gonzalez and Donaldson, both 24, worked so well together that Gonzalez was perfect through the first three innings. His fastball was hitting the mid-90s, his changeup was sharp, and so was his curve. He struck out eight, walked two and improved to 3-1.

"His fastball looked great, he got a lot of swings and misses, and he challenged every hitter, it didn't matter who it was," Donaldson said.

Andrew Bailey worked 11/3 innings to earn his third save and to extend his scoreless streak to 181/3 innings.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle, 5/2/2010

**Three's not a crowd:** Oakland isn't the only team drawing poorly; while the A's were in town, there were front-page stories in Tampa and Toronto about sparse attendance. The crowds on this trip have averaged less than 12,000.

## **Sheets vs. Toronto - updated, Donaldson back in and more**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Toronto 5/2/2010 8:51AM

Ben Sheets makes his second career appearance at Rogers Centre (it's so hard to type that, I still think of it as the SkyDome) and in his first one, five years ago, he allowed one earned run in eight innings. Sheets is coming off a rough one at Tampa Bay in which he gave up nine hits and eight runs in four innings; he was saying this morning that what he'd really like is a lot more 1-2-3 innings. Those have been infrequent for him this season. He thinks he's had three or four.

UPDATE: Well, no 1-2-3 innings today. Quite the opposite. Sheets gave up nine runs today in 3 1/3 innings. So that's 17 runs his past two starts, in 7 1/3 innings....an ERA of 20.87 for those outings. Even a lot of the Toronto outs were drilled, lots of balls to the track. When Sheets had that nightmare outing this spring in which he didn't retire any of the 10 men he faced, I'd thought perhaps he wasn't entirely healthy. I wonder again if he is 100 percent, or if he is just far, far more rusty than expected after missing a year. Or maybe it's the American League: Tampa Bay and Toronto are good-hitting teams, lots of pitchers struggle coming from the NL to the AL. But this is really pretty awful.

Josh Donaldson is back in after his nice first-ever start behind the plate in the majors. He homered for his first big-league hit, and he said his mom, Lisa Mamuscia, was watching back home in Alabama. She hooked up the computer to the TV, invited some friends over and, Donaldson said, she told her son she was still shaking (with joy) over his day when he spoke to her last night. He's batting eighth today and manager Bob Geren said he's going to get regular playing time with Kurt Suzuki out; here's the lineup:

Pennington SS, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Chavez DH, Rosales 2B, Patterson LF, Donaldson C, Davis CF

Geren said he's liked what Eric Patterson has done given regular playing time - he said it's tough to take him out even against lefties. Patterson is hitting .308 in the last seven games, all of which he has started.

Geren said that Vin Mazzaro is a candidate to start Tuesday night if Justin Duchscherer cannot, but if it appears as if Duchscherer might just miss one start (a possibility if he's told to rest a few days or if he gets a cortisone shot), the bullpen might handle the chores on Tuesday. In that case, swingman types such as Tyson Ross and Chad Gaudin, both stretched out to start this spring, would get several innings each.

It's Dallas Braden tomorrow in the opener against Texas, going against former A's starter Rich Harden. Another ex-A's starter, Dana Eveland, told me he'd gone over to say hi to Braden the first day of this series, and he called Braden "everyone's favorite player" for having called out Alex Rodriguez for running across the top of the mound en route back to the dugout.

Braden is definitely popular for that: In Tampa Bay, when the A's pitchers went out to stretch, a group of Rays pitchers on the field saw Braden come out and they started clapping.

## **A's report: Dana Eveland finds landing spot in Blue Jays' rotation**

By Joe Stiglich\_Oakland Tribune 5/1/2010

Eveland finds a landing spot in Blue Jays rotation

TORONTO — Dana Eveland wasn't sure what his future held when the A's designated him for assignment shortly before spring training.

He wound up landing on his feet in Canada.

The A's traded Eveland to the Toronto Blue Jays on Feb. 7, and the left-hander has settled into the Jays' rotation. He'll start today.

"When I got designated, that's when reality sets in," Eveland said. "You think, 'I might be off the 40-man roster. I might have to go to minor league camp with somebody.' I was hoping somebody would take a chance on me. Fortunately, these guys did."

Eveland made 38 starts for the A's from 2008-09 after being acquired from the Arizona Diamondbacks in the Dan Haren trade.

But things went south early last season when he posted a 7.40 ERA in his first six outings and spent most of the year in the minors.

"I got sent down. I was (ticked) off at myself and I was (ticked) off at the organization," Eveland said. "I had a lot going on in my head. It took me until after the season was over to realize, 'Why am I (ticked) off at them? I'm the one that was terrible.'"

With Toronto, he's 2-0 with a 4.57 ERA in four starts.

Catcher Kurt Suzuki was placed on the disabled list for the first time in his career. Suzuki hadn't played since April 23 because of a strain in his rib cage, but manager Bob Geren

said he's hopeful Suzuki will be ready when he's eligible to come off the DL on May 9.

Besides being an expert handler of pitchers, Suzuki also had a team-high four homers.

Catcher Josh Donaldson was promoted from Triple-A Sacramento and made his major league debut, striking out in the eighth and catching one inning. Geren said he's likely to start Donaldson today.

Outfielder Matt Carson was sent to Triple-A Sacramento to make roster room for Trevor Cahill.

Reliever Joey Devine was transferred to the 60-day DL to clear a 40-man roster spot for Donaldson.

Michael Wuertz pitched 12/3 scoreless innings for Sacramento.

Geren said Wuertz might be ready to come off the DL depending on how his shoulder felt, but Wuertz probably won't rejoin the team until the A's come home.

## **Trevor Cahill can't stop A's spiral**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 5/1/2010

TORONTO — Trevor Cahill offered the A's a change of pace Friday night, coming up from the minors to make his first start of 2010.

Apparently, the team's struggling vibes are contagious.

Cahill was shelled for eight runs (six earned) in five-plus innings in a 10-2 Toronto Blue Jays pounding before 12,722 fans at the Rogers Center, leaving the A's 0-4 on their six-game road trip.

Cahill's familiar bugaboo from 2009 — the long ball — bit him again. He served up three homers, two to Blue Jays shortstop Alex Gonzalez.

"I kind of went out there looking to throw as many strikes as possible," Cahill said. "I left a couple of them up."

What to make of the A's 12-12 record in April?

They got off to an encouraging start but have lost a season-high four straight. They've also endured numerous hits because of injuries.

Catcher Kurt Suzuki, as expected, was placed on the 15-day disabled list with a strained muscle in his rib cage, the 10th time already the A's have used the DL this season.

The team still doesn't know the status of right-hander Justin Duchscherer, who left Thursday's start with a left hip injury. Duchscherer will fly to Nashville and be examined Monday by Dr. Thomas Byrd, the specialist who performed surgery on his right hip in 2007 and 2008.

Duchscherer's next turn in the rotation comes Tuesday against the Texas Rangers.

Cahill (0-1) started in place of the injured Brett Anderson (right elbow, forearm). Cahill made 32 starts as a rookie last season but lost out on the fifth starter's job this spring. Twenty-one of the 27 homers Cahill allowed in 2009 were to lefties. All three homers in this one came against right-handers.

"(The ball) does travel here, but you've got to keep the ball down and get as many ground balls as possible," A's manager Bob Geren said.

With his sinker flattening out, Cahill went with his slider more. Two of his homers came on that pitch.

"I threw my slider more than normal. I got away from my game plan," Cahill said. "I kind of overthrew trying to make an impression."

With Anderson, and possibly Duchscherer, out for an extended period, Cahill is likely to remain in the rotation for now.

Kevin Kouzmanoff's single scored Cliff Pennington in the first to give the A's a short-lived lead, but Gonzalez gave Toronto the lead for good with his three-run blast in the second.

Cahill had two outs in the fourth when Jose Bautista's grounder skipped over Kouzmanoff's glove at third for an error to put two runners on base. Cahill uncorked a wild pitch to move the runners up, then surrendered John Buck's two-run single to make it 5-2.

Vernon Wells connected for his 200th career homer in the fifth, a two-run shot. Then Gonzalez led off the sixth with a homer that chased Cahill.

A's pitchers have allowed 11 homers over the past four games after surrendering just 12 through the first 20.

But The A's also are short-circuiting offensively. They were 1 for 10 with runners in scoring position against Toronto, including five strikeouts. They also have struck out 42 times over the past four games.

A bright spot: The first career hit for Steve Tolleson, who pinch hit for Pennington in the ninth and singled to left.

"I was hoping it came in a situation that was big for the team," Tolleson said. —... It's a special moment in time, hopefully the first of many."

## **Ryan Sweeney not in A's lineup today, other pregame notes**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/1/2010 9:28PM

Pretty quiet pregame scene today at the Rogers Centre. The roof will be closed, and it's always a little funky watching a day game indoors. It could be 10 a.m. or 10 p.m., and you couldn't tell from being inside this place.

—Ryan Sweeney is out of the lineup today because his knees aren't feeling great after playing four straight games on turf. Sweeney deals with tendinitis in both knees on a regular basis. He had platelet-rich plasma injections in his knees immediately after last season ended to help with the problem. But Sweeney said he could play today if called upon and expects to return to the lineup tomorrow. He's reached base in all 23 games he's played, and he's just four away from the Oakland record for most consecutive games reaching base to start a season — Mark McGwire had a 27-game streak in 1995 and Carney Lansford did the same in 1992.

With Sweeney out, Rajai Davis gets moved up to second in the batting order with Daric Barton hitting third.

—Michael Wuertz turned in another solid rehab outing last night, throwing 1 2/3 scoreless innings for Triple-A Sacramento. It's looking very much like Wuertz will rejoin the A's bullpen soon, though manager Bob Geren said that probably won't be until the upcoming homestand. Wuertz's presence has definitely been missed in the late innings, so his return should be a boost.

—I have no idea how Gio Gonzalez will pitch today, but he was in a good mood before the game. The lefty likes playing Motown in the clubhouse before he pitches, and he was dancing to "What's Goin' On?" by Marvin Gaye before batting practice. Sort of reminded me of Rod Tidwell in "Jerry Maguire." You remember that scene at the wedding reception, right?  
...

Today's lineups ...

A's: Pennington SS; Davis CF; Barton 1B; Kouzmanoff 3B; Rosales 2B; Fox DH; Gross RF; Donaldson C; Patterson LF; Gonzalez LHP.

Jays: Lewis CF; Hill 2B; Lind LF; Wells DH; Ruiz 1B; Gonzalez SS; Bautista 3B; Snider RF; Molina C; Eveland LHP.

## **Latest on Justin Duchscherer**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/30/2010 4:36PM

Ah yes, in my last blog I forgot to provide an update on that Justin Duchscherer fella. You might be curious about him. Duchscherer will head to Nashville on Monday to have his left hip examined by Dr. Thomas Byrd, the specialist who performed both surgeries on his right hip. We'll know more after that appointment, but it would be a shock if Duchscherer isn't placed on the DL. His next turn in the rotation would come Tuesday against Texas ...

## **Trevor Cahill can't stop A's spiral**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 5/1/2010

Trevor Cahill offered the A's a change of pace Friday night, coming up from the minors to make his first start of 2010.

Apparently, the team's struggling vibes are contagious.

Cahill was shelled for eight runs (six earned) in five-plus innings in a 10-2 Toronto Blue Jays pounding before 12,722 fans at the Rogers Center, leaving the A's 0-4 on their six-game road trip.

Cahill's familiar bugaboo from 2009 — the long ball — bit him again. He served up three homers, two to Blue Jays shortstop Alex Gonzalez.

"I kind of went out there looking to throw as many strikes as possible," Cahill said. "I left a couple of them up."

What to make of the A's 12-12 record in April?

They got off to an encouraging start but have lost a season-high four straight. They've also endured numerous hits because of injuries.

Catcher Kurt Suzuki, as expected, was placed on the 15-day disabled list with a strained muscle in his rib cage, the 10th time already the A's have used the DL this season.

The team still doesn't know the status of right-hander Justin Duchscherer, who left Thursday's start with a left hip injury. Duchscherer will fly to Nashville and be examined Monday by Dr. Thomas Byrd, the specialist who performed surgery on his right hip in 2007 and 2008.

Duchscherer's next turn in the rotation comes Tuesday against the Texas Rangers.

Cahill (0-1) started in place of the injured Brett Anderson (right elbow, forearm). Cahill made 32 starts as a rookie last season but lost out on the fifth starter's job this spring. Twenty-one of the 27 homers Cahill allowed in 2009 were to lefties. All three homers in this one came against right-handers.

"(The ball) does travel here, but you've got to keep the ball down and get as many ground balls as possible," A's manager Bob Geren said.

With his sinker flattening out, Cahill went with his slider more. Two of his homers came on that pitch.

"I threw my slider more than normal. I got away from my game plan," Cahill said. "I kind of overthrew trying to make an impression."

With Anderson, and possibly Duchscherer, out for an extended period, Cahill is likely to remain in the rotation for now.

Kevin Kouzmanoff's single scored Cliff Pennington in the first to give the A's a short-lived lead, but Gonzalez gave Toronto the lead for good with his three-run blast in the second.

Cahill had two outs in the fourth when Jose Bautista's grounder skipped over Kouzmanoff's glove at third for an error to put two runners on base. Cahill uncorked a wild pitch to move the runners up, then surrendered John Buck's two-run single to make it 5-2.

Vernon Wells connected for his 200th career homer in the fifth, a two-run shot. Then Gonzalez led off the sixth with a homer that chased Cahill.

A's pitchers have allowed 11 homers over the past four games after surrendering just 12 through the first 20.

But The A's also are short-circuiting offensively. They were 1 for 10 with runners in scoring position against Toronto, including five strikeouts. They also have struck out 42 times over the past four games.

A bright spot: The first career hit for Steve Tolleson, who pinch hit for Pennington in the ninth and singled to left.

"I was hoping it came in a situation that was big for the team," Tolleson said. "... It's a special moment in time, hopefully the first of many."

## **Sweeney gets a start off; more small crowds**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Toronto 5/1/2010 10:16am

Ryan Sweeney's occasionally problematic knees were acting up a bit after four games in a row on artificial turf, so he's not in the lineup today. He expects to be back in tomorrow.

Here's the lineup: Pennington ss, Davis cf, Barton 1b, Kouzmanoff 3b, Rosales 2b, Fox dh, Gross Rf, Donaldson c, Patterson lf. Gio Gonzalez is starting against former teammate Dana Eveland in a matchup of lefties.

It's Josh Donaldson's first major-league start; manager Bob Geren was hopeful that getting him an at-bat and an inning behind the plate last night might have reduced any nerves.

UPDATE: Guess it worked: Donaldson connected on his first big-league hit here in the fourth inning - a two-run homer to left. He's also catching a nice game so far....Gio Gonzalez is perfect through three.

A's reliever Brad Ziegler took some heat this week when his tweets about a proposed Arizona sports boycott (some fans were trying to get Ziegler to support a boycott of the Diamondbacks because of the controversial new immigration law there - Ziegler, naturally, is not in favor of boycotting baseball teams) morphed into a discussion of the small crowds at the Coliseum. Ziegler's main point was that the players like playing in front of people - they'd like more fans to come out to the games. He understands why people might not, he's supportive of A's fans in general, he'd just like to see more people at the Coliseum.

Anyway, the A's aren't alone. On this trip, Oakland has played at back to back cities that are getting scant support - and Tampa Bay is in first place while the Blue Jays have an exciting offensive club. While the A's were at Tampa Bay, there were front-page newspaper stories about the small turnouts, and in today's Globe and Mail in Toronto, there's a similar story about the lack of attendance here at Rogers Centre.

Oakland and Tampa Bay both play in less than ideal surroundings. The Coliseum is old and no longer best suited for baseball, Tropicana Field is a gray dome with an artificial surface. Toronto, though, is a mystery. This is a well-placed park, and despite the artificial turf and the relative age of the building, Rogers Centre isn't a bad place to see a game. The roof is still pretty cool.

One common complaint in Oakland and Tampa Bay: parking prices, which in some cases, are steeper than the actual tickets. It's \$17 at the Coliseum, which I can see giving fans pause. Spend \$17 on parking on top of tickets and concessions, or watch at home on TV for free?

So take BART, people say; well, that doesn't work for everyone. The A's have free parking on Tuesdays - select Tuesdays. I think maybe that should be expanded to all Tuesdays, or maybe add a day of half price parking, or better still, reduce parking prices altogether. They're too high. Tampa Bay's parking is \$15, and the Rays have fans tell them that's keeping them away.

There are numerous other factors, of course, but this is one issue that brings an easy fix. Cut the prices a little, see if it gets more butts in the seats. What have you lost if it does up the attendance? Ideally, the parking loss would be offset by more tickets bought, more food and drink purchased.

Thoughts? The first poster to mention the conspiracy theory about the A's trying to drive fans away so they can justify a move to San Jose wins free parking this Tuesday.

Oh, I should correct something from today's A's beat; I had Michael Wuertz with 1 1/3 scoreless innings for Triple-A Sacramento last night, which is what the running box score and play-by-play had when I left Rogers Centre, with Wuertz already out of the game at Fresno, but it was later corrected to 1 2/3 scoreless innings.

At any rate, it sounds very much as if he'll be back with the A's on Monday.

For any of you fellow hockey nuts, the big screen just showed that former Toronto captain Mats Sundin is here at today's game.

## **Oakland: A's signage policy is unconstitutional**

The Associated Press 5/1/2010

Oakland's city attorney is advising the police chief not to enforce the A's policy banning fans' homemade signs at the Coliseum.

The baseball team has had a policy for decades banning signs that are negative or done in poor taste directed at a specific person.

Earlier this month, 25-year-old Jorge Leon was removed from the publicly owned stadium during a game over a sign criticizing A's owner Lew Wolff.

But in a letter to Police Chief Anthony Batts, City Attorney John Russo said the A's policy is an unconstitutional restriction of free speech and could open the city to lawsuits. Russo says the A's could only restrict signage for containing threats, potentially inciting violence or similar reason.

A's spokesman Bob Rose says the team is reviewing Russo's letter and declined comment.

## **Cahill labors in season debut at Toronto**

### **Third baseman Tolleson collects first career big league hit**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

TORONTO -- Trevor Cahill painted quite the proverbial scene at Toronto's Rogers Centre on Friday night.

His opposing cast of characters differed slightly than that seen last year, but the results sure looked all too familiar.

The young righty, who offered up an Oakland rookie-record 27 home runs last year, surrendered three to the Blue Jays in his season debut Friday.

All three came against right-handers, who tallied just six of those 27 long balls last season.

It didn't really matter, though. Toronto's right-handers found their way around the bases just as easily as the lefties en route to handing Oakland its fourth consecutive loss in the form of a 10-2 defeat.

"I threw my slider more than I usually do," Cahill said, "and two of the homers came off my slider. I kind of got away from my game plan. You get called back up and your first time out there you want to make a good impression. It just didn't go my way."

The 22-year-old Cahill, who began the season on the disabled list with a stress reaction in his left scapula before being reinstated and immediately optioned to Triple-A Sacramento on April 20, was making his first start since Sept. 29 of last year.

He was officially added to the A's 25-man roster Friday to take the rotation place of Brett Anderson, who is one of nine Oakland players currently occupying the DL. Cahill's anticipated return, though, didn't quite go as planned.

"I was battling out there," he said, "trying to throw as many strikes as possible, wanting to get deep in the game. I just left a couple up."

The first one Cahill left up resulted in a second-inning three-run homer off the bat of Alex Gonzalez, who tallied two dingers in the game. It quickly erased a 1-0 lead for the A's, who watched Kevin Kouzmanoff single home a run in the first frame.

"It was definitely disappointing," Cahill said of his 2010 debut outing. "You try to come out and use a lead in your favor, but I gave it away."

En route to giving up eight runs (six earned) on seven hits and a walk through five-plus innings, Cahill insisted much of his struggles came as a result of his inability to locate one pitch.

"I couldn't really find my sinker," he said, "so I was kind of working without my best pitch."

Cahill was also working without regular battery mate Kurt Suzuki, who on Friday joined the already crowded disabled list with an intercostal strain in his left side. The A's catcher has missed a total of six games -- the last four of which have seen Oakland pitchers go 0-4 with an ERA above 12.00.

"Obviously I should respect Kurt as a catcher, but that's such a small sample size," manager Bob Geren said. "We've just had a couple of starters have a rough go of it."

The same can pretty much be said of a rather lackluster offense, which has scored just 14 total runs in its last four road games. Two of those came Friday in a nine-hit effort, but the A's failed to get a run on the board after Landon Powell scored on an RBI groundout from Ryan Sweeney in the fourth frame.

Geren, though, insisted he liked what he saw from his team against Toronto starter Brandon Morrow, who collected his second win after giving up two runs, seven hits and two walks with nine strikeouts in six innings.

"I thought we've had good at-bats," the A's skipper said. "They did tonight."

The biggest one, perhaps, didn't lend itself as a game-changer, but rather represented something special on a more personal level. Steve Tolleson, who entered the game as a defensive replacement at third base in the seventh, notched his first career Major League hit in the ninth -- a line-drive single to left field.

"I was hoping it came in a situation that was big for the team," Tolleson said. "I guess it's always a great thing to happen for a young player. I just hoped it would come in a close game."

Still, the 26-year-old infielder sported a big grin while holding the momentous ball and game lineup card after finally "getting the monkey off my back."

"As a kid, that's what you dream about, getting your chance in the big leagues and then having some success," he said. "It was a special moment in time, and hopefully it's the first of many."

Unfortunately, Tolleson's base hit represented something of a lone bright spot for the A's, who combined for a total of 11 strikeouts in the game -- one of which went to Josh Donaldson, who made his Major League debut in the eighth inning when he pinch-hit for Powell.

The A's current string of four losses in a row is a season high, and the club officially finished the month of April with an even 12-12 mark.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Fresno knocks off Cats, who return to Raley**

Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento's bullpen couldn't match the stellar performance of starter Lenny DiNardo and the River Cats finished their road trip 4-4 with a loss to the Fresno Grizzlies.

Another costly Sacramento error gave Fresno the lead in the seventh and two Grizzlies home runs in the eighth sent Sacramento packing with a 4-2 loss Sunday afternoon.

DiNardo allowed only five hits and one run over 6.0 innings, matching top San Francisco Giants prospect Madison Bumgarner pitch for pitch -- Bumgarner also allowed one run over 6.0 innings.

River Cat Jack Cust singled home Matt Carson, who reached on a triple, to tie the game, 1-1, in the bottom of the fourth.

The game remained tied until the seventh, when Sacramento reliever Michael Benacka walked Ben Copeland. Copeland stole second, and River Cats catcher Anthony Recker's throw was errant, allowing Copeland to advance to third. Copeland scored on a sacrifice bunt. Ryan Rohlinger and Buster Posey hit back-to-back home runs in the eighth for a 4-2 lead.

Sacramento was able to score one run in the ninth on a Michael Taylor fielder's choice, but couldn't threaten the lead as Fresno took three of four games in the series.

Sacramento returns home Monday to open an eight-game homestand that concludes April 10. The River Cats home to get back in the South Division race with four games against the Salt Lake Bees and Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

### **Hounds Welcome Chris Young With Five Run 1st**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Sunday in San Antonio, the RockHounds faced San Diego Padres pitcher Chris Young on a Major League re-hab assignment ... with the Padres' top pitching prospect, Simon Castro waiting to enter the game when Young was through.

Young, as it would turn out, would not survive the first inning, a victim of four walks and a huge, 3-run double by Jermaine Mitchell. Four consecutive walks were followed by Mitchell's bases-clearing shot to left-center (on a 1-2 pitch), and the 6-10, 270-pound Padres right-hander was through. Gabe Ortiz then took reliever Bryan Oland's first pitch to right field, driving in Mitchell, and the 'Hounds exited the inning with a 5-0 lead. Castro, entering the game in the third, would give up two runs on five hits over 5.0 innings, and the RockHounds led, 7-1.



The "other" pitcher in the game was Pedro Figueroa. Oakland's # 5 prospect would be the game's pitching "story," earning his first Double-A victory with 7.2 outstanding innings, allowing two runs (just one earned), while walking three and striking out seven.

Figueroa did not go to a 2-0 count on a San Antonio batter until the seventh inning. True to "the book," that batter, James Darnell, would take advantage. From the 2-0 start, he eventually drove a 3-2 pitch out for a solo home run.

In the eighth, Figueroa ran out of steam, allowing two of his three walks and a Cedric Hunter double to load the bases with two out. Justin Souza entered the game to face Matt Clark with the bases full and the tying run on deck (a save situation). He whiffed Clark on a 3-2 pitch to end the threat and, after a lead-off single in the ninth, struck out the side to end the game, earning his first save.

The RockHounds (13-10) now have a 2-game lead in the crazy Texas League South, with San Antonio, Frisco and Corpus Christi each at 11-12. The 'Hounds are now 5-2 on an 8-game road trip which ends Monday morning (11:00) at San Antonio.

## **Ports Stumble in Series Finale, 14-3**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** -For the Ports on Sunday, when it rained, it poured. After making it a one-run game in the fifth, the Ports (11-13) committed four consecutive errors to start the eighth inning, and allowed 10 runs to score in the two final frames, as Stockton lost, 14-3, to Bakersfield (8-13) in Sunday's game.

The Ports totaled five errors in the contest, a new season high, and allowed a season-high 14 runs on a season-high 17 hits. The Ports allowed five home runs in Sunday's game. Ports starter Anivoris Ramirez lost his fifth straight game, and Stockton relievers were also tagged for a number of runs in the game. Designated hitter Josh Horton finished the game 3x4 with a solo home run, his first homer of the year. Shortstop Grant Green collected a pair of hits and an RBI, while Stephen Parker extended his hitting streak to five games, by doubling in the first inning.

The wind was blowing 24 mph to center field, and Bakersfield hitters found that wind tunnel early and often in the contest. Blaze left fielder David Paisano led off the game with a triple to centerfield. After shortstop Davis Stoneburner grounded out, center fielder Engel Beltre singled, allowing Paisano to score. Ramirez got the next two batters to retire, and kept the Blaze scoreless in the second inning. But the Blaze pulled ahead, 3-0, in the third inning on a two-run home run by designated hitter Mike Bianucci. Right fielder Mitch Hilligoss gave Bakersfield a four-run advantage with a solo shot to center field in the fourth inning.

Horton responded with his first home run of the season, slamming the ball off Blaze starter Michael Main to centerfield. Horton finished the series batting .500 (6x12) with a double, a triple, a home run and four RBI.

The Ports added a pair of runs to make it a 4-3 ballgame in the fifth inning. Catcher Ryan Ortiz started things off with a double to centerfield. He moved to third on a single by center fielder Jose Crisotomo. Left fielder Shane Keough then walked to load the bases for Green. Green singled to bring home the Ports' second run of the game. Third baseman Stephen Parker hit into a fielder's choice as Blaze first baseman Jared Bolden threw the ball to catcher Chris Gradoville to put out Crisotomo at the plate. Ports right fielder Jeremy Barfield hit a sacrifice fly to score Keough.

From there, the two teams stayed at 4-3 until the eighth inning, which is when the score escalated quickly in favor of Bakersfield. With Scott Hodsdon on the mound, Gradoville reached first on an error by Parker. Hilligoss then reached safely on a throwing error by Hodsdon to put two on. Mike Spina committed a fielding error with Tommy Mendonca at the plate to load the bases with no out. Second baseman Andres James then stepped to the plate and singled to left field, allowing Gradoville and Hilligoss to score and make it 6-3. Keough made an error fielding the ball, which allowed James to move to second and Mendonca to third. With runners in scoring position, Bolden hit a two-RBI single up the middle to make it 8-3. While Hodsdon gave up five runs, none of them were unearned.

The Ports then called up on Jose Pina to pitch. Pina got the first batter to fly out, before surrendering a two-run home run to shortstop Davis Stoneburner, his fourth homer of the year. Pina then got the next two batters out to get the Ports out of the jam.

But the Ports' woes continued in the ninth frame. Gradoville started off the inning, and hit the ball straight to Parker, who made another error. Right fielder Mitch Hilligoss homered to the Metro PCS Home Run Hill in right field to add another two runs to Bakersfield's total. The Ports got the next batter to ground out before calling upon Dan McDaniel to pitch. McDaniel gave up a single and a two-run home run to make it 14-3 before recording his first out of the game. He got pinch-hitter Daniel Lima to strike out to end the inning.

The Ports were able to get a baserunner in the ninth inning with two out, but Green struck out to end the game.

The Ports will enjoy an off day on Monday before welcoming the San Jose Giants to town. On Tuesday at 7:05 PM, RHP Justin Murray (2-1, 2.37) will take the hill for Stockton, while LHP Eric Surkamp (1-1, 2.35) will start for San Jose.

## **Cougars' Drop Game 3 to Kernels**

**CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa** - The Kane County Cougars suffered a 6-3 loss Sunday afternoon at the hands of the Cedar Rapids Kernels at Veterans Memorial Stadium. The Cougars lost two players to injury during the game, fell to 1-5 against the Kernels so far this year and have lost three straight after winning four in a row.

Starter Chris Mederos (2-2) took the loss and left in the first inning with an apparent shoulder injury after facing just two batters. He walked two, and the first free pass led to a run and a lead the Kernels never gave back. Ryan Quigley allowed two runs in three innings as Mederos' replacement. Then Bo Schultz yielded one run in three innings, Josh Lansford got touched for one in the seventh, and Jose Guzman gave up a solo homer in the eighth.

Down, 5-0, in the eighth inning, the Cougars sent nine men to the plate and rallied for three runs. Kent Walton doubled home Conner Crumbliss, Leonardo Gil delivered a sacrifice fly and Mike Gilmartin got hit by a pitch with the bases loaded to cut it to 5-3. During the inning, outfielder Myrio Richard got hit by a pitch on the left hand and was lifted for a pinch-runner. Orangel Arenas (1-4) got the win for Cedar Rapids, and David Carpenter notched his second save.

The finale of the four-game series is Monday afternoon at 12:05 CT. The Cougars (11-13) will send Justin Marks (0-2, 9.72) to the mound to try to avoid a sweep, and the Kernels (12-12) will counter with Tyler Skaggs (0-1, 0.64). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com), with pregame coverage starting at 11:50 a.m.