

A's News Clips, Thursday, May 13, 2010

Texas Rangers bang five homers to rout Oakland A's

By Joe Stiglich jstiglich@bayareanewsgroup.com

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But they could have fooled the A's on Wednesday night, when they sent five homers rocketing through the humid air at Rangers Ballpark during a 10-1 drubbing of the visitors in front of 26,625 fans.

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Although the A's pitching staff collectively took it on the chin, starting pitcher Gio Gonzalez's struggles set the tone for the night. Gonzalez (3-3) gave up four runs on nine hits, exiting in the fifth after Josh Hamilton blasted a 427-foot, two-run homer to right-center that gave Texas a 4-0 lead.

That snapped a string of three solid outings by Gonzalez. The Rangers came in ranked 10th in the AL with 27 homers, but they made Gonzalez pay for leaving too many fat pitches over the plate.

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It was a slippery slope once Texas got to the A's bullpen. After Hamilton's homer, Chad Gaudin relieved Gonzalez and served up another long ball to Vladimir Guerrero, a 422-foot shot that landed on the grass in dead center.

Gaudin, who made just his second appearance in 10 games this month, allowed two more homers in 12/3 innings. Max Ramirez hit a solo shot in

the sixth, and Michael Young went deep later in the inning to make it 7-0.

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Meanwhile, the A's were shackled by Rangers starter Derek Holland (1-0), who was called up from Triple-A and surrendered just five hits over six scoreless innings. He struck out seven and walked one, working his fastball on both sides of the plate and mixing in an effective slider.

"We went up there taking the first time around. There were rumors he could be wild," A's first baseman Daric Barton said. "He looked good tonight. He kept us off-balance and threw a good game."

Oakland avoided the shutout with Eric Patterson's pinch-hit homer in the eighth off Doug Mathis.

It was the A's first pinch-hit homer since Kurt Suzuki's walk-off shot on Aug. 15, 2008, against the Chicago White Sox.

Ian Kinsler's daredevil baserunning aided the Rangers as they broke a scoreless tie with a two-run fourth.

A run was in when Kinsler broke from third with two outs and tried to steal home. Gonzalez broke from his windup and fired an errant throw past catcher Landon Powell. After much confusion about how the play was ruled, Gonzalez was charged with a balk, and Texas had a 2-0 lead.

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The play appeared to rattle Gonzalez, who made a fielding error on David Murphy's dribbler shortly after. But Gonzalez, whose .200 opponents' batting average coming in was fourth lowest in the AL, was more steamed about missing location on his pitches.

"(Kinsler) didn't throw me off my game," he said. "I was leaving pitches up. It wasn't my best performance."

A's victimized by Texas Rangers' power display

By Joe Stiglich, [Oakland Tribune](#)

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TODAY: A's (Ben Sheets 2-3) at Rangers (C.J. Wilson 3-1), 11:05 a.m. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

A's notebook: Kurt Suzuki's minor setback extends stay in Triple-A

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Suzuki's minor setback extends stay in Triple-A

ARLINGTON, Texas — Kurt Suzuki's return to the lineup is on hold.

The catcher homered and doubled in his first rehab game for Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday, but his strained rib cage muscle was hurting him afterward. That nixed any chance of Suzuki being activated for Wednesday's game against the Texas Rangers, as the A's had hoped.

Suzuki has been sidelined since April 24.

"He's going to stay with the Triple-A team at least the next few days," manager Bob Geren said. "He'll probably play Friday."

Landon Powell, who had a game-tying single and scored the winning run Tuesday, started his fourth straight game behind the plate for the A's. Powell also caught Dallas Braden's perfect game Sunday.

"We're always going to miss Kurt. He's a very valuable part of this team," Geren said. "But Landon has done a very nice job in his absence."

Despite Suzuki's setback, the A's could welcome back a few core players soon.

Center fielder Coco Crisp took batting practice for the first time since fracturing his left pinkie April 2. He and second baseman Mark Ellis (strained hamstring) are scheduled to begin rehab assignments with Single-A Stockton next week.

Right-hander Justin Duchscherer will throw a bullpen session today. If Duchscherer's left hip responds well, he'll come off the DL and start Saturday against the Los Angeles Angels.

□ Adam Rosales sported a large white bandage above his left eye before the game. He was taking early batting practice when he hit a line drive that ricocheted off the pitcher's L-screen and came back to whack him. Rosales looked like he went a couple rounds with Rocky Balboa, but Geren used another sports comparison: "He's got a little MMA look to him right now."

Rosales still started at second base and hit second in the order for the first time this season. Geren stacked his lineup with seven right-handed hitters against Texas lefty Derek Holland.

□ Sacramento first baseman Chris Carter is tied for second in the Pacific Coast League in homers (eight) and RBIs (29). But he's hitting .246, and his 38 strikeouts rank second in the league.

Chin Music: House resolution to honor Braden's perfect game

By Josh Richman, Oakland Tribune, 5/12/2010 9:40am

Rep. [Pete Stark](#), D-Fremont; Rep. [Barbara Lee](#), D-Oakland; and Rep. [Jerry McNerney](#), D-Pleasanton, today introduced [H.Res. 1351](#), congratulating Dallas Braden and the Oakland A's for pitching a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays on Sunday.

Now, don't get all aflutter because Stark, the Congressman from *FREMONT*, is the lead author on a resolution honoring the *OAKLAND A's*. It's nothing. Really.

Here's the text:

Whereas, on May 9, 2010, Oakland Athletics pitcher Dallas Braden pitched a no-hitter without allowing any base runners;

Whereas the Oakland Athletics defeated the Tampa Bay Rays in the Oakland Coliseum in Oakland, California by a score of 4-0;

Whereas Dallas Braden threw 109 pitches with no walks and six strikeouts;

Whereas players Cliff Pennington and Kevin Kouzmanoff scored one run each, and Daric Barton scored two;

Whereas Dallas Braden was raised in Stockton, California and played high school baseball at Stagg High School in Stockton, California, and played collegiate baseball for American River College and the Texas Tech Red Raiders before being drafted by the Oakland Athletics in 2004 and making his major league debut with the team in 2007;

Whereas Dallas Braden's mother, Jodie Atwood, tragically died of cancer when he was in high school, Braden celebrated Mother's Day with his grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, with a hug on the field after his perfect game when he presented her with the game ball;

Whereas the accomplishment was the result of the hard work of every player and coach on the Oakland Athletics baseball team, including Dallas Braden, Cliff Pennington, Daric Barton, Ryan Sweeney, Kevin Kouzmanoff, Eric Chavez, Adam Rosales, Eric Patterson, Landon Powell, Rajai Davis, and Manager Bob Geren;

Whereas this marks the nineteenth perfect game in Major League Baseball history;

Whereas Hall of Famer James "Catfish" Hunter pitched the only other perfect game in Oakland Athletics history against the Minnesota Twins on May 8, 1968;

Whereas the team has played at their current home in Oakland since 1968, winning 4 World Series, 6 American League pennants, and 14 West Division titles: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

- (1) congratulates Dallas Braden of the Oakland Athletics for pitching a perfect game on Mother's Day, May 9, 2010;
- (2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches and staff of the Oakland Athletics whose hard work helped Dallas Braden to complete the perfect game;
- (3) recognizes the loyalty of Athletics baseball fans in the East Bay and around the United States.

Chin Music: Kurt Suzuki's return delayed; ticket discounts for A's next homestand (thank Dallas Braden)

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/12/2010 5:23PM

Hey folks, I won't bore you w/the technical issues I've had trying to post this blog, so I'll just get straight to the important stuff with the game getting underway ...

-Kurt Suzuki won't be activated for at least a few days, as his strained rib cage started acting up after last night's rehab game with Triple-A Sacramento. He'll take two games off and try playing Friday for Sacramento.

-Justin Duchscherer's bullpen session is scheduled for Thursday, not today. Whether he comes off the DL to pitch Saturday depends on how his left hip feels coming out of that.

-Second baseman Mark Ellis and center fielder Coco Crisp are inching closer to returning. Both are scheduled to begin rehab assignments with Single-A Stockton next week. Crisp took BP with his teammates tonight for the first time since fracturing his left pinkie. ...

-One last note: The A's are running a promotion for their upcoming seven-game homestand. "The Perfect Homestand" will include ticket discounts, special giveaways and a ceremony to honor Dallas Braden's perfect game. Plaza-level tickets for Monday's game against Seattle will go for \$2.09 (as in the 209 area code of Braden's hometown of Stockton, get it?). Those tickets can be purchased at oaklandathletics.com/perfect, w/coupon code "209".

Tonight's lineups:

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

Rangers: Andrus SS, Young 3B, Hamilton CF, Guerrero RF, Kinsler 2B, Smoak 1B, Garko DH, Murphy LF, Ramirez C; Holland LHP.

Thunderous 13 at bats dim A's glow

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Texas hit five homers in the span of 13 at-bats Wednesday night, emphatically slamming the door on an A's team that one night earlier had staged a ninth-inning comeback and scored in two of the extra innings to beat the Rangers.

In the fifth inning Wednesday, A's starter Gio Gonzalez and Chad Gaudin surrendered back-to-back homers by Josh Hamilton and Vladimir Guerrero. The Rangers went on to pummel Oakland 10-1 and regain sole possession of first place in the division.

Texas nearly had back-to-back blasts again in the sixth, but Max Ramirez and Michael Young were separated by a batter when they went deep off Gaudin. In the seventh, Justin Smoak hit a two-run shot off Henry Rodriguez.

"They linked together five home runs in a very short period of time and jumped way ahead of us," Oakland manager Bob Geren said.

Wednesday was just the second time Gonzalez allowed more than three runs in a start, and the Rangers hit the ball hard against him all night.

"I didn't have my best game," said Gonzalez, who thought he might have been rushing a bit. "I left a couple up to some good hitters and those guys make you pay."

Guerrero opened the fourth with a base hit and scored on an Ian Kinsler double that left fielder Jake Fox dived for unsuccessfully. Geren said he thought that Fox might have had a shot at it, and he didn't mind the dive there.

Kinsler advanced to third on Smoak's lineout to center, and then, with David Murphy just settling into the batter's box, Kinsler bluffed about a third of the way down the third-base line.

Gonzalez stepped off the rubber and threw wildly by catcher Landon Powell at the plate, and Kinsler sped home easily on what was first called an error and then changed to a balk after the game.

"If I'd stepped off and took my time, I would have had him out easy, no doubt about it," Gonzalez said. "That was a free out I kind of gave away myself."

Young singled to open the fifth and Hamilton crushed a 3-2 fastball out to right center. That was all for Gonzalez, who has not received a single run of support in each of his past five losses, dating back to last year. Gaudin came in and immediately gave up a homer to Guerrero.

It just wasn't the A's night. Second baseman Adam Rosales was playing with a big lump over his left eye and a swollen eyelid after a ball ricocheted in the indoor batting cage and hit him in the face.

On Tuesday night, for the fourth time in Oakland history, the team trailed entering the ninth inning but scored a run in at least two of the extra innings. Daric Barton (homer, game-winning single) was the first A's player since 1956 (Harry Simpson, Kansas City A's) to have an RBI in two different extra-inning at-bats.

Suzuki's return delayed

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Kurt Suzuki's return to the A's was held up for at least three days after he felt soreness in his rib-cage area.

Manager **Bob Geren** had said Tuesday night that Suzuki was en route from Oklahoma City to join the A's. On Wednesday, though, Geren said it turned out that Suzuki had felt some discomfort after returning to his hotel room Tuesday night, so the A's had Suzuki take the day off. He'll play for Triple-A Sacramento today and Friday with an eye toward rejoining the A's on Saturday.

Landon Powell, meanwhile, is doing a fine job filling in for Suzuki. He caught a perfect game Sunday and stole his first career base Tuesday.

"For me to catch a perfect game and steal a base, I think we need to send the devil a North Face (parka) because it must be pretty chilly down there," Powell said with a grin.

Told that the team's relievers were crediting strength and conditioning coach **Bob Alejo** for Powell's speed, Powell laughed and said, "Alejo should get a raise."

Rajai Davis was supposed to bunt in the 13th with Powell going from first, but he pulled the bat back when he got a curveball, Davis said.

"I peeked and saw he pulled back, and I was scared," Powell said. "I stole a base in Fall League (in 2006), so I don't have zero speed, but with the game on the line in the 13th inning, that's scary."

Davis also swung through a bunt attempt with Powell at second, and Powell was nearly caught too far off the bag.

"His bunting was not for lack of practice or effort," Geren said. "He works on it every day. He just didn't get the job done."

Briefly: **Mark Ellis** (hamstring) and **Coco Crisp** (fractured pinkie) will start a rehab assignment with Class A Stockton on Tuesday. ... **Joey Devine** (forearm tendinitis) said he resumed playing catch Monday. ... **Travis Buck** (oblique) said he swung a fungo bat 20 times at 50 percent effort level Wednesday.

A'S LEADING OFF

Susan Slusser

Thursday, May 13, 2010

Hail Braden! The A's will offer fan incentives all next week in honor of Dallas Braden's perfect game, including \$2.09 plaza level tickets Monday (online only, code 209) and a Braden T-shirt giveaway when he starts Wednesday.

Eric Byrnes turns the page

Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle

Eric Byrnes is back in the lineup as an everyday player. Every Wednesday, anyway. Byrnes is the starting left fielder for the Dutch Goose, a slow-pitch softball team sponsored by a Menlo Park burger barn.

Byrnes is probably the best-compensated ballplayer in the league, considering he will be paid \$11 million this season - although the Arizona Diamondbacks (\$10.6 million) and Seattle Mariners (\$400,000) will pay his salary, while the Dutch Goose will simply supply the burgers and beer.

Until a week and a half ago, Byrnes was a Seattle Mariner, so some might see this as a step down. To Byrnes it's just another exciting chapter of life.

Wednesday night, in the Menlo Park League, Byrnes, the cleanup hitter, led off the bottom of the second inning against Vintage Construction.

The Vintage pitcher was Bill Lopez, who, as a local Little League coach, passed over 9-year-old Eric Byrnes in a draft.

Revenge time, 25 years later: Byrnes hit the first pitch deep over the left-field fence. When he arrived back at the dugout, Lopez nodded and rolled the ball to Byrnes, a souvenir of his first slow-pitch homer.

Byrnes walked to the stands and presented the ball to his proud mom, Judy.

Life is good.

It was a relief to see Byrnes seemingly happy and reasonably sane. The reports out of Seattle on his release by the Mariners were weird and disturbing.

The cut was no surprise. Byrnes, 34, had been battling injuries, was cut in January by the Diamondbacks, was picked up on the cheap by the Mariners, was relegated to part-time duty and wasn't hitting his pet bulldog's weight.

Two Fridays ago, in extra innings of a scoreless game in Seattle, Byrnes pulled his bat back on a suicide squeeze, rendering teammate Ichiro Suzuki a dead duck at the plate. The Mariners lost 2-0.

Minutes after the game, Byrnes burst out of the clubhouse riding a beach-cruiser bicycle, blew past the media and almost ran down Mariners general manager Jack Zduriencik, hurrying to the clubhouse to address his sinking team.

Two days later, Byrnes was cut, and he announced in a radio interview he was done with baseball for good but would be playing slow-pitch softball.

Knowing it's time to go

Those of us who met Byrnes when he played for the A's remember the Bay Area homeboy (St. Francis High in Mountain View) as a relentless free spirit and nonstop good guy. But the reports made it sound as if one of Byrnes's notoriously loose screws had jammed and sent him spinning out of control.

To the above reports, Byrnes pleads guilty, with an explanation. He hadn't snapped; he merely flamed out, and retired from baseball with as much dignity as you can muster making your exit on a beach cruiser.

Byrnes said that when Mariners manager Don Wakamatsu and Zduriencik cut him, they offered to make calls to other teams on his behalf.

"I told him, 'I appreciate it, Jack, but this is it. I'm done,' " Byrnes said. "I went to shake Don's hand and he pushed it away and hugged me. He said, 'Hey, I never had anyone play harder for me.'

"To be honest, I don't really have any interest (in trying to play more baseball). I've never been scared for it to be done, for life after baseball, and it's not because I didn't love the game."

'I didn't give up on baseball'

One could make the case that few players ever enjoyed the game more. Romping in the outfield in batting practice, Byrnes looked like a large Labrador puppy.

Baseball guys always talk about the importance of never getting too high or too low, but Byrnes missed that memo. He arrived at the park (naturally) high every night, and went up from there.

Byrnes' version of events in Seattle vary from the news reports. On the failed squeeze bunt, he said the pitch was so far outside he said he knew he couldn't reach it, so he pulled back and hoped to obstruct the catcher to allow Ichiro to score.

After the game, he was upset with himself, so after showering he hopped on his bike (he lived near the ballpark) and pedaled off, not deliberately blowing off the media and not seeing the GM.

Byrnes said he left baseball, and the Mariners, on good terms.

"Ask any of my teammates if I gave a" darn, he said. "Ask Wakamatsu. Ask Mike Sweeney. ... I didn't give up on baseball. I played, in my mind, to the end. My time just ran out. ... I busted my ass for 11 years, I gave this game all I had."

He drove home from Seattle to Half Moon Bay with his 8-months-pregnant wife, Tarah; their 17-month-old daughter, Peanut (real name Chloe), and their three bulldogs. Byrnes slept a couple of hours at home, then hit the golf course.

Tuesday he played golf, then went surfing. Wednesday, softball.

"People keep asking me, 'Are you really done' " with baseball? Byrnes said. "I'm beyond OK with (retirement). This is awesome for me."

Second time up Wednesday, two men on. Home run, left field. Final: Goose 6, Vintage 2. Break up the Goose.

Gio's rare poor start turns into blowout

Offense struggles as A's return to second place in AL West

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- The wind-blown litter that swept through the Ballpark in Arlington couldn't hide the already-messy scene that was displayed on its field, where Oakland dropped a 10-1 game to the Rangers on Wednesday. A's starter Gio Gonzalez, noticeably off from the start, could only watch a 1-0 game snowball following an error in the fourth. Actually, following a balk -- as it was deemed after the game.

With Ian Kinsler on third base, Gonzalez readied himself for a pitch to Justin Smoak. Before the A's lefty had completed his windup, Kinsler was speeding toward home -- a move that forced Gonzalez to act quickly and throw a ball wide to catcher Landon Powell, who reached the ball only after Kinsler crossed home plate to make it 2-0.

"I would have had him out easy if I had just stepped off, taken my time and thrown home," the A's pitcher said. "I just rushed it. It was a free out, and I kind of just threw it away myself. I don't know what happened."

However, Kinsler knew exactly what he was doing.

"I was going," the Rangers' second baseman said. "I was definitely going to try and steal home.

"In the Garko at-bat, I had his timing down. I thought I could make it. He has a pause in his windup before he goes into a high leg kick. I felt I could have gone and made it."

He did, and, as a result, confusion reigned over the 26,625 fans in attendance -- not to mention Gonzalez, as well. Home plate umpire Tim Tschida had called a ball, bringing manager Bob Geren out of the dugout to prove his pitcher's throw was just that, and not a pitch.

"I wasn't trying to get the run reversed," the A's skipper said. "He had stepped off the rubber. In the end, it was the right call."

Except Geren spoke those words before the call had been reversed, at which point Gonzalez was notified and just shrugged his shoulders.

"I thought I had stepped enough off the mound," he said, "and I don't know how they determine if it's a balk there."

Either way, it didn't lead to the best of endings for the A's, who watched the Rangers combine for 17 hits -- including five home runs, all of which came in a span of 13 batters. Gonzalez gave up one of them, a two-run shot to Josh Hamilton with no outs in the fifth that increased the Rangers' lead to four runs and led to the southpaw's early exit.

"His overall stuff was not as crisp as it has been," Geren said. "They were hitting balls hard off him from the beginning. He did a pretty good job of limiting the damage, though."

Gonzalez was able to leave Texas runners on first and second in the first two frames before tallying a 1-2-3 third inning and watching his night come to a rather quick end in the fifth. The 24-year-old lefty entered the game having given up five earned runs over his past three starts, which spanned 20 2/3 innings.

"I battled," he said. "I didn't have my best game. I was trying to throw strikes, but these guys make you pay for balls left up. Anyone's going to get hit when a ball's left up."

Unfortunately, Chad Gaudin and Henry Rodriguez had to learn that lesson the hard way following Gonzalez's performance. Gaudin, while facing just eight hitters, offered up three long balls through 1 2/3 innings of work. Meanwhile, Rodriguez -- making his 2010 debut -- surrendered a two-run shot to Justin Smoak in the seventh.

"They linked together five homers in a very short period of time," Geren said. "They jumped ahead of us quickly. Before that, we were right there in the ballgame."

The lone offensive highlight for Oakland came in the top of the eighth, courtesy of a solo shot to right field off the bat of Eric Patterson, who represented the first pinch-hitter to knock one out for the A's since Kurt Suzuki did it August 15, 2008, against the Chicago White Sox.

However, the homer barely put a dent in an otherwise outstanding night by Texas' pitching staff, which was led by starter Derek Holland. Making his season debut, the Rangers' lefty put together six shutout innings of five-hit ball while walking one and fanning seven.

"He had a pretty good fastball that had real explosiveness on the end of it," Geren said. "When the ball's reaching up out of the zone like that, it's hard to catch up with it. He also had a cutter-type slider that was working. Bottom line, he threw strikes."

The loss snapped a three-game winning streak for the A's, who gave away sole possession of first place in the American League West with the defeat and will look to regain the lead in Thursday's afternoon rubber match.

"A game like today," Geren said, "is one you try to shake off as quickly as possible."

Suzuki's return pushed to at least Saturday

Catcher felt sore after rehab appearance for Sacramento

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- Kurt Suzuki's bat proved more than ready for a big league return after a big day at the plate for Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday night.

The catcher's intercostal strain, however, told him a different story.

Suzuki will stay with Sacramento until at least Friday to continue rehabbing the strain that landed him on the 15-day disabled list for the first time in his career back on April 30. The transaction was retroactive to April 24, and Suzuki was expected to join the A's in Texas on Wednesday.

"After the game, when he went back to his hotel, he felt a little sore," said manager Bob Geren. "He didn't quite feel ready."

In five innings for the River Cats in Oklahoma City on Tuesday, Suzuki went 2-for-2 with a double and a home run to go along with three runs and three RBIs.

Geren said the 26-year-old Suzuki will take Wednesday and Thursday off, but he will play Friday and could potentially meet up with the A's in Anaheim on Saturday, when right-hander Justin Duchscherer (left hip) is also due back and slated to start.

In the meantime, Landon Powell will be given regular catching duties. He entered Wednesday's contest against the Rangers batting .160, but has seven walks and has reached base safely in all eight games in which he has batted. Along with tallying his first career steal Tuesday, he scored the winning run in the A's 13-inning 7-6 win.

"We're always going to miss Kurt no matter how well we're playing," Geren said. "He's a valuable player to this team, but Landon's been doing a nice job."

'Perfect Homestand' set to honor Braden

ARLINGTON -- The A's on Wednesday announced "The Perfect Homestand," a special week-long celebration honoring Dallas Braden's perfect game that will include unique fan giveaways, ticket discounts and an on-field tribute to the Stockton, Calif., native during the team's next homestand, May 17-23.

The club will kick the promotion off Monday night when the Mariners come to town for the first of a quick two-game set. Plaza Level tickets, including Section 209, will be priced at \$2.09 to correlate with Braden's dedication for his hometown area code. The deal is only available online by using the coupon code "209" at oaklandathletics.com/perfect.

The following night, Lower Box seats will be priced at \$19 in honor of the 19th perfect game in Major League history. Parking will also be free.

The celebratory week will continue Wednesday when Braden makes his first home start since the perfecto. The game against the Tigers will feature a Braden T-shirt given to the first 15,000 fans in attendance. Then, on Thursday, 10,000 fans will receive a commemorative ticket dated May 9, 2010, to mark the game in which Braden accomplished the rare feat.

When the Giants make their trip across the Bay Bridge for the first of a three-game set Friday, the A's will host a special on-field ceremony honoring Braden and his grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, who is slated to throw out the honorary first pitch.

Weekend offerings include a \$5 discount for all Field Level tickets Saturday, using the coupon code "Bridge" when purchasing online. To round out the promotion week, the A's will hand out a Braden perfect game poster to 15,000 fans on Sunday.

Braden graces Sports Illustrated cover

ARLINGTON -- For the first time in nearly a decade, a member of the A's is featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated.

Dallas Braden, who tossed the 19th perfect game in Major League history on Sunday, is gracing the front page of America's most prolific sports magazine this week. The issue launched Wednesday and represents the 21st time that a member of the A's franchise has been featured on the cover.

Among the other A's featured on the prestigious cover include Philadelphia great Al Simmons and stars from the Swingin' A's of the 1970s, including Vida Blue and Bert Campaneris. Other A's cover boys include the likes of Walt Weiss and Oakland's 1981 rotation, which boasted Rick Langford, Steve McCatty, Brian Kingman, Mike Norris and Matt Keough.

Reggie Jackson tops the list with four covers, while Jose Canseco, Rickey Henderson, Mark McGwire and Catfish Hunter have been featured on two covers each.

Jason Giambi's appearance on the July 17, 2000, cover had been the last time an Oakland player emerged on a cover. Pitcher Jim Nash, meanwhile, became the first Athletics player to make an SI cover on March 13, 1967.

Crisp, Ellis set for first rehab starts

ARLINGTON -- Manager Bob Geren confirmed on Wednesday that Coco Crisp and Mark Ellis will make their first rehab starts together with Class A Stockton next week.

Crisp (left pinkie finger) and Ellis (left hamstring) are expected to join the Ports when they play in Lake Elsinore on May 18-20.

Ellis has been stationed at home in Phoenix rehabbing a strained left hamstring, which has kept the A's second baseman off the field since April 20. He also missed time from April 12-18 with the same injury.

Crisp, meanwhile, has yet to make his A's debut since signing a one-year contract in December. The Oakland outfielder was placed on the disabled list April 3 with a fractured finger. He was slated to take batting practice with the club for the first time Wednesday.

"He's had no pain so far," Geren said. "That will be the biggest test yet."

Worth noting

Justin Duchscherer (left hip) is scheduled to throw a bullpen session Thursday. The results of that outing will determine whether the right-hander will be lifted off the disabled list and make his scheduled start Saturday. ... Daric Barton, who hit an 11th-inning home run and a run-scoring single in the 13th inning for the A's on Tuesday night, became the first A's player since 1956 to have an RBI hit in two different extra-inning at-bats in the same game. Harry Simpson had a 12th-inning homer and a 15th-inning three-run triple for the Kansas City A's in Washington on June 12 of that season.

Vlad's historic siege in Arlington continues

By Tom Singer / MLB.com

Vladimir Guerrero's "case of the warm fuzzies" could give Ben Sheets a case of the willies.

Guerrero's historic siege at Rangers Ballpark at Arlington continued unabated Wednesday night, when he included his seventh homer of the season in a 2-for-4 contribution to Texas' 10-1 victory over the A's in an American League West-tiebreaker game.

Through his visits with the Angels and his first month-plus as a happy Ranger, Guerrero remained a lifetime .400 (106-for-265) hitter in Arlington. As best as the Elias Sports Bureau folks can figure, that is the highest average in any park by any player with at least 200 plate appearances -- ever.

Well, at least since 1952, when such statistical splits were first recorded.

Just when Sheets is finally coming off an effort that began to make sense of the A's \$10 million investment in him, he has to match up against a hot (five wins in six games) and hot-hitting (five homers among 17 hits Wednesday) team trailing Guerrero's smoke.

Clint Hurdle, the former Colorado manager who now coaches Texas hitters, has an inkling into why Guerrero rakes in Arlington. Mrs. Hurdle once explained the phenomenon.

"My wife," Hurdle said, "has a saying about things that make her feel comfortable. She calls them 'warm fuzzies.' He's got a case of the warm fuzzies here."

Guerrero will be able to enjoy that warm feeling once more on Thursday afternoon before the Rangers briefly hit the road. But after three games in Toronto, he'll be back in his friendly confines for seven more games -- two of them against his ex-Angels teammates.

Sheets and Guerrero have met often, but re-introductions may be in order. They have not faced each other since 2004, when the pitcher was in Milwaukee facing the hitter's Angels in an Interleague game.

They frequently crossed each other when Guerrero was still with the Montreal Expos. Guerrero's 7-for-18 (.389) against Sheets includes a homer and four RBIs.

In his most recent start, Sheets pitched four-hit ball for 6 1/3 innings to "set up" the Rays for Dallas Braden's next-day perfect game.

Athletics: Duchscherer nearing return

Justin Duchscherer (left hip) is scheduled to throw a bullpen session Thursday. The results of that outing will determine whether the right-hander will be lifted off the disabled list and make his scheduled start Saturday in Anaheim.

Rangers: Wilson on verge of Texas record

Left-hander C.J. Wilson could set a club record by turning in his seventh quality start in as many outings to begin the season. Wilson's six matched the record getaways of Kevin Brown in 1993 and Charlie Hough in 1988.

As a former reliever, Wilson knows how the guys in the bullpen appreciate starters who don't wear them out and makes it a goal to pitch deep into games.

"Many guys don't have high standards, they just want to pitch six innings," he said. "Ideally, I want to pitch eight-nine innings and give the bullpen a day off and shut the other team down. Throwing eight innings or a complete game has a positive effect, not only for that day, but for days down the road. It takes pressure off the bullpen, and you need that."

Worth noting

Both the Rangers and Athletics have key players on the final legs of injury rehab assignments. Oakland catcher Kurt Suzuki (intercostal strain) will play a couple more rehab games with Triple-A Sacramento before a decision is made on activating him, according to manager Bob Geren. It sounds like Texas outfielder Nelson Cruz (strained right hamstring) could beat him back to The Show. He went 2-for-4 with Triple-A Oklahoma City on Wednesday, and Texas manager Ron Washington expects to have him back for Friday night's series opener in Toronto.

A's hammered by five Rangers' homers

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARLINGTON, Texas — Derek Holland struck out seven in six shutout innings of his first start of the season, Josh Hamilton and Vladimir Guerrero hit consecutive homers, and the Texas Rangers routed the Oakland Athletics 10-1 on Wednesday night.

Holland (1-0) allowed five hits and walked one while throwing 103 pitches. The left-hander was recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City earlier Wednesday to take the rotation spot of Matt Harrison, who went on the 15-day disabled list with left biceps tendinitis.

Michael Young, Max Ramirez and Hamilton homered and each had three hits to help the Rangers take over sole possession of first in the AL West after beginning the night tied with the A's.

Rookie Justin Smoak also connected as the Rangers had a season-high five homers and 17 hits.

Holland, who went 8-13 for Texas as a rookie last season, was a strong candidate to secure a rotation spot out of spring training before he sustained a mild right knee sprain during an agility drill on Feb. 20.

The injury limited Holland to four outings in Arizona, and he opened the season in Oklahoma City where he was dominant, going 4-1 with a 0.93 in six starts.

Texas has won five of six and nine of 12.

The Rangers went in front 2-0 in the fourth against Gio Gonzalez (3-3) with the help of the left-hander's balk.

Ian Kinsler's double drove in Guerrero from first, and Kinsler went to third on a flyout. Kinsler took several steps toward home before stopping, and Gonzalez panicked, stepping off the rubber causing the balk.

Young singled leading off the fifth and Hamilton followed with his seventh homer of the season, a 427-foot shot to right-center for a 4-0 pad.

That ended Gonzalez's outing after allowing four runs and nine hits in four-plus innings.

Guerrero greeted Chad Gaudin with his seventh homer to make it 5-0.

Ramirez and Young added solo shots in the sixth off Gaudin, giving the Rangers four homers in a span of nine batters, and Smoak's two-run blast in the seventh off Henry Rodriguez extended the lead to 9-0.

Eric Patterson's homer in the eighth off Doug Mathis ended the shutout bid.

NOTES

A's manager Bob Geren said C Kurt Suzuki will need a few more games in his minor-league rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento before he's ready to be activated. Suzuki, who went 2 for 2 with a homer, double and three RBIs in Tuesday night's game at Oklahoma City, has been on the 15-day DL since April 30 with an intercostal strain.

Oakland RHP Justin Duchscherer will throw in the bullpen again today to test the sore left hip that has kept him on the 15-day DL since April 25. Duchscherer is scheduled to be activated for Saturday night's road start against the Los Angeles Angels.

Rookie CF Craig Gentry was in Texas' original starting lineup, but he was scratched due to an upset stomach. David Murphy was inserted in LF, with Hamilton shifting from LF to CF.

Texas OF Nelson Cruz went 2 for 4 for Triple-A Oklahoma City on Wednesday, and manager Ron Washington said Cruz will be activated for Friday night's game at Toronto. Cruz has been on the 15-day DL since April 27 with a right hamstring strain.

The Rangers had back-to-back homers for the third time this season. Guerrero has been involved in all three.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HONORS BRADEN

By The Stockton Record

Stockton native and Stagg High School graduate Dallas Braden was honored in a resolution by the U.S. House of Representatives today for his May 9 "perfect game" against the Tampa Bay Rays.

Rep. Jerry McNerney (D-Pleasanton) coauthored a resolution to recognize the Oakland A's starter for being only the 19th pitcher in Major League Baseball history to throw a perfect game.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to honor Stockton resident and Oakland A's pitcher Dallas Braden," said McNerney in a release issued today. "Everyone from Stockton can be proud that one of our own made history this past weekend by pitching the 19th perfect game in Major League Baseball. This is a special reminder of what all young people from Stockton can achieve."

The resolution honoring Braden was coauthored by Rep. Pete Stark (D-Fremont).

The full-text of the resolution is available below.

Resolution

Congratulating Dallas Braden and the Oakland Athletics baseball team for pitching a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays on Mother's Day, May 9, 2010.

Whereas, on May 9, 2010, Oakland Athletics pitcher Dallas Braden pitched a no-hitter without allowing any base runners;

Whereas the Oakland Athletics defeated the Tampa Bay Rays in the Oakland Coliseum in Oakland, California by a score of 4-0;

Whereas Dallas Braden threw 109 pitches with no walks and six strikeouts;

Whereas players Cliff Pennington and Kevin Kouzmanoff scored one run each, and Daric Barton scored two;

Whereas Dallas Braden was raised in Stockton, California and played high school baseball at Stagg High School in Stockton, California, and played collegiate baseball for American River College and the Texas Tech Red Raiders before being drafted by the Oakland Athletics in 2004 and making his major league debut with the team in 2007;

Whereas Dallas Braden's mother, Jodie Atwood, tragically died of cancer when he was in high school, Braden celebrated Mother's Day with his grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, with a hug on the field after his perfect game when he presented her with the game ball;

Whereas the accomplishment was the result of the hard work of every player and coach on the Oakland Athletics baseball team, including Dallas Braden, Cliff Pennington, Daric Barton, Ryan Sweeney, Kevin Kouzmanoff, Eric Chavez, Adam Rosales, Eric Patterson, Landon Powell, Rajai Davis, and Manager Bob Geren;

Whereas this marks the nineteenth perfect game in Major League Baseball history;

Whereas Hall of Famer James "Catfish" Hunter pitched the only other perfect game in Oakland Athletics history against the Minnesota Twins on May 8, 1968;

Whereas the team has played at their current home in Oakland since 1968, winning 4 World Series, 6 American League pennants, and 14 West Division titles: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives —

- (1) congratulates Dallas Braden of the Oakland Athletics for pitching a perfect game on Mother's Day, May 9, 2010;
- (2) recognizes the achievements of the players, coaches and staff of the Oakland Athletics whose hard work helped Dallas Braden to complete the perfect game; and
- (3) recognizes the loyalty of Athletics baseball fans in the East Bay and around the United States.

Dallas Braden: Mouth That Roared (Perfectly)

By TYLER KEPNER, New York Times, 5/12/2010

ARLINGTON, Tex. — The Class A Stockton Ports opened a new ballpark in 2005, but the players still parked at the old one. The day of the first practice, Daric Barton and Richie Robnett, both first-round draft picks, rolled into the old lot and dropped off their cars: a Tahoe for Barton, a Range Rover with 24-inch rims for Robnett.

The next day, their new teammate Dallas Braden, a lanky left-hander, approached them and asked if the cars did, indeed, belong to them. Warily, Barton said yes.

"Well, it's a good thing that I'm here, because a couple of my buddies came up to me asking whose cars they were, because they wanted to steal them," Braden replied. "I told them not to, because they were your guys'."

And that, Barton said, was his first impression of Braden: make sure you stay on his good side, or his buddies from Stockton may steal your car.

Five years later, the scene shifted to the Oakland Coliseum, about 70 miles west of Stockton. There were two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning Sunday, and Braden, now pitching for the parent club, the Athletics, had retired all 26 Tampa Bay hitters.

The count was 3-1 to Gabe Kapler, but Braden did not realize it; he thought his 2-1 fastball had clipped the outside corner for a strike. The catcher, Landon Powell, called for a fastball, and Braden delivered one at 87 miles per hour. Kapler bounced to shortstop Cliff Pennington, and at first base, Barton's mind flooded with details.

"The first thing was get to the bag," he said. "The second thing was make sure you catch the ball. But my legs were shaking, my eyes were jumping all over the place, and I was nervous. I wanted to celebrate before I got the ball. It was tough to just stay there. Once I caught the ball and held onto that sucker, then it was all celebration and happiness."

Barton caught the ball and charged toward Braden, wrapping him in an embrace. Powell and Pennington, also first-round picks, joined the celebration. Braden had just authored the 19th perfect game in major league history, an underdog defying the odds again.

"His name will be synonymous with it for as long as we live, as long as our kids live, as long as anybody's around," said Todd Steverson, the Athletics' first-base coach, who managed Braden in Stockton. "He's etched his name in there, and you can't take it away from him."

As the party unfolded on the field, the television cameras panned to Section 209 at the Coliseum, in the second deck behind first base. The seats there were sold at a discount, the section number a nod to the Stockton area code that is tattooed across Braden's chest.

Down on the field, Braden embraced his grandmother Peggy Lindsey, who raised him after his mother, Jodie Atwood, died of cancer when Braden was a senior in high school. Just that morning, on Mother's Day, his childhood friend Jimboy Rabanal had placed flowers at Atwood's grave.

"Jodie wanted nothing more in the world than for Dallas to play baseball," Rabanal said. "He slept in his car a few times in the parking lot at the ballpark. His mom wanted it so much for him, he felt obligated to make it happen."

The dream seemed unrealistic. The other six pitchers who have started for the A's this season were drafted in the eighth round or higher. Braden was taken in the 24th round in 2004, 727th over all, out of Texas Tech.

Braden had played the previous two seasons at American River College in California, so he was not well known. Other pitchers from Texas — Homer Bailey, Yovani Gallardo, Jeff Niemann — attracted more scouts that spring. With a fastball that never crept above 88 m.p.h., Braden was widely ignored.

Blake Davis, then an area scout for the Athletics, saw Braden pitch early that spring, but it was not a memorable impression. Later, though, Davis found himself staying at the same hotel as the Texas Tech team, and he talked to some of the players. All of them raved about Braden's makeup, calling him the leader of the team. Davis was intrigued.

"He was a 21-year-old man as far as taking care of himself and knowing what was in front of him," Davis said. "He had seen some of the worst. There was nothing in pro ball that was going to scare him."

As a prospect, Braden did have an excellent changeup, and what he lacked in velocity, he made up for with a fearless approach, challenging hitters with inside fastballs.

Davis thought he might make a useful reliever and asked Braden if other teams had contacted him. Braden said no.

Such honesty stood out to Davis; most players said they were coveted by many teams, to improve their draft position.

Braden, who had no agent, told Davis to take him in the first 24 rounds, and he would sign. Davis trusted Braden, took him in the 24th round and signed him for \$15,000.

The Athletics offered to pay for Braden's final year of college someday, but Braden asked that the money be rolled into his bonus instead.

Ever since he was 4, he said, he had no doubt he would make the majors.

"That was the game plan," Braden said Tuesday at a news conference at Rangers Ballpark. "It was either that or asking you if you wanted to supersize that. I stuck with this."

The A's put Braden in the bullpen at first, but that did not last long. He pitched well in 2004 and 2005, missed most of the next year with shoulder trouble, but was in the majors by April 2007. He went 5-4 in 2008 and started on opening day last season.

"The reason was that we knew he could handle that responsibility," Oakland General Manager Billy Beane said. "He wouldn't be overwhelmed by the opportunity. With some of the other guys, we felt they would be."

This season has been Braden's breakthrough, as a pitcher and a talker. Just 18 days before his perfect game, he famously criticized the Yankees' Alex Rodriguez for crossing over the mound — his mound — after a foul ball.

Now, after one perfect day, Braden is known for his pitching. That is how he wants it. That is how he got out of Stockton, even though he never really left.

"I guess A-Rod said it best: it's good to be noticed and recognized for things you do on the field," Braden said.

"That's always a positive. I guess that's why I live in Stockton, because I can go home and be me there, and I'm not really worried about what anybody else thinks."

Oakland Pitcher On His Perfect Game

Robert Siegel, NPR, May 10, 2010

Robert Siegel talks to Dallas Braden of the Oakland A's, who pitched a perfect game Sunday in a 4-to-zero win over Tampa Bay. It's only the 19th perfect game in major league history.

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MICHELE NORRIS, host:

From NPR News, this is ALL THINGS CONSIDERED. I'm Michele Norris.

ROBERT SIEGEL, host:

And I'm Robert Siegel.

For the 19th time in the history of Major League Baseball, a perfect game was pitched yesterday. Twenty-seven men came to bat, and 27 outs later, the Oakland A's Dallas Braden had bragging rights for life. And we're joined right now by Dallas Braden. Congratulations.

Mr. DALLAS BRADEN (Pitcher, Oakland Athletics): Well, thank you, sir. And thank you for having me. That's pretty awesome.

SIEGEL: Now, tell me. You're throwing a perfect game, how many batters, how many innings in does it start to occur to you, hey, I could get all 27 guys out?

Mr. BRADEN: You never think that you can't get all 27 outs, but you never think that you're going to do it all in a row, that's for sure. And, you know, when I had a 12-pitch at-bat with Mr. Gabe Kapler, and after I was able to induce his out, I kind of took notice of what was going on. So that's kind of when it hit me.

SIEGEL: Mr. Gabe Kapler of the Tampa Bay Rays. You threw your perfect game against a pretty good ball club yesterday.

Mr. BRADEN: Yeah. That's a pretty strong lineup over there. You know, there's not many holes, if there are any. They got speed and power in all the right places. You know, we were able to eek one out.

SIEGEL: In the dugout, did your teammates on the A's observe the old tradition of never mentioning a no-hitter, no less a perfect game, or were they talking to you about it?

Mr. BRADEN: You know, every five days, nobody ever talks to me. That's - every day that I pitch, they don't talk to me. When I come into the clubhouse, they don't talk to me. So, in that respect, it was not too far of a stretch from what I experienced every fifth day. But they were a little farther away and they were a lot more quiet.

SIEGEL: What do you - how do you make of this? For A's fans, they've been following your whole season very closely. But for a lot of other baseball fans, the news yesterday was: remember the guy who criticized Alex Rodriguez for stepping on the pitcher's mound on a foul ball and the one whom A-Rod dismissed as, how many games has he won? That guy just pitched a perfect game. The two events seem linked now.

Mr. BRADEN: There's obviously zero correlation between the first incident and this latter. It's just - I guess it's nice to gain some notoriety for something positive. You know, I still don't consider what happened to be negative. It was just a, you know, it was just an assertion of my respect for the game, nothing more. And, you know, this time around, the name in the paper has got some lights around it, so that's all the better.

SIEGEL: And because of that, your grandmother contributed what I think will be one of the quotes of the year in Major League Baseball. Somebody asked her about your run-in with Alex Rodriguez - who, by the way, was gracious about your throwing the perfect game yesterday - but someone asked her and she said -first said: Let's forget about it, then she said: Stick it, A-Rod.

(Soundbite of laughter)

Mr. BRADEN: That just gives you some insight to her fiery attitude and where I get my competitive nature from as well.

SIEGEL: Does it affect your approach now in your next couple of starts as you will take the mound as Dallas Perfect Game Braden?

Mr. BRADEN: Oh, no. Not at all. You know, I've always said I think everybody's goal that takes that mound is to be perfect. If not, it's to be unhittable. And if not, it's to throw a shutout. And if not, you just keep going on from there. But the ultimate goal in all of those is to give your team a chance to win.

SIEGEL: Have you looked at the list of the pitchers who've thrown the 18 perfect games before yours?

Mr. BRADEN: No. You know, I still haven't gotten a chance to look at the list. I've obviously had the names, you know, thrown out at me. And just some of the names are, I mean, you know, you would never think ever have your name mentioned in the same book as those people, let alone the same breath. And, you know, lo and behold, here I am.

SIEGEL: Well, Dallas Braden, congratulations on the perfect game for the Oakland A's against the Tampa Bay Rays. And may you have a great season.

Mr. BRADEN: Well, thank you very much, sir. Thank you for having me.

Darryl Strawberry bashes Oakland A's pitcher Dallas Braden for feud with Yankees star Alex Rodriguez

By Kenneth Lovett, New York Daily News, 5/11/2010

ALBANY - Former Mets and Yankees great Darryl Strawberry brushed back mouthy Oakland A's pitcher Dallas Braden - and his grandmother - for their cracks on Alex Rodriguez.

Braden, who tossed the 19th perfect game in Major League history on Sunday, has been publicly feuding with A-Rod for the better part of a month.

Perfect game or not, the Straw said Braden and his trash-talking grammy aren't in the same class as the Yankee slugger.

"How can they dog someone who's going to the Hall of Fame?" Strawberry said during a trip to the state Capitol.

"A-Rod said it pretty clear, 15 minutes of fame and he wouldn't waste his time," Strawberry added.

Strawberry wasn't impressed that Braden turned in a perfect performance against the Tampa Bay Rays, the team with the best record in baseball.

"So what?" he said. "That doesn't mean he's great because he pitched a perfect game."

"Baseball is a period of time of success, and A-Rod has done it consistently year in and year out. Who are they to talk about him?"

The Braden-Rodriguez spat started late last month.

The then little-known pitcher erupted when A-Rod crossed the pitcher's mound and stomped on the rubber on his way back to first base after a foul ball.

After the game, Braden slammed Rodriguez for violating one of baseball's unwritten rules.

A-Rod at the time dismissed Braden as someone who's won just a "handful of games."

Strawberry, in Albany to tout cancer research, dismissed Braden's unwritten rule: "Whoever came up with that idea, whoever Braden is, is exaggerating."

Just when the flap was dying down earlier this month, Braden reignited tensions by signaling he might fight Rodriguez the next he faced the Yankees.

Rodriguez declined to take the bait. "Look, I really don't want to extend his extra 15 minutes of fame," he said.

But by tossing a perfect game, Braden won a lot more than 15 minutes in the spotlight - and his family felt emboldened to take another swipe at A-Rod.

Even his grandmother Peggy Lindsey jumped in, telling A-Rod to "stick it."

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento shut out by Oklahoma City

By Allie Mandel / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats fell 1-0 to the host Oklahoma City RedHawks on Wednesday afternoon.

The River Cats gave up the winning run early, when former River Cat Esteban German once again struck against his former team in the first inning. German hit a single past River Cats shortstop Michael Affronti to lead off the inning. German quickly stole second to put him in scoring position. Both Gregorio Petit and Nelson Cruz would single, driving German home. German went 2-for-4 in the game and scored the lone run.

In a game of little scoring, River Cats pitcher Lenny DiNardo had a strong outing to keep the game close. DiNardo pitched a complete game, going 8.0 innings, striking out three and walking none. DiNardo allowed nine hits and only one run, which was earned, to end the game with 3.89 ERA for the season. DiNardo leads the River Cats in losses with five. The River Cats also managed to turn three double plays in the game, tying the team record for most double plays in a game.

River Cats bats tried to mount a response, and had three doubles from three separate players in the game, although none were able to score. Designated hitter Anthony Recker had the first double, and first hit, for the Cats in the fifth inning, smacking a ball into right field. Recker was picked off at second almost immediately after recording his second double of the year.

Catcher Dusty Napoleon would also double in the fifth, but would be left in scoring position as second baseman Eric Sogard struck out to end the inning. The next inning, with two outs and nobody on, third baseman Adrian Cardenas doubled to right field. Center fielder Corey Brown would strike out at the next at-bat to end the inning and the River Cats would only record one more hit in the game.

The River Cats look to rebound against the RedHawks on Thursday, as they face the Midwest opponent again 5:05 p.m.

Hounds End Road Trip With Win

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The RockHounds left something behind in Frisco: A 500-pound gorilla.

The 'Hounds broke a 5-game losing streak ... and snapped Frisco's 8-game win streak in the process ... with a 12-2 win over the RoughRiders Tuesday afternoon at Dr Pepper Ballpark.

The RockHounds exploded for six runs in the fifth inning, started by Steve Kleen's two-run double and capped by Alex Valdez' third home run on two games.

Archie Gilbert added a two-run laser in the sixth and Shane Peterson capped the scoring with a three-run shot to center in the seventh.

The other MVP's were the four relief pitchers ... the only four arms available ... who stepped in and stepped up with Carlos Hernandez unable to go (ankle). Justin Friend made just the second start of his pro career, going 3.2 shutout inings.

Jared Lansford got the win, facing and retiring four batters, with Derrick Gordon and Daniel Sattler closing the door. Gordon gave up one (unearned) run and Sattler gave up a run which was earned but hardly deserved, as a pop up fly, lost in the sun, dropped about 70 feet from home plate for an RBI single.

The 'Hounds now return home for their first stay of more than four games since the season-opening home stand, hosting San Antonio (May 13-16) and the RoughRiders (May 17-20) at Citibank Ballpark.

Lucky 7's propel Ports to victory

STOCKTON, Calif.- The Ports (15-19) offense sprang to life Wednesday afternoon as they scored seven runs on seven hits in the seventh inning on their way to a 9-6 victory over the Modesto Nuts (17-14) at Banner Island Ballpark.

The Ports drew first blood when Matt Whitney hit a two-out double down the left field line in the first inning to drive in Tyler Ladendorf from third base.

Modesto answered in the third, as Maikol Gonzalez led off with a double down the right field line and scored on the next pitch when Jimmy Cesario singled to center.

The game remained tied until the sixth, when Thomas Field launched a two-run homer into the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch in right field to give the Nuts a 3-1 lead.

Modesto starter Juan Nicasio continued to puzzle Ports hitters into the seventh inning. After Jeremy Barfield grounded out to begin the frame, Nicasio had retired six in a row. He would not record another out though. Todd Johnson singled and advanced to third on Shane Keough's double to left-center field. Ryan Ortiz then smashed a 2-2 fastball over the right field wall for his second home run of the season, giving Stockton a 4-3 lead. A Michael Richard double chased Nicasio and brought on right-hander Jonnathan Aristil. Aristil walked Ladendorf, then surrendered a run scoring single to Grant Green to push the margin to 5-3. Mike Spina, who finished Tuesday's game a home run shy of the cycle, belted his fourth long ball of the season to give Stockton an 8-3 lead.

The home team tacked on another run in the eighth. Back to back walks and a wild pitch put Johnson on third with one out. He would score on Ladendorf's sacrifice fly to left field for a 9-3 lead heading to the ninth.

The Ports called on Andrew Carignan to finish out the game, but the right-hander would struggle mightily with his command. After hitting Field with a pitch and striking out Brian Rike, he induced a groundball off the bat of Eric Wetzel to the shortstop Green. Green's throw to first pulled Spina down the line and off the bag, but Spina appeared to apply the tag to Wetzel as he ran by. Base umpire Ryan Blakney ruled Wetzel safe, and Ports manager Steve Scarsone came out to argue. After a lengthy conversation, Scarsone was ejected for the first time in 2010.

With runners on first and second and one out, Carignan walked Gonzalez and hit Cesario to force in a run. He then issued a bases loaded walk to Scott Robinson-the first walk Robinson had drawn all year-to cut the lead to 9-5. Acting manager Tim Garland removed Carignan in favor of closer Paul Smyth, who came in to face the tying run at the plate. Tim Wheeler hit into a run scoring groundout and Jordan Pacheco flew out to right field to end the game. Smyth earned his fifth save of the year for his efforts.

Reliever Brett Hunter (1-0) earned the win in his first appearance for the Ports. He tossed a scoreless seventh inning. Nicasio (1-3) took the loss for Modesto after allowing five runs (all earned) on nine hits in 6.1 innings. He walked none and struck out five. Ports starter Kenny Smalley received a no-decision. He surrendered three runs (all earned) on five hits in six innings. The right-hander walked three and struck out five.

The game was played in front of 5,244 fans, the second largest crowd of the season.

The Ports (15-19) will go for the sweep of the Nuts (17-14) on Thursday at 7:05 at Banner Island Ballpark. On the hill for Stockton will be left-hander Anvioris Ramirez (0-5, 7.58) to oppose right hander Greg Reynolds, who will be making a MLB rehab start. The game can be heard live on KWSX 1280am or online at stocktonports.com.

Cougars Washed Out in Beloit

Kane County's series finale in Wisconsin postponed, to be made up next week

BELOIT, Wisc. – Wednesday night's series finale between the Kane County Cougars and Beloit Snappers at Pohlman Field was postponed by rain before it ever began. The contest will be made up next Tuesday, May 18, at 4:30 CT as part of a doubleheader consisting of two seven-inning games. The Cougars and Snappers were originally scheduled to start a three-game series in Beloit that night at 6:30 CT, but the start time has been moved up to accommodate the doubleheader.

After splitting the first two games in their series in Beloit, the Cougars (17-16) now return home Thursday night at 6 CT to start a four-game series against the Quad Cities River Bandits. The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at www.kccougars.com, with pregame coverage starting at 5:45 p.m.