

## **A's News Clips, Friday, May 21, 2010**

### **Oakland A's get no clutch hitting, fall to Detroit Tigers**

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

Tyson Ross and Vin Mazzaro allowed a combined 12 hits in a 5-2 A's loss to the Detroit Tigers on Thursday afternoon at the Oakland Coliseum. But manager Bob Geren wasn't totally displeased with how his young pitchers performed.

Instead, Geren lamented his team's lack of production at critical times, as the A's left 10 men on base and were 1 for 6 with runners in scoring position in losing for the seventh time in nine games.

"(Ross) had pretty good life on his ball, a good sinker going. We just didn't score enough runs for him," Geren said. "(Vin) did his job and kept us in there. We had the tying run at the plate at the end of the game "... but we were just a swing or two short today."

The A's (20-22) may not have had much of a chance against Justin Verlander during a 5-1 loss to the Tigers on Wednesday night. But they couldn't take full advantage of a juicy opportunity against a wobbly Jeremy Bonderman in the third inning Thursday.

After three walks, the A's had the bases loaded with two outs when Bonderman hit Kurt Suzuki with a pitch to bring home Adam Rosales. But with the bases still loaded, Jack Cust lined a slider by Bonderman right to Tigers right fielder Brennan Boesch.

"It just didn't go our way," Cust said. "It could've found the gap, and it would have been a different game."

The A's left at least one runner on base in six innings, including two in the ninth when Ryan Sweeney grounded out to short. Oakland's three, four and five-hitters — Sweeney, Suzuki and Cust — went a combined 0 for 10 on Thursday and 2 for 20 for the two-game series.

"You definitely want to take advantage of that when guys get on base," Sweeney said. "Verlander threw well last night and if you can squeeze out a couple runs against him, you've done pretty well."

Ross was making his second start for the A's after he filled in for an injured Justin Duchscherer on Saturday. He gave up a two-run single to Magglio Ordonez in the third but limited the Tigers (24-17) to one run in the fourth after he got Austin Jackson to ground into a double play.

Ross, the Berkeley native who went to Bishop O'Dowd High and Cal, gave up seven hits and three earned runs in four innings. But he also set a career high for strikeouts (four) and let his manager know that he could again fill a starter's role if necessary.

Because of Monday's day off, the A's wouldn't need a fifth starter until May 29 in Detroit. Ross could get the nod if Brett Anderson, who is scheduled to throw for Triple-A Sacramento on Monday, still isn't available. Anderson, on the disabled list with a forearm strain, felt fine Wednesday after throwing 41 pitches off a mound.

"I was kind of throwing the ball the way I wanted to," Ross said. "But they just did a good job of getting some hits on some pitches that I thought were pretty decent."

Mazzaro, who was called up from Triple-A Sacramento before Thursday's game as the A's optioned reliever Henry Rodriguez, retired 14 of the last 17 batters after he allowed a two-run homer to Miguel Cabrera in the fifth inning.

### **A's update: Oakland faces tough task in San Francisco Giants' rotation**

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

Offense faces difficult task in Giants rotation

The A's had trouble mustering much offense in their two-game series against the Detroit Tigers. Now comes the challenge of trying to score runs against one of the best rotations in the National League.

Oakland will face Giants starters Barry Zito, Matt Cain and Jonathan Sanchez during this weekend's series at the Oakland Coliseum. The three San Francisco pitchers are a combined 10-7, and the Giants' team ERA before Thursday of 3.27 is third best in the NL behind just San Diego (2.74) and St. Louis (2.84).

Meanwhile, the A's have won just two of their past nine games and have scored a combined eight runs in the seven losses.

"Lucky for us, we get to play (the Giants) more than any other team in the National League," A's outfielder/designated hitter Jack Cust said dryly. "That's the way it rolls."

Second baseman Mark Ellis, who's been on the 15-day disabled list since April 21 with a strained left hamstring, was back in the A's clubhouse Thursday and said he hasn't felt any discomfort for the past week.

Ellis was feeling so good that he was hoping to avoid going to Triple-A Sacramento, where he'll continue his rehab assignment tonight. But A's manager Bob Geren said after Thursday's game that Ellis and outfielder Coco Crisp will play for the River Cats because neither veteran has played a full game during their rehab assignments.

Vin Mazzaro, called up from Sacramento on Thursday morning, came out of the bullpen for the first time in an A's uniform and threw five innings, allowing two earned runs. Since he was sent back down to Triple-A on May 5 after one inglorious start in Oakland, Mazzaro was 2-0 with a 4.15 ERA in two starts for the River Cats.

"I was working on a changeup a lot down there, not walking guys, pounding the strike zone and letting them hit it," Mazzaro said. "When I went out there in the (ninth) inning, it was fastball-changeup the whole inning. It worked out pretty well."

The A's optioned reliever Henry Rodriguez to Sacramento to make room for Mazzaro on the 25-player roster.

Geren said the plan for starting pitcher Brett Anderson (forearm strain) remains for him to pitch in Sacramento on Monday, throwing between 50 and 60 pitches. "... Justin Duchscherer (left hip inflammation) visited a Bay Area doctor Thursday, but Geren didn't have any details on how the visit went.

### **Chin Music: Ellis visits, stays? Mazzaro called up, Duchscherer visits doctor**

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune 5/20/2010 12:09PM

It's shaping up to be a very nice day for baseball at the Coliseum as the A's and Tigers conclude their short series. Mark Ellis (strained left hamstring) was in the A's clubhouse this morning and said he's feeling great. The plan for he and Coco Crisp as of now is to play in Sacramento Friday night, but Ellis said he would like to avoid that if possible and be back on the A's roster by then.

Vin Mazzaro was called up from the River Cats this morning, with Henry Rodriguez optioned back to Triple-A. Mazzaro will be used in the bullpen today for long relief purposes, considering Tyson Ross will probably only throw 70-75 pitches. A's manager Bob Geren said the plan remains for Brett Anderson to pitch in Sacramento on Monday, throwing between 50-60 pitches. Justin Duchscherer is visiting a Bay Area doctor today. We may get an update on how that went after the game, but there are no real details as of now.

The lineups

A's – Pennington SS, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Suzuki C, Cust LF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Chavez DH, Rosales 2B, Davis CF, Ross P.

Tigers – Jackson CF, Damon LF, Ordonez DH, Cabrera 1B, Boesch RF, Inge 3B, Avila C, Santiago SS, Worth 2B, Bonderman P.

### **A's ailing offense will get no relief in Giants**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

If you were to prescribe a remedy for an ailing offense, nowhere on the Top 100 of that list would you suggest facing the Giants' pitching staff in a three-game series.

Unfortunately for the A's hitters, that's the difficult task - the last two nights notwithstanding - they face this weekend.

On Thursday afternoon at the Coliseum, Oakland managed all of five hits as the Tigers completed a two-game sweep with a 5-2 decision. The A's went 9-for-60 in the series.

So to try to end that scuffling, the A's get to face Barry Zito tonight, Matt Cain on Saturday and Jonathan Sanchez on Sunday.

Oakland left fielder Jack Cust said the Giants have probably "one of the best starting staffs in the National League, and, lucky for us, we get to play them more than any other team in the National League.

"So, that's the way it rolls."

The A's seemed to have gotten their offense rolling when they put together 31 hits in beating Seattle on Monday and Tuesday.

But with Justin Verlander dominant in a four-hitter Wednesday night and Jeremy Bonderman (2-2) combining with the Detroit bullpen to rack up 12 strikeouts Thursday, Oakland looked about as punchless as it did on the previous road trip, when the A's lost five straight while scoring a grand total of five runs.

"We've got the pitching staff to hold guys," right fielder Ryan Sweeney said. "We just need to score some more runs."

With two outs in the ninth, Sweeney came to the plate representing the tying run. Jose Valverde (11 saves) got Sweeney to bounce to short, and the A's had come up short again when they fail to score more than three runs.

When the A's have scored at least four runs in a game this season, they're 19-1; three runs or fewer, they're 1-21.

Their best chance against Bonderman came in the third inning. He already had allowed his only run by issuing three walks and hitting Kurt Suzuki with a pitch.

The A's were down 2-1 and the bases were still loaded when Cust came to the plate with two outs.

"Jack Cust absolutely hit a ball perfect," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Said Cust: "I knew I hit it hard. It could have found the gap and it would have been a different game."

Could have and would have mean what transpired didn't have the A's celebrating. Detroit right fielder Brennan Boesch flagged down Cust's drive just shy of the warning track.

The fact Cust's well-hit ball turned into an out might be termed a tough break for Oakland. You'd figure the A's do get one bit of good news against the Giants in that Tim Lincecum pitched Thursday night in Phoenix. That means the two-time Cy Young Award winner won't be on the mound in this series.

Then again, as Geren said before Thursday's game, "You have to be careful what you ask for. You say you're glad one guy doesn't throw, then somebody else could throw a gem, too."

### **Mazzaro shows better command this time around**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Barely two weeks after the A's sent him to Triple-A Sacramento following his only major-league start this season, **Vin Mazzaro** was back with the big club Thursday.

The A's recalled the right-hander in the morning and wasted little time using him. Mazzaro replaced **Tyson Ross** (1-2) to start the fifth inning of a 5-2 loss to Detroit.

**Miguel Cabrera** jumped on a Mazzaro slider for a two-run homer in the fifth, but Mazzaro navigated the final four innings without allowing another run.

Perhaps the best news for Mazzaro in his five-inning stint: He gave up only one walk. Contrast that with his start for Oakland against Texas on May 4 when he walked four and allowed a **Vladimir Guerrero** grand slam in three-plus innings. That outing against the Rangers earned Mazzaro a spot on the River Cats' roster the next day. He figures his performance Thursday should keep him with Oakland.

"I thought I did enough to stay awhile," Mazzaro said. "Just keep doing what I'm doing, pitch my game and I should be good."

Manager **Bob Geren** said Mazzaro will be the A's long man in the bullpen for the time being.

**Infield streak:** The A's have used the same starting infield - **Daric Barton** at first, **Adam Rosales** at second, **Kevin Kouzmanoff** at third and **Cliff Pennington** at shortstop - for the past 23 games.

That's the third-longest such streak in Oakland history. The longest came in the first 39 games of 1976, with **Don Baylor**, **Phil Garner**, **Sal Bando** and **Campy Campaneris**.

The current streak might end soon. Second baseman **Mark Ellis** (hamstring) will join outfielder **Coco Crisp** (pinkie) on a rehab assignment tonight in Sacramento.

Ellis said Thursday he feels ready to rejoin the A's at any time. Once he does, he'll probably replace Rosales in the starting lineup.

**Briefly:** Barton went 2-for-4 Thursday. He's hitting .350 (28-for-80) at home and .191 (13-for-68) on the road. ... The A's optioned reliever **Henry Rodriguez** to Sacramento.

### **A'S LEADING OFF**

Steve Kroner, San Francisco Chronicle

**Cal connection:** Tyson Ross prevailed in his two matchups with fellow rookie Brennan Boesch on Thursday. Ross struck out the Tigers' right fielder in the second inning and got Boesch on a long flyball to center in the third. Ross and Boesch were Cal teammates in 2006.

### **Schierholtz, Sweeney provide everything but power**

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Ryan Sweeney of the A's and the Giants' Nate Schierholtz are a lot alike: big, fast, athletic right fielders with good arms, above-average defensive skills, the ability to hit .300 - and dogged by constant reminders they don't hit enough home runs.

Enough already.

Sweeney and Schierholtz are who they say they are, and they're not the second comings of Reggie Jackson and Jack Clark. They're a couple of guys who want to be all-around players but aren't necessarily willing to sacrifice their batting averages for more power.

Interleague play is here again, and the A's are hosting the Giants the next three games, so Sweeney and Schierholtz will be sharing the same Coliseum real estate - if Schierholtz can overcome his bruised shoulder. Because they've carried the load in right field for their respective teams, it's probably time to get used to who they are, rather than imagining who they aren't.

"I've heard it my whole career," Sweeney said about powering up. "It doesn't really bother me. It's not going to change the kind of player I am. I can try to start hitting home runs now. I might hit more. But I might hit .200."

Schierholtz has similar thoughts and admitted he made a mistake in spring training when trying to develop a power swing - a common theme for him - as he competed with John Bowker for the starting job. It didn't work. Bowker won the job, but eventually lost it.

"I was just tinkering too much," Schierholtz said. "I was playing with too many different things instead of sticking with what got me here. It's been a constant battle to try to change and do things that maybe felt unnatural to me."

Sweeney is hitting .300, Schierholtz .298. Each has one home run, and they've hit homers with similar frequencies (or infrequencies) in their careers - Sweeney once every 84 at-bats (13 in 1,098), Schierholtz once every 82 at-bats (seven in 576).

Not exactly Jose Canseco-esque, speaking of right fielders.

Then again, this is the era of drug-testing, so fluke/tainted home runs apparently are down anyway. Sweeney calls himself a "contact guy," and Schierholtz is handicapped because he bats lefty in a lefty-unfriendly park. So the odds aren't good for sudden power outbursts by the S&S Boys.

"If you don't hit the ball perfectly, it's not going to go out, so there's really no point trying," Schierholtz said of hitting in China Basin. "The only thing you can control is hitting line drives and base hits, and the homers will come. In our park, you have to have a different strategy."

This would be less of an issue if Sweeney and Schierholtz played on power-laden teams, but the A's and Giants are anything but. The Giants have 33 homers (tied for 12th in the NL), the A's 25 (12th in the AL). Those numbers accentuate talk that the right fielders should be going deep more often.

But a glance at their minor-league stats suggests this was predictable. Schierholtz never hit more than 18 homers in a minor-league season, and Sweeney never hit more than 13.

Not that there's anything wrong with that.

The path to their latest opportunities - Sweeney is a No. 3 hitter for the first time, and Schierholtz has played regularly for the first time - included significant transitions. Schierholtz was drafted as a third baseman, and Sweeney was a White Sox farmhand, sent to Oakland in the Nick Swisher trade.

"I like playing here," Sweeney said. "It's relaxed, and I haven't had one person say anything about my swing or try to change anything. I've made minor adjustments, but with the White Sox, everyone would tell me to change my swing every single day."

How does Sweeney see himself as a hitter?

"More of a gap-to-gap guy," he said. "When I'm going good, I'm spraying the ball all over the field. If I'm going bad, I'm pulling everything. When I was younger, I was always taught to hit the ball the other way and react to the inside pitch. I've always hit up the middle and away a lot better than pulling the ball, but I pull when I need to."

Schierholtz seems done worrying about hitting for power.

"I feel I hit for decent power in the minor leagues," he said. "When I got here from the minor leagues, I didn't hit for power right away and in turn changed a lot of things that didn't make me comfortable. My main goal lately is to do what I need to do to step in the box and feel confident every day."

The Giants and A's need more home run production, but it'll have to come from other players. Sweeney and Schierholtz are good defenders and runners, but they'll hit for average before they hit for power.

The quicker that's accepted, the quicker they can be appreciated.

*Staff writer Henry Schulman contributed to this report.*

## **Interleague returns**

The Giants visit the A's for three games beginning tonight:

**Tonight:** Zito (6-1) vs. Cahill (1-2), 7:17 p.m. Channel: 11

**Saturday:** Cain (2-3) vs. Gonzalez (4-3), 1 p.m. **CSNBA, CSNCA**

**Sunday:** Sanchez (2-3) vs. Sheets (2-3), 1:05 p.m. **CSNBA, CSNCA**

## **Right with might**

The top five San Francisco and Oakland right fielders:

### **Giants**

1. Bobby Bonds: Five-tool player, more so than his son.
2. Jack Clark: Fans loved the Dude more than he loved the 'Stick.
3. Felipe Alou: Better manager or player?
4. Ellis Burks: Short-timer but outrageous numbers.

5. Candy Maldonado: Solid except for that '87 playoff gaffe.

**Honorable mention:** Willie McGee, Randy Winn, Willie Kirkland.

## **A'S**

1. Reggie Jackson: Oaktown superstar long before N.Y. superstar.

2. Jose Canseco: Better player than reputation.

3. Tony Armas: Maybe the best defender of them all.

4. Matt Stairs: Hits homers as if he were a softball player.

5. Jermaine Dye: Higher on list with better health.

**Honorable mention:** Mike Davis, Ruben Sierra, Milton Bradley.

## **NATE SCHIERHOLTZ**

AVG: **.298** HR: **1** RBI: **7**

## **RYAN SWEENEY**

AVG: **.300** HR: **1** RBI: **19**

### **A's offense silenced by Bonderman**

#### **Ross, Mazzaro turn in respectable performances**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Tyson Ross and Vin Mazzaro were caught wearing very similar expressions following Thursday's 5-2 loss to the Tigers.

Ross, who has been used primarily as a reliever this season, had come off just his second big league start. Mazzaro, meanwhile, had walked away from his first career relief appearance.

Both sported half smiles while shrugging their shoulders, knowing full well that their respectable performances couldn't take away from the team's second successive defeat.

Both would like to have one pitch back, yet both figured they tossed the ball equally well.

Manager Bob Geren thought so, too. As did a handful of hitters.

But said hitters could only muster five hits in return, while tallying 12 strikeouts against a four-man Detroit pitching staff led by starter Jeremy Bonderman.

"They both threw the ball well," Geren said of his pair of pitchers. "We just didn't score any runs for them."

Such was the story -- an ongoing one -- for an inconsistent Oakland team, which entered the two-game series against Detroit having combined for 31 hits and 14 runs in its previous two contests. On Thursday, though, the A's walked away having tallied just nine hits and three runs against the Tigers.

Eight of the A's starting nine struck out, the lone K-less player surprisingly being Jack Cust, who has been a bright spot for Oakland since being promoted from Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday. Cust, who has reached base safely in each of his six games with the A's, went 0-for-3 with a walk against Bonderman.

That seemed to be a pretty popular trend up and down the Oakland lineup, which picked up more walks (six) than hits (five). In fact, the club's first run of the game came in the third courtesy of three consecutive free passes followed by a hit batter.

"Bonderman was a little wild and had a lot of walks," Geren said. "It might be a different game if we take advantage of a few more of those situations."

In reality, though, the A's stranded a total of 10 baserunners in the affair and ended five innings with runners on base courtesy of the strikeout.

"There were a few balls chased out of the zone," Geren offered. "A few spots looked a little generous, but overall, there was a pretty consistent strike zone."

It's one Bonderman controlled for six innings, as the Tigers righty surrendered one run on three hits and four walks, while fanning a season-high eight.

Oakland's only other run of the day came in the seventh thanks to a run-scoring single off the bat of Daric Barton that scored Kevin Kouzmanoff, who reached base on a double against Detroit's Phil Coke.

Meanwhile, Ross -- starting in place of the injured Justin Duchscherer -- gave up three runs on seven hits and a walk through four innings. He struck out four in the effort before righty Mazzaro took over in the fifth.

"It was one of those days where I was throwing the ball where I wanted," said Ross, who was pulled after throwing a career-high 78 pitches. "I was pretty happy with the way things went."

Whether Ross will get another starting nod will heavily depend on the results of Brett Anderson's first rehab start with Triple-A Sacramento on Monday. The left-hander, recovering from a strained forearm and elbow tendinitis, could potentially be lifted off the disabled list May 29 in Detroit to make his scheduled start.

If Anderson needs more than one Minor League start, Geren feels confident in the young Ross' ability to hand the club a solid dose of work. Mazzaro, who pitched the final five innings of Thursday's game, is also an option.

The right-hander, who allowed four runs in three innings in his only other appearance this year, appeared sharper in his second go at it -- his only mistake coming in the fifth in the form of a two-run homer on a slider to Miguel Cabrera.

"I left that pitch up, but then I was able to settle in and make my pitches," Mazzaro said. "I've been working on filling the zone and putting the ball in play. I took that same approach today."

"I thought I did enough to stay awhile. I just have to keep doing what I'm doing."

The A's offense, meanwhile, has to take the opposite approach in order to put a stop to a slump that has left the club on the losing end of seven of its past nine games.

"We've been facing good pitching, and we just keep battling," Cust said. "We have to make things happen when we get guys on base. Hopefully tomorrow, we find that spark and keep it going."

Detroit manager Jim Leyland, for one, believes that spark will undoubtedly be ignited by the A's most consistent facet of their game.

"That's a real scrappy club, and they're going to win a lot of games," Leyland said. "They really got some good arms. I'm very impressed from what I've seen."

### **Zito returns to old stomping grounds in Oakland**

By John Schlegel / MLB.com

Once a star on the Oakland Coliseum mound for the A's, Barry Zito has pitched against his former team since he crossed the bay to pitch for the Giants, and not with much success.



But, then, it could be said Zito hasn't pitched this well for this long since he was on the mound with the A's anyway.

When he meets up with right-hander Trevor Cahill in a Bay Bridge Series opener of Interleague Play for both clubs in Oakland on Friday night, Zito enters with a 6-1 record and a 2.15 ERA. More important, he has displayed the type of poise and command on the mound the Giants expected when they lured him from Oakland with the seven-year, \$126 million contract.

Zito battled in his last outing, allowing three runs on six hits over seven innings of work to get the win as the Giants took a 4-3 victory at Houston, earning him his sixth victory.

"That was one of his gutsier outings. He got the job done," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said.

Zito will be meeting an A's team that has been battling injury all season, and now has lost seven of its past 10, including a two-game set at home to the Tigers.

### **Giants: Sanchez glad to be back**

Freddy Sanchez made his long-awaited 2010 debut on Wednesday night, going 0-for-4 in the No. 3 slot. That the former National League batting champ and All-Star second baseman was even in the lineup came as a great relief to the Giants and Sanchez himself. He hadn't gotten 2010 started after undergoing left shoulder surgery over the winter.

"The good news for me is that I'm back," Sanchez said. "It's been tough watching every game on TV, knowing that these guys are going to work every day and I wasn't there with them. I'm going to do what I can."

Sanchez went 2-for-3 with a run scored and an RBI Thursday.

### **Athletics: Lefty Anderson on the mend**

Good news for the A's rotation: Manager Bob Geren said Thursday that left-hander Brett Anderson will make his first Minor League rehabilitation start Monday at Triple-A Sacramento. Anderson, out with a forearm strain and left elbow tendinitis, threw a 41-pitch session at the A's Minor League complex in Phoenix on Wednesday. "It went well," Anderson said via text. "I threw all my pitches." The A's are hoping he can return May 29, when they next need a starter to plug the hole left by Justin Duchscherer's DL stint. ... Prior to Friday's opener, the A's will take time to officially honor Dallas Braden for his perfect game. The ceremony will take place at 6:30 p.m. PT prior to the 7:17 p.m. start.

### **Worth noting**

The Giants took last year's series by a 5-1 margin, with NL Cy Young Award winner Tim Lincecum picking up two of those victories with complete games. The A's lead the overall series, 39-35, with a 20-17 edge at the Coliseum.

### **A's amped for Interleague opener vs. Giants**

#### **Club enters with 128-102 record against National League**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Manager Bob Geren believes Interleague Play is good for baseball.

The only thing Ben Sheets believes, though, is that "it ain't good for my batting average."

But in less than a month, the A's right-hander will have no choice but to once again place himself back in the batter's box, where he compiled a .076 mark through eight seasons of at-bats with the Brewers.

Sheets and Co. will visit National League parks beginning June 11, but not before they host the Giants to kick off the 2010 Interleague schedule starting Friday. It marks the 14th season of Interleague Play across baseball and features two segments -- the first coming in a three-game set this weekend and the latter from June 11-27.

"I think we all look forward to this time of year," Geren said. "I know our pitchers enjoy it every year and try to get some good swings in."

Given the club's injury history, though, chances are few pitchers will be given the green light to freely swing. Luckily for Geren, that risk won't have to be taken this weekend against the cross-Bay rival Giants -- a team, like the A's, which relies heavily on pitching, speed and defense.

### ***ATHLETICS' 2010 INTERLEAGUE SCHEDULE***

**Date Opp Record vs.**

May 21 SF 39-35

May 22 SF

May 23 SF

June 11 @ SF

June 12 @ SF

June 13 @ SF

June 15 @ CHC 1-2

June 16 @ CHC

June 17 @ CHC

June 18 @ STL 1-5

June 19 @ STL

June 20 @ STL

June 21 CIN 8-1

June 22 CIN

June 23 CIN

June 25 PIT 6-0

June 26 PIT

June 27 PIT

"I agree that they're a similar type of team," the A's skipper said. "I don't know if that's the appeal. Obviously, there's a rivalry. It's a friendly rivalry, of course.

"But it's good to see so many fans come out to the games. It kind of reminds me of a college football game, because you get a lot of fans from both sides."

Following Sunday's series finale, the A's will face three weeks of American League play before diving into 15 contests of Interleague action, which picks up again June 11 when the club returns the favor to the Giants and travels across the Bay Bridge to San Francisco.

"Playing the Giants is always fun," Jack Cust said. "It's more for the fans than anything. But the best part for us is playing so close to home."

Once done taking their shots at McCovey Cove, the A's will head to Chicago to face the Cubs at Wrigley Field from June 15-17 before rounding out Interleague travel by visiting St. Louis from June 18-20.

The Reds then come to Oakland from June 21-23 before former A's shortstop Bobby Crosby and the Pirates make a visit June 25-27 to complete the green and gold's Interleague Play schedule -- which, in the past 13 seasons, has resulted in a 128-102 record.

"We just look at it as trying to get as many wins as possible," Geren said, "whether they come on the East Coast or the West Coast."

### **A's option Rodriguez, recall Mazzaro**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- In an effort to augment an overworked bullpen, the A's on Thursday recalled righty Vin Mazzaro and optioned Henry Rodriguez to Triple-A Sacramento.

The 23-year-old Mazzaro lends a long-relief option to the A's, who handed rookie Tyson Ross just his second big league start Wednesday. Ross, who received his first career starting nod Saturday in the form of a spot start for the injured Justin Duchscherer, will be limited to 60-70 pitches, manager Bob Geren said.

"He's not completely built up," the A's skipper said. "If we need someone to give us length, Vin is available to be used in that role."

Mazzaro joins the A's for the second time this year, as he was previously brought up May 4 to start in place of Duchscherer against Texas only to be sent down the following day. He finished with a no-decision after allowing four runs on two hits and four walks while striking out four in three innings.

The A's right-hander made his Major League debut with the A's last June and went 4-9 with a 5.32 ERA in 17 starts before being shut down in September with right shoulder tendinitis. He endured a rocky spring and lost out on the fifth starter battle, but he carried a 3-1 record with a 3.13 ERA in six starts with the River Cats upon his promotion.

Geren limited his words when asked about Mazzaro's future role as a reliever, only going so far as saying, "He's in the bullpen today."

With an off-day Monday, the A's can afford the opportunity to skip Duchscherer's spot in the rotation until May 29 in Detroit, when lefty Brett Anderson could potentially be activated off the disabled list.

### **Ordonez, Cabrera lead Tigers past A's, 5-2**

#### **A's emergency starter Ross tagged with loss**

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Miguel Cabrera and Magglio Ordonez each drove in a pair of runs, Jeremy Bonderman won for the first time in over a month and the Detroit Tigers defeated the Oakland A's 5-2 on Thursday to complete a two-game sweep.

Cabrera snapped an 0-for-12 streak with a single in the third, then added a two-run homer in the fifth. Ordonez singled home two runs in the third, and Ramon Santiago had an RBI single in the fourth to help the Tigers win for the fourth time in five games.

Bonderman (2-2) gave up a run before he gave up a hit, walking the bases loaded in the third and then hitting Kurt Suzuki with a pitch. Bonderman ended up allowing three hits and four walks over six innings, striking out a season-high eight.

Tyson Ross (1-2) lasted four innings in his second start, allowing three runs on seven hits.

Cabrera has turned the AL West into his personal playground. He leads all active major league hitters with a .349 average against the four teams in 100 career games, and also hit his 21st home run to go with 93 RBIs.

Bonderman has not allowed more than two runs in his past three starts while allowing at least three runs in the previous three. He also moved into 17th on the Tigers' career strikeout list with 854, surpassing Milt Wilcox.

Ross was an emergency starter for Oakland when Justin Duchscherer was unable to start last Saturday. He's given up seven runs over 10 2-3 innings after allowing six in his first 16.

"I was throwing the ball where I wanted to and they were doing a good job of putting the ball in play," Ross said after his second start. "I like starting. It's nice to know when I'm going to pitch. The last five days were nice."

Vin Mazzaro, who was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento earlier in the day, took over for Ross and gave up Cabrera's ninth home run of the season before keeping Detroit at bay.

Daric Barton singled home a run against Phil Coke in the seventh to make it 5-2.

"We just didn't score enough runs," A's manager Bob Geren said. "We were a swing or two away."

Coke went 1 1-3 innings, Ryan Perry got the final two outs of the eighth and Jose Valverde pitched the ninth for his 11th save in 12 chances.

**NOTES**

Tigers OF Austin Jackson has a hit in 19 of 20 road games. . . . Bonderman has limited opponents to a .115 average (7 for 61) the first time through the lineup. . . . A's RHP Henry Rodriguez was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento to make room for Mazzaro. . . .

Barton is hitting .350 (28 for 80) at home and .191 on the road. . . . The Tigers are 18-2 when scoring five or more runs. . . . A's Mark Ellis and Coco Crisp will continue their

rehab assignments at Sacramento on Friday.

### **A's Get Swept by Tigers**

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post, 5/21/2010

Oakland, CA – Perhaps its the defense, matching “mohawks” or the tenacity of the bullpen. The Detroit Tigers showed no mercy in sweeping the Oakland A's 2-0 for the series. It was the second day of good pitching from the Tigers that gave them a 5-2 win over the A's.

Detroit sits first place in their American League Central division though tied with the Minnesota Twins. Oakland coming off a series sweep of the Seattle Mariners dropped two games under .500. They are now four games behind Texas in the American League West.

“I think we were a swing or two short today,” said manager Bob Geren. “They both threw the ball well, we just didn't score any runs for them.”

Tyson Ross got his second start of the season. He gave up three runs on seven hits, a walk and struck out four through four innings. Filling in for injured Justin Duchscherer, Ross's performance was a clear statement that he is capable of being awarded another start. If Brett Anderson is not ready to return from Triple-A, Ross may get his third nod to start next week.

“I felt like I did a good job,” Ross said. “I like starting, it feels comfortable and something I can get used too.”

The A' biggest hurdle was getting hits when they had opportunities on base. After three walks in the third frame, Oakland had the bases loaded with two outs. Pitcher Jeremy Bonderman hit Kurt Suzuki with a pitch bringing in Adam Rosales. The next play Jack Cust popped out to right field to end the inning.

Bonderman controlled the plate for six innings before giving up a one run in three hits, four walks and struck out a season-high eight batters.

Following behind Verlander's performance yesterday Bonderman felt things were finally going his way on the mound.

“I'm definitely making progress,” Bonderman said. “It felt good to get into a rhythm were we had good defense.” “It's just a matter of executing pitches, I could've gone farther but I hurt myself with the walks.”

“It just didn't go our way,” Cust said. “We had opportunities but we couldn't find the gap or it would've been a different game.”

The A's will honor Dallas Braden for his perfect game during a special pre-game ceremony tomorrow. Oakland will begin a three game series against Bay rivals the San Francisco Giants.

### **Interleague baseball schedule can provide an edge**

Paul White and Jorge Ortiz, USA Today, 5/21/2010

The Washington Nationals don't face a division foe again until June 28. By then, one of baseball's biggest surprises will know if it was able to exploit perhaps its best edge in the National League East: interleague play.

The Nationals host the Baltimore Orioles, the American League's worst team, beginning Friday night in this season's first weekend of interleague games. When interleague play resumes June 11-27, Washington's only foe which currently has a winning record will be the Detroit Tigers.

The Nationals have baseball's easiest interleague schedule, based on opponents' winning percentage. For teams that meet in two series, the foe's record is counted twice.

Nationals opponents entered Thursday 48 games under .500. The other NL East teams face teams with a combined winning record. The first-place Philadelphia Phillies, four games ahead of Washington, have the division's toughest interleague foes, a combined 20 games over .500.

The AL's biggest schedule discrepancy is in the West, where the first-place Texas Rangers have the league's easiest road; the Florida Marlins are the only winning club in a group of foes that are a combined 38 games under .500. The second-place Oakland Athletics face teams a combined 14 games over .500, including the San Francisco Giants twice, St. Louis Cardinals and Cincinnati Reds.

"You notice it," A's general manager Billy Beane says. "You'll always complain if you're playing a top team in the National League and the competitors are not, but that comes and goes. ... I don't know that you can create an interleague schedule where you're always perfectly balanced."

It's not just division races that can be tilted. A tight NL wild-card race figures to involve teams from all three divisions. The schedule is heavily weighted toward intra-division games, but interleague play could skew it further in favor of the Central contenders. Washington is the only NL team with an easier group of AL opponents than the NL Central's top three: the Reds, Cardinals and Cubs.

\* \* \*

Strength of schedules: Based on the current number of games over or under .500 for the opponent in each interleague series (i.e., the Mets would be counted twice for the Yankees). The bigger the negative, the easier the schedule, the bigger the positive, the more difficult.

## **AMERICAN LEAGUE**

### East

- Yankees -11
- Rays -6
- Orioles +14
- Blue Jays +17
- Red Sox +18

### Central

- Twins -16
- Tigers -8
- White Sox -6
- Royals -2
- Indians +15

### West

- Rangers -38
- Angels 0
- Mariners +12
- Athletics +14

## **NATIONAL LEAGUE**

### East

- Nationals -48
- Mets +11
- Braves +16
- Marlins +19
- Phillies +20

## Central

- Reds -38
- Cubs -26
- Cardinals -18
- Pirates -5
- Brewers +5
- Astros +39

## West

- Padres -13
- Giants -8
- Rockies +4
- Dodgers +9
- Diamondbacks +41

-- Advantage Central in the Wild Card race

### 5 toughest schedules

- Diamondbacks +41
- Astros +39
- Phillies +20
- Marlins +19
- Red Sox +18

### 5 easiest schedules

- Nationals -48
- Reds -38
- Rangers -38
- Cubs -26
- Twins -16

## MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

### Memphis strikes early to topple Sacramento

The Stars and Stripes were flying high at Raley Field at Thursday night's game on Military Appreciation Night presented by U.S. Army, as Sacramento fell 13-3 to Memphis.

Starting River Cats right-hander Fernando Hernandez (0-3) struggled on the mound from the start, giving up 12 runs in just 4.0 innings.

The Redbirds led off the game by scoring three in the first inning, but Sacramento answered back and it looked as if it would be a battle-of-the-bats for the two teams. Chris Carter's sacrifice fly to shallow center field scored Corey Wimberly, who singled on a hard-hit to left field but advanced to second base after a slight hesitation and a Redbirds error. They ended the inning scoring two with three hits.

Wimberly added one more to his 17 consecutive games of reaching base and extended his hitting streak to six consecutive games.

The Redbirds scored in five of the nine innings and Mark Hamilton recorded a grand slam for the Redbirds, who extended their lead to 8-2 after just two innings as the River Cats remained scoreless until the ninth.

Travis Blackley, a new addition to the River Cats roster, entered the game for the Cats in the fifth inning and faced just seven batters in his first two innings he pitched to end the innings quickly in his home debut game at Raley Field. He gave up just one earned run.

"I try to do my job. We have to go back to the basics in order to get the win," commented Blackley on his out-look of the teams struggling record.

The River Cats will face the Redbirds for the second game of the series Friday night at 7:05 as they kick off the 10th Anniversary of Raley Field.

### **'Hounds Break Out Against Frisco**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The sport of hockey has a wonderful tradition known as the "three stars of the game." The three players judged to have had the most outstanding performances in that night's contest are introduced and skate back on to the ice for a quick salute.

It was 90-degrees at game time, and still 83 just two hours, 10 minutes later, when the RockHounds completed a 9-1 win over the division-leading Frisco RoughRiders. Tough "skating" weather, but perfect for baseball. And, had this been a hockey game, the three stars would have been easily selected:

Josh Horton went 3-for-4, including two triples. The 'Hounds shortstop scored three runs and drove in another.

Carlos Hernandez returned to the starting rotation, and pitched the first five innings. Five perfect innings. The lefty faced and retired 15 batters, was really threatened only twice on two hard outs, and struck out five. Carlos had missed a start due to an ankle injury, and had made one appearance in relief, so his pitch count limited him to those five, outstanding innings, enough to earn him the win (3-0, 1.96).

Archie Gilbert went 2-for-3, and both of his hits left the ballpark. Archie's 3-run home run in the last of the first inning was huge, coming just one pitch after Frisco starter Martin Perez struck Jeff Baisley out on a laser of a fastball at the knees. The whiff was the second out of the inning, and the 'Hounds have struggled to get that "one big swing of the bat" over the last week or two. This time, on Perez' first pitch, Gilbert delivered a towering fly over the left center field wall. After adding a walk and a stolen base in the third inning, Archie capped the 'Hounds scoring with a line shot over the left field wall in the seventh.

Gilbert took over the team lead in home runs (7) and RBI (28) with the big night at the plate.

J.C. Holt also provided a key hit. The RockHounds led, 4-0, in the fourth, with runners at second and third. Perez got a strike out and promptly went 0-2 on Holt, whom he had struck out in the first and second innings. J.C., who joined the club two days ago as a free agent, fouled off five, 2-strike pitches and ran the count full. On the 11th pitch of the at bat, he delivered a 2-run single up the middle. The lead was 6-0 and that was largely the ballgame.

The first seven runs came against Perez, the Texas Rangers' # 3 prospect. The outstanding lefty, just 19, saw his ERA jump more than a half-point (from 3.34 to 4.91). Ben Hornbeck came out of the bullpen to relieve Hernandez, pitching the last four innings to earn the save in his first relief appearance of the season.

The RockHounds close the current home stand with a "Thirsty Thursday" match-up against Frisco before traveling to Corpus Christi for a 4-game series with the Hooks.

### **Ports End Road Trip With Dramatic Come-From-Behind Win**

**LAKE ELSINORE, Calif.** - On Thursday Night, the Stockton Ports came within three outs of dropping the rubber match of their series with the Lake Elsinore Storm and dropping five of seven on their South Division road trip. For the second time this season, however, the Ports rallied when trailing after eight innings to score four in the ninth, stealing the series away from the Storm and winning by a final of 7-5.

Lake Elsinore had the lead the entire game until the ninth, breaking the ice in the bottom of the first with an RBI single from Vince Belnome and a sac-fly from Daniel Robertson to take a 2-0 lead.

Five times in the series, when Stockton scored in the top half of an inning, Lake Elsinore came right back and answered in the bottom half. This happened on Thursday night in the fourth inning. Stephen Parker doubled off Storm starter Anthony Bass to start the inning and scored two batters later on an RBI single from Mike Spina to put the Ports on the board at 2-1.

The Storm came right back, however, and scored a run on a Blake Tekotte RBI single to put the lead back to two runs at 3-1.

Ports starter Shawn Haviland yielded a leadoff double to Drew Cumberland in the fifth, then walked Cole Figueroa. After recording back-to-back strikeouts of Belnome and Cody Decker, Robertson reached on an infield single that scored Cumberland from second as the throw from Parker went to first and Cumberland never hesitated around third.

Haviland would record the first out in the sixth and then be lifted from the game, going 5.1 innings and allowing four runs on eight hits while striking out seven in receiving a no-decision.

Trailing 4-1, Stockton cut the deficit to a run in the sixth. Parker started a rally with a one-out single and after a strikeout of Matt Whitney, Spina drew a walk to extend the inning and chase Bass from the game. Nick Vincent followed from the bullpen and allowed back-to-back RBI singles to Petey Paramore and Jeremy Barfield to cut the Storm lead to 4-3.

Bass would also receive a no-decision, going 5.2 innings and allowing three runs on six hits while striking out seven.

The Storm tacked on a run in the seventh to pad their lead. With Cumberland at first and two down, Decker hit a double high of the right field wall off Ports reliever Trey Barham to put Lake Elsinore's lead at 5-3. It was the only run allowed by Barham in 1.2 innings of work.

Trailing 5-3 heading into the top of the ninth, the Ports got their game-winning rally started with the bottom of their order. With Storm reliever Aaron Breit (2-3) on the hill, Barfield and Todd Johnson each singled to start the inning. Michael Richard came up next and laid down a terrific sacrifice bunt between the mound and home plate. The ball was mishandled by Breit and Richard reached on the error, loading the bases with nobody out. Shane Keough came up next and, after working the count full, drilled a 3-2 pitch down the right field line to score Barfield and Johnson and tie the game. Grant Green followed and, saddled with an 0-for-12 mark in the series to that point, singled to left to score both Richard and Keough and give the Ports their first lead of the night at 7-5.

Bass would take his second loss of the series after allowing four runs (three earned) on four hits and failing to record an out in the ninth.

After Andrew Carignan (2-0) pitched a perfect eighth and recording back-to-back strikeouts to end his inning, Paul Smyth (SV, 7) came on to pitch the ninth and struck out the first two batters he faced en route to setting the side down in order and recording his second save of the series. Carignan would be credited with his second win of the series.

After going 3-4 on their seven-game road trip, the Ports begin an eight-game homestand on Friday night at Banner Island Ballpark by welcoming the Visalia Rawhide to town. Murphy Smith (3-3, 6.21 ERA) will head to the bump for Stockton, opposed by right-hander Andrew Wolcott (1-2, 6.04 ERA) for Visalia. First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

### **Krol Suffers Loss, Cougars Drop Finale**

**BELOIT, Wisc.** - The Kane County Cougars fell to one game under .500 after a tough 3-2 loss Thursday night at Pohlman Field against the Beloit Snappers. The Cougars dropped three of four in the series, scoring just seven runs on 19 hits in the set. Ian Krol contributed his fourth quality start in five outings in the loss.

Krol (2-2) suffered a hard-luck defeat. The lefty was perfect through five and gave up just two unearned runs -- in the sixth -- on three hits over his seven-inning quality start. He walked none and fanned a season-high seven. Josh Lansford took over in the eighth and got touched for one run on one hit.

Down 3-0 after eight innings, the Cougars fought back in the ninth against the Snappers' bullpen. Mike Gilmartin doubled and scored on a single by Anthony Aliotti. After Leonardo Gil reached on an infield single, a Beloit throwing error brought home Aliotti to make it 3-2 and took Gil to third. With one out and the tying run at third, the Cougars' next two batters, Rashun Dixon and Franklin Hernandez, struck out. Kane Holbrooks posted his fifth save, and B.J. Hermesen got the win for the Snappers (25-16).

The Cougars (20-21) continue their eight-game road trip Friday night at 6:30 CT as they start a four-game series against the Clinton LumberKings (20-20). Jonathan Joseph (0-1, 5.23) will get the start for the Cougars. The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com), with pregame coverage starting at 6:15 p.m.



