

**Gonzalez shuts down Giants**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Gio Gonzalez is quick to spread credit around when he throws a good game, rarely spotlighting his own work.

It didn't matter Saturday, as others had plenty to say about the left-hander following the A's 1-0 blanking of the Giants in front of a sellout crowd of 35,067 at the Oakland Coliseum.

Gonzalez surrendered just two hits in a career-high eight innings. After allowing Andres Torres' single with one out in the second, Gonzalez retired 20 consecutive batters to finish his outing, easily his finest effort in 33 career starts.

"He was incredible," A's second baseman Mark Ellis said. "He was just pounding the strike zone. When he does that, his stuff is so good, he's going to have a lot of success." The A's go for the three-game sweep over their cross-bay rivals today.

Considering Gonzalez's dominance, it was surprising he didn't get the chance to nail down his first big league shutout. A's manager Bob Geren called on closer Andrew Bailey to start the ninth with the Giants' top of the order due up.

Bailey put two runners on — engaging Giants cleanup man Pablo Sandoval in an entertaining 10-pitch at-bat — but nailed down his seventh save.

"(Gonzalez) went through the lineup three times," Geren said. "Asking somebody to go through it a fourth time at the 100-pitch mark, when you have a fresh and outstanding closer, is not a decision really."

Gonzalez (5-3), who was at 95 pitches through eight innings, has eclipsed the 100-pitch mark four times this season, with a high of 104. The lefty said he wasn't disappointed to come out.

"Andrew Bailey is the perfect guy for that situation," Gonzalez said. "He put the crowd on their feet, and that's the guy you want to put out there to shut it down."

Sandoval stepped up in the ninth with Edgar Renteria on first and two outs. Bailey jumped ahead 0-2 before Sandoval worked the count full. After Renteria took second on defensive indifference, A's catcher Kurt Suzuki went to the mound to remind Bailey he had a base open.

Bailey threw Sandoval 10 straight fastballs and eventually walked him. But Bailey got Bengie Molina swinging for the final out.

"Going into that situation and getting Gio a win was great," Bailey said. —... That was a fun at-bat (with Sandoval). I don't think I've had one of those in a while."

On a day the A's lost designated hitter Eric Chavez to the disabled list, they welcomed back Ellis, who was sidelined 28 games with a strained left hamstring. He went 0 for 3, but his presence at second gives the A's strong infield depth.

Geren pointed out that he can use Adam Rosales as a utility man, filling in around the infield and giving starters a break. Rosales spelled Kevin Kouzmanoff at third base Saturday. He scored the A's only run off Giants starter Matt Cain (2-4) in the third on Coco Crisp's sacrifice fly, and made several nice plays defensively.

"What was really impressive, and you don't see at second so much, is his arm strength," Geren said of Rosales. "He's got a heck of an arm."

The A's, 22-22 overall, are 17-9 at home. Their starting pitchers are 12-7 with a 2.84 ERA at the Coliseum and 4-9 with a 5.77 ERA on the road.

Notes: Geren confirmed that Justin Duchscherer (left hip) will go to Phoenix today and begin throwing, but no rehab starts have been scheduled. ... Geren also said Brett Anderson (strained forearm) could come off the DL to start Saturday's game at Detroit. If he doesn't, Tyson Ross and Vin Mazzaro are the candidates. "... Marin Catholic High pitcher Gunnar Sandberg, recovering after being hit in the head with a line drive in March, will tour both clubhouses today and throw out the first pitch. De La Salle High's Zac Byers, who hit the ball that injured Sandberg, will be his catcher.

## **Latest injury could threaten Eric Chavez's career**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Eric Chavez's season was rolling along without any injury news.

It turns out the A's designated hitter wasn't so healthy after all.

Chavez went on the disabled list Saturday after a recent MRI revealed two bulging disks in his neck. It's an injury Chavez said he's dealt with since spring training, but kept quiet as he was hoping to gut his way through his first full season since 2006.

During the winter, Chavez said he would retire if he suffered another major injury. The severity of this ailment isn't known, but Chavez, 32, acknowledged it could be career-threatening.

"It might be," he said before the A's 1-0 win over the Giants. "I don't know what my future is going to hold. They've asked me to go home (to Arizona) and get healthy and see what happens."

Chavez said he collided with a minor league teammate during a drill in spring training and suffered a whiplash-type effect. Since then, he said he's had occasional days where he's felt good, but swinging the bat causes him great pain.

Even as he was getting daily treatment, Chavez said he didn't alert team officials — including manager Bob Geren — because he hoped he would get better.

Chavez finally underwent an MRI on the A's last homestand, which revealed bulges in the C6 and C7 disks.

He's had five surgeries since September 2007 — two on his back, two on his right shoulder and one on his left shoulder.

"I knew I was dealing with something," he said. "I just didn't know exactly what it was. But I didn't want to know, to be honest with you. That's why I never went to go see a doctor."

A's head trainer Steve Sayles said the only remedy is rest and physical therapy, including traction.

"It just depends on how he recovers," Sayles said. "Could it shelve him for the year? It's possible. But do we know if it will shelve him for the year? No."

Sayles also said he doesn't believe there's a connection between Chavez's back problems and his current issue.

But this injury helps explain Chavez's offensive struggles. He's hitting .234 with one homer and 10 RBIs.

"I had a few at-bats in Tampa where I couldn't even stop myself from swinging," Chavez said. "It's not about my numbers, but the quality of at-bats. It would just be three games of not very good at-bats."

Geren said Jack Cust would now get the majority of at-bats at DH.

Second baseman Mark Ellis, activated from the DL on Saturday and the longest tenured Athletic behind Chavez, said he's sorry to see his teammate sidelined again.

"In a perfect world, I'd be out there running around and playing every day with him," Ellis said. "But he'll be all right. He's got a great family. I hope (he resumes his career). But whatever he does, it's whatever makes him happy."

## **Chin Music: Eric Chavez goes on DL with neck spasms, his return unknown**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/22/2010 12:49PM

A quick update here before Game 2 of the Bay Bridge Series ...

The A's activated Mark Ellis from the DL and placed Eric Chavez on the DL with neck spasms. Here's the essentials on Chavez:

He's been told he has two bulging discs in his neck, and he gets pain on both sides. The injury dates back to spring training, when he collided with a teammate during a drill. He's dealt with pain all season but kept it pretty quiet, even as he was getting regular treatment from trainers and chiropractors. "I knew I was dealing with something," Chavez said. "I just didn't know exactly what it was. But I didn't want to know, to be honest with you. I never wanted to know. That's why I never went to go see a doctor."

He's going home to Phoenix to rehab and there's no timeframe for his return. We haven't gotten a chance to talk to the A's training staff yet (not sure if we will today). Manager Bob Geren said he didn't know if this injury was potentially season-ending. But Chavez said during the winter that he'd retire if he suffered another major injury. Could this be that serious? "It might be," Chavez said.

It's definitely affected his hitting. Chavez said he often had trouble stopping his swing once he started. That might help explain why he's looked so fooled on off-speed pitches at times.

This is only the latest in a string of well-chronicled injuries for Chavez, who hasn't played a full season since 2006. He's had five surgeries (two on his back, two on his right shoulder and one on his left shoulder). He said his spirits are OK, but he acknowledged it's discouraging dealing with yet another physical setback. "I almost wish I could say it was my back or it was my shoulder," he said. "But when it's something new, it's just like, 'What are you gonna do?' But my spirits, I'm fine."

Geren said Jack Cust would assume the regular DH duties, though Jake Fox, Kurt Suzuki (when he's not catching) or a backup outfielder could see action there. ... Ellis is playing second base and hitting sixth, by the way ...

### **Talking Points: Evening 1, 2, 3: Sabean and Bochy under the microscope, the A's small margin, the Sharks can't quit (yet)**

Tim Kawakami, Mercury News, 5/22/2010 8:36PM

*\* Whew, **whatever it was that hit me** the last few days--some belligerent flu/fever/cold/cough super-hybrid--thank goodness it is mostly passed, though all obvious errors in this item may of course be attributed to the lingering symptoms. I considered trying to post an item during the heights of the chill-dizzy experience, but thought much, much better of it. And the 15 hours of sleep per day was quite convincing, too.*

-Let's try to play a little weekend catch-up, shall we?

1--They've put the decisions off long enough, because Brian Sabean and Bruce Bochy like putting off decisions. They are status quo guys.

They resist change. They want everybody to just be patient, things will be fine.

But the time for major decisions has come. And what the Giants GM and manager decide in the next few days and weeks, I believe, will have a large effect on whether they're around starting in 2011.

Now, I know that's not a comfortable topic in some status-quo quarters of the Bay Area.

That's fine. Status quo has its merits.

But not when the Giants have, once again, put together a line-up that is not very athletic, not very disciplined, not very powerful and is oft-injured while being not very athletic or disciplined or powerful.

Most importantly, they're wasting too many precious days of Tim Lincecum and Matt Cain's prime years.

It's not fine when Buster Posey is sitting there in triple-A--not as a savior, but at least as an alternative, a live bat, an interesting option beyond the normal 0-for-4s scattered throughout the Giants order.

Right now, Posey could be playing first base a couple days a week (moving Aubrey Huff to LF) and catching a couple days, if Bochy would ever allow the time taken away from Bengie Molina and Eli Whiteside.

But the Giants have resisted bringing up Posey. Why? I believe it's not entirely about keeping his arbitration clock frozen until mid-June.

It's because they know if they bring him up before then, Bochy won't play him anyway. Start his clock, watch Bochy keep him on the bench. Not a good equation. That's why Posey isn't up now.

That logic doesn't work any more.

What we've all seen the last few weeks, in games that do not include the Astros, is what we've seen out of the Giants for the last several years.

They get slaughtered by good pitchers, they struggle against good pitchers, and they only eek out a little life against even the mediocre ones.

The Giants have a lot of trouble spots in their line-up, but let me point out three humongous ones:

\* **Molina** does not have an extra-base hit in his last 13 games, has seen his OPS drop from .825 to .673 in the month of May, and has 10 total RBIs in 118 at-bats this season.

He has 2 RBIs in 50 May at-bats.

I know he's considered sacrosanct to Bochy and others, but that is awful stuff and yet not altogether surprising from a 35-year-old catcher who could not get a multi-year offer from anybody this off-season.

Molina might have a few more thumps left in his bat. But he's getting down to the last few dozen, I'd think, and you sure don't want to be the team giving up 200 more at-bats 50 days after he's lost everything at the plate.

Last I checked, Posey was hitting .336, with a .435 OBP and .527 SLG in Fresno, with 5 HRs and 11 doubles.

Another thought: Why is Travis Ishikawa on the big-league roster again?

\* **Aaron Rowand**, who has been given an unbelievable amount of lead-off ABs, has a .274 OBP in May.

He's drawn 5 walks this season and scored 17 runs. As the lead-off hitter.

That's 4 fewer runs than Freddy Lewis has scored with Toronto, by the way. (No, I'm not making a point about Lewis' value or saying he shouldn't have been let go. Just saying that 17 runs is a poor total.)

I could see the argument in benching Rowand for a while and giving Andres Torres a long, unfettered look in CF, batting leadoff, but we know Bochy won't do that.

His big change is to move Rowand back in the order, and maybe install Torres as the lead-off man and LF.

Heck, Bochy's probably wishing he could sign Ryan Klesko again and put *him* in LF.

\* **Pablo Sandoval** is in a major slump. He's a very good hitter, but something is happening here:

He hasn't hit a HR since April 21, a span of 27 games (he sat one of them out), and he's hitting a stunning .197 in May, with zero power.

Now, we know Sandoval isn't going to hit like Omar Vizquel for very long, or if he does, there really is no answer for the Giants.

He's the Giants' essential bat—their only truly dangerous hitter—and his dramatic disappearance is a alarm bell for the franchise.

I could guess that the decline of Molina, however expected, and lack of a power bat anywhere else in the line-up (with the possible exception of Huff) is taking its toll on the Panda.

But that would just be a guess. I'll say this: It's up to Bochy and his staff to figure out why the heck it's happening and fix it.

There are a lot of things that are very much up to both Bochy and Sabeian right now.

I've said this before, surely it was no subtle thing when Bill Neukom gave them both two-year contract extensions last winter.

It was a dual reward for an 88-win season.

And it was the exact length at which Neukom could fire them after one season.

2—Wow, I went long on that item, so I'll make my A's item short: Their two wins over the Giants toggled the **A's back to 22-22**, but they're still walking a razor's edge.

If they keep playing like this, they will not be at .500 for very long.

Biggest indicator: They've got a -15 run-differential.

Put that in perspective: It's the same run-differential as the Chicago White Sox, who are 18-24.

More sobering info: The first quarter of the season has been heavily tilted to A's home games, where they have flourished.

They're 17-9 at the Coliseum, but only 5-13 on the road, and they've got a lot more road games coming up.

Like the Giants, the problems are all about the offense.

-The A's have only 6 HRs from their outfielders this season (a stat Fox discussed during today's Mets-Yankees game), the fewest in the league.

-The A's are tied for second fewest overall, with 25 HRs, ahead of only Houston's 21.

So far this year, A's players have thrown more perfect games (1) than they've gotten multi-homer performances out of a hitter (0).

-They have a team .683 OPS, fourth worst, ahead of only Houston, Pittsburgh and Seattle.

-The A's team ERA of 4.11 is 16th in baseball. (San Diego, which is close to the A's in most offensive categories, blows the A's away in this one, with a 3.08 team ERA, third best in baseball.)

It's fairly amazing that they're 22-22, by the way.

3—I picked the Sharks to beat Chicago in this series, and yes, that is a pick that deserves some taunting.

The Sharks are down 0-3 after a hard-fought but relentlessly non-victorious OT loss in Game 3.

They play Game 4 tomorrow in Chicago.

Now I only have one point to make: **The Sharks have to show up tomorrow**, like they showed up on Friday, and if the Sharks get the right bounces, they might drag this series back to HP Pavilion for a Game 5.

I'm out of the hockey prediction business, of course. But I do think that the Sharks can win this one—for themselves and for their organization—just to prove a mini-point.

It won't change much. The Blackhawks still have a stranglehold on this series, and if they lose Game 4, I'd expect them to come back to beat the Sharks here in Game 5.

But Patrick Marleau (my guy!) and the rest of the Sharks are working to make sure that this era does not end with a surrender, and if they lose something like 4-1, that's what it'd be.

They can do better. They've done better for most of this postseason, even through the 0-3 deficit.

## Dave Newhouse: One A's fan, two perfect games

By Dave Newhouse, Oakland Tribune columnist

A PERFECT GAME becomes a lifetime accomplishment the moment the 27th out is recorded and the pitcher is engulfed by teammates in unrestrained jubilation.

Try to imagine that special thrill as only 19 pitchers have achieved perfection — twice by the Oakland A's — in Major League Baseball's 141-year history.

Now imagine the thrill of watching those two perfect games by A's pitchers Jim "Catfish" Hunter in 1968 and Dallas Braden on Mother's Day this month, both in Oakland.

Well, Rob Leidy of Oakland saw them both, 42 years apart.

He has the ticket stubs to prove it.

"When you start thinking of the odds of that happening, and the rarity of a perfect game, I've been to 10 percent of the perfect games pitched," Leidy said. "There's not really anything more remarkable than that."

Not for a baseball fan, anyway.

Leidy (LYE-Dee) was 12 and living in Concord when he, two buddies and Leidy's father watched Hunter confront the powerful Minnesota Twins with Harmon Killebrew, Rod Carew and Tony Oliva on Wednesday, May 8, 1968.

It was young Rob's first big-league game, coming in Oakland's first big-league season.

"We decided to check out this new team," he recalled. "It was a big deal because we got to stay out late on a school night."

The four sat in Section 122, Row 33 in the lower deck, under the second-deck overhang. Each ticket cost \$3.50.

"I collected baseball cards, like Willie Mays and Willie McCovey, and listened to games on the radio," Leidy said. "So I knew how the game was played — the hits, the home runs, all that stuff. But that first game, I was impressed with the size of the field and how hard the balls were hit."

When did he sense a perfect game was possible?

"Like a lot of people, you go along," he said. "In the fourth or fifth inning, my dad said, 'He hasn't given up a hit yet.' Then everybody focused a lot more. Catfish Hunter wasn't about antics. He had this easy motion and a smooth delivery, but he was very focused, all about business."

Then came the ninth inning.

"My friend Gary and I were standing on our seats, screaming," he said. "Gary was so excited, he fell over backward, but wasn't hurt. I knew how difficult (a perfect game) was, though I grew to appreciate it more as I got older."

Fast forward 42 years. Leidy sat in Section 108, Row 15 with his wife Elizabeth — a Mother's Day gift — and their three children — Garrett, 20, Jena, 17, and Kate, 10 — plus one of the children's friends. Each lower-deck ticket cost \$30.

"Jena scores all the games," the father said. "It's the third inning and I said, 'No hits.' Someone said, 'Oh, you jinxed it.' By the fifth, the crowd was buzzing more. From the seventh on, it was really nerve-racking.

Hunter, the future Hall of Famer, was 22 when he silenced the Twins, 4-0. Braden, 26, shut down Tampa Bay by that same 4-0 score.

"Catfish was a great competitor," Leidy said, "but Braden seems even more intense."

Leidy, 54, is a wetlands biologist employed by the Environmental Protection Agency. He played baseball at Acalanes High School, then attended UC Berkeley before graduate school at UC Davis.

He goes to 10 A's games a year. His historical timing is impeccable — two perfect games.

"The best part," he said of Braden's perfecto, "was watching my kids and thinking, 'How can it get any better than this? My dad took me. Now I'm here with my kids.' It was just one of those things — beautiful, fantastic."

Leidy's parents were vacationing in Hawaii when Braden stuck it to the Rays — and A-Rod. Leidy couldn't wait to pick them up at the airport.

"My dad doesn't know yet that I was there," he said. "It's just one more remarkable thing about the Oakland years — the three World Series titles in a row, Billy Martin, the Bash Brothers, the 20-game winning streak."

Leidy has witnessed two perfect games and one perfect speech — Rickey Henderson's Hall of Fame induction last year at Cooperstown, N.Y.

What's left after that trifecta?

### **Gonzalez makes quick work of Giants**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Gio Gonzalez** allowed one hit in the first inning, a walk and a hit in the second inning, and then nothing for the next six innings Saturday.

After Gonzalez had retired 20 Giants in a row, manager **Bob Geren** removed him, with the A's leading the Giants 1-0, in favor of **Andrew Bailey**. Bailey allowed a hit and a walk, but he struck out **Bengie Molina** to end the game.

"Gio went through the lineup three times, and asking him to go through a fourth time at the 100-pitch mark when we have an outstanding closer isn't a decision, really," Geren said.

"Andrew Bailey is the perfect guy for that situation," Gonzalez said.

Gonzalez's eight innings were a career high, and he earned his team-best fifth win. He threw 95 pitches, and he struck out five.

"I was just going out there and pounding the strike zone, keeping the team in the game as much as possible," Gonzalez said.

With two outs in the ninth and **Edgar Renteria** at second, Bailey had a 10-pitch matchup with **Pablo Sandoval** before walking him. Bailey said that matchup was a blast, and he really enjoyed the crowd of 35,067, the A's first sellout of the season.

"That was fun. There's no other way to sum it up than just fun," he said. "It was a great game by Gio, and the crowd brought a lot of energy. I definitely heard them."

**Briefly: Justin Duchscherer** (left hip) played catch, and he'll go to Arizona today to start throwing bullpen sessions. ... Geren confirmed that the A's are targeting **Brett Anderson** to start Saturday at Detroit. ... **Coco Crisp**, who drove in two runs in his A's debut Friday, had Saturday's only RBI, with a sacrifice fly in the third. ... With **Mark Ellis** returning to second base, **Adam Rosales** was at third and played well there, along with scoring the only run. ... **Dallas Braden** said he did wag his finger at his grandmother, **Peggy Lindsey**, in mock disapproval when she took the mound to throw out the first pitch Friday.

## **A'S 1, GIANTS 0**

### **One mistake is all it takes**

#### **San Francisco can't escape offensive 'rut' against Oakland**

Henry Schulman, Chronicle Staff Writer

The vibe inside the Giants' dugout during Saturday's 1-0 loss in Oakland was not good.

"We were only down one run but it felt like we were down 10," first baseman Aubrey Huff said. "That's not the way you want it."

The entire offense is not the way you want it. In a flashback to last year, and the year before, and the year before that, the hitters have gone stone cold. They have scored two or fewer runs in eight of their last 12 games.

The Giants matched their season-worst losing streak at four games. For the fourth time on this 1-5 trip, they were held to one or no runs, this time held to three singles by Gio Gonzalez and Andrew Bailey.

In Friday's series opener, the Giants were 0-for-9 with runners in scoring position. That was not much of an issue Saturday, when they had only two runners reach second base. The hitters behind them were 0-for-3. In the ninth, after Pablo Sandoval fought valiantly to draw a two-out walk with Edgar Renteria at second base, Bengie Molina struck out to end the game.

Changes could be coming before today's series finale against Ben Sheets.

Before Saturday's game, manager Bruce Bochy was asked if Andres Torres could be a good leadoff hitter and he said, "Hell yes." After the loss, Bochy suggested it might happen today.

Bochy has been reluctant to make a change because Aaron Rowand has done some good things atop the lineup, but not lately. In his last 12 games Rowand is hitting .137 with one RBI, having driven himself in with a homer last Sunday.

Other than changing leadoff hitters, there is not much Bochy can do short of getting new players for a team that ranks 15th in the league in average with runners in scoring position. Yes, Buster Posey lurks in Triple-A, but the brass does not seem ready to play that card.

"We're in a tough rut," Bochy said. "The only way it's going to change is if we change it. We're getting shut down. We've got to get the bats going."

A single run would have been enough to alter Saturday's game, in which the only run was scored without a hit. Matt Cain, who pitched a complete game in falling to 2-4, hit Adam Rosales to start the third inning. Huff then let a potential double-play ball skip off his glove for his second error of the year. Rajai Davis sacrificed and Coco Crisp hit a sacrifice fly.

Bochy probably would trade a limb right now to get a situational run like that.

Huff played on some bad Baltimore and Tampa Bay teams that went through spells like this. Asked what it usually takes to escape, he said one big hit early in a game would do wonders.



A year ago today, when the Giants were in a similar offensive dive, Juan Uribe provided a big hit, although it came late, a three-run, eighth-inning double that sparked a 5-1 win in Seattle - in a Cain start, no less. The Giants did hit better after that.

Molina, who has two RBIs this month and none since May 5, said maybe the answer is to stop asking questions and simply do the job.

"I don't know what it is. We're just not hitting," Molina said. "A lot of times you look around and try to see why. For me, that's just bull-. For me, we're not doing it. That's it. You can't start looking for reasons, swinging at the first pitch, swinging at the last pitch, taking pitches, not taking pitches. We're not scoring runs, bottom line."

### **Latest injury clouds Chavez's future**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Eric Chavez hasn't spent any time wondering if his latest injury might end his career, but when asked, he acknowledged that it's possible that this might be it for him.

"I haven't thought about it, other than that my goal for the year was not to be back on the DL this year," Chavez said before the A's 1-0 victory on Saturday at the Coliseum. "But it could be it. It could. I don't know."

Chavez - the A's highest-paid and longest-tenured player - was placed on the disabled list with what the six-time Gold Glove winner said are two bulging disks in his neck. Chavez has had neck problems since spring training, when he collided with minor-league infielder Adrian Cardenas during a pop-up drill.

"It was like a whiplash reaction," Chavez said, "but I was like, 'I don't care, I'm so sick of this, I'm just going to play through it.' "

He had some shooting pains down his left arm and then neck spasms that alternated from one side to the other, depending on the day. Chiropractors, sleeping with a neck brace and getting traction therapy - his head was pulled up away from his neck to decrease pressure on the vertebrae - would work for a day or two before the discomfort resurfaced.

Chavez knew the problem was affecting his hitting, and he finally had an MRI exam on the last homestand that showed the bulging C6-C7 disks.

"I was shocked," Chavez said. "I thought it was a pinched nerve."

Chavez already has had two back surgeries to repair different bulging lumbar disks, and he said before this season that if he had one more major injury, he would retire.

He is not at that point yet. He has not been told that surgery is a possibility for the neck problem; he has been told only that cortisone isn't an option in that area and that traction therapy is his best bet. He is returning to Phoenix to do a more extensive course of traction, but there is no specific timetable for his return.

"I just need a new spine," he said.

Trainer Steve Sayles said that Chavez will be back whenever Chavez tells the team he is ready. Sayles was asked if it's possible that Chavez might miss the rest of the season, and he said it is possible, but he added, "Do we know? No, we don't."

Right-hander Esteban Loaiza missed more than a month for the A's with a bulging disk in his neck in 2007 (and then missed another two-plus months after knee surgery). He did come back to pitch that season and part of the next with varying degrees of success.

Mark Ellis, Chavez's longtime teammate, took Chavez's place on the roster Saturday, coming off the DL after missing more than a month with hamstring tendinitis.

"We just can't play together," Ellis said. "I don't know what's going on. But Chavvy will be all right. Give him a couple of weeks.

"People look, and all they see when he was playing third base was all those Gold Gloves, but he played through a lot of stuff that people don't realize, and it's catching up with him now. Hopefully, he's able to recover, but you want him to have a normal life after baseball."

### **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Injured player honored:** Gunnar Sandberg, the Marin Catholic junior critically injured when struck in the head by a line drive in March, will throw out the first pitch today. For each field-level ticket purchased at [oaklandathletics.com/Gunnar](http://oaklandathletics.com/Gunnar), \$5 will go to his medical fund.

### **Drumbeat: Chavez on DL with neck problem - what does it mean for his future?**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 5/22/2010 12:03PM

Eric Chavez's goal for 2010 was simply to stay healthy, and he didn't even make it out of spring training without getting hurt again, as it turned out. That might not be the best sign for Chavez's already tenuous future, because health troubles seem to crop up every few months, and the six-time Gold Glove winner has said that if he has any more significant injuries, and he'll hang it up.

"I just need a new spine," he said.

Chavez collided with Adrian Cardenas during a pop-up drill, and he has had neck trouble ever since. He said he had pains down his left arm initially, and then had aches on one side of his neck and then the other, alternating days on a regular basis.

"I told them I just wanted to play through it," Chavez said. "But it hasn't gotten any better."

Chiropractors helped a bit, as did traction therapy, but never for more than a day or two at a time, and an MRI done on the A's last homestand showed bulging discs, two of them, in his neck.

"I was pretty shocked," he said. "I thought I had a pinched nerve."

He is now heading home to Phoenix for more traction therapy and he is hopeful that he won't be gone too long, but it's hard to say, precisely. Injections, such as cortisone, aren't usually done in the neck area, so traction is usually the treatment - Chavez's head will essentially be pulled up from his neck. Not a lot of fun; Dallas Braden told me he's had traction therapy for his neck and it was an awful combination of painful and boring. "You can't even play video games," Braden said.

Chavez said surgery hasn't been mentioned as a possibility. He's already had two back surgeries, and now he has issues with two more vertebrae? That's troubling.

I asked if he's concerned that this could be it for his career, and Chavez said, "I hadn't thought about it, other than my goal for the year was not to be back on the DL. ... But it could be. I don't know."

Chavez is in the final year of a \$66 million deal, and he's the longest serving A's player, in year No. 12 with the team. As Drumbeat regulars know, he's a media favorite, and though beat writers are supposed to be objective, I will readily admit that Chavez is among my favorite players I've ever covered - and one of my favorite people, period. It's impossible not to like him: He's honest, he's accessible, he's quotable, he treats everyone around him with respect. He's just a genuinely nice person, and I have seen how hard he's tried to get onto the field and stay on the field over the years, much of it without ever even mentioning how much pain he was in. Like this time - no one had an inkling. I talked to several players in the clubhouse today who hadn't had the slightest idea Chavez was hurt.

I'd asked both before and after yesterday's game about Chavez's status, particularly with Jack Cust DHing yesterday, and received very vague answers, which made me think something was up. I'm sorry it's another trip to the DL - I know there are Drumbeat readers who would be more than happy to see Chavez go, and I realize his production is way down and he's probably no happier about that than A's fans are. But I'll be very sad the day Chavez hangs it up, and I hope he can manage to fend it off at least a little longer.

Mark Ellis is back - and he's sad that when he comes back that Chavez goes on the DL.

"It seems like we just can't play together," he said. "But Chavvy will be all right. Give him a couple of weeks."

Cust is, of course, the DH now, so no more outfield. At least not very often; manager Bob Geren said Cust might be in the field if Kurt Suzuki or Jake Fox DHs.

Justin Duchscherer played catch before today's game and he'll need to see how his left hip responds to that activity, but he's hopeful that after rehabbing in Arizona for a short time that he'll be able to make a couple of rehab appearances and come back to the A's.

Geren confirmed that, as expected, Brett Anderson is being pointed toward that start a week from today at Detroit. If he can't go, Vin Mazzaro or Tyson Ross would get the call.

Here's the lineup; Adam Rosales stays in, playing third: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Sweeney rf, Suzuki c, Cust DH, Ellis 2b, Rosales 3b, Pennington ss, Davis lf.

### **Gio's career outing propels A's to victory**

#### **Lefty retires 20 straight Giants from second to eighth inning**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Talk about a quality fifth starter.

Gio Gonzalez, who started the season in the No. 5 spot in the Oakland rotation, looked more like an ace on Saturday, as he paced the A's to a 1-0 victory over the Giants.

Gonzalez tossed a career-high eight shutout innings -- needing 95 pitches to do so -- while allowing just two hits and a walk and recording five strikeouts. Although he finished his afternoon by retiring 20 straight batters, Gonzalez didn't get a chance to finish out the game.

A's manager Bob Geren instead elected to go with closer Andrew Bailey, who allowed a pair of baserunners before striking Bengie Molina out to end the game.

"[Gonzalez] went through the lineup three times," Geren said. "Asking somebody to go through the lineup a fourth time at the 100-pitch mark when you have a fresh, outstanding closer -- it was not a decision."

Gonzalez, true to his humble form, had no qualms with his manager about the decision.

"Andrew Bailey is the perfect guy for that situation," Gonzalez said. "He did a great job. It was exciting all the way to the end. He put the crowd on its feet, and that's the guy you want to put up there to shut it down."

Geren said it wasn't tempting to keep Gonzalez in the game. Geren said he simply told Gonzalez his afternoon was over after the eighth inning.

According to his teammates, Gonzalez's control was the key to his success Saturday. For just the second time all season, Gonzalez issued fewer than two walks while throwing at least five innings. He didn't allow a runner to reach third base all afternoon.

"He's pretty tough when he's throwing everything for strikes," said Giants outfielder John Bowker. "At least with me, he was getting that curveball over and working the outside of the plate. He has a really big breaking curveball with a lot of break on it, to go with that 92-93 [mph fastball]."

For the game, Gonzalez faced three batters over the minimum. Per usual, though, Gonzalez deflected the praise toward his defense and catcher Kurt Suzuki.

For the first time in 25 games, the A's featured a different starting infield, thanks to the return of second baseman Mark Ellis. As a result, Adam Rosales, who had replaced Ellis during his stint on the disabled list, moved to third base, spelling Kevin Kouzmanoff.

Rosales had a fine day in the field, accounting for four assists.

"We knew when we got him that he had incredible versatility," Geren said. "He's played solid everywhere I've put him. What I was really impressed with -- though you don't see it at second base so much -- is his arm strength. You really see that at third. ... He's got a heck of an arm."

Rosales concurred, saying his arm is his top asset. He also said he felt completely comfortable at third, as he played there plenty during the past two seasons with Cincinnati's Triple-A affiliate in Louisville. He also played 57 games at third with the Reds last season.

"I don't care where I play," Rosales said. "It's just great playing, man. It's just great being out there."

Though Ellis went 0-for-3 in his return to the big league club, he said he felt 100 percent physically and that his timing in the batter's box still needs a bit more work.

"It does take a minute when you get put in there against big league pitching," Ellis said. "But I felt pretty good. Every at-bat I felt a little bit better, so that's good."

The game's lone run came in the third inning, when A's outfielder Coco Crisp delivered a sacrifice fly to left field, plating Rosales.

After Gonzalez exited the game, the Giants were able to make it a bit interesting in the ninth against Bailey. The game reached its fever pitch during Pablo Sandoval's 10-pitch at-bat.

With two outs and a runner on, Sandoval started off the duel by taking a couple of hearty swings against Bailey. After fouling off four pitches, Sandoval eventually drew a walk. At one point during the at-bat, Suzuki approached the mound to calm Bailey down, telling him an issued walk wasn't necessarily a bad idea.

"That's what Zuk brings to the table -- just knowledge of the game," Bailey said. "A lot of times, pitchers get caught up in the moment, kind of like I was. You're just battling with a guy and trying to throw it harder or put it in a better spot."

Bailey regrouped after Sandoval's walk, though, getting Giants catcher Bengie Molina to wave at an outside fastball to end the game.

"We would rather have won, 11-0," Geren said. "But when you can limit a team to no runs only using two pitchers, that's pretty impressive."

### **Chavez heads to DL with future uncertain**

### **Slugger's career in jeopardy with neck spasms; Ellis activated**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- One of the all-time A's greats may have played his final game with Oakland.

In order to make room for second baseman Mark Ellis, who was activated off the 15-day disabled list Saturday, the A's placed Eric Chavez on the DL.

Chavez said he collided with a second baseman during Spring Training and that he's been battling spasms in his neck ever since.

When asked if he thought his career was over, Chavez said, "It might be. I don't know what my future is going to hold. They've asked for me to go home and get healthy and see what happens."

Ellis, meanwhile, said he was happy to with the big league club after three successful Minor League rehab starts this week.

"It feels good," Ellis said. "We took our time to really rest and heal it and I feel great."

Though his playing days may be over, Chavez said he was still in good spirits Saturday.

Chavez said he has two bulging discs in his neck and that the injury has affected him all season. Chavez said the team had an MRI done two weeks ago, and it revealed the problem.

"I was hoping it would go away," Chavez said. "But every time I would swing a bat, my neck would go in such a bad spasm and it continued to get worse."

Chavez said the injury affected him "tremendously" at the plate, and he recounted a few at-bats in Tampa Bay where he would swing at balls involuntarily.

He said he tried sleeping with a neck brace for two weeks earlier this season, but that it was too uncomfortable.

Chavez also tried getting chiropractic work done at times throughout the season, but the short-term pain relief wasn't enough to get him through more than one game at a time. Chavez said he could have had his neck realigned before every game, but that it was too much trouble.

"I almost wish I could say, 'At least it was my back,' or, 'I wish it was my shoulder,'" Chavez said. "Because then at least it's a history of something, but something new, it's like, what are you going to do?"

Chavez is in the final year of his six-year, \$66-million deal and is the longest tenured player on the team. He was drafted by the A's with the 10th overall pick in the 1996 First-Year Player Draft and made his big league debut on Sept. 8, 1998.

Chavez has etched his name among the franchise's best players, ranking second in career doubles (282) and extra-base hits (532) and fourth in runs (730), home runs (230) and RBIs (787).

Chavez played all 13 of his seasons with the A's, recording a .267 batting average over his career. He also won six straight American League Gold Glove Awards at third base from 2001-06.

Chavez said he will likely go back to his home in Arizona on Sunday to rest, ice and treat his neck.

"It is what it is," Chavez said.

### **Duchscherer to begin rehab on left hip**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's right-hander Justin Duchscherer said he will go to Arizona on Sunday to start rehabbing his injured left hip.

Duchscherer has been placed on the 15-day disabled list twice because of his inflamed left hip this season, the most recent time coming on May 16.

Duchscherer said he had a lubricant injected into his left hip joint earlier this week and that he doesn't know how it will respond. Duchscherer played catch on flat ground before Saturday's game against the Giants, exiting the field after a few minutes.

"We're making an attempt to avoid surgery," Duchscherer said. "We'll do this stuff and see how it goes."

Duchscherer said he will throw a couple of bullpen sessions in Arizona and try to make a couple of rehab starts before trying to come back to the big league club. He said he has no timetable for a return.

Duchscherer has a femoroacetabular impingement, which is caused when the ball and socket of the hip rub together abnormally, injuring the joint. If Duchscherer needs surgery, his season will likely be over.

### **Rosales moves to utility role with Ellis back**

OAKLAND -- With the return of regular second baseman Mark Ellis on Saturday, Adam Rosales has been freed up to become the utility player the A's sought when they traded for him this offseason.

Coupled with the addition of Coco Crisp, who made his Oakland debut on Friday, Ellis' return has given A's manager Bob Geren the lineup he expected to see this season.

"It's kind of the team in Spring Training you envisioned," Geren said. "Looks like almost everyone is back in there at this point, and it's a good feeling to have."

Crisp remained as Oakland's starting center fielder, hitting leadoff, while Ellis occupied the No. 6 slot Saturday.

Rosales spelled Kevin Kouzmanoff, who has played in every game but one this season, as the A's starting third baseman.

Geren said Rosales will likely be filling in for shortstop Cliff Pennington and first baseman Daric Barton on occasion throughout the season.

"That's what we really need to stay healthy -- is have flexibility and the utility of a guy like Rosales," Geren said.

Geren also said Jack Cust will become the team's primary designated hitter now that Eric Chavez has been placed on the 15-day disabled list.

### **Worth noting**

If all goes well, A's lefty Brett Anderson could be back on a big league mound on May 29, when the A's play at Detroit. As expected, manager Bob Geren said Anderson will be limited to 50-60 pitches during his rehab start with Triple-A Sacramento on Monday. Geren said Anderson will be limited to about 75-80 pitches if he makes the May 29 start. If Anderson is unavailable, Geren said the team will likely turn to Tyson Ross or Vin Mazzaro. ... For the first time all season Saturday, the A's sold out the Oakland Coliseum with 35,067 fans. ... The A's are 8-2 in one-run games, which is the best mark in the Majors. ... Andrew Bailey has not allowed a run in his last 17 appearances (17 innings pitched) in Oakland.

### **Sheets, Sanchez wrap up Bay Bridge Series**

By John Schlegel / MLB.com

As the Giants try to get their offense moving and the A's go for the sweep of the season's first Bay Bridge Series, Ben Sheets is the main man who will decide those outcomes Sunday.

Sheets, the veteran right-hander who missed all of 2009 after shoulder surgery, spent his entire career in the National League before signing with the A's over the offseason. So he's no stranger to the Giants, owning a 4-2 record and a 2.36 ERA in eight previous meetings with San Francisco.

Sheets will be matched against left-hander Jonathan Sanchez, who hasn't won since April 26 but maintains a solid 3.06 ERA for the season, in the finale before the two rivals meet again June 11-13.

After lefty Gio Gonzalez combined with Andrew Bailey for a shutout of the Giants on Saturday, San Francisco has just one run over the course of the first two games of the Bay Area rivalry.

In Sheets, the Giants are meeting a pitcher who has had two big blowup starts, but his catcher, Kurt Suzuki, believes Sheets is finding his groove.

"He's throwing the ball with a lot more conviction," Suzuki said after Sheets went 6 2/3 innings vs. Seattle on Tuesday. "You can see he's getting more comfortable as the year goes on."

"The first few starts, you could tell with his emotion that he was so happy to be out on the mound again feeling great. Now he's settling in and he's pitching like he usually pitches."

Sheets is 2-1 with a 3.00 ERA at home this year and is 1-0 with a 3.32 ERA and a .217 opponents batting average in his past three starts.

### **Giants: Infield more crowded now**

Shortstop Edgar Renteria returned to the Giants' lineup Saturday, contributing one of their three hits on the day and combining with Freddy Sanchez on a pair of double plays. The return of Renteria, who was on the DL with a groin injury, gives the Giants a crowded middle infield, with Juan Uribe having filled in both spots while the other two have been sidelined. Uribe came out of Friday's game with a sore hamstring and struck out as a pinch-hitter Saturday. When all three are healthy, manager Bruce Bochy says he has a good problem on his hands. "Some guys will be moving around, getting a day off, things like that," Bochy said Saturday. "It's a very workable situation. It's really a good situation to be in, where you can rest guys. We have some movable parts here."

### **Athletics: Kouzmanoff takes a break**

The A's starting infield changed for the first time in 24 games, the third-longest such streak in Oakland history, when Mark Ellis returned to the active roster Saturday. Adam Rosales switched over to third for the Gold Glove second baseman, and Kevin Kouzmanoff (4-for-25 in his career against Giants starter Matt Cain) took a seat. Rosales is likely to move around in a utility role now that the infield is at full strength again. "It's kind of the team in Spring Training you envisioned," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Looks like almost everyone is back in there at this point, and it's a good feeling to have." Previous to Saturday's game, it had been Daric Barton at first, Rosales at second, Cliff Pennington at short and Kouzmanoff at third for 24 games, the longest run for four infielders since a club-record 39-game streak in 1976 by Don Baylor, Phil Garner, Bert Campaneris and Sal Bando.

### **Worth noting**

The A's and Giants will host Marin Catholic High School pitcher Gunnar Sandberg, his family and teammates at Sunday's game. Sandberg, critically injured after being hit in the head by a line drive while pitching March 11, will visit both the A's and Giants clubhouses to meet with players and coaches and watch batting practice from the field. During a special pregame ceremony at 12:45 pm PT, Sandberg will throw out the ceremonial first pitch of the game to De La Salle High School's Zac Byers, the player who hit the line drive. Sandberg's teammates will be gathering donations to a fund to defray his medical and rehabilitation costs. The A's are offering a special fundraising ticket for the game as well, available [here](#).

### **Many baseball players use music for introductions**

Paul Gutierrez, Sacramento Bee, 5/23/2010

The bossa nova beat, rapped gently on a Gretsch mod orange drum set, cuts through the cool AT&T Park air in a quick 4/4 time.

*You know the day destroys the night,*

*Night divides the day ...*

Two measures later, in perfect syncopation, the Fender/Rhodes piano bass and Vox Continental organ join in, followed by the Gibson SG electric guitar's evocative riff.

*Tried to run, Tried to hide ...*

Then, descending from the ether and settling upon the diamond, the feral and haunted voice of Jim Morrison. ...

*Break on through to the other side ...*

With that, Tim Lincecum's pregame psychedelic trip to the loneliest place in sports, the pitcher's mound, begins – the reigning Cy Young king joined in spirit by the Lizard King.

The Doors' iconic "Break On Through (To The Other Side)" – written fittingly enough in the key of G – is Lincecum's entrance music at Giants home games as his pregame warmup tosses come with the song pumping along, giving the waterfront yard a trippy Summer of Love flashback feel. And really, is there one more appropriate for the national pastime's biggest rock star than the epitome of the turbulent late-1960s rock star's seminal hit?

"I really got into them this offseason after seeing the (1991) movie ('The Doors')," Lincecum said. "It's a combination of the beat and the words. I need a beat in my head when I'm pitching. Plus, the lyrics of the song stood out to me."

Seemingly every Tom (Seaver), Dick (Williams) and Harry (Heilmann) has a walk-up song for batters or entrance tune for pitchers these days, the cultural fusion of music and baseball giving fans a glimpse into a ballplayer's soul.

The music, as primal a stimulus as there is, comes in every genre, from classic rock to pop to rap to what A's center fielder Rajai Davis had the guys in the Oakland Coliseum press box queuing up for him – gospel.

"I'm letting the people know what kind of guy I am," he said. "I like to listen to something that I need, in life, (to tell me) that I'm loved."

So much so he sometimes takes his sweet time getting from the on-deck circle to the batter's box, just to take in a few more bars.

Sacramento sports psychologist John Meyer said a player's need to add a personal soundtrack to his game can remind him of "the glory days of high school or serve as a reminder of a good time" and borders on superstition, not to be confused with Stevie Wonder's early '70s classic. A slumping player quickly shuffles songs.

"It's the element of getting themselves pumped up, whether it's to inspire the crowd or to strike fear into the heart of their opponents," Meyer said. "Psychologically, it solidifies how they view themselves."

Players making like professional wrestlers with their ring entrance is nothing new. Not when ballpark organs have been around since before the Giants last won a World Series.

In 1972, the New York Yankees' organist played "Pomp and Circumstance" for closer Sparky Lyle. Randy "Macho Man" Savage, a former minor league catcher for St. Louis, later adopted the song for his ring entrances.

Not everyone is in favor of personalized soundtracks, though.

"They all do it, (and) it's absolutely ridiculous," Lyle told New York Newsday in 2006.

A's broadcaster Ray Fosse's big-league career spanned from 1967 to 1979. He smiled when asked if he ever thought of a walk-up song.

"I don't know who would have even had the idea to do it," Fosse said.

But if they had been in vogue back then?

"Tom Jones, 'Delilah,' " Fosse shot back.

Fosse then asked A's third-base coach Mike Gallego, who played from 1985 to 1997, if he had a walk-up song.

"A *what?*" Gallego said incredulously, nearly spitting out his mouthful of seeds.

You could say Charlie Sheen's Ricky Vaughn sauntering in from the bullpen in 1989's "Major League" to "Wild Thing" ushered in the modern movement, which does not cost individual teams a cent.

Major League Baseball Properties has licensing agreements with BMI and ASCAP that cover all 30 clubs, so there are no per-use fees for music in their catalogs.



At first, public relations types would simply choose a song for a player. Then players took the initiative and started spending almost as much time wracking their brains for their perfect song as they did choosing between high socks and saggy pants.

Giants starter Barry Zito, a musician in his own right, began this season hoping to have a different entrance song for every one of his 30-plus starts. A's designated hitter Eric Chavez's brother picked his song, the Christian rock "Lion Chaser" by Transparent.

"It's not like I feel sexy or anything, but it's pretty cool," Chavez said. "If guys think it helps them, good for them."

The soundtrack to Dallas Braden's perfect game on Mother's Day paid homage to his hometown – "Welcome to Stockton" by Thugs On My Payroll.

"It's a welcome, welcome to what you're about to get right now," Braden said. "It's sentimental and gets me fired up. It's a form of extrinsic motivation for myself."

"There's so much to be said about the mind-set when you take the mound. Hitters get to dig themselves three, four times a game. Pitchers get that one time."

A's right-hander Trevor Cahill is an old soul who warms up to Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," a song he took a shine to as a kid playing a Vietnam War video game. He has used it since Class-A Kane County in 2007.

"It's mellow; it calms me down," Cahill said. "I don't throw too hard anyway, so I don't want something that's going to make me want to overthrow."

Former Oak Ridge High School standout and seven-year big-leaguer F.P. Santangelo said his "best" walk-up song was Rush's "Working Man," but the "best ever is (relief pitcher) Trevor Hoffman's 'Hells Bells' (AC/DC). "

Once, in Montreal, Santangelo said, Cliff Floyd had a love song harkening his approach to the plate.

"He got back to the dugout, and we were all over him," Santangelo said. "We were like, 'You trying to get the umpire's phone number?' "

Sometimes during road games, Santangelo and teammates would bury face in hands, listen to the opponent's walk-up music and try to guess the batter's ethnicity.

Arizona-style racial profiling? Hardly.

Then again, they probably would have gone deep with Giants reliever Sergio Romo's Norteño-styled "Sergio El Bailador," which he quit after being teased by Latino teammates for its *oom-pah-pah* nature. Santangelo & Co. would have whiffed, though, on Giants shortstop Edgar Rentería, who favors Gangsta Rap pioneer Dr. Dre's "Nuthin' But a 'G' Thang."

Sometimes, the ballpark disc jockeys just don't get it and use music as a distraction for foes.

Trying to get into Hee-Sop Choi's head during a minor league game in 2001, the Nashville music man played "Kung-Fu Fighting" before the South Korean's at-bat for Iowa. Earlier, "China Girl" greeted him.

Nashville's music man was canned.

In 2002, Manny Ramírez delivered a CD to Boston's sound people for his walk-up music. Without anyone vetting the song, Styles' "Good Times (I Get High)" echoed throughout Fenway Park. As did the 12-letter expletive contained within. Not amused, the umpires called the press box at the end of the inning.

*We chased our pleasures here,*

*Dug our treasures there,*

You could picture a groovy, multi-hued and constantly changing psychedelic background rippling over Ray Manzarek's shoulder.

*But can you still recall,*

*The time we cried?*

Turns out The Doors' keyboard player, now 71, living in Napa and still playing shows, is a fan of the Giants in general, Lincecum in particular, and totally digs his entrance music.

*Break on through to the other side ...*

"The song has a great driving, pulsating beat," Manzarek said. "It's like what Jim Morrison was saying: 'Break on through to the other side.' And Tim has obviously found something in himself, as opposed to the day-to-day ballplayer, that has enabled him to break on through to a more powerful place.

"He's found another place within himself to break on through to, another plane to be – dare I say it – superhuman."

There's some serendipity working here. Lincecum's father, Chris, saw The Doors in concert at Eagles Auditorium in Seattle. During the show, Morrison bounded through the crowd mid-song and literally bumped into the elder Lincecum.

"Trippy, huh?" said the son, who eschewed his native grunge scene with "Break On Through" after considering "Peace Frog," "Alabama Song" and "L.A. Woman," all by The Doors.

A modern-day Mister Mojo Risin' with a far-out wind-up, nasty fastball and filthy changeup to make batters look like they're on a bad trip?

"He's a fantastic pitcher, just fabulous," Manzarek said. "If the guy is only 25 and playing The Doors, this guy is cool, man. Very hip."

Cool. Hip. Hallmarks for which every ballplayer with a playlist in his head strives.

### **Giants and A's players' playlist**

Paul Gutierrez, Sacramento Bee, 5/23/2010

Giants

Tim Lincecum, RHP

"Break On Through (To the Other Side)" by The Doors

Matt Downs, INF

"Moneytalks" by AC/DC

Aubrey Huff, 1B

"Burn It To The Ground" by Nickelback

Aaron Rowand, CF

"So Hott" by Kid Rock

Pablo Sandoval, 3B

"Walk It Out" by DJ Unk

Barry Zito, LHP

"Little Secrets" by Passion Pit

Eli Whiteside, C

"The Ocean" by Led Zeppelin

**A's**

Dallas Braden, LHP

"Welcome to Stockton" - from compilation album "Thugs on My Payroll"

Daric Barton, 1B

"Coming Undone" by Korn

Eric Chavez, 3B

"Lion Chaser" by Transparent

Ryan Sweeney, OF  
"I Run This" by Birdman & Lil Wayne

Jake Fox, INF  
"Foxey Lady" by The Jimi Hendrix Experience

Gabe Gross, OF  
"Blessed Be Your Name" by Matt Redman

Andrew Bailey, RHP  
"Fire It Up" by Thousand Foot Krutch

### **Gonzalez outduels Cain** ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Gio Gonzalez got into such a groove he didn't even realize how quickly he was setting down the Giants.

Gonzalez retired his final 20 batters and the Oakland Athletics scored an unearned run to beat Matt Cain and the Giants, 1-0, on Saturday.

"Dallas Braden set the tone," Gonzales said of his teammate's perfect game on May 9. "We all try to follow in those footsteps. I felt great just going out there pounding the strike zone."

An error by first baseman Aubrey Huff set up Coco Crisp's sacrifice fly in the third inning. The Giants managed only three hits and matched a season high with their fourth straight loss.

Gonzalez (5-3) allowed two hits in eight innings. He gave up a single to Freddy Sanchez in the first, then a one-out walk to Huff followed by a single to Andres Torres in the second. After that, he went 1-2-3 the rest of the way.

The left-hander struck out five and walked one. Closer Andrew Bailey, the reigning AL Rookie of the Year, pitched the ninth for his seventh save in nine chances.

But not without a bit of drama. Bailey allowed Edgar Renteria's one-out single and walked Pablo Sandoval in a 10-pitch at-bat with two outs after starting 0-2 against him. Bengie Molina struck out to end it.

"No other way to sum it up than just plain fun," Bailey said.

"To get Gio the win there was great. That was a fun at-bat. I don't think I've had one of those in a while."

Manager Bob Geren said he didn't want Gonzalez to have to face San Francisco's lineup a fourth time as he neared the 100-pitch mark. It was already a career-best for Gonzalez going eight innings.

"The entire performance was impressive," Geren said.

Cain (2-4) pitched a five-hitter for his first complete game since last Aug. 3 against Houston. He was hurt again by a lack of run support, his third straight outing with the Giants held to two or fewer runs.

"I thought we gave away some at-bats today to be honest," manager Bruce Bochy said. "They're pressing, there's no getting around it."

Crisp had another productive day in his second game of the season. The new Oakland center fielder made his A's debut Friday night with two RBIs in a 6-1 win over the Giants after coming off the disabled list from a broken left pinkie finger.

The Athletics scored when Adam Rosales was hit by a pitch and Cliff Pennington reached on Huff's error. Rajai Davis sacrificed and hit Crisp hit a fly ball.

Cain lost his third straight start. He was coming off consecutive losses to San Diego in which he struggled with his control and walked 11 total batters in those two outings. He issued only one free pass Saturday and struck out four.

"It was definitely a tough loss," he said. "It just came down to one situation and it worked out in their favor."

Bochy was planning to shake up his lineup today, then the Giants will have a much-needed day off Monday following 13 straight.

Cain fell to 2-5 with a 2.44 ERA in seven career outings against Oakland.

"He pitched his heart out," Bochy said. "Got the leadoff hitter on six times and he had to pitch out of it, and he did it.

He really did a great job today. That's why this is another tough one. We've had some gut-wrenching losses."

The Giants were 0 for 9 with runners in scoring position on Friday night, and again couldn't get anything going against Gonzalez.

## NOTES

Molina is in an 0-for-15 slump.

Renteria returned from the 15-day disabled list following a right groin injury.

San Francisco INF Juan Uribe, who had been playing in place of Renteria, wasn't in the lineup as he nursed a tight left hamstring that forced him out of Friday night's game after the second inning.

The Giants optioned INF Ryan Rohlinger to Fresno to clear roster room for Renteria's return.

Matt Downs served as the DH for the Giants as Molina returned to his regular catching duties after he only hit Friday night.

3B Kevin Kouzmanoff had the day off for just the second time in Oakland's first 44 games.

The A's and Giants today will host Gunnar Sandberg, the Marin Catholic High School pitcher who was hit by a line drive during a March 11 scrimmage and suffered a life-threatening brain injury.

Davis stole his 15th base of the year.

The game drew 35,067 fans, the first sellout of 2010 for the A's.

### **A's Chavez goes on DL again, says he could be done**

JANIE McCAULEY Associated Press

Longtime Athletics star Eric Chavez is on the disabled list once again and says his career could be over.

Oakland put Chavez on the 15-day DL on Saturday because of what he calls two bulging disks in his neck.

The 32-year-old designated hitter is the longest-tenured member of the A's.

Manager Bob Geren is optimistic Chavez could return this season. But the six-time Gold Glove third baseman says he might be done after several injury-plagued years.

Chavez has spent all 13 of his major league seasons with the Athletics. He is hitting .234 with one home run and 10 RBIs this year.

### **Perfect night: Braden gets key to city in hometown**

STOCKTON, Calif. (AP) — It was another perfect day for Dallas Braden.

The Oakland Athletics pitcher returned to Stockton on Saturday night, sharing his slice of baseball history with a hometown proud to call him one of its own.

A sold-out crowd roared as Braden received a key to the city before a Class-A game at Stockton Ballpark, where he pitched for the Ports five years ago on his way to major league fame.

The left-hander was honored for throwing the 19th perfect game in big league history, the culmination of two whirlwind

weeks for the 26-year-old pitcher after his 4-0 gem against the Tampa Bay Rays on May 9.

"I'm speechless for the first time really," said Braden, who still lives in this central California city of 290,000 and commutes to the Bay Area to play for the A's. "It's something that I never would have imagined. This is my close family. This is my friends. This is where I come from. It just doesn't get beat."

Braden is a symbol to this working-class community, grinding it out as an unheralded prospect during his rise to celebrity status. He had a 17-23 record in the majors before retiring 27 batters in a row on Mother's Day.

Braden was raised by his grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, after his mother died when he was a teenager. Lindsey was part of the large contingent that hovered around Braden on Saturday as he signed countless autographs for rows of fans.

Braden was 6-0 with the Ports on his rise through the Oakland organization, so this was the perfect place to celebrate his perfect game with those close to him. Appropriately, he threw out the first pitch. It was high and outside.

That was after he received the key to the city from Mayor Ann Johnston and a congressional resolution honoring his accomplishment.

"You're a product of your environment, and it makes you who you are," Braden said. "There's a lot of positive things going on in this town, and it's all about what you make of it. I was given nothing but an opportunity from the townspeople and everything else in this city. Everybody and everything had a hand in where I am today."

Braden is one of the few athletes to receive such an honor from the city, joining recent honorees such as astronaut Jose Hernandez and musician Chris Isaak. But his indelible mark on baseball made him a natural selection for the award.

"He made baseball history, No. 1, and he's from Stockton, which is the most important thing," Johnston said. "We don't have many hometown heroes that make history like that. He stands as representing the best of Stockton and the best at what he does. We're so proud that he's proud of Stockton, because we sure are proud of him."

Braden is active in the community and works out during the offseason at Stockton Ballpark, where he often instructs Little League players who were once like him.

He thanked the crowd and told fans he would stand up for any of them.

### **FOR BRADEN, THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME**

By **Jason Anderson**, Stockton Record, 5/23/2010

STOCKTON - He's been on television and radio, morning shows, late shows and the cover of a major sports magazine.

A two-week whirlwind tour took him places he never imagined he'd go, but on Saturday night, before an overflow crowd of 5,347 at Stockton Ballpark, Dallas Braden came home to a long, loud emotional ovation.

"This is an unreal honor for me," Braden said. "To have it all culminate back here where I grew up, it's pretty special."

Stockton Mayor Ann Johnston and other dignitaries joined the Stockton Ports in honoring the Oakland Athletics pitcher for his perfect game during a pregame ceremony. Fans packed the waterfront park to pay tribute to Braden, a 26-year-old Stockton resident and Stagg High School graduate who threw the 19th perfect game in Major League Baseball history in a 4-0 victory over the Tampa Bay Rays on May 9.

Braden said he had never felt more loved.

"Maybe in a dream somewhere, but nothing I've ever lived, that's for sure," he said.

Johnston presented Braden with a key to the city. The Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce gave him a newly published tabletop book about Stockton with a personal inscription and a lifetime honorary membership in the chamber.

They recognized Braden not just for his perfect game but for all he overcame to reach the big leagues and for all he's done to make Stockton a more perfect place.

Braden endured trying times while growing up in Stockton. He had an estranged relationship with his father, his mother died of cancer when he was a senior at Stagg, and he played only two years of high school baseball because of truancy and other behavioral issues.

Now, he's a model citizen and an ambassador for the 209 area code. He collects and donates food to feed the homeless on Thanksgiving, sponsors underprivileged Little Leaguers and takes every opportunity to promote a city that has been hit hard by unemployment and home foreclosures.

"His story is the story of so many people in Stockton, the hard-luck story, difficult circumstances, tragedy in their lives, but they rise above it," Johnston said. "We have a great spirit here in Stockton. He epitomizes that, and the fact that he tells the whole world about Stockton is wonderful."

Larry Valderrama, a 39-year-old Stockton resident, said Braden has generated a great deal of pride in the community.

"Everybody talks down about Stockton, and for him to stand in front of everybody and say, 'You know what - 209 - I'm proud of where I come from,' it means a lot," Valderrama said. "It makes me feel proud of where I'm from."

Valderrama said people in the Stockton community find it easy to identify with Braden. Braden said he identifies with them.

"We've all had to grind it out here," Braden said. "Nothing's been handed to a lot of people here. We know what a hard day's work can get you, and we're ready to step up and let people know what we're all about."

Peggy Lindsey, Braden's grandmother, smiled while watching Braden sign autographs before the game. She said it was heartwarming to see him honored in his hometown.

"Dallas loves this town, and I love this town," said Lindsey, who helped raise Braden and urged him to refocus after his mother died. "We think there are great people here - great people - and we just love everybody here."

Many at the ballpark were familiar with Braden's compelling personal story long before he pitched his Mother's Day gem, but, like most Americans, Ports manager Steve Scarsone learned of his path to perfection after the fact.

"After the perfect game, we all got a chance to learn about him and his family and the ordeals he went through with his mom, and the huge influence and love he received from his grandmother showed through the TV as we were watching it," Scarsone said.

"It's a great baseball story, a great human story, and to have it come to our front door is pretty cool. It's an emotional day for a lot of folks in the Stockton area, and I think it's great that they've been able to put this tribute together to bring Dallas home and put him up on that pedestal."

Saturday's festivities capped two weeks of public appearances for Braden. He was featured on the cover of Sports Illustrated. He read the Top 10 on "Late Night with David Letterman." He appeared on a CBS morning show with his grandmother, did an interview with National Public Radio and received the American League Player of the Week award.

Braden was honored with a special weeklong celebration this week at the Oakland Coliseum. The A's offered ticket discounts and gave away commemorative posters and T-shirts. Braden was recognized in an on-field ceremony and Lindsey threw out the first pitch before a game against the San Francisco Giants on Friday, which Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums declared "Dallas Braden Day."

Braden has been places he never dreamed he'd go, but he said nothing compared with coming home.

"This is where I come from," Braden said while addressing the crowd before the game. "It's like that country song goes, these are my people and this is where I'm from. I'm proud to put you on my back any day of the week. I'll go to war with you any day of the week, and I want you to be there by my side, day in and day out. That's what we're doing together as a city. We're coming up and we're going to keep coming, so let's go."

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Sacramento drops fourth game in a row**

By Kevin Poveda / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats extended their losing streak to four games in a row with a 9-0 loss to the Memphis Redbirds on Saturday night at Raley Field.

Sacramento was shut out for the fifth time this season and is only four games away from tying last years total of nine shutout losses.

Memphis stuck first in the fourth inning when catcher Bryan Anderson blasted right-hander Graham Godfrey's pitch towards right field and into the River Cats bullpen.

River Cats pitchers struggled throughout the entire game, brining in three different pitchers from the bullpen. All but one River Cat's pitcher gave up at least one earned run, with right-hander Edwar Ramirez's being the only Sacramento pitcher to not give up a hit or a run in his one inning of pitching.

While only down 3-0 going into the ninth inning, Sacramento looked for resurgence; but with a mixture of poor pitching and miss-communication between teammates things took a turn for the worse.

Right-handed reliever Justin Souza took the beating in the ninth, with one out, shortstop Tyler Green singled to left field, followed by a Daniel Descalso triple. Redbirds outfielder Allan Craig would advance to first after being hit by a pitch. Both Mark Hamilton and Bryan Anderson would get on base before third-baseman Ruben Gotay rounded things off with three-run homer on a soft fly ball to left field.

Despite a three-game losing streak coming into tonight's game, River Cats fans continued to pour into Raley Field even on a night when temperatures were as low as fifty-one degrees, with a total attendance of 12,681. Although the River Cats are at the bottom of their division with a 18-25 record, they remain atop in the attendance rankings.

Sacramento has been outscored 43-7 in the past four games, and will finish their series with the Memphis Redbirds Sunday afternoon as left-handed pitcher Lenny DiNardo (2-5, 3.77) takes the mound and will attempt to get Sacramento's first victory against Memphis in their four-game series.

### **'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 Drop Close Contest to Visalia, 2-1**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** - The offensive woes of the Stockton Ports (18-26) continued on Saturday, as they dropped a close contest to the Visalia Rawhide (23-21) by a final of 2-1. The Ports had the tying and winning runs on base, but were unable to score the necessary runs in the ninth. Stockton finished the contest 0x10 with runners in scoring position and stranded nine baserunners. The Ports outhit the Rawhide 9-5 in the game as well.

Stockton starter Kenny Smalley picked up the hard-luck loss, allowing two runs on four hits in 5.0 innings. He struck out five and walked five as well. Ports relievers Trey Barham, Scott Hodsdon, Andrew Carignan, and Fautino de Los Santos kept the Rawhide scoreless in the contest. Right fielder Jeremy Barfield led Ports batters with two hits, including a double. Shortstop Grant Green and left fielder Shane Keough also doubled in the contest for the Ports.

Stockton was the first club to post a run, as Smalley made the Rawhide strand four baserunners in the first three innings. In the bottom of the third, catcher Ryan Ortiz led off with a single. He moved to third on Keough's double. He came around to score the lone Ports run as second baseman Tyler Ladendorf grounded out to Visalia shortstop Victor Estevez, giving the Ports a 1-0 lead.

Smalley held the Rawhide scoreless in the fourth and fifth frames, but ran into a little bit of trouble in the top of the sixth. First baseman Paul Goldschmidt doubled to lead off the inning. Smalley then walked left fielder Marc Krause, before giving up an RBI double to catcher Josh Ford.

Ports manager Steve Scarsone then pulled Smalley and replaced him with Barham. Right fielder Kyle Greene hit into a fielder's choice as Ladendorf threw the ball to Ortiz to get Krauss out at the plate. With two one and one out, Barham



intentionally walked Estevez. Barham then walked in a run as he gave a free pass to pinch hitter Chris Davis, to make it 2-1. Centerfielder Alfredo Marte grounded into a double play to end the threat.

From there, both teams were kept scoreless. Ports pitchers allowed just one hit in the last three innings of the game. The Ports collected four hits in the eighth and ninth innings, and put runners on the corners with just one out in the ninth. But the last two Ports batters were called out on strikes to end the game.

The Ports will face off against the Rawhide for Game Three of the four-game set at 2:05 p.m. The first 1,000 fans into the game will receive a Dallas Braden Perfect Game commemorative poster. LHP Ben Hornbeck (0-0, 0.00) will start for the Ports, after joining the team on May 22. Visalia will have RHP Chase Anderson (0-1, 4.5) start on the mound.

### **Cougars' Skid Hits Four** **Kane County offense continues to struggle as team loses 4<sup>th</sup> straight**

**CLINTON, Iowa** – For the second time this season, the Kane County Cougars have lost four straight games, and for the third time they have dropped to three games under .500. They suffered a 5-1 loss Saturday night at Alliant Energy Field against the Clinton LumberKings, falling to 1-5 on their eight-game road trip. So far on the trip the Cougars have scored nine runs on 27 hits in six contests.

Starter Dan Straily got a no-decision with a fourth straight solid performance. He gave up one run -- a solo homer to Kalian Sams in the second inning -- on three hits over five frames, walked two and matched his season-high for strikeouts with eight.

The Cougars tied the game in the fifth against Clinton lefty Jon Hesketh. Max Stassi singled, stole second and scored on Conner Crumbliss' single. Chris Affinito's second-inning single was the only other Cougars hit. With the game tied, 1-1, after five innings, Connor Hoehn (3-2) gave up two runs in the sixth, and Bo Schultz got tagged for two in the eighth to account for the 5-1 final. John Housey (3-0) won it for Clinton, and Chris Kirkland notched his first save.

The Cougars (20-23) and L'Kings (22-20) play Game 3 in the four-game series Sunday afternoon at 2 CT. Justin Marks (1-5, 7.15) is scheduled to face Tyler Stanton (3-2, 3.97). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com), with pregame coverage starting at 1:45 p.m.