

Oakland A's road losses, injuries pile up

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's are out to prove that life away from the Oakland Coliseum really can be pleasant.

But it didn't take long for the momentum from last weekend's sweep of the Giants to evaporate.

Starting pitcher Dallas Braden left Tuesday's 5-1 loss to the Baltimore Orioles with a sprained left ankle, an injury that he vows won't keep him from making his next start.

That news surfaced after center fielder Coco Crisp was a pregame scratch with a muscle pull in his chest, likely to send him right back to the 15-day disabled list.

Is there something about climbing on an airplane that jinxes this club?

The A's embarked on this 10-game trip looking to improve on a 5-13 road record. But the journey didn't begin well against Baltimore, the American League's worst team at 15-31.

"It didn't turn out our way," shortstop Cliff Pennington said. "But we'll be ready (today)."

Braden, who had left his previous start against Detroit because of a flu-like symptoms, said he sprained his ankle while running stairs when the A's were in Texas two weeks ago.

The ankle didn't affect his first two outings after the incident, but it was a hindrance Tuesday. He was pulled after four innings with the game tied 1-1.

Tyson Ross (1-3) relieved him and allowed two walks that led to two runs. The Orioles struck for two more runs against Michael Wuertz.

Braden allowed just an unearned run on three hits, but he walked the first two batters in the fourth, when the Orioles scored their first run on a Pennington throwing error.

Braden was making his third start since throwing a perfect game against Tampa Bay on Mother's Day.

"He got through the first couple innings," A's manager Bob Geren said. "But the pain increased. I thought he was hopping around on it, and I thought his delivery looked different. You could see it wasn't going to get any better."

Braden said he fought to stay in the game "but to no avail, obviously." He did concede his ankle affected his pitching.

Braden has nerve damage in his left foot that causes him to occasionally lose feeling in his foot. He said that was a factor in his stair-running mishap.

"I hit a stair and I wasn't aware of where I was, from the feeling that I don't have," he said. "I slipped and my ankle went."

He was asked if he expects to make his next start Sunday in Detroit.

"See you in five days," he said.

The bigger loss, as things stand, will be Crisp's absence. He missed the first 42 games with a fractured left pinkie finger, but his presence atop the lineup Friday and Saturday against the Giants made Oakland's offense look more formidable.

He injured an intercostal (rib cage) muscle near the right side of his chest Saturday and didn't play Sunday.

Geren held off on posting Tuesday's lineup until waiting to see how Crisp came out of batting practice.

"I thought I'd be able to go run down some balls in the outfield, but I was short of breath," Crisp said.

Geren said the DL was a possibility with Crisp, but Crisp talked as if the decision already was made.

"Collectively, I guess we thought it best to not let this thing worsen," he said.

Top prospect Chris Carter has played outfield recently for Triple-A Sacramento, but the A's are likely to look elsewhere to promote someone if Crisp goes back on the DL.

TODAY: A's (Trevor Cahill 2-2) at Orioles (Brian Matusz 2-4), 4:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

A's update: Patterson brothers both start in left field

Joe Stiglich, BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

Patterson brothers get starts in left field

BALTIMORE — Playing left field was strictly a family affair Tuesday night at Camden Yards.

Eric Patterson started in left field for the A's, while his older brother, Corey, patrolled left for the Orioles during Baltimore's 5-1 victory.

It was the first time the siblings had started in the same major league game.

"Now, for three games, I have the luxury of not having to read the box scores (to see how he did)," Eric Patterson said beforehand.

As it turned out, they converged on just one play Tuesday. That came in the top of the sixth, when Eric hit a tailing fly ball toward the foul line that Corey hauled in for the third out.

Eric Patterson, batting ninth for the A's, went 0-for-2 with a walk before Jake Fox pinch-hit for him in the top of the ninth. Corey led off for Baltimore and went 1-for-3 with a walk.

The two went to dinner Monday night after the A's arrived in Baltimore. Their mother, Carolyn, was expected to arrive Tuesday from Atlanta to watch the series.

The Pattersons shared the field in a major league game on just two other occasions, both in 2008 when Eric was with the Chicago Cubs and Corey was with the Cincinnati Reds. Corey was in the starting lineup and Eric pinch-hit in an April 16 game, and both players pinch hit for their teams in the next day's game.

"It's good to see him, period," Eric Patterson said. "We haven't played against each other that much, and we don't get to see each other much."

Brett Anderson, fresh off Monday's rehab start for Triple-A Sacramento, will rejoin the A's today. He'll throw a bullpen session, and if he comes out of it OK, the lefty will come off the DL and start Saturday at Detroit. Anderson has been sidelined with a forearm injury since April 24.

Brad Bergesen, a Foothill High grad, has been moved up in Baltimore's rotation and will face the A's on Thursday. David Hernandez, originally scheduled to go that day, has been moved to the bullpen. "... Left-hander John Halama, who recently signed a minor league deal with the A's, is scheduled to make his first start for Sacramento tonight against Nashville.

Chin Music: Crisp a late scratch, other A's notes

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/25/2010 4:03PM

Quick update before the A's-Orioles series opener here at Camden Yards, which just might be my favorite American League ballpark. There's nothing fancy about the place, it's just a classy-looking joint. ...

—Coco Crisp was a late scratch in the A's lineup. This mystery has been unfolding right up until game time. Manager Bob Geren held off on posting a lineup until after Crisp took BP. Then the team announced that Crisp was leading off and playing center, and we just heard about 15 minutes before first pitch that Crisp was scratched. Crisp says he has an intercostal (rib

age) injury, but he had trouble describing it to me, and sounded unsure about how he even hurt himself. But it happened Saturday. He said the pain is centered on his right side. From what I saw during BP, the switch-hitting Crisp only took swings from the left side of the plate. Not sure if his injury hurts him more hitting from one side or the other. He also shagged flies, but we weren't able to talk to him after BP. There should be more information available after the game.

—Brett Anderson will join the A's for tomorrow's game, Geren said. The lefty will throw a bullpen session tomorrow and if that goes well, he'll come off the DL and start Saturday in Detroit. He threw three innings last night for Triple-A Sacramento, allowing two runs and six hits in 57 pitches.

—Eric Patterson gets a rare chance to play against his brother, Corey, who's leading off and playing left field for Baltimore.

—Here's a reminder that you can follow me on twitter at twitter.com/joestiglich. I update it often throughout the day.

The lineups

A's: Pennington SS, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Suzuki C, Cust DH, Kouzmanoff 3B, Gross CF, Ellis 2B, Eric Patterson LF; Braden LHP.

O's: Corey Patterson LF, Lugo 2B, Markakis RF, Tejada 3B, Wigginton 1B, Jones CF, Wieters C, Atkins 1B, Izturis SS; Guthrie RHP.

Chin Music: Down on the farm

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/25/2010 12:23PM

I caught up with Keith Lieppman, the A's director of player development, and picked his brain about many of the organization's top prospects. Some are knocking on the big league door, others still have a long road ahead, and some just want to get healthy. Here's a progress report on some of the top names ...

Chris Carter, 1B: You might have noticed in Triple-A Sacramento's box scores that Carter, the A's No. 1 prospect, is getting time in right field. Rest assured the A's still see Carter as a first baseman, but they want him to continue to play left and right field to expand his versatility. Carter, 23, hit his 10th homer last night, but he's batting .242 with 52 strikeouts in 43 games. Lieppman pointed out that Carter has lost some protection in the lineup with Jack Cust getting called up and Michael Taylor sidelined with a calf injury. "Right now he's getting a dose of the Triple-A cutter. That's the pitch of preference there, and probably more so in the big leagues," Lieppman said. Carter is likely to get promoted at some point this season, but don't expect it to happen soon. "You get to the big leagues either by dominating the league you play in, and he hasn't done that yet, or a situation where there's an injury or opportunity," Lieppman added. "At this stage, I'm not sure there's an opportunity to play first base every day."

Michael Taylor, OF: Ranked by Baseball America as the A's No. 2 prospect, Taylor, 24, is still sidelined by a calf injury suffered earlier this month. He's been able to do little except rest, and the A's won't rush him back. Calf injuries can take a long time to heal, as we saw when Mark Ellis was sidelined for two months last season. "In most cases you have to let it heal completely and be conservative, or you're going to be dealing with it the rest of the year," Lieppman said. This figures to delay Taylor's ticket to Oakland. He had just 30 games of Triple-A experience coming into this season, and like Carter, he needs the seasoning.

Jemile Weeks, 2B: As you can see, the A's injury woes aren't relegated to the majors. Weeks, 23, was playing well for Double-A Midland before re-injuring his left hip flexor while trying to beat out a grounder. A similar injury sidelined Weeks for the end of the 2008 season and the early part of 2009. Lieppman described this injury as a partial tear in the hip flexor, and the A's are hopeful of getting him back by mid-June. After Weeks was drafted in '08, there was talk that center field might be his future position, but the A's like him as a second baseman and he was showing improvement defensively until this latest setback.

Grant Green, SS: Green, 22, — the A's first-round pick last June — received lots of individual instruction from the big league staff during spring training. He's hitting .267 with two homers and nine doubles in 45 games with Single-A Stockton. After Green signed in August, the A's shut him down following his long collegiate season, so he appeared in just five minor league games in 2009. More than anything, the A's want him to adapt to playing everyday in his first full pro season. "He's showing some gap-to-gap power," Lieppman said. "Defensively, he's caught the ball pretty well. He's got a few errors at this stage, but he's made some nice adjustments."

Max Stassi, C: After he impressed everyone this spring with his maturity in major league camp, there's a tendency to assume Stassi, 19, will shoot rapidly through the farm system. Young catchers have a lot to digest, however. Stassi is playing regularly for low Single-A Kane County (Ill.), a big jump considering he was in high school at this time last year. He

has six homers in 38 games but is hitting .240 with 55 strikeouts. Importantly, Stassi gets high marks for his handling of pitchers. Lieppman keeps a long-range view in mind regarding Stassi. "I looked at numbers for how long (some of the top big league catchers) spent in the minor leagues. Most of them spent three to four years in the minor leagues. He's (19). You're looking at 21, 22, when you want to have him ready."

Corey Wimberly, IF/OF: Wimberly was acquired from Colorado before the 2009 season, and two things stood out about him that spring: 1) His breathtaking speed, and 2) The standing back-flips he did as part of his pre-game routine. But now he's turning heads with his play for Triple-A Sacramento. Wimberly is hitting .287 and leads the Pacific Coast League with 19 stolen bases. At age 26, he's hardly a can't-miss prospect, but Oakland's roster includes another speedster – Rajai Davis – who was a late bloomer. Wimberly can play the middle infield and outfield, and his versatility prompts Lieppman to call him "the Chone Figgins of the minor leagues." But the A's aren't hurting for utility players at the big league level, so Wimberly's first call-up doesn't appear in the near future.

Michael Ynoa, RHP: It's been a strange season so far for the highly touted prospect from the Dominican Republic. After being slowed by an oblique injury, Ynoa needed to have his wisdom teeth pulled and suffered complications from that. But he's back on the mound now, and Lieppman anticipates Ynoa, 18, will be in the rotation when the A's Phoenix-based rookie league team begins play June 22. Ynoa was sidelined by an elbow injury for much of 2009, and he has yet to appear in a regular-season professional game since signing in July 2008.

James Simmons, RHP/Sean Doolittle, 1B: We lump these two together because both were high picks in the 2007 draft and both are sidelined indefinitely with injuries. Simmons is home recovering from a shoulder ailment that limited him to 22 starts last season. He's gotten several different medical opinions and won't report this season until there's a clear diagnosis on his shoulder. "There's something he feels in his shoulder that doesn't seem able to heal through physical therapy," Lieppman said. ... Doolittle, who shows good potential at both first base and the outfield, has recovered slowly from October knee surgery. He's just coming off physical therapy and is trying to work his way back to the diamond.

More piddling injuries derail A's momentum

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer

Is it possible to bleed to death from paper cuts?

Those are the types of injuries that are killing the A's, certainly ruining Tuesday night's game, opening night of the team's "Are We For Real?" 10-game East Coast tour.

Oakland lost to the Orioles 5-1, falling victim to the old unwritten baseball rule: Even the worst team in baseball can't lose 'em all.

And so the A's will spend at least one more day wondering if they can play baseball on the road, where they are 5-14 and have lost six in a row. They slipped back to .500 overall (23-23).

Dallas "Mr. Perfect" Braden came out of the game after four innings and 62 pitches because of a sprained ankle he likened to a paper cut. It was a 1-1 game when he was removed. Braden probably won't miss his next turn.

Coco Crisp was a late scratch from the starting lineup and probably is headed to the disabled list again with a rib-cage injury that might have been caused by a cough. It's somewhat similar to the rib injury that sent catcher Kurt Suzuki to the DL a month ago. Crisp missed most of the season's first two months with a broken pinkie, another killer paper cut.

A frustrated Braden said his sprained left ankle, which he has been keeping on the down-low, "has been a lingering issue, like a paper cut."

Flash back to Mother's Day. Perfect game. The A's then traveled to Texas, where Braden, running stadium steps for conditioning, mis-hit a step, slipped, sprained an ankle and gashed a knee.

That's what he gets for trying to stay in shape.

Braden lost his next two starts, but pitched effectively. On Tuesday, he gave up only one run in his four innings, but walked two Orioles in the fourth, very unlike him.

Pitching coach Curt Young asked Braden how he felt and, "I was honest, I told him it wasn't so hot."

Braden's next scheduled start, Sunday in Detroit?

"See you in five days," Braden said.

Not so fast with Crisp. He's supposed to be the A's leadoff man, and without him the team has suffered, with a below .300 on-base percentage from its leadoff spot. On Tuesday, leadoff hitter Cliff Pennington went 0-for-5, three times leading off an inning, and is batting .164 over the last 19 games.

No leadoff, and no power - seven games without an A's home run.

The road trip and the game that started in gorgeous weather (76 degrees, tiny breeze) in the still-gorgeous Camden Yards ended with an invisible dark cloud hovering over the visiting clubhouse and with manager Bob Geren keeping his office door closed long after the game, possibly making calls to find tourniquets for the paper cuts.

You talk about your momentum killers, your team mood swings. Sunday afternoon, party. Tuesday evening, the opposite of party.

So many elements seemed to be falling into place for the A's, the team starting to look like it was built to look. Crisp was back, Suzuki was back, Mark Ellis was back, Jack Cust was back, Brett Anderson was on his way back from the DL, Gio Gonzalez and Ben Sheets were looking strong ...

Now: Nine games to go, so much to prove.

A's beat

Hurting Crisp expects to go back on DL

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer

Coco Crisp was a late scratch from the starting lineup Tuesday, with lingering pain from a pulled intercostal (rib cage) muscle. Crisp said after the game it's likely he'll go on the 15-day disabled list, retroactive to Sunday.

Crisp hit in the indoor cage Monday and took regular batting practice to test the injury that kept him out of the previous game. A's manager **Bob Geren** talked with Crisp after BP, wrote him into the starting lineup, leading off, then scratched him shortly before game time when Crisp reported sharp pain and shortness of breath.

Crisp missed the first 42 games of the season, played two, then tweaked the rib, possibly by coughing too hard.

Winners attract stars: **Brad Ziegler** dropped by the A's ballpark Monday, before the team flight east, to do some throwing, and ran into **Brad Pitt**. Pitt will play **Billy Beane** in the movie based on the book "Moneyball." The pitcher and the actor were introduced and chatted about Springfield, Mo.

"He's from Springfield, and that's where I went to college," Ziegler said.

Beane was in the clubhouse, too. Ziegler could tell them apart because Pitt has a tiny mole on his neck.

Trivia quiz: Who will play Ziegler in the movie, since he was drafted by the A's in 2000, the "Moneyball" season? Nobody. The A's didn't sign him until two years later, as a free agent.

Ziegler got Pitt's autograph on a baseball, adding to his collection. Other gems: **Garth Brooks, Dick Vitale, Ted Williams** (purchased at an auction).

Anderson's return: **Brett Anderson** was due to arrive in Baltimore on Tuesday evening or today. He will pitch a bullpen session today and, barring complications, will start Saturday in Detroit. Anderson went on the 15-day DL April 27 (retroactive to the 25th) with a left medial forearm strain.

He threw 60 pitches Monday in a Triple-A (Sacramento) rehab assignment. Geren said if Anderson goes Saturday, the normal progression would limit him to 75 to 80 pitches.

Don't count out Giants - or A's - yet

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Not long ago, it was reasonable to glance at the National League West and declare:

Why *not* the Giants?

After all, a broken pitching staff was supposed to bury the Dodgers, and the Padres were supposed to pinch themselves and fall to earth. Well, the Dodgers' ERA is the best in the majors since May 9, and the Padres remain in the clouds, still playing like they're for real behind the league's best pitching.

Jeff Francis is back with the Rockies, who began their ascension under Jim Tracy about this time last year, and even the Diamondbacks are in it.

Though the back-to-square-one Giants have morphed into the 2009 Giants (all pitch, little hit), are they destined to finish closer to first or last?

Amazing what one weekend at the Coliseum does for momentum. Though the A's sweep was a small sample size, it was a reminder that the Giants' lack of youth and speed can continue to expose them and make them vulnerable to slumps, especially if Pablo Sandoval isn't hitting.

On the contrary, while glancing at the American League West, which is just as wide open with no team showing enough firepower to break from the pack, it's now reasonable to declare:

Why *not* the A's?

After all, the Angels have surrendered the most hits and runs in the league and issued the most walks, and the Brian Fuentes-led bullpen has been an embarrassment, a far cry from those 2002 World Series relievers. The Rangers await the Texas heat that has wilted many a pitching staff and the team's bankruptcy/pending sale that might affect how it approaches the trade deadline.

The Mariners are dysfunctional and an offensive nightmare, so the A's aren't hurting any more than any other division foe, especially with Ben Sheets pitching better and Brett Anderson back soon.

Like the Giants, the A's have the third-best ERA in their league. The Giants are 24th in the majors in runs scored, the A's 25th. But the A's lineup is younger and more athletic, which could make a difference in a long season - if they ever learn how to win on the road.

Any way you glance at it, the good news for both teams is they play in the West.

A's leading off

Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle

Managing expectations: The Orioles' manager is named Dave, and his perch is ... Trembley. His team is floundering, reeling from injuries, he could get the ax any day. His successor will take the wheel of the Titanic, post-iceberg.

A's experience tough night in Baltimore

Braden leaves after four, winning streak snapped at three

By Pete Kerzel / MLB.com

BALTIMORE -- Dallas Braden exited after only four innings in Tuesday night's start because of lingering pain in a left ankle he sprained two weeks ago working out between starts in Texas. The left-hander didn't get a decision in the A's 5-1 loss to the Orioles, but said he'll make his next start.

Center fielder Coco Crisp wishes he were that lucky. Crisp, who came off the disabled list Friday said he is likely headed back to the DL with a strained right intercostal muscle, an injury that occurred over the weekend that didn't respond as quickly to treatment as he had hoped.

Two injuries -- one with more lasting effects than the other -- put a damper on a frustrating night at Camden Yards, in which the A's saw their three-game winning streak halted as they were unable to convert multiple opportunities against O's right-hander Jeremy Guthrie. Oakland also fell to 5-14 on the road this season.

"We just didn't get the job done. We just didn't get them in," said A's outfielder Ryan Sweeney. "A couple times we had some leadoff guys on. Sometimes that happens. [Guthrie] got out of it. We just didn't get the key hits when we needed them."

The A's came up empty against Guthrie despite forcing him to throw 113 pitches in six innings. Oakland had a hit in every inning, three times getting the leadoff batter on via hit or walk, but Guthrie wiggled out of trouble.

"We grinded out some at-bats, we got in some deep counts, we got runners on. [Guthrie] threw a very large amount of pitches in a very short time. ... The hitters did their job today grinding out some at-bats, we just didn't get the big hit today with runners in scoring position," manager Bob Geren said.

Baltimore caught a break when Braden departed after throwing only 62 pitches and the game tied at 1. He allowed an unearned run on three hits, walked two and struck out four. But the lingering ankle soreness from a misstep while running steps that cropped up during his pregame warmups, started to get to the left-hander -- at least in the eyes of Geren and pitching coach Curt Young.

That led to a one-sided conversation in the dugout. Braden pleaded his case in vain and Geren stood by his decision to remove his starter in favor of Tyson Ross, who started the fifth inning.

"It's something that's been there, it's been a lingering issue -- like a paper cut," Braden said, adding that the problem wouldn't cause him to miss a start.

"See you in five days," Braden told reporters.

Geren thought it was prudent to take the conservative approach with Braden, no matter how much he wanted to stay in the game.

"It got to the point I had to make a decision where I felt like the way he was throwing, he wasn't going to help the team as much the next inning as normal, or risk any further [injury], so I just took him out," Geren explained.

The Orioles tried a patient approach with Braden and it paid off, according to Baltimore's Nick Markakis.

"We know what he has, he's not a power pitcher, he mixes up speeds, he hits his spots -- that's what [Braden] lives on," Markakis said. "And if you make him work, make him come to you and throw strikes, good things happen. I think we had some good at-bats, good approaches off him and it showed early."

Mark Ellis's run-scoring groundout put Oakland up 1-0 in the second. Jack Cust drew a leadoff walk, moved to third on Gabe Gross' one-out double and scored on Ellis' bouncer to second.

Both Orioles' rallies started on successive walks at the start of an inning.

In the fourth, Braden walked Markakis and Miguel Tejada, and got a break when Ty Wigginton hit a fielder's choice to the pitcher, with Braden throwing Markakis out at third. But Oakland's first error in seven games tied the game. With one out and runners on first and second, the A's attempt for a 3-6-3 double play on Adam Jones' ground ball went awry when shortstop Cliff Pennington's relay sailed wide of first, a run scoring on the errant throw.

Ross' wildness helped Orioles go ahead 3-1 in the sixth. Ross (1-3) walked Markakis and Tejada to start the inning, then moved them up with a wild pitch. Successive sacrifice flies to right field by Wigginton and Jones made it 3-1.

Reliever Craig Breslow yielded a solo homer by Markakis and an RBI double by Matt Wieters in the eighth.

Guthrie (3-4) checked the A's on six hits over six innings. The right-hander allowed one run, walked three and fanned two.

Braden leaves start with ankle injury

Left-hander lasted only four innings in loss to O's

By Pete Kerzel / Special to MLB.com

BALTIMORE -- Oakland left-hander Dallas Braden left Tuesday's game against the Orioles after four innings with a tender left ankle.

Braden said he's been pitching with the sore ankle after spraining it in Texas, following his perfect game against the Rays on May 9. The injury occurred when he was running steps as part of his between-starts training regimen.

"It's something we've been taking care of for the past couple of weeks. I don't know if it was the plane flight, swelling up in the air, but coming down it wasn't the same as it's been," Braden said, following Tuesday's 5-1 loss to the Orioles.

Braden said manager Bob Geren and pitching coach Curt Young saw him favoring the ankle and figured the injury was the reason the left-hander was up in the zone with some of his pitches. Young threw 36 of his 62 pitches for strikes.

"A lot of three-ball counts and they asked me how it felt. I was honest and told them it didn't feel too hot," Braden said. "We just figured it was probably the right move."

Geren said the ankle bothered Braden while warming up and that his discomfort increased the deeper he got into the game.

"It got to the point where I felt he was hopping around on it. His delivery looked different. He uncharacteristically walked a couple of guys back to back [in the fourth], he bounced off [the mound] on the [bunt] play to third and you could see it wasn't going to get any better."

Braden said he expects to make his next scheduled start.

"See you in five days," he said.

The four-inning stint matches an April 28 outing at Tampa Bay for Braden's shortest of the season. Braden allowed an unearned run on three hits, walked two and struck out four.

Crisp says he's headed back to DL

Outfielder suffering from strained chest muscle

By Pete Kerzel / Special to MLB.com

BALTIMORE -- Coco Crisp's sore side muscle didn't pass muster in pregame batting practice, and A's manager Bob Geren held the center fielder out of the lineup for Tuesday's opener of a three-game series at Camden Yards.

The center fielder said after Tuesday's loss that he expected to return to the DL on Wednesday, courtesy of a strained muscle in his right chest that just hasn't responded to treatment.

Crisp just came off the DL Friday, but then suffered a strained right intercostal muscle over the weekend that hasn't responded as quickly to treatment as he had hoped.

"It's kind of a bad stroke of luck here," said Crisp, who originally went on the DL April 3 with a fractured left pinky.

Crisp took pregame treatment Tuesday, hit inside and outdoors and seemed to make solid contact. But the injury continued to trouble him when he ran, threw and hit, sometimes causing him to have trouble catching his breath.

"With the progression of pain throughout the course of the day, I guess we felt collectively that it would be better to not have this thing worsen and then be out an extended period of time later in the season and battling through until then. Just let it go away, let the troubles pass and come back as healthy as possible."

Geren said a decision on whether to put Crisp on the DL hasn't been made, but that it was a possibility.

Crisp's capability to ignite an offense was definitely missed, and the A's had trouble manufacturing runs.

Before batting practice, both player and manager were tight-lipped when asked whether Crisp was available. Crisp hit in the indoor tunnel, but when approached after the session, said, "I'm not prepared to talk to you about that at this time."

When Geren met with reporters, he acknowledged that he had made out two lineups -- one with Crisp, one without -- and would post his batting order after Crisp took his cuts against live pitching outdoors.

"He's going to try to take BP here and we'll see how he feels," Geren said. "We'll decide on a lineup after he hits. He'll hit in the first group [so] we'll know pretty soon."

Crisp appeared to swing without any obvious discomfort, spraying line drives over the field, but he sat out for a second straight game. Cliff Pennington hit leadoff and played shortstop.

Patterson vs. Patterson at Camden Yards

BALTIMORE -- Eric Patterson popped out of the A's dugout Tuesday afternoon and spied his brother, Orioles outfielder Corey Patterson, jogging around third base during batting practice.

"Take your baseball seriously," Eric Patterson yelled at his older brother, clearly relishing an opportunity to renew their sibling rivalry at the Major League level.

This isn't the first time the Patterson brothers have played against one another. It last happened April 17, 2008, when both appeared as pinch-hitters, Corey for Cincinnati and Eric for the Chicago Cubs. When Corey was with the Reds in 2008, it happened when Eric was called up to the Cubs from Triple-A before being dealt to Oakland on July 8. Last year, both were in Triple-A, meeting when Oakland affiliate Sacramento battled Nashville, the Milwaukee farm club for which Corey played.

Eric frequently searches the Internet while unwinding after games, and was delighted to hear that Corey was called up to Baltimore on May 12. The two had dinner Monday night after the A's arrived in town.

"It's fun. Obviously, both of us playing baseball, we don't get to see each other a lot during the year. It's nice to spend a little time, catch up. ... It's not like I even get to see him on TV a lot," Eric said.

Have the brothers, who rely on cell phone conversations and text messaging to communicate during the season, put a friendly wager on this week's three-game series?

"No, we're both pretty low key when it comes to stuff like that," Eric said. "I just enjoy spending time with him, getting to hang out with him."

Anderson set for bullpen session

BALTIMORE -- Left-hander Brett Anderson, fresh off a rehabilitation start for Triple-A Sacramento on Monday night, will rejoin the A's on Wednesday. From there, Anderson will throw a bullpen session and a determination will then be made if he can be activated from the 15-day disabled list.

"We'll see how that goes. We'll have more news after that [when] we see where he's at," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Anderson, who is 1-1 with a 2.345 ERA in four starts, has been on the disabled list since April 25 with left elbow inflammation and a left forearm strain. He worked three innings Monday against Nashville, allowing two runs on six hits, walking one and striking out one.

The A's have not announced a starting pitcher for Saturday at Detroit and Geren said it was "a possibility" Anderson could get the assignment if he gets through Wednesday's bullpen session without any discomfort.

"He threw well last night, said he felt good. ... He was a little bit rusty, but physically he felt fine," Geren said.

Cust feeling under the weather

BALTIMORE -- Jack Cust was in the A's lineup Tuesday night despite battling the same flu-like symptoms that have been making the rounds of the Oakland clubhouse.

When a visitor extended his hand to Cust in the A's clubhouse, Cust quickly explained that he hasn't felt well since arriving in Baltimore.

"Guys here have been sick here for weeks, and I usually don't get sick during the season," Cust said. "I was feeling sick on the plane [to Baltimore]. It was a long trip, I got off the plane and I felt like somebody had hit me on the head with a hammer or something."

Geren said the bug has almost run its course. Cust served as the designated hitter and batted fifth.

"We have a few guys, but everybody's pretty healthy," Geren said. "All you can do is wash your hands and the normal things you can do to combat the flu. It went around, but it hasn't been a major problem."

Who've been the best drafters of the decade?

A's, D-backs, Red Sox, Nats and Phils have fared well

By Jonathan Mayo / MLB.com

What makes for a good Draft? And which teams have had the most success over the years at being successful via this annual means of bringing talent into a system? MLB.com has tried to figure that out, at least as it pertains to the decade that was. From 2000-09, which clubs have been the most productive with their June selections?

Before answering that question, something much more basic needs to be addressed: What is the definition of Draft success? Is it the number of big leaguers produced? Could it be the number of All-Stars, Most Valuable Players or Cy Young Award winners? Is it the accumulation of stats? All of those things are taken into account in this study.

"It's a loaded question," said scouting director Tom Allison, whose Arizona Diamondbacks rank highly across many of the measurements used. "You can go through the Draft when Albert Pujols was drafted (1999) and not have an idea of who went before him. But the impact he's had at the Major League level is, 'wow.'"

Point made. In some ways, Pujols is an aberration as a 13th-rounder to have that kind of "wow" impact. Of course, that would be reflected in the statistical analysis, were 1999 included in this study. One player like Pujols can do a whole lot on his own to make a team's draft success that much greater, even by the numbers.

"You're trying to get guys that are going to be every-day guys at the Major-League level," Allison continued. "If you get impact players into your system and continually have a pipeline of players coming through, then you have had successful drafts.

"There are so many different definitions," Oakland A's scouting director Eric Kubota said. "I like to think it's the number of big-leaguers you produce. It's probably between big leaguers and number of impact players you produce."

Award-winning Drafters

Below is a look at the number of major awards (MVP, Cy Young, All-Star, Rookie of the Year, Gold Glove, Silver Slugger) won by players drafted by each of the 30 teams over the past decade.

	MVP	CY	AS	ROY	GG	SS	TOT
WAS	0	1	9	1	3	3	17
BOS	1	0	11	1	2	1	17
PHI	1	0	7	1	1	5	15
ARI	0	1	7	0	0	2	10
MIL	0	0	6	1	0	3	10
NYM	0	0	6	0	2	2	10
ATL	0	0	4	0	2	3	9
LAD	0	0	5	0	2	2	9
MIN	1	0	3	0	2	3	9
TEX	0	0	3	0	3	3	9
CHC	0	0	4	2	0	0	6
FLA	0	0	3	1	2	0	6
SF	0	2	4	0	0	0	6
STL	0	0	4	0	2	0	6
OAK	0	0	1	3	0	1	5
TB	0	0	2	1	1	1	5
DET	0	0	3	1	0	0	4
LAA	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
PIT	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
TOR	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
HOU	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
KC	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
SEA	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
CWS	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
COL	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
SD	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
BAL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CIN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Below is a look at the number of major awards (MVP, Cy Young, All-Star, Rookie of the Year, Gold Glove, Silver Slugger) won by players drafted by each of the 30 teams over the past decade.

	MVP	CY	AS	ROY	GG	SS	TOT
CLE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NYY	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2	5	95	12	24	31	170

Let's start, then, by looking at the stats and what they say about how many big-leaguers have been produced via the Draft in 2000-2009. If the key is to produce every-day Major League players, or at least ones that go on to lengthier careers, then perhaps the best indices should be things like games played, innings pitched and at-bats.

The Diamondbacks and A's have done extremely well in those categories, both for hitters and pitchers. Oakland ranks second among Major League teams in games and innings pitched and third in games and plate appearances. Arizona places third in games and innings pitched while topping all 30 clubs in plate appearances and finishing second in games for hitters.

Looking at these numbers can definitely help point to an organization's strengths and/or weaknesses. Case in point: the San Francisco Giants. The Giants, typically, are known for drafting and developing pitching, starting with Boof Bonser and Noah Lowry in 2000 and 2001 and working up to stars like Matt Cain (2002) and Tim Lincecum (2006), with many others in between. So it comes as no surprise that San Francisco finishes first not only in games and innings pitched, but also in wins and strikeouts, while finishing third in saves and fourth in ERA.

Conversely, the Giants have not done nearly as well finding bats via the Draft. As a result, they're near the bottom in plate-appearances and nearly every offensive category.

The Brewers are almost the polar opposite. Just looking at the 25-man roster says it all: Fielder, Braun, Weeks, Hart, even the since-traded J.J. Hardy. Milwaukee, as a result, is in the top six in nearly every offensive category. As for pitching, it's kind of like Giants hitters. The Brewers are near the bottom in just about every statistical category examined. The Brewers are joined in this extreme by the Colorado Rockies: Great with hitters, not so good at finding arms via the Draft.

Taking seven pitching (G, IP, W, SV, ERA, K, WHIP) and hitting (PA, G, R, TB, RBI, SB, OPS) categories, ranking the teams in each and coming up with a total score, the top four teams would be: Oakland, Arizona, Boston and Washington (see chart below for complete rankings).

The Red Sox join the A's and Diamondbacks as scoring fairly well across the board. But how did the Nationals (Nationals/Expos, to be precise) get in there? Stats were considered for any player drafted by a team, whether that player accrued those stats for the team that drafted him or another. So Washington/Montreal gets credit for the Cliff Lees and Grady Sizemores of the world.

"It's hard to judge a [team] by active, cumulative stats," Kubota said. "I don't think every team approaches the Draft in the same way. If you're looking for guys who are getting to the big leagues quickly, you're understanding you're not going to have as much impact when you do that."

It's a valid point, one that makes it necessary to move beyond just the sheer numbers. An interesting debate could occur over just what defines someone as being an "impact player." For the sake of this examination, the major awards are a good place to start, though it should be pointed out that the value of players who win major awards would likely be borne out in statistics as well.

How many MVPs, Cy Young Award winners, Rookies of the Year, Gold Glove recipients, Silver Slugger honorees, Relievers of the Year and overall All-Stars have come from the 2000-09 Drafts? Not nearly as many as one might think. There have been just three MVPs drafted in the past decade: The Phillies' Ryan Howard (2001, fifth round), Dustin Pedroia of the Red Sox (2004, second round) and the Twins' Joe Mauer (2001, No. 1 overall pick).

Five Cy Young Award winners rose through the ranks from those Drafts, and two of those awards belong to one guy, Tim Lincecum (Cliff Lee, Brandon Webb and Zack Greinke are the others). There have been a dozen Rookies of the Year from those classes (Oakland leads the way with three: Bobby Crosby, Andrew Bailey and Huston Street), 95 All-Star appearances, 24 Gold Gloves, 31 Silver Slugger Awards and one Reliever of the Year.

Once again, it's the Nationals who find themselves atop the list, with 17 total pieces of "hardware." Ryan Zimmerman's All-Star appearance, Silver Slugger and Gold Glove, along with Chad Cordero's All-Star nod are the only ones who contributed with a Washington uniform on. The rest came from Lee, Sizemore and Jason Bay. The Red Sox and Diamondbacks rank high on this list as well, making it awfully difficult to keep them off a short list of top drafters for the decade.

Kubota's point about quick-to-the-big-leagues drafting limiting the number of impact players seems to have some validity. For much of the decade, the A's have been a very college-heavy team in the Draft. As a result, they've gotten many players

up to the Majors but have just the three Rookies of the Year, one All-Star (Bailey) and one Silver Slugger (Andre Ethier, with the Dodgers) from the 10 years of drafting. There also is some pragmatism that comes into play.

"If you keep shooting for that [impact] guy, by the time you produce that guy, it might be for a different scouting director or GM," Kubota said. "You need some semi-immediate return from it."

"It's probably a successful Draft determined by what your owner or GM thinks is a successful Draft. Every team has a different approach to the Draft. As long as you're succeeding within the plan, that's successful. That's dependent on what the plan is."

To be fair, looking at only big league stats and awards would make for an incomplete survey, since many of the past decade's draftees are still making their way up through the Minor Leagues and establishing themselves as big leaguers. By no means exhaustive, a look at the Top 50 prospects entering the season can shed some light on this decade of draftees' futures. A total of 40 out of this year's 50 hail from the Draft classes of 2000-09. The Tampa Bay Rays, for instance, are in the middle of the rankings for stats and awards, but they have four recent draftees in the Top 50. The Kansas City Royals, similarly, don't measure up that well based on those first two indices, but also have four recent Draft selections on the Top 50 list.

All of this, of course, comes with the very big caveat that anyone in the scouting industry will bring up: The Draft isn't exactly a no-risk endeavor. Quite the contrary.

Baseball America's Jim Callis did a study back in 2003, looking at players who signed in the first 10 rounds of the 1990-97 Drafts. His findings were that only eight percent went on to become big league regulars or better. And that's just the first 10 rounds. In other words, the definition of success is very much altered by just how tough it is to draft, sign and develop quality Major League players.











Allison points this out with a bit of trivia he heard recently: Since the Draft began back in 1965, how many pitchers (who signed) went on to throw 162 innings or more in a season? How many pitchers compiled enough innings to qualify for an ERA title? Allison said he couldn't confirm it, but that the answer he was given was seven. Seven out of the hundreds of pitchers taken each year.

So things like big-time statistics and awards are nice, but the truth is that they are very hard to come by.

"Everyone's excited [about the Draft], but there are still some realities," Allison said.

draft productivity

Below is a look at the top 10 teams in terms of the stats accumulated by players they drafted in the past decade -- 30 points awarded for being at the top of a given statistical category, down to one point for being at the bottom.

	PA	G	R	TB	RBI	SB	OPS	G	IP	W	S	ERA	K	WHIP	TOT		
	28	28	28	28	28	15	15	170	29	29	29	29	23	29	27	195	365
	30	29	29	30	29	19	21	187	28	27	27	16	25	27	16	166	353
	26	26	27	26	24	26	23	178	26	15	12	30	30	17	25	155	333
	21	19	22	22	22	27	29	162	20	23	21	26	19	21	23	153	315
	27	27	25	27	27	9	20	162	25	21	24	12	13	22	11	128	290
	20	21	21	19	16	29	8	134	22	26	26	25	16	26	14	155	289
	23	22	24	24	26	18	26	163	18	16	15	22	18	14	18	121	284
	19	20	18	17	18	22	16	130	21	18	19	24	29	20	15	146	276
	16	12	19	20	21	25	30	143	6	17	18	15	26	16	30	128	271
	24	25	23	23	23	30	14	162	16	22	20	6	7	23	12	106	268

Tuesday Inbox: Release Chavez?

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 5/25/3010

Because the busy season doesn't allow for a weekly Inbox appearance on the A's site, I've decided to start taking time out of each day to answer one or two of your questions regarding all things green and gold right here. Dozens of questions about the A's fill my mailbox each week, so make sure you stop by daily to see if yours is one of the chosen. If it's not, it's probably because of one of the following reasons:

- You want to know about the "stadium issue," as it is usually referred to in most of the e-mails I get. I assure you that, at the moment, there are no updates on a potential new A's stadium. When I hear of anything, I'll let ya know.
- Your only goal is to get me to join you in bashing a player whom you think Billy Beane should rid of ASAP. Sorry, folks. You're on your own.
- You're asking about an injury update or other news tidbit of which I've already addressed in a story on the A's site. Basically, if I've already answered the question somewhere else, chances are you won't find it here.
- Otherwise, have at it. And please feel free to pass along any non-baseball but, rather, human interest-type questions you may have regarding Daric Barton's favorite food or Kurt Suzuki's biggest pet peeve. If I don't know the answer, I'll do my best to find it. Onto the Inbox, May 25 edition:

Do you think the A's might release Eric Chavez at some point this season, as they did last year with Jason Giambi? I don't see him playing again.

-- Vernon S., Piedmont, Calif.

I have to admit that I considered this same scenario the day Eric was sent to the DL, but after thinking it over I quickly realized that the chances of the club releasing him are very slim. Eric has represented the epitome of a team player from day one. He's made the commitment to himself and the team to recover from injuries that would have easily sent most players into retirement, and he's also played hurt without any fuss. It's easy to assume he's spent his final days on the field, but Eric says he's not done. He clarified this week via text that he plans on playing again, "if and when" he's healthy. Eric has done everything his body has been willing to allow him to do in an effort to uphold his \$66 million contract. He's a franchise player, not to mention one who has a strong relationship with Mr. Beane, so the only way Eric is released is if he asks to be. But don't go holding your breath on that one. I think that by being back on the field again this year and surrounding himself with his teammates again made Eric truly realize how much he loves the game and this club, and how he's not going to let injuries take away his career that easily. He's truly dedicated to helping this team win, so we can only hope his body gives him the chance to do so. Cutting him would prove costly, much more so than it did with Giambi last summer. So even though his production was down upon the time of his DL move and his body has turned mightily fragile, I don't see the A's releasing him.

To submit your Inbox question, please follow this link. Also, don't forget to follow me on Twitter for timely A's updates. I'm not with the team in Baltimore for the next three days, but I'll be back on the beat in Detroit when the club starts a four-game set Friday

Orioles defeat Athletics 5-1

AP Sports Writer

BALTIMORE -- Ty Wigginton and Adam Jones delivered successive sacrifice flies in the sixth inning, and the Baltimore Orioles got a home run from Nick Markakis in a 5-1 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday night.

Jeremy Guthrie (3-4) gave up one run and six hits in six innings for the Orioles, who took a 3-1 lead without benefit of a hit.

Baltimore's first run came on a throwing error, and the run-scoring fly balls in the sixth followed two straight walks and a wild pitch by Tyson Ross (1-3).

Markakis hit a solo homer off Michael Wuertz in the eighth, and Matt Wieters added an RBI double.

Oakland starter Dallas Braden left after allowing an unearned run and three hits in four innings. In explaining why the left-hander was pulled after only 62 pitches, the Athletics called it "a manager's decision" and would not elaborate.

Braden departed with the score tied at 1. He is winless in three starts since throwing a perfect game against Tampa Bay on May 9.

The defeat ended Oakland's three-game winning streak, fashioned with an interleague sweep of San Francisco in which the A's outscored the Giants 10-1.

Oakland had won 13 of its last 15 games against the Orioles and were 15-4 in their previous 19 games at Camden Yards.

After Guthrie threw 113 pitches, the injury-depleted Baltimore bullpen made the lead stand up. Mark Hendrickson pitched two innings and Will Ohman worked the ninth.

Before the game, the Orioles put closer Alfredo Simon and setup man Koji Uehara on the 15-day disabled list.

Oakland took a 1-0 lead in the second inning when Jack Cust walked, took third on a double by Gabe Gross and scored on a groundout by Mark Ellis.

Baltimore ended Oakland's string of consecutive shutout innings at 23 with an unearned run in the fourth after Braden walked the first two batters. Trying to complete an inning-ending double play, shortstop Cliff Pennington threw wildly to first base, allowing Miguel Tejada to score from third.

Braden rebounded to strike out Wieters, but that would be the last batter he faced.

NOTES: Oakland failed to hit a home run in a seventh consecutive game, the team's longest such streak since a nine-game run in 1983. ... Orioles DH Luke Scott was scratched with a strained shoulder. He was replaced by slumping Garrett Atkins, who broke an 0-for-18 skid with a seventh-inning single. ... Oakland OF Coco Crisp was also a late scratch, due to a strained chest muscle. It was the second straight game he missed. ... Athletics LHP Brett Anderson (left elbow) will throw a bullpen session in Baltimore, Oakland manager Bob Geren said. If all goes well, Anderson could come off the DL and start Saturday in Detroit. ... Baltimore OF Corey Patterson and his brother Eric, an Oakland OF, played in the same game for the first time since April 17, 2008.

Gunnar Sandberg, strike two

Harold Abend, Special to ESPN RISE

05/25/10 - Looking pretty good and feeling quite chipper for a 16-year-old facing another major skull surgery in two days, Gunnar Sandberg was in perfect form.

Two weeks ago, Sandberg smoked the opening pitch down the middle prior to a Marin Catholic (Kentfield, Calif.) versus Justin-Siena (Napa, Calif.) game May 6 at AT&T Park in San Francisco. On that day, the Giants hosted a benefit for Gunnar. About 2,000 fans attended.

There was a sellout crowd of 35,067 fans in attendance when Sandberg took the mound again. That came prior to the Athletics' interleague game against the Giants on May 23 at the Oakland Coliseum.

Once again, this time to a thundering roar, Sandberg tossed one right over the plate and into the glove of Zac Byers. Byers was De La Salle (Concord, Calif) player whose metal bat sent a pitch zipping back at Sandberg on March 11. The ball crushed Gunnar's skull and caused a brain injury.

Prior to the ceremonial first pitch, Sandberg and the entire Marin Catholic baseball team, including coach Mike Firenzi, plus Byers and De La Salle coach Rick Steen were part of an hour-long series of on-field festivities.

Even before that, the A's rolled out the red carpet for the young man, giving him a grand tour of the clubhouse.

The tour included meeting many players, getting autographs and photos, including one with Dallas Braden, the A's pitcher who recently threw a perfect game. Braden, too, had adversity in his youth.

The on-field extravaganza started with autograph seekers leaning over the rail and holding out items for Gunnar to sign as he came out of the tunnel from the clubhouse.

Martine Riggan of Walnut Creek, Calif., had him sign a ticket.

"When I'm old, I want to remember you and how you're fighting through this. It's a blessing," she told Sandberg as he signed.

Pitchers Andrew Bailey of the A's and Barry Zito of the Giants presented Sandberg with a plaque and an autographed wooden bat.

Athletics pitcher Brad Ziegler, himself the victim of a fractured skull off a batted ball, posed for pictures with Gunnar and offered words of encouragement.

"I told him that as long as the doctors say its okay, he shouldn't let this hinder his dream of playing again," said Ziegler, who was struck in the temple in a 2004 minor-league playoff game, spent six nights in ICU and initially was advised not to pitch again. "If it hinders him, he should find another dream and make it come true."

After the ceremonial pitch, Sandberg and Byers hugged near home plate where Sandberg remained to take part in the pre-game meeting at the dish between the umpires and managers.

"It feels really great to see all these people who are here supporting me, but it's a little overwhelming," said Sandberg from under the helmet he has to wear until after the surgery May 25.

His father, Bjorn, added: "What's been unreal is the support we've gotten from the community. The A's and the Giants, the dinners and other fundraisers that we didn't know anything about.

"We were hunkered down in the hospital and people just came up with stuff. It's all because of an outpouring of the community."

The fundraisers started with people in the Marin Catholic community establishing the Gunnar Sandberg Fund at the Bank of Marin.

The latest effort by the Athletics to assist with the cost of Gunnar's medical expenses and rehabilitation consisted of a five-dollar donation to the fund for every field-level seat sold through the A's web link.

"Over \$1,000 was raised through the special ticket fundraiser for the Gunnar Sandberg Fund," Oakland Athletics' Player and Media Relation Manager Kristy Fick said. "There was also money raised through fan donations collected at tables throughout the concourse of the Coliseum and we're waiting for that total."

Because Gunnar is a confessed Giants fan, about the only thing that didn't go right was his heroes' hitting. San Francisco continued its anemic hitting and lost, 3-0, to the hosts, who swept the three-game series.

Sandberg's Marin Catholic team now moves to the North Coast Section Division IV playoffs where the 14-11 Wildcats open May 25 on the road at Middletown (Middletown, Calif.).

A's historian

Tom Mahon, philly.com, 5/25/2010

WHEN ROBIN ROBERTS died a little over 2 weeks ago, people naturally wondered how many of the Whiz Kids are still with us.

The answer: Six (pitchers Curt Simmons, Paul Stuffer and Bob Miller, catcher Stan Lopata, infielder Putsy Caballero and outfielder Jackie Mayo).

But how many people know the number of Philadelphia A's players who are still alive?

The answer: At least one, Ted Taylor, who said that 48 Philadelphia A's are still around.

When it comes to the old Athletics, Taylor is the man.

Daily News readers may remember that Taylor wrote a baseball memorabilia column for the People Paper for 12 years. Now, he's written "The Ultimate Philadelphia Athletics Reference Book 1901-1954," a labor of love that has Father's Day gift written all over it.

The book even has a father-son anecdote, recalling that when A's manager Connie Mack stepped down in 1950 it was expected his son Earle, who had been his longtime assistant, would take over.

"But Connie said his son was too old and he named Jimmie Dykes the manager instead," Taylor said with a laugh.

At the time, Connie was 87, Earle was 60.

The book lists the bios of every player, coach and manager of the Athletics, more than 12,000 in all. Included is Taylor's idol, Hank Majeski.

"He was my favorite player because my real name is Henry, and when you're 8 or 9 years old you root for a player with the same name as you. So I liked Majeski, followed by Ferris Fain and Bobby Shantz."

Among the stories are some real gems.

The most unusual?

"Earle Mack once made a pitching change," said Taylor. "He looked over in the bullpen and saw Les McCrabb throwing so he put him in the game. The only problem was that McCrabb was a coach - really just a guy who threw batting practice. He hadn't pitched since 1942 and he wasn't even on the roster. They did stuff like that back in those days."

The book is available on amazon.com, barnesandnoble.com and several area locations, including the Philadelphia Athletics Historical Society at 6 North York Road in Hatboro.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Nashville strikes early to topple River Cats

By Nick Hunte / Sacramento River Cats

Ray Olmedo hit a grand slam as part of a five-run Nashville second inning as the Sounds topped the Sacramento River Cats 8-1 at Raley Field on Tuesday night.

The River Cats struggled both on offense and defense with only five hits and four errors. It's the third game this season in which the River Cats have committed four errors.

Nashville put up runs early, with one in the first inning and five in the second. Designated hitter Erick Almonte hit an RBI line-drive single to right field in the top of the first to give the Sounds the early 1-0 lead. In the top of the second, shortstop Luis Cruz hit a one-run double to left field, which was followed by a grand slam to right field by Olmedo.

Nashville added a run in the fifth and sixth innings.

Sacramento's run came off an Eric Sogard walk that scored first baseman Chris Carter in the sixth inning. Corey Wimberly was hit by two pitches to reach base for the 22nd consecutive game.

River Cats right-hander Fernando Hernandez (0-4, 6.91 ERA) picked up his fourth loss of the season. In five innings, he gave up seven hits and seven runs (four of them earned) and threw three strikeouts.

Left-hander Chuck Lofgren (6-3, 4.67 ERA) picked up the win for Nashville. He gave up four hits, one run earned run and threw two strikeouts in 5.2 innings.

Wednesday will be the battle of left-handers as newly acquired free-agent John Halama (no record) will make his first start with the River Cats. He will go up against Nashville's Chase Wright (3-1, 3.77 ERA).

Return Home Can't End Cougars' Skid **Kane County losing streak hits 7 as homestand opens**

GENEVA, III. – After going 1-7 on an eight-game road trip, the Kane County Cougars returned home Tuesday night to battle the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, but their losing streak continued. Rob Gilliam pitched eight innings of three-run ball but couldn't get support, as the Cougars lost, 3-0, in front of 5,529 at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars have lost seven straight games, their longest skid since they lost seven in a row in '08.

Gilliam (3-3) tossed his team-high seventh quality start and lost one for the first time. He gave up a solo homer to Pete Fatse in the fifth and yielded two runs in the sixth. He scattered seven hits, walked none and fanned six in his second straight defeat. Max Peterson logged a 1-2-3 ninth in relief.

The Cougars' offense, which had 10 hits in a loss Monday night in Clinton, mustered just five hits and two walks. They stranded seven runners, including two in the third when they had runners at second and third with one out. Jake Odorizzi (2-1) tossed seven innings for the win, and Caleb Thielbar notched a two-inning save.

The Cougars (20-26) and Timber Rattlers (17-28) continue the three-game series Wednesday night at 6 CT. Ian Krol (2-2, 2.00) will face Eric Arnett (0-4, 8.57). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at **www.kccougars.com** with pregame coverage starting at 5:45 p.m.