

Oakland A's pitching staff can't hold on to early 4-0 lead

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Gio Gonzalez couldn't hang on to a sizable early lead, but he wasn't solely responsible for the A's 9-4 loss to the Boston Red Sox on Tuesday night.

Tyson Ross (1-4) paved the way for Boston's go-ahead rally by issuing two walks, and fellow relievers Craig Breslow and Michael Wuertz also allowed a combined four runs.

Indeed, there was no shortage of blame to pass around as the A's pitching staff, which has been front and center in the team's recent streak of good play, allowed 14 hits and nine walks in the opener of a three-game series at Fenway Park.

"As a staff, we just didn't do a good job tonight," Wuertz said.

The A's lost for just the third time in 11 games and fell back into a first-place tie with the Texas Rangers in the American League West.

Boston's Victor Martinez went 5 for 5 and became the first major league catcher to hit four doubles in a game since Cleveland's Sandy Alomar did it June 6, 1997, also at Fenway Park.

The A's have played some of the quickest games in the majors this season, but Tuesday's wasn't one of them. After the first pitch was delayed 20 minutes because of steady rain, the game played out at a leisurely 3 hours, 29 minutes.

Besides their shaky pitching, the A's also fell silent with the bats after jumping to a 4-0 lead against John Lackey. Daric Barton hit a two-run homer in the third, and the A's pelted Lackey for 12 hits over six innings.

But it was a bad omen when the A's loaded the bases with no outs in the fourth and couldn't bring a run home.

"Any time you have bases loaded, you don't want to leave them out there," Barton said. "That's a situation we have to capitalize on, obviously."

Lackey (6-3), the longtime Angels pitcher who was 16-4 with a 2.76 ERA against the A's entering the night, wound up collecting a win that appeared to be headed Gonzalez's way after the left-hander was staked to the 4-0 advantage.

Gonzalez struggled with his command, walking four in five innings, but he held Boston off the board through the first four frames.

Martinez doubled with one out in the fifth, and Kevin Youkilis singled. Then after Gonzalez struck out David Ortiz for the second time on the night, he hung a 1-0 curveball to Adrian Beltre, who blasted a three-run home run over the Green Monster to pull Boston within one.

"You get that second out, and you could almost taste that final out," Gonzalez said. "I let up a little bit and I kind of grooved one right there."

Ross relieved Gonzalez and walked two to lead off the sixth. Breslow came in and walked a batter to load the bases. He induced a 4-6-3 double play that tied the game, but Martinez then launched a ground-rule double to right-center that scored Darnell McDonald to give Boston the lead for good.

The A's need to get Ross back on track. The rookie right-hander has allowed four earned runs and four walks over his past two relief outings after making two starts.

Wuertz looked strong Monday against Detroit but allowed three hits and three earned runs in two-thirds of an inning Tuesday. It marked his first back-to-back outings since he came off the disabled list, and the right-hander said he's still building his endurance.

Oakland A's update: Outfielder Gabe Gross is making most of everyday opportunity

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Gross is making most of everyday opportunity

BOSTON — Regular playing time wasn't part of the bargain when Gabe Gross signed with the A's in the offseason.

But the veteran outfielder has started seven of the first eight games on this 10-game road trip and has made the most of it. Gross went 3 for 4 in Tuesday's 9-4 loss to the Boston Red Sox, making him 10 for 23 (.435) with three RBIs on the trip.

The defense he's played in left field has been enough to justify running him out there. Gross turned in yet another impressive play Tuesday with his running catch of J.D. Drew's fly ball in the second inning.

But his recent offense has also kept him in the lineup.

"He's done everything well," manager Bob Geren said before Tuesday's game. "He's played solid defense. "... You want to leave him in there."

The left-handed hitting Gross, batting .268 overall with one homer and seven RBIs, has been primarily a platoon player during his six years in the major leagues. He's never had more than 345 at-bats in any season, mostly because he's played little against lefties and struggled when he has.

Gross has started seven games against lefties this season though he's just 4 for 24 (.167).

"Any time somebody in my position plays multiple days in a row, it gives you more opportunity to settle in," Gross said.

Updates on the injury front:

Geren said Coco Crisp (strained rib cage muscle) has made improvement from his injury but didn't have a timetable for the outfielder to start baseball activity. Crisp began the season on the disabled list with a fractured pinkie finger. After being activated, he played two games before suffering the rib cage injury and returning to the DL on May 25.

Outfielder Travis Buck (strained right oblique), out since April 21, continues making incremental progress.

Reliever Joey Devine (right elbow) is throwing off the mound and reporting positive results. "He said he (recently) cut the ball loose the best that he had since spring training," Geren said.

Outfielder Rajai Davis notched his major league-leading 23rd stolen base in the third inning Tuesday. He's the second Athletic since 1995 to steal at least 20 bases before the All-Star break. Rickey Henderson had 37 in 1998.

Chin Music: Rainy weather at Fenway, but no delays yet

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, June 1, 2010 3:39PM

Different ballpark, same scenario as yesterday ... It's very overcast here at Fenway Park as the A's and Red Sox prepare to open a three-game series. The rain was coming down pretty hard just a few minutes ago. No delay has been announced yet, but we'll be lucky if this game gets played uninterrupted. For what it's worth, weather.com calls for an 85 percent chance of thunderstorms at game time, then a 40 percent chance by 9 p.m. The infield is covered right now, and neither team took batting practice on the field.

I'd think the uncertainty during bad weather has got to be tough for players, who are used to a set routine when they prepare for a game. Trevor Cahill, who waited out a nearly three-hour delay in Detroit yesterday before taking the mound, seems to have the perfect mentality to handle rain delays. He's pretty mellow, never gets too excited over things (at least on the outside). It's probably no coincidence he pitched pretty well yesterday. Gio Gonzalez starts tonight for the A's. He's got a little more nervous energy going on, so we'll see how he fares if we do get delayed.

I've never seen Fenway this empty with about a half-hour to go before first pitch. There's maybe 2,000 fans scattered about right now.

Not much in the way of news to report. After a few days of no activity, Coco Crisp (strained rib cage) is feeling better, according to manager Bob Geren. Still no word on when Crisp will resume baseball activity and go on a rehab assignment.

Here's the lineups, with the A's trotting out a pretty standard look:

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

Red Sox: Scutaro SS, Pedroia 2B, Martinez C, Youkilis 1B, Ortiz DH, Beltre 3B, Drew RF, Hall LF, McDonald CF; Lackey RHP.

San Jose, Sharks come to deal on downtown parking structure

By Tracy Seipel, Mercury News

Ending months of frustrating discussions with city officials, the San Jose Sharks emerged victorious Tuesday after San Jose agreed to solve the team's concerns about traffic and parking from a proposed downtown ballpark.

The city will let the team build a four-story parking facility just north of HP Pavilion. San Jose, in turn, will oversee transportation improvements and traffic and parking plans to ease congestion around the Pavilion, the Major League Baseball park and Diridon Station.

"Because there are so many projects slated for this area, we felt it was critical that a traffic plan and parking plan and infrastructure plan all be put into place," said Greg Jamison, chief executive officer of Silicon Valley Sports & Entertainment, which owns the Sharks and manages the arena where they play.

San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, said it was all a matter of timing.

"The Sharks wanted more certainty earlier about the things we would do to protect our building and their interests," he said of the Pavilion, which the city built and owns. The city also owns the Sharks' current 1,800-space parking lots, with revenues going both to the city's general fund and Sharks operations.

The City Council will discuss the proposal at its June 15 meeting.

Reed said he had been confident the city would resolve differences with the Sharks over a revised environmental impact report for the ballpark site, which suggested no new downtown parking was needed. Aside from the possibility of two major sporting venues, the Sharks and other critics noted plans to bring BART and high-speed rail — and accompanying vehicle traffic — to Diridon Station.

"I just thought we ought to try to figure out if we could come to common ground on what needed to be done," said Reed.

For months, the Sharks have been openly critical of the environmental report, saying they were particularly concerned about days when simultaneous events would occur at the Pavilion and the stadium.

The Sharks have insisted that additional parking must be built in the area beyond the 13,847 available in downtown lots and garages. Last week, the team filed an appeal challenging the San Jose's Planning Commission's decision to certify the environmental report.

City officials didn't disagree with the call for more parking — they just couldn't pay for it. San Jose's general operating fund faces an \$118 million budget deficit in the fiscal year that begins July 1, and the city's cash-strapped redevelopment agency just had to pay \$62 million to the state of California to help balance Sacramento's budget.

San Jose officials had suggested building a garage on the existing parking lot adjacent to the Pavilion so no land would have to be purchased. But Sharks management said that would disrupt operations and cost them revenue.

Under the new agreement, the team will have the right to buy the land and build the parking structure, both of which it would then own. A handful of properties will have to be acquired for the project, which might not go forward if the A's don't get permission from Major League Baseball to move to San Jose.

Jamison would not estimate the cost of the project, but he said the team might finance it by bringing in investors or selling bonds that would be repaid by parking revenues.

And if property owners refuse to sell to the Sharks, the city and redevelopment agency said they will step in and execute eminent domain, the legal process by which land can be taken from one private owner at market value and given to another.

RED SOX 9, A'S 4

Beltre's homer buoys Boston

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer

Painful night for the A's.

They not only absorbed a 9-4 drubbing from the Red Sox and slipped out of first place (by percentage points) in the AL West, but they had to take a close-up look at what might have been and what probably never will be.

The A's were stung by Boston third baseman Adrian Beltre, a man they tried to get last winter, and, to a lesser extent, by shortstop Marco Scutaro, another man they tried to get (or re-get) last winter.

And they were beaten by a pitcher, John Lackey, who was a free agent and simply out of the A's price range. Those sellout-every-game Fenway Park crowds do bring in some handy cash.

Still, the A's seemed to be in good shape Tuesday night, early. But after they piled up a 4-0 lead in the top of the fifth, the Red Sox responded.

So much, for one night anyway, for the A's magic number four. They had a 25-1 record this season in games in which they scored at least four runs.

Just one loss in a long season, but this one had to hurt in several ways.

The big blow for the Red Sox was a two-out, three-run homer by Beltre in the fifth.

Beltre was a free agent last winter and the A's offered him a multiyear deal. Instead, he opted to sign a one-year contract (with a 2011 player option) with Boston for \$5 million.

Beltre preferred to play on a sure contender, the better to showcase himself for big future bucks. So far, so good for Beltre. And for the Red Sox, the rich get richer, even when they're getting a bargain.

Beltre, injury-free, is having a big career resurgence, hitting .342 with 37 RBIs. The A's settled for Kevin Kouzmanoff, a nice pickup, but his numbers are .248 with 25 RBIs.

Beltre's belt came off A's starter Gio Gonzalez, who had already cowboyed up successfully to serious challenges. He struck out David Ortiz in the first, with two men on, on three smokin' fastballs.

Gonzalez got himself out of a bases-loaded, one-out situation in the second by jamming the two guys at the top of the Boston order.

Then, Beltre.

"If you take away the curve he hung for a home run, he pitched a pretty good game," A's manager Bob Geren said. "They really grind out the at-bats and make you work."

Tyson Ross relieved Gonzalez in the sixth, walked two batters, they scored, and there's your ballgame.

The go-ahead run scored on a double by Victor Martinez, who had a pretty fair night: 5-for-5, with four doubles, two runs and two RBIs.

It might not be all about money with the Red Sox, but take Lackey, the starter and winner, for example. He left the Angels as a free agent and the Sox signed him to a five-year deal, \$16.5 million per, out of the A's league (\$).

He hasn't been lights-out for the Sox but he is 6-3 and with Tuesday's win, he is 17-4 lifetime against the A's. Serious ownage, as they say.

Lackey gave up all four A's runs but ate up six big innings, holding on until the cavalry came riding in.

Adding to the A's woes, big picture, they had to look at Scutaro, who turned down an offseason offer with Oakland - three years, \$5.75 million per - to sign with Boston for two years and \$12.5 million. He's hitting .263. Oakland shortstop Cliff Pennington is at .204.

Braden is slidin' up the charts

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer

Hand-scrawled on a piece of paper taped up in the visitors' clubhouse at Fenway: "**Ben Sheets** for president. Braden for director of tarpslides."

Not sure what the reason is for the Sheets candidacy ("A changeup you can believe in"?), but **Dallas Braden** is a shoo-in. On Monday, during a rain delay at Detroit, Mr. Perfecto sprinted onto the wet infield tarp, circled the bases and slid home headfirst.

No word on whether Braden was fined. He's still recovering from a sprained ankle, and if you aren't worried about freak injuries, talk to the Angels.

On the other hand, Braden's having fun, that's got to be worth something.

Streaks: **Cliff Pennington** was mired in an 0-for-23 slump coming into the game and went 0-for-4, though he hit the ball well twice. His batting average is .204. ... **Kurt Suzuki**, with a third-inning triple to center, has at least one hit in each of his 21 career starts against the Red Sox. ... **Dustin Pedroia** snapped an 0-for-17 skid with his eighth-inning ground-rule double.

Crisp on mend: Coco Crisp is eligible to come off the disabled list Tuesday, and probably will do so, probably after playing in a rehab game or two in the minors. The injury is an intercostal rib strain.

"He's feeling better," manager **Bob Geren** said. "He's not doing baseball activity yet, but the soreness is less."

Priorities: Second inning, the Fenway crowd briefly chanted, "Beat L.A.! Beat L.A.!"

Greed: The A's and all other teams wore white caps Monday, a tribute to war vets on Memorial Day. Nice.

Now MLB is selling the caps (new, not game-worn) for \$36.99. Get this: It will donate \$1 per sale to the Welcome Back Veterans Fund.

I'm no economist, but those caps cost probably a buck-fifty to make, and MLB will donate \$1 to the vets? And pocket a profit of about \$34? That's not a tribute, that's a crime.

A's leading off

Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle

Shifted: Second inning, Jack Cust's line drive to right ...slams into the glove of second baseman Dustin Pedroia, playing short right in the Cust Shift. The shift was invented seven decades ago to thwart Boston's Ted Williams. So it's an honor to get "Shifted" at Fenway.

Drumbeat: Rain Rain Rain Rain

Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/1/2010 2:44PM

It's 5:45 at Fenway, the tarp is out, so where is Dallas Braden? The forecast for tonight is pretty much wet, although right now it seems kind of clear. They will try very hard to get this one in, it's the A's only trip here this season.

Braden, before Monday's game in Detroit, ran a lap around the infield tarp before the game, sliding head-first into home and drawing big cheers.

A hand-written sign in the A's clubhouse at Fenway today: "Sheets for president. Braden for director of tarpslides."

Not sure if Braden got fined. Seems possible. He's still healing a sprained ankle, and running around on a wet tarp doesn't seem the best RX for an ankle sprain. But at least he's having fun.

The Fenway infield tarp, by the way, is sponsored by L.L. Bean, the outdoor sportswear company. When it comes to tarps, though, you can't top the Oakland A's.

Something's fishy about cashing in on failure

Gwen Knapp, San Francisco Chronicle

The Florida Marlins' sale of unused tickets to Roy Halladay's perfect game threatens to make failure profitable. In fact, the idea could be a bonanza for low-budget teams.

Build a weak lineup; face a team that paid for a great pitcher; welcome that team to your park; don't get anyone on base all night. Ka-ching!

In major-league baseball, the home team keeps all gate receipts. Usually, that method of distribution rewards teams that do the best job of selling their own product. In this case, it could create an ex post facto sellout for a team that flopped.

An e-mail to the Marlins' public-relations chief Tuesday asked whether the club was considering donating any of the proceeds from the leftovers sale to charity. He said that had not been decided yet.

The White Sox pioneered the concept of selling unused tickets for a historic event after Mark Buehrle's perfect game against the Rays last year. But they were cashing in on their own place in history, from empty seats in their park. The Marlins seem to be poaching the success of the visiting Phillies.

The last thing baseball needs is an incentive for owners in unfilled stadiums to root for their teams to go down passively after a hitless seven innings.

The Marlins are selling the tickets online at face value (starting at \$120 plus \$6.25 convenience charge for the best "seat" available when I checked at 11 a.m.) The A's, by contrast, will sell May 9 tickets from Dallas Braden's perfect game at the Coliseum for \$10 to anyone who buys another seat for a future game online. They also gave out commemorative tickets to people in attendance when Braden's achievement was honored during the last homestand.

The Marlins' leftovers are available through Ticketmaster, which the team believes will suffice for authentication purposes. Of course, it's possible to sell duplicates of the same ticket after the fact, because two people aren't going to end up trying to use the seat attached it.

But even if only one version of each ticket is sold, the people who actually attended the game will see their memorabilia devalued. Their ticket is no longer proof of witnessing history.

Bay Area needs a blueprint for pro sports

Jim Lazarus, President of the SF Chamber of Commerce, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/1/2010

The Bay Area is getting a wake-up call when it comes to professional sports.

On Tuesday, Santa Clara voters will vote on a measure to commit public funding and land for a stadium for the 49ers. The Oakland A's want to relocate to the South Bay and the Golden State Warriors are for sale. Clearly, Bay Area political leaders should be looking at long-term solutions to meet the needs of our sports teams and find how they can best bring economic and community benefits to our region.

If the current uncertainty surrounding Bay Area sports tells us anything, then it's that our teams need 21st century facilities. Both football teams (the 49ers and Raiders) play in outdated stadiums. The Cow Palace in Daly City is antiquated and Oracle Arena in Oakland is not well located to maximize convention- and visitor-industry uses.

Major League Baseball could open San Jose to the A's franchise, subject to some form of compensation for the Giants. And the sale of the Warriors to a Bay Area buyer could spur development of a world-class arena at Pier 48, south of AT&T Park.

Two football stadiums, at \$1 billion each, will not be built in the Bay Area. But if we are to keep the teams, we have to look at the New York Giants/Jets model of a shared stadium for the 49ers and Raiders.

What could this all mean for the Bay Area?

The 49ers and the Raiders could share a stadium at Hunters Point or Santa Clara, or perhaps on the Oakland Coliseum site (next to BART and I-880).

The A's could play in a downtown San Jose ballpark.

The Warriors could relocate to a state-of-the-art arena on the San Francisco waterfront.

The Cow Palace might be demolished and the site used for tax-paying residential and commercial development, with many of its events relocated to Oracle Arena.

Baseball in San Jose. Football in Oakland. Basketball and a convention arena in the city. New development in Daly City. Wishful thinking?

Maybe. But regardless of whether or not Santa Clara voters pass their stadium measure, now is the time for the mayors of San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose to create a blueprint for a new generation of sports facilities for the Bay Area.

Jim Lazarus is the senior vice president of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.

Shaky bullpen sinks A's at Fenway Park

Gonzalez yields just three runs; Barton belts fourth homer

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- Gio Gonzalez didn't have his best stuff from the start.

His fellow pitching comrades didn't fare much better in the middle.

As a result, the end wasn't so pretty for the A's.

Following a 20-minute rain delay, the A's watched a four-run lead dissipate in a 9-4 loss to the Red Sox on Tuesday in the first of a three-game set at Fenway Park, where Boston's Victor Martinez enjoyed a perfect 5-for-5 night with four doubles.

Martinez and Co. dealt the A's -- who entered the contest 25-1 when scoring four runs or more -- their largest blown lead of the season. Each of Boston's starting nine went to the plate five times against a total of five Oakland pitchers, who dealt out a combined nine walks -- three of which resulted in runs.

Gonzalez tallied four of those walks, all of which came in the first three frames. He also gave up three hits in that time yet managed to strand five Boston runners without giving up a run. However, it all caught up to him in the fifth, a time at which the A's had handed him a 4-0 lead thanks to a two-run homer from Daric Barton, along with RBI hits from Jack Cust and Mark Ellis.

With two outs and two on for Gonzalez, the A's southpaw offered up a three-run homer to Adrian Beltre that narrowed said lead to one.

"It was like you could taste that final out," Gonzalez said. "You could see it coming. I just left a hanging curveball, and he did his job. He's a good hitter."

Meanwhile, counterpart John Lackey was able to get out of jams similar to those Gonzalez had faced in the early get-go. The A's stranded a total of 11 on base, 10 of which came during the Boston righty's six innings of work. Lackey escaped a one-out bases loaded situation in the fourth and also left A's runners on first and second in the sixth.

"Anytime you have the bases loaded, you don't want to leave anyone on," Barton said. "[Lackey] left the ball up a little more than normal, but I've always seen him well. Bottom line was he made pitches when he had to after the third inning. He had a rough start, but he came back and finished strong."

Lackey also finished with the win having allowed four runs on 12 hits and two walks while striking out four through six.

Gonzalez, who was rung up for 108 pitches through just five innings, walked away with a no-decision after leaving with a 4-3 lead still intact. Struggling right-hander Tyson Ross, who entered the game having allowed a combined four runs, three hits and four walks through 1 2/3 innings in his past two outings, immediately walked the first two batters he faced in the sixth -- both of which eventually scored on a Martinez double against Craig Breslow for a 5-4 lead.

"I don't like free passes," manager Bob Geren said. "They make you throw strikes. That's one of the reasons that makes their offense so tough. We knew that coming into the game, and it's the same thing we try to do with our offense. They were just able to do it a little better tonight."

"The last couple outings, [Ross] has maybe been too fine in the zone. He's missed a couple spots, but he'll be fine."

Following Martinez's double, Breslow came back in the seventh and handed his former team another run courtesy of a RBI triple from Bill Hall. The A's lefty hadn't surrendered a run in his previous 10 outings, yet such was the story Tuesday for a lethargic Oakland bullpen, which also witnessed Michael Wuertz add to the mess.

The Oakland right-hander, who missed the first month of the season with shoulder tendinitis, made his first back-to-back appearance of the season. Unfortunately, it showed in the form of three hits and three runs in just 2/3 of an inning.

"I didn't make good pitches to good hitters," Wuertz said. "A positive was that I didn't walk anyone, but I couldn't put anyone away. That was the problem.

"We didn't do a good job as a staff tonight. It was just one of those nights."

It's one the A's would like to quickly forget. And one Martinez is likely to never forget.

"I think I definitely got a little bit lucky," said the Red Sox catcher, who became the first catcher with four doubles in a game since Sandy Alomar did it for Cleveland on June 6, 1997, at Fenway. "[I] found some holes and I just went out there and looked for a good pitch to hit, and just put a good swing on the ball. Like I always say, when you put a good swing on the ball, anything can happen."

The A's loss, coupled with a Rangers win on the same day, left the two American League West teams tied for the division lead -- one which Oakland doesn't want to see escape as easily as Tuesday's game did.

"You flip the page," said Wuertz, "and move on."

Devine slowly building up arm strength

If all goes right, reliever could return to A's at end of June

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- Joey Devine is no longer making guesses on when he'll be back in Oakland.

After all, the A's rehabbing reliever -- recovering from last year's Tommy John surgery -- thought he'd already be with the team by now.

"To be honest, I'm done making timetables," said Devine, who experienced his first setback in March in the form of tendinitis. "I thought I'd be back by June."

Yet if Devine has his way, he still might be. A lot has to go right, but Devine said he could potentially be putting on that green and gold uniform by the end of June.

The 26-year-old pitcher, who in 2008 posted a 0.59 ERA in 42 appearances with Oakland, has been throwing a bullpen session every two to three days at the A's Minor League complex in Phoenix, Ariz.

As of Tuesday, when he spoke to MLB.com via phone, Devine said he is at the point in his rehab program where he was four weeks ago when he experienced a setback that resulted in a trip to Birmingham, Ala., for a visit with renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews.

It was there Andrews gave Devine a platelet rich plasma injection, which releases growth factors to stimulate recovery in non-healing injuries. The right-handed pitcher, who was instructed to take two weeks off following the procedure, was told the first try could work, but it may take a second or third try.

So far, so good.

"I'm close to the point I was at before I left for there," Devine said. "I've been feeling really strong, which is a good sign that the treatment is working."

Devine most recently threw a 25-pitch bullpen session at about 85 percent on Monday, and he'll throw at 90 percent -- the level he was at when he began experiencing a sore flexor tendon a month ago -- on Thursday. Thus, "I should know more than," he said.

If he comes out of Thursday's session feeling strong, Devine hopes to pitch in a simulated game once or twice before moving on to games. Finding games in which to partake, though, may be an issue since extended spring games end Friday and don't resume again until June 21.

However, Devine said that problem may actually work in his favor.

"I'm pretty much stuck here throwing bullpens," he said, "unless the organization says that if I'm at 100 percent and feeling good, I can make a rehab assignment, which I'd be all for."

If given a chance to take his rehab work into a Minor League assignment, Devine thinks there's a chance he could be activated from the 60-day disabled list close to the time he's eligible -- June 29.

"We'll see," Devine said with cautious optimism. "It's extremely frustrating being away from the guys and not being able to help out the team. It's just a matter of being patient. I check in with a lot of the guys every seven days or so, and I'm excited for them."

In the meantime, Devine has been in good company with wife, Erin, and their dogs, Bruiser and Lily.

"It's been real good having them around," he said. "It's kind of helped this process, because it's been hard going through everything."

Dice-K, Sheets having roller-coaster year

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com

You'll have to excuse the Red Sox and Athletics if they aren't sure what to expect from their starting pitchers in the middle game of their series Wednesday night.

Two veteran hurlers, Ben Sheets and Daisuke Matsuzaka, will take the ball, but thanks to roller-coaster seasons on both ends, predicting the result when these two hurlers go is a difficult task.

For Boston, Dice-K has been the definition of an enigma this season. On May 22, he took a no-hitter deep into the eighth inning against the Phillies. Five nights later against the Royals, he walked eight batters over just 4 2/3 innings.

While Sheets started the season fighting through nearly every inning, he's turned in five consecutive quality starts. Adding to the unpredictability factor is the fact that Sheets has never faced the Red Sox in his nine Major League seasons.

Matsuzaka's Jekyll-and-Hyde show continued to confound against Kansas City on Thursday. Dice-K gave up only two hits, but it became clear he didn't have his best control, walking five in the fifth frame alone.

"Obviously, he was struggling with his command and his release point," said catcher Jason Varitek. "At different times, he was able to throw through me, and at other times, his arm would drag or his arm would be in front. I don't know what the answer is, but I know he'll do the work to try and figure it out."

Matsuzaka was the first to point out the vast differences between his stronger and weaker appearances this season.

"In my good outings, I can throw the ball without overthinking too much and still be able to pitch well," he said. "But when things are going bad, no matter what I try to get out of it, things just don't click and I can't build that momentum. But in general, I know that I can't be overly conscious of that. I still need to pitch. As for tonight, I just need to look back at my performance and find those bad elements and hopefully clear them up."

Sheets knows something about studying his results, and even, it seems, something about figuring how to clear them up.

After a rocky start to the season, Sheets appears to have worked through some of his issues and has been solid of late, despite not picking up a decision since May 8. He continued his progress in his previous start, striking out six and allowing three runs. But it was the depth he pitched into the game that excited Sheets the most, seven innings -- a first for this season.

"I'm still building my stamina up," said Sheets, who pitched at least six innings for the first time since Sept. of 2008. "We've seen my velocity climb, we've seen my breaking ball start to break again, and we're seeing more strikes."

Like Matsuzaka, Sheets has had to work through some tough situations at times, but at least lately, he's been able to battle through a bit. And even opponents are taking note.

"He pitched good," said Detroit's Miguel Cabrera, who hit two homers off Sheets in his past start. "[I] have to give him credit. He's a good pitcher. The mistakes he made, he made with me. He battled all day and still pitched seven innings."

It might be a hard-fought battle, but both teams likely hope they aren't on the receiving end of one of these pitchers putting it all together on Wednesday.

Athletics: Gross making statement

Outfielder Gabe Gross continues to make Athletics' manager Bob Geren look smart for starting him. Gross went 2-for-2 on Tuesday night, continuing his tear.

"He's playing to the point where you want to leave him in there," Geren said before Tuesday's game.

The 30-year-old has a .368 average (7-for-19) over the past seven games. And his good work hasn't been confined to the plate, Gross has been getting it done in the field.

"He's done extremely well," Geren said. "He's played solid defense and has had some big hits for us recently."

Red Sox: Cameron to see specialist

Mike Cameron was held out of the Red Sox's starting lineup on Tuesday night due to pain in his lower abdominal region and underwent an MRI at Fenway Park. On Wednesday, he'll see a specialist and undergo more testing.

"We should have, hopefully, better information [Wednesday] where we can make a decision on the best way to go forward," said Red Sox manager Terry Francona. "[I] was back there with him for a while, with [Red Sox medical director] Tom Gill, and we were kind of walking through it. He'll be looked at again in the morning and we'll try to make a good judgment on where he is. That's kind of where we're at."

Worth noting

After this series, each of the previous 10 games played between these two teams will have been played in Boston -- dating back to July 6 of last season. ... The Red Sox have won eight of their past 11 games at Fenway Park.

Suzuki, Sweeney seek All-Star support

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- A's catcher Kurt Suzuki and outfielder Ryan Sweeney could represent sleeper picks for this year's All-Star Game thanks to their roles as the club's most consistent clutch hitters and overall lineup mainstays.

They can't get there on their own, though.

This unassuming young pair of talent that has guided the A's to a first-place division start this season needs your help to take part in one of baseball's most glorified events. Both are in need of votes in order to be included in the top picks among their position.

Fans can cast their votes for starters up to 25 times at MLB.com and all 30 club sites using the 2010 All-Star Game MLB.com Ballot sponsored by Sprint until July 1 at 11:59 p.m. ET.

Starting rosters will be announced during the 2010 All-Star Game Selection Show on TBS on July 4. Baseball fans around the world will then be able to select the final player on each team via the 2010 All-Star Game Final Vote sponsored by Sprint.

And the voting doesn't end there. Fans will have the opportunity to participate in the official voting for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet at the Midsummer Classic via the 2010 All-Star Game MVP Vote sponsored by Sprint.

The All-Star Game, to be played in Anaheim on July 13, will be televised nationally by FOX and around the world by Major League Baseball International. ESPN Radio will provide exclusive national radio play-by-play, while MLB.com will offer extensive online coverage.

Though sidelined for part of the season with an intercostal strain, Suzuki -- deemed by many around the league as one of the game's most underrated catchers -- has given the A's a sturdy middle-of-the-order hitter while also providing several impressive defensive gems.

Sweeney, meanwhile, boasts a team-high .306 batting average to go along with a .393 slugging percentage. The 25-year-old, just in his third full big league season, is also part of what manager Bob Geren has called the league's best defensive outfield.

"As a player, you definitely like to get recognized by other teams and players," Suzuki said. "I don't think any of us go into a season thinking we want to be in the All-Star Game, but it's a great opportunity if it happens. You want to play with the best of the best around the league."

Boston's bats beat back Oakland

Martinez's 5 hits, including 4 doubles, Beltre's homer erase A's 4-0 lead

By JIMMY GOLEN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — John Lackey had just struggled to make it through the sixth inning when Victor Martinez offered him some encouragement.

"He told me to hang in there, and he was going to take care of me," Lackey said. "He did. It was pretty cool."

The Red Sox catcher had four doubles — and five hits in all — driving in the go-ahead run after Oakland walked the bases loaded in the sixth inning on Tuesday night and the Red Sox rallied from a four-run deficit to beat the A's 9-4.

The five hits matched a career-high for Martinez, and the four doubles tied a major-league record matched only three other times by a catcher since 1952.

"It's not that I had a feeling, but we just never quit," said Martinez, who was batting .227 on May 18 but has had multiple hits six times in nine games since then. "I've been in a big hole since the start of the season. But I never lost my confidence."

Lackey (6-3) spotted the A's a 4-0 lead before Adrian Beltre hit a three-run homer in the fifth. In the sixth, Bill Hall reached on a leadoff walk and then Darnell McDonald and Marco Scutaro both tried to sacrifice bunt but wound up walking as well.

Hall scored to tie it on Dustin Pedroia's double-play grounder, then Martinez's line drive one-hopped into the stands to make it 5-4. Hall added an RBI triple in the seventh, and Martinez also hit an RBI double and scored in the eighth, when the Red Sox added three more runs to take a 9-4 lead.

"We dug ourselves a little bit of a hole and didn't panic, didn't get frustrated," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said.

"Beltre's hit was huge. Lackey ... you look at numbers, and we certainly do, but I don't think you can measure the way a guy almost wills himself, the way he competes, to give us a chance to win."

Lackey gave up four runs on 12 hits and four walks while striking out two, but the Red Sox won their third straight and for the eighth time in their last 10 games.

"We did have a nice little lead going against Lackey," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I thought we had a real good offensive approach ... got some big hits. They got back in that game with a three-run homer and worked Gio (Gonzalez) pretty good."

Gabe Gross had three hits for the A's, who had won five of their previous six games. Tyson Ross (1-4) inherited a 4-3 lead when he relieved Gonzalez at the start of the sixth, walking both batters he faced before Craig Breslow came in to face Scutaro.

Pedroia doubled in the eighth to snap an 0-for-17 slump, then scored on Martinez's fourth double of the game. Kevin Youkilis and J.D. Drew added RBI singles to make it 9-4.

Daric Barton hit a two-run homer for Oakland in the third. The A's made it 4-0 when Ryan Sweeney doubled and scored on Jack Cust's single, then Cust scored on Mark Ellis' bloop double to right.

But the Red Sox got back in the game in the fifth on one swing from Beltre, who had three hits.

After Martinez doubled off the Green Monster and Youkilis singled off third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff's glove, Beltre smacked the ball so hard off the Monster Seats that it bounced much of the way back toward the infield. Gonzalez got Drew on a meek check-swing bouncer back to the mound to end the inning.

Gran dame of Stockton

Dallas Braden's grandmother Peggy Lindsey is rock of support for everyone around her

By Lori Gilbert, Stockton Record, 6/1/2010

From her heart-tugging embrace that followed the perfect game crafted by her grandson, Oakland Athletics pitcher Dallas Braden, to her famously blurting out "Stick it, A-Rod" in reference to Braden's nemesis, New York Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez, Peggy Lindsey was swept up in a media frenzy that made her the most famous senior this side of Betty White.

Long before she was the best-known grandmother in the country, though, she was simply Gran.

"I didn't know her first name for quite some time," said Julie Sullivan, who was a friend of Braden's mother, Jodie Atwood, before becoming one of Lindsey's closest friends. "She had surgery a long time ago and I went to the hospital to visit. They asked me her name, and I thought, 'What is her name? Everybody knows her as Gran.' "

"Everybody" are the friends Gran, her daughter and grandson made in their mid-Stockton neighborhood and in their involvement in youth football and Little League Baseball. They knew the heartache of that tearful Mother's Day hug, wrapped as it was in the memory of Atwood, who'd died of cancer nine years earlier. They knew Gran's steely determination before she delivered a one-bounce ceremonial first pitch to her grandson at the Oakland Coliseum during a weeklong celebration of his becoming the 19th pitcher in Major League Baseball history to toss a perfect game. They understood the pride she had in the eldest of her eight grandchildren before it was evident on her face as she watched Stockton mayor Ann Johnston present him with a key to the city.

Beyond being the one who helped her single daughter raise a boy who would become a professional baseball player, they know her as a loving, caring, non-judgmental woman who loves to laugh and is an honest, straight shooter.

"She takes care of us," said Sullivan. "We don't have to ask her to do something. She just does it. She loves to bake and she brings my husband pineapple upside down cake, because she knows it's his favorite. If she knows we're going out of town, she'll make goodies for us to take on our trip."

Living in the same neighborhood where she and her daughter raised Dallas, just around the corner from the Sullivans and two blocks from her grandson, Lindsey loves to work in the backyard of the home he rents for her. Her black pug, Jim, and an African tortoise keep her company.

Lindsey, who suffered a stroke and heart attack last July that prompted her grandson to leave the Athletics and fly cross-country to be with her, walks with Sullivan every day and the two use the time to serve as each other's sounding board.

"She's so straight forward, and fun, lighthearted," Sullivan said.

Two weeks after making the A-Rod comment - a result of Rodriguez's denigrating Braden after Braden called him out for jogging across the mound on his way across the diamond - Lindsey showed up at the Coliseum to throw out the ceremonial first pitch. She asked Braden if it was OK for her to stand on the mound. (It wasn't.)

Although closer to Braden than to her other grandchildren because of geography and having raised him, she's no less attached to the others.

The day after a granddaughter got married in Florida, the whole family was together on the beach wondering what they should do that day and someone suggested they all should get tattoos.

Lindsey proudly rolls up her left pant leg and reveals a tattoo of a dream catcher with 209 in the center of the circle.

The dream catcher is a nod to her American Indian roots. Her father was of the Choctaw tribe. It's also a tribute to Stockton, which she's called home since 1983.

"I was living in Arizona and I came for Thanksgiving (to visit her parents)," Lindsey said. "I stayed for about 10 days. We had so much fun together, and I decided I needed to come to where they were."

It wasn't her first impulsive move. She'd grown up in Norwalk, had her first child at 17 and by the time she was 22, had four. The family visited the Grand Canyon one Fourth of July, and they loved Arizona so much, they were living there by the end of the month. It was there she met her second husband, Tom Lindsey, a truck driver who died of cancer in 1989.

Once her children were grown, Lindsey was ready to live near her parents again, although their reunion was short-lived. Her mother suffered a fatal heart attack three months after Lindsey's arrival.

Some of the void was filled when Braden was born six months later. Lindsey drove to Phoenix, packed her daughter and newborn in the car and drove them to Stockton, so she could help care for both of them.

The women became more like best friends than mother and daughter as they took on the shared role of raising Braden.

"Once she took me to get something to eat at a Subway," Braden remembered. "We didn't have a lot of money and I think she gave me like a \$10 bill and I get myself a sandwich and I'm thinking maybe I'll get her a sandwich. I'll surprise her. I order her sandwich and it's taking forever. She comes into the Subway and says, 'What is taking so long? What are you doing?' I said, 'Gran, I got you a sandwich, too.' She goes, 'What are you doing with that money? I did not tell you to get me a sandwich.'

"I was probably 13, 14, and she grabs me by my ear like I'm 7 years old and (drags) me out of Subway for wasting money on a sandwich she did not want or ask for."

Lindsey, who turns 69 today, said she can't remember why she reacted that way, although the story is now part of family lore.

Lindsey admits to spoiling Braden, but she was tough when she had to be. When Atwood died, about 10 months after being diagnosed with melanoma and two weeks after Lindsey lost her father, Braden, then 18, was so depressed he considered giving up baseball.

Lindsey wouldn't let him.

"My words were, 'Dallas, your mom never let you quit and you're not going to quit now,' " Lindsey said. "That was her dream and it had to happen. He had to play ball. I pushed him as hard as (I) could."

She even called American River College and talked to the baseball coach so he could start college. He'd planned to attend Delta, but being in Stockton was too difficult. Everywhere he went held memories of his mom.

While working as a motel manager, she managed to follow his baseball career.

"He was on his way home from a (Sacramento) River Cats game and he called and he sounded sad and he said, 'Gran, I'm going back,' and I said, 'Back where, to (Double A) Texas?' Lindsey said. "He said, 'No, back east to Baltimore. I got called up and you're coming with me.' "

The two flew to Baltimore together and Lindsey watched him pitch - and win - his first game in the big leagues.

Since then, Lindsey's seen him pitch in Florida and Boston and attends every game he pitches in Oakland.

She's retired now. The first thing Braden did when he reached the big leagues was tell her to quit her job because he was going to take care of her.

The close relationship between the two was revealed in the aftermath of the perfect game, but it was forged long before their public display.

In a photograph he signed for her when he was a minor league player, he wrote, "Endless determination and pride are the root of ... success and without you I would know neither of these traits. ... I owe everything I have to the two strongest women I have ever known. ... I love you with all my heart, Gran!!"

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Carson's two homers not enough for Cats

By Nick Hunte / Sacramento River Cats

Three Tacoma players combined for four home runs as the Rainiers beat Sacramento 12-3 on Tuesday night at Raley Field to end the River Cats' six-game winning streak.

Sacramento struggled defensively and allowed three errors in the game, including a John Halama fielding error with two out in the first inning that lead to four unearned runs.

Some of the highlights of the game came from some controversial calls early in the game. The first was a strike out call that didn't sit well with catcher Josh Donaldson, who was quickly getting ejected after arguing with home plate umpire Chris Tiller. He was replaced by Anthony Recker.

The second call came when Tacoma's right fielder Greg Halman interfered with a double play attempt. As Halman was sliding to second base, he stuck his hand out and blocked shortstop Corey Wimberly's throw to first base and it was originally ruled

as just one out. After River Cats infielders and manager Tony DeFrancesco came out to dispute the call, the umpires gathered and reversed the call to award the River Cats a double play.

Center fielder Matt Carson went 2-for-4 with two solo home runs, the first in the second and then the fifth. The third River Cats run came from a line-drive double to center field by right fielder Michael Taylor that scored first baseman Chris Carter.

The Rainiers' onslaught offense included four home runs and 14 hits. Former River Cat Tommy Everidge went 2-for-5, including a solo home run for Tacoma. Halman went 3-for-5 with two home runs, a double and seven RBIs.

River Cats pitchers struggled on the mound, each giving up a home run. Left-hander John Halama (1-1, 2.08) gave up eight hits, seven runs (three earned) and a home run. Edwar Ramirez, Marcus McBeth and Fernando Hernandez each pitched an inning each and gave up a combined five earned runs.

Left-hander Luke French (6-2, 1.93) pitched 8.0 innings for Tacoma and held on for the win. He gave up three earned runs, seven hits and threw four strikeouts.

Right-hander Graham Godfrey (2-4, 3.98) will start for the River Cats on Wednesday at Raley Field and will face off against right-hander Andy Baldwin (3-1, 4.68).

Ports Offense Shut Down In 2-0 Loss To Nuts

MODESTO, Calif. - One night after setting a new season-high with 21 hits, the Stockton Ports found themselves pressing for any offense on Tuesday night at John Thurman Field. Stockton was shut out for the fourth time the season, the second time at the hands of the Modesto Nuts by a final of 2-0. The Ports did not have a hit after the fourth inning and only on two occasions did they have a runner at third base.

The game started with a missed opportunity for the Ports. Stockton loaded the bases with one out one back-to-back singles from Grant Green and Todd Johnson and then a walk to Mike Spina. Nuts starter Kenny Durst (6-2) would escape the jam by striking out Stephen Parker and Tyler Ladendorf.

Modesto squandered their first scoring chance in the first as well. With two on and one out, Michael Zuanich hit into an inning-ending 5-4-3 double-play to end the rally.

The Nuts scored the game's first run in the fourth. Zuanich drew a leadoff walk and Brian Rike got hit with a pitch to put two aboard. David Christiansen came up and knocked a single to left to score Zuanich and give the Nuts a 1-0 lead. Ports starter Paul Oseguera (0-1) would induce an inning-ending double-play ball off the bat of Beau Seabury to escape further trouble.

Following the single from Christiansen, Oseguera retired 11 of the last 12 he faced. The only batter to reach in that span was pinch-hitter Thomas Field, who hit a one-out solo home run in the seventh to extend the Nuts lead to 2-0.

Oseguera, who pitched well in his Ports debut after being signed from independent ball, took the loss after going seven full frames and allowing two runs on five hits while walking two and striking out six.

Meanwhile, Durst allowed six hits through the first four innings but settled down after that. Stockton's final hit of the game came on a one-out single from Jeremy Barfield in the fourth. After allowing that hit, Durst retired seven in a row up until Tyler Ladendorf reached on an error with two down in the sixth. After Ladendorf stole second, Barfield was intentionally walked, putting two aboard and ending Durst's outing. Kurt Yacko, with the tying run at second, came on and got Ryan Ortiz to fly to center to end the inning and the threat.

Durst would earn the win, going 5.2 scoreless innings while allowing six hits.

Yacko yielded a one-out walk to Jermaine Mitchell in the seventh. Mitchell would steal second and take third on a deep fly-ball out, but with two down, Rex Brothers was summoned from the bullpen and got Todd Johnson to ground out to end the inning. After the walk to Mitchell, Nuts pitchers combined to retire eight in a row to end the ballgame.

Yacko, Brothers, and Adam Jorgenson (SV, 15) combined for 3.1 scoreless innings of relief. Jorgenson struck out the side in the ninth to record his 15th save of the year.

Brett Hunter pitched the eighth for Stockton and struck out the side.

Following an off-day Wednesday, the Ports will head to Visalia to begin a four-game set with the Rawhide on Thursday. Mike Madsen (0-0, 0.00 ERA) will take the hill for Stockton in his 2010 debut, opposed by Rawhide left-hander Taylor Sinclair (3-2, 4.22 ERA). First pitch at Recreation Park on Thursday is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

Cougars Fall in Road Trip Opener

Crumbliss' game-starting homer not enough for Kane County

DAYTON, Ohio – The Kane County Cougars began a six-game road trip Tuesday night with 9-2 loss against the Dayton Dragons at Fifth Third Field. Conner Crumbliss led off the game with a homer and drove in another run in the third, but the Cougars could not overcome Dayton's offensive attack and lost their seventh straight road game.

Crumbliss' homer was his first as a Cougar and the third of his career and it came on the second pitch of the game by Pedro Villareal (3-3). After Dayton scored twice in the bottom of the first against Dan Straily, Crumbliss poked a game-tying sacrifice fly in the third to make it 2-2. That became the Cougars' final run. They totaled six hits and stranded eight.

Meanwhile Straily (4-2) yielded tallies in each of his final four innings. He gave up nine runs on 12 hits, walked one and fanned four in the loss. The Dragon's four-run fifth inning broke open the game. Max Peterson tossed two hitless relief innings after Straily departed.

Game 2 of the three-game series is Wednesday night at 6 CT. The Cougars (22-31) will send Murphy Smith to the mound for his 2010 Cougars debut, and Dayton (21-31) will counter with J.C. Sulbaran (3-3, 5.63). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at www.kccougars.com with pregame coverage starting at 5:45 p.m.

Oakland A's MLN: Carter, Watson Lead 'Cats

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Jun 1, 2010

Offense has been hard to come by for Oakland A's minor league hitters in 2010, but the A's minor leaguers had their hitting shoes on on Memorial Day 2010. We have the details inside...

Sacramento Slugs Way To Sweep

The Sacramento River Cats homered five times and overcame an early deficit to defeat the Reno Aces, 11-8 on Monday.

Chris Carter and **Matt Watson** each had two-homer games, and **Brett Harper** added the other homerun for Sacramento, who has now won six in a row and is only two games under .500.

Watson finished the four-game set with Reno with nine hits in 17 at-bats. He had five extra-base hits and six RBIs and he walked twice in his first series back with the River Cats since 2006.

Carter's two homeruns gave him a team-best 12 for the season. He also leads the team with 42 RBIs. The two-hit game broke a 1-23 stretch. Carter has an 811 OPS for the season.

Sacramento had 14 hits and overcame an early 5-1 deficit. In addition to Watson and Carter, **Corey Wimberly**, **Eric Sogard** and **Michael Taylor** had multi-hit games. Taylor also added an outfield assist. Harper's homerun in the sixth was a grand-slam. It was his first homer of the season.

Jesus Sanchez made the start for Sacramento. Sanchez was signed over the weekend by the A's to a minor league free agent contract. The 35-year-old left-hander first made his major league debut with the **Florida Marlins** in 1998. He has a major league career record of 23-34 and a 5.32 ERA. He has pitched in the majors with Florida, the **Chicago Cubs**, the **Cincinnati Reds** and the **Colorado Rockies**. Sanchez had been pitching for the York Revolution in the independent Atlantic League. The A's signed Sanchez and **Val Majewski** away from the Revolution.

Sanchez's return to affiliated baseball was a rude one. He allowed seven runs on four hits and seven walks in only four innings pitched. Reliever **Cedrick Bowers**, in his first game back with Sacramento after a two-week stint with the A's during which he made one appearance, was rusty, walking three in one-third of an inning.

The River Cats were able to get back in the game in the middle innings thanks to the relief work of **Jonathan Hunton** and **Sam Demel**. Hunton tossed 1.2 innings of scoreless baseball and Demel followed that with two scoreless innings of his own. Hunton lowered his ERA to 2.60 and Demel lowered his to 1.08. Demel earned the win. He has struck-out 26 and walked eight in 25 innings this season.

Henry Rodriguez battled some wildness in the ninth, walking two, but he kept Reno off of the scoreboard to earn his sixth save of the season and lower his ERA to 0.63.

Midland Steamrolls Naturals

Corey Brown had three hits in his return to Midland and the Rockhounds pummeled the Northwest Arkansas Naturals by a score of 9-1.

Brown had two singles and a triple in five at-bats for the Rockhounds. He was re-assigned to Midland this past weekend after batting only .156 in 34 games for the River Cats. **Jermaine Mitchell** was sent to Stockton to make room for Brown on the Midland roster.

J.C. Holt had three hits and two RBIs and **Matt Sulentic** added a three-RBI game to help lead the Rockhounds. **Alexander Valdez** knocked in two runs to raise his season RBI total to 33.

Starter **Anthony Capra** had a solid outing to earn the win. He walked four in five innings, but allowed only two hits and he struck-out eight. Most importantly, he didn't allow a run. Capra lowered his ERA to 4.18. He has struggled with command at times this season (26 walks in 47.1 innings), but he has struck-out 43 and has held opposing batters to a .228 average.

Justin Friend, **Jason Ray** and **Derrick Gordon** combined to hold the Naturals to one run on five hits over the final four innings to secure the win.

Stockton Cracks Nuts

The Stockton Ports brought out their big bats to earn a 13-8 win over the Modesto Nuts.

Grant Green continued his hot-streak by collecting five hits in six at-bats. He also had a stolen base and two doubles and he raised his average to .303. Green, the A's top draft pick last season, has a seven-game hitting streak. Over his last four games, he is 13-19 with five extra-base hits.

Ryan Ortiz had three hits and three RBIs and **Toddric Johnson** and **Michael Spina** each had two-RBI nights. **Jeremy Barfield** had a four-hit night and **Stephen Parker**, Spina, **Tyler Ladendorf** and **Michael Richard** had two-hit nights. Barfield added yet another outfield assist. He has 11 on the season already, the most of any outfielder in the A's organization.

Starter **Shawn Haviland** struck-out seven in 5.1 innings, but he allowed eight hits and five runs. Still, it was good enough on this night to earn Haviland his fifth win of the season. He has 66 strike-outs in 61.2 innings this season. **Paul Smyth** pitched the ninth and added another scoreless inning to his resume. He struck-out two and retired all three batters he faced. Smyth has a 31 strike-outs in 32 innings pitched and a 1.69 ERA on the season.

Kane County Snaps Streak After Rain

Despite an hour-long rain delay, the Kane County Cougars made Memorial Day a good one by breaking their three-game losing streak with a 7-4 win over Clinton. The Cougars had lost 13 of 15 games coming into Monday's contest.

Max Stassi led the Cougars' offense with a 3-3 day. He hit his seventh homer of the season and drove-in two. Stassi has four homers in May and a 948 OPS in day games.

Michael Gilmartin also homered, his second of the season. **Kent Walton** had three hits, including two doubles, and **Myrio Richard** had two hits and an RBI. The Cougars swiped three bases, with Stassi (3), Walton (2) and **Conner Crumbliss** (11)

stealing bags.

Ian Krol got the start, but he was taken out after the rain delay (which occurred after the first inning). He struck-out one in a perfect frame. Krol has a 1.90 ERA this season.

Jose Guzman earned the win with 3 innings of relief. He allowed a run on three hits. **A.J. Huttenlocker** had two innings of scoreless relief and **Connor Hoehn** earned his first save with 1.1 innings of perfect relief. **Jose Pina** struggled in his second outing with Kane County, allowing three runs on six hits in 1.2 innings.