

A's News Clips, Friday, June 4, 2010

Oakland A's update: Catcher Kurt Suzuki is difficult out for Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Suzuki has proved difficult out for Red Sox

BOSTON — Kurt Suzuki can't explain his torrid hot streak against the Boston Red Sox.

The A's catcher homered in his first two at-bats in Thursday's 9-8 win. He's now hitting .357 (35 for 98) with three homers in his career against the Red Sox.

He also homered Wednesday and went 2 for 5 with three RBIs on Thursday.

"I'm not surprised, I'm very, very happy," Suzuki said. "It's hard to explain. Sometimes you just get hits against a certain team."

There were many standouts for the A's on Thursday, but manager Bob Geren labeled Suzuki the player of the game. Aside from his hitting, he made an excellent tag on Victor Martinez on a third-inning play at the plate.

The A's also got back-to-back homers from Jack Cust and Kevin Kouzmanoff in the eighth off Manny Delcarmen.

Geren had said before the game that Cust needed a breakout game, and Cust went 3 for 5 with three runs.

The A's were light in the bullpen with Michael Wuertz experiencing some mild arm soreness and Craig Breslow having thrown two straight days. So closer Andrew Bailey was called on to get a six-out save.

Bailey entered in the eighth with no outs and two runners on and didn't allow a run in the inning, preserving a 9-7 lead. He allowed Bill Hall's homer in the ninth but notched his 12th save of the season.

His highlight: Striking out David Ortiz on a 97 mph fastball to end the eighth.

"I love that matchup," Bailey said. "Big power hitter with the game on the line. That's what the game's all about."

Coco Crisp (strained rib cage muscle) is eligible to come off the 15-day disabled list Monday, but Geren said Crisp is at least a week away from returning. "... The A's claimed Adam Heether off waivers from Milwaukee and sent him to Triple-A Sacramento. To make room on the 40-man roster, Justin Duchscherer was switched to the 60-day DL. Heether hit .245 with nine homers and 28 RBIs in 50 games for Triple-A Nashville.

A's wild win over Boston Red Sox comes with bumps, bruises -- Brett Anderson (elbow) and Ryan Sweeney (dizziness)

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

It should have been a satisfying cross-country flight home for the A's on Thursday night.

But the joy of a 9-8 victory over the Boston Red Sox was accompanied by a sizable dose of bad news, and that's your 2010 A's season in a nutshell.

Starting pitcher Brett Anderson left the game after two innings with tightness in his left elbow, a bad development considering the left-hander was making his second start since coming off the disabled list for an elbow-related injury.

Shortly after Anderson's exit, right fielder Ryan Sweeney left with dizziness after he collided with second baseman Mark Ellis as both chased Kevin Youkilis' foul pop-up in the third.

Those injuries put a damper on a wild win for the A's, who got two home runs from Kurt Suzuki and four overall. Oakland avoided a three-game sweep at Fenway Park and closed a challenging 10-game road trip with a winning record at 6-4.

"Obviously I'm happy with the win and a great road trip," A's manager Bob Geren said. "We'll see where we're at tomorrow with Brett."

Anderson, signed to a four-year, \$12.5 million contract extension April 16, said he felt tightness in his elbow beginning in the second inning.

He looked dominant against Detroit on Saturday, his first start since missing five weeks because of a strained forearm and elbow inflammation.

His pitches didn't have the same life Thursday, and Vin Mazzaro relieved him to start the third inning.

Anderson is set to be examined by a doctor today.

"It's kind of like a re-occurring of what happened last time," Anderson said. "It's tough to tell how it is. ... My slider just wasn't the same. At-bats where there's two strikes, it's usually a putaway pitch. But I just left it over the middle."

Sweeney went to a Boston-area medical center to get tests, which came out negative, according to Geren. Sweeney's status is unknown as the A's begin a seven-game homestand tonight against the Minnesota Twins.

Take away those injuries, and there was much for the A's to like.

Their four homers were their most since hitting five at Minnesota on Sept. 11 of last season.

Jack Cust went deep for the first time since being recalled from Triple-A Sacramento on May 15. His eighth-inning blast was followed by Kevin Kouzmanoff's solo shot, the first time the A's have hit consecutive homers this season.

Geren had to call on a depleted bullpen early, yet the A's withstood Boston's 18-hit attack. Andrew Bailey was called on for a six-out save. The 18 hits tied the Oakland record for most allowed in a nine-inning win.

Credit two big plays where the A's threw out runners at home. Victor Martinez was nailed in the third while trying to score from first on Youkilis' double. Suzuki made a terrific play, scooping a short-hop relay throw from shortstop Cliff Pennington and applying the tag as Martinez slid by.

Right fielder Gabe Gross threw out Darnell McDonald in the fourth as McDonald tried scoring from second on Jeremy Hermida's single.

Mazzaro (1-0) gave up nine hits and three runs in 3 1/3 innings but still got the victory. He may be ticketed for the minors if the A's need to call up a fresh arm for the bullpen.

The A's will cross their fingers on the injury front and take comfort that they've more than held their own during this ongoing stretch of 20 games without a day off.

"It'll be nice to go home and get healthy," Bailey said.

TODAY: Twins (Scott Baker 5-4) at A's (Dallas Braden 4-5), 7:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

Chin Music: Elbow soreness for Anderson; Sweeney leaves with dizziness

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/3/2010 11:45AM

The announcement on Brett Anderson was left elbow soreness, which isn't surprising considering the injury that put him on the DL was a combo strained forearm/elbow inflammation. Obviously not a good development for the A's.

And shortly after he left, right fielder Ryan Sweeney exited the game after a collision with second baseman Mark Ellis on a foul pop-up. Sweeney made a sliding attempt and Ellis' thigh appeared to hit him in the head. Sweeney was taken out for precautionary reasons after he said he had dizziness.

Gabe Gross switched from left field to right, and just threw out Darnell McDonald on a play at home. The A's have thrown two guys out at home and we're only in the fourth inning.

Chin Music: A's Brett Anderson leaves after two innings vs. Red Sox; no explanation yet

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 6/3/2010 11:15AM

Brett Anderson left today's game after just two innings, being relieved by Vin Mazzaro. We haven't heard a reason yet, but I'll update when we get word. This was Anderson's second start since coming off the DL for a strained forearm. He looked terrific in 5 2/3 shutout innings Saturday against Detroit. Afterward, he said he had mild arm soreness but that he thought it was normal postgame stuff. ...

Chin Music: A's pregame notes for road trip finale

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/3/2010 10:23AM

There's something about Boston that always makes for great cab stories. I've encountered some of the friendliest and chattiest cabbies in this city. This morning was a different story. I'm not saying the guy who drove me and the Chronicle's Scott Ostler to Fenway had road rage, but he was weaving in and out of traffic like it was the final lap at Daytona. I even heard him swearing under his breath. Maybe the guy was having a bad day, or, as Scott mentioned, maybe he saw the luggage I was carrying and assumed he would get a lucrative airport fare. Either way, he got us to the ballpark quick and we survived ...

On to baseball ...

-It was a pretty slow morning in the A's clubhouse, with many of the players watching highlights and reaction of the Armando Galarraga/Jim Joyce fiasco from last night. You gotta like the way both Galarraga and Joyce have handled things in the aftermath, wouldn't you say?

-Jack Cust, who has yet to homer since being called up May 15, could use a breakout game. Manager Bob Geren is hopeful today could be it. Cust is 8-for-19 career against Red Sox knuckleballer Tim Wakefield. You may have noticed Boston is playing the "lefty shift" on Cust. The Sox are the first team to do so since Cust was promoted from the minors. Cust beat the shift one time Tuesday, punching a single to the left side. And he tried to drop a bunt down yesterday but fouled it off. Overall, I don't think Cust is the kind of hitter who should try to change too much. The A's need him to start knocking the ball over the fence, and homers will beat any shift. ...

Here's the lineups:

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

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

Drumbeat: correction

Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/3/2010 12:38PM

In last post, it should have been Ryan Sweeney complaining of dizziness, not Brett Anderson. Anderson: removed with sore arm. Sweeney: removed with sore head.

2 A's Down!

Posted 11:21AM

Third inning, the A's suddenly lose two players. Starter Brett Anderson does not take the mound to open the third, is replaced by Vin Mazzaro. Reason: left elbow soreness. Anderson recently came off the DL, having suffered elbow and forearm soreness.

Then in the bottom of the inning, Ryan Sweeney and Mark Ellis collided chasing a high foul pop off the bat of Victor Martinez. Sweeney's head collide with Ellis' leg, and after a quick look from the trainer, Bob Geren signaled for Eric Patterson to replace Sweeney, with Patterson playing left and Gabe Gross moving to right. Anderson complained of dizziness.

Last Gasp

Posted 9:35AM

"Pivotal game" is such a terrible cliché. But what the hell, let's haul it out for today's game at Fenway.

A's lose and they fly home on a three-game losing streak, having squandered three chances to log a winning record on the longest road trip of the year.

Win and they're 6-4 on an arduous trip against two elite teams (Tigers and Red Sox) and one not-elite team.

And they started the trip by losing Coco Crisp. So it would be a statement of sorts.

Before the game the A's were checking out the previous night's "perfect game" on the clubhouse tv. They had pretty much same reaction as the rest of us.

Bob Geren had an interesting comment. He noted that Tiger manager Jim Leyland could have asked Jim Joyce if maybe he had a tough angle on the play, maybe he could check with the second-base ump.

Geren has done that three times this season, gotten calls against the A's reversed by convincing ump's to get a second opinion. Granted, the perfect-game call was of routine nature, it would be hard for Joyce to say he got angled out or whatever, but it's an idea.

Leyland, though, was probably too worked up in that situation to either think of that or to be calm enough to broach the idea with Joyce.

Winning road trip proves A's mettle

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer

Friday, June 4, 2010



(06-04) 04:00 PDT BOSTON -- After the Oakland A's beat the Red Sox 9-8 on Thursday in an absolute shootout at Fenway Park, the normal on-field hand-slaps and handshakes of the winning team were mixed with hugs. Kevin Kouzmanoff hugged Daric Barton. Manager Bob Geren wrapped designated hitter Jack Cust in a huge bear hug. This was much more than a normal win.

This was the capper on the Road Trip of Death, and the A's flew back to the West Coast on Thursday night with a 6-4 record on the trip, and a road grit and a self-belief they seemed to lack 10 days earlier.

You aren't legit until you can take your game on the road, so the A's showed something.

The baseball gods seemed to be smiling on the A's, since three of their wins on the trip, including Thursday's, were wedged into very tiny good-weather windows. About an hour after the sunshiny/muggy game, a thunderstorm blasted Boston.

Ah, but those fickle gods work both sides of the fence. The A's most exciting and meaningful win of the season was potentially a dark day for the club. With the Oakland A's, once you hear the good news you always have to say with a grimace, "OK, now give me the medical report."

It's not good.

Starting pitcher Brett Anderson left the game after two innings with a sore left arm, the same soreness that put him on the disabled list for a month. Anderson, potentially the team's best pitcher and its ace of the future, will be examined today.

Also, right fielder Ryan Sweeney left Thursday's game with a possible concussion. He banged his head on the knee of second baseman Mark Ellis as they chased a foul pop. Sweeney was dizzy and disoriented, and was taken to a medical facility for examination.

Until the A's get the medical reports, though, they are going to chalk up this trip as a success, a possible turning point in the season, a gut-check that they passed.

An A's MVP for the trip? Plenty of legit candidates, including:

-- Catcher Kurt Suzuki hit two homers Thursday and nimbly tagged out two Red Sox trying to score. Suzuki also hit a homer Wednesday and finished with six hits and five RBIs in three games at Boston.

-- First baseman Daric Barton hit in all 10 games, including six extra-base hits, and had six RBIs.

-- Rajai Davis, assuming the leadoff role when Coco Crisp went on the DL, had 13 hits, nine stolen bases and scored eight runs in nine games.

-- Gabe Gross left Oakland with a .196 batting average and went 14-for-31 on the trip. He dramatically "stole" a home run in Detroit and threw out a runner at home Thursday.

-- Ellis had 11 hits over the trip's final seven games.

On Thursday, the A's hit four homers for the first time all year, including Cust's first, in his 16th game.

Fittingly, closer Andrew Bailey supplied the final close-out heroics, a six-out save, his 12th in 14 tries. He entered the action in the eighth with two men on and retired three of the game's best hitters - Kevin Youkilis, Adrian Beltre and the preposterously hot David Ortiz on a strikeout.

"I love that matchup (with Ortiz) anytime," said Bailey. "Big power hitter, with the game on the line, that's what the game's all about."

Suzuki said of Bailey, "He always rises to the occasion. With Bailey, it's pretty simple. 'Here it is, hit it if you can.' "

The Red Sox pound the ball. They had 18 hits Thursday.

"It's a different brand of baseball," Bailey said.

But the A's survived it, and over 10 days they made a statement. Now for the medical reports.

Trip at a glance

Some stats from the A's 10-game trip through Baltimore, Detroit and Boston:

-- Posted a 6-4 record.

-- Hit .285 as a team, collecting double-digit hits in six games.

-- Starting pitchers posted a 3.64 ERA.

-- Homered in eight games.

Anderson wore pain on face but didn't want to come out

Scott Ostler, Chronicle Staff Writer

Friday, June 4, 2010



(06-04) 04:00 PDT Boston -- Catcher **Kurt Suzuki** didn't like what he saw early Thursday - the subtle grimaces in the face of A's starter **Brett Anderson** and the swings the Sox were putting on Anderson's pitches. Suzuki went to Anderson in the dugout.

"I'm not coming out of the game," Anderson told his catcher.

"I've got to tell 'em (the manager and the pitching coach)," Suzuki said.

"I don't want to come out, but it's your call," Anderson said. So Suzuki told manager **Bob Geren**, "I don't think Brett's right."

That was it for Anderson.

"The first inning, it was OK," Anderson said. "The second inning it was a lot worse."

Anderson recently spent a month on the disabled list with elbow and forearm soreness. His first game back for the A's was a dominating win in Detroit.

Brandon Inge of the Tigers said then, "I was watching (**Carlos**) **Guillen** before me, and (Anderson) threw him some incredible sliders that went down on his back foot. ... The way he was pitching to other guys was unbelievable. He's going to be very, very good. I like the way he holds himself. You can kind of tell he's got a very good makeup. ... It's fun to watch him."

On Thursday, Anderson felt soreness in the same spot as the DL injury. The A's may have feared the worst, but they hoped the month off would be a cure. With repeat arm injuries, the next step is often surgery. In this case, one possible scenario would be flexor-tendon surgery, with a (roughly) six-month rehab.

The A's signed Anderson, their most talented starter and just 22 years old, to a three-year contract extension through 2013 in mid-April. Since the signing, he had one start, then went on the DL, then the recent return.

Pitching is the A's strength, but they've already lost **Justin Duchscherer** to season-ending hip surgery.

After the A's took two of three in Detroit, Tigers manager **Jim Leyland** said, "With the kind of pitching they have, if they can get in (the playoffs), they'll be tough to handle."

Crisp not ready: **Coco Crisp** is eligible to come off the DL on Monday, but he won't be ready to play. His intercostal rib-muscle strain is improving, but as of Thursday he had not resumed baseball activities. Once he is healthy, the A's center

fielder (or so was the plan) will need rehab games in the minors. He missed the first 42 games of the season with a broken pinkie.

Hated in Boston: Suzuki has started 23 career games against the Red Sox and has hit successfully in all 23 - 34 hits. Plus, he's 1-for-2 as a pinch-hitter.

Near-perfecto react: Geren noted that one option in the case of an apparent blown call by an ump is to ask that ump to ask another ump for help. Geren has had three calls reversed this season in that fashion.

Politeness is the key, as in: Perhaps you were screened out of a clear view of that play. ... Would you consider ... ?

That's a tough option, though, on a clear-view play like the one **Jim Joyce** blew Wednesday. And Tigers skipper Leyland was not in a polite mood.

A's LEADING OFF

Friday, June 4, 2010

Close call: Oakland third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff chased a popup to the lip of the A's dugout, stepped down onto the first step and kept going. He missed the ball, but survived the high-speed descent down 10 steps and into the clubhouse tunnel without falling.

A'S FUTURE

Finding their way at plate in Triple-A

[Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

Friday, June 4, 2010



(06-04) 04:00 PDT Sacramento -- June or July, those were the months many thought Michael Taylor and Chris Carter would be getting the call - the Buster Poseys of the A's, if you will.

Yet as June gets under way, there is little evidence that either of Oakland's top two prospects will be in the major leagues any time soon. The A's are playing well, while outfielder Taylor and first baseman Carter are trying to get into a groove at Triple-A Sacramento.

Taylor, 24, came to the A's last winter as an offshoot of the Roy Halladay/Cliff Lee multiteam deal, in which Oakland sent third baseman Brett Wallace to Toronto. Taylor, at 6-foot-6, 260 pounds, was advertised as a five-tool phenom and compared to players such as Jermaine Dye for his size, speed and strength.

The way he's playing right now, however, has left him frustrated.

"You have these situations, where you think, 'Am I ever going to be good again?' And then you click for 200 at-bats," said Taylor, who is batting .244 with two homers and 25 RBIs in 39 games.

The onetime Stanford outfielder has been slowed by a calf injury that landed him on Sacramento's disabled list for nearly three weeks. He's been back in action since Saturday but frustrated by the fact that he has yet to get locked in. He said he's having trouble getting comfortable in his setup at the plate - and on those days he's comfortable, he's not seeing the ball well.

"I'd love to be hitting .360 with 10 homers," Taylor said at Raley Field this week. "I'm trying to figure it out. That locked-in feeling is just not there. I woke up one day and didn't have that feeling, and I've been searching for it since."

Carter, 23, also came to Oakland in a major trade, the A's big haul from Arizona for starter Dan Haren, which also brought in left-hander Brett Anderson and outfielder Carlos Gonzalez, among others. Carter, 6-5 and 230 pounds, wasn't the centerpiece of the deal, but the A's believed he'd be a good big-league power hitter.

Like Taylor, Carter has had some trouble getting going, but his slow start comes with an asterisk: Even with a .240 average, he's got 12 homers and 44 RBIs, putting him atop the Pacific Coast League.

"If he's going to hit for home runs and RBIs, who cares about the average?" said one American League scout at a River Cats game this week. "Or the strikeouts? The A's don't care - they've got Jack Cust, so you know that won't bother them."

"It's hard to say a guy with those numbers is struggling," Taylor said of Carter. "But there's more there."

Carter has 63 strikeouts in 200 at-bats, and another AL scout said he believes Carter has too much of a loop in his swing. He said that while Carter feasts on low fastballs, he has trouble with high heat and breaking stuff on the outside part of the plate.

Sacramento manager Tony DeFrancesco agreed that Carter must get a better grasp of the strike zone, but he believes he'll wind up with a .270 average and lead the league in RBIs. Carter said this week that he's working on starting earlier, making sure he's ready. But the main thing for him, he said, is "I try to keep it simple. I feel like I'm getting there."

The primary knock on Carter is his defense, and the scout who raved about his RBIs and homers said Carter appears to have taken a step back in the field. On Tuesday against Tacoma, Carter made a terrific diving stop on a hard-hit ball down the first-base line, but the following inning he failed to make a play on a little popup.

Carter also has spent some time in the outfield, but that's not considered a great fit for him. Many believe that Carter will be best suited as a designated hitter.

DeFrancesco doesn't accept teamwide slow starts as an excuse, but he said Carter and Taylor "have so much more to offer. We're just waiting for both of those guys to light it up. Everyone has such high expectations for them, but sometimes it's just not that easy."

The A's remain high on both players. They are imposing right-handed hitters, and right-handed power hitting is something that over the years, Oakland has had trouble finding. DeFrancesco called Carter "a quiet assassin," and director of player personnel Billy Owens described Carter and Taylor as "a combustible combination. They're bookends, right there.

"Taylor has a more short, line-drive stroke, and Carter has gargantuan power, like a right-handed Ryan Howard," Owens said.

The rest of the River Cats know that Carter and Taylor are the team's surefire big leaguers. "Both of them are still trying to find it, but everyone knows they have all the talent to be everyday major-league players," said catcher Josh Donaldson, who recently had his first call-up to Oakland. "Just wait until they really get going."

Suzuki's first two-homer game lifts A's

Cust, Kouzmanoff go back-to-back in first for team this year

By Mike Petraglia / Special to MLB.com

BOSTON -- Kurt Suzuki had the first multiple-homer game of his career and drove in three runs as the A's salvaged the finale of their three-game series against the Red Sox with a 9-8 win Thursday afternoon at Fenway Park.

Jack Cust and Kevin Kouzmanoff went back-to-back in the eighth inning off Red Sox reliever Manny Delcarmen on consecutive pitches, marking the first time Oakland has accomplished the feat this year.

The four homers were also the most for the A's since belting five on Sept. 11, 2009, at Minnesota.

Vin Mazzaro (1-0) entered the game to start the third inning and earned the win after left-hander Brett Anderson had to leave after two innings and 36 pitches with left elbow soreness.

Mazzaro scattered nine hits and allowed three runs over his 3 1/3 innings before giving way to Brad Ziegler, Jerry Blevins and Andrew Bailey.

Suzuki homered in his first two plate appearances against knuckleballer Tim Wakefield (1-4).

The A's benefited from outstanding outfield defense as two Red Sox runners were thrown out at the plate with none out. In the third, left fielder Eric Patterson -- who entered the game moments earlier after Ryan Sweeney left with an injury -- fielded a double by Kevin Youkilis and threw to shortstop Cliff Pennington, who then fired to Suzuki at the plate to nail Victor Martinez.

One inning later, Gabe Gross, filling in for Sweeney in right field, threw out Darnell McDonald at the plate for the first out, as the Red Sox were held to just one run combined in the two innings.

Bailey entered the game in the eighth, with runners at first and second and none out, and got two fly outs and struck out David Ortiz to protect the lead.

Thursday's win was significant for the A's as they finished their 10-game road trip with a winning record, compiling a 6-4 mark through Baltimore, Detroit and Boston.

Anderson, Sweeney exit game early

Right fielder collided with second baseman going for foul pop

By Mike Petraglia / Special to MLB.com

BOSTON -- It was a rough and tumble start to the end of the road trip for the Athletics on Thursday at Fenway Park.

First, Brett Anderson, one of the most reliable pitchers for the A's as they have hovered around first place in the American League West, had to leave after just two innings with left elbow soreness.

Anderson allowed five hits and two runs while striking out one over his two innings. He threw just 36 pitches, 23 for strikes. He left with his team trailing, 2-1.

Then, in the bottom of the third, while attempting to make a sliding catch on a Kevin Youkilis foul pop along the right-field line, Ryan Sweeney took a knee to the head from second baseman Mark Ellis and had to leave.

Sweeney complained of dizziness and was taken out of the game as a precaution, according to the team.

Eric Patterson came into the game to play left field while Gabe Gross moved over to right field to take Sweeney's spot.

Joyce restores integrity, Braden says

A's perfect pitcher unsure how he would react in same spot

By Mike Petraglia / Special to MLB.com

BOSTON -- While most of the baseball world is offering its opinions on what Major League Baseball should do in the wake of Jim Joyce apologizing to the Tigers' Armando Galarraga after the near-perfect game Wednesday night, one A's pitcher is uniquely qualified to offer his.

"I can just imagine how stressful the probably hour-and-a-half prior to that had been," Dallas Braden said before Thursday's game at Fenway Park. "I understand exactly what he was going through, what he was feeling. Obviously, just a slight miscalculation, but what he did afterward, what Jim Joyce did afterward, has only improved the integrity of the game, because I think a lot of other people might have just hid behind the facade of 'umpires are never wrong.'

"We all know they make mistakes. They know they make mistakes, but he stepped up and admitted it. That's all you can ask out of a guy like that, because he's one of the best in the game. We all know it, and we all have a tremendous amount of respect for him, and even more so now."

Braden said he can't imagine a pitcher handling himself any better than Galarraga did after coming so close to becoming the 21st big league pitcher to hurl a perfect game.

"As far as Galarraga is concerned, he did absolutely what you should do in that situation: Turn a blind eye to it and go get the next out," Braden said.

"I'd love to say that I would know how I would react, but I can't. I can't tell you, because I've never had anything like that happen. To be on the brink of something so special and not quite get there. I don't know how I would react. I really can't put myself in his shoes, but hats off to both of them again, because it speaks to the integrity of the game and the integrity of those two men, because he could've easily let it snowball and lost control of it for himself and the team, but he got the next out pretty quickly and put a win up."

Crisp will need rehab games before return

BOSTON -- A's manager Bob Geren indicated that Coco Crisp (intercostal injury in his rib cage near the right side) is getting closer to returning to baseball activity but will need rehab games before returning to the A's.

"He's feeling a lot better," Geren said Thursday, but he ruled out Crisp returning immediately to the team. "That won't happen. He'll definitely need some [Minor League] games."

Crisp was placed on the disabled list on May 26 retroactive to May 23. It's his second stint on the disabled list this year. He was on the DL from April 3 to May 20 with a fractured left pinky.

"This isn't like the finger. He'll need to get a feel for the game again and test that side," Geren said.

Crisp is technically eligible to come off the disabled list Tuesday.

Meanwhile, right-hander Joey Devine (Tommy John surgery rehab) threw on flat ground between 140 and 160 feet on Wednesday after a side session on Monday of 30-35 pitches in Phoenix.

Crisp and Devine are in Phoenix along with third baseman Eric Chavez (neck), rehabbing their injuries while on the disabled list.

A's claim third baseman Heether off waivers

BOSTON -- The A's claimed third baseman Adam Heether off waivers on Thursday from the Milwaukee Brewers and optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento. To clear a spot on the 40-man roster, the A's transferred Justin Duchscherer (left hip) to the 60-day disabled list.

Heether, 28, was batting .245 with nine home runs and 28 RBIs in 50 games with Triple-A Nashville. He was leading the Sounds in home runs and walks (23) and was tied for the team lead in runs scored (30).

The right-handed hitter played all 50 of his games at third base. Heether was originally drafted by Milwaukee in the 11th round of the 2003 First-Year Player Draft and combined to hit .296 with 18 home runs and 71 RBIs in 121 games between Nashville and Double-A Huntsville in 2009.

Kurt Suzuki's 2 HRs lead A's to 9-8 win over Red Sox

Associated Press

Kurt Suzuki hit two of Oakland's four homers as the Athletics showed unusual power in overcoming Boston's 18-hit attack and holding on to beat the Red Sox 9-8 on Thursday.

The A's entered the game with 33 homers, the third-fewest in the majors, and hit more than two in a game for the first time this season. In their 15 previous games, they had just eight.

But they wasted little time clearing the fences in this game.

Suzuki homered in his first two at-bats against Tim Wakefield (1-4), a solo shot in the second inning and a two-run homer in the fourth. Then, with Oakland leading 7-5 in the eighth, Jack Cust and Kevin Kouzmanoff hit homers on consecutive pitches by Manny Delcarmen, who began the day as the AL leader with a .128 batting average by opponents.

That made it 9-5 before Boston scored a run in the seventh on Bill Hall's RBI groundout and another in the eighth on Marco Scutaro's third homer of the year. Dustin Pedroia followed that with a walk and Victor Martinez singled.

Then Andrew Bailey came in and retired the next three batters, finishing by striking out David Ortiz, who had eight homers in his previous 17 games. Bailey allowed Hall's solo homer in the ninth but finished for his 12th save in 14 opportunities.

Vin Mazzaro (1-0) got the win after replacing starter Brett Anderson, who left with a sore left elbow, after two innings.

Oakland had 14 hits, seven for extra bases. Boston had 10 extra-base hits. Hall had four hits and Kevin Youkilis and Jeremy Hermida each had three for the Red Sox. But they had two runners thrown out at home plate.

Adrian Beltre's RBI single gave Boston a 1-0 lead in the first before Suzuki's homer tied it. The Red Sox made it 2-1 in the bottom of the second on a run-scoring groundout by Scutaro.

Then the A's scored four runs in the fourth for a 5-2 lead on a two-run double by Mark Ellis and the two-run homer by Suzuki, his seventh of the season.

Oakland added a run in the sixth on Gabe Gross' RBI single, but Boston cut the lead to 6-4 in the bottom of the inning on Hermida's fifth homer of the year, a two-run shot. The A's made it 7-5 in the seventh when Ellis walked, took second on Cliff Pennington's sacrifice and scored when third baseman Beltre fielded Rajai Davis' ground ball single and threw wildly past first base for an error.

NOTES: With the Celtics facing the Lakers in Los Angeles in the opener of the NBA finals Thursday night, the crowd chanted "Beat L.A." several times during the game. ... Anderson allowed two runs on five hits after holding teams scoreless in three of his previous five starts. ... Lefties Ortiz and J.D. Drew, two of Boston's hottest hitters, did not start against lefty Anderson but pinch hit in the seventh. ... Wakefield's six innings gave him 2,769 2-3 in his Red Sox career, second to Roger Clemens' 2,776.

Time for baseball to adopt instant replay

By: GLENN DICKEY, Special to The Examiner

SAN FRANCISCO — The blown call that cost Armando Galarraga a perfect game has revived calls for more use of instant replay, as it should. Commercial television long ago exposed the myth that baseball umpires always get it right.

The worst call, in terms of what it meant at the most important time was Don Denkinger's blown call in the 1985 World Series, which was watched by millions on national television.

Jorge Orta of the Kansas City Royals hit a grounder to St. Louis Cardinals first baseman Jack Clark, who tossed to pitcher Todd Worrell before Orta hit the bag. But umpire Don Denkinger called Orta safe. The Royals were trailing in the Series 3-2, but that gave them the chance to win that game 2-1. They won the Series the next day.

Baseball umpiring, in theory, should be easier than football or basketball officiating, where officials are often on the move when they're making calls. Both home plate and base umpires are set and looking at a specific area.

Usually, they get it right. When the Giants and Padres played at AT&T on May 13, Padres pitcher Mat Latos was perfect for five innings. Eli Whiteside led off the bottom of the sixth and hit a liner back to the mound, which was deflected off Latos' glove.

Third baseman Chase Headley made a snap throw to first, but Whiteside was ruled safe in a bang-bang play.

In the press box, we weren't sure, but television replays showed the umpire got the call right.

Ten days later, I saw A's catcher Kurt Suzuki catch a tipped ball which should have been strike three, but the plate umpire called it a foul ball — and the first base umpire agreed. A's manager Bob Geren was thrown out for protesting.

This is an example of the worst change in umpiring, their quick triggers. Managers such as Earl Weaver and Bobby Cox used to argue calls, and it was just part of the game.

No longer. Umpires have very short fuses. Houston pitcher Roy Oswalt got thrown out of a game this week by a home plate umpire — even though Oswalt was talking to the first base umpire. The first thing hitters and pitchers do is find out what the strike zone is that day. Forget the rule book. Individual umpires set their own strike zones.

Jim Joyce, the umpire who blew the call on Galarraga, is not in that category. He is widely respected, and he apologized to Galarraga after the game.

"I thought it was the right call when I made it," he said, "but when I saw the replay, I realized I was wrong."

Exactly. The key words are "when I saw the replay."

There's no reason to restrict umpires from reviewing calls. The lament about "losing the human element" is ludicrous. Baseball will always be played by humans. It won't be a computer game. But we have the technology to review calls. It should be used.

The NFL went to instant replay after a blown call in an AFC Championship between the Broncos and Raiders. Hopefully, this blown call will be the impetus for baseball to get out of the 19th century.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento gets the perfect cheer in victory

06/04/2010 2:06 AM ET

By Annie Becker / Sacramento River Cats

Perhaps Peggy Lindsey brought Sacramento some perfect game magic.

The grandmother of pitcher Dallas Braden, the former River Cat who threw a perfect game on Mother's Day this year, helped Raley Field celebrate her grandson's historic feat by tossing out the first pitch Thursday night. The River Cats followed with a 10-2 victory over the Tacoma Rainiers, ending a two-game home losing streak for Sacramento.

Braden, who played for Sacramento in 2007-08, became the 19th pitcher in MLB history to deliver a perfect game when he lifted the Oakland A's past the Tampa Bay Rays on May 9.

A six-run second inning, which including Corey Wimberly extending his consecutive on-base streak to 31 games, helped Sacramento capture its first win of this four-game series that concludes Friday at 7:05 p.m.

Matt Mangini's two-run homer in the second inning gave Tacoma something to cheer early, but the Rainiers would be shut down over the next five innings by Sacramento starter Clay Mortensen (7-2, 4.30).

Michael Taylor's RBI in the bottom of the second scored Josh Donaldson, who opened the inning with a walk. The Cats went on to score five more in the inning, including two runs off a Michael Affronti bases-loaded double to the center-field wall. Tacoma starter Ryan Feierabend balked with one out, advancing Corey Wimberly to second and scoring Affronti. Wimberly then stole third and scored on a wild throw from the catcher.

"I am always extremely happy to get the win," said Taylor, who went 2-for-2 with two walks, two runs and an RBI. Taylor, who recently returned from a left calf strain, is riding a four-game hitting streak. "This is the best I have felt and it is a step in the right direction to continue to be aggressively ready every day."

Donaldson and Chris Carter continued to keep the bats hot for the Cats in the third with back-to-back doubles, scoring Donaldson.

Mortensen, who is now tied for the league lead in victories with seven, gave Tacoma hope in the fifth inning, loading the bases with one out. He escaped the inning with a pop up and swinging strike out of Brad Nelson.

"After walking two and loading the bases, I just had to take a step back and minimize the damage," Mortensen said.

Mortensen gave up two runs - all in the first inning -- over 7.0 innings before being replaced by Marcus McBeth, who pitched two scoreless innings to close the game.

Matt Watson continued to shine, adding his third home run in seven games with the River Cats. The solo shot over the center-field wall in the fifth inning was the eighth River Cat run of the night. Sacramento added two more runs in the eighth.

Sacramento will look to split the series against Tacoma on Friday night at 7:05 p.m.

RockHounds on a roll, beat Drillers 2-1

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

TULSA, Okla. -- For the fifth time in the last eight games, the Midland RockHounds pulled out a victory.

Three RockHounds pitchers combined to strand 10 Tulsa Drillers on base in a 2-1 victory Thursday at ONEOK Field in Tulsa.

Ryan Edell picked up the win, giving up one earned run on five hits and two walks. Jason Ray and Jared Lansford each gave up one hit over two innings of work. Lansford picked up his fifth save of the season.

All three runs in the game were scored in the fourth inning. Archie Gilbert put Midland up 1-0 with a sac fly to left that scored Alex Valdez and was followed by a solo home run by Corey Brown.

Tulsa responded with a run in the bottom of the fourth, when Warren Schaeffer doubled to right, scoring Wilin Rosario.

The two teams wrap up a three-game series at 7:05 p.m. today.

Ports Push Falls Short In 4-3 Loss

VISALIA, Calif. - When examining the Stockton Ports' Thursday night loss to the Visalia Rawhide, it's to tell where the Boys of Banner Island fell short. Stockton went 0-for-3 with runners at third base and less than two outs and yielded four two-out runs in a 4-2 loss, one that snapped an eight-game losing streak for Visalia.

The Ports had an ominous beginning to their night in the first. Jermaine Mitchell hit the game's first pitch to left field and outfielder Marc Krauss lost the ball in the sunlight. The ball went off his glove and all the way to the wall, putting Mitchell at third with nobody out. Rawhide starter Taylor Sinclair would escape the jam unscathed by striking out Grant Green and Todd Johnson back-to-back, then getting Mike Spina to ground to short to end the inning.

Visalia, in their half of the first, would take advantage of the error they were given. With two on and two out after two walks from Ports starter Ben Hornbeck, Green had a ball hit by Krauss go under his glove and into center, allowing Byron Wiley to score and giving the Rawhide a 1-0 lead.

The Rawhide extended their lead to 2-0 in the second on a two-out solo home run to right from Rossmel Perez.

Hornbeck went on to walk a season-high five batters on the night, but allowed just the two runs on three hits in receiving a no-decision after going 4.1 innings.

Stockton finally scratched the surface with two down in the fifth. With two on and two out, Green tripled to right-center to score Ryan Ortiz and Mitchell and tie the game at two.

Those were the only two runs allowed by Sinclair, who also received a no-decision after going 5.1 innings and allowing two runs on five hits while striking out six.

Stockton had another golden opportunity fall by the wayside in the sixth inning. The Ports put runners at the corners with one out on a walk and infield single, knocking Sinclair from the game. Billy Spottiswood (3-2) was summoned from the bullpen and he escaped the jam, getting Jeremy Barfield to pop to first and Ortiz to strike out.

Tied 2-2, Visalia took the lead for good in the seventh. Andrew Carignan (2-2), who got the final two outs of the sixth, loaded the bases with one out on a single and two walks. After a fielder's choice force-out at home for the second out, Trey Barham came on from the 'pen and gave up a single to Wiley that scored Perez from third. Chris Davis, who was trying to score from second, was thrown out at the plate by Barfield to end the inning.

Carignan would take the loss after being charged with the go-ahead run in 1.1 innings of work.

Visalia would pad their lead in the eighth with a two-out RBI single from Alfredo Marte coming off Fautino De Los Santos-the only run De Los Santos would allow in two innings of work.

The Ports made a final push in the top of the ninth against Rawhide reliever Bryan Woodall (SV, 4). With one out, Barfield drew a walk which was followed by a single from Ortiz (who was lifted for pinch-runner Michael Richard). Shane Keough, with runners at second and third, came up next and hit a single to right. Barfield scored on the play, and the throw from right field was cut off and redirected to third in time to get Richard for the inning's second out. Mitchell would follow with a single to center, but Green would end the game by grounding into a fielder's choice force-out at short.

Woodall was credited with the save, but the run he allowed in the ninth was the first earned run he's allowed on the season (23 innings).

Stockton and Visalia will play the second game of their four-game set on Friday night at Recreation Park. Mike Madsen (0-0, 0.00 ERA) will make his first start for the Ports in 2010 coming from Extended Spring Training. He'll be opposed by Rawhide right-hander Chase Anderson (1-2, 3.00 ERA). First pitch is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

Cougars Rout Dragons to Win Series

Marks' mound work, Dixon's bat lead Kane County to winning set

DAYTON, Ohio – With seven shutout innings from Justin Marks and every position reaching base safely, the Kane County Cougars cruised to a 9-3 victory Thursday night at Fifth Third against the Dayton Dragons. The win snapped the Cougars' four-series losing streak and marked the first time they won consecutive games since May 14-15. Rashun Dixon homered and drove in three to lead another balanced offensive attack.

Marks (2-6) notched his first win since May 8. This was his third quality start, and in each one he has tossed shutout baseball. He gave up four hits, walked one and fanned five in the victory. Jose Pina gave up the three Dayton runs over the final two frames of the contest.

Dixon belted a two-run homer in the second off Josh Ravin (2-6) to give the Cougars a lead they never gave way. In the third, Anthony Aliotti drew a bases-loaded walk, Dixon poked an RBI fielder's choice and Nino Leyja drilled a two-run single to make it 6-0. Myrio Richard smoked a two-run single in the fourth, and Aliotti's fielder' choice in the fifth accounted for the Cougars' final run. The team had nine hits, drew 11 walks and stranded 13 runners.

The Cougars (24-31) continue their six-game road trip Friday night at 7:05 with the franchise's first-eve series with the Bowling Green Hot Rods (22-31), one of two new Midwest League clubs. Ian Krol (2-2, 1.90) will face Jason McEachern (2-5, 4.35). The game will be broadcast online at www.kccougars.com with pregame coverage starting at 6:50 p.m.