

Oakland A's fall to Twins in 11

By Curtis Pashelka_Oakland Tribune

What seemed less likely for the A's? That they would already have nine home runs for the month or that Dallas Braden would still be searching for another win almost four weeks after he pitched a perfect game?

Both figured to be longshots, but that's exactly where things stand after the A's lost 5-4 to the Minnesota Twins in 11 innings on Friday night before an announced crowd of 21,703 at the Oakland Coliseum.

Kevin Kouzmanoff and Rajai Davis both homered for the A's to raise the team's total for June to nine, but Braden gave up four earned runs in 6 1/3 innings to remain 0-3 since he retired 27 straight Tampa Bay Rays on May 9.

And one day after he pitched the final two innings against Boston, closer Andrew Bailey came on in the 11th inning and gave up a double to Justin Morneau and an RBI single to Delmon Young as the A's opened their seven-game homestand on a sour note.

Before Friday, the A's had scored a combined four runs in Braden's last four starts.

"Dallas always keeps us in games. That's who he is and that's what he does," Bailey said. "The offense will turn around for him, I'm sure."

Braden allowed a two-run homer to Morneau in the top of the first inning but was more upset by Young's RBI double in the sixth that gave the Twins a 4-1 lead.

Braden said his left ankle, which was problematic enough for him to leave his May 25 start against Baltimore after just four innings, is "by no means 100 percent."

But he wasn't looking to make excuses after his fifth straight start without a win.

"More times than not, I haven't been crushed or hit extremely hard," said Braden, whose lone poor outing during this stretch was on Sunday as Detroit touched him for 11 hits and five earned runs in six innings in a 10-2 win. "It's been the ones that fall in. That's the game of baseball."

With Justin Duchscherer having season-ending hip surgery on Monday and Brett Anderson out for an indefinite period with left elbow tendinitis, the A's certainly would like Braden to regain the form he showed in April when he went 3-1 in five starts.

Anderson went on the 15-day DL Friday, meaning the A's have used the disabled list 15 times so far this season. The Oakland record is 25 times in 2008.

That leaves the 26-year-old Braden as the second oldest A's starter behind the 31-year-old Ben Sheets.

"We just need to get some runs for him. He threw the ball OK," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He made one mistake to Morneau and (the Twins) linked a couple hits later. We did get runs, they were just a little bit late for him."

Limited to four hits over the first six innings by Twins starter Scott Baker, the A's got a two-run homer from Kouzmanoff in the seventh and a solo homer from Davis in the eighth to tie the game 4-4. For Kouzmanoff, it was his third home run in as many games — a career best.

The A's are now a game back of Texas for the division lead. Their 6-4 record on their 10-game road trip included a 4-3 record against playoff contenders Detroit and Boston.

Inman: Ace Brett Anderson's return to DL is painful to Oakland A's

By Cam Inman_Oakland Tribune

Of the 79 trips A's players have taken to the disabled list since 2007, Friday's ranks among the most concerning.

Pitcher Brett Anderson is not just any player. Even worse, he is a return guest to the DL-lounge this season.

"He's basically our No. 1 guy," A's catcher Kurt Suzuki said before Friday's homestand-opening game against the Minnesota Twins. "With a guy of that caliber, you want him pitching for you. When he can't, it kind of (stinks)."

It is a familiar tale with the A's: Key player gets hurt. Here is another repetitive story line: Injury follows lucrative contract extension.

How hurt is Anderson?

Manager Bob Geren was happy to report that tendinitis is Anderson's nemesis. Tendinitis, in a 22-year-old left elbow, mind you.

Neither Anderson nor Geren seem too fazed. At least publicly.

"The news from the doctor was relatively good news," Geren said.

Good? Well, yes, he did not utter the term "season-ending surgery."

A 15-day stint on the disabled list has been prescribed. Sound familiar? Anderson was on the DL from April 25 to May 28 with the same injury. He is shelved until he is "symptom free," Geren said.

Anderson plans to take a more cautious route with this comeback. His future demands that approach. In April, he signed a contract extension, worth \$12.5 million over four years and up to \$31 million over six years.

How many of those years will be hampered by elbow woes?

This is a re-occurring injury. While your annual nag might be your relatives who visit during the holidays, Anderson's elbow pain usually passes through in spring training or the offseason.

This time, he is in the midst of the season. This time, he alerted reporters it is "a little bit more severe, but nothing I can't get through."

He won't rush back — nor should he, for his and the A's sake.

Somehow, the A's have managed to stay afloat this season despite using the disabled list 15 times — two fewer than all of last year's total.

They may be crippled, but their pennant hopes are not. The A's entered this homestand tied atop the American League West table with the Texas Rangers.

"The division is wide open. Everyone is banged up," Suzuki said. "We definitely feel we have a chance. We feel we have everything we need."

Well, aside from a scrappy bunch, they have plenty of issues.

Their pitching staff is down two key starters in Anderson and Justin Duchscherer, who is slated for hip surgery Monday. As for Dallas Braden, he entered Friday's start 0-3 since his May 9 perfect game, and he got off to a bad start when he allowed a two-run home run in the first inning to Justin Morneau.

The A's disabled list features eight men out: infielder Eric Chavez (neck spasms), outfielders Coco Crisp (right rib cage muscle) and Travis Buck (right oblique) and pitchers Anderson, Duchscherer, Joey Devine (right elbow), John Meloan (right elbow) and Josh Outman (left elbow).

"You never want to get used to it. But you understand it," Suzuki said of the club's injury-prone presence.

These are the modern-day A's. Injuries are not supposed to result in widespread panic. Instead, such wounds are intertwined into the franchise's fabric.

That said, an alarm needs to sound when your budding ace can't stay healthy at the start of his sophomore season.

In a recent survey of 22 baseball executives and scouts by ESPN's Jason Stark, Anderson ranked fifth in terms of which starting pitchers they would buy stock in for the next decade. Ranked ahead of Anderson were only Felix Hernandez (Seattle Mariners), Josh Johnson (Florida Marlins), Ubaldo Jimenez (Colorado Rockies) and David Price (Tampa Bay Rays).

That survey took place before Anderson's elbow flared up Friday and cast a cloud over his worth for that incoming decade.

Chin Music: Reaction from Anderson

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune, 6/4/2010 6:17PM

Brett Anderson doesn't know when he'll be able to throw again after receiving word that he has tendinitis in his left elbow, but he definitely thought that things could have been worse. As of now, surgery isn't on the table.

"Anytime there's something in your elbow or near your elbow, it's kind of a little bit worrisome," Anderson said before tonight's game. "But with the diagnosis I got today, hopefully it works out in the end."

I'll have more reaction from Anderson in tomorrow's paper, but I just wanted to let everyone know that Anderson seems to be taking this in stride. He's dealt with this before and just feels he may have to be a bit more cautious this time around. Whether that means another month off the roster remains to be seen. But the injury, right now, does not appear to be season-ending.

Chin Music: Anderson to DL, Rosales playing SS

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune, 6/4/2010 5:24PM

Brett Anderson was placed on the disabled list today with tendinitis in his left elbow after he had a contrast MRI. Calling it relatively good news, manager Bob Geren said Anderson will not throw until he's symptom free and then he'll start back up again. Anderson won't be throwing for at least 2-3 days, but Geren is hopeful that the left-hander can begin a program before too long. Geren said Vin Mazzaro is filling Anderson's slot in the rotation.

In other moves, catcher Landon Powell was optioned to Sacramento and relievers Cedrick Bowers and Henry Rodriguez were brought up. Geren wanted a little more depth in the bullpen considering how much he had to use his relievers on the road trip.

Mired in a 1 for 32 slump at the plate, Cliff Pennington is not starting tonight at shortstop. Adam Rosales will play that position, with Geren saying Rosales might even play first base some time soon. Pennington will be back in the lineup tomorrow though.

Andrew Bailey is "50-50" for tonight's game after throwing two innings yesterday. Geren said Eric Chavez is doing better and may join the A's early next week for workouts.

After his collision with Mark Ellis yesterday, Ryan Sweeney said he didn't sleep that well last night but started to feel better as the day went on and is back in the lineup.

The lineups

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

Twins – Span CF, Hardy SS, Mauer DH, Morneau 1B, Kubel RF, Young LF, Valencia 3B, Punto 2B, Butera C, Baker P

Candid Cam: Death of UCLA great Wooden provokes thoughts of other icons

By Cam Inman _Bay Area News Group Columnist

Here is what I can tell you about John Wooden's 1975 exit as UCLA's dominant basketball coach: I was only 3 at the time. That said, Wooden's legacy carried into one generation after another before his passing Friday at age 99.

He was not simply a Los Angeles treasure and UCLA hero. He was an American sports icon, a regal title that might not be as rare as you think. More on those "icons" later.

Was he the greatest coach in American sports history, as Sporting News labeled him last year? His 10 NCAA championships — including seven in a row from 1967 to 1973 — suggest that could be true. He also imposed a style and structure (see: "Pyramid of Success") that became revered, but never fully duplicated.

His death will hit hardest in Westwood and reverberate across America's hardwoods, blacktops, driveways and anywhere a hoop exists. His impact on basketball and sports dynasties is undeniable.

Greater Los Angeles was lucky to claim him and bask in his legacy to this very day.

Wooden was to L.A. as (fill-in-this-blank) is to the Bay Area.

Really, how can we relate here up the coast, specifically in terms of which living legends would we be crushed to lose?

Three who jump to mind: Al Davis, 80; Willie Mays, 79; and John Madden, 74. The next generation of living legends include Joe Montana, 54 next Friday; Steve Young, 48; and Barry Bonds, 45.

We lost our own college basketball icon two years ago, that being former Cal coach Pete Newell, who beat Wooden's UCLA squads in their last seven meetings from 1957-60.

Bill Walsh's 2007 death was mourned by thousands at a public memorial at Candlestick Park, not to mention a touching private memorial at Stanford. Walsh ranked only 26th on the Sporting News list headed by Wooden. Walsh's place should have been much higher. As for Wooden's, it seemed appropriate considering all the tributes made to him since news broke Thursday about him being on his death bed.

I can not lend much historical perspective to Wooden's coaching career considering I did not witness it. But his passing did make me think about all the living legends that exist.

Every region has their own American sports icons, like these living ones in these locales (apologies in advance for those who slipped my mind):

Los Angeles — Magic Johnson, Vin Scully, Tommy Lasorda, Sandy Koufax, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Jerry West and Wayne Gretzky.

New York — George Steinbrenner, Yogi Berra, Joe Namath, Reggie Jackson, Bill Parcells, Lawrence Taylor, Tom Seaver and Derek Jeter.

Boston — Carl Yastzremski, Larry Bird, Bill Russell, Tom Brady, Bobby Orr, Carlton Fisk and Jim Rice.

Chicago — Michael Jordan, Ernie Banks, Mike Ditka and Bobby Hull.

Pittsburgh — Terry Bradshaw, Chuck Noll, Franco Harris, Mario Lemieux, Bill Cowher and Jerome Bettis.

Green Bay — Brett Favre, Brett Favre, Brett Favre.

Dallas/Houston — Roger Staubach, Nolan Ryan, Troy Aikman, Emmitt Smith, Tony Dorsett, Earl Campbell, Hakeem Olajuwon, Carl Lewis, Roger Clemens and Jerry Jones.

Detroit — Barry Sanders, Isiah Thomas and Bob Lanier.

Miami — Don Shula, Dan Marino and anyone from the 1972 undefeated Dolphins.

Atlanta — Henry Aaron (anyone else pales in comparison).

Arizona — Lute Olson, Charles Barkley, Jerry Colangelo and Randy Johnson.

Seattle — Ken Griffey Jr., Ichiro Suzuki, Warren Moon and Steve Largent.

Denver — John Elway, Terrell Davis, Larry Walker and Todd Helton.

Indianapolis — Peyton Manning and Tony Dungy.

Cleveland — Jim Brow and, Bob Feller.

Minnesota — Frank Tarkenton, Bud Grant and, no, can't say Favre yet.

San Diego — Tony Gwynn, Dan Fouts, Kellen Winslow.

Philadelphia — Mike Schmidt, Steve Carlton, Julius Erving and Bobby Clarke.

Kansas City — George Brett, Len Dawson and Willie Lanier.

Baltimore — Jim Palmer, Cal Ripken Jr. and Ray Lewis

St. Louis — Stan Musial, Mark McGwire, Tony LaRussa, Lou Brock, Kurt Warner, Ozzie Smith, Dick Vermeil and Dan Dierdorf.

OK, so I missed a few names, a few cities, but go ahead and add them to the comments section.

Wooden surely belongs in that parade of names, may he rest in peace.

A's rally to tie, but lose in 11th

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Andrew Bailey worked two innings at Boston on Thursday to get the save. On Friday night at the Coliseum, he entered in the 11th inning, hoping to get the win.

Instead, Justin Morneau hit an opposite-field double to left, with Oakland outfielder Gabe Gross slightly turned around, and with one out, Delmon Young sneaked a single down the first-base line to drive in Morneau and give the Twins a 5-4 victory over the A's. It was the first run that Bailey, the A's closer, has allowed at home this season.

He threw 33 pitches Thursday, but Bailey said he felt fine.

"I felt good. I felt strong," he said. "I wouldn't have been in there if I hadn't felt that way. It was just one of those games."

Even had Gross not been off a bit on his angle to the ball, Bailey said that he probably wouldn't have had a play on Morneau's rocket.

"He hit that pretty hard," Bailey said.

Since his perfect game on May 9, A's starter Dallas Braden hasn't had much success. He isn't pitching poorly, but the wins aren't there. After allowing four runs Friday night, Braden is 0-3 with a 4.45 ERA since the perfecto.

"There's no reason to be frustrated," Braden said. "Wins and losses come in bunches. It's a team effort."

Oakland put one run on the board while Braden was in the game Friday, and he has made six starts this season in which his teammates have scored no more than one run.

With two outs in the first, Joe Mauer singled to left, and Morneau followed with a blast into the seats in right. Minnesota added two more in the sixth; in that inning, after Mauer singled, Braden walked Morneau, which seemed like maybe the wise way to go until Jason Kubel singled and Young doubled on the one pitch Braden said he'd like back.

"I know how to pitch that guy," he said.

Braden's sprained left ankle was tender, he said, but it didn't affect his performance.

In the seventh, Jack Cust walked and Kevin Kouzmanoff banded a homer to left. Kouzmanoff has homered in three consecutive games, a career first. Rajai Davis added a solo shot in the eighth to tie the game, barely clearing the wall in the corner in left with a line drive.

Right fielder Ryan Sweeney said he was still a little sore after getting cracked in the head by Mark Ellis' knee when the two collided going after a foul ball Thursday, but he drove in Oakland's first run with a groundout in the fourth. That sent in Daric Barton, who'd doubled to extend his hitting streak to 11 games.

Reliever Michael Wuertz had a bit of a dead-arm period, but he said before the game that he was feeling much better and that the dead-arm issue "is over today." Manager Bob Geren said after the game that Wuertz had been available.

Anderson back on DL, yet relieved

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Brett Anderson went back on the disabled list Friday, this time with elbow tendinitis, but that's OK, as far as the A's are concerned, because the news could have been worse.

Anderson had just come off the DL one week ago, so when he came out of Thursday's game at Boston after two innings with a similar problem, it raised some red flags. Even Anderson said he was concerned that he'd be told he needed surgery.

A contrast MRI exam done Friday showed no structural damage, however, and Anderson said he will take 10 days off from throwing and then go from there.

Manager **Bob Geren** said Anderson will resume throwing when he is "symptom free," and with elbow tendinitis, that can range from days to weeks. Considering that Anderson missed more than a month with a forearm strain, the team is likely to be extra cautious this time.

Anderson called Friday's diagnosis the "best-case scenario. ... It checked out well, and I'm not going to miss much time."

Geren said that **Vin Mazzaro** will fill Anderson's spot Tuesday. Mazzaro wound up with the victory Thursday after replacing Anderson. With Mazzaro leaving the bullpen, the A's called up two more relievers Friday, left-hander **Cedrick Bowers** and right-hander **Henry Rodriguez**, both of whom had been with Oakland earlier this season. Bowers pitched 1 1/3 scoreless innings.

Catcher **Landon Powell** was sent back to Triple-A Sacramento after his third stint with Oakland this season.

Briefly: Dallas Braden will play host to 275 players from his former Little League, Hoover Tyler of Stockton, on Sunday. Braden again will sponsor two Little Leaguers from a single-parent household, providing all Little League-related costs for **Reagan Lidden**, 11, and **Alex Lidden**, 9. ... The A's picked up third baseman **Adam Heether** on waivers from the Brewers and assigned him to Triple-A Sacramento, where he went 1-for-4 in a 2-0 loss to Tacoma.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Chavez on the mend: Eric Chavez is on the disabled list with two bulging disks in his back, but he's starting to feel better. He said he's looking at Monday as a possible day to return to Oakland to start working out.

3-Dot Lounge

A call for revisionist history

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle

Sure, I'm OK with **Bud Selig's** decision to leave that bad call alone. I covered my first big-league game in 1972, so I must be a traditionalist, a purist, or that most pungent of labels, a "seamhead."

But he could have overturned it, friends, without damaging a thing.

There's a new reality coming in baseball - the expansion of instant replay to cover calls on the bases, fair versus foul, pretty much everything but the sacred balls and strikes. Calls are going to be overturned routinely. Granted, not the next day, but we're about to enter an age in which umpires' mistakes will be exposed and corrected for the sake of accuracy. I find it an unsettling prospect, but there's no doubt it's coming.

On ESPN's "Baseball Tonight" on Thursday, former Toronto general manager **J.P. Ricciardi** said he'd be "shocked" if such replay expansion isn't put in place by next year, and a number of baseball executives reportedly share that feeling. When **Jim Joyce** called **Jason Donald** safe and torched **Armando Galarraga's** perfect game, the future became clear to everyone.

So what's the big deal about Selig "setting a dangerous precedent" by overturning that call, or claims that "you can't undo history"? Oh, yes, you can. We'll be seeing it regularly in the coming seasons, and remember this about Joyce's call at first base: It relates to *nothing* from the past, when debates raged during a game. This was the end. Game over. A reversal had no bearing on history, other than the elimination of a **Trevor Crowe** at-bat (the official 27th out) that should not have occurred.

If Selig changes that call, the rest of Joyce's life becomes a hell of a lot easier. Galarraga gets the perfect game he so richly deserves. Get a jump on that new reality, Bud, because it's coming soon.

Also worth noting on this topic:

-- Where were the rest of the umpires when this call went down? It's highly unusual for them to get involved on a call at first, but did they *all* see the man safe? Have a meeting, for crying out loud. These are unusual circumstances.

-- I won't waste too much time here, because I've railed on the topic for years, but expanded replay won't wreck the pace of the game. Not if you allow representatives of the umpires' union to make instant calls off a television set in the press box. As that former umpire (and bad-call villain) **Don Denkinger** says, "Why not have a guy in the booth who can review the play and get a ruling in 20 seconds?"

-- If you're going to allow replay challenges by managers, along the lines of an NFL coach, limit them to one per game. And leave a provision for booth reversals, challenges be damned, if it's one of those life-changing calls. How do you craft the wording, exactly? Hey, I'm just pourin' Clamatos here.

It was Mays-like

When Detroit center fielder **Austin Jackson** recorded Galarraga's first out of the ninth inning, racing halfway across Michigan to make an unbelievable basket catch on the dead run with his back to the plate, it was one of the most sensational plays of any season. ... The French Open can't go wrong in the men's final. Either **Robin Soderling** arrives as an official force on tour, or the great **Rafael Nadal** - who truly does seem to be better than ever on clay - rises higher in the pantheon. ... OK, so **Roger Federer's** surrealistic streak ended at 23 times to the semifinals in Grand Slam events. But why doesn't anyone ever mention **Chris Evert**? She missed a number of majors between 1971 and 1983, but she didn't miss a semifinal in the 34 majors in which she competed during that stretch. ... Had an interest in watching the **Tiger Woods** highlights from Thursday, until I saw him let the club fly out of his hands on impact, once again, in disgust. Amazing he sinks to such pathetic levels. Wouldn't want the kids to watch that, either. ... If you ever met **Dontrelle Willis**, you pray he finds himself in Arizona - but that's a panic move by the Diamondbacks, who had lost eight straight games when they made the deal. If **Justin Upton** and **Dan Haren** continue in mediocrity, and **Brandon Webb** isn't able to come back, that's one fewer team for the Giants to worry about. ... **Milton Bradley** was in tears when they showed a video montage of **Ken Griffey Jr.**'s career on the night of his retirement. You wonder how it affects Bradley, who said Griffey's presence was a big reason he wanted to play in Seattle. ... Remember Griffey this way: The best thing you can say about an outfielder is that he hit the ball a million miles, ran like the wind and played defense at the absolute highest level. In the 500-homer club, **Barry Bonds** and **Hank Aaron** fall just short of that standard. Griffey plays in a threesome with **Willie Mays** and the young **Mickey Mantle**.

Drumbeat: Anderson on DL with tendinitis; he'll rest for 10 days

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum, 6/4/2010 5:36PM

It's "relatively good news" here, as manager Bob Geren put it: a contrast MRI this afternoon showed that left-hander Brett Anderson has elbow tendinitis. So the team placed him on the DL and he won't throw for 10 days - which isn't ideal, since Anderson is the A's most talented starter, but it's a heck of a lot better than season-ending surgery, which was the fear.

Anderson told me that's what he was worried about, too, so he's relieved, even though, he said, "It's not fun to go on the DL. But this is the best-case scenario."

The contrast MRI showed no structural damage, no tears, just inflammation, so Anderson will be allowed to get on the mound when he's symptom-free. Typically, that can take 10 days to a month, and the fact that Anderson missed five weeks with a forearm strain in May means that it could be on the longer side: No one wants to take any unnecessary chances with a 22-year-old who was just given a long-term contract.

Vin Mazzaro will take Anderson's spot in the rotation for now, Geren said.

Ryan Sweeney is back in the lineup despite taking a knee to the noggin yesterday in Boston when he and Mark Ellis collided going after a foul ball. He said he's sore, but he's giving it a go. A CT scan and X-rays were all fine, though Sweeney's told his pupils were tiny after collision, and he said, "I was kind of out it."

Here's the lineup: Davis CF, Barton 1B, Sweeney RF, Suzuki C, Cust DH, Kouzmanoff 3B, Gross LF, Ellis 2B, Rosales SS.

I asked if we might see more of Rosales at shortstop, considering Cliff Pennington's recent hitting woes, and Geren said Pennington will be back in tomorrow - but Rosales might make his debut at first base soon. I'd be pretty tempted to leave Rosales at shortstop for a while, but it's clear the A's are committed to Pennington there.

Eric Chavez is feeling better since going on the DL with bulging disks in his neck, and he might come back to the Bay Area next week to resume working out.

In regularly scheduled news, the A's sent down catcher Landon Powell for what seems like the 10th time this season. Fourth time, I believe, counting before Opening Day. He is the designated luckless one this season. Left-hander Cedrick Bowers and righty Henry Rodriguez are back to help the weary bullpen.

Drumbeat: Adam Rosales for SS?

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/4/2010 12:05PM

We've seen sentiment in the comments to bench horrendously slumping Oakland A's shortstop Cliff Pennington (.031 in his last 10 games) and put in super-utilityman Adam Rosales. Note, however, that Rosales washed out as a SS at the single-A level in the Reds' system. Eyeballing his range factor, Rosales can be expected to get to about 0.7 fewer balls per nine innings than Pennington. Yes, it's a small sample size, but since Rosales' range factor at 2B is also well below league average, it makes sense that he wouldn't be Pennington out there. Is it worth making the switch?

With the A's their highest draft position since 1999, Melissa Lockard took a look at the other two times they had the 10th pick--Mark McGwire and Eric Chavez.

It seems likely the A's will select a hitter on Monday, as they've done five of the last six years. They've been able to more easily develop pitchers from further down in the draft. Jerry Crasnick notes that of the nine most-hyped draft choices of all time, the hitters have fared considerably better than the pitchers. Y'all remember which one was drafted by the A's?

Farm report: In case you missed it, here's Susan's somewhat downbeat report on Chris Carter and Michael Taylor in Sacramento. Taylor was on base four times last night, so maybe he's starting to snap out of an inexplicable slump. Carter's hit 12 homers, but his fielding problems seem to make him a DH candidate.

A's rally after Braden exits, but fall in 11

Bailey takes loss in extras after Davis ties it in eighth

By Eric Gilmore / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Forget perfection. Oakland A's left-hander Dallas Braden could just use a win of any kind.

Since throwing a perfect game on May 9 against Tampa Bay, Braden is now winless in five starts, the victim, in part, of a distinct lack of run support.

When Braden left Friday night's game after 6 1/3 innings, the A's trailed the Twins, 4-1. The A's rallied to tie the game at 4 - - Kevin Kouzmanoff hit a two-run homer in the seventh and Rajai Davis a solo shot in the eighth -- but lost, 5-4, in 11 innings.

Braden is 0-3 with a 4.45 ERA since his perfecto, with two no-decisions, including one Friday.

"It's a long season," Braden said. "No reason to press. These things come and go."

Despite his losing streak and the fact that he's received one run or less of support six times this year, Braden brushed off the thought of frustration.

"Nothing to be frustrated about," said Braden, who's still feeling the effects a sprained left ankle he suffered May 25 against Baltimore. "When you don't make it out of the first and you start walking multiple people, and your game plan is completely different than it's ever been, that's when you get frustrated, and that's when you go back to the drawing board.

"I know so far more times than not, I haven't been crushed and hit extremely hard. It's just been the ones that fall in. That's just the game of baseball. You hit them where they ain't, and you hit them where they are sometimes."

Braden allowed six hits and four runs, all earned. He struck out two, walked one, hit a batter and gave up a two-run homer to Justin Morneau, who hit one deep into the right-field seats in the first inning with Joe Mauer on first after a two-out single.

After that, Braden settled into a groove. He held the Twins scoreless for the next four innings, allowing just one hit during that span. But he got into trouble again in the sixth, once again after getting the first two Twins out.

As in the first inning, Mauer and Morneau were in the middle of the rally. Mauer singled up the middle, then Morneau worked a walk, bringing Jason Kubel to the plate. He lined an opposite-field single to left, scoring Mauer and moving Morneau to third, making it 3-1 Twins. Delmon Young doubled to left, scoring Morneau and putting Minnesota ahead, 4-1.

"That's not even the pitch I want back," Braden said of Morneau's home run. "The one I'd really like back was to Delmon Young. I know how to pitch that guy. I made an OK pitch. If I made a good pitch, the result's a lot different.

"Mauer and Morneau, I wish Mauer would have took Morneau with him to Cabo, maybe left him there on a fishing boat somewhere. What are you going to do? They're pretty decent hitters."

The A's only run while Braden was in the game came in the second. Leading off, Daric Barton launched a double off the right-field wall, extending his hitting streak to 11 games. Barton moved to third on Ryan Sweeney's groundout to second and scored on Mark Ellis' infield single up the middle.

Then trailing, 4-1, with one out in the bottom of the seventh, Kouzmanoff sent a monster two-run homer into the left-field seats, cutting the Twins' lead to 4-3. Kouzmanoff homered for a third consecutive game for the first time in his career.

With one out in the eighth, Davis lined a solo home run over the left-field wall off Twins starter Scott Baker, who entered the game 4-0 with a 3.24 ERA lifetime against Oakland. That tied the score at 4 and ended Baker's night.

"We felt that was a good opportunity for us to win it late," Davis said. "Unfortunately, we didn't come out on top today."

A trio of A's relievers -- Cedrick Bowers, Tyson Ross and Craig Breslow -- held the Twins scoreless for 3 2/3 innings after Braden left the game.

Breslow, taking over for Ross with one out in the ninth, struck out a career-high four -- all in a row and all on third-strike fastballs, swinging. He allowed no hits in 1 2/3 innings before Andrew Bailey took over in the 11th.

Morneau led off that frame with a double to left that went over the head of left fielder Gabe Gross, who appeared to misplay the ball. Young brought Morneau home with an opposite-field single down the right-field line.

"He hit that ball pretty hard," Bailey said of Morneau's double. "If Gabe makes that play, it would have been a Web Gem. Obviously, you can't give up a leadoff double in that situation. You have to tip your cap to Morneau and Delmon Young."

Bailey pitched two innings on Thursday against the Red Sox, but he said he "felt strong" on Friday.

"I wouldn't have been in there if I didn't feel that way," Bailey said. "I told the coaches at the beginning of the day that I felt I had an inning in me."

Anderson back on disabled list

Southpaw sidelined again by left elbow tendinitis

By Eric Gilmore / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Oakland A's placed left-hander Brett Anderson on the 15-day disabled list Friday with what manager Bob Geren called "tendinitis" of his pitching elbow.

"He got a contrast MRI today and basically that's what it showed. He's going to be shut down from throwing until he's symptom free and then he'll start back up again," Geren said.

Considering what the news might have been, Geren and Anderson breathed sighs of relief.

"It wasn't too bad," Anderson said. "It could have been worse. It could have been surgery. It wasn't too bad -- hopefully just rehab and get better. It's too early to tell on some things right now. [I'll] take some time off and get some anti-inflammatories and hopefully get better."

"I think the news from the doctors is relatively good news," Geren said. "When you go and you have a problem and you get it checked out and get the news we got, then you've got to say that's positive."

This is the second trip to the DL this year for Anderson, who signed a four-year contract extension through 2013, with club options for '14 and '15, on April 16. He was sidelined April 25 to May 28 with the same injury.

In his first start after coming off the disabled list, he held Detroit scoreless over 5 2/3 innings, allowing just three hits. But in his next start Thursday at Boston, he had to leave the game after two innings because of elbow pain. He gave up five hits and two runs.

How long will it be before Anderson resumes throwing?

"It's hard to estimate that," Geren said. "[Head athletic trainer Steve Sayles] just said basically when the symptoms are gone, he'll start throwing again. It's obviously a little more than day-to-day, but putting an exact number of days on it is hard to do. It won't be in the next day or two, but hopefully it won't be too long."

Anderson said after landing on the DL again, he definitely won't try to rush back.

"[We'll] take a little bit more caution," he said. "[I] should be all right. It's kind of early to tell the severity of it right now. [I'll] take it one day at a time and hopefully get out there pretty soon, help the team win."

Left elbow soreness is nothing new for Anderson.

"It's been reoccurring, especially this year," Anderson said. "I usually have one bout with it every year. Most of the time, it happens in Spring Training or in the offseason. It's just kind of a little bit later in the season this year and a little bit more severe, but nothing I can't get through."

Geren said Vin Mazzaro, who relieved Anderson in the third inning Thursday, would move from the bullpen into Anderson's spot in the rotation.

The A's also called up a pair of relief pitchers from Triple-A Sacramento -- right-hander Henry Rodriguez and left-hander Cedrick Bowers -- and optioned catcher Landon Powell to Sacramento.

"I just felt like I needed the pitching now with this last road trip, as often as I had to use the bullpen, playing against some really obviously good offensive teams that tend to grind out their at-bats." Geren said.

Cahill looks to continue hot streak vs. Twins

By Cash Kruth / MLB.com

Friday night, the Twins beat the A's at their own game.

Oakland, a Major League-best 10-2 in one-run games entering Friday, came up short in a 5-4 loss to Minnesota in extra innings.

Friday's five-run game was an offensive explosion for the Twins, at least as of late. Minnesota was held to only one run in its previous three games, the first time the Twins were held to one run or fewer in three consecutive games since Aug. 5-7, 2007.

"Right now, it's just a grind," Twins manger Ron Gardenhire said. "We're on a tough road trip. We've played a lot of games in a row and faced some very good pitching in Seattle, and we faced a very good pitcher [Friday], and we knew it was going to be tough. This is a big win. This is a big comeback after losing three in a row in Seattle."

On Saturday, the A's will send their hottest pitcher to the mound in hopes of evening the three-game series at 1-1.

Right-hander Trevor Cahill, winner of his past three games, will get the start Saturday in Oakland. After going 1-2 in his first four starts of the season, Cahill has rattled off three wins, giving up only one run in each.

The Twins will counter with arguably their most talented pitcher, Francisco Liriano. In his last outing against Seattle, Liriano earned his first win since May 2 after starting out with a blazing April in which he was named American League Pitcher of the Month.

Minnesota fans may be hopeful the early-season version of Liriano is returning, but take caution: Liriano is 1-2 with a 5.08 ERA in eight career appearances against the A's.

Twins: Hardy back, but not Hudson

Shortstop J.J. Hardy went 0-for-5 on Friday after missing Thursday's game with a lingering bone bruise in his left wrist. ... Hardy's double-play partner, second baseman Orlando Hudson, remains doubtful for the rest of the series and could potentially be placed on the 15-day disabled list, Gardinhire said.

A's: Kouzmanoff on fire

Kevin Kouzmanoff hit a home run for the third consecutive game Friday. It is the first time in his career he has done that. ... Catcher Kurt Suzuki had his fourth consecutive multiple-hit game while going 2-for-5 Friday. He is 8-for-19 during that span. ... Leadoff man Rajai Davis hit his second home run of the season. He is hitting .319 (22-for-69) in his past 19 games.

Worth noting

Minnesota's Danny Valencia stole his first career base a day after making his Major League debut Thursday. He finished 1-for-5 with two strikeouts. ... Oakland's Daric Barton extended his hitting streak to 11 games on a double in the fourth inning.

Draft Preview: A's can add to deep system

No. 10 slot is highest Oakland has drafted since 1999

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's farm system has consistently been deemed by many around the league as one of the best, a nod to the solid history of success the organization has had with the First-Year Player Draft.

This year, the A's will select 10th in the first round of the Draft, marking the highest place in which they've been assigned since 1999, when they chose left-hander Barry Zito with the ninth pick. Although that 10th slot means the club ranked in the bottom third of Major League standings last year, the good news is that it lends Oakland scouting director Eric Kubota and his staff the chance to make an early go at a premier prospect.

MLB.com will offer live coverage and analysis of the entire First-Year Player Draft from June 7-9 on MLB.com/Live. The first round and Compensation Round A will be broadcast live on MLB.com and MLB Network on Monday, June 7, beginning with the Draft preview show at 3 p.m. PT.

MLB.com Draft expert Jonathan Mayo will join Greg Amsinger, Harold Reynolds, John Hart, Peter Gammons and Baseball America executive editor Jim Callis on Monday's broadcast.

Coverage for rounds 2-50 will shift exclusively to MLB.com/Live. Rounds 2-30 will be streamed on Tuesday, beginning at 9 a.m., and rounds 31-50 will be streamed on Wednesday, starting at 9 a.m. Host Pete McCarthy will be joined by Mayo and former general manager Jim Duquette.

Here's a glance at what the A's have in store as the Draft approaches:

In about 50 words

Aside from presumed No. 1 pick, 17-year-old junior college phenom Bryce Harper, "There's probably not as much consensus at the very top of the Draft," Kubota said. Beyond that, he said, "There's a lot of depth in all types of players. I would say the hallmark of this Draft is depth."

The scoop

As the Draft nears, Kubota and Co. are busy putting the finishing touches on what he calls "The Board," a list of players the club has deemed as potential early picks. Sometimes The Board isn't complete until Draft Day, as a handful of players call for last looks. Once the Draft is under way, Kubota said, the A's take a rather simple approach. "Our goal is always to take the best available player," he said. "That's our goal all the time -- just to try to get the best players placed in our farm system."

First-round buzz

The strength of this year's Draft may actually be somewhat less clear than its weakness. Although power arms, from both the college and high school level, were all the hype last year, the alarming lack of hitting depth dominates this year's talk. Yet most mock drafts have the A's using their top pick on a select one of them. Still, a special arm is never out of the picture for this organization. "It's not necessarily an emphasis," Kubota said, "yet it's not necessarily something we're not going to need, obviously."

Shopping list

The A's are among several teams, Kubota says, that don't necessarily go into the Draft thinking about organizational needs. General manager Billy Beane has traded a number of established big leaguers -- think Matt Holliday, Rich Harden and Dan Haren, among others -- over the past couple of years to address a general lack of top prospects. The harvest of those trades has resulted in a haul of talent that has the A's near the forefront of teams considered well-stocked for the future. "You never really know what your needs are going to be," Kubota said. "Our goal is always to take the player who is written down the highest at the time of our pick."

Trend watch

It was not too long ago the A's were known for going heavy on college players, an approach that aided their need of getting draftees to help at the big league level as quickly as possible. However, "I'd say our recent history is less that way," Kubota said. That may be so, but not until the later rounds. In 2009, Oakland selected college players with 11 of its first 14 picks. And since 1997, the A's have drafted just one high school player in the first round -- Jeremy Bonderman (now with Detroit) in 2001. When Draft day comes, though, "it's all a matter of reacting to what's going on," Kubota said.

Recent Draft History

A'S RECENT TOP DRAFT PICKS

Year	Player	Current team
2009	Grant Green	Class-A Stockton
2008	Jemile Weeks	Double-A Midland
2007	James Simmons	Injured
2006	None	
2005	Cliff Pennington	Oakland

Rising fast

Infielder Jemile Weeks, the A's first-round selection and the 12th pick overall in the 2008 Draft, split the 2009 season between Class A Stockton and Double-A Midland after a hip injury that kept him on the disabled list the first two months of the season. The 23-year-old Weeks bounced back quickly in 80 games and combined to hit .278 with nine home runs and 44 RBIs to put himself back on the fast track. The younger brother of big leaguer Rickie Weeks was a non-roster invitee to Spring Training this year and opened the season at Midland. He was batting .304 with 13 RBIs and a .490 slugging percentage through 26 games with the Rockhounds before once again being sidelined with a hip injury last month. However, Weeks and his hot bat are expected back soon.

Cinderella story

Few people are surprised at Tyson Ross' status as a Major League pitcher, but the young right-hander represents quite the tale considering the speed at which he made his way to Oakland. Selected in the second round of the 2008 Draft out of the University of California, Berkeley, Ross began his first full professional season at Stockton last year before earning a late-season promotion to Midland and combined for a 10-10 record and 4.09 ERA, along with 113 strikeouts, in 27 starts. Taking full advantage of an invitation to big league camp, Ross was the surprise story of the spring this year. He made the team and has since been consistently used by the club in a long relief role. He also made two spot starts. The organization still sees him fulfilling the starting role in the future.

In The Show

Ross is the only player from the past three Draft classes to reach the Majors, but Weeks -- barring any further injury -- may be knocking on the door by next season.

A's getting by on chemistry, heart

Paul Gutierrez, Sacramento Bee, 6/5/2010

OAKLAND – You glance at the notes. You dive into the stats. You look at the standings.

And then, you scratch your head and wonder out loud: How is this team winning? The A's, as impressively scrappy as they are strikingly thrifty, have not only won more games than they've lost despite debilitating injuries that would cripple more well-heeled teams, they entered Friday night's game in a virtual tie for first place.

Their 5-4 loss in 11 innings to Minnesota at the Coliseum was more aberration than rule, which, again, defies logic.

So how in the name of a Charlie Finley gimmick did the A's enter June in first place for only the eighth time since moving to Oakland in 1968 – and first time since 1990 – with so many trips to the disabled list and constant lineup and roster switches?

What should have killed the A's has had the opposite effect, and the River Cats' mother ship has become a tighter-knit, more fundamentally sound outfit as a result. They keep things basic and thrive on simplicity. But even that has an expiration date.

"We've got good chemistry," insisted designated hitter Jack Cust who, being as crusty a ballplayer as you'll find in the A's clubhouse, makes you question a throwback player's belief system. "There's a lot to be said for that."

As shocking as Cust's admission is, he also said the A's youngsters are coming into their own, while adding Ben Sheets' influence in the clubhouse is palpable (my word, not his, but you get the drift).

"He's an old-school guy," Cust said of Sheets. "Guys are learning from him, and not just the pitchers."

Even fourth-year manager Bob Geren, who has scribbled out the lineup he envisioned in spring training only a handful of times in his tenure, got into the whole good-vibrations gig.

"They play with a lot of heart every day," Geren said. "Everybody pulls for everybody else. It's great."

Great, schmeat. It can't be as simple as that, could it, some girls softball-style rah-rah, feel-good, Kumbaya act working at the major league level? There must be something tangible at work as the hobbled A's find themselves 11 games deep into a 20-games-in-20-days stretch.

For one, the American League West is down. The A's 29-26 record entering Friday would have had them 7 1/2 games back in the East, 2 1/2 back in the Central.

Still ... the A's are a rag-tag group, one that knows its limitations. So, being built on pitching and defense with a deep bench, the A's don't suffer as much offensively when another player gets injured.

Before Friday's games, they ranked fourth fewest in the A.L. in runs (222), extra-base hits (146) and slugging percentage (.383), and those numbers should have been worse. Consider: The A's have already used the disabled list 15 times this season and a mind-blowing 79 times since 2007. Eight guys currently reside on the DL.

Others have stepped up, players such as jack-of-all-trades Adam Rosales, who is more Mickey Hatcher than Pete Rose (sorry to pick at the scab, A's fans from 1988).

That's how the A's were an A.L.-best 10-2 in one-run games. The pitching staff leading the league in shutouts (seven) and fewest hit batters (eight) also helped.

Still, you get that old sinking feeling that fate, and that old faithful injury bug, is going to reach up and fatally wound the A's. Soon.

Frustration set in Thursday on the other side of the country, the A's losing Brett Anderson to elbow tendinitis and then Ryan Sweeney to a dizzy spell.

"We were like, 'OK,' " closer Andrew Bailey said with an uneasy laugh, " 'let's get Kurt (Suzuki) out of the game and get the hell out of Boston.' "

No need to scratch your noggin over what that meant.

A's Fall to Twins in 11 innings

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post 6/5/2010

Oakland, CA – The Oakland A's battled through two extra innings against the Minnesota Twins. The A's were limited to four hits over the first six innings. But a late rally in the seventh put the A's back in the game but it wasn't enough before they lost 5-4.

Dallas Braden remains 0-3 and hasn't won a game since pitching a perfect game on May 9. He pitched 6 1/3 innings, allowing six hits, four earned runs, two strikes, 1 walk and gave up two a two-run homer. Dallas got off to a rough start after two outs and the Twins got going early with a single from Joe Mauer and a home run from Justin Morneau in the first frame.

"It's a long season," Braden said. "No reason to press, things come and go."

Morneau continues to play outstanding and helped end a three game losing streak. He led off the eleventh inning with a double and scored off Delmon Young's single to right field to secure the win. Justin hit his 13th home run of the season and remains atop the list for the upcoming MLB All-Star game for first baseman.

"He's been a big part of our success," said Scott Baker. "Right now, he's one of the best, if not the best hitter in the league." "It's seems like every night he comes up big for us offensively."

Minnesota's bullpen combined 3 2/3 innings of scoreless ball behind Baker's 4-1 lead through the six frame. He shut out Oakland through four innings before Kurt Suzuki singled on a line drive to bring in Daric Barton giving the A's their first run making it a 2-1 game.

"A good win," said Twins manager Ron Gardenhire. "Kind of a crazy one but our bullpen did a good job." "He threw the ball great except for the home runs."

The A's came alive bottom of the seventh frame when Kevin Kouzmanoff hit a two-run homer to bring the A's back into the ball game 4-3. Bottom of eighth, Rajai Davis hit his second home run of the season on a 1-0 pitch and tied the game.

"We felt that was a great opportunity for us to win it late," said Davis. "Unfortunately, we didn't come out on top today."

Manager Bob Geren rotated his bull pen with Cedrick Bowers, Tyson Ross and Craig Breslow. All three pitchers held Minnesota scoreless for 3 2/3 innings after Braden left the game. Breslow struck out a career-high four all in a row. He allowed no hits before Andrew Bailey closed the game.

"Anytime you play 10 or 11 innings, you want to win the game," said Ryan Sweeney. "We have guys swinging the bat well, we just got to get more runs."

RoY Bailey Recalls NECBL Roots

By Don Leyboldt, New England College Baseball League, 6/4/2010

With the benefit of hindsight, we can good-naturedly kid Oakland A's closer Andrew Bailey on his youthful naiveté.

Bailey, then a sophomore pitcher at Wagner via his hometown of Haddon Heights, NJ had just completed his first pre-season throwing session for the 2004 Mill City All-Americans. (Mill City changed its name to Lowell in 2006.)

"I remember calling my parents after my first bullpen and saying 'I don't know if I'm going to even make the team!' I was up there as a favor for my college coach and as a tryout type thing," recalls Bailey.

As stiff as the competition is in the NECBL- and the competition is excellent- all 12 teams would now gladly find a spot for Bailey if they could. The 2009 All-Star and American League Rookie of the Year posted a 1.84 ERA and 26 saves for Oakland last season; he converted his last 21 save opportunities.

But the dominant fireman of 2010 was an insecure sophomore in 2004. Until just after that bullpen session. "I ended up being one of the starters so that was pretty cool," Bailey finished.

He did more than become "one of the starters." The affable Bailey, who could also close for Major League Baseball's All-Friendly Guy Team, ended up leading the NECBL in starts (9), strikeouts (79) and innings pitched during the summer of '04. He held hitters to a .188 average against and tossed a shutout inning at the League All-Star game in Montpelier.

Bailey's summer in the NECBL marked the end of his pitching in anonymity. "That was the summer that I realized that maybe I had a shot of getting drafted or even making it to the minor leagues," he believes.

"I learned a lot that summer about the game of baseball itself. I learned how to pitch inside. That summer was probably the transition point of my career, to where I learned how to get ahead of guys, how to pitch against wood bats and get that feeling of acceptance that I do belong."

The summer at Mill City helped Bailey to grow outside of the foul lines as well. He attended college close to home and for the first time had to wrestle with being far from the familiar. He explains, "Growing up in a small town in South Jersey, everything was right there for me: American Legion ball, Little League and high school. Going to college on Staten Island and being an hour away from home helped me a lot in terms of family. But as far as baseball, that was definitely the summer that for the first time I was really 'away' in terms of long bus trips.

"Bus trip, home game, bus trip, home game. That was definitely a fun summer. I still keep in touch with a lot of the guys from the Mill City team and some of them are good friends. That was one of the greatest summers of my life, getting to have that experience of playing baseball for the entire summer. Taking that into my junior year of college was a big step."

The 6'3" righty started his summer in Mill City not knowing if he would make the team and left Lowell as a bona fide prospect. Despite having Tommy John surgery in May 2005, the Milwaukee Brewers selected him one month later in the 16th round.

Bailey returned for Wagner during his senior year, earning his Business Administration degree in the process. The Seahawks put him in the bullpen and then eased him into a starting role. His first start came on a cold, raw April day at Central Connecticut. When the dozen scouts in attendance saw Bailey consistently hit 92-93 on the radar gun- that soon after surgery and in that weather- his prospect status was elevated. The A's drafted Bailey in the sixth round.

While a starter at Mill City, Wagner and even through his first three years in the Minors, Bailey switched to reliever- a change for the better.

"It was pretty easy for me and my mentality suited that," commented Bailey on the transition. "When I got drafted they said 'We like your attitude on the mound. We're going to try you out as a starter and we can always put you in the pen if needed.' When I was struggling at double-A they said, 'We're going to try you in the bullpen.' And I was all for it. I love that high adrenaline type inning or appearance."

Bailey had started since Little League but his attitude remains "anything to get here (the Majors) and stay here, I'll do it- whatever role it is," he emphasized. "The hardest thing for me off the bat was getting ready for the game. As a starter, you're used to throwing 30 or 40 pitches in the bullpen but as a reliever, when they say 'Get Loose', you're only throwing 10 or 12.

"The bullpen guys have been a great help in my career so far," Bailey mentioned, singling out his fellow relievers' assistance in getting him properly warmed up and prepared for games. "Especially in the Big Leagues. I'll ask them what guys are looking for in certain situations."

So now that he is not just in The Show but a rising star, what advice would Bailey offer? "What would I tell the NECBL guys?" he mulled it over before enthusiastically answering:

"What was that movie- *Summer Catch*- about the Cape Cod League? I remember watching that and thinking 'I want to play in one of those summer leagues.' Being at a small college, you may not have that opportunity. But wherever you are, they'll find you. Throw strikes, pound the zone and enjoy the summer because you don't know how long you're going to have the uniform on.

"The NECBL was great for my career and my advancement. For the guys going there, take advantage of opportunities. That is what I did that summer and forward into my professional career- taking advantage of every opportunity because you never know who is watching or what that next step in your career is going to be. Learn from your experience over the summer and build on that. That summer gave me the confidence that propelled me to be able to be drafted and get into the A's system."

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento enters critical Fresno series with loss

By Robbie Enos / Sacramento River Cats

There could only be one winner in a battle of left-handers Friday night, but unfortunately for the Sacramento River Cats it was Chris Seddon of the Tacoma Rainiers who came on top. Seddon threw a complete-game shutout, holding the River Cats to three hits in a stellar 106-pitch performance and 2-0 victory.

"It is awesome. Just fantastic," Seddon said of his performance after the game. "I was just trying to keep (River Cats hitters) off balance. Just work the fastball in and out, and the changeup away."

The River Cats threatened in the ninth, grasping for air with a two-out rally. Matt Watson drew a walk, and Josh Donaldson singled to left to put runners on first and second. Needing to finish off top prospect Chris Carter for the shutout, Seddon struck him out looking on a 2-2 pitch.

Tacoma Manager Daren Brown gave his thoughts on Seddon's performance.

"Obviously he did outstanding," Brown said. "A three-hit shutout against a good hitting ball club. He was never in a whole lot of trouble except for the ninth inning. He made a big pitch for the last out of the game. I felt he mixed his pitches well, used both sides of the plate, and did a nice job."

A home run off the bat of right fielder Mike Wilson in the second was the difference maker. After Guillermo Quiroz walked, Wilson pounded a 1-0 pitch over the left-field fence and on top of the River Cats clubhouse.

Outfielder Corey Wimberly went 0-for-4 with no walks or hit-by-pitches. This ended his consecutive on-base streak at 31 games. The streak was the longest in the PCL this season. Wimberly hit .317 with 16 walks and 24 runs during the streak.

"It was fun while it lasted," he said after the game. "It kind of hit me by surprise. For me I've just been trying to repeat a consistent plan at the plate. It was just something that happened."

With five left-handers in the Tacoma lineup, DeFrancesco felt confident with the left-hander Travis Blackley on the mound. Blackley retired 10 of the 14 lefties he faced, with two strikeouts. Overall, Blackley threw 6.1 innings, allowing five hits and two earned runs. He finished the game after 90 pitches and six strikeouts.

"Everything was really working today," Blackley said. "I was just trying to throw strikes and not let the umpire dictate it. He was a little tight, but we knew that already coming in. So I just wanted to make them swing it, and things seemed to be doing its job."

But the lineup DeFrancesco put out on the field couldn't come through, baffled by Seddon's work.

"He had great command of all his pitches," Wimberly said. "He worked both sides of the plate and got ahead in the count early."

Added Carter: "He kept changing up pitches and hitting the zone well. He kept throwing the good pitches and we struggled."

Quiroz continued to pester Blackley in the fourth when one of Blackley's pitches nailed him in the foot. A Mike Carp single put Quiroz in scoring position. But Blackley worked his way out of trouble by forcing a deep flyout of Wilson in the corner of left field, and then a fielder's choice at second off the bat of Matt Mangini.

Adam Heether, who singled in the first, was the only River Cat to reach base through five innings. He struck out four batters through the first five and ended the fifth with 14 consecutive batters retired.

The battle of the southpaws continued on through the sixth. Seddon gave up his second hit to Michael Affronti, a single that one-hopped shortstop Chris Woodward, rolled up his glove arm and trickled into center field. But Seddon got out of the inning without any damage. Blackley retired eight in a row after Carp's single in the fourth.

A controversial call in the seventh nearly blew the game open for Tacoma. After Carp got his second hit of the game with a single, Wilson again drove a ball to deep left field that crossed the left-field fence. The ball was right next to the foul pole, and was originally called a home run. After more discussion, the umpires overturned the call and ruled the ball foul. Wilson

struck out on the next pitch, and Blackely's night was done after a Matt Mangini single. Jonathan Hunton came in for relief and got out of the inning without any damage.

Donaldson walked in the seventh off Seddon with one out as the River Cats tried to get something going. Carter was the next batter and the Sacramento offense smelled a rally. But the sweet smell was doused by Carp, who made a sensational diving catch going toward the third-base line off a shot from Carter. Matt Carson flew out to center field to keep the shutout intact.

Sacramento (26-30) dropped three of four games in the homestand against Tacoma. The River Cats next play a critical road series against the Fresno Grizzlies starting Saturday. The Grizzlies are in first place in the Pacific South, with the River Cats a distant second.

"We just need to keep playing hard," Carter said of the upcoming series. "We've been playing good games, they just haven't been going in our favor. I think if we just keep working hard, it should work out for us."

Drillers Edge 'Hounds in Series Finale

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The match-up between the RockHounds and Tulsa Drillers did not decide either division race, but the clubs concluded a heckuva home-and-home series Friday night in Tulsa.

The Drillers edged the RockHounds, 2-1, winning the 3-game set in Tulsa and splitting the six games between the clubs in the Texas League's first half.

In the Tulsa series, the Drillers won the opener, 2-0, and the 'Hounds took the middle game by a 2-1 score. As was the case in each of those games, one swing was the difference Friday night, as a home run won the game. Ryan Harvey's solo home run in the sixth came moments after the RockHounds had forged a 1-1 tie, and it would stand up as the game winner. Wilin Rosario's 2-run home run won the opener and Corey Brown's solo shot snapped a 1-1 tie in game two.

The teams split the six games, with each winning 2-games-to-1 at home. Each of the RockHounds' wins came by one run, with Tulsa winning by scores of 2-1, 2-0 and 5-2 in at Citibank Ballpark. That game, however, was tied at 2-2 from the seventh until the 14th inning. Tight as your proverbial drum!

Anderson Baffles Ports In 3-1 Loss

VISALIA, Calif. - The Visalia Rawhide had lost eight straight heading into this weekend's series with the Stockton Ports. The Ports, however, have become Visalia's favorite target. On Friday night, the Rawhide beat Stockton for the second straight time and the 11th time in 14 games as the Ports fell by a final of 3-1.

Visalia had only one run-producing inning, and that was in the bottom of the first. Ports starter Mike Madsen (0-1), in his first outing of the year coming from Extended Spring Training, had trouble settling in and received little help from his defense. Madsen yielded a leadoff single to Dan Kaczowski, then issued back-to-back walks to Byron Wiley and Ryan Wheeler. Paul Goldschmidt produced the game's first run with a sac-fly to center to give the Rawhide a 1-0 lead. Marc Krauss came up next and hit a ground ball to short that went under the glove of Grant Green, an error that allowed Wiley to score to make it 2-0. Two batters later, with the bases re-loaded and one out, Kyle Greene reached on an error made by second baseman Michael Richard, scoring another run and giving the Rawhide a 3-0 advantage. Madsen would get back-to-back-to-back strikeouts of Rossmel Perez and Victor Estevez to end the inning.

Madsen, in his first outing of the season, went four-plus innings and allowed just the three first-inning runs (two earned) on five hits while walking four and striking out five in taking the loss.

Meanwhile, Rawhide starter Chase Anderson (2-2) came out guns blazing. Anderson struck out seven over the first three innings and kept Stockton off the board in that span.

Stockton scored their first and only run in the fourth. Todd Johnson got aboard with a leadoff single to left. Three batters later with two down, Jeremy Barfield plated Johnson with a double to right to make it a 3-1 ballgame.

Anderson earned the win for Visalia, going seven full innings and allowing just the one run on four hits while striking out a season-high 11.

Both offenses would be shut down most of the night. Shane Keough led off the fifth inning with a double and would not score. Keough's double was Stockton's last hit, and Rawhide pitching would face the minimum the rest of the way.

Victor Capellan would pitch a scoreless eighth and Bryan Woodall (SV, 5) a perfect ninth to record his second save in as many nights and his fifth in as many chances.

Stockton's bullpen was equally as strong. Scott Deal and Lance Sewell combined for four scoreless innings, holding the Rawhide to just one hit in that span.

The Ports and Rawhide will play the third game of their four-game set on Saturday night at Recreation Park. Justin Murray (3-3, 3.98 ERA) will head to the hill for Stockton, opposed by left-hander Dan Taylor (0-2, 8.40 ERA) for Visalia. First pitch is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

Cougars Win Third Straight

Krol leads Kane County to victory in team's first-ever trip to Kentucky

BOWLING GREEN, Kent. – With early offense, 5 2/3 steady innings from Ian Krol and stingy bullpen work, the Kane County Cougars claimed their third straight victory with a 3-2 win Friday night against the Bowling Green Hot Rods at Bowling Green Ballpark. It was the first-ever game for the Cougars in Kentucky, as the Hot Rods are one of two new Midwest League teams this season. The Cougars are 3-1 so far on their six-game road trip and have won four of their last five.

The Cougars took the first lead of the game in the second inning when Leonardo Gil belted a one-out solo shot off Aaron Dott (1-2). Krol gave up the only Bowling Green runs in the bottom of the second. He balked home Ty Morrison and then yielded a solo homer to Tyler Bortnick, the first round-tripper off Krol this season. Trailing, 2-1, the Cougars quickly regained control in the fourth. Max Stassi led off with a double and took third on a grounder. After Rashun Dixon walked, a throwing error by Hot Rods third baseman Julio Cedenó scored both runners to make it 3-2, and that became the final.

Krol scattered five hits, walked none and fanned two in the victory. He has not walked a batter in his last 19 2/3 innings. Connor Hoehn held down Bowling Green for 2 1/3 hitless innings, and Jose Guzman handled the ninth for his fourth save.

The Cougars (25-31) and Hot Rods (22-32) play Game 2 of the series Saturday night at 7:05 CT. Rob Gilliam (3-4, 3.68) will face Jason McEachern (2-5, 4.35). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at www.kccougars.com with pregame coverage starting at 6:50 p.m.