



***Clips***  
***(June 7, 2010)***

*From the Los Angeles Times*

## **Mike Napoli's four hits lead Angels to 9-4 win over Mariners**

By Mike DiGiovanna

Reporting from Seattle - The Angels will travel 50,509 air miles this season, the most in baseball and more than twice as many as the Chicago White Sox, who will travel a major league-low 22,832 miles. But when those flights stop in Kansas City and Seattle, who's complaining?

Mike Napoli had four hits, including a tiebreaking, two-run home run in the seventh inning, to lead the Angels to a 9-4 victory and a three-game sweep of the Mariners at Safeco Field on Sunday.

Erick Aybar also had four hits - a double and three singles - and Robb Quinlan snapped an 0-for-2010 slump with two doubles and a single, part of a season-high 18-hit attack that pushed the Angels (31-28) to their eighth win in nine games.

Three of those wins came during a four-game series at Kauffman Stadium, where the Angels, now a half-game out of first place in the American League West, are 26-7 since 2003. The Angels are 23-12 at Safeco Field since 2007.

The offense has come to life since Kendry Morales broke a bone above his left ankle in a freak injury May 29; in eight games without the first baseman, the Angels are batting .310 (92 for 297) with 58 runs, 13 homers and 25 doubles.

Which raises the question: Are the Angels this good, or are they simply fattening up on noncontenders that are a combined 22 games under .500?

"It doesn't matter who we're playing. If we're not playing good ball, we'll get beat by anybody," said bench coach Ron Roenicke, who filled in for Mike Scioscia while the manager attended his daughter's high school graduation in Southern California. "If we're playing this way, I feel we can beat anybody."

The Angels have played well for Roenicke, going 7-0 and outscoring opponents, 44-18, in games in which he has filled in for Scioscia, who is to return Monday at Oakland.

What's Roenicke's secret?

"We're playing good," he said. "We're playing nice baseball."

The Angels fell behind, 3-1, in the first inning Sunday, when Jose Lopez (single), Milton Bradley (double) and Josh Wilson (triple) drove in runs against Angels starter Joel Pineiro, but Pineiro (4-6) shut out Seattle over the next four innings.

The Angels came back when Napoli singled and seldom-used Quinlan, hitless in 14 at-bats this season, hit a two-out, run-scoring double in the fourth and Hideki Matsui hit a solo homer in the fifth.

Quinlan singled and later scored on an error for a 4-3 lead in the sixth, but Ichiro Suzuki's run-scoring double in the bottom of the sixth tied the score, 4-4.

Seattle reliever Shawn Kelley, who walked four during a six-run sixth inning Saturday, came on for the seventh. The right-hander found the plate this time ... too much of it.

Matsui singled and Napoli hit his ninth home run of the season, an opposite-field shot to right, for a 6-4 lead.

"It was a two-strike slider, and I was trying to protect the plate," Napoli said. "It was a little up. I tried to hit it hard."

The Angels pulled away with three runs off closer David Aardsma in the ninth, an inning Napoli opened with a single. Juan Rivera hit a double, Aybar had a single and Howie Kendrick had a triple, each driving in a run.

The streaky Napoli, who hit .322 with eight homers and 10 doubles in May, seemed to be cooling, with three hits in 22 at-bats in June, but the catcher caught fire again Sunday.

"When a pitcher makes mistakes, he really hits them well," Roenicke said. "I don't know if it's because he's a catcher, but he picks up spin well."

Quinlan hasn't picked up much of anything this season. He spent April and May bouncing between Anaheim and triple-A Salt Lake and was hitting .000 before Sunday. He left with a .158 average.

"If you start looking at the numbers, you can get down on yourself quick," Quinlan said. "I was just happy to have some good at-bats and to help the team win."

*From the Orange County Register*

## **Napoli helps continue Angels' surge**

By BILL PLUNKETT

SEATTLE - Well, he certainly seems to hit like a first baseman.

Mike Napoli is still spending most of his days behind the plate for the Angels (including Sunday) while Jeff Mathis continues his rehab assignment in Triple-A. But Napoli continued making his case as the Angels' best cheap-fuel alternative to replacing first baseman Kendry Morales' bat in their lineup.

His two-run home run in the seventh inning broke a tie and keyed a late-inning push by the Angels' offense that put the Seattle Mariners away Sunday, 9-4, and completed a three-game sweep at Safeco Field.

The Angels have now matched their season-high with a five-game winning streak, part of a stretch that has seen them win eight of their past nine games to go a season-high three games over .500 (31-28).

The offense has been key to the surge, averaging seven runs per game in the past nine - and Napoli has been a big part of the offense. He was 4 for 5 Sunday with the two-run home run and three runs scored, reversing a downward trend (3 for 22) to start June after his hot May (.322, eight home runs, 19 extra-base hits).

"Nap's a streaky hitter and for the last few weeks he's hot," said Angels bench coach Ron Roenicke, now 7-0 as acting manager over the past few seasons. "When he is (hot), he has such a good eye he doesn't get himself in trouble too much. And he has such great power.

"I don't know if it's because he's a catcher and he's used to tracking balls from behind the plate. But he really sees the spin on the ball really well."

It was a slider outside from Mariners reliever Shawn Kelley that Napoli tracked and re-directed over the wall in right field for the game-breaking home run Sunday.

"The last couple games I felt I had hit some balls hard," Napoli said of the temperature changes in his batting results. "I wasn't panicking or anything. I still felt good in the box."

He wasn't alone in that Sunday. The Angels had a season-high 18 hits including four-hit games by Napoli and Erick Aybar (back in the leadoff spot with Maicer Izturis nursing a tight hamstring) and a three-hit game by Robb Quinlan (his first hits of the season).

Eight of the 18 hits and five of the Angels' runs came in the final three innings. While beating the Mariners five consecutive times over the past two weekends (including consecutive walkoff wins in Anaheim last weekend), the Angels have scored 28 runs on 28 hits and 14 walks in 15 1/3 innings pitched by the Mariners' bullpen.

"Any time your offense is doing a good job, I think they're getting starters out of there," Roenicke said. "You look at a good offensive team like the Yankees, they say, 'Let's get the starter out of there and get to the bullpen.' I think that's true of most teams."

## Starters' numbers rounding into shape

By BILL PLUNKETT

SEATTLE - John Lackey's departure from the Angels' starting rotation might have left a legacy rather than a void.

Since a rough start that saw the rotation's collective ERA soar to 5.23 on May 6, Angels starters have a 3.67 ERA and have allowed three or fewer runs in 27 of the past 39 games.

Instead, it might be on the four days between starts that Lackey's influence lives on. Lackey, who signed with the Boston Red Sox as a free agent this past winter, was diligent in his workout regimen between starts - something now mirrored in the young right-hander who has stepped to the front of the Angels' rotation this season.

"I thought John brought a lot of personality to the guys around him," Angels pitching coach Mike Butcher said. "That being said, I think a lot of guys have stepped it up.

"I think in a good way, John left a good impression on a young guy like Jered Weaver. He's getting after it. This is as hard as I've ever seen him work out. It started last year and has just gotten even better this year."

The approach, Butcher said, is to "grind yourself to the point" that the fifth day - the day you get to pitch - seems easy and becomes a reward for all the hard work in between starts.

Left-hander Joe Saunders got that speech early in May when the Angels were in Seattle. Butcher, Saunders and Angels manager Mike Scioscia met in Scioscia's office in the visiting clubhouse to discuss a way to turn around Saunders' horrible start (1-5, 7.04 ERA).

One suggestion was that he increase the intensity of his workouts between starts. Butcher said there were no questions about Saunders' work ethic. But he fell into the routine a lot of pitchers do - work out hard during the offseason but slip into "a maintenance program during the season rather than really pushing yourself."

Saunders said the new approach has "given my whole aspect a different look." Since that 1-5 start, Saunders is 3-1 with a 3.00 ERA in six starts.

"Any time you switch something up and do something harder than before, you feel better," Saunders said. "You go out there with more confidence that you can handle things.

"I think we all have enough time in (the majors) now to where we feed off each other."

### REHAB UPDATES

Scioscia's estimate that Jeff Mathis would need to spend "upwards of 10 days" on a rehab assignment with Triple-A Salt Lake seems high now.

Scioscia said the final test before Mathis could be activated would be whether he could catch on back-to-back days - but Mathis caught nine innings in each of his first two

games with Salt Lake. Mathis went 1 for 4 at the plate in each game, then went hitless in four at-bats as the DH on Sunday.

Meanwhile, third baseman Brandon Wood has gone 2 for 24 (.083) with nine strikeouts in six games on his rehab assignment with Salt Lake. He is eligible to come off the DL on Tuesday.

Mathis has been out since April 19 because of a fractured right wrist and can be activated any time.

#### NOTES

Infielder Maicer Izturis was not in the lineup Sunday after feeling tightness behind his right knee during Saturday's game. Izturis came out after six innings Saturday but bench coach and acting manager Ron Roenicke said the team was being cautious with Izturis. ... Mariners second baseman Chone Figgins and Manager Don Wakamatsu were ejected Sunday after arguing a called strike during Figgins' at-bat. ...

The Mariners placed starter Doug Fister (right shoulder fatigue) on the DL and promoted left-hander Luke French.

#### TODAY

Angels LHP Scott Kazmir (4-5, 5.86) opposes A's RHP Ben Sheets (2-4, 5.00) at 7:05 p.m. The game will be broadcast on FSN, KLAA/830 and KWKW/1330 (Spanish).

*From Angelsbb.com*

## **Napoli's blast paves way to Angels sweep**

Halos rap out season-high 18 hits in fifth straight victory

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

06/06/10 8:39 PM ET

SEATTLE -- The road warriors apparently are back.

Mike Napoli slammed an opposite-field, two-run homer in the seventh inning against Shawn Kelley, lifting Joel Pineiro and the Angels to a 9-4 come-from-behind decision and sweep of a three-game series against the Mariners on Sunday at Safeco Field.

"It was only a matter of time with these guys we have," said Howard Kendrick, who delivered two of the Angels' season-high 18 hits, including their second triple of the season.

The surging Angels claimed their fifth in a row and eighth in the past nine. The best road team in the Majors the past two seasons, the Halos are even at 15-15 in unfriendly environs with wins in six of seven on the current 14-game journey that resumes in Oakland on Monday night.

Hideki Matsui, who hammered a tying homer in the fifth, singled before Napoli powered his ninth blast of the season.

Kelley had entered after Mariners starter Jason Vargas went six innings, navigating the same distance as Pineiro, who moved to 4-6 with three innings of bullpen support.

"All credit today goes to the offense," Pineiro said. "Those guys really picked me up."

Napoli and Erick Aybar, with four hits apiece, spearheaded the attack along with Matsui and Robb Quinlan, who doubled twice off the wall in left and singled while playing superb defense at first base.

"It just felt good to be a part of it," said Quinlan, who was 0-for-14 coming into the game. "I was just thinking about what I could do today to help out. I'm just glad I had some good at-bats."

Presiding over it all, advancing his record as interim manager to 7-0 in three seasons in Mike Scioscia's temporary absence, was Ron Roenicke, the Angels' bench coach. Scioscia returns Monday after spending the past two days with his family in celebration of daughter Taylor's high school graduation.

"If we're not playing good ball, we get beat by anybody," Roenicke said. "When we're playing this way, we can beat anybody."

Even though he swears he doesn't check the standings until much later in the season, Scioscia would find the top of the American League West a three-team crowd all of a sudden.

The Rangers lead the Angels by a half-game with the A's a half-game behind the Angels - all three with winning records.

"They have a lot of depth," said Mariners manager Don Wakamatsu, who was ejected along with former Angels third baseman Chone Figgins on Sunday. "They're a good ballclub.

"Today with Pinerio, I thought we had him in a position where we could have done some damage, and we didn't take the opportunity. They swung the bat well. When you don't jump up and take those runs when you can, they gain the momentum back."

The Angels, their offense in flight again, took the lead in the sixth Sunday with an unearned run. After singles by Quinlan and Aybar had runners at the corners, third baseman Jose Lopez threw wildly on Kendrick's roller for an error, Quinlan scoring.

The Mariners, who left Franklin Gutierrez stranded after a leadoff double in the fifth, tied it in the bottom of the sixth. Michael Saunders walked with two away and scored on Ichiro Suzuki's double to left-center, the sixth hit of the series by Ichiro.

A collision with third baseman Kevin Frandsen on Figgins' first-inning roller left Pineiro a little shaken up, with two on and none out, and the Mariners capitalized.

Lopez singled home a run, Milton Bradley doubled home a second, and Josh Wilson's RBI triple had the Mariners in front, 3-1.

"It felt a little numb for a minute," said Pineiro, whose quickness to Figgins' roller surprised Frandsen, "but I was all right. I made some good pitches, and they hit a few shots. After that I felt good, strong, with good rhythm. Hopefully, this is something I can build on."

Figgins, who was thrown out at third by left fielder Juan Rivera on Lopez's hit, was tossed from the game after disputing a strike call in his second at-bat in the second inning.

The Angels had taken the lead in the first on doubles by Aybar and Torii Hunter. Napoli's single and a two-out double by Quinlan -- his first hit of the season -- made it a one-run game in the fourth.



Matsui, continuing his torrid hitting with 12 hits in his past 23 at-bats, unloaded his solo homer with two away in the fifth against Vargas to bring the Angels even. It was Matsui's ninth of the season and fifth against a lefty.

A sprawling catch by Gutierrez in center robbing Kendrick ended the seventh with the bases loaded and kept the Angels from breaking it open.

But they took care of that with another thrashing of the Mariners' bullpen in the ninth. Napoli singled, scoring on Rivera's double. With two away, Aybar slashed his fourth hit, scoring Rivera from third, and he trotted home when Kendrick slammed his triple to right-center.

"Everybody's getting their wheels turning again," Kendrick said. "One through nine, we're picking each other up. Kendry Morales goes down, and a guy like Robb Quinlan comes in and gets it done. 'Q' can hit, believe me. We all know that."

## **AL West tightening as Angels, A's open set**

By Rhett Bollinger / MLB.com

Apparently, it was only a matter of time before the Angels finally caught fire this season.

Fresh off a three-game sweep over the Mariners, the Angels have won five in a row and eight of their past nine entering a four-game series against the American League West rival A's that begins Monday at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

Although Angels manager Mike Scioscia maintains he doesn't look at his club's place in the standings, it enters just a half-game back of the Rangers in the AL West, which is the closest the Angels have been to first place since May 1.

The Angels will turn to left-hander Scott Kazmir in the series opener against A's right-hander Ben Sheets.

Kazmir, who is 4-5 with a 5.86 ERA this season, is coming off one of his better outings of the season when he limited the Royals to just one run over 5 2/3 innings on Wednesday. But he also struggled with his control with four walks and just two strikeouts.

"The results were there, but his command wasn't what it needs to be," Scioscia said. "When he had to make a pitch, he did, but his ball-to-strike ratio was not good."

The A's, meanwhile, have been a pleasant surprise this season and enter just one game behind the Rangers in the standings. But they enter having lost four of their past six after playing the always-tough Red Sox and Twins.

Oakland will look to Sheets to get it back on track, and the nine-year veteran has done his best to keep the A's in games, as he's pitched at least six innings in each of his past six starts.

Sheets, though, has just one win over that stretch despite a 3.32 ERA and is 2-4 with a 5.00 ERA on the season. He tossed six innings again in his last start on Wednesday but allowed four runs in a loss against the Red Sox.

"I was up and down," he said. "I'm still working on being consistent with good arm speed. I didn't think it was great by any means."

#### Angels: Izturis held out

Infielder Maicer Izturis was held out of the Angels' 9-4 win over the Mariners on Sunday because of soreness in his right knee, but he is expected to be back in the lineup on Monday. "I could play," Izturis said, "but it's probably better to take a day off."

#### A's: Crisp nears rehab assignment

Outfielder Coco Crisp resumed baseball activities on Sunday and could potentially be ready for a rehab assignment this week. Crisp, who is on the disabled list with a strained right intercostal muscle, will take batting practice early in the week, and then the A's will decide when Crisp will begin his Minor League rehab assignment.

#### Worth noting

The Angels will have Scioscia back at manager on Monday after he missed the final two games in Seattle to attend daughter Taylor's high school graduation. Bench coach Ron Roenicke was the club's manager in Scioscia's place. ... A's manager Bob Geren said Eric Chavez, rehabbing from neck spasms, will continue to work out with the club this week and could begin a rehab assignment by the end of the homestand Friday. ... Angels catcher Jeff Mathis, recovering from a fractured right wrist, caught a full game for the second day in a row on Saturday for Triple-A Salt Lake, going 1-for-4 with an RBI in a 7-2 loss to Colorado Springs. Third baseman Brandon Wood was 0-for-4 in his fifth rehab assignment at third base.

## Sizzling Frandsen steps up for Halos

Versatile reserve spells aching Izturis for series finale

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

06/06/10 4:14 PM ET

- Bulger on roll out of Angels' bullpen
- Ichiro continues to amaze Angels
- Wilson gives depth, quality behind plate
- Worth noting

SEATTLE -- Maicer Izturis, experiencing some soreness behind his right knee, was a scratch from Sunday's lineup at third base for the Angels. Such is the team's depth at the moment that Izturis was replaced by a man hitting .452, Kevin Frandsen.

"I could play," Izturis said, "but it's probably better to take a day off. It's pretty cold today."

Inserted into the leadoff spot for Friday night's series opener against the Mariners, Izturis responded with three hits and two walks in nine plate appearances in the two games, scoring four runs and driving in two. Erick Aybar was back in the leadoff role on Sunday against Jason Vargas.

Frandsen, who pinch-hit for Izturis in the seventh inning Saturday and singled and scored, has gone 5-for-10 during the road trip with a pair of RBIs and owns eight hits in 16 at-bats during a five-game hitting streak.

"He's got personality -- he's a little cocky, confident," acting Angels manager Ron Roenicke said of Frandsen on the second day of Mike Scioscia's hiatus to attend his daughter's high school graduation. "He's got some big league experience [with the Giants]. He's not scared of anything.

"We've put him at third, but he's played everything and has got some huge hits for us. He said, 'Hey, I can play right field, left field.' He came to me the other day and said, 'I can play first base.' We only have a four-man bench. It makes it easier for [pitching coach Mike Butcher] to carry a 12-man staff. That kind of player is huge for us, and he's played great."

### **Bulger on roll out of Angels' bullpen**

SEATTLE -- Painting fastballs while bringing in his killer breaking ball and changeup, Jason Bulger is back in full command in his middle-relief role for the Angels.

One of the club's most durable and effective arms last season, Bulger is on a roll with 15 scoreless appearances in his past 17 and 21 strikeouts in 16 innings. He struck out three in two scoreless innings on Saturday against Seattle.

"My fastball command is finally getting back to what it needs to be," Bulger said. "It's not 100 percent, but it's getting closer. Butch [pitching coach Mike Butcher] and I did a few minor tweaks a couple of weeks ago. Sometimes simplifying things does have the biggest impact. Sometimes you try to think about too many things."

Acting manager Ron Roenicke likes what he sees in Bulger's body language, velocity and command.

"When he's confident, he's a totally different pitcher," Roenicke said. "All three of his pitches are Major League pitches. His breaking ball is always there. When he's got the fastball he can throw for strikes and a very good changeup, he's not going to get hit. It's just a matter of confidence."

### **Ichiro continues to amaze Angels**

SEATTLE -- There is nobody quite like Ichiro Suzuki. The Mariners' leadoff artist has reached base six times in eight plate appearances in the first two games against the Angels, who admittedly have no idea how to pitch the man with the golden wand.

"You're not going to stop Ichiro," Angels acting manager Ron Roenicke, subbing for Mike Scioscia, said heading into Sunday's series finale at Safeco Field. "It looks like he looks out and sees where the defense is and hits accordingly."

"We play him off the line at third base and he hits it down the line. Move off the line, and he hits it in the hole. I don't know what to do. He has such good bat command there's not much you can do. He's really different. Obviously, he's a great hitter. There aren't too many guys like him who don't have holes. We talk about it all the time -- 'How are we going to pitch him, so I can set the defense?'"

"I felt the same way with [former Angels slugger, now with Texas] Vladimir Guerrero. You don't know how to defense him. He hits to all fields and bloop a lot of balls in. You hope he hits out of the zone and gets himself out."

### **Wilson gives depth, quality behind plate**

SEATTLE -- In the absence of two of their most valuable players -- first baseman Kendry Morales and catcher Jeff Mathis -- the Angels have been forced to mix and match, with Mike Napoli doing double duty at both positions.

The high-caliber play of catcher Bobby Wilson has given Angels manager Mike Scioscia (and interim skipper Ron Roenicke) the confidence to play Napoli at first on occasion and entrust catching duties to the new backup receiver.

Showing he belongs after being named the Pacific Coast League's best defensive catcher last season while at Triple-A Salt Lake, Wilson is 6-0 in his starts with a 2.77 catcher's ERA in 48 2/3 innings.

"Mike [Scioscia] has always liked him," Roenicke said. "He pays so much attention to catching. He's always said the guy is going to be a nice Major League catcher. He's done a great job. He blocks balls very well. His target is very nice. His throwing is good, although sometimes he doesn't have a chance [to nail baserunners with big jumps]. For us, he's been a really good catcher."

### **Worth noting**

Jeff Mathis, recovering from a fractured right wrist, caught a full game for the second day in a row on Saturday for Triple-A Salt Lake, going 1-for-4 with an RBI in a 7-2 loss to Colorado Springs. Brandon Wood was 0-for-4 in his fifth rehab assignment at third base. ... The Angels had won 15 of the previous 22 heading into Sunday's bid for a three-game sweep of the Mariners. ... Moving on to Oakland, where they have won their past five games, the Angels will have manager Mike Scioscia back after he missed the final two games in Seattle to attend daughter Taylor's high school graduation. ... Ben Sheets, Vin Mazzaro, Dallas Braden and Trevor Cahill are lined up in that order for the A's against Scott Kazmir, Jered Weaver, Joe Saunders and Ervin Santana. ... The Angels have five of the first 40 picks in Monday's First-Year Player Draft, which is rich in the brand of high school talent, especially on the mound, the club traditionally has favored.

### **Draft Preview: Angels armed and ready**

Team has two first-round selections in 2010

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

06/04/10 10:00 AM ET

ANAHEIM -- As difficult as it was for them to say goodbye to Chone Figgins and John Lackey, the Angels are prepared to reap some benefits in the 2010 First-Year Player Draft for the signings of the Type A free agents by Seattle and Boston, respectively.

Armed with a pair of first-round choices -- No. 18 overall courtesy of the Mariners and No. 29 from the Red Sox -- the Angels also have No. 37, for Lackey, and No. 40, for Figgins, in the supplemental first round. They have their own second-round pick, No. 81 overall, and a third-round choice at No. 111. They also have pick No. 115 in the supplemental third round for not signing 2009 third-round pick Josh Spence.

MLB.com will offer live coverage and analysis of the entire First-Year Player Draft from Monday to Wednesday on MLB.com/Live. The first round and Compensation Round A will be broadcast live on Monday, 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 noon, and Rounds 31-50 will be streamed on Wednesday, starting at noon. Host Pete McCarthy will be joined by Mayo and former general manager Jim Duquette.

In about 50 words

The Angels are in a position to fortify their organization both on the mound and on the field with quality position players. Based on past decisions, they're likely to focus on high school athletes they can shape and mold.

The scoop

"We're kind of reaping the benefits of some of our guys choosing free agency, if there is any benefit to that. We need to enjoy the time we have with these picks, because it won't happen very often." -- *scouting director Eddie Bane*

*ANGELS' RECENT  
TOP DRAFT PICKS*

Year	Player	Current team
2009	Randal Grichuk	Cedar Rapids (A)
2009	Michael Trout	Cedar Rapids (A)
2009	Tyler Skaggs	Cedar Rapids (A)
2009	Garrett Richards	Cedar Rapids (A)
2005	Tyler Kehr	Cedar Rapids (A)
2009	Tyler Chatwood	Rancho Cucamonga (A)
2005	Jonathan Bachanov	Cedar Rapids (A)
2009	Hank Conger	Salt Lake (AAA)
2005	Trevor Bell	Angels (MLB)

First-round buzz

With athletes and high-upside pitching available on both the college and high school fronts, the Angels have an opportunity to fortify themselves with power arms and power hitters, both organizational needs.

Shopping list

Having beefed up their outfield while enhancing their pitching in last year's Draft, the Angels figure to go for athletes and arms again. They'd like to add more power.

#### Trend watch

The Angels have a history of selecting high school players, both position players and pitchers.

#### Recent Draft History

##### Rising fast

Southpaw Trevor Reckling, an eighth-round pick in 2007 out of St. Benedict's Prep High School in New Jersey, has advanced to Triple-A Salt Lake in his fourth professional season, emerging as the organization's premier pitching prospect.

##### Cinderella story

Roberto Lopez, taken in the 25th round in 2008 out of the University of Southern California, is tearing up California League pitching for high Class A Rancho Cucamonga. The right-handed hitter hails from Rancho Bernardo High School in the San Diego area.

##### In the Show

No players from the past three Drafts have reached the big leagues.

## **Hundreds of players to realize Draft dreams**

Three-day First-Year Player Draft begins tonight at 7 ET

By Jonathan Mayo / MLB.com

06/07/10 9:00 AM ET

It's said that every kid who picks up a baseball dreams of one day playing in the big leagues.

Only a very select few fulfill that dream, but starting at 7 p.m. ET on Monday, hundreds of talented high school and college players will take their first big steps in that direction when they are selected in the First-Year Player Draft.

The first 50 picks -- representing the first and supplemental compensation rounds -- of the three-day event begins at that time, and fans can watch it all during live coverage on MLB.com and MLB Network, whose preview show begins at 6 p.m. MLB.com will then provide exclusive coverage of days 2 and 3, featuring a live pick-by-pick stream, expert commentary and Draft Tracker, a live interactive application that includes a searchable database of every Draft-eligible player.

When Commissioner Bud Selig walks to the podium on Monday evening to announce the top pick, held by the Washington Nationals for the second straight year, it's expected that he will speak the name of Bryce Harper, the 17-year-old phenom who has been the face

of this Draft for the past year, when he received national attention and left high school two years early to attend junior college.

It's long been believed that Harper is the best talent in this Draft class, and he has backed it up with his performance, most of it with a wood bat, at the College of Southern Nevada. While the Nationals had not confirmed their choice as of Sunday evening, it is seemingly clear that Harper will be their choice.

"If they didn't take him, I think it could be a nightmare," said College of Southern Nevada coach Tim Chambers. "In my opinion, and this is my opinion alone, with his age, he's possibly the greatest amateur player ever. At 17, a junior in high school, I can't imagine anybody being better."

Harper, of course, is not the only player in the Draft class and there are bound to be stars taken throughout the 50 rounds. There is a general consensus that the next two to go off the board will hail from the high school ranks: right-hander Jameson Taillon from The Woodlands in Texas and shortstop Manny Machado from Miami Brito in Florida.

After that, however, things remained somewhat unclear in terms of who would go where. There's bound to be a fair share of college pitchers going early, as is always the case, with lefties Chris Sale of Florida Gulf Coast and Drew Pomeranz of Ole Miss leading that group. Right-handers Deck McGuire of Georgia Tech, Brandon Workman of Texas, Asher Wojciechowski of The Citadel and Alex Wimmers of Ohio State are also in the first-round picture.

Last year's college pitchers have set the bar pretty high. No. 1 pick Stephen Strasburg, taken out of San Diego State, will make his much-anticipated Major League debut for the Nationals on Tuesday after tearing through the Minors. He'll join Drew Storen -- last year's No. 10 overall pick -- on Washington's staff. The former Stanford closer has a 1.93 ERA in 10 relief outings since being called up on May 17.

The leader of the 2009 Draftees so far has been Mike Leake, the No. 8 pick who went straight to the big leagues and is 5-0 with a 2.22 ERA over his first 11 starts.

This year's class doesn't have quite the college pitching talent, at least in terms of guys separating themselves at the top. There are more pitchers to choose from at the high school level -- many consider that to be the deepest pool of talent -- but with that comes the risk of taking young arms.

"To overgeneralize, it's a younger Draft," a National League scouting director said. "The high school crop is giving more. But as much as we like the high schoolers, there won't be 20-25 taken in the first round. But it is the depth of the Draft."

After Taillon, high school pitchers like Karsten Whitson (Florida), Stetson Allie (Ohio), Dylan Covey (California) and Aaron Sanchez (California) are among the prepsters who could go in the first round.



As deep as the pitching may appear, the hitting pool is shallow. It's not that there aren't any good hitters in his class, but scouts have bemoaned the lack of impact bats, especially ones worth considering at the top of the Draft after Harper. Still, advanced college hitters like Zack Cox of Arkansas, Michael Choice of Texas-Arlington and Yasmani Grandal of Miami figure to go pretty early, as do high schoolers Josh Sale from Washington state and Justin O'Conner from Indiana.

Some teams will get more cracks at picking the best talent than others in the early rounds. The Los Angeles Angels have three picks in the first round proper and 10 total through the first five rounds. The strength of this Draft's high-school pitching pools may be to their advantage, as the Angels are an organization that doesn't normally shy away from the younger set.

The Toronto Blue Jays trump the Angels by one, with 11 picks in the first five rounds. Three of those extra picks are because of unsigned 2009 selections, including a pair of Canadian natives, second-round selection Jake Eliopoulos and supplemental first-rounder James Paxton. Paxton headed to independent-league ball and could be re-drafted in the first couple of rounds.

The Jays, of course, aren't the only ones who will be looking to recoup for losses from last year's Draft. The Texas Rangers have the 15th pick -- technically 14B -- because they didn't sign their top pick last year, Matt Purke, who's now pitching at Texas Christian University and will be a Draft-eligible sophomore next year. The Tampa Bay Rays get a do-over of sorts with pick No. 31 after not coming to terms with LeVon Washington, who's back in the pool after going to Chipola Junior College. The Rangers and Rays will likely be sure to select signable talent as they would not receive compensation again if the players they take in those slots go unsigned.

It will likely start with Harper at No. 1 on Monday, just after 7 p.m. ET, and end roughly 1,500 picks later on Wednesday. Who will be the lucky few to make their dreams come true and reach the big leagues? Only time will tell.

## Stage is set for ever-evolving Draft

Fans can follow live on MLB.com, Network, Twitter

By Mark Newman / MLB.com

06/07/10 12:00 AM ET

Adrian Gonzalez, Chase Utley, Joe Mauer, Mark Teixeira, B.J. Upton, Zack Grienke, Matt Cain and Justin Verlander.

Justin Upton, Ryan Braun, Troy Tulowitzki, Evan Longoria, Tim Lincecum, David Price and Jason Heyward.

It is time to find out who's next.

Major League Baseball's First-Year Player Draft starts at 7 p.m. ET on Monday, presented live by MLB Network and MLB.com.

Those marquee players are just some of those chosen in the first round during the past decade, and now the stage is set -- literally -- as prospects, families and fans everywhere baseball is played turn their focus to the Commissioner's podium.

The annual multimedia extravaganza arrives again, delivering the names of tomorrow's stars today. The Nationals are on the clock with the top overall selection again this year, and they are expected to use it on catcher/outfielder Bryce Harper. This year, the drama is under a bigger umbrella, because on Tuesday night, the second day of the Draft, the overall No. 1 selection by the Nationals in 2009, Stephen Strasburg, makes his Major League debut on the same Network, with Bob Costas in the play-by-play booth.

What a time for the Nats. What a time for all those scouted players who have nurtured dreams since childhood. All systems are go at MLB Network's Studio 42 and at MLB.com's Draft Central, where the first pick will be read by Commissioner Bud Selig. The first round again will be televised by the Network, and one of many additions to the presentation this time is that it also will carry Compensation Round A -- a TV first for the event.

Another big change coming to the Draft coverage is a returning figure in a new role: Peter Gammons. He was hired as an MLB Network analyst and MLB.com columnist last offseason, so this will be his first Draft in the Network studio. When the event was at Disney World in 2007-08, Gammons was an off-stage analyst for ESPN.

"That's huge," said John Entz, senior vice president of production at MLB Network. "Peter, obviously he's been around the game forever, but he really gets into this event. He showed a ton of attention to it. It's something he enjoyed doing. It's going to be a big change for us, and we're very excited to have him on our coverage."

In Gammons' latest MLB.com column previewing the Draft, he writes: "Harper is the story of Monday's Draft. He is the age of a high school junior and could break Teixeira's position-player signing bonus record of \$9.5 million. He will probably end up in the outfield, where one GM said, 'I have him penciled in for 500 home runs,' and may give the Nationals two straight Drafts with franchise players. Ironically, the Draft will be going on the same day Stephen Strasburg makes his Major League debut."

Hall of Famer Al Kaline was among the dignitaries who sat at the Tigers' Draft-room table the last three years, and he said showcasing this event is making a big difference for this generation of fans and players.

"In baseball, the players in high school and college aren't publicized like basketball and football," said Kaline, who signed with Detroit as a bonus baby in 1953, long before the Draft's inception. "You didn't think there would be a media for something like this back when I played. It's a natural with today's technology. It's kind of exciting for the kids. I never visualized anything like this."

Commissioner Bud Selig will start it all off by reading the identity of the Nationals' top pick for the second year in a row. After last year's first round, he said, "Years ago, you didn't announce [picks] until days later. We can do even more to market this event. I know it's great for BAM [MLB Advanced Media] and it's a great day for the Network. I'm glad people can see what we have here."

The Draft already was an attraction always sure to drive the highest traffic of the year on MLB.com, and the addition of the live Network feed and the influence of social media has taken it to another level. Consider what the first round will be like. On a single computer screen, fans have the live Network studio feed; the MLB.com DraftTracker, listing every selection in order with a link to scouting reports; and a Twitter feed that includes a tab for "Everyone" and for "Insiders." Include the #mlbdraft hashtag in your tweets to be included in the former, and look for special access from official club accounts for the latter.

One by one, individual clubs have been stepping up over recent days to announce that they are on board for the behind-the-scenes tweets. Last year, for example, the @OaklandAs account was tweeting updates from their war room to show fans what the A's organization was thinking throughout the first round. This is a significant change -- and certainly light years from the old days of a Draft, when clubs just had a conference call with the MLB headquarters.

There will be increased access to the clubs' war rooms this year, as fans will have inside-access to 22 clubs as they make decisions that will mold their teams for years to come.

In addition, you can expect to see more on-camera involvement featuring the team representatives who sit at the club's tables at Studio 42. It will again be a collection of well-known personalities, including four Hall of Famers, each of them connected by phone to his individual club.

Prior to the start of the Draft, MLB Network will air a preview show, also simulcast on MLB.com, with Greg Amsinger, Harold Reynolds, John Hart, Gammons, MLB.com senior writer Jonathan Mayo and Baseball America executive editor Jim Callis, at 6 p.m. ET.

Continuing coverage at the start of Day 2, MLB.com will deliver exclusive live programming of the final two days on MLB.com/Live, featuring a live pick-by-pick stream, expert commentary and a searchable database of over 1,500 Draft-eligible players, supplemented by statistics, scouting reports and video highlights.

On the eve of the big event, the Network studios were putting on the finishing touches, and the Nationals were preparing for their Next Big Thing. Harper is generally considered a lock, but General Manager Mike Rizzo was playing it close to the vest and said on Sunday morning that the club had not yet informed the player it intends to select.

"We'll keep it under raps," he said. "It's not the biggest secret in the world. Until we make the pick, things change often up to the Draft time."

In addition to Harper, other players expected to be high picks are James Taillon, a right-handed pitcher from The Woodlands High School near Houston (Kyle Drabek's alma mater); Drew Pomeranz, a southpaw from University of Mississippi; and Manny Machado, a shortstop from Miami Brito High.

The selection order is determined by the reverse order of finish at the close of the previous season. Compensation picks have been assigned to clubs whose Type A or Type B free agents signed with other clubs and/or went to clubs that did not sign a player who was chosen in the first three rounds of the 2009 Draft.

The Angels have the most first-round selections, with three (18th, 29th and 30th overall), and possess five of the first 40 picks overall. The Astros (eighth and 19th), the Rangers (15th and 22nd) and the Rays (17th and 31st) also hold multiple first-round choices.

The Draft will have 50 rounds and will conclude after all 30 teams have passed on a selection or after the final selection of the 50th round, whichever comes first.

*From the Associated Press*

## **Offense helps Angels continue winning ways**

Napoli, Matsui each have homers as Halos get their fifth consecutive victory

By The Associated Press

Posted: 06/06/2010 11:23:41 PM PDT

SEATTLE - For the past two weeks, Mike Napoli has been piling up hits. This weekend, the rest of the Angels joined in.

Napoli had four hits, including a two-run homer that snapped a seventh-inning tie and lifted the Angels over the Seattle Mariners 9-4 on Sunday for their fifth straight victory.

Hideki Matsui also homered to back Angels starter Joel Pineiro (4-6), who recovered from a shaky start. Erick Aybar and Napoli both went 4 for 5.

"We've been going pretty good for a little bit now," Napoli said. "We're clicking pretty well as an offense and it's what we needed."

The Angels roughed up Seattle pitching for 38 hits and 27 runs during the three-game series.

After the Mariners rallied to tie it at 4 in the sixth, Napoli jumped on a high slider from Shawn Kelley (3-1), driving it over the right-field wall and the outstretched arm of Ichiro Suzuki. Napoli also singled and scored in the ninth on Juan Rivera's double. Aybar added an RBI single and Howie Kendrick hit a run-scoring triple to break the game open.

The four hits matched a career high for Napoli. Since May 21, he is batting .291 with five homers and 14 RBIs.

"He's hot," said Angels acting manager Ron Roenicke, who filled in because Mike Scioscia was attending his daughter's graduation from Louisville High of Woodland Hills. "He's got tremendous power, especially opposite field, and when pitchers make mistakes he really sees the ball well."

Pineiro went six innings, allowing four runs and nine hits. "All the credit goes to the offense today," he said. "They picked me up huge."

Aybar smacked the first pitch from Mariners starter Jason Vargas down the left-field line for a double. Torii Hunter fought off a fastball on his hands and looped it just inside the right-field line for a two-out double that scored Aybar.

After a leadoff walk to Suzuki in the bottom half, Chone Figgins hit a chopper between the mound and third base. Pineiro fielded the ball but collided with a charging Kevin Frandsen, allowing Figgins to reach on an infield single.

"I felt a little numb for a minute because I was getting ready to throw," Pineiro said. "Just needed that little break, little breather and I was all right."

Figgins disagreed with a strike called by plate umpire Tim Timmons in the second inning. He was ahead in the count 3-1 when Timmons called a strike on the outside corner. Figgins grounded out to second on the next pitch, turned around at first base and began to voice his displeasure with Timmons on the previous pitch.

Timmons then ejected Figgins from the game, prompting Seattle manager Don Wakamatsu to come out of the dugout. After a long conversation, first base umpire and crew chief Tim Tschida got involved.

Wakamatsu became increasingly more animated and was tossed as well.

Napoli led off the fourth with a single and scored on a double off the wall in left by Robb Quinlan.

Matsui tied it 3-all in the fifth with a home run into the right-field seats.

*From the SportingNews.com*

## **Angels-Athletics Preview**

STATS Senior Writer

The Los Angeles Angels have won five straight games overall and five in a row at the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, and that's where starter Scott Kazmir is enjoying a 14-inning scoreless streak.

The Angels hope all of those streaks will continue Monday night when they open a four-game series against the Oakland Athletics.

After getting off to a slow start in which they were below .500 for the entire month of May, the Angels (31-28) are starting to show why they are the three-time AL West champions. Los Angeles has matched its longest win streak of the season and has won 10 of 12 overall.

The Angels are 4-2 against the Athletics (30-28) this year, outscoring them 20-3 in a three-game sweep May 14-16. The first six meetings were all in Anaheim.

Last year, Los Angeles went 8-1 at the Coliseum for its best mark in Oakland since going 6-0 in 1997.

Kazmir (4-5, 5.86 ERA) is 5-2 with a 1.99 ERA in his last seven starts at the Coliseum, and his 2.66 ERA there is his second-lowest ERA at any current ballpark. He didn't allow a run in winning two outings at Oakland last season.

The left-hander has done a good job against Athletics regulars Kurt Suzuki (2 for 13) and Mark Ellis (5 for 25) while Jack Cust (4 for 12) has fared better.

Kazmir has won two straight road starts after going 0-3 with a 7.59 ERA in his first four. He yielded one run over 5 2-3 innings Wednesday in a 7-2 victory at Kansas City.

The Angels completed a weekend sweep in Seattle with a 9-4 victory Sunday. They outscored the Mariners 27-7 in the series, with Hideki Matsui and Mike Napoli enjoying big efforts.

Matsui was 5 for 12 with two homers and five RBIs over the weekend while Napoli had six hits and scored four runs in the last two games.

"We've been going pretty good for a little bit now," Napoli said. "We're clicking pretty well as an offense and it's what we needed."

Matsui is 8 for 21 with seven RBIs against the A's this year, and Bobby Abreu - hitless in his last 10 at-bats - is 10 for 24 with seven runs scored versus Oakland.

The A's played their fourth straight one-run game Sunday and avoided a three-game sweep by Minnesota with a 5-4 victory. Cust and Kevin Kouzmanoff each had three hits as the A's strung together enough offense to prevail.

"A lot of singles but we're getting hits, getting guys on base and giving ourselves opportunities to score," Ellis said. "We felt we could have won all three of these games."

Ben Sheets (2-4, 5.00) will face the Angels for the second time this season. Sheets gave up three runs over six innings and did not get a decision in a 4-3 loss April 10.

The right-hander is 2-1 with a 2.50 ERA in six home starts this year.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia will rejoin the club after missing the last two games due to his daughter's high school graduation.

*From YahooSports.com*

## **Everything you need to know on draft day**

By Steve Henson

Don't expect the instant gratification of the NFL draft or a parade of recognizable college stars. The Major League Baseball draft is all about unfamiliar names, interminable seasoning in the bush leagues and arm injuries that keep many of the names unfamiliar forever.

Still, something about potential and promise and prospects is alluring to even casual fans. So log on Monday at 7 p.m. ET – the Big League Stew live chat on Yahoo! Sports is sure to be an informative and entertaining gabfest – and enjoy the proceedings.

Meanwhile, here is a handy guide to names, trends and tendencies, something to help give a little meaning to all that will be unfamiliar.

- **Bloodlines:** When in doubt, baseball teams draft a player with a familiar last name. A year ago the Angels even took the adopted son of Muhammad Ali, catcher Asaad Ali, in the 40th round. The Red Sox drafted Carl Yastrzemski's grandson, high school outfielder Mike, in the 36th round. Displaying impressive restraint, both players opted for college rather than signing.

The sons of former MLB players Ruben Sierra(notes), Tim Wallach, Al Bumbry, Todd Worrell, Tony Fernandez, Chad Kreuter and Harold Baines also were picked in 2009. Of course, sometimes progeny can be prodigy – witness Barry Bonds(notes), the sixth overall pick in 1985; and Ken Griffey Jr.(notes), the first overall pick in 1987.

This year, two prospects with familiar fathers are regarded somewhat below the Bonds/Griffey Jr. level but well above most other bloodline picks. Both are high school players from Georgia with commitments to LSU: Delino DeShields Jr., an outfielder with an electric bat and foot speed; and Cam Bedrosian, a right-handed power pitcher just like his father, 1987 Cy Young Award winner Steve.

DeShields Jr. and Bedrosian could go as high as the late first round but are more likely second-round picks. Their draft spots could be determined by how scouts regard their LSU commitments.

- **Boras:** As usual, superagent Scott Boras will have a major impact on the proceedings. He is representing Bryce Harper, the no-brainer first overall pick of the Washington Nationals, and another half-dozen players who could go in the first and supplemental rounds.

Being represented by Boras means a player probably will squeeze every dime possible out of the team that drafts him. It means the player likely won't sign until minutes before



the Aug. 16 deadline. And it also means the player might not sign at all if the team doesn't meet his demands.

Manny Machado, a high-school shortstop from Miami who might be the second or third player drafted, is represented by Boras. So are highly regarded college pitchers Anthony Ranaudo and Matt Harvey, and two potential first-round picks from Cal State Fullerton – middle infielder Christian Colon and outfielder Gary Brown.

Serving as cautionary tales for teams are two other Boras clients who were first-round picks a year ago but did not sign and are back in the draft: left-handed pitcher James Paxton and center fielder LeVon Washington.

Washington, whose calling card is speed and consistent gap power, was drafted 30th overall by the Tampa Bay Rays but rejected a reported \$1.1 million offer. He didn't qualify academically to attend Florida, played this season at a junior college and did not improve his draft stock.

Paxton went 37th overall to the Toronto Blue Jays but did not return for his senior year at the University of Kentucky because the NCAA launched an investigation into whether Boras was his "adviser," as stipulated by NCAA rules, or actually represented him in contract negotiations. Paxton instead pitched for an independent minor league team and is projected to be drafted about the same place he was last year.

- The Next Leake: The No. 8 overall pick last year, Cincinnati Reds starter Mike Leake (notes), became only the 21st player and first since 2000 to go directly from the draft to the big leagues, and he's 5-0 in 11 starts this season. Leake was a mature college pitcher with excellent command of his fastball and changeup, the ideal prototype to skip the minors. Is there a Leake in this year's draft crop?

The short answer is no. This draft is loaded with talented, high-school, right-handed pitchers, none of whom will sniff the big leagues in 2011. Among college right-handers, Deck McGuire of Georgia Tech probably will be the first drafted, and he conceivably could go straight to a big league rotation because of his competitive makeup and durability. More likely he'll pitch in Double-A for half a season, honing his changeup.

The other possible first-round college right-handers are either late bloomers, have command issues or a history of injuries: Brandon Workman (Texas), Alex Wimmers (Ohio State), Anthony Ranaudo (LSU), Matt Harvey (North Carolina), Brett Eibner (Arkansas), Chad Bettis (Texas Tech), Jesse Hahn (Virginia Tech) and Asher Wojciechowski (The Citadel).

None of the three left-handers targeted for the first round appear ready to go straight to the big leagues, either. Drew Pomeranz of Ole Miss could be drafted in the top five, but his devastating curveball comes and goes. Chris Sale of the Florida Gulf Coast has tremendous fastball command and three-plus pitches, but concerns about his durability mean the team that signs him will proceed with caution. Sammy Solis of San Diego has had back problems that indicate he will be brought along methodically.

- **Prep arms:** The player most likely to eclipse Harper as the plum of the draft is 6-foot-6 right-handed pitcher Jameson Taillon of The Woodlands (Texas) High. The most frequent comparison is to Josh Beckett (notes), another Texas power pitcher. Taillon has touched 99 mph with his fastball and has two quality breaking pitches. Interestingly, a high-school right-hander has never been the No. 1 pick in the draft, and Harper's presence means that streak will continue even though Taillon would be worthy.

Taillon is one of a dozen prep righties projected to be picked by the early second round. The best name is Stetson Allie of Lakewood, Ohio. The best makeup might be that of Peter Tago, a seemingly easygoing beach kid from Dana Point, Calif., whose deep competitive streak emerges late in games when he summons a 95-mph fastball. The best two-way player is Kaleb Cowart of Adel, Georgia, who throws a sinking fastball in the low 90s and hits home runs from both sides of the plate as a third baseman. The best secondary pitch is that of Karsten Whitson of Chipley, Fla., whose sharp slider is big league ready. The best buzz heading into the draft is about A.J. Cole, another Florida kid, whose fastball has jumped from 90 to 95 mph in the last two months. The closest to the majors is Dylan Covey of Pasadena, Calif., who has four better-than-average pitches.

- **Bats:** Although research has established that college hitters drafted in the first round have a greater probability of making an impact at the major league level than high school hitters or pitchers of any background, a lean year is a lean year. And this is a lean year for college hitters.

Yasmani Grandel of Miami is a polished catcher and switch-hitter, but he'll probably bat .270 with a dozen homers a year in the major leagues. The only corner infielder to excite scouts is Zack Cox, a 5-foot-11 third baseman from Arkansas with a knack for opposite-field gap power. Maybe the best college hitter is Kolbrin Vitek of Ball State, but he hasn't mastered a position and conceivably could be converted to a pitcher.

Colon projects as an ideal No. 2 hitter, but he sits behind Machado as a shortstop prospect and is likely to be moved to second base. Among corner outfielders, Michael Choice of Texas-Arlington has enviable power and a sustained record of solid production, although he strikes out a ton. Kyle Parker of Clemson is a gamer who also plays quarterback for the football team, and Bryce Brentz of Middle Tennessee State led Division I in home runs but is another potential convert to the mound. Gary Brown, a fleet center fielder from Fullerton, figured out how to hit this season despite rarely taking a walk.

That leaves high-school position players, and only a few are first-round caliber. Machado is a Floridian of Dominican descent, so he has drawn the obligatory comparisons to Alex Rodriguez (notes). You never know. Outfielder Josh Sale is the best pure power hitter in the draft and a baseball rat who could go in the first handful of picks. Outfielder Austin Wilson of Harvard-Westlake High in Southern California has a Stanford commitment that he'll probably honor. Catcher Justin O'Conner of Muncie, Ind., has such a good arm he could be converted to the mound if he doesn't hit in Single-A. Nick Castellanos is a shortstop who will probably move to third base and has average major league skills across the board.

Who is left to mention? Maybe the most intriguing player of all – Drew Vettleson of Silverdale, Wash. Vettleson can hit for average and power. Vettleson can field and throw. But the real treat is watching him pitch because he does so with his right and left hands. Alas, even though he touches 90 mph, he likely won't showcase that rare ability in the pro ranks because he's a better hitter than pitcher.

- Team that could clean up: Even though the Los Angeles Angels' own first-round pick is third-to-last because they advanced to the ALCS last season, they picked up four compensation picks for losing free agents John Lackey(notes) and Chone Figgins(notes). Therefore, they pick at No. 18, No. 29, No. 30, No. 37 and No. 40.

All those suddenly familiar names above? Pencil in five of them for the Angels.

*From the USAToday.com*

## **American League Team Notes**

### **BALTIMORE ORIOLES**

#### **INSIDE PITCH**

Scott Moore is hitting his way into a regular role.

The reserve infielder, who started at third Sunday, came up with a clutch hit in the eighth, driving in Adam Jones with the go-ahead run on a double to right field.

It was the second hit of the game for Moore, who kept the two-run second going with a single and a steal before scoring the tying run.

He drove in two essentially meaningless runs Saturday night with a ninth-inning base hit, as well.

Moore has the ability to play all the infield positions in a pinch, but is most comfortable at third. He's played some second base in Baltimore, and opened the season playing some shortstop at Class AAA Norfolk (Va.).

At this point in the season — with little to play for aside from pride — the Orioles could insert Moore as the everyday second baseman with Ty Wigginton at first on a regular basis. Moore can also spell Miguel Tejada at third, as he did Sunday.

With Brian Roberts out for an extended time, Moore might be the team's best option at second base, particularly if he continues to hit.

ORIOLES 4, RED SOX 3 (11 innings): The game that never wanted to end finally came to a close on Nick Markakis' game-winning single to left-center field, snapping the Orioles' 10-game losing streak. It was the first win for interim manager Juan Samuel.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—RF Nick Markakis ended an 0-for-14 slump in a big way Sunday, driving in the winning run in walk-off fashion with an opposite-field single. Markakis reached base three times Sunday, walking twice and going 1-for-4.

—LHP Brian Matusz had the Red Sox off balance all afternoon, but four walks elevated his pitch count, which stood at 117 at the time of his exit in the sixth. Matusz allowed two runs on just four hits in 5 2/3 innings, with the damage coming on one elevated pitch to Victor Martinez.

—OF Corey Patterson was battling some leg soreness Sunday, MASNsports.com reported, and the regular left fielder was not in the starting lineup. Patterson was available to pinch-hit if necessary, but he was passed over for OF Lou Montanez when the team needed a pinch-runner and defensive replacement. OF/DH Luke Scott started in Patterson's customary defensive spot.

—C Matt Wieters snapped an 0-for-20 skid with a leadoff double in the ninth Saturday. The game was already out of hand, but Wieters could use any boost of confidence possible. He was given Sunday off, with C Craig Tatum starting behind the plate. Wieters came in from the bullpen in the eighth inning, but was not used as a pinch hitter.

—1B Garrett Atkins had one of his better performances Saturday night — relatively speaking. The struggling ex-sluggger went 1-for-2 with a pair of walks, ending a 0-for-9 skid. He was not in the starting lineup Sunday, and did not come off the bench despite a handful of pinch-hit situations throughout the 11-inning game.

BY THE NUMBERS: 20 — Consecutive at-bats without a hit for C Matt Wieters until a ninth-inning single June 5.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "While I am disappointed at the outcome, I feel it was a privilege to wear the Orioles uniform each day and I thank all the fans for their tremendous support. I hope the team will soon return to the winning tradition they enjoyed for so many years."  
— Dave Trembley's team-issued statement after being fired on June 4.

---

BOSTON RED SOX

INSIDE PITCH

There have been countless times this season when free-thinking baseball statistician Bill James has been proven correct about middle relievers, and the importance of the ninth inning.

James wrote that the most important outs of a ballgame — the essence of when a baseball game is won or lost — don't always happen in the ninth inning with a well-heeled closer out on the mound.

Daniel Bard has proven that baseball theory true time and time again this season with his work as a setup guy in the seventh and eighth innings. Bard has a 1.80 ERA to lead all Sox relievers this season, but the true value of a reliever goes well beyond that particular pitching stat.

He's held opponents scoreless in each of his last 10 games spanning 10 1/3 innings of relief work and has allowed only two hits during that stretch of mound dominance.

Hitters are 2-for-32 against Bard over that 10-game stretch, which amounts to an ineffectual .063 batting average.

Bard gets a still-valuable hold for that little piece of relief pitching mastery — and he ranks second in the American League with 14 holds this season to help set the pace for the class of the AL's middle relievers.

"He has a changeup for left-handers. But it's just maturity, too. His stuff is good. He's confident. He should be," manager Terry Francona said. "He's gone through the league. Now he knows what he's doing. He knows his role. It's a huge advantage for us. We've got a guy who can come in, like he did, and then go back out (for another inning).

"Whether it's left-handed or right-handed (batters), it doesn't matter. It's a big (deal) for us."

Bard plays the role of setup man right now, but he's a game-winning factor and legitimate weapon that continues to loom larger in the Sox bullpen scene as he gains experience, confidence and awareness of just how good he is on a nightly basis.

Perhaps there should be a new category simply for that: it could be called "soul-crushing" or "hope-stomping."

It's no coincidence that many teams crumbled after Bard puts the hammer down in the late innings, and it's no stretch to think he'll be doing that in a Red Sox uniform in the seventh, eighth and ninth innings for a long, long time to come.

ORIOLES 4, RED SOX 3 (11 innings): John Lackey left the game after seven innings with the score tied, but the O's scratched for runs against Manny Delcarmen and Hideki Okajima to eventually saddle Boston with a loss and deny a Sox sweep. Victor Martinez clobbered a two-run homer in the second inning to help power the offense, but the Sox

couldn't capitalize on bases-loaded situations in the sixth and seventh innings to ice the game.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—OF Mike Cameron returned to the Red Sox lineup Sunday after missing five games with a lower abdominal strain on the left side opposite the healing abdominal tear on his right side. Both the 37-year-old Cameron and Sox manager Terry Francona admitted that the outfielder won't be an everyday player going forward, and his ability to bounce back from Sunday's game will determine how the Sox manage his injury situation. Cameron went 1-for-3 with a pair of walks, made a highlight basket catch in the ninth inning and said he felt OK after the game. "Hopefully he'll be able to bounce back," Francona said. "That's the bigger question is how he bounces back. He's not going to play every day. That's not going to be in his best interest. I do know that."

—RHP Boof Bonser made his final rehab appearance for the Class AAA Pawtucket (R.I.) Red Sox on Saturday and hit 95 mph on the radar gun while tossing a shutout inning in relief. Bonser was recalled from his rehab assignment on Sunday, and it's expected that he'll be activated from the 15-day disabled list in time for Monday night's game in Cleveland against the Indians. Bonser will pitch out of the bullpen for the Red Sox when he does get recalled; he put up a 6.34 ERA in nine rehab games for the PawSox. "(Bonser) threw really well (Saturday) night," manager Terry Francona said. "He played up (with velocity) for the inning, which I think everybody hoped he would. You see that a lot. We saw that in the past with him working out of the bullpen."

—1B Kevin Youkilis made his first start of the 2010 season at third base Saturday night, and his first since playing the hot corner Oct. 4, 2009, against the Cleveland Indians. Youkilis has now played at least one game at both corner infield positions for each of the last six seasons, the most in team history, passing George Scott and Billy Goodman (five apiece). "(Third base) is the position I played in the minor leagues and throughout college, so it's something that feels natural to me," Youkilis said. "You have to get your feet moving a little more and be quicker at times, but it's not a problem playing third base for me."

—RHP Manny Delcarmen was touched up for a run in 1/3 inning in Sunday afternoon's loss and exited the mound when his back tightened up in the eighth inning after only 13 pitches. Delcarmen has been battling the bad back for the last few weeks, and said he felt it worsening over the last five pitches he tossed before he was visited by the Sox training staff and manager Terry Francona. Delcarmen said he felt better following the game after getting worked on by team massage therapist Russell Nua, but it could be a nagging issue for the foreseeable future. "I've got an old man back," joked Delcarmen.

—RHP John Lackey allowed two runs in seven innings against the Orioles and has now pitched at least seven innings in each of his last seven starts against the Orioles. It's the longest streak against the Orioles by a big league pitcher since a nine-game streak put up by Hall of Famer Gaylord Perry from 1974-80. The outing also registered as the mound workhorse's seventh quality start of the season, which puts him in a tie with LHP Jon Lester and RHP Clay Buchholz for the team lead.

BY THE NUMBERS: .074 — Batting average for left-handed hitters against flame-throwing righty Daniel Bard ending last weekend, as he's retired 50 of 54 left-handed hitters.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "We have every stat known to man, so why not have instant replay to get it all right? We're going to replay it for the next two months anyway, so you might as well replay it over two minutes and make sure you get it right." — Mike Cameron on expanding instant replay in Major League Baseball.

---

## CHICAGO WHITE SOX

### INSIDE PITCH

Manager Ozzie Guillen would love to have an explanation for the dismal outings by Mark Buehrle this season. After watching the left-hander last just three innings Sunday, throw 98 pitches and leave the game with six runs allowed on eight hits, Guillen is still searching.

So is Buehrle, obvious by the fact that he is 1-6 with a 6.22 ERA in his last 10 starts, with just one win since April 11.

"I don't know. I'm trying to figure that out," Guillen said after the Sox's come-from-behind win. "I've never seen Buehrle throw 90 pitches in three innings ever. Even if he threw right-handed he couldn't do that. It almost looked like he tried to throw the 90 pitches, I've never seen anything like that.

"I'm not saying I'm worried about it, because Buehrle is the type of pitcher that you either kill him or he's going to get you out. Last two outings, a lot of pitch counts. Hopefully the last two games, he can raise it from there and get better."

Buehrle has now allowed six runs in back-to-back starts for the second time this season, which is also a major concern.

"I'm not worried, I'm worried about me getting fired because of him," Guillen joked, when asked if he really wasn't worried with Buehrle. "Buehrle is fine, he's got a lot of cake, he's making a lot of money. I never see Buehrle change, and I respect that. I can't say here that he might be hurt because I will never play anyone that is hurt or tired."

But this isn't just a Buehrle problem that has the Sox failing to gain any ground on the first-place Twins the last two weeks. This is a problem throughout the starting rotation. As a group, Sox starters are last in the AL with a 5.20 ERA.

This was expected to be a unit that was dominant and made opposing lineups sweat. The only one sweating is general manager Ken Williams, as he tries to figure out if he should hold them or fold them.

Guillen's concern is the long-term problems this could cause the team, specifically the amount of pressure it has been putting on the bullpen.

"Last week, I said it. It's the same thing — we have to get better in the starting rotation," Guillen said. "We can't have one guy out of five, two out of five starts do their job. If we're not consistent there we're going to pay the price in July and August with our bullpen because we're not going to last that long. We are. We're going to pay a price. It seems like our bullpen does more work than our starters lately."

WHITE SOX 8, INDIANS 7: Despite watching Mark Buehrle spot the Indians six runs through three innings, the Sox avoided the three-game sweep at the hands of the Indians by rallying behind a stingy bullpen and some clutch hitting. With the score tied 6-6 in the seventh, Carlos Quentin delivered the big blow, as his single to center scored Juan Pierre and Alex Rios to put the Sox out in front to stay. Bobby Jenks closed the game in the ninth, picking up his ninth save.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—Manager Ozzie Guillen has been experiencing *deja vu* almost daily, not only with how his team has been dropping game after game, unable to sustain any type of hot streak, but also continued questions by the media of how the losing has been taking a toll on the seventh-year manager. "Believe me, I played here. I love this organization," Guillen said. "I don't think anybody takes a loss worse than me. You see my kids' Twitter or my kids' comments about every time we lose or win, that makes a lot of difference in my family and life. It can make it from a fun day to a really bad day. Nobody takes a loss the way I do. I'm managing the team I always love and played with, but I'm a big, die-hard fan. I'm lucky to manage the team I've always loved. We need to win to have a smile on face."

—OF Ozney Guillen, 18, is the next Guillen who might join the Sox organization, but his father, Ozzie Guillen, isn't exactly pushing for it. Ozney is the youngest of Guillen's sons, and the most regarded for his baseball ability. He has a scholarship to play with South Florida, but if he is picked high enough, he could bypass that and turn pro. The question is, will he join the Sox? Ozzie Jr. works for the organization and middle son, Oney, played two years in the minors before joining the video scouting department, only to resign in the midst of "Twitter-Gate" this spring. GM Ken Williams has his son, Ken Jr., playing in the organization, but Ozney could be more highly touted than any of them. "I don't want any favors," the Sox manager said of the possibility. "I respect the scouts on how low or high they have my kid (rated). I think he has a chance. He can play a little. It's something he's always wanted to do. For me, it will be another day. Obviously I'll get excited (if he is drafted), but I told him don't get too excited or down. You still can go to college (and be draftable again in future years)."

—INF Omar Vizquel seems to be the direction manager Ozzie Guillen is leaning when it comes to filling the void at third base left by Mark Teahen's trip to the 15-day disabled list (broken right middle finger). Guillen continued to give Vizquel a majority of the time there Sunday, over Jayson Nix and Brent Lillibridge. With good reason, as Vizquel came into the finale against Cleveland with a hit in nine of his last 10 starts, hitting .333 over that time. He also still displays that Gold Glove that actually makes the infield better



defensively than when Teahen is in there. The problem? "Omar is not an everyday starter at this point in his career," Guillen said. So that means a few consecutive starts for Vizquel and then a rest to get Nix or Lillibridge in there.

—RHP Tony Pena has not only emerged as the main middle reliever, but in manager Ozzie Guillen's estimation Pena is the team MVP the last few weeks. After yet another starting pitcher bowed out early, Pena saved the day by throwing three scoreless innings and keeping the Indians handcuffed while the Sox offense could comeback. "Tony Pena has been awesome," Guillen said. "Last four or five times he's pitched, he's really saved this ballclub with the way he's pitched. Every time we use him in that role he's done a tremendous job. We tried to pitch him just one inning at the start of the year, but in the meanwhile, he's helped this ballclub a lot. He's kept a few guys healthy and fresh just with the job he's done the last few weeks."

—RHP Bobby Jenks is helping his own cause, not only by saving his ninth game of the year Sunday, but pitching well enough to go back on the trade radar for the Sox. The franchise would love to move Jenks soon, and the fact that he's converted his fourth consecutive save and has not allowed a run in eight of his last nine appearances, only adds to that trade value.

BY THE NUMBERS: 10-14 — The Sox's record against the AL Central this season, and they have only played division leaders Detroit and Minnesota a total of six games so far. The killer is a 4-8 record against lowly Cleveland.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I'm surprised. I never thought we'd play the way we have collectively. I'm not putting the blame on any one facet of the game. You can't. It hasn't clicked. There are some issues we have to address as a team. Man for man, we're trying to do that daily." — Starter Jake Peavy, on the Sox's problems in 2010.

---

## CLEVELAND INDIANS

### INSIDE PITCH

The Indians concluded a 10-game trip Sunday by losing 8-7 to the White Sox in Chicago. The Indians went 4-6 on the trip, which included four games in New York, three in Detroit and three in Chicago.

The common denominator in most of those losses was poor work by the bullpen. Sunday was a case in point. The Indians were unable to protect an early 6-2 lead.

In the 10-game trip, Indians relievers had an 11.14 ERA. Equally troubling is that left-hander Tony Sipp, who had been one of the most dependable relievers in the bullpen, had a horrible trip and is battling his worst slump of the season.

Sipp, who was the losing pitcher Sunday, made four appearances on the trip and had an 81.02 ERA, allowing 12 earned runs in 1 1/3 innings. He also gave up four home runs.

The Indians did make one adjustment to their bullpen on the trip. They recalled Frank Herrmann from Class AAA Columbus and designated veteran Jamey Wright for assignment.

Manager Manny Acta said following Sunday's game he can't make changes to the bullpen every time a pitcher has a bad outing. But Sipp has had four bad ones in a row, and obviously needs to pitch better to keep his spot on the major league roster.

WHITE SOX 8, INDIANS 7: Starter Jake Westbrook gave up six runs in less than five innings, and the bullpen gave up two crucial runs late as the Indians failed in their attempt to sweep their weekend series with the White Sox. Outfielder Austin Kearns had three hits and two RBI, and catcher Lou Marson had three RBI, all of them coming on his first home run of the season.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Mitch Talbot is 7-4 and leads all major league rookies in wins. Talbot is 3-0 versus the White Sox and is the first rookie pitcher to beat the White Sox three times in one season since CC Sabathia in 2001.

—2B Luis Valbuena, who had been in a season-long slump, is suddenly the Indians' hottest hitter. Valbuena has hit .467 (7-for-15) in his last four games after hitting .056 (2-for-36) in his previous 13 games.

—LHP Tony Sipp probably can't wait for the Indians to begin their 10-game homestand Monday. Sipp has a 0.93 ERA at home and an 11.45 ERA on the road.

—C Lou Marson snapped an 0-for-19 hitless streak by hitting his first home run of the season in the third inning Sunday, a three-run homer off Mark Buehrle. It is Marson's second career home run. He hit one for the Phillies on Sept. 28, 2008.

—INF Mark Grudzielanek left Sunday's game in the sixth inning with a tight hamstring. He is listed as day-to-day.

BY THE NUMBERS: 17 — Number of consecutive starts RHP Justin Masterson went without winning a game, before snapping the streak June 4 with a victory over the White Sox. Masterson was 0-11 during his 17-start winless streak.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "You never want to have to make that call in that situation, ever in your lifetime." — 1B Russell Branyan, on umpire Jim Joyce's blown call that cost Detroit RHP Armando Galarraga a perfect game.

---

## DETROIT TIGERS

### INSIDE PITCH

Detroit can be expected to draft a tall, hard-throwing pitcher Monday when its turn comes in the first round of baseball's annual draft.

Oh, wait, the Tigers don't have a selection in the opening round.

But that's not all bad because one could say Detroit's first-round pick in this year's draft has already converted 12 of 13 save chances for the Tigers before the draft even took place.

Under baseball rules, Detroit forfeited its first-round selection when it signed closer Jose Valverde, whom Houston had offered arbitration. Had the Astros not offered their former closer arbitration, the Tigers would have had Valverde and a first-round selection.

But instead of paying about \$4 million to sign a draft choice near the bottom of the first round, the Tigers elected to give Valverde a two-year deal at \$7 million a season. All Valverde has done is gone unscored upon in 23 of his 24 games with Detroit, including the last 22 in a row entering Tuesday.

The club had a pressing need for a back-end reliever because it lost both its 2009 setup man, Brandon Lyon, and closer, Fernando Rodney, via free agency.

The process came back to help Detroit, though. Since the Tigers offered both relief pitchers arbitration and they elected to leave, the club will have a pair of supplemental round selections, the 44th and 48th overall picks.

Given Detroit's recent track record, it will make its first pick a high school player who is tall, throws hard and whom it will pay a large amount of money to sign him away from the college of his choice.

Based on need, the Tigers will follow four picks later with a high school hitter who has a high upside — and offer him enough money to forsake college and start play immediately.

**ROYALS 7, TIGERS 2:** It's no longer May for right-hander Jeremy Bonderman. The Detroit veteran, who had a 1.80 ERA for his last six starts, gave up a three-run home run in the first inning and two more runs in the second as Kansas City won two of three from the Tigers. DH Johnny Damon led off the fourth with a single, stole second and scored on a single by right fielder Magglio Ordonez. Third baseman Don Kelly doubled in the eighth, went to third on a groundout and scored on a wild pitch for the Tigers' other run. Bonderman gave up seven runs and 11 hits in 5 2/3 innings. He didn't get his fastball down quite as much as he had been and his slider didn't have a lot of bite on it.

### NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Jeremy Bonderman didn't have his sharp-breaking slider and was unable to spot his low-90s fastball. The result? He got the first two outs of the first inning then gave up a three-run home run, allowed two more runs in the second and wound up giving up 11 hits and seven runs in 5 2/3 innings. Manager Jim Leyland said Bonderman was fighting himself all afternoon. He had a 1.80 ERA for his previous six starts.

—UT Don Kelly played third base so 3B Brandon Inge could have a day off. Kelly produced Detroit's second run when he doubled leading off the eighth, advanced on a groundout and scored on a wild pitch. Kelly has looked good defensively at third and no doubt is helped by coming through the minors as a shortstop.

—3B Brandon Inge sat out a game but can be expected to return to the field Tuesday when Detroit visits the Chicago White Sox. Inge will have the benefit of two days off since the Tigers are not scheduled to play Monday.

—Rookie C Alex Avila is going to get more playing time, manager Jim Leyland said, because Detroit needs offense from the bottom part of its batting order. Avila was 0-for-3 although he hit one ball very hard. He is still 6-for-12 since May 31 and that has landed him above .200 for the first time this season. "I'm going to try him a little more for awhile to get a little more thunder at the bottom of the order," Leyland said. "I will not forget about Gerald Laird."

—RHP Ryan Perry is looking at a restorative trip to the minors unless he can straighten out his faulty fastball command soon. Perry faced one batter and got him out but it was on a fastball up in the zone that was hit deep to center. "We have to get him going," manager Jim Leyland said. "I told him he's a big-league pitcher, but right now your slider is flat. You're not getting any tilt to it. I'm going to stay with him for a while, but if things at some point don't get worked out, then you go down and work it out." Prior to his one-batter appearance, Perry had a 30.38 ERA for his previous four games, boosting his season's average from 2.41 to 5.82. He has allowed 10 hits and nine runs in three innings. "I'm going to give him more time and see if we can hopefully iron it out," Leyland said. "But it's not really about development up here. You have to produce. I've sent a lot of players down over the years, and while it's heartbreak at the time, it's strictly for their own good. The good ones come back. But I'm not at that juncture yet."

—SS Adam Everett was told after Detroit's 7-2 loss at Kansas City he was being designated for assignment, with rookie SS Danny Worth being brought back to replace him. "This is a sad day," manager Jim Leyland said. "I never wanted to be the guy to tell Adam Everett. He's the classiest guy I've ever managed. And he was totally (understanding). It just seemed like nothing was happening. We felt that it was time. We kept trying to buy time. But we felt like, 'Let's give this kid a chance.'"

"That's a great compliment coming from him," said Everett, who re-signed a \$1 million deal to return to the Tigers this season. Everett, 33, was batting .185 with no home runs and only four RBI in 81 at-bats. He was second among American League shortstops with a .992 fielding percentage and helped the club with rookies this season. Everett tutored Worth when the rookie came up earlier this year even though he knew it could cost him his job, one reason Detroit is hopeful the veteran will return to the organization as a

coach at some point. Everett signed two seasons ago to give Detroit some defensive stability at short and he exceeded expectations when he got off to a quick start offensively as well. But he slumped over the second half of 2009 and that continued into this season.

—INF Danny Worth was recalled by Detroit and will join the club Tuesday for the start of a series in Chicago against the White Sox. Worth had a stint with Detroit earlier this season when the Tigers returned rookie 2B Scott Sizemore to the minors and before 2B Carlos Guillen was ready to come off the disabled list. Worth played eight games and hit .333, although his reputation is as a light-hitting, good fielding shortstop. Detroit is designating SS Adam Everett for assignment to make room for Worth, who credited the incumbent with tutoring him during his short earlier term with the Tigers. "It just seemed like nothing was happening," manager Jim Leyland said of the move. "We felt that it was time. We kept trying to buy time. But we felt like, 'Let's give this kid a chance.'"

**BY THE NUMBERS: 22** — Consecutive scoreless appearances by closer RHP Jose Valverde through Sunday, equaling the known best by a Detroit reliever. RHP Todd Jones posted 22 straight scoreless games in 2000. It's the best string since at least 1952, when extensive records began being kept, but is probably a club record since relievers were used differently before then.

**QUOTE TO NOTE:** "I'm going to try him a little more for awhile to get a little more thunder at the bottom of the order. Justin (Verlander) and him had a pretty good rapport (Saturday). He called a good game and swung the bat pretty well... But I will not forget about Gerald Laird." — Manager Jim Leyland, on giving rookie C Alex Avila more playing time.

---

## KANSAS CITY ROYALS

### INSIDE PITCH

Rick Ankiel is going to Class AAA Omaha on Tuesday to begin a minor league injury rehab assignment and he won't be rushed back to the majors.

Ankiel has not played since May 1-2, striking out twice as a pinch hitter at Tampa Bay. He has not been in the outfield since April 24 when he pulled his right quadriceps.

Ankiel was hitting .308 on April 18, but went into a 1-for-23 slump to drop his batting average to .210 in 19 games before landing on the disabled list.

"He's swinging the bat really well in batting practice, but that's batting practice," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "I talked to him and told him I think it's real important for him to go down and get his timing back because when his timing is right, he crushes the ball to all fields. And when his timing is not right, he's a little more susceptible to the off-speed stuff."

"So it's important for him to go down and get comfortable, get his timing back and get in a position where he can step right in and be productive for us instead of working his way back here at the big-league level, because Mitch Maier has been doing a nice job. So it's important for him to go get himself back on track and step in, seeing the ball good, swinging good and hitting the ball good. It would be a big asset to us to get his bat back in the lineup."

Maier, who has been playing mostly center in Ankiel's absence, has hit .253 with five doubles, three triples and one home run in 46 games.

Ankiel signed a \$3.25 million contract with the Royals in January with a mutual option for 2011 with a \$500,000 buyout.

ROYALS 7, TIGERS 2: Brian Bannister restricted the Tigers to two runs and five hits in 7 1/3 innings to win his fifth straight start. Jose Guillen's two-out, three-run homer in the first jump-started the offense. The Royals collected 15 hits with everyone getting at least one hit while five players had two-hit games. Yuniesky Betancourt had two hits, including a double, and a sacrifice fly, with two RBIs.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Brian Bannister won his fifth straight start, which is a career high. He also improved to 20-8 in 37 career day games, 36 of them starts. Bannister also ended a streak of allowing a home run in nine consecutive games, which was the longest active streak in the majors.

—IF Wilson Betemit, hitting for DH Jose Guillen, doubled in the seventh Sunday. It was Betemit's first big-league hit since May 3, 2009, at Texas while with the White Sox.

—OF Rick Ankiel, who has not played since striking out as a pinch hitter May 2 at Tampa Bay, will leave Tuesday for a minor league rehab assignment with Class AAA Omaha. Ankiel, who is hitting .210 in 19 games, is on the disabled list with a pulled right quad.

—LHP John Parrish, who went on the disabled April 29 with rotator cuff inflammation, will join the Royals' Class AAA Omaha affiliate Tuesday to begin a minor league rehab assignment. Parrish, who did not pitch last season after having shoulder surgery, went 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in nine relief appearances before going on the disabled list.

—INF/OF Willie Bloomquist started Sunday in left field as Scott Podsednik was rested. He went 1-for-5 with an RBI while batting leadoff. It was Bloomquist's third start in left. He has started four games in center, three in right, three at second and three at third. He is also 1-for-2 as a pinch hitter with a home run, and has been used as a pinch runner.

BY THE NUMBERS: 2.48, 0-4 — RHP Zack Greinke's ERA and his record in six road starts this season.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I think that guy has made great strides. When I first saw him a couple of years ago, if he got into trouble it was harder was better. I think (catcher Jason) Kendall and (Bob) McClure, the pitching coach, have done a great job with him. Now he's backing off, using the change up, using other pitches. I think they've done a spectacular job with him. He's always been a talented guy, but (Saturday, June 5) he looked more like a pitcher than a good arm and good stuff." — Tigers manager Jim Leyland, on Royals RHP Luke Hochevar, who allowed one run in seven innings but took the loss against Detroit.

---

## LOS ANGELES ANGELS

### INSIDE PITCH

Before U2's Bono went on the disabled list, the Angels went on the road.

The Angels are midway through a four-city, 14-game road trip scheduled (in part) to clear out Angel Stadium to accommodate two concerts by U2 (featuring a massive stage) and a scheduled re-sodding of the Angels' home field in anticipation of next month's All-Star Game there. Those concerts (and U2's entire summer tour) were cancelled due to a serious back injury suffered by lead singer Bono.

The Angels' rough road schedule continues, though. This is their longest road trip since another 14-game trek in June 2002 and just part of a schedule that will have them travel a major league-high 50,510 miles this season.

In addition to the current trip, the Angels have already had two three-city trips (one featuring a six-hour flight from Boston to Seattle following a night game at Fenway Park). Over the course of the season, they will start six separate road trips with cross country flights from the West Coast to the Eastern time zone.

"This is the worst — the worst I've ever seen in my whole career," Angels outfielder Torii Hunter said of the daunting travel schedule.

Hunter has the perspective of having spent a decade in the coziest division, the AL Central, where the Chicago White Sox will travel a major league-low 22,000 miles this season. Second baseman Howie Kendrick has spent his entire major league career on the West Coast.

"We know that (the travel is difficult) — as far as thinking about it, though, we don't," Kendrick said. "It's not going to change. That's part of playing where we play."

ANGELS 9, MARINERS 4: The Angels scored five times in the final three innings Sunday to break a tie game and complete a sweep of the Mariners. Mike Napoli's two-run home run broke the 4-4 tie in the seventh inning. Napoli and Erick Aybar each had four-

hit games as the Angels banged out a season-high 18 hits. They have won eight of their last nine games to go a season-high three games over .500 (31-28).

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—INF Maicer Izturis left Saturday's game after six innings due to tightness in the back of his right knee (on the outside of the hamstring). He was not in the lineup Sunday either as a precautionary measure. The Angels are 14-6 in the 20 games the injury-prone Izturis has started this season.

—3B Brandon Wood went hitless in four at-bats again Sunday and is now batting just .083 (2-for-24) in the first six games of his minor league injury rehabilitation assignment with Class AAA Salt Lake. Wood is eligible to come off the DL on Tuesday.

—C Jeff Mathis caught all nine innings of the first two games of his rehab assignment with Class AAA Salt Lake, going 1-for-4 in each game. Angels manager Mike Scioscia indicated that catching on back-to-back days would be the final measure of Mathis' readiness to return — but he has done it in the first two games of his rehab assignment. Mathis went 0-for-4 as the DH on Sunday.

—C Mike Napoli had started June 3-for-22 after a hot streak in May (.322, eight home runs, 19 extra-base hits). But he warmed back up with a 4-for-5 game in Sunday's win, including a two-run home run and three runs scored.

—INF Robb Quinlan spent the first two months of the season bouncing between the Angels and Class AAA Salt Lake and was hitless in 14 scattered at-bats at the major league level. He finally got his first hit of the season Sunday and wound up going 3-for-5 with a pair of doubles off the wall at Safeco Field.

BY THE NUMBERS: 49 — Runs scored by the Angels in the first seven games following 1B Kendry Morales' broken ankle. Morales led the team in average (.290), home runs (11) and RBI (39) at the time of his injury but the Angels were averaging only 4.35 runs per game.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I wish we could figure out our offense." — Angels bench coach Ron Roenicke, on the way the team's offense has improved since the loss of its most dangerous hitter, 1B Kendry Morales.

---

#### MINNESOTA TWINS

#### INSIDE PITCH

For Nick Blackburn, there will be days like Sunday. The starting pitcher, who relies on his sinker and pitches to contact, knows this but doesn't like it.



Blackburn gave up five runs on 10 hits in a season-low 2 2/3 innings Sunday in Oakland in his first start since allowing five runs on 10 hits in a 3 2/3-inning outing in Seattle last week.

"The A's hit his good ones, they hit his bad ones," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said.

"I don't have any pitches that are going to blow anybody away, nothing that's going to surprise anyone," Blackburn said. "They're out there looking for sinkers and sliders, and that's what they're going to get. Hopefully they start hitting more of them at people. Not the case (Sunday)."

The two worst starts of Blackburn's season came after a dominant month of May, during which he went 5-0 and compiled a 2.65 ERA. After Sunday's loss, he's now 6-3 with a 5.21 ERA this season.

Blackburn said his mechanics and his pitches were better on Sunday than they were in his brief start at Seattle last week and he didn't feel there was a common thread between the two games.

"I felt like I had decent movement on the ball (Sunday)," he said. "Those guys were spitting on a lot of good pitches and just hitting the ones that were up. They even hit some good pitches I thought. Mechanics-wise I felt great. Everything felt the way it should be, but who knows. There's got to be some sort of reason for what happened out there again (Sunday). Whatever the reason, we're just going to keep going out and working on what we have been."

A'S 5, TWINS 4: The Twins scored two runs in the eighth inning to cut a three-run A's lead to one but couldn't manage any rally in the ninth, failing to overcome starting pitcher Nick Blackburn's five-run, 10-hit, 2 2/3-inning outing. The loss finished up a 3-4 road trip for the Twins.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—CF Denard Span snapped a 0-for-22 slump with a third-inning triple on Sunday, but his one hit didn't cover up the dearth of results from the team's No. 1 and 2 hitters on this road trip. During the seven-game span, the Twins' table setters combined went 4-for-59 with one run scored, 13 strikeouts and two walks.

—LF Delmon Young hit a two-run home run in the eighth inning Sunday night, the day after driving in three runs in a Twins win. Young has now hit safely in nine of his last 10 games, batting .351 (13-for-37) during that span. His homer Sunday was his 20th extra-base hit of the season (in 167 at-bats). Last season, in a span of almost 400 at-bats, Young had 30 extra-base hits.

—2B Orlando Hudson's left wrist was still too sore for swinging a bat left-handed, manager Ron Gardenhire said Sunday morning. Hudson has now missed seven games

since colliding with CF Denard Span in the Target Field outfield, and the team is considering placing him on the disabled list.

—SS J.J. Hardy is on some new medication for his sore left wrist, an injury that has already put him on the DL once this season. If the medication has not worked well enough for Hardy to return to the lineup after Monday's day off, manager Ron Gardenhire said the team will put Hardy on the DL.

—1B Justin Morneau missed two games in Oakland because of the stomach flu, though he did pinch hit in Saturday's 4-3 win over the A's. Oakland intentionally walked Morneau, and J.J. Hardy took over for Morneau at first as a pinch-runner. Hardy later scored the winning run on a single up the middle by Matt Tolbert. Morneau pinch hit again on Sunday but struck out.

BY THE NUMBERS: 4-for-58 — Combined results for Minnesota's No. 1 and 2 hitters during the team's seven-game road trip to Seattle and Oakland from May 31 through June 6, good for a .069 average.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "He said he wanted to hit, and then I knew I had to run for him. I didn't want to see a grown man go to the bathroom in his pants on the field. It wasn't a pretty sight. It wasn't even a pretty thought." — Twins manager Ron Gardenhire, on using flu-stricken Justin Morneau to pinch-hit Saturday night in Oakland. Morneau was intentionally walked and left for pinch runner J.J. Hardy, who later scored the winning run.

---

## NEW YORK YANKEES

### INSIDE PITCH

Even as Javier Vazquez appeared to be turning things around with impressive wins over the Mets and Orioles, the critics wondered if the right-hander could put together a solid outing against a good offensive team.

That outing finally came Sunday, as Vazquez allowed two runs on one hit over seven innings against the Blue Jays, evening his record at 5-5 with his first back-to-back wins of the season.

"He's back on track," manager Joe Girardi said. "This is the guy we thought we were getting."

Vazquez didn't allow a hit through the first five innings, walking three and striking out eight during that stretch. He got two quick outs in the sixth before issuing a walk to Adam Lind, then lost his no-hitter and shutout on a poorly executed slider, which Vernon Wells hit out of the ballpark for a 2-0 Toronto lead.

"I thought it was the right pitch, I just didn't locate it where I wanted it. When you're in a game like that, you want to try and limit the mistakes. One run can be the game."

After his awful start in which he went 1-3 with a 9.78 ERA, Vazquez has posted a 2.75 ERA over his last five starts.

"I'm feeling better with my command," Vazquez said. "It feels good to do it against an offense like the Blue Jays."

YANKEES 4, BLUE JAYS 3: RHP Javier Vazquez allowed two runs over seven innings, winning for the third time in his last five starts. Vazquez allowed one hit and four walks, striking out nine. 2B Robinson Cano went 3-for-4 with a two-run single in the eighth that capped a four-run inning for the Yankees, who avoided being swept by the Blue Jays. RHP Mariano Rivera pitched a scoreless ninth for his 13th save.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—3B Alex Rodriguez left Sunday's game in the ninth inning with tightness in his right groin, but he expects to be back in the lineup Tuesday in Baltimore. Rodriguez initially felt the tightness in the first inning, but he remained in the game until it began bothering him more.

"It's not bad; it was more the turf than anything else; probably the 14 (innings on Saturday) and the early game (Sunday)," Rodriguez said after Sunday's game. "It's fine now. I'll be ready to go on Tuesday."

—C Jorge Posada could begin participating in catching drills this week in Baltimore, moving him closer to a return behind the plate. Posada has started five straight games as the designated hitter since returning from the disabled list last Wednesday. —1B Mark Teixeira continued to struggle this weekend, going 1-for-14 including a five-strikeout, 0-for-6 performance on Saturday. But the Yankees have no plans to move Teixeira out of the No. 3 spot in the lineup, confident that he will turn things around again the way he did in early May.

—LF Brett Gardner has responded well following a June 1 day off after playing every inning for 33 straight games. In his first four games this month, Gardner is 6-for-13 with four extra-base hits, including a triple Sunday.

—Saturday's 14-inning loss to the Blue Jays was the first defeat for the Yankees in a game that long since July 11, 1993, when they dropped a 14-inning game to the Angels. The Yankees had won five straight games of 14 innings or more during the streak.

BY THE NUMBERS: 17 — Robinson Cano's hitting streak that came to an end Friday, leaving him one short of his career-high.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It was a tough first month for him, but I give him credit; he kept fighting. He did what we asked him to do. For that, I really applaud him, because he

never stopped trying and never got so down that he didn't do his work and go about his business. It's the mark of a true professional." — Manager Joe Girardi, on RHP Javier Vazquez.

---

## OAKLAND ATHLETICS

### INSIDE PITCH

Last season, Michael Wuertz was among Oakland's most important contributors.

He had among the best seasons of any set-up man in baseball, with the most strikeouts by an American League reliever, 102, and that earned him a two-year contract during the offseason that includes a team option for 2012.

This year, however, Wuertz had some shoulder issues during the spring, limiting his appearances, and once he was back, he was slow to get going. He had an 11.81 ERA in his seven outings before Sunday.

The day before, though, Wuertz made a slight change on his wrist angle when gripping the ball, and he said that gives his slider more depth. He tried it out Saturday and struck out the only man he faced.

Sunday, with Andrew Bailey unavailable because he'd worked two innings Thursday and one Friday, Wuertz served as Oakland's closer and earned his first save of the season. He struck out two, including pinch hitter Justin Morneau, and he caught a liner by Denard Span to end the game.

A'S 5, TWINS 4: After dropping two one-run games in a row to the Twins, the A's turned the tables, getting all five of their runs with two outs, and four of the five on RBI singles. Gio Gonzalez went seven innings, a major key for the A's considering how overworked the bullpen has been, and Michael Wuertz earned his first save of the season.

### NOTES, QUOTES

—3B Eric Chavez, on the DL with bulging disks in his neck, is taking batting practice and he'll work out with the team in Oakland this week. He hopes to go on a minor-league rehab the following week when the A's are on the road.

—OF Coco Crisp (ribcage strain) is hitting off a tee and is likely to start taking batting practice this week. He is still a week or two away from a rehab assignment, however.

—RHP Andrew Bailey has allowed at least one run in three of his past four appearances, with an ERA of 5.06 in that span. The A's closer had a 0.96 ERA over his first 19 games.

—RHP Tyson Ross threw three pitches Sunday, and allowed a two-run homer by Delmon Young. Through his past six outings, the rookie reliever has an ERA of 23.60.

—RHP Michael Wuertz recorded his first save of the season Sunday, pitching a one-two-three inning that included two strikeouts — one of them Justin Morneau, pinch-hitting in the ninth in a one-run game. Wuertz said he has adjusted his wrist angle on his grip and he's more comfortable. He also struck out the only batter he faced Saturday after making the grip change.

BY THE NUMBERS: 11-4 — Oakland's record in one-run games through Sunday, the best mark in the majors.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It would've taken a home run to beat us. Fortunately, so far in my career, I haven't given up many of them. I'd like to have my shot in that situation, but it's not my decision, and after that, I didn't do a very good job." — A's reliever Brad Ziegler, after being asked to walk pinch hitter Justin Morneau intentionally with the bases empty and one out. Ziegler then also walked Nick Punto, and with two outs, Ziegler gave up a game-tying hit to Matt Tolbert.

---

## SEATTLE MARINERS

### INSIDE PITCH

It's not clear just what can be done to solve Seattle's sudden issue of fragility in the bullpen, but the relievers aren't getting the job done and it's taken away any momentum the Mariners had.

Seattle came into a three-game weekend series against the Angels having won three in a row. And they could have won two more. But the bullpen blew up after the club was tied 1-1 with the Angels after five inning Saturday and 4-4 after six innings Sunday.

"That club is swinging hot bats right now," Mariners manager Don Wakamatsu said of the Angels. "Our bullpen is leaving pitches up in the zone and they're hammering them. We've had our struggles with the bullpen this whole season. We're going to continue to address it and get it right."

Seattle is more than one-third of the way through the season and hasn't gotten it right yet. The bullpen ERA has rocketed to 5.10 the last two games and the relievers are 9-15. Not what Seattle expected from a pen that was the backbone of the club last year.

But closer David Aardsma has struggled — he gave up three runs Sunday — and the absence of top setup man Mark Lowe has too many pitchers throwing out of the slots they were originally intended for.

ANGELS 9, MARINERS 4: Seattle's bullpen meltdown continued Sunday as the Angels scored five times in the final three innings to complete a three-game weekend sweep. The Mariners had allowed 10 runs in four relief innings in an 11-2 loss Saturday. The game Sunday was tied 4-4 when lefty Jason Vargas left, but right-hander Shawn Kelley gave up three runs and closer David Aardsma surrendered two more. Seattle got three runs in the first inning, but much of the offensive momentum seemed to be last after the second inning ended with 2B Chone Figgins and manager Don Wakamatsu getting ejected. The Mariners offense came up with just one run after the first with the team leaving 11 men on base total.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—LHP Jason Vargas got no decision Sunday, but by allowing three earned runs (four overall) in six innings, he turned in his ninth quality start in 11 appearances this season.

—RHP Doug Fister unexpectedly went on the disabled list before Sunday's game. He was originally supposed to start Saturday, but he was skipped because of right shoulder fatigue. The second-year starter was on a pace for 225 innings before that move was made. Manager Don Wakamatsu said Fister would be better served getting two starts off. He's due to return June 16 against Texas. LHP Ryan Rowland-Smith, who started for Seattle in Fister's place Saturday, will continue to start for him for now.

—LHP Luke French was called up from Class AAA Tacoma, where he was a starter, and went into the bullpen because Seattle was short of relief help after giving up 11 runs in the final four innings Saturday. French made 11 starts for the Rainiers, going 6-2 with a 1.93 ERA, the second-best ERA in the PCL.

—SS Jack Wilson (right hamstring) was sent to Class AAA Tacoma to start an injury rehabilitation assignment Sunday. However, he was scratched from the lineup because the Mariners didn't want him testing his leg on a rainy day and soggy field.

—C Josh Bard (left calf) is catching bullpen sessions at Tacoma through Tuesday, after which the Mariners hope to send him out on an injury rehabilitation assignment.

—C Adam Moore (left fibula) flew Sunday from Seattle to the club's minor league facility in Arizona. He'll take part in simulated games, both offensively and defensively, Monday and Tuesday, then if all goes well is likely to start an injury rehabilitation assignment.

—LHP Erik Bedard will test the progress of his comeback from left shoulder surgery by throwing a bullpen session Monday in Texas. It's possible some simulated games will be up for him after that.

—RF Ichiro Suzuki's second-inning single Sunday extended his hitting streak to 10 games, and a double later in the game gave him his MLB-leading 29th multiple-hit game. On Saturday he scored the 1,000th run of his career. He did it in 1,481 games, making him the eighth-fastest active big leaguer to get to 1,000 runs.

—2B Chone Figgins was ejected from Sunday's game by umpire Tim Timmons while standing on first base after grounding out. Figgins, who said he'd never been ejected before, apparently had complained about a called strike before grounding out. Manager Don Wakamatsu complained about the ejection and was also tossed, the second time this season for him.

—Third-base coach Mike Brumley left the team to be at his daughter's high school graduation. First-base coach Lee Tinsley moved over to coach third and minor league coordinator Darrin Garner joined the club to coach first.

BY THE NUMBERS: 1 — Number of career ejections for 2B Chone Figgins, after he was tossed on June 6.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "We've had our struggles with the bullpen the whole season." — Manager Don Wakamatsu.

---

## TAMPA BAY RAYS

### INSIDE PITCH

What looked like mad science when manager Joe Maddon unveiled the plan on Saturday — rookie catcher John Jaso hitting leadoff — appeared to be sheer brilliance on Sunday when Jaso drove in five runs.

Maddon turned to Jaso because of his ability to work good at-bats and get on base often, hoping he could provide some table-setting for No. 3 hitter Evan Longoria and kick-start the stagnant offense.

After a slow start on Saturday, Jaso delivered spectacularly on Sunday, getting on base four times and driving in five runs.

"This guy, at-bat per at-bat, works it as well anybody we have on this team right now," Maddon said. "He's a mature hitter. There's things he has to learn regarding the game, and the game here, but as a hitter he's very mature because he knows his strike zone."

Jaso through Sunday is hitting .307, with a .423 on-base percentage, and has 23 RBIs in 34 games.

RAYS 9, RANGERS 5: The Rays salvaged a split of their six-game road trip to Toronto and Texas, which was good enough for manager Joe Maddon. "I now consider this an excellent road trip," he said. Rookie C/DH John Jaso drove in five runs and RHP Matt Garza snapped a five-start winless streak.

### NOTES, QUOTES

—Rookie John Jaso on Saturday became the first catcher to bat leadoff for the Rays in their franchise history, and the first to do so in an AL game in more than a year, as Kurt Suzuki did for Oakland on May 4, 2009.

—RHP Matt Garza snapped a five-start losing streak Sunday, working into the sixth even though he wasn't sharp. Garza won his fifth game on May 5 (5/5) and his sixth game on June 6 (6/6).

—1B Carlos Pena is likely to remain in the Rays lineup even though an extended slump has dropped his average to .169 going into Sunday's game. Manager Joe Maddon is concerned that Pena is swinging at pitches he normally doesn't swing at, but said Pena's defense is "hard to walk away from."

—C Kelly Shoppach reported no problems with his surgically repaired right knee after his earlier-than-expected return to the Rays on Friday (as a result of Jason Bartlett going on the DL), then Sunday he withstood a collision at the plate with Rangers DH Vladimir Guerrero, though he used his left leg to block the plate.

—SS Reid Brignac got credit from manager Joe Maddon for the role his fourth-inning strikeout played in the Rays' June 6 win because he battled through 15 pitches before he was called out on strikes against Rich Harden. "That took an inning off Harden's life," Maddon said.

BY THE NUMBERS: 41 — Number of lineups used by manager Joe Maddon in the first 57 games.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I never thought we would run away with anything. It was going to have to even out at some point. Now you've really got to get after it every day." — Rays manager Joe Maddon, on the prospects of a four-team AL East race.

---

## TEXAS RANGERS

### INSIDE PITCH

Left fielder Josh Hamilton is hot and bothered.

Hamilton has been on a tear for the last week since deciding to abandon the toe-tap trigger mechanism to his swing. But he also has been bothered by a sore left knee for most of the last month.

The knee finally forced him out of the Rangers lineup late in Saturday's game against Tampa Bay. He did pinch hit on Sunday and is expected back full-time Monday.



"Josh has turned the corner as far as gutting through things," manager Ron Washington said. "But sometimes we need to take care of him, too. It was just a good time to get this done. He's going to play (Monday)."

Hamilton's off day came at the end of a red-hot week. Counting his 1-for-2 performance after entering Sunday's game, Hamilton was 11-for-24 (.458) for the week. He also had a pair of homers, six RBIs and a 1.291 OPS.

The key may be his tweaked swing. Hamilton once before tried to eliminate the toe-tap. He did it last spring, but junked it before the season began. He struggled for most of the year. This time, a dash of immediate success may help him buy into it a bit more.

"I've always wanted to get my swing to a place like an Albert Pujols or Joe Mauer and that's why I tried this before," Hamilton said. "But I don't know if I just didn't believe it in my head. (Hitting instructor) Clint Hurdle didn't push towards anything, but we talked. I was getting out in front of everything and starting my swing earlier and earlier. He said ultimately it was going to get to the point where I'd be starting my swing before the ball was coming out of the pitcher's hand."

RAYS 9, RANGERS 5: For the sixth consecutive start, RHP Rich Harden failed to make it through six innings due to a high pitch count. His struggles and a rare breakdown by the bullpen cost the Rangers a chance to sweep AL East-leading Tampa Bay. Harden fell behind 2-1 in the third, then allowed single runs in the fourth and fifth as well before exiting with 111 pitches. The bullpen allowed four runs in the final two innings to prevent the Rangers from making any kind of significant comeback.

#### NOTES, QUOTES

—The 4:06 minute game was the longest nine-inning game in Arlington since a club-record 4:21 game versus Cleveland on August 31, 2000. It was the third longest home game in Rangers history. It didn't help that the game-time temperature was 93 degrees.

—C Matt Treanor recorded the first multi-homer game of his career with solo homers in the second and the ninth. Treanor has a career-high five home runs. Since the Rangers had three off days in an eight-day stretch, Treanor is 6-for-15 (.400) with three homers and six RBI in five games.

—SS Elvis Andrus extended his hitting streak to 12 games with an infield single in the ninth inning. Andrus now has a pair of hitting streaks of at least 12 games.

—RHP Frank Francisco allowed three hits and three runs in the eighth inning Sunday. They were the first runs he allowed since May 6. In the time between, Francisco went 12 innings and allowed just 10 baserunners while striking out 21. He held batters to a .150 average during the stretch.

—The Rangers begin a four-game series with visiting Seattle on Monday. Texas has won four in a row against Seattle and five of six this year. The Rangers won 11 of the last 15 games in Arlington and 17 of the last 25.

BY THE NUMBERS: 19.9 — Average pitches per inning for RHP Rich Harden. It is the worst pitches per inning average for any starter in the majors. On Sunday, Harden threw 111 pitches in five innings. He threw at least 20 pitches in four of the five innings he started.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I don't know if I just didn't believe it in my head. (Hitting instructor) Clint Hurdle didn't push towards anything, but we talked. I was getting out in front of everything and starting my swing earlier and earlier. He said ultimately it was going to get to the point where I'd be starting my swing before the ball was coming out of the pitcher's hand." — OF Josh Hamilton, on why he has switched from a swing that started with a toe-tap trigger to a more conventional swing.

---

## TORONTO BLUE JAYS

### INSIDE PITCH

Given how they handled the Yankees over the three-game series, the future for the Blue Jays starters looks more than promising.

On Friday it was left-hander Brett Cecil, who held the Yankees to one run on five hits over eight innings.

On Saturday it was right-hander Ricky Romero, who allowed two runs on five hits over eight innings.

Finally, on Sunday it was Brandon Morrow, and the hard-throwing right-hander went seven-plus innings, allowing one run on four hits.

Thanks to more bullpen bloopers, though, the Jays won just two of the three games as they dropped Sunday's finale 4-3.

Morrow, meanwhile, has been a revelation and a quick study as he has moved in short order from being a hard thrower to a pitcher with A-plus stuff.

"I'm just trying to build off every positive outing, and the last start I had good mechanics and command and stuff and then tried to build off that and add some arm speed and some better off-speed pitches," he said.

Improvement and consistency has been the order of the day for all the starters of late.

"I think we've shown that we can pitch with anybody, we can hit with anybody, definitely," Morrow said. "This was a big homestand for our pitching staff. Our starting rotation really logged some real quality innings. Up and down the rotation everybody pitched well and kept us in games. We had a chance to win them all."

**YANKEES 4, BLUE JAYS 3:** The Jays blew a 2-0 lead as New York came back with four runs in the eighth. It was a ratty inning for the Jays as righty Brandon Morrow and reliever Scott Downs opened the inning by hitting batters. Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter doubled in a run and the game became tied 2-2 on a wild pitch from right-hander Jason Frasor. Second baseman Robinson Cano put the Yankees in front with a two-run single off Frasor. Center fielder Vernon Wells gave the Jays a 2-0 lead with a two-run home run in the sixth, the first hit of the day for the Jays.

## NOTES, QUOTES

—Going into Sunday's game, the Jays had hit 96 home runs and allowed just 39 for a difference of plus 57. The difference is the best plus/minus in home runs hit versus allowed in the major leagues (the next closest is Boston with a plus 20). According to the Elias Sports Bureau, through the opening 57 games of a season only one other team in history has been plus 50 — the 2005 Texas Rangers, who hit 90 homers and allowed 40.

—LHP Ricky Romero allowed two earned runs in eight innings Saturday in a no-decision. It marked the fifth time in 12 starts this season that he has pitched at least eight innings. It was his sixth start at Rogers Centre, where he is 4-1 with a 1.69 ERA, 50 strikeouts and just 15 walks.

—Jays manager Cito Gaston turned down an invitation by Yankees manager Joe Girardi to serve as a coach at this year's All-Star Game in Anaheim. "Joe asked me to be one of his coaches and I consider that to be an honor," Gaston said Sunday. "I appreciate it but I told him I want to spend that time with my family (in Toronto). He called me the first day they were in town (Friday). It's a tough decision but sometimes you need those days off."

—CF Vernon Wells supplied the Jays with a 2-0 lead in the sixth when he busted Javier Vazquez's no-hit bid with a two-run home run on an 0-2 pitch. It was his 15th homer of the season. During his miserable 2009 season, Wells hit 15 home runs in 158 games, 630 at-bats. The homer also extended his hit streak to 14 games, which is the longest hit streak by a Jays players this season and the longest current hit streak in the major leagues.

—RHP Brandon Morrow continues to show improvement as Sunday he held the Yankees to one run and four hits over seven-plus innings. It was his sixth quality start of the season and second in a row.

**BY THE NUMBERS:** 3 — Number of times the Jays have successfully employed the sacrifice bunt this season through Sunday. The Jays used the strategy (a sac bunt by Fred Lewis) in the 14th inning Saturday and it led to their 3-2 victory when 2B Aaron Hill followed with a game-winning single. The only other Jay to have recorded a sacrifice bunt is utility infielder John MacDonald, who has two.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "I think we played some good teams and we're going to lose games like that. Unfortunately it is frustrating. But we played two of the best teams in baseball and had a chance to win every one of them. I think it shows that we still need to continue to improve, that's what this whole process is about, becoming a better team from top to bottom. If we continue to play like this, continue to play the game the right way then we'll start winning some of these games." — CF Vernon Wells, after the Jays went 3-3 versus the Rays and the Yankees, all three losses the result of blown saves by the bullpen.