



Clips
(June 9, 2010)

From the Los Angeles Times

Angels see streaks come to an end with 10-1 loss to Oakland

Jered Weaver's string of 16 consecutive innings without allowing an earned run falls, as does his string of 32 straight innings without giving up a home run. The Angels' six-game win streak falls too.

By Mike DiGiovanna 11:48 PM PDT, June 8, 2010

Reporting from Oakland — It was streak-busting night in the Oakland Coliseum on Tuesday.

First to go was Jered Weaver's string of 16 consecutive innings without allowing an earned run. Next was Weaver's string of 32 straight innings without giving up a home run.

Finally, it was the Angels' six-game win streak that came to a crashing halt in a 10-1 loss to the Oakland Athletics, a game A's catcher Kurt Suzuki broke open with a three-run home run in the seventh inning.

Suzuki's line drive over the left-field wall, Weaver's first homer allowed since May 18 at Texas, turned a 3-1 Oakland lead into a 6-1 advantage and was one of a career-high tying four hits for the former Cal State Fullerton star.

Suzuki added an RBI single in the eighth off reliever Trevor Bell, and Jack Cust added a two-run homer to left-center for a 10-1 lead.

"From where he was when he came into the league a few years ago, he's definitely the most improved catcher, and he might be the most improved player in our league," Angels Manager Mike Scioscia said of Suzuki, who is batting .275 with eight homers and 28 runs batted in. "From throwing and defense to the offensive side, he's definitely playing well."

It wasn't Weaver's worst start of the season, but it was close — the right-hander went six innings, giving up six runs and 12 hits, matching a career-high for most hits allowed, which he set at Seattle on Aug. 1, 2007. The A's had 18 hits in all, 16 of them singles.

"I thought I made some good pitches early on, and the ball had eyes on it for a couple of those hits," Weaver said. "I made one bad pitch, and it happened to be a three-run homer."

That home run pitch to Suzuki was a two-seam fastball that came back over the plate.

"It wasn't too smart of a pitch," Weaver said. "Nap [catcher Mike Napoli] called a slider, and I called him off. I didn't put the ball where I wanted."

Weaver (5-3) gave up runs in each of the first three innings, on Cust's single in the first, Eric Patterson's single in the second and Gabe Gross' single in the third.

The Angels' only real threat against A's starter Vin Mazzaro came in the fifth, when Juan Rivera led off with a single and took third on Michael Ryan's double off the right-center field wall.

Rivera scored on Kevin Frandsen's slow roller to third, but Ryan held at second and was stranded there when Erick Aybar grounded out and Maicer Izturis fled to left.

Four relievers — Craig Breslow, Brad Ziegler, Jerry Blevins and Tyson Ross — combined to throw four shutout innings for the A's.

"They have terrific arms all the way through their pitching staff," Scioscia said of the A's. "That's why they're contending."

Indeed, the A's bullpen is so deep they could afford to send right-hander Henry Rodriguez, whose fastball was clocked at 101 mph in his two-inning scoreless stint against the Angels on Monday night, to triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday.

There was an embarrassing moment for the Angels in the fourth, but it didn't cost them.

With one out, Patterson lifted a popup between home and first. Napoli appeared to have a bead on it, and Ryan, the first baseman, appeared to have a play.

Frandsen, racing in from his third-base spot, called off both players but misjudged the ball. His diving attempt came up short, and the ball dropped near the first-base line for a hit. Weaver got Daric Barton and Ryan Sweeney to fly out, ending the inning.

"Frandsen called it late," Scioscia said. "We had a little inexperience out there at first. The wind currents can knock balls down here. Ryan could have got to it. Kevin thought he had a shot. That was a long way to run for that ball."

Stephen Strasburg's debut draws a crowd in Angels' clubhouse

Angels gather to watch Nationals pitcher's outing, in which he struck out 14 and gave up two earned runs. All agreed he is impressive but it remains to be seen how he does through long season.

By Mike DiGiovanna June 9, 2010

Reporting from Oakland — Most major league games on the clubhouse television serve as background noise, with players taking a peek at the action every now and then as they go about their pregame preparations.

Not Tuesday afternoon. At least a dozen Angels were glued to the TV in their Oakland Coliseum clubhouse watching the highly anticipated big league debut of Washington Nationals phenom Stephen Strasburg.

The right-hander's radar-gun readings — the former San Diego State star who was the top pick of the 2009 draft hit 100 mph with his fastball — were eye-catching enough.

But when Strasburg snapped off a wicked curve ball to strike out Delwyn Young in the second inning, Angels infielder Kevin Frandsen turned to outfielder Michael Ryan and gave him a look as if to say, "Wow!"

When the next Pittsburgh batter, Andy LaRoche, singled to right field for the first hit against Strasburg, many reacted with mock indignation.

"He gave up a hit?" pitcher Joe Saunders said. "He's terrible."

Strasburg went on to strike out 14 while allowing two earned runs and four hits in seven innings of a 5-2 victory. Very impressive, all agreed, but it will be interesting to see how Strasburg looks in September.

"It's tough to go from college to the big leagues, because it's too big of an innings jump," Saunders said. "You go from throwing 100 innings to 200. Your arm is not used to that kind of tax. Unless you're going to go five innings every game, you can't do it."

Morales surgery

Kendry Morales, who broke a bone above his left ankle in a freak mishap while jumping into home plate after hitting a walk-off grand slam May 29, will undergo surgery Thursday, Manager Mike Scioscia said.

Dr. Phil Kwong, a foot and ankle specialist, will insert a metal rod and several screws into the fractured fibula. The extent of the injury — and duration of the rehabilitation — won't be known until after the surgery.

The Angels hope Morales, who was batting .290 with 11 home runs and 39 runs batted in, can return in September, but there is a chance he will miss the remainder of the season.

"I think he's over the shock of it," Scioscia said. "He's disappointed, but he's come to grips with understanding the process, the surgery. We've stressed to him the importance of listening to the doctors, taking his time, don't rush it. He's anxious to get into the healing and rehabilitation."

Draft Day 2

After using their first five picks on high school players, four of them from the Deep South, the Angels kicked off the second day of the draft by selecting selected Florida Southern closer Daniel Tillman in the second round, their first of 30 picks.

The right-hander threw 22 scoreless innings in the Cape Cod League last summer and became Florida Southern's all-time leader with 30 saves this season.

The Angels selected Wendell Soto, a shortstop from Riverview High School in Sarasota, Fla., in the third round. Soto signed a letter of intent to play at Florida International University.

They used an additional third-round pick on Donn Roach, a right-handed pitcher from the College of Southern Nevada who was the teammate of No. 1 overall pick Bryce Harper. Roach was a 40th-round pick of the Angels in 2008 but didn't sign.

From the Orange County Register

Loss drops Angels out of first place

By DAN WOIKE

OAKLAND – Starting pitching has been a major reason for the Angels' successes this season, and Jered Weaver probably has been the team's best. Tuesday at Oakland-Alameda County Stadium, though, just wasn't Weaver's night.

The Angels' ace allowed 12 hits as Oakland knocked the Angels right back out of first place in the American League West with a 10-1 victory.

Weaver was shaky, allowing nine hits in six innings, but Oakland was only able to score three times. That all changed in the seventh when Kurt Suzuki hit a three-run homer after back-to-back singles, ending Weaver's night.

The 12 hits allowed are the most he has given up in a game since an Aug. 1, 2007, start. Oakland finished with 19 hits.

The loss snapped a six-game winning streak — the Angels' longest this season. The Angels, who climbed into first place Monday for the first time since opening day, now are a game behind Texas after the Rangers won.

The Angels (32-29) didn't have many chances Tuesday night, and when they finally got one, they watched it fly over the plate for strike three.

Shortstop Erick Aybar was frozen by a 2-2 curveball in the seventh, leaving runners on first and second in a two-run game. It was one of only a few scoring chances the Angels had all night.

The Angels run came on Kevin Frandsen's groundout, scoring Juan Rivera in the fifth. Oakland (31-29) scored a run in each of the first three innings before Suzuki's home run keyed a four-run seventh. Suzuki also singled in a run in the eighth before Jack Cust added a two-run shot off Trevor Bell.

Despite having eight hits, the Angels only managed a pair of multi-hit innings.

Frandsen is a good fit for Angels

By DAN WOIKE

2010-06-08 20:58:48

OAKLAND -- As soon as news reached the San Francisco Giant clubhouse that their former teammate, Kevin Frandsen, had been claimed off of waivers by the Angels, Bengie Molina knew it would be a good fit.

Molina had spent eight years with the Angels and six playing for Mike Scioscia. Knowing the way the Angels' clubhouse operates, Molina was sure of one thing.

"He texted me right away and told me this was a good place for me to go," Frandsen said.

The Angels claimed Frandsen off of waivers from Boston on April 29, and he was up playing with the Angels nine days later.

"He fit right in. He came right in and he's not quiet. He introduced himself," Torii Hunter said. "Right away, he fit in. Guys like him. He's got a big personality. He's out going. He's not nervous. He's not scared. He wants to be in the lineup. It doesn't matter; he'll talk to anybody."

Frandsen's sense of humor and laid-back approach off the field helped him win over his team quickly.

"When you have new guys come in, the chemistry can get distorted," Hunter said. "For him to come in and shake hands with everyone and talk to guys, it helped him settle in and helped us to accept him. It was awesome. I mean, it was maybe a couple of days."

For Mike Scioscia, it's easy to see why Frandsen's looked so comfortable with the Angels off the field.

"He's goofy," he said, "so he fits right in with those guys."

Frandsen's also given the Angels production at third base – something they weren't getting much of the year with Brandon Wood slumping. Prior to Tuesday night's start, Frandsen's batting .385 in his 15 games.

"It's hard being a utility guy; we all know that. It's the fact of just going out there and having good at bats. As a utility guy, you usually don't try to base it off of results. You base it off of having quality at bats," Frandsen said. "Am I moving guys over? Am I doing things right and not costing the team wins? Am I contributing to wins?"

"Right now, I feel like I'm doing the things I need to do to help this team in my role. I've gotten some results, and that's always good. You know it's not always going to be like that. You just want to do your part and do the things that make a winning ball club."

Morales getting cut

Kendry Morales is scheduled to undergo surgery on his fractured left ankle, Scioscia said. The surgery had been postponed due to swelling around the injury. Morales fractured the ankle celebrating his walk-off grand slam on May 29.

"I think he's over the shock of it," Scioscia said. "I think he's disappointed, but he's come to grips with understanding the process of the surgery. We've really reinforced the idea that he's got to really listen to the doctors. It's going to take time. You can't rush it.

"I think he's anxious to get this surgery and get into the rehab."

Notes

Second baseman Howie Kendrick got the night off with Maicer Izturis returning from a sore shoulder to take his place in the lineup. ...Prior to Tuesday's game, Angel players gathered around to watch Stephen Strasburg make his debut for the Washington Nationals. Most players seemed impressed, but some joked about the hype the rookie's start received.

Today

Joe Saunders (4-6, 4.78) will face Oakland lefty Dallas Braden (4-5, 3.77) at 7:07 p.m. The game will be broadcast on television on Fox Sports West and on radio at KLAA AM 830 and KWKW 1330 AM (Spanish).

From the LA Daily News

Angels can't Weave their way in defeat

By Gideon Rubin, Special to the Daily News

OAKLAND - Jered Weaver pitched well enough to qualify for a quality start on a night when he didn't have his best stuff.

But it was a pitch he admits he shouldn't have thrown Tuesday that doomed the Angels in a 10-1 loss to the Oakland Athletics in front of 11,860 at Oakland Coliseum.

The loss snapped a six-game Angels winning streak, and combined with Texas' 7-1 win against Seattle, knocked them out of first place in the American League West a day after they moved a half game ahead of the Rangers.

A's catcher Kurt Suzuki hit a three-run homer that chased Weaver before he retired anybody in the seventh.

Weaver (5-3) threw Suzuki a two-seam fastball after shaking off catcher Mike Napoli, who called for a slider. The pitch sailed back and caught too much plate, Weaver said.

"Wasn't a very smart pitch," said Weaver, a Simi Valley High graduate. "Just one of those things where you wish you had the pitch back, but you can't."

Weaver, the Angels' most consistent starter this year, struck out six batters and allowed six runs on 12 hits and one walk in six-plus innings.

Weaver hadn't allowed an earned run in 16 consecutive innings going into Tuesday, and had a combined 1.50 ERA in his previous four starts.

The A's built a 3-0 lead, scoring in each of the first three innings - all with two outs.

Oakland scored a run in the first as Ryan Sweeney, Kurt Suzuki, and Jack Cust had back-to-back-to-back

hits - all with two outs.

An inning later, Mark Ellis drew a one-out walk, stole second and scored on Eric Patterson's two-out single, and Gabe Gross' two-out single in the third scored Sweeney.

Weaver settled down in the fourth after Patterson's one-out infield single, retiring eight of the next nine batters he faced until getting chased from a disastrous seventh.

"Early on he was he was struggling with some of his command," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "It didn't look like the ball was coming out consistently out of his hand, but as the game went on he settled in. The sixth inning was his best inning and it looked like he had plenty left.

"Obviously, he had a little trouble in the seventh."

The Angels didn't advance a runner past second until the fifth, when Juan Rivera led with a single and took third on Michael Ryan's double off the wall in right.

Rivera scored on Kevin Frandsen's grounder to third, but Ryan couldn't advance, and was left at second when Oakland starter Vin Mazzaro got Erick Aybar to ground out to third and Maicer Izturis to fly to left.

The Angels threatened again in the seventh when Ryan and Frandsen had consecutive two-out singles off reliever Brad Zeigler, but A's manager Bob Geren summoned Jerry Blevins, who struck out Aybar.

When catcher Wilson is in, Angels can count on a win

By Gideon Rubin, Special to the Daily News

OAKLAND - Angels catcher Bobby Wilson hit the national scene earlier this season - literally - when he was on the receiving end of a violent collision with New York Yankees first baseman Mark Teixeira that left him with a concussion.

It is not how he wants to be known.

"Obviously, I'd like to prove myself as a player and not as a punching bag," said Wilson, a 27-year-old rookie.

Wilson these days is making a name for himself as a gritty backup catcher who does the little things to help his team win.

And when he plays, win they do. The Angels are 7-0 in his starts.

That fact may be coincidental, and Wilson isn't taking credit for it.

"The games I've caught, the guys have thrown good games," he said. "I'd like to think I helped them through some situations, but they're big-league pitchers. They know what they need to do.

"Hopefully we can keep it going."

Wilson has become especially valuable since first baseman Kendry Morales suffered a possibly season-ending broken ankle in a freak accident during the celebration of a game-ending grand slam in a May 29 win over the Seattle Mariners.

The injury has allowed manager Mike Scioscia to move everyday catcher Mike Napoli into a rotation at first.

Wilson hasn't helped the team much with his bat, hitting just .167 (4 for 24) in eight games, but his defense and ability to shepherd pitchers is considered his calling card.

"He's got a real good feel for what he has

to do and he's been playing at a high level," Scioscia said. "He's been important to us."

Wilson credits his success with the way he was groomed by the Angels in the minors, in which preparation, which included studying hitters' and pitchers' strengths and weaknesses were heavily emphasized.

"He's always been solid behind the plate and he calls a great game," Angels reliever Kevin Jepsen said.

Grand DC opening

All eyes in the Angels clubhouse before Tuesday's game were glued to the two flat-screen TV's for the start of Stephen Strasburg's much-hyped major-league debut with the Washington Nationals.

"Everybody was watching, we wanted to see what happened," said Jepsen, who was Strasburg's 2008 Olympic teammate.

"He looked good," Jepsen said after Strasburg's 1-2-3 first inning against the Pittsburgh Pirates. "He threw hard, and he threw his breaking balls for strikes."

Angels closer Brian Fuentes called Strasburg's debut "the start of a new era."

"He should be good for his team and he should be good for the game, really."

Surgery set

Scioscia confirmed that Morales will undergo surgery Thursday in an attempt to repair his broken ankle. The surgery will be performed by ankle specialist Dr. Phil Kwong, and monitored by Lewis Yocum, the team doctor.

The Angels will have a better idea if a Morales return later this season is possible after the procedure, which was delayed because doctors didn't wanted to operate while his ankle was swollen.

Scioscia said he's been in contact with Morales.

"I think he's over the shock of it," Scioscia said. "He's come to grips with understanding the process of the surgery. It's going take time, and he's obviously disappointed."

Izturis back

Injured infielder Maicer Izturis (hamstring) was back in the lineup Tuesday after missing two games. He singled and stole second in the first inning.

From Angelsbb.com

Angels' winning streak snapped at six

Suzuki's decisive three-run shot chases Weaver in seventh

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

06/09/10 1:52 AM ET

OAKLAND -- From the vantage point of Angels manager Mike Scioscia, standings in June are "not relevant to anything we need to do."

Of course, that's easy for him to say. He's won the American League West five of the past six seasons.

With a three-run homer and four hits, catcher Kurt Suzuki powered the Athletics to a 10-1 rout on Tuesday night at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum that snapped the Angels' six-game winning streak, returning the Rangers to the front of a lively AL West race by a half-game.

Oakland is in third, a half-game behind the Angels, with all three teams above .500. Not that any of it matters -- yet -- to Scioscia, whose focus is on today and the task at hand.

"We got beat tonight," Scioscia said. "That's part of the schedule. You're going to battle. Sometimes you're going to have a game where the other team does so many things well, you're not going to have the outcome you want. They did a lot of things well. You turn the page and get on to tomorrow's game."

Jered Weaver lost for the third time in eight decisions, Suzuki driving the Angels' ace to cover with his three-run blast in the seventh inning.

"When you're facing a guy like Weaver, he's good enough to where you won't see the same pitch again," Suzuki said. "He was pitching pretty well coming into tonight, but we were able to get hits up and down the lineup. Everyone put swings on his balls."

Eric Patterson and Ryan Sweeney had three hits for the A's in support of Vin Mazzaro, who moved to 2-0 with five solid innings.

"Some balls had eyes," Weaver said. "I threw one bad pitch, and it happened to be a three-run homer."

Suzuki, who hit a two-seam fastball that didn't behave, has been battling Weaver since their college days. Suzuki was at Cal State Fullerton, down the road from Angel Stadium, while Weaver toiled up the freeway at Long Beach State.

"All three years in college," Weaver said of their experience in competition. "He's gotten a lot better. He's always been that guy who had a great work ethic. He had a great game tonight."

Nobody knows more about the job of catching than Scioscia, who has become a big Suzuki fan.

"From when he came into the league to where he is now," Scioscia said, "he's by far the most improved catcher -- and maybe player -- in the league. When he's receiving, calling a game like that, he's a heck of a player."

"For any young catcher coming into the league, there are going to be rough spots. Kurt struggled early with some things but made adjustments. The tools are there. He's got a chance to be a good catcher for a long time."

The A's put together a two-out rally on successive singles by Sweeney, Suzuki and Jack Cust to take the lead in the first. They made it 2-0 in the second when Mark Ellis walked with one out, stole second and scored on Patterson's bloop single to left.

Oakland's run in the third was disputed by the Angels. Sweeney and Suzuki singled to open the inning, and they didn't move until Gabe Gross stroked a two-out single to right. Bobby Abreu's strike to Mike Napoli appeared to beat the sliding Sweeney, who was ruled safe by plate umpire Bill Miller.

The Angels got something going in the fifth when Juan Rivera singled and stopped at third on Michael Ryan's double to right-center.

After Kevin Frandsen's ground ball scored Rivera, Mazzaro pitched out of trouble and turned it over to the deep A's bullpen.

The Angels were frustrated in the seventh after singles by Ryan and Frandsen when lefty Jerry Blevins struck out Erick Aybar to quell the threat.

"They've got terrific arms all through their pitching staff, from the starters through the back of their 'pen," Scioscia said. "That's why they're contending now. They're going to be tough. At the back end, [Andrew] Bailey is as good as there is."

Weaver had allowed no earned runs in his previous 14 innings and only four in four starts covering 26 innings.

"Early on he was struggling with some of his command," Scioscia said of his ace. "As the game went on he picked up. Really, the sixth was his best inning. Obviously, he had a little trouble in the seventh."

Ground-ball singles by Daric Barton and Sweeney preceded Suzuki's decisive blow.

"It was a two-seam fastball that came back over the plate," Weaver said. "Nap called a slider and I shook him off. I wish I had it back. I just didn't put it where I wanted it. That's all there is to it."

In only three of his 12 previous starts had the angular right-hander given up more than two earned runs.

The A's padded their cushion with a three-run eighth, Cust unloading a two-run homer, his eighth, against Trevor Bell after Suzuki's RBI single matched his career high with four hits.

Angels' Morales set for surgery on Thursday

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

06/08/10 10:27 PM ET

OAKLAND -- Kendry Morales' surgery to repair a fracture in his lower left leg will take place on Thursday, Angels manager Mike Scioscia indicated before Tuesday night's game against the A's.

"I think he's scheduled for surgery Thursday," Scioscia said. "I think he's over the shock of it. I think he's disappointed but has come to grips with understanding the process, the surgery.

"He's got to listen to the doctors. It's going to take time. Right now he's anxious to get the surgery and rehab aspect [started]. He's obviously disappointed."

Morales suffered the fracture landing on home plate in the celebration following his game-winning grand slam against Seattle on May 29 at Angel Stadium.

The initial diagnosis was that he could be back before the end of the season, but Scioscia said that's all up in the air.

"I'm sure after the surgery we'll get word from Dr. [Lewis] Yocum, whoever is in there, on the extent of what they had to do and the prognosis," Scioscia said. Yocum is the team orthopedist.

The Angels, using three first basemen to replace Morales, are 8-1 since his injury, moving to the top of the American League West with six consecutive wins in Kansas City, Seattle and Oakland.

Starting all 51 of the team's games at first base, Morales was the Angels' leader in homers (11) and RBIs (39) while batting .290 with a .487 slugging percentage.

Taking over at first base in 2009 after Mark Teixeira signed a free-agent deal with the Yankees, Morales erupted, finishing fifth in the American League Most Valuable Player balloting. The native of Cuba batted .306 with 34 homers and 108 RBIs with a .569 slugging percentage.

In his absence, the Angels have been going with catcher Mike Napoli, versatile veteran Robb Quinlan and corner outfielder Michael Ryan at first base.

Halos nab wide range of talent on Day 2

Power right-hander Tillman is first of 30 picks on Tuesday

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

06/08/10 10:39 PM ET

OAKLAND -- Having spent the opening round of the First-Year Player Draft loading up with four quality athletes and one pure-bred pitcher in Cameron Bedrosian, the Angels selected a wide range of talents with their 30 choices Tuesday in rounds 2 through 30.

"We feel like it was a good day," Angels scouting director Eddie Bane said. "Everybody stayed focused, and our national cross-checkers were still fighting for players in the 29th round. But we know how it is. Every team, all 30, thinks they had a great Draft today. That's how you feel."

In the first round, fortified with four additional picks from the free-agent departures of Chone Figgins to Seattle and John Lackey to Boston, the Angels tapped a third baseman (Kaleb Cowart), shortstop (Taylor Lindsey), two center fielders (Chevez Clarke and Ryan Bolden) and right-hander Bedrosian, son of former National League Cy Young Award winner Steve Bedrosian.

The second round, at No. 81 overall, produced another right-handed power pitcher in Daniel Tillman of Florida Southern.

In the third round, Florida high school shortstop Wendell Soto and right-hander Donn Roach from Southern Nevada were intriguing choices by the Angels.

The Draft concludes on Wednesday with rounds 31 through 50, starting at 9 a.m. PT. Fans can follow all of the Angels' picks with the Draft Tracker.

"Tillman has a big arm," Bane said. "He pitched in relief [at Florida Southern]. He's got enough in his repertoire to start. We're not sure if we want to start him or bring him out of the bullpen.

"Wendell Soto [from Riverview High School in Sarasota, Fla.] is a really good-looking shortstop. He's small [at 5-foot-9], but I've seen him dunk a basketball over his head. He has really good hands and quick feet, and he has the ability to stay at shortstop.

"We took Taylor Lindsey primarily because he can really hit. He'll probably have to move to third base or second base. Soto's going to stay at shortstop."

Soto has signed a letter of intent with Florida International University.

Coming from the same school that produced No. 1 overall pick Bryce Harper, who is destined to become Stephen Strasburg's teammate in Washington, Roach was drafted for the second time by the Angels. He was taken in 2008 in the 40th round, opting for college ball.

"We took him out of high school and didn't get it done," Bane said. "He wanted to attend the University of Arizona. He went there for a year, and then he wanted to get home to Las Vegas and junior college and get an opportunity in pro ball quicker. He did not have a good year at Arizona but had a great year at Nevada. He throws hard. With the hitters you have in the Major Leagues now, you better throw hard if you're a right-handed pitcher."

Among other notable choices on day two were center fielder Andrew Heid of Gonzaga in the ninth round, right-hander Bryant George (Southern Illinois University, 13th round) and first baseman Brandon Decker of Valdosta State in the 27th round.

Southern California's fertile ground was tapped for right-hander Jesus Valdez (Oxnard, fifth round); right-hander Justin La Tempa (Huntington Beach and Oregon, 12th round); catcher Francis Larson (Dana Point and UC Irvine, 22nd round); shortstop Jesus Campos (South Gate and Cal State Los Angeles, 24th round) and catcher Timothy Helton (Upland, 28th round). The sixth-round pick, right-hander Brian Diemer, comes from the University of California at Berkeley.

Starters' success coincides with Angels' rise

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

The trademark Angels' starting pitching is beginning to show as the club continues to improve in the American League West. The A's are right there with the Angels and have a new player to show off Wednesday night.

For the Angels, things have smoothed out on the mound. Even after Jered Weaver's rough outing on Tuesday night, the club has a 3.44 overall ERA (68 innings, 26 earned runs) in June. And during the team's six-game win streak that ended Tuesday, Angels starters were 6-0 with a 1.95 ERA.

Since inflating to a 5.23 ERA on May 6, Angels starters have fashioned a 3.77 ERA (186 1/3 innings, 78 earned runs) over their past 31 games. They've allowed three earned runs or less in 28 of their last 41 games and lead the AL with five complete games.

"We're starting to see some depth show up in our rotation," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said.

"Ervin Santana and Jered Weaver have been terrific. We're seeing Kaz [Scott Kazmir] now, and Joel Pineiro, even though he's had some rough spots. Joe Saunders has given us some good games. Our season is definitely going to be connected with what our starting pitching is going to be."

As for the A's, their outfield situation is in flux with a mild hamstring injury to Rajai Davis, so Matt Carson will get another shot to see what he can do Wednesday, when he'll likely get a start against the left-handed Saunders.

Carson was called up from Triple-A Sacramento and joins the A's for the second time this year, having already been with the club from April 22-29. The right-handed hitter was batting .293 with six home runs and 19 RBIs in 33 games with Sacramento, and after going homerless over his first 20 games with the River Cats, Carson homered six times over his final 13 games. That seemed to catch the eyes of the A's.

"He gives us more depth," A's manager Bob Geren said. "We felt, with the way things are right now, it was important to add a position player."

Angels: Morales to have surgery Thursday

First baseman Kendry Morales' surgery to repair a fracture in his lower left leg will take place on Thursday, Scioscia said before Tuesday night's game against the A's. "I think he's over the shock of it," Scioscia said. "I think he's disappointed but has come to grips with understanding the process, the surgery. He's got to listen to the doctors. It's going to take time. Right now he's anxious to get the surgery and rehab aspect [started]. He's obviously disappointed." Morales suffered the fracture landing on home plate in the celebration following his game-winning grand slam against Seattle on May 29 at Angel Stadium.

Athletics: Sweeney on fire

A's outfielder Ryan Sweeney, who has put together four straight multiple hit games, now ranks in the top 10 in the AL for batting average at .324. ... Geren said he received a text from right-hander Justin Duchscherer, who said he "feels real positive" about the way his left hip surgery went Monday in Nashville. Duchscherer will miss the remainder of the season and is expected to need four to six months of recovery time.

Worth noting

Angels reliever Francisco Rodriguez has retired 21 of the first 25 batters he has faced in his career and has nine strikeouts and zero walks in 7 1/3 innings. ... The A's are 11-4 in one-run games, which is the best such record in the Majors this year. They went 15-23 in one-run games last year.

Two years later, Halos come back to Roach

Righty's status helped by being teammate of Harper

By Evan Drellich / MLB.com

06/08/10 11:31 PM ET

ANAHEIM -- The Angels liked Las Vegas right-hander Donn Roach enough out of high school to draft him in the 40th round in 2008.

But would they have taken him at No. 115 overall this year in Compensation Round B, between the third and fourth rounds, if it weren't for his teammate at the College of Southern Nevada, Bryce Harper?

The presence of the top overall pick by the Washington Nationals certainly didn't hurt.

"Oh, definitely it helped," said Roach, who's 6-foot-1, 200 pounds. "It helped everyone. General managers at every other game, how could that not help? It's a different level with Harper being on the team just because of who he is. I think we dealt with it pretty well, we got pretty used to it after a while."

After Roach's 2009 at the University of Arizona, all the general managers watching him in the world wouldn't have mattered if he didn't turn things around. In his lone season with the Wildcats, Roach went 1-4 with a 7.84 ERA in 20 appearances, only seven of which were starts. He had the same amount of walks, 22, as he did strikeouts in 41 1/3 innings.

"I was a wreck," Roach said. "I had totally forgot how to pitch. I didn't know what I was doing. My arm slot had gotten way over the top. I just didn't know what it was.

"I slacked off, didn't go to class. I was uncomfortable, it wasn't really the place for me and it didn't work out like I wanted to."

In August, Southern Nevada coach Tim Chambers saw how out of whack Roach's arm slot had become, and asked him, in so many words, what the heck happened to him.

A transfer to the junior college, Roach put in the work necessary to turn things around. He would wake up at 5 a.m. to work out with local trainer Tim Soder, who has worked with big leaguers Reed Johnson and Aaron Rowand, and he overloaded his class schedule so he could graduate this spring, taking on as many as 24 credits in a semester. His GPA always stayed above 3.0, Chambers said.

"Tremendous work ethic," said Chambers, who called Roach on Tuesday to let him know he was drafted. "Not to mention he's a real leader and super funny."

With Southern Nevada trailing in a game earlier this season, Roach dressed up like Harper, who had struck out earlier in the game, putting on eye black. Harper later hit a go-ahead home run.

"I was just messing around, trying to loosen him up," Roach said.

Roach's ceiling may not be the highest, but he has three effective pitches, relying on his low-90s fastball about 80 percent of the time, then his breaking ball and a splitter. He's working on a changeup so he can keep starting as he progresses in the Minors, and he favors a two-seam fastball to a four-seamer. He works out of a three-quarters arm slot.

"Probably the best pitch maybe I saw anybody throw this year for any team was his breaking ball," Chambers said.

Roach said he was taken where he was expected to go by the team he expected would take him. But there was a time when his relationship with the Angels had soured.

"When I got drafted out of high school, [Angels scouting director] Eddie Bane and my family had a falling out, got into a verbal war over a couple days," Roach said. "At the beginning of the season when I got my stuff together and started pitching well again, I asked one of the scouts who I know pretty well for Eddie Bane's number and I called him up and told him, 'Hey, the past is the past and I want to play pro ball.'"

"We took him out of high school and didn't get it done," Bane said. "He wanted to attend the University of Arizona."

Now, with Roach ready to sign, any discordance in the past.

"I'm pretty excited," he said. "It's what I've worked for my whole life. Hopefully there's a whole lot more to be excited about. It was a pretty fun day."

Shields recalls journey's start

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Internet was not the force it is today. Phones certainly didn't provide immediate access to the world's events, including results of Major League Baseball's First-Year Player Draft.

So it was that Scot Shields, at home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., discovered from a total stranger that he'd been taken by the Angels in round 38 in 1997 out of Lincoln Memorial University in Harrogate, Tenn.

"I found out in the mail the next day," Shields said. "I was home, about two weeks after school had ended. My doorbell rang at about 9 a.m., and I rubbed the sleep out of my eyes and went to see who it was.

"It was UPS or FedEx. The package said `Anaheim Angels' on it, and I could barely open it, I was so excited.

"I called my parents and told them I'd been drafted. Tom Kotchman [an Angels' area scout who managed the rookie team in Boise] called a few hours later, and we talked."

Shields was amazed the Angels had taken him. He'd started and closed in college, once throwing an estimated 260 pitches in a 16-inning game. But he felt he'd blown an opportunity during an audition for Kotchman.

"A week before [the Draft] I drove up to Tampa and threw a bullpen for him, and I didn't think it went that well," Shields said. "I figured that was it."

The day he received the package from the Angels containing a contract, Shields called his college coach and asked for some advice. He was told, basically, to "take whatever they offered." That's what he did.

"I drove to my dad's work and signed with my mom there, for \$2,000," Shields said. "I was kind of pumped. I went to see my girlfriend in Michigan [Jaimie McGovern would become his wife three years later], and then about a week later I went to Boise and got started pitching for Kotchman."

Shields was 7-2 with a 2.94 ERA in 30 games that summer, launching a career that would bring him to Anaheim in 2001 and again during the magical 2002 season -- eventually landing him a role as one of the game's premier setup men.

Only in baseball, to paraphrase Don King.

Maybe another story like Shields' will emerge from round 38 in Wednesday's final afternoon of bringing dreams alive for kids around the country.

The Draft, Day 3: Digging for gems

From Piazza to Ibanez to Hafner, late rounds have proven rich

By Spencer Fordin / MLB.com

06/08/10 9:41 PM ET

NEW YORK -- The First-Year Player Draft will wind into its final day Wednesday, giving 30 teams a chance to find some prospects in the rough. Thirty-two players who were drafted after the 30th round made it onto Opening Day rosters this season, providing proof that late-round bargains can be found. In fact, two prominent former All-Stars -- Mike Piazza and Keith Hernandez -- were drafted well after that point.

Hernandez, a five-time All-Star, was drafted in the 42nd round by the Cardinals in 1971 and went on to win 11 Gold Gloves. Piazza was famously drafted by the Dodgers in the 62nd round as a favor to family friend Tommy Lasorda, and he wound up hitting 427 home runs in a 16-year big league career. And while there was certainly some luck involved in their emergence, you also have to credit the teams that found them at that point.

Damien Oppenheimer, the Yankees' vice president of amateur scouting, said there is no substitute for vigilance late in the draft.

"I think there's a combination of having a really good scouting staff that does their homework, and a little bit of luck, too," said Oppenheimer. "We got Evan DeLuca from New Jersey last year late in the Draft and he's been pitching down here [in Tampa]. You're talking about a high school left-hander that we got late that's throwing 93-to-95 [mph] down here with a good curveball and a changeup who should move through the system pretty quick. That's a credit to the scouting staff and a credit to Evan for what he did to work."

Two prominent veterans -- Raul Ibanez and Travis Hafner -- know what DeLuca might be going through. Ibanez was a 36th-round draftee by the Mariners in 1992 and methodically worked his way through the lower levels of the organization. Ibanez didn't carve out a full-time starting job until he was 30 years old, but he's managed to post more than 1,500 hits and 200 home runs in the Major Leagues.

Diamonds in the rough

Below are some notable current Major Leaguers that were drafted in the 30th round or later.

Round	Player	Year
31	Travis Hafner	1996
33	Jason Frasor	1999
33	Nyjer Morgan	2002
36	Raul Ibanez	1992

Below are some notable current Major Leaguers that were drafted in the 30th round or later.

Round	Player	Year
38	Mark Buehrle	1998
38	Rajai Davis	2001
38	Scot Shields	1997
38	Randy Wells	2002
39	Andy LaRoche	2003
42	Kyle Blanks	2004
43	Orlando Hudson	1997
43	Julio Lugo	1994
47	Kyle Farnsworth	1994
48	Brad Ausmus	1987
57	Gabe Kapler	1995

Hafner, meanwhile, was drafted in the 31st round by the Rangers in 1996, and he went on to post two consecutive top 10 finishes in the American League's Most Valuable Player voting. Relievers Mike Gonzalez and Scot Shields were taken in the 30th round or beyond, and two current players -- David Riske and Gabe Kapler -- were taken in belated rounds of the Draft that don't even exist anymore.

Shields, in fact, was drafted so late that he didn't even hear about it until the next day.

"I found out in the mail the next day," he said. "My doorbell rang at about 9 a.m. and it was UPS or FedEx. It said Anaheim Angels on it, and I could barely open it. I called my parents and told them I'd been drafted. [Angels scout] Tom Kotchman called. A week before I drove up to Tampa and threw a bullpen for him and didn't think it went that well. I figured that was it.

"I drove to my dad's work and signed with my mom there, for \$2,000. I was kind of pumped. I went to Boise and got started pitching for Kotchman."

Riske was taken in the 56th round in 1996, and Kapler was selected in the 57th round the year before. Now, the Draft only goes to 50 rounds, and some teams don't even make it that far.

Veteran infielders Julio Lugo and Orlando Hudson -- who have both carved out long and interesting careers for themselves -- were both taken in the 43rd round, an extremely deep position in the Draft.

And they're not alone. Kyle Blanks, who already has reached the Majors, has overcome the odds associated with being a 42nd-round draftee, and he's progressed to the point that the Padres consider him an important part of their future. Jake Wilson, a former scout with the Padres who was instrumental in drafting and signing Blanks, spoke about his development this spring.

"If I said I knew what Kyle would become, I would be lying," said Wilson, who now works in a scouting capacity for Tampa Bay. "I think that we were fortunate enough to get him. It was a real team effort on our part. Not just me, but all of the scouts who saw him."

And that doesn't just apply to Blanks, but to a host of players who have outperformed their modest Draft status. Brothers Adam and Andy LaRoche -- drafted in the 29th and 39th rounds, respectively -- have both made their late positions work out for them. Former big leaguer Marcus Giles was drafted in the 53rd round in 1996, and he still worked his way into a successful seven-year career.

For some reason, the 38th round has been extremely fertile over the years. Shields came out of that round in 1997, and the next year, the White Sox found four-time All-Star Mark Buehrle, who has thrown a perfect game and a no-hitter. Big leaguers Rajai Davis, Randy Wells and Mike Jacobs each came out of the 38th round in the last 15 years, giving that slot a strange claim to fame.

So, who will be next to join the big league fraternity of the underdrafted and overachieving ballplayer? Much of the first two days proceeded according to plan, making it hard to pinpoint a potential sleeper. And that's exactly the point: Teams spend an entire year scouting and preparing for the Draft, and after 30 rounds, most of the prominent names have already come off the board. The answer won't come tomorrow, next week or even next year. Players will sort themselves out according to ability to adapt and improve against the world's greatest ballplayers. And for fans of any or all of the league's respective teams, the intrigue comes in watching it all develop.

From the Associated Press

A's win 10-1 to snap Angels' 6-game winning streak

By JOSH DUBOW
AP Sports Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) -- Kurt Suzuki went 4 for 5 with a homer and four RBIs to help Vin Mazzaro get the win in his second start of the season, and the Oakland Athletics snapped the Los Angeles Angels' six-game winning streak with a 10-1 victory Tuesday night.

Ryan Sweeney added three hits and scored three times, and Jack Cust hit a two-run homer for the A's, who had lost six straight home games to their AL West rivals before breaking through against Jered Weaver (5-3) and the bullpen.

The strong outing by Mazzaro (2-0) in place of the injured Brett Anderson was a big reason for Oakland's success. Oakland put the game away with four runs in the seventh and three in the eighth.

Mazzaro faced little trouble until the fifth when the Angels put runners on second and third with no outs. An RBI groundout by Kevin Frandsen scored one run, but Mazzaro retired the next two hitters to end the threat and keep the A's on top 3-1.

That was it for Mazzaro, who had pitched out of the bullpen since being called up from the minors on May 20. He gave up one run, five hits and no walks in five innings in his second start of the season for the A's. He lasted only three innings in his first start, getting a no-decision in Oakland's 7-6 win over Texas on May 4.

From the SportingNews.com

Angels-Athletics Preview

STATS Senior Writer

Oakland managed to snap the Los Angeles Angels' longest winning streak of the season. Now, it hopes Dallas Braden can end his own personal skid.

The left-hander looks to avoid a fourth straight loss when the Athletics continue their four-game home set with the Angels on Wednesday night.

Braden (4-5, 3.77 ERA) makes this start a month to the day he pitched the first perfect game of the season in a 4-0 Mother's Day win over Tampa Bay on May 9.

Since then, Braden is 0-3 with a 4.45 ERA. However, he's received one run of support or less in three of those outings. In his last, Braden allowed four runs in 6 1-3 innings of a 5-4, 11-inning loss to Minnesota on Friday.

"Nothing to be frustrated about," Braden told the Athletics' official website. "I know so far more times than not, I haven't been crushed and hit extremely hard. It's just been the ones that fall in. That's just the game of baseball."

Braden is 2-4 with a 4.61 ERA in seven starts against the Angels, including 1-1 with a 4.50 ERA this year. In his first start after the perfect game May 14, Braden allowed four runs in eight innings of a 4-0 loss at Los Angeles to become the first pitcher to follow a perfect game with a complete game since Cleveland's Len Barker in 1981.

Angels' scheduled starter Joe Saunders (4-6, 4.78) also threw a complete game in that contest, giving up four hits to improve to 10-4 with a 3.73 ERA in 16 starts against the A's.

"You don't really get hyped up because of who's pitching against you," Saunders said of opposing Braden. "You just tell yourself to do what you can do - stay within yourself, throw as many strikes as you can, put the hitters on the defensive, throw up some zeros and hope your team can scratch out a run."

The left-hander, 3-1 with a 3.24 ERA in his last five starts, allowed a run in six innings of a 7-1 win at Seattle on Friday.

Saunders looks to help the Angels (32-29) bounce back after their six-game winning streak was snapped in a 10-1 loss to the A's on Tuesday. Los Angeles was held in check after batting .310 and averaging 7.2 runs during the winning stretch.

Kurt Suzuki went 4 for 5 with a homer and four RBIs as the A's (31-29) pounded out a season-high 18 hits to snap a four-game skid against Los Angeles.

"We were getting some balls to fall. That's the game," Suzuki said of the A's, who scored double-digit runs for the fourth time this season. "Sometimes you hit line drives and they get caught, sometimes you place them in the right spot."

Jack Cust added a two-run homer, giving Oakland 12 home runs in June after combining for 15 in April and May.

Suzuki has four homers and 10 RBIs while batting .389 in eight games this month. However, he's 2 for 24 (.083) with a home run lifetime against Saunders.

After hitting a two-run homer in Los Angeles' 4-2 series opening win Monday, Bobby Abreu went 1 for 4 on Tuesday.

Though he's batting .375 against the A's this season, Abreu is 9 for 45 (.200) in his last 11 games in Oakland.

From BaseballAmerica.com

Angels Raid Georgia Prep Ranks On Draft Day

By Bill Shaikin

ANAHEIM—The conference call had not yet started, so righthander Cam Bedrosian and outfielder Chevy Clarke decided to talk to each other.

"I can't believe it, man. This is crazy," Bedrosian said. "We're going to L.A."

The Angels tapped into Georgia's talent pool for their first three picks on draft day. With pick No. 18, they took third baseman Kaleb Cowart from Cook High in Adel, Ga.

With back-to-back picks at Nos. 29 and 30, Los Angeles selected two friends from the greater Atlanta area—Bedrosian, who hails from Sharpsburg's East Coweta High and is the son of former big league pitcher Steve Bedrosian, and Clarke, a Marietta High product.

The Angels had five of the first 50 picks, with four coming as compensation for the loss of John Lackey and Chone Figgins in free agency.

"It's really fun to have five," scouting director Eddie Bane said. "It's no fun to lose John Lackey and Chone Figgins, but this is a little bit of payback."

The Angels will have to buy Cowart out of a Florida State scholarship, but they took a big first step by drafting him as a third baseman. The switch-hitter batted .654 with 11 home runs and stole 36 bases without getting caught. But he also had a 1.05 ERA and 116 strikeouts in 73 innings, with a fastball that touched 95 mph. Some teams scouted him as a pitcher.

"Kaleb is a hitter for us," Bane said. "There's no thought of him pitching."

Cowart would not go so far as to say he would not have signed with a team that wanted him to pitch, but he was pleased the Angels announced they had drafted him as a third baseman.

"A few years down the road, if it doesn't work out, and I'm struggling, I can move to the mound," Cowart said. "I'd love to be the future third baseman for them—in the near future. I feel I can be an everyday third baseman for a major league club."

ANGEL FOOD

- The Angels did not conclude their Day-One selections with pick No. 30. They held two supplemental picks and used them to select shortstop Taylor Lindsay, No. 37 overall from Desert Mountain High in Scottsdale, Ariz.; and outfielder Ryan Bolden, No. 40 overall from Madison (Miss.) Central High.
- The Angels chose high school players with all five of their first-day picks, a high-risk, high-upside bet aimed at replenishing the farm system. "Other teams don't have that luxury," Bane said. "Maybe they have one pick."

From ESPNLosAngeles.com

Morales to have surgery Thursday

By Mark Saxon
ESPNLosAngeles.com
Archive

OAKLAND -- Los Angeles Angels first baseman Kendry Morales is scheduled for surgery to repair his broken left ankle on Thursday, 12 days after he fractured it while celebrating a game-winning home run. Doctors were waiting for the swelling to subside.

Originally, he was to undergo the surgery -- in which a metal rod or screws are inserted to hold the fibula in place -- the day after he injured it on May 29.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia spoke with Morales by phone.

"We really reinforced the idea that he's got to listen to the doctors," Scioscia said. "It's going to take time. You can't rush it. Right now, I think he's anxious to get into the surgery and the rehab."

Morales led the team in home runs (11), RBIs (39) and batting average (.290). He finished fifth in MVP voting last November and was in the process of replicating, or improving on, most of his numbers.

Team orthopedist Lewis Yocum said once surgery is performed Morales could begin putting weight on his leg within 4-6 weeks. After that, he would need to strengthen the leg and get into baseball activities. The team is holding out hope that he could return in September.

Several Angels players and coaches have called Morales to offer him moral support.

"He was upset the way it happened. It's tough," Bobby Abreu said.

Angels left fielder Juan Rivera broke two bones in his lower leg playing winter ball in December of 2006 and still has a metal rod running the length of his lower leg with metal screws attaching it at both ends. He said he occasionally sets off metal detectors at airports.

"It takes a while before you get your strength back again," Rivera said.

Angels shouldn't chase first baseman

Morales' injury has some wondering if a move should be made, but L.A.'s not in position

By Mark Saxon
ESPNLosAngeles.com
Archive

OAKLAND -- The question that seems to be hanging over the Los Angeles Angels ever since Kendry Morales went down with a grimace on top of home plate, his left ankle in pieces, is this: Do they fork over big money and go after a power-hitting first baseman?

The names of potentially available boppers -- Paul Konerko, Prince Fielder, Lance Berkman, Adam LaRoche -- have been tossed around for weeks. The motivation -- a seemingly smooth path to another playoff appearance -- isn't such a stretch.

But it's probably not going to happen and, frankly, it probably shouldn't. It's the wrong move in early June and it's probably the wrong move in late July.

Even in the midst of their six-game winning streak -- which ended emphatically with a 10-1 loss in Oakland on Tuesday night that knocked them into second place -- the Angels weren't giving off the aura of a World Series contender. Even with, say, Konerko hitting home runs fairly regularly in the second half, was this team ever going to make any noise in October?

How do you like the Angels chances against the New York Yankees again? How about the Tampa Bay Rays, even the Minnesota Twins? In their current incarnation, the Angels would be first-round fodder and, these days, their fans don't get too worked up about making playoff appearances. They have higher aspirations, and so does the organization.

And if you put all your efforts and concentrate all your finances on the first-base problem, what do you do about your leaky bullpen, your mediocre starting rotation and your lack of a leadoff hitter? First base might not even be the most pressing infield hole. What about third? The foundation of the Angels' offense is weak at the pillars: the corner infield spots.

"Are they really one guy away?" one veteran scout wondered Tuesday.

If you didn't realize that before, watching Michael Ryan and Kevin Frandsen converge on an infield popup in the fourth inning Tuesday -- Frandsen diving for naught -- should have summed it up. No offense to Ryan and Frandsen, but they're not the kind of corner infielders who carry teams deep into October.

I asked manager Mike Scioscia if he can continue mixing and matching at the corners all year. His answer, basically, was "yeah." Then again, what choice does he have? In other words, Angels fans, you can settle in for a long summer of Ryan, Frandsen, Robb

Quinlan, Maicer Izturis & Co. Those guys should be good for, what, about eight home runs between them?

"I think things can settle if we can just get some guys producing," Scioscia said.

Tuesday night was one of Jered Weaver's worst starts in years and, when he falters, this team doesn't look like much of anything. Weaver's 114th pitch was a belt-high fastball over the middle of the plate that Kurt Suzuki sent soaring in the air and, eventually, bouncing up the steps beyond the left-field fence. That three-run blast was the 12th hit Weaver gave up in just over six innings. He hadn't been knocked around this way since Aug. 1, 2007.

The Angels' lineup, meanwhile, looked flummoxed facing an array of mediocre Oakland arms. It started with five good innings from converted reliever -- and fairly recent call-up -- Vin Mazzaro. It continued. In the seventh, Erick Aybar took a called third strike on the outside corner on a floating, 73 mph curveball from lefty Jerry Blevins.

The AL West has had the appearance of a rudderless mess all season. The Angels are right in the middle of that mass of mediocrity and one move, no matter how much of owner Arte Moreno's money it costs, isn't going to change that.

Scene and heard

Like the rest of the baseball-watching world, the Angels got caught up in Stephen Strasburg's debut for the Washington Nationals on Tuesday. They were able to watch the first five innings of his electric, 14-strikeout start on the clubhouse TVs here before heading out to the field to stretch.

Some of the Angels' pitchers related it to their first major league outings. Joe Saunders noted Strasburg seemed to be having trouble throwing his slow curveball early in the game, so he was throwing the hard slider.

"He's probably got so much adrenaline going right now, he can't slow his arm down," Saunders said.

Quote of the day

"I think from where he came into the league a couple years ago to where he is now, he's by far the most improved ... definitely catcher and, maybe, player in our league." -- Scioscia on Suzuki, a Cal State Fullerton alum.

Looking ahead

Oakland's Dallas Braden (4-5, 3.77 ERA) hasn't won since pitching his perfect game on May 9. Entering Wednesday's start against the Angels here, he's 0-3 with a 4.45 ERA since then and opponents have hit .277 against him. The Angels were one of the teams that beat him, getting to him for four runs in their 4-0 win on May 14.

In that game, Saunders (4-6, 4.78), who pitches for the Angels on Wednesday, threw a complete-game shutout, holding Oakland to four hits and striking out six. He has tended to pitch well against the A's, winning six of his past eight games with a 2.58 ERA.

From the El Paso Times

Hanks senior Michael Bolaski drafted by LA Angels

By Aaron Bracamontes \ El Paso Times

Posted: 06/08/2010 10:31:51 PM MDT

EL PASO -- Hanks High School senior Michael Bolaski was drafted by the Los Angeles Angels on Tuesday in the 23rd round of the MLB draft.

"They (called to) let me know they are going to be coming to town to sort everything out and they congratulated me," said Bolaski, who was taken with the 714th overall pick. "It feels great. I am just really excited for the opportunity to play for them."

The call came early in the afternoon, and immediately sent the Bolaski family into an outburst of joy.

"Pretty much I was waiting all day long," Bolaski said. "They like my hitting, bat speed and patience at the plate. They told me they want me to play third base for them."

Earlier this year, Bolaski signed with El Paso Community College. Bolaski can chose to either sign with the Angels or attend EPCC and re-enter the draft next year. He plans to meet with Angels officials before deciding.

"It would be nice to play for my home team, but it's a dream to play professionally," Bolaski said. "I'm pretty much on the fence. Hopefully I get some good news from the Angels. But if not, it'd be good to play in El Paso."

The 6-foot-3, 185-pound senior had a .506 batting average with 44 runs, 40 RBIs and nine home runs last season. His on-base average was .573, while his slugging percentage was at 1.024.

He helped the Knights earn a playoff spot and was named to the All-District 1-5A first team at second base.

"It's times like this that make you realize that your hard work paid off,"

he said. "It hasn't quite hit me yet, but I'm sure it will soon."

Hanks coach Ryan Medrano said Bolaski worked hard for his success. "They're getting a kid with good physical talent. They're just getting a great kid in general," he said.

From the USAToday.com

American League Team Notes

BALTIMORE ORIOLES

INSIDE PITCH

Two names surged to the top of the Orioles' managerial search list Tuesday.

Former Mets manager Bobby Valentine and ex-Indians skipper Eric Wedge will reportedly interview with the Orioles soon, two industry sources told the Baltimore Sun.

Valentine, 60, is an analyst with ESPN. He managed the Mets to the World Series in 2000 and most recently managed the Chiba Lotte Marines in the Japanese League. Wedge, 42, was Cleveland's manager until last season, when he was fired, ending his seven-year tenure.

The Orioles are also said to be considering former major league managers Buck Showalter, Phil Garner, Davey Johnson, Bob Melvin and Clint Hurdle. Interim manager Juan Samuel and current Orioles television analyst Rick Dempsey, a former Orioles catcher and 1983 World Series MVP, are considered the best "in-house" options. Dempsey has been a fan favorite for the manager's seat since the team let go of Mike Hargrove, but it's unlikely he'll get an interview.

According to the report, Showalter has not been contacted by anyone in the Orioles organization about managing.

The Orioles fired manager Dave Trembley on Thursday when the team returned from New York. Samuel was named the interim manager but was not given any guarantees that he will finish the season in the same position.

YANKEES 12, ORIOLES 7: Phil Hughes held the Orioles to three runs and nine hits in six innings to improve to 8-1. Going against what he said in his introductory press conference, manager Juan Samuel played the left-right matchup game and lost as the Orioles bullpen allowed six runs, capped by a Mark Teixeira seventh-inning homer to deep right-center off Matt Albers.

NOTES, QUOTES

—2B Brian Roberts was shut down from all baseball activity. The injured leadoff man, out since April 9 with a herniated disk, will undergo more testing in the coming days before being re-evaluated.

—RHP Kevin Millwood didn't pitch well enough to win and fell to 0-7. Millwood allowed 10 hits and five walks on 119 pitches Tuesday as the Yankees scored six earned runs off him. Millwood allowed two home runs, increasing his AL-leading total to 16.

—CF Adam Jones hit his seventh home run of the season in the eighth inning. It was his second home run in two games against New York — his solo shot June 3 in the Bronx was his first homer since hitting one out of Nationals Park May 22.

—RHP Alfredo Simon is on pace to rejoin the Orioles before the end of the homestand. Simon, out with a strained left hamstring, will not need a rehabilitation assignment, team president Andy MacPhail told the Baltimore Sun. Simon will resume his role as closer upon his return.

—LF Corey Patterson was held out of the lineup for a second straight game because of soreness in his groin muscle. Patterson is eyeing a return during the current series, but that's unlikely to come until Thursday because the Yankees start LHP CC Sabathia Wednesday.

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

Tim Wakefield has pitched for the Red Sox for so long that, for two seasons, he was teammates with Roger Clemens.

Tuesday night, he broke one of Clemens' franchise records.

By getting the Indians' Russell Branyan to pop to shallow center field for the second out of the seventh inning, Wakefield passed Clemens for the most innings pitched in Red Sox history with 2,777. Red Sox catcher Victor Martinez alertly asked for the baseball (Wakefield initially was unaware of the milestone), and when they returned to the clubhouse after the Red Sox's 3-2 victory, Wakefield and Martinez shared a champagne toast.

Also, the nameplate above Wakefield's locker was replaced with "2,777."

"It's special because I had a pretty close relationship with Roger when he was here," Wakefield said. "He kind of took me under his wing, showed me how to work hard and never give up. Just to be mentioned in that kind of company with Roger or be able to pass a guy like Roger, who's a first-ballot Hall of Famer, in my opinion, is very special. I'm very honored and humbled at the same time to be able to pass some numbers that he's put up."

Wakefield also gave credit to Red Sox pitching coach John Farrell, who helped him make adjustments from his previous two starts, in which he allowed a total of 15 runs in only 9 2/3 innings. And after bouncing from the Red Sox's rotation to the bullpen and back to the rotation when Josh Beckett got injured last month, Wakefield said he was putting too much pressure on himself to be perfect.

"Considering the situation I've been in from spring training on, there's a little bit of pressure to throw zeroes up there," he said. "There's a very fine line of pitching to win and pitching not to lose. And I think I was on the other side of that."

RED SOX 3, INDIANS 2: Tim Wakefield pitched 7 1/3 solid innings and set the Red Sox's all-time record for innings pitched in a victory at Progressive Field. Kevin Youkilis picked up three hits for the Red Sox, while Adrian Beltre added two hits. David Ortiz had an RBI single to end an 0-for-18 slide. Reliever Ramon Ramirez got the final out of the eighth inning to leave the tying run on third base, and Daniel Bard picked up his third career save by pitching a scoreless ninth. The Red Sox are 4-1 on their seven-game road trip and have won 10 of their last 12 road games.

NOTES, QUOTES

—OF Jacoby Ellsbury will have his still healing ribs examined Wednesday by well-known Dr. Lew Yocum at the Kerlan-Jobe Clinic in Anaheim, Calif. Ellsbury fractured his ribs April 11 and has missed all but two of the last 54 games. His agent, Scott Boras, suggested seeking a second opinion from Yocum, and the Red Sox agree that it may be helpful. "He has permission to be examined thoroughly," manager Terry Francona said. "Whatever that entails, they have our blessing. Hopefully we'll get some news, and it'll be like, 'We know you feel this. We understand that. You can try to build up and you're not going to hurt yourself.' That's what we're trying to get to, but we don't know. We just want to get as much information as we can."

—RHP Daniel Bard pitched a scoreless ninth inning to record his third career save and perhaps give the Red Sox a glimpse of his future as a closer. "You're going to get guys trying to end the game with one swing, but I approach it the same way I would the seventh or eighth," Bard said. "The game's on the line, but it's on the line in the seventh and eighth, too. I don't see any difference out there." Said manager Terry Francona, "This has been a guy that, regardless of the inning, we've leaned on him with the game on the line. Certainly, it won't hurt him to experience this."

—DH David Ortiz hadn't gotten a hit in six days, a span of 18 at-bats, when he stepped to the plate in the fourth inning. Ortiz delivered an RBI single that scored 1B Kevin Youkilis to give the Red Sox a 2-0 lead.

—RHP Ramon Ramirez got one of the biggest outs of Tuesday night's game. Leading 3-2 with the tying run on third base and two out in the bottom of the eighth inning, the Red Sox summoned Ramirez to face the Indians' Austin Kearns. Ramirez threw a first-pitch slider for a ball, but he came back with another slider and got Kearns to line out to right fielder J.D. Drew.

BY THE NUMBERS: .074 — Batting average for left-handed hitters against flame-throwing righty Daniel Bard going into this week. He had 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

Ozzie Guillen's youngest son, Ozney, was selected by the Sox in the 22nd round of Tuesday's second day of the draft, but rather than it being a feel-good story it was more of a slap in the face.

The elder Guillen was asked after the pick was announced if he thought his son would sign with the Sox or go ahead and take that full scholarship to play at the University of South Florida that awaits him, and Ozzie gave this response:

"Nah, 22nd round? I give my kid 50 grand just to go to school," Guillen said. "I got 50 grand in my pocket to send my kid to go to Niketown. Or buy something. I don't need the money. ... I don't know (what happened). I really don't put my nose in that. Surprised? Of course I'm surprised. I'm not worried about that. What happened, why? That's up to people who know why, but I'm not going to waste my time investigating or asking people what happened. I got a lot of things to worry about."

Why the bad feelings?

Some scouting agencies had Ozney projected as high as a fourth-round talent coming out of Monsignor Edward Pace High School in Florida. For him to slide all the way down to Round 22 was a punch in the stomach.

"I think the White Sox did what I told them ... I don't need any favors or he doesn't need any favors," Guillen said. "In the meanwhile, it's kind of hard. His expectations, not mine, his expectations were a little higher. He thought he was a little better player than what other people think. But in the meanwhile, I think we have a backup if something like this happened. I already talked to the coach on when he was going to go to summer class, go there and enjoy himself.

"Obviously, it's not an easy day for the family because we thought he was a little bit better. In the meanwhile, you learn from the worse. The hardest thing for us is to talk to him about it. He feels embarrassed, he feels like he let himself down. He thinks he's better than a few players picked by teams before him, but I said, 'Listen, that's part of life. You learn from that, you get yourself stronger mentally and you prove people wrong. That's all you can do.' I always say things happen for a reason."

What sounded obvious on Tuesday was Ozney Guillen will not be joining the Sox organization anytime soon.

TIGERS 7, WHITE SOX 2: The Sox continued to show they can do very little right when it matters, including hitting in the clutch, holding leads or making the routine play, and it again hurt them. With the Sox leading 2-1 in the seventh inning and set up perfectly with Matt Thornton out there to help keep the door locked, the Tigers had two on with an out before Ryan Raburn doubled to give Detroit the lead. It didn't help that Gordon Beckham had a throwing error on the play, however, right after outfielder Carlos Quentin slipped on the wet surface in trying to get the ball back to the infield. There went the lead.

Miguel Cabrera was then intentionally walked, leading to a Brennan Boesch three-run homer, all but ending any hope of a comeback, as the Sox dropped to 4-20 in games following a win this season, as well as 10-15 against the Central Division.

NOTES, QUOTES

—Manager Ozzie Guillen said there was still no indication coming from general manager Ken Williams on whether he will be in sell mode soon. "As long as I'm here, I think this club is good," Guillen said. "I might be wrong. But everyone has different feelings about how they approach their job and if we think we don't go anywhere or he thinks it's going to be hard for us to do it, then he does what he has to do."

—Scouting director Doug Laumann had been insisting that the Sox were looking to restock the minors with pitching, and through the first two days of the draft he obviously wasn't lying. "We think we maybe put the word out early that that was something we were going to focus on," Laumann said. "We felt that the draft was really strong in pitching. ... Like I said the other day, you never know how it's going to fall, but we certainly were happy with the fact that we got the guys that we wanted. Threw some position guys in there a little bit later, but we got a lot of the college pitching we were looking for."

—RHP Freddy Garcia has earned himself a bigger payday after this season, as the free agent-to-be has transformed himself from the hard-throwing No. 1 ace he used to be into

a crafty veteran who can eat up innings at the end of a rotation. While Garcia's fastball barely hits 90 mph these days, he has turned into a better pitcher, evident by the display he's put on this season for the Sox so far. Garcia has been the best starter the South Siders have, taking a 5-1 record and 4.33 ERA over his last six starts into his next outing. Garcia has allowed two earned runs in five of his last six outings. "If someone would have told me Freddy would be our most consistent starter this season, I would have thought they were crazy," manager Ozzie Guillen said. "In the meanwhile, he has been."

—RHP Sergio Santos is starting to get tested a bit more, and not by the Sox putting the rookie in during heat-of-the-moment situations, but from the rest of the league now getting a better feel for what he throws. The former infielder-turned-reliever has been scored upon in two of his last three outings after he did not allow a run in 19 of his first 20 appearances. Santos is still heavily in the plans for the back end of the bullpen, especially if the club can move RHP Bobby Jenks by the trade deadline.

—RHP Scott Linebrink continues to make himself trade proof, not only because of the \$5.5 million he is scheduled to make next season, but also his performance of late. The veteran, mostly working in mop-up time, owns a 9.82 ERA in his last five games entering the Tigers series. He then came in for 1 2/3 innings against Detroit, allowing a homer and three hits.

BY THE NUMBERS: 13-17 — The White Sox's home record through June 6.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "There have been a lot of rock bottoms this year. I'm like you — kind of out of answers. If there are any, come and let us know." — 1B Paul Konerko, on all that has gone wrong for the Sox so far this season.

CLEVELAND INDIANS

INSIDE PITCH

There are moments in every game when the Indians' youth and inexperience reveal themselves. Frequently those moments lead to negative plays, and sometimes they result in losses.

Tuesday was one of those nights. The Indians lost to Boston 3-2, and all three of Boston's runs were unearned. Indians center fielder Trevor Crowe dropped a flyball that should have been the third out of the inning.

Instead, it put a runner at second base, and Indians starter David Huff then gave up four consecutive hits, leading to three unearned runs, which was the difference in the game. Crowe appeared to lose his concentration on what should have been a routine catch.

Huff was unable to pick up his teammate, allowing an inning to snowball on him, something that many veteran pitchers are able to prevent. It was a dramatic example of two young Indians players going through some on-the-job training.

There have been other moments like that earlier in the season, and there figure to be more to come. Unfortunately for the Indians, such moments are the price rebuilding teams have to pay.

RED SOX 3, INDIANS 2: David Huff pitched six innings without allowing an earned run but still took the loss, dropping his record to 2-7. The Indians were held to four hits, one of them a solo home run by Shelley Duncan.

NOTES, QUOTES

—INF Mark Grudzielanek was designated for assignment to make room on the roster for INF Anderson Hernandez, whose contract was purchased from Class AAA Columbus. Grudzielanek, who hit .273, had 30 hits — all of them singles.

—INF Anderson Hernandez's contract was purchased from Class AAA Columbus. Manager Manny Acta said the move was made so Hernandez could play some shortstop, which would allow the Indians to give INF Jason Donald some playing time at second base, where Donald is a better long-term fit for the Indians. Donald has been playing shortstop in place of the injured SS Asdrubal Cabrera, on the disabled list with a broken left forearm.

—OF Shelley Duncan's solo home run in the seventh inning Tuesday was his first home run of the season. It was also Duncan's first major league home run since May 23, 2008, when he hit one for the Yankees against Seattle.

—LHP David Huff took the loss in the Indians' 3-2 loss to Boston. However, Huff did not allow an earned run in the six innings he pitched. It was the first time in 11 starts this season that Huff did not allow an earned run.

—OF Shin-Soo Choo had two of the Indians' four hits. It was Choo's team-leading 20th multi-hit game of the season. In his last eight games he is hitting .364.

BY THE NUMBERS: 17 — 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 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

Wherever Scott Cerny was Tuesday — and it was probably in the Detroit draft room — he had to be smiling.

It was Cerny who scouted Brennan Boesch and pushed the Tigers to draft the University of California product even though the outfielder's junior season was a relative disappointment when stacked up next to his outstanding sophomore season.

On the four-year anniversary of the week Detroit drafted Boesch, he slammed a towering three-run home run to highlight a six-run seventh inning that powered the Tigers to a 7-2 victory over the Chicago White Sox.

Gavin Floyd had made Boesch look silly his first three at-bats, fanning him each time with some very large help from a sharp curveball. Then came the fourth at-bat.

Floyd was gone, victim of a high pitch count that had him out of the game after six innings. Matt Thornton was brought in to protect a 2-1 lead. Ryan Raburn's RBI single and an accompanying run-permitting error erased the deficit and put Detroit on top 3-2.

Miguel Cabrera was walked intentionally with Raburn on third and one out. Boesch then battled through a 10-pitch at-bat and launched a 3-2 fastball into the teeth of a fierce incoming wind and over the center-field fence.

It might have made a difference that Boesch was tracking fastballs instead of being worked over by breaking balls, but three-run bombs over the center-field fence are why manager Jim Leyland has him batting fifth in his lineup.

If that didn't make Cerny smile, what would?

An outstanding spring training with the Tigers convinced them Boesch was the guy to bring up when Carlos Guillen pulled a hamstring and Detroit needed an outfielder to replace him. Boesch's hot start in Triple-A had confirmed his solid spring.

He was Rookie of the Month for May, and more honors could be on the way.

TIGERS 7, WHITE SOX 2: A three-run home run by rookie Brennan Boesch highlighted a six-run seventh inning that powered Detroit to its victory in Chicago. Ryan Raburn, a late substitute when a left oblique strain kept Magglio Ordonez out of the lineup, doubled for the second time to drive in the tying run and the go-ahead marker came in on an accompanying throwing error. Miguel Cabrera was walked intentionally and Boesch battled through a 10-pitch at-bat to hit his home run into a stiff wind blowing in from center. Carlos Guillen followed with a solo home run. Armando Galarraga, who got a standing ovation from White Sox fans as he took the mound, didn't even get an out before giving up a single in his first start since his near-perfect game. Galarraga gave up a two-run home run in the fourth and his less-than-perfect control had his pitch count up to 100 in the fifth. Brad Thomas got the win in relief.

NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Armando Galarraga got a standing ovation from the Chicago fans when he took the mound for his first start since his near-miss perfect game — then LF Juan Pierre put his no-hit dreams to rest by lining a single to center as the first batter of the game. Galarraga didn't have the command he had in his previous start, but he pitched well enough to give Detroit a chance to win. However he left after 100 pitches in five innings, one a two-run home run after a 10-pitch battle with DH Mark Kotsay. The Hall of Fame has requested and the Tigers agreed to provide the first-base bag, Galarraga's spikes and a baseball used in the pitcher's near masterpiece. "Instantly, the game became a historic moment in baseball, one that has spurred the interest among fans around the globe," Hall spokesman Brad Horn said. "The game's outcome shows the human element of sportsmanship, character and integrity by all parties involved, which helped the moment transcend a single feat or performance." Galarraga was also selected American League Player of the Week for his effort.

—RF Magglio Ordonez was a late scratch from the lineup because of a sore left oblique muscle. He was replaced in the lineup by LF Ryan Raburn, with RF Brennan Boesch shifting from left to right. Head trainer Kevin Rand said he did not believe Ordonez would miss much playing time.

—C Alex Avila was behind the plate to catch RHP Armando Galarraga again. Avila and Galarraga worked together in the pitcher's last start, the now famous near-perfect game. Avila was making his third straight start — manager Jim Leyland wants to give him a chance to play more often in hopes he can give Detroit more offense than C Gerald Laird. Avila went hitless for a second straight game, however, after a four-game hitting streak.

—RF Brennan Boesch looked bad striking out in his first three at-bats but made up for it in his fourth with a three-run home run at the end of a 10-pitch at-bat against hard-throwing LHP Matt Thornton. His ability to drive in important runs and to shrug off bad at-bats are two of his assets. Boesch also has more speed than most 6-6 guys and showed it in beating out an infield single to first in the ninth. "He's going to have some outhouse nights and he's going to have some castle nights," manager Jim Leyland said. "Tonight the castle outweighed the outhouse."

—2B Carlos Guillen grounded an RBI single to right in the sixth to cut a 2-0 deficit in half, then followed a three-run home run by Brennan Boesch with a solo shot of his own. Manager Jim Leyland is looking for production from the bottom part of his batting order, and Guillen is helping in that regard.

—LF Ryan Raburn got the emergency call to start when LF Magglio Ordonez was a lineup scratch because of a left oblique strain. Raburn had two doubles, the second triggering a six-run seventh inning. "I haven't been able to get in there a whole lot, but I wanted to get in there and help the club win a game," Raburn said. Raburn spent a brief stint in the minors when Detroit needed an extra pitcher and hit over .400.

—LHP Brad Thomas picked up his third win in relief by pitching two shutout innings in relief of RHP Armando Galarraga. Thomas has been a good find for Detroit, which lost

LHP Bobby Seay to a sore shoulder in the spring. After two seasons in Korea, Thomas has been readjusting to the difference in leagues, and recently he's been assigned more mid- and late game duty. Thomas retired all six batters he faced; his fastball has good life and his breaking ball has improved steadily.

—SS Danny Worth reported to the Tigers as scheduled, but manager Jim Leyland held him out of the starting lineup. Leyland likes to get his newcomers into action as soon as possible and indicated Worth would start Wednesday against the White Sox. Worth hit .333 in eight games with Detroit earlier this season.

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

The Royals have been blindsided. They did not see this coming.

The numbers next to Zack Greinke's name are staggering: 1-8 record, 4.05 earned run average. That is where Greinke stands after a 7-3 loss Tuesday night at Minnesota, where he gave up six runs on nine hits in five innings.

Greinke put up 2009 numbers that would be nearly impossible to duplicate: 2.16 ERA, 242 strikeouts, 51 walks, 195 hits in 229 1/3 innings while going 16-8 and winning the American League Cy Young Award. But who would have predicted Greinke's steep slide in 2010?

In Greinke's last two starts, losses to the Angels and Twins, he has allowed 19 hits and 10 earned runs in 11 innings.

"The last month I haven't really been myself, I guess," Greinke said. "Everything looks tougher, like the hitters look better and the strike zone looks smaller. It just seems tougher out there at the moment."

Greinke said he does not think about his record.

"Maybe I'm not thinking about stuff enough this year," he said. "I don't really think about it a whole lot. Maybe I need to start taking it more personal and changing it up a little bit because it's been going on awhile. Eventually you're going to have to stop it or you're going to cost your team a lot of games."

TWINS 7, ROYALS 3: Zack Greinke threw 31 of his 102 pitches in the Twins' three-run first, giving up three runs on four hits and a walk. Not that it would have mattered, but the Royals' offense again vanished in a Greinke start. They failed to get a hit until Jose Guillen and Mike Aviles singled in the fifth. Twins starter Kevin Slowey restricted the Royals to three hits in seven scoreless innings. Scott Podsednik's sacrifice fly in the eighth scored Mitch Maier for the first Kansas City run. The Royals got two more meaningless runs in the ninth on a Guillen RBI double and an Aviles two-out single, which scored Guillen.

NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Gil Meche played catch before the game for the first time since going on the disabled list May 29. Manager Ned Yost said Meche still feels a little something in the front of his shoulder. It appears Meche doubtful Meche would be able to return in the next two weeks, probably longer. LHP Bruce Chen, who has been filling in for Meche, is scheduled to make his third start Wednesday.

—RHP Brad Thompson, who was designated for assignment June 3, cleared waivers but opted for free agency instead of accepting a minor league assignment to Class AAA Omaha. Thompson was 0-4 with a 6.41 ERA in 16 relief appearances with Kansas City.

—OF Rick Ankiel's minor league rehab assignment got off to a slow start — he struck out in all four of his at-bats in Class AAA Omaha's 6-0 loss to Oklahoma City. Ankiel had not played since striking out May 2 as a pinch hitter because of a pulled right quadriceps.

—LHP John Parrish lost Tuesday in a start for Class AAA Omaha to begin his minor league rehab assignment. Parrish threw only six strikes in 15 pitches. He retired two of four batters, allowing a hit and a walk, and both runners scored. Parrish last pitched April 24 and has been on the disabled list for 37 games with left rotator cuff inflammation.

—The Royals picked a local product, RHP Jason Adams, 6-4, 225, from Blue Valley (Kansas) Northwest in the fifth round of the draft Tuesday. Adams throws in the lows 90s with a plus curve and is working on a changeup. He has signed with the Missouri. In the second round, the Royals picked RHP-OF Brett Eibner out of Arkansas. Scouts are divided on whether Eibner is a pitcher or a center fielder. Eibner prefers to hit.

BY THE NUMBERS: 2.48, 0-4 — RHP Zack Greinke's ERA and his record in six road starts this season through June 6.

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

First baseman Kendry Morales has spent 10 days sitting in the hospital, waiting for doctors to decide it is time to perform surgery on his broken ankle.

Swelling in the injured area has finally subsided enough for that surgery to be scheduled for Thursday morning — 12 days after Morales suffered a fractured fibula during a walk-off celebration.

The surgery will be performed by foot and ankle specialist Dr. Phil Kwong. Kwong is expected to place a metal rod and several screws into the fractured bone to ensure proper healing.

"I think he's over the shock of it," said manager Mike Scioscia who has spoken with Morales by phone. "I think he's disappointed, but he's come to grips with understanding the process of the surgery. We've really reinforced the idea that he's got to really listen to the doctors. It's going to take time. You can't rush it. I think he's anxious to get this surgery and get into the rehab."

The Angels' medical director, Dr. Lewis Yocum, said immediately after the injury that Morales would not be able to put any weight on the leg for four to six weeks following surgery. Yocum held out the possibility that Morales could return to play again this season. That, however, seems more unlikely all the time.

Morales was batting .290 with 11 home runs and 39 RBI at the time of the freak injury. He was leading the Angels in all three categories.

A'S 10, ANGELS 1: The A's ended the Angels' season-high six-game winning streak in convincing fashion. The A's outhit the Angels 18-8 in the game — though the 18 hits seemed to include an unusual number of flares and broken-bat hits. The first 11 hits off Angels starter Jered Weaver were singles. The 12th hit, though, was a three-run home run by Kurt Suzuki that broke the game open. The Angels' offense managed little response against A's starter Vin Mazzaro and four relievers. With the loss and a Rangers win, the Angels fell out of first place, a half-game behind Texas.

NOTES, QUOTES

—IF Maicer Izturis was back in the starting lineup after missing two games because of tightness in the outside of his right hamstring. Izturis made his third start of the season at second base, giving Howie Kendrick a night off, and went 2-for-4 with two singles and a stolen base.

—OF Bobby Abreu was 1-for-4 and is just 7-for-35 (.200) on the Angels' current trip. For the season, Abreu is hitting .211 (26-for-123) on the road and .315 (34-for-108) at home.

—3B Brandon Wood went 2-for-4, his second consecutive two-hit game for Triple-A Salt Lake. Wood is still batting just .182 (6-for-33) with no extra-base hits but 13 strikeouts in eight games on his minor league injury-rehabilitation assignment.

—RHP Jered Weaver took a string of 16 consecutive innings without allowing an earned run into Tuesday's game. The A's ended that with single runs in each of the first three innings. Weaver pitched into the seventh inning but gave up a season-high 12 hits in the loss.

—LHP Joe Saunders will start Wednesday in Oakland having gone 3-1 with a 3.24 ERA in five starts since starting the season 1-5 with a 7.04 ERA. Saunders is 10-4 with 3.73 ERA in his career against the A's. The 10 victories are his highest total against any opponent.

BY THE NUMBERS: 58 — Runs scored by the Angels in the first eight 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

The Twins haven't had a call-up make the kind of impression Nationals pitcher Stephen Strasburg made Tuesday night, but they've had success with a long string of minor league help this season.

As Strasburg was wowing baseball with 14 strikeouts in his major league debut, Matt Tolbert and Danny Valencia were helping the Twins beat the Kansas City Royals, 7-3, at Target Field. They were playing because second baseman Orlando Hudson and shortstop J.J. Hardy were out of commission with left wrist injuries.

"Those guys are tremendous players, just proven players," Tolbert said. "You've just got to go out there and do what you can do, play the best you can. I mean, they're on a different level, obviously, but while you're up here you have to do what you can."

Tolbert went 1-for-5 with a walk, RBI and run scored; the walk, with one out in the first inning, started a three-run rally. Valencia, making just his fifth major league start, went 3-for-4 with two runs scored.

"It felt good. I hadn't hit it out of the infield until today, so obviously getting the hit made me feel like I can build off this," Valencia said.

Minnesota has gone through a long line of players from Rochester, and while only reliever Alex Burnett seems to have found a permanent home, all of them have helped the team win games this season, from catcher Wilson Ramos to infielder Trevor Plouffe.

"You just try to stay healthy and try to get better, because you never know what's going to happen," said Tolbert, who was with the Twins for their playoff run last season. "One time I got called up it was 12 o'clock at night, so obviously you don't ever know when someone's going to go down and you might get a chance."

Tolbert scored the game's first run on a single by Michael Cuddyer, drawing a walk after Denard Span got picked off of first base. In the sixth, he drove in Valencia for the Twins' final run, capping a solid night for two more Twins call-ups.

"You get used to being up and down," said Tolbert. "You don't unpack; you don't make plans. I don't even look at the schedule because I don't want to get like, 'Oh, we go here in a week!' I just look at the series; right now it's Kansas City. You learn to live day-to-day.

"But it's fun, too, playing baseball. I'll take it."

TWINS 7, ROYALS 3: Kevin Slowey pitched seven innings of three-hit ball, and Jason Kubel drove in three runs with a homer and a double as the Twins hammered the Kansas City in front of 38,970 at Target Field.

Denard Span drove in two runs with a one-out single in the fourth, and Michael Cuddyer went 2-for-4 with an RBI.

Slowey (7-3) had a no-hitter until designated hitter Jose Guillen laced a single to center with one out in the fifth inning. He struck out three and didn't walk a batter. Matt Guerrier got the final out for his first save of the season.

NOTES, QUOTES

—SS J.J. Hardy had an MRI taken of the wrist he injured while sliding into third base on May 4. When it revealed no further damage, he had a cortisone shot the Twins hope will keep him from making a second trip to the disabled list.

"We figured we'd get the shot and give it a day or two," Hardy said, "If it's better, then great; if it's not, then we're back to where we were today without all this."

The same injury put him on the disabled list May 11, and he missed 17 games before returning. But he also has missed the last three games and will take Wednesday night off as well. If Hardy isn't able to play by Thursday, manager Ron Gardenhire said he will likely go to the DL and INF Trevor Plouffe will be recalled from Class AAA Rochester.

The source of Hardy's soreness is a bone bruise suffered while sliding into third base on May 4. He acknowledged that to repair the wrist, he might have to just shut it down for a week to 10 days.

"I want to play, but if it's not going to get better, and if I have to play with it for the rest of the season, then that might not be the way to go," he said.

—2B Orlando Hudson has been placed on the disabled list because of a bad left wrist, injured May 30 in a collision with CF Denard Span. It's the same wrist Hudson had surgically repaired in August 2008, and on Tuesday he visited the surgeon who did the procedure.

"We just have to give him five or six more days and he should be ready to go," manager Ron Gardenhire said, "but if you try to go before then, it's probably not a good thing."

—RF Michael Cuddyer was activated from the bereavement list after missing four games to attend the funeral of his father-in-law. He was 2-for-4 with an RBI but made a two-base error when he dropped a flyball in the ninth inning, his first error since Aug. 21, 2009 at Kansas City.

The Twins were 2-2 in games Cuddyer missed last week in Seattle and Kansas City.

"You put his name in the lineup and don't worry about the guy and he comes up with a couple of big hits early," manager Ron Gardenhire said. "That's what we missed on the road there, having Cuddy out there. He's a leader."

—C Joe Mauer entered Tuesday's game with a .250 batting average in June and was 8-for-38 (.211) in his previous 10 games. He went 1-for-3. But manager Ron Gardenhire laughed off a suggestion that the American League batting champ might be in a slump.

"Yeah, he's hitting poorly — line drives right at people," the manager said. "I think he's swinging great; he's just not getting anything to show for it. It's what happens when you set the bar so high."

Mauer hit .365 with a career-high 28 home runs and 96 RBI last season, despite missing the first month because of a back injury, to win his third AL batting crown. Through 49 games this season, Mauer was hitting .311 with two homers and 24 RBI.

"He's not getting as many hits as he normally does, but still he's hitting rockets," Gardenhire said. "That's just the way the game goes sometimes. That's why they say it can humble you. Sometimes you get humbled a little bit. It's really humbling to only hit .320."

—RHP Kevin Slowey improved to 33-18 with a 4.22 ERA over his career on Tuesday.

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

Phil Hughes didn't have his best stuff Tuesday, but a combination of generous run support and big pitches in tight spots helped the 23-year-old win his eighth game of the season.

Hughes said he struggled to get comfortable as he allowed nine hits against the struggling Orioles, but he didn't issue a walk all night, doing his best to limit the damage where he could.

"I've seen him sharper, but he was pretty good," manager Joe Girardi said. "He stopped it, and that's good. Sometimes you're going to give up hits with runners in scoring position, but he stopped it."

Hughes was a little more critical of himself, saying he felt as though he didn't deserve to win the game.

"If I was to evaluate myself without knowing how many runs I gave up, just by the pitches I made, I feel like I shouldn't have won this game," Hughes said. "You have those days where you may not pitch well enough to win, but you do just because we have such a great offense."

Hughes improved to 8-1 on the season, becoming the third eight-game winner in the American League.

YANKEES 12, ORIOLES 7: The Yankees beat the Orioles for the ninth time in 10 games this season, clinching their 13th straight non-losing season against Baltimore. RF Nick Swisher had a home run and five RBI, while CF Curtis Granderson's second career grand slam helped build a 6-0 lead. RHP Phil Hughes allowed three runs over six innings to earn his eighth win as the Yankees broke it open with a six-run seventh inning in which Swisher hit a three-run double and 1B Mark Teixeira hit a two-run home run.

NOTES, QUOTES

—1B Mark Teixeira went 3-for-4 with a home run, only his second homer since May 16. Teixeira collected more hits in the game than he had in the first six games of June — he opened the month 2-for-24. Teixeira also drew two walks, reaching base four times in the game.

"It's kind of like a bounce-back game after you lose a tough game," manager Joe Girardi said. "When you're in one of those streaks, you want to bounce back as soon as you can."

—C Jorge Posada took part in his first round of catching drills since returning from the disabled list last week. Posada caught LHP Andy Pettitte's bullpen session, did blocking drills and made 10 throws to second base, testing his fractured right foot. Posada will not do any catching activity on Thursday, but he'll be back at it Friday and could be back behind the plate sometime next week.

—3B Alex Rodriguez was back in the lineup, showing no signs of the tightness in his right groin that forced him to leave Sunday's game in the ninth inning. Rodriguez went 0-for-5 before leaving the game in the seventh, but manager Joe Girardi said the decision to lift the third baseman had to do with the lopsided score, not the injury.

—LF Brett Gardner was removed from the game in the eighth inning after feeling soreness in his left thumb. Gardner felt the discomfort after a checked swing in his sixth-inning at-bat, then aggravated it in his at-bat the following inning. Gardner missed 40 games last season after breaking the same thumb, and he said he's experienced a similar feeling numerous times since the injury, though it typically goes away by the next day. He was optimistic that he'll be back in the lineup on Wednesday.

—The Yankees are 9-1 this season against the last-place Orioles, including a 3-1 record at Camden Yards. A win on Wednesday will clinch the season series for New York, which has posted 13 straight non-losing season series against Baltimore. The Yankees have won at least 11 games in a season against the Orioles eight times in the last nine years.

BY THE NUMBERS: 17 — Games in 2B Robinson Cano's hitting streak that ended June 4, 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

Oakland's eight-man bullpen was much needed on the last road trip, when the A's had starter Brett Anderson on a limited pitch count, and then, in his second start, he came out after just two innings.

The A's had to drop back to seven relievers, however, on Tuesday because of an injury to center fielder Rajai Davis.

Davis has what he describes as a minor left hamstring strain, and he is expected to miss two or three games — not significant enough to put him on the disabled list, but still enough to hamper the team's sparse bench.

With the packed bullpen, the A's had just three players in reserve — outfielder Eric Patterson, infielder Adam Rosales and catcher/utility player Jake Fox. Tuesday, the team added outfielder Matt Carson to the mix, and Patterson started in the outfield thanks to Davis' injury. Gabe Gross moved to center field.

Carson, who is in his second stint with the A's this season, has hit six homers this season and five have come off left-handers, which means Carson is expected to start Wednesday against Angels lefty Joe Saunders. Carson was hitting .405 vs. lefties at Sacramento.

The A's sent out right-hander Henry Rodriguez to make room for Carson, which raised some eyebrows in the Angels clubhouse — Rodriguez hit 101 mph on the stadium radar gun the night before, when he retired six of seven batters. He also topped out at 101 mph twice during a game against the Angels last September.

A'S 10, ANGELS 1: For the second time in 22 big-league appearances, right-hander Vin Mazzaro didn't issue a walk, and he scattered five hits in five innings while allowing one run. Mazzaro is filling in for left-hander Brett Anderson (elbow tendinitis) and a strong start such as Tuesday's against the Angels will go a long way toward keeping Mazzaro in that spot until Anderson returns, which could be a month or more away. Kurt Suzuki matched his career high with four hits, including a three-run homer, and the A's recorded a season-high 18 hits.

NOTES, QUOTES

—OF Rajai Davis told reporters that his left hamstring strain was much improved after he injured the muscle running out a triple in the fifth inning the night before. Manager Bob Geren said he believes Davis will miss two or three games.

—RHP Justin Duchscherer told A's manager Bob Geren via text that his left hip surgery on Monday in Nashville went well. There was a good deal of damage to repair and Duchscherer told Geren that he felt positive about the way things had turned out. Duchscherer is out for the season and will be a free agent.

—RHP Henry Rodriguez was sent down to Triple-A Sacramento so that the A's could add an extra bench player while outfielder Rajai Davis is out for a few days with a hamstring strain. Rodriguez was still getting mentioned in the Angels dugout on Tuesday after hitting 101 mph on the radar gun the night before and retiring six of seven men.

—OF Matt Carson was called up to give the A's an additional bench player while outfielder Rajai Davis is out for a few days with a left hamstring strain. Carson, 28, has hit six homers at Triple-A Sacramento, with five coming off left-handed pitchers; he's expected to be in the lineup on Wednesday against left-hander Joe Saunders.

—OF Ryan Sweeney has had three multi-hit games in a row and is among the AL leaders with a .324 average. Sweeney's younger brother, Kellen, was the Blue Jays' second-round pick on Tuesday.

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

The Mariners came into the season knowing they could count on Felix Hernandez, their best starting pitcher and last year's runner-up in the Cy Young Award chase.

That level of confidence has been shaken in the first nine weeks of the season. Hernandez struggled from start to finish again Tuesday as the Mariners lost 7-1 to Texas, the club's fourth loss in its last five starts.

Hernandez thought maybe he'd turned things around with an eight-inning start against Minnesota the last time out. June has always been a good month for Hernandez, who came into Tuesday 12-2 in his career in the month.

But he gave up runs early and often and never seemed to find his way Tuesday. The Rangers' Josh Hamilton hit a two-out, two-run double off the tip of the glove of diving left fielder Michael Saunders in the first inning, and the Mariners never recovered.

Hernandez started the season 2-0 but is 1-5 in his last nine starts and looks nothing like the pitcher who went 19-5 last year. Barely half of his first pitches (17 of 31) were strikes.

RANGERS 7, MARINERS 1: Felix Hernandez gave up two runs in the first inning, and with the Mariners' well-documented offensive troubles continuing, this one got out of hand early.

Seattle got just four hits all night against Colby Lewis and the Texas bullpen, two each by Franklin Gutierrez, who scored the one run, and Rob Johnson, who drove that run in.

The Mariners have scored just one run in their last 15 innings.

Hernandez, meanwhile, fell to 1-5 in his last nine starts. He'd been hoping to win back-to-back starts for the first time since April.

NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Scott Patterson, who last pitched in the big leagues in 2008, signed a contract with the Mariners. He'll start working in the minor leagues. He had been pitching for the independent Lancaster Barnstormers in the Atlantic League.

—LHP Erik Bedard reported no problems after throwing a 40-pitch session in the bullpen Monday. He'll get one more bullpen session before the Mariners decide if he's ready for a simulated game or two on his comeback from shoulder surgery.

—C Rob Johnson said he missed the sign when he was thrown out stealing third in the fifth with two on and no one out. He said he thought he'd seen a hit-and-run sign, but he hadn't, and the Mariners were taken out of their best chance for a big inning.

—SS Jack Wilson (hamstring) played five innings in a minor league game on his injury rehabilitation assignment.

—C Josh Bard (calf) is catching bullpens with Triple-A Tacoma but still isn't officially on an injury rehab assignment. That probably comes later in the week in Tacoma or West Tennessee.

—C Adam Moore (fibula) had seven at-bats in a simulated game Tuesday. He's likely to start his injury rehab assignment with Triple-A Tacoma, which has a day off Wednesday, on Thursday.

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

The Rays had a lot of things to feel good about Tuesday — a good start to their homestand, a dazzling two-hit complete game by Jeff Niemann, another solid night at the plate by B.J. Upton among them.

But what they should have felt best about was the production from slumping slugger Carlos Pena, who hit two home runs to pace the 9-0 win.

Pena, even after two hits Sunday, came into the game with a .176 average, lowest among major league qualifiers, and an AL-most 63 strikeouts. Plus there was chatter about whether the Rays should bench him, though manager Joe Maddon has resisted the idea because Pena's defense is so good.

And as if the two homers weren't enough of a sign that Pena's extended slump might be over, he drew a seventh-inning walk after starting out 0-2.

"When Carlos walks, he hits," Maddon said. "At some point, he's going to get back to that level where he's going to carry us for a long period of time. There's no doubt in my mind."

RAYS 9, BLUE JAYS 0: The Rays got a strong start from Jeff Niemann, who finished with a two-hit complete game, and a big night from slumping Carlos Pena, who hit two homers, to improve their MLB-best record to 38-20.

NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Jeff Niemann held the Blue Jays hitless into the sixth and finished with a two-hitter — not allowing a runner past first base — for the third shutout of his career. He improved to 6-0 this season and won his seventh consecutive decision going back to last year, matching the 2005 franchise record set by Mark Hendrickson.

—CF B.J. Upton reached base his first four times up after getting on all five times Sunday for a streak of nine. Upton moved back into the leadoff spot against LHP Brian Tallet on Tuesday and will be at the top again Wednesday against lefty-killing RHP Shaun Marcum.

—LHP David Price, the top pick in the 2007 draft, knows a little bit about hype and could relate to what Nationals RHP Stephen Strasberg was going through on Tuesday.

"He's got some of the best stuff I've ever seen," Price said. "So I'm looking forward to seeing some of his highlights."

—SS Jason Bartlett tested the sore right hamstring that landed him on the DL and said he was pleased with the improvement and confident he would be ready to go when eligible to return June 15 in Atlanta.

—LF Carl Crawford was not in the lineup against Jays lefty Brian Tallet, but the decision was more about giving Crawford rest. The Rays were off Monday, and manager Joe Maddon likes to give players such as Crawford their break on either side of an off day. That means he'll go from Sunday afternoon to Wednesday without having to get on his feet.

BY THE NUMBERS: 41 — 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

Meet the Rangers' new ace: Colby Lewis.

Lewis might not be an ace in the traditional sense, but he's eating up innings for a team that is starving for innings from the rotation. Making his 12th start of the season, Lewis went seven innings for the Rangers on Tuesday.

Lewis has pitched into the seventh six times in his 12 starts this year. He has pitched at least six innings in nine of 12. He has yet to pitch less than five. With the exception of Tommy Hunter, who has made only one start, Lewis is the only Rangers starter this season who has not had a start of fewer than five innings.

And every time out, the Rangers know they can count on Lewis for about 110 pitches. Tuesday, he gave the club a season high in pitches thrown (119). His last time out, he threw his fewest this season (102).

By virtually guaranteeing the Rangers at least six innings and 110 pitches, Lewis gives manager Ron Washington predictability, which makes it easier to map out the bullpen use. He is averaging 109 pitches per outing, the fourth-highest average in the AL behind workhorse starters Justin Verlander, Cliff Lee and Jered Weaver. Each of those guys pitched 200 or more innings last year. Together the trio has eight 200-plus inning seasons.

This is exactly what the Rangers hoped for with Lewis. They expected Lewis, not Rich Harden, to make up for the innings lost by trading Kevin Millwood. The club figured Lewis could give the team 180-200 innings. They didn't count on anything more than 150 innings from Harden, who has struggled with command to this point.

RANGERS 7, MARINERS 1: The Rangers scored early on a two-out double by Josh Hamilton and simply kept building to their lead against Felix Hernandez. It extended Hamilton's RBI streak to five games. Since June 1, he's hitting .419 with nine RBI in eight games. The Rangers also got big hits from Elvis Andrus and Vladimir Guerrero, who hit his 13th homer of the season.

NOTES, QUOTES

—SS Elvis Andrus had three hits to extend his hitting streak to 13 games. But none of the hits was bigger than his two-out, two-run double in the sixth that gave the Rangers a 5-1 lead. Andrus is hitting .452 for the season with runners in scoring position. He has hits with RISP in each of his last four games in which he's had an at-bat in this situation.

—1B Justin Smoak walked twice and had a big RBI single in the sixth that extended the Rangers' lead to 3-1. Over the last two weeks, Smoak, a switch hitter, is crushing right-handed pitching. Smoak is at .406 against righties over the last 12 games. That includes a .525 OBP and a 1.150 OPS. On the flip side, it might be wise to give him days off against lefties. He's only 2-for-38.

—2B Ian Kinsler was hitless again and has fallen into a deep slump after a hot first couple of weeks in his season. Kinsler is 11-for-61 (.180) over his last 16 games. Even his penchant for getting hit by pitches and taking walks has been stymied. His on-base percentage in that stretch is a mere .271.

—OF Nelson Cruz likely won't be back from a hamstring injury until Tuesday at Florida at the earliest, manager Ron Washington said. Cruz is eligible to come off the DL on Sunday. The Rangers are off on Monday.

—Among the picks made by the Rangers in the second day of the amateur draft were the sons of former major leaguers Steve Buechele and Gene Roof. Buechele's son, Garrett, was taken in the 18th round. Buechele, who spent the majority of his major league career with the Rangers, is the manager of the club's Double-A affiliate in Frisco, Texas.

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

The Blue Jays added pitching, pitching and more pitching in the early rounds of the free agent draft.

With the 11th overall selection, the Jays opted to draft Deck McGuire, a 6-foot-6 right-hander from Georgia Tech. McGuire is the same sort of pitcher they drafted in the first round a year ago when they selected Chad Jenkins, who this season is pitching for Class A Lansing.

"They're very similar guys," said Jays scouting director Andrew Tinnish said. "They're big, durable, physical guys who log a lot of innings. I think we see them as middle-of-the-rotation starters down the road. It's exciting to have two potential impact-type horses, so to speak, coming up through our system."

The Jays also took right-handed pitchers with their three compensation picks in the first round: Aaron Sanchez from Barstow High School in California, Noah Syndergaard from Legacy High School in Texas and Asher Wojociechowski of The Citadel.

McGuire, who turns 21 on June 23, went 9-4 with a 2.96 ERA in 16 starts at Georgia Tech. The native of Richmond, Va., has 118 strikeouts in 112 2/3 innings.

"It was a consensus," Tinnish said of the reports on McGuire. "Everybody had strong feelings for this player. There was a comfort level across the board from our entire group."

"He's got size, he's got a good delivery and arm action, and he's got good stuff. His slider's probably his best pitch, anywhere from 83 to 87. It's a swing-and-miss type pitch."

The Jays had four of the first 41 selections — their regular pick at No. 11, along with three compensation picks: No. 34, for losing free agent Marco Scutaro to Boston; No. 38, for being unable to sign pitcher James Paxton of Ladner, B.C., a supplemental first-rounder last year; and No. 41, for losing free agent catcher Rod Barajas to the New York Mets.

RAYS 9, BLUE JAYS 0: The Blue Jays, who went 1-8 at Tropicana Field in 2009, are 1-3 in 2010. They had no answer for the Rays' Carlos Pena, who hit a solo home run in the fourth and a grand slam in the fifth. The Jays also had little answer for Rays starter Jeff Niemann, who threw a shutout. Mike McCoy collected the Jays' first hit with a one-out single in the sixth.

NOTES, QUOTES

—LHP Brian Tallet made the start for the Jays and allowed five runs on four hits over four innings. In all probability it was his final start — RHP Jesse Litsch is expected to be recalled from Triple-A Las Vegas to fill the No. 5 spot in the rotation with Tallet moving back to the bullpen.

—INF John McDonald, who missed the weekend series in Toronto against the Yankees, is expected to be away from the team indefinitely to be at his family home in Connecticut with his father, Jack, who is gravely ill from cancer. "It's not good, not good. They're all but waiting for him to pass," manager Cito Gaston said before Tuesday's game. "I spoke to John today, and of course Mac is the type of guy who feels like he's letting us down here. But I assured him to stay with your dad as long as you need to stay, that we're going to be fine."

Gaston said that the Jays have thought about placing McDonald on bereavement leave, which would allow them to bring up a replacement.

"We will have to do something definitely before we go to Colorado (Friday). If he's not back by then, which I doubt he will be, then we will have to do that."

—SS Alex Gonzalez was absent because of what manager Cito Gaston termed "personal issues." Gaston added that Gonzalez is expected to be with the team for Wednesday's game. Taking Gonzalez's place on Tuesday was Mike McCoy, who last appeared in a game as a pinch runner May 26. It was McCoy's 11th start of the season and his first since May 16. McCoy batted ninth in the lineup and entered the game in an 0-for-17 slump. He singled in the sixth inning to snap the streak at 0-for-18.

—CF Vernon Wells went 0-for-3 to end to his 14-game hitting streak.

—RF Travis Snider was a visitor in the clubhouse. Snider is on the disabled list with a sprained right wrist ligament and has been working out at the Jays' complex in Dunedin. Snider, who hasn't played since May 14, has been restricted to working out in the gym, running and throwing drills but has yet to swing a bat.

"It's taken a lot longer than we all expected to heal," he said. "I've tried to do some swinging in the last week or so, and it really hasn't responded the way that I'd like it to. It's one of those things that's taken its sweet time and we just have to be patient."

There is no target date at this point for his return.

BY THE NUMBERS: 3 — Times the Jays had successfully employed the sacrifice bunt this season through June 6. The Jays used the strategy (a sac bunt by Fred Lewis) in the 14th inning June 5, and it led to a 3-2 victory over the Yankees when 2B Aaron Hill followed with a game-winning single. The only other Jay to have recorded a sacrifice bunt was INF John MacDonald, who had 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.