

A's News Clips, Saturday, June 19, 2010

A's let Carpenter, Cardinals off the hook

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's jabbed away at Chris Carpenter in the second inning Friday night, but they paid for not landing the knockout blow against the St. Louis Cardinals ace.

After putting up four runs in the second, the A's went silent and lost 6-4 to open a three-game series at Busch Stadium.

The A's have lost three straight and are 1-6 on this nine-game interleague trip. They've dropped seven games behind American League West-leading Texas.

"We didn't finish (Carpenter) off. He was on the ropes," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Against a pitcher of that caliber, it's tough to get that many runs off him. But being we got them all in one inning, we would have liked to tack on some more."

The Cardinals pecked away at a 4-2 deficit and took the lead for good with two runs in the seventh off A's reliever Brad Ziegler (2-4).

"We're not kicking the ball around," Geren said. "We're not running the bases poorly. We're playing the game right. We just came up short."

It was the A's first game against St. Louis since former Bash Brother Mark McGwire became the Cardinals' hitting coach last winter. But it was a player with a much briefer history in Oakland who did big damage.

Matt Holliday, who is batting second in a typically quirky lineup wrinkle from Cardinals (and former A's) skipper Tony La Russa, drilled a two-run homer in the first inning off Vin Mazzaro. He finished 3 for 4 with three RBIs.

The A's had reason for optimism based on their own offensive look. Geren batted Conor Jackson third behind Rajai Davis and Daric Barton, and after things clicked early, Geren said he'd like to stick with Jackson in that spot. Davis delivered his second career four-hit game and Jackson had a two-run double.

But the A's let Carpenter (8-1) off the hook. The right-hander gave up 10 hits but lasted seven innings, and the A's didn't advance a runner past first base after the second.

"We may have went out of the (strike) zone a little more than we needed," Davis said. "He's a good pitcher and he's able to take advantage of that."

Mazzaro gave up four earned runs over five innings, leaving with the game 4-4. Ziegler delivered a 1-2-3 sixth, but the seventh was a different story.

Brendan Ryan led off with a double to left, and Skip Schumaker followed with a double to right. After Holliday's groundout, the A's intentionally walked Albert Pujols to set up a double play. But Ryan Ludwick's grounder found a hole through the right side for an RBI single that made it 6-4.

Ziegler, who has a 5.79 ERA in 10 outings during June, is a Midwest native who makes his offseason home in Springfield, Mo. He has lots of loved ones in the stands this weekend, but he was ticked because he said he felt he made quality pitches that the Cards still put good wood on.

Things went better for Ziegler before the game. He and Pujols, the three-time NL MVP, played American Legion ball against each other. They got reacquainted during batting practice.

"He was always such a nice guy back then, and he seems the same way now," Ziegler said.

TODAY: A's (Ben Sheets 2-6) at Cardinals (Adam Wainwright 9-4), 4:15 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM, 1640-AM

A's update

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Geren clarifies strategy regarding closer Bailey

ST. LOUIS — Manager Bob Geren tried to clarify Friday that his strategy for using closer Andrew Bailey hasn't changed as far as he's concerned.

"I'm going to try to use him as much as I can for one inning, and if he's well-rested, I'll use him more than one inning," Geren said before Friday's 6-4 loss to the St. Louis Cardinals. "It's nothing out of the ordinary at all."

After Thursday's 3-2 loss to the Chicago Cubs — in which Bailey finished the eighth but was pulled for a pinch-hitter in the top of the ninth — Geren's postgame comments suggested that he had recently decided to treat his second-year closer more carefully than normal.

Jerry Blevins pitched the ninth against the Cubs, walked three and surrendered the game-winning run.

Bailey himself said after Thursday's game that he and Geren had a recent discussion in which Geren said he wanted to limit him to one inning, partly because of "the longevity of the season."

"I think he just kind of wants to start getting (other relievers) more into roles," Bailey added, "start getting guys confidence in certain situations."

Geren denied that was his motivation for how he's using Bailey, adding that he may not have explained his own stance clearly to the media following Thursday's game.

Left-hander Dallas Braden may be able to grit his teeth and pitch through the pain in his left elbow, but whether he's able to use his full repertoire is another story. Braden estimated he threw just one slider in Thursday's start against Chicago because that pitch puts the most strain on his elbow.

Braden has tendinitis in his elbow and was given two extra days of rest before facing the Cubs. He delivered six strong innings despite relying primarily on his fastball and changeup. The changeup is his best pitch, but he also mixes in a slider and cutter. He didn't indicate whether his cutter bothers the elbow.

"If you're a four-pitch pitcher, you don't want to be a two-trick pony," Braden said.

Geren said Brett Anderson (left elbow tendinitis) played catch Thursday, the first time he's thrown a baseball since he went back on the disabled list June 4. There's no timeframe for Anderson to get on the mound yet.

Chin Music: A little more on Bailey and Braden, plus other A's tidibits

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/18/2010 5:04PM

It's very muggy here in St. Louis, exactly what you'd expect this time of year in the Gateway City. But a local writer told me this is especially warm and humid for mid-June. It's 91 degrees right now with about 20 minutes to go before game time. Should be a pretty good test of stamina for A's starting pitcher Vin Mazzaro. But I'd say Trevor Cahill will have it much worse pitching Sunday afternoon. ...

I know Bob Geren's handling of the bullpen is probably foremost on people's minds after yesterday's loss. In his pregame media chat, Geren emphasized that he's not trying to handle closer Andrew Bailey any differently than he has in the past. "I'm going to try to use him as much as I can for one inning, and if he's well rested, I'll use him more than one inning," Geren said.

I guess most managers around the majors would say roughly the same thing. But in his postgame comments yesterday, Geren definitely made it sound like he decided — recently — to treat Bailey more carefully. Today, Geren said his strategy regarding Bailey hasn't changed at all.

Is this making your head spin yet? I should mention that Bailey emphasized yesterday that he's on the same page w/Geren about when/how often he should be used. I'm just not sure what page that is at the moment ...

–Regarding Dallas Braden leaving after 83 pitches yesterday, both Braden and Geren said that it was time for him to come out. Braden’s elbow was really bothering him, which makes you wonder if he can continue pitching effectively with the problem. Earlier today, Braden said he threw just one slider yesterday because that pitch puts more strain on his elbow. Without that pitch, he’s mainly a fastball-changeup guy (he occasionally throws a cutter). Braden kept the Cubs off-balance w/just his fastball and changeup yesterday, but how long can he get by w/just those two pitches?

–Conor Jackson is hitting third today, and Geren said he’d like to keep him in the No. 3 spot for a while, hitting ahead of Daric Barton. ...

Here’s the lineups, with Cards pitcher Chris Carpenter hitting eighth. That nutty Tony LaRussa ...

A’s: Davis CF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Suzuki C, Sweeney RF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Ellis 2B, Pennington SS, Mazzaro RHP.

Cards: Schumaker 2B, Holliday LF, Pujols 1B, Ludwick RF, Rasmus CF, Freese 3B, Molina C, Carpenter RHP, Ryan SS.

Holliday experiment pays off against A's

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Cardinals manager Tony La Russa is not afraid to try something new, so it shouldn't be surprising that Matt Holliday - who wasn't cutting it as a cleanup hitter - is batting second for the first time in his career.

Holliday, who was a struggling member of the A's last season, is in a happier and wealthier place, and he helped sink his former team Friday night. He had hits in his first three at-bats, including a two-run homer off Vin Mazzaro, and the Cardinals beat the A's 6-4.

"The difference today was the home run," A's manager Bob Geren said. "They hit a homer for two RBIs, and we didn't."

The A's snagged Holliday from Colorado in November 2008 and shipped him to St. Louis in July 2009, and the left fielder signed a \$120 million contract to return to the Cardinals and protect No. 3 hitter Albert Pujols.

That didn't work so well. Cardinals cleanup hitters were last in the league in RBIs. So on Monday, La Russa began placing Holliday in front of Pujols, a three-time Most Valuable Player, instead of behind him.

Worked fine Friday.

Holliday's homer put the A's in a 2-zip hole, and they rebounded off Chris Carpenter with four in the second on Rajai Davis' RBI single (his second of four hits), Conor Jackson's two-run double and Kurt Suzuki's RBI single. Carpenter gave up 10 hits in a game for the first time since last June against the Giants.

"It's good confidence for a young team to play against one of the best of the best and get some runs," Geren said. "I like what we did early against Carpenter. We just didn't add on."

Mazzaro exited after the Cardinals tied it 4-4 in the fifth (thanks in part to Holliday's run-scoring single). Brad Ziegler tossed a scoreless sixth but surrendered two runs in the seventh.

"He didn't really get hit hard," Geren said of Ziegler, who gave up not-so-scorching doubles to Brendan Ryan and Skip Schumaker and a ground-ball, run-scoring single to Ryan Ludwick.

During the rally, Ziegler intentionally walked Pujols. It was the first time they faced each other since Legion ball in Missouri, representing different high schools: Odessa High for Ziegler and Fort Osage High in Independence, Mo., for Pujols.

"In that situation, that was the right move," Ziegler said. "Would I love to face him? Absolutely. He's never seen me throw sidearm. The last time I saw him was 12 years ago."

How did Ziegler do against a teenaged Pujols?

"He hit a couple of homers off me," Ziegler said. "He hit a lot of balls hard that were right at guys. Average-wise, I think I did OK against him, but it wasn't like I was punching him out every at-bat. He was a phenomenal hitter in high school, and we all knew he'd go on to bigger and better things."

The A's lineup had Davis, Daric Barton and Jackson 1-2-3, meaning Jackson has batted first, second and third in his first three A's starts. Geren said he plans to stick with the Barton-Jackson alignment in the 2-3 holes.

Geren still defending strategy against Cubs

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

One day after the A's fumbled away a game in Chicago, manager **Bob Geren** spoke more Friday about his moves in the final innings.

As to why he didn't execute a double-switch when closer **Andrew Bailey** entered in the eighth, Geren said, "I liked the defense I had."

But by not double-switching, Geren was forced to pinch hit for Bailey, who was the first scheduled batter in the ninth. In the bottom of the inning, Geren went to reliever **Jerry Blevins**, who gave up a run and took the loss.

Whispers were heard from several members of the team's traveling party, in and out of uniform, who wondered why Geren didn't double-switch. Options could have included putting **Ryan Sweeney** in right field in place of **Jack Cust** or **Adam Rosales** at third base in place of **Kevin Kouzmanoff**. That way, Sweeney or Rosales could have led off the ninth, with Bailey remaining in the game.

On Friday, Geren said Bailey would have hit for himself and pitched the ninth had he protected a 2-1 lead in the eighth (he entered with one out and the bases full and gave up a sacrifice fly).

Also, Geren backtracked on comments he made Thursday about limiting Bailey's outings to one inning. Bailey said that's exactly what Geren had told him last weekend in San Francisco. But on Friday, Geren said, I'll try to use him as much as I can for one inning, and if he's well-rested, I'll use him more than one inning. It's nothing out of the ordinary at all."

Braden's elbow: **Dallas Braden** said his left elbow tendinitis is a "problem," and he doesn't plan to make his normal between-starts throwing session. He did say he fully expects to make his next start, Tuesday against the Reds.

He said he threw no breaking balls Thursday other than one slider, because of the elbow tenderness. He was pulled after 83 pitches, having surrendered one run in six innings.

A's leading off

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Track record: The numbers won't be with Ben Sheets when he pitches tonight at Busch Stadium. This year, he's 0-4 with a 7.28 ERA on the road (compared with 2-2, 2.79 at home), and he's 6-14 lifetime against the Cardinals. No team has beaten him more.

A's unravel after four-run second inning

Early outburst is all offense manages in loss to Cardinals

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ST. LOUIS -- Brad Ziegler knows he did his job Friday night.

Manager Bob Geren knows it, too. He even vouched for him, even though the final scorecard didn't.

Unfortunately, the Cardinals did their jobs, too, perhaps a little bit better. And, unlike Ziegler, they got the win to prove it.

Ziegler's story unfolded in the seventh frame, when the A's reliever surrendered a trio of what Geren deemed "unlucky hits" that broke open a tie game and eventually led to a 6-4 Oakland loss at Busch Stadium in the opener of a three-game Interleague series -- one that handed the A's their sixth loss in their last seven games.

With the game knotted, 4-4, after five frames, Ziegler entered in the sixth to relieve starter Vin Mazzaro and quickly tallied a 1-2-3 inning. Ziegler had no such luck in the seventh, though, immediately offering up back-to-back doubles to Brendan Ryan and Skip Schumaker to make it a 5-4 game.

"It all started with the leadoff hitter," Ziegler said. "I thought I made a pretty good pitch. It was a slider on the outside corner, and he just kind of lurched out and hooked it down the line. I knew [Schumaker] would try to bunt him over to third. ... I threw a backdoor slider that probably caught a little too much plate. He was out front on it and hooked it down the line."

After former A's left fielder Matt Holliday moved Schumaker over to third, Ziegler was instructed to intentionally walk an old pal. Albert Pujols, whom the A's righty played with and against during high school in Missouri 12 years ago, was offered a free pass -- a move that brought Ryan Ludwick, another former A's organization player, to the plate.

"In that situation," Ziegler said of walking Pujols, "it's the right move. He's as productive of a player as there is in baseball. So would I have loved to face him? Absolutely."

Instead, the right-hander set to face Ludwick, who pushed a ground ball to the right side. It was exactly what Ziegler was looking for, until it went through a hole and into the outfield, scoring Schumaker and extending St. Louis' lead to two.

"You tip your hat to their team," Ziegler said. "They were doing what they could to move runners over to drive runs in. They took advantage of what I gave them."

"I'm going to give up a lot of contact hits, especially against a team that's never seen me before. They're going to come up there aggressive because they know I throw strikes. The sixth inning was no different -- they were all up there hacking. In the sixth inning, they hit it at guys, and in the seventh they hit it where we weren't."

Not much noise was made after that fateful frame, as the A's went down in order in the final two innings and fell to a season-low three games under the .500 mark. One week ago, Oakland stood just two games behind first-place Texas in the American League West. Coupled with Friday's loss, the A's now rest a fairly lengthy distance of seven games behind the Rangers for a third-place standing.

The digression represents a rather frustrating week for the A's, who looked to turn around by tagging starter Chris Carpenter for four runs in the second inning on Friday. Rajai Davis, who enjoyed a career-high-tying four-hit night -- his fourth consecutive multi-hit game -- was one of three A's players to notch RBIs in the frame.

The bats were silenced, though, after that, as Carpenter retired 13 of the final 17 batters he faced while also compiling three 1-2-3 innings. The Cardinals righty went seven innings, surrendering four runs on 10 hits with one walk and five strikeouts. He escaped several jams, including a first-inning, bases-loaded situation.

"It was a tough first couple innings," Carpenter said. "I didn't make very many good pitches. I was able to battle through it and get out of some stuff."

"I go out and try to execute pitches and go as long as I can. And, fortunately for me, I had some quick innings, they put some early balls in play, and I was able to start making pitches better than I was the first two, and I started catching up."

"I thought we actually did well against Carpenter, considering how good of a pitcher he is," Davis said. "After the second, I think we were maybe out of the zone more with guys in scoring position. A pitcher recognizes that and is able to take advantage."

Mazzaro, meanwhile, also averted trouble in a handful of innings after surrendering a two-run long ball to Holliday in the first -- one that came on a fastball aimed in but landed down in the middle. He kept the Cardinals from scoring again until the fifth, when he walked Ryan before surrendering three consecutive hits, two of which resulted in runs. The A's rightly went five innings, giving up four runs on six hits and three walks with five strikeouts.

"He battled," Geren said. "He had trouble locating the ball a bit, but he had a pretty good fastball and breaking ball."

"I wanted to go out and put zeroes up," Mazzaro said. "I was able to get into a groove and put up some quick innings. I thought I pitched pretty good -- it just didn't fall our way."

That seems to be a trend for this struggling A's team, which on Saturday will look to again land in the win column and avoid another slip in the standings.

"The end results haven't been what we want," Geren said, "but we're playing solid baseball. A lot of things are going well for us. We're playing the game solid, just coming up short."

Jackson likely to remain in third spot

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ST LOUIS -- The A's newly acquired outfielder, Conor Jackson, appeared in his third different lineup spot in as many days on Friday, but manager Bob Geren says the musical chairs will likely stop for now.

Jackson, who was brought into the A's fold Tuesday via a trade with Arizona, was placed in the No. 3 slot behind Daric Barton -- a visual Oakland fans are likely to see often from now on. Jackson ripped a two-run double in his second at-bat on Friday against the Cardinals; Barton did not reach base in either of his first two plate appearances.

"We'll keep it like this for a while," Geren said. "Both are similar hitters -- they don't strike out a lot; they have good knowledge of the strike zone; they move the ball around the field."

On Thursday, the two were flip-flopped, with Jackson batting second and Barton hitting third. Geren, however, likes what he's seen from his first baseman in the No. 2 hole, where Barton has hit .300 in 61 games.

"He's having a fine year there," the A's skipper said. "He's done so well there. We've got a lot of good parts to our lineup now, especially with the addition of Connor."

A's could limit closer Bailey's innings

ST. LOUIS -- On Thursday, following a late-inning loss to the Cubs, Andrew Bailey -- pulled after throwing 10 pitches in the eighth inning -- stood at his locker and talked about a recent discussion he had with manager Bob Geren.

"He said because of the longevity of the season, he wanted to limit me to one inning," the A's closer said. "I just think he wants to get guys more roles and have them confident in certain situations, which will play out through the end of the year."

Geren had echoed this notion just minutes before Bailey, who said he feels fine physically. But on Friday, when approached about the subject again, the A's manager said he may have misspoken the day before about Bailey's newly apparent one-inning limitation.

"Really, I just want to try to use him for just one inning as much as I can," Geren said Friday. "If he's well-rested, we may use him for more than one inning. He's done it before."

"We'll basically treat him the same way as it's always been -- it's nothing out of the ordinary at all."

Bailey endured appearances lasting more than four outs 22 times last season, and he's done so five times this year.

Anderson on recovery trail from elbow malady

ST. LOUIS -- Good news came out of the A's dugout on Friday afternoon when manager Bob Geren shared an update on lefty Brett Anderson, who began throwing again Thursday.

Anderson, placed on the 15-day disabled list on June 4 with elbow tendinitis, will continually increase his throwing distance off flat ground before moving to the mound for a round of bullpen sessions. However, a timetable on when the southpaw reaches that step is still unknown.

This marks the second trip to the DL this year for Anderson, who on April 16 signed a four-year contract extension. He was sidelined from April 25 to May 28 with the same injury.

Upon being activated, he held Detroit scoreless over 5 2/3 innings, allowing three hits. But in his next start at Boston, Anderson had to leave the game after just two innings -- which resulted in five hits and two runs -- because of elbow pain.

Worth noting

Coco Crisp, in the middle of a rehab stint with Triple-A Sacramento, went 5-for-5 with 5 RBIs in seven innings for the River Cats on Friday. The A's outfielder (intercostal strain) is expected to rejoin the club during its next homestand, which begins Monday. ... First baseman Daric Barton has played in every game this season and leads the American League in games played with 69. ... Shortstop Cliff Pennington, who was struggling at the plate for a couple of weeks, now has a five-game hitting streak. He is batting .471 (8-for-17) during the stretch.

Star hurlers Wainwright, Sheets lock horns

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

A's right-hander Ben Sheets is trying to get back to being one of the best pitchers in baseball. Cardinals righty Adam Wainwright is already there.

So the potential for a pitching duel is great when the two hook up on the mound Saturday in the second installment of the three-game Interleague series at Busch Stadium.

For Sheets, who is coming off a six-inning outing in a loss against the Giants, in which he threw 99 pitches and allowed eight hits, things have to get better if he's to return to the form that made him a perennial All-Star contender in Milwaukee before arm surgery slowed him down.

"It was tough getting in a groove today," Sheets said after facing the Giants. "Nothing was too sharp. They were getting a lot of first-pitch and second-pitch hits. They had good at-bats.

"It was a weird day. I didn't get the ball down. ... We're a team that's built on pitching and defense, so it's important for us not to make mistakes."

The A's are trying something different with Sheets, whose last victory came on May 8 against Tampa Bay, marking a seven-game winless streak -- his longest since he went nine consecutive starts without a "W" between July 17 and Aug. 28, 2004. He's taking the hill with two extra days' rest.

Meanwhile, Wainwright keeps chugging along and might be the Cy Young favorite in the NL if Colorado's Ubaldo Jimenez weren't off to such a good start. In his last outing, Wainwright rebounded from a subpar performance against the Dodgers and beat the Mariners at Busch, marking his Major League-record 21st consecutive quality start at home.

Wainwright shrugged off some early mistakes and ended up toughing out seven-plus innings, striking out six and giving up three runs. Overall, Wainwright has owned teams in his home park, going 6-0 with a 1.96 ERA in six starts at Busch, and he's averaging 7 2/3 innings per game in those starts.

"I think it's kind of expected of him now," teammate Ryan Ludwick said earlier in the year of Wainwright's new-found ace label.

"He's clarified himself as a definite No. 1. He was in the top three in Cy Young voting last year, along with [teammate Chris Carpenter]. Those guys are tremendous at what they do, and they're bulldogs. They get out there and they don't give in."

A's: Wuertz struggling

Reliever Michael Wuertz has allowed at least two runs in three of his past 10 outings (7 2/3 innings, 11 hits, eight earned runs) after allowing no runs over his first four games. Right-handers are hitting .250 (8-for-32) against him, and lefties are

batting .400 (6-for-15) off Wuertz. ... Outfielder Rajai Davis has hit safely in a season-high nine consecutive games and is 13-for-39 (.333) with four doubles, a triple and a home run during the streak.

Cardinals: If at first ...

The Cardinals are 25-5 (.833 winning percentage) when scoring first this season, the best record in the National League. They trail only the New York Yankees for the Major League lead in this category; the Yankees are 27-5 (.844) when scoring first. ... Outfielder Colby Rascal has six home runs in 13 games in June, tying his output from April for the most prolific home run month of his career.

Worth noting

A's infielder Adam Rosales owns the four fastest trips around of the bases after home runs in the Major Leagues this season, according to tatertrots.com, including the quickest run-around -- 15.47 seconds on June 12 against the Giants. ... Cardinals outfielder Nick Stavinocha leads the Majors with 10 pinch-hits this season (10-for-31, .323), including two home runs, a double and three RBIs. He worked a pinch-hit walk against the A's on Friday night.

Cardinals beat A's, 6-4, behind Holliday

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. LOUIS — Matt Holliday homered and drove in three runs in his first successful night in the No. 2 slot, helping the St. Louis Cardinals beat the Oakland Athletics, 6-4, on Friday.

Skip Schumaker drove in the go-ahead run in the seventh as St. Louis manager Tony La Russa improved to 6-1 against his old team. Schumaker had three hits and scored three times.

Albert Pujols, a major league-best .352 hitter in interleague play for his career, singled in a run and walked twice for St. Louis, which has won three of four overall.

Chris Carpenter (8-1) gave up four runs in the second, matching his season worst, but none in his other six innings.

Rajai Davis matched his career high with four hits and drove in a run for the Athletics, who have lost six of seven.

Conor Jackson had two hits and two RBIs.

Holliday hit a two-run homer to straightaway center against Vin Mazzaro in the first - ending a 43 at-bat RBI drought -- but the Athletics jumped on Carpenter in the second.

The big hit was a two-run double by Jackson, with Davis and Kurt Suzuki also driving in a run.

Holliday and Pujols hit RBI singles in consecutive at-bats in the fifth, tying it at 4. Holliday's bloop single barely cleared the infield, finding a hole between shortstop Cliff Pennington and a charging Jackson in left.

Holliday began the year as the cleanup hitter but was moved up to second on Monday, his third spot in the lineup this season.

He was 2 for 11 over his first three games and struck out on a ball in the dirt with the go-ahead run on third in the eighth inning on Wednesday.

Even after the big day, he is sixth on the team with 28 RBI.

Carpenter allowed a season-high 10 hits but Oakland had no runners in scoring position in its last five innings against the right-hander.

Schumaker hit an RBI double and Ryan Ludwick added a run-scoring single against Brad Ziegler (2-4) in the seventh.

Ryan Franklin finished for his 13th save in 14 chances.

The Cardinals and Athletics are meeting for the third time in interleague play, which has not diminished La Russa's enthusiasm for facing the team he managed from 1986-95. La Russa lives in northern California, about a half-hour drive from Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

"A lot of good memories," La Russa said. "I still live there, as opposed to living here."

Davis has four straight multihit games, going 11 for 19, and is batting .386 during a 10-game hitting streak (17 for 45).

NOTES

Cardinals SS Brendan Ryan, a big Lakers fan, hung an L.A. jersey with his No. 13 in his locker before the game. Batting ninth, Ryan doubled, walked and scored twice.

Cardinals Hall of Famer Lou Brock was honored on his 71st birthday.

Paul Hagen: Complacency has flourished throughout Philadelphia history

By Paul Hagen, Philadelphia Daily News

THE PHILLIES are supposed to be the class of the National League. At the moment, however, they're puttering along in third place. Somebody pulled the plug on the offense. Key pieces to the puzzle are missing. They've lost roughly twice as many games as they've won in the last month.

Seeking solace, some have gone to the archives and found similar stretches of futility in the last three seasons. Each time, the ship was righted and the club went on to make the playoffs, winning two pennants and a World Series in the process. Maybe something similar will happen again.

Or not. Because, truthfully, there are other chapters in the books that don't have happily-ever-after endings. As Casey Stengel used to say, you could look it up.

Coming off three straight division titles, the Phillies signed free agent Pete Rose before the 1979 season. His drive and winning personality were supposed to catapult the franchise to its first world championship ever.

They finished fourth.

Bob Warrington, of the Philadelphia A's Historical Society, also notes a remarkable parallel between this year's Phillies and the 1912 Athletics.

Like the Phillies, they were coming off back-to-back World Series appearances. Like the Phillies, they appeared poised for a three-peat.

Instead they ended up third, 15 games behind the Red Sox.

Phillies manager Charlie Manuel has been a bit cranky lately. A couple of weeks ago in Atlanta, he went off on a tangent about "cockiness, bigheadedness and complacency." Last Sunday in Boston he returned to a variation of the theme.

To Warrington, it's all reminiscent of what happened 98 years ago at Shibe Park.

"Most baseball observers thought the A's were odds-on favorites to win their third title in a row. [Manager] Connie Mack certainly believed his team would repeat as champions, and so did his A's players. Instead, the Athletics got their comeuppance. Playing lethargically with a 'we'll win when we have to' mentality, the A's got off to a slow start and never got on track. Mack would later call the 1912 Athletics his 'greatest team ever,' but also note sadly about it, 'If ever a club suffered from overconfidence, it was my 1912 team,' " he wrote.

Warrington quoted Mack saying in his autobiography that consecutive world championships "made my boys feel they couldn't lose . . . This gave our boys a feeling of cocksureness that invariably results in a tumble. Maybe I, too, was too complacent, and thought the boys would step up the pace."

Noted the researcher somberly: "The months passed and the surge toward victory never materialized."

Again, this season hasn't even reached the All-Star break. This is a Phillies team that has shown an ability to excavate itself in the past. The anticipated return of Jimmy Rollins, J.A. Happ and Ryan Madson from the disabled list should be a boost.

At the same time, some of Manuel's comments this summer have been eerie echoes of Mack's long-ago lamentations. "You can't turn it on and off," he said as recently as Wednesday night at Yankee Stadium. "Do I worry about that? I hope [the players don't think they can flip the switch whenever they want] because it don't happen that way. The game will take care of you. When you think you've got it figured out, it will shut you down."

No matter what happens the rest of this season, though, there is a glimmer of hope in this otherwise glum history lesson.

A year after their crushing disappointment, the 1980 Phillies won that elusive first championship. And, in 1913, the A's rebounded to win the World Series for the third time in 4 years.

Around the bases

* Send in the clowns: They should throw a circus tent over Fenway Park this weekend when the Dodgers, and Manny Ramirez, visit Boston. The slugger, of course, was an integral part of the Bosox' two world championships, but fans turned on him when he became such a distraction in 2008 that he forced the team to trade him at the deadline.

Boston mayor Tom Menino told the Los Angeles Times that he expects Manny-Being-Manny to receive a warm reception. "We have fair fans," he said.

* Park place: As interleague play continues, the Angels play at Wrigley Field for the first time ever this weekend. Well, sort of. In their first year of existence, 1961, they played their home games at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles, which previously had been home to the Triple A Pacific Coast League's Los Angeles Angels.

Fans of a certain age might also recall that it was where the old classic show "Home Run Derby" was filmed.

* Cup crazy: Cubs righthander Ryan Dempster would love to win a World Series, of course. But the native of Gibsons, British Columbia, was pretty excited when he had a chance to hoist the Stanley Cup this week when the local National League baseball team honored the NHL champion Blackhawks.

"For a kid who grew up in Canada, that's all I ever thought about," Dempster said.

* Pass the salt, please: Colorado's Ubaldo Jimenez improved to 13-1 yesterday. He has been the most dominant starting pitcher in baseball. But did you know that his WHIP (walks and hits per nine innings) of 1.00 is actually higher than Cliff Lee's 0.93?

* Stats of the week: The Padres are tied for first in the NL West despite not having an outfielder with more than 100 at bats hitting over .227.

Pittsburgh's Zach Duke beat Roy Halladay at Citizens Bank Park on May 18. In the next 26 games, going into last night, only one Pirates starting pitcher (Paul Maholm on June 5) has earned a win. Of course, the Bucs were 6-20 overall in that span.

* Mr. Fix-It: Kansas City's Zack Greinke, the defending AL Cy Young Award winner was 1-8, 4.05 before a dominant 12-strikeout performance Sunday against the Reds. And, yes, he thinks he knows what he had been doing wrong. He wasn't raising his glove to a consistent spot during his delivery, which changed his arm angle, which made his slider go flat. At least, he thinks that's what it was.

Phair and phoul

* Waiting area: There has been some speculation that former Phillies manager/ coach/shortstop Larry Bowa could be on the Orioles' list of possible replacements for Dave Trembley.

That makes some sense. There were those who thought Trembley was a little too laid-back. Let's just say that nobody ever accused Bowa of that. And the pattern is often for a fiery manager to follow a more mellow one.

Bowa is currently the third-base coach for the Dodgers and the Los Angeles Times reported that the team might not grant permission for him to be interviewed during the season. Which wouldn't necessarily kill his chances. While O's president Andy MacPhail has already interviewed Bobby Valentine and Eric Wedge and plans to talk to Buck Showalter next week, he hasn't ruled out making a final decision until after the season.

It's also not out of the question that another former Phillie, current interim manager Juan Samuel, could be retained.

* Trivia time: Shane Victorino leads the Phillies in triples with seven. No surprise there. The Flyin' Hawaiian led the league with 13 three-baggers in 2009. But do you know who's second on the team?

* 20-20 hindsight: While many fans still seem to be fixated on the trade that sent Cliff Lee to the Mariners, another Phillies pitching decision during the offseason has been largely overlooked.

Brett Myers, told the day after the World Series that the Phils would make no effort to re-sign him, is 4-5 for an awful Astros team after a loss last night against Kansas City with a 3.34 ERA.

Granted, there were reasons beyond his ability for letting Myers go. A certain fatigue seemed to have set in on both sides of the relationship. But that sort of production would look pretty nice right now in the middle of the Phillies' rotation.

* Believe it or not: The Phillies went into last night's game at Yankee Stadium with just two .300 hitters: Placido Polanco (.311) and Joe Blanton (.308).

* Catching up with: Michael Taylor: Many Phillies fans were unhappy to see the slugging outfielder, who batted .320 with 24 homers and 84 RBI between Double A Reading and Triple A Lehigh Valley, included in the Roy Halladay trade.

Toronto immediately flipped him to Oakland, where he has struggled all season. Through Wednesday, he was hitting .225 with three homers and 29 RBI playing for the A's Triple A affiliate.

* Trivia answer: Raul Ibanez (3) is the only other Phillie with more than one triple this season.

Barton has worked out well for A's

Cardinals sent him to Oakland in trade that got them Mark Mulder

BY DAVID WILHELM, Belleville News-Democrat , IL.

Oakland A's first baseman Daric Barton is a reminder of the Dec. 18, 2004, trade that did not turn out well for the St. Louis Cardinals.

Five-plus years after Barton, then a catcher and the Cardinals' No. 1 prospect, was sent to the A's with pitchers Dan Haren and Kiko Calero for pitcher Mark Mulder, Barton surfaced Friday at St. Louis for the first time in his career.

"It was probably the quickest" way to get to St. Louis, Barton said, noting that the Cardinals had Albert Pujols at first base and Yadier Molina ready to replace Mike Matheny at catcher when the trade was made. "With St. Louis, obviously, I wasn't going to go anywhere. For me, it was probably the best move that could have happened to me.

"I was catching then and Yadi's back there now. And there's some guy by the name of Pujols at first. I obviously could never fill his shoes."

Haren and Calero have moved on from Oakland, while Mulder formally announced his retirement recently and is pursuing a golf career.

Mulder, an All-Star left-hander who was expected to fill a void in the Cardinals rotation for years to come, battled injuries during his four-year stay in St. Louis and was 22-18 with a 5.04 ERA in 52 starts and 311 innings.

The 24-year-old Barton, who was 0-for-4 on Friday and is batting .278 with 17 doubles, four home runs, 24 RBIs and a .385 on-base percentage, is a young player on the rise.

"It's a good situation for me to be over here," Barton said, crediting Oakland General Manager Billy Beane. "Billy had a lot of respect for what I did and liked the way I played the game. Looking back, it's nice knowing that Billy wanted me, too, and I wasn't just a guy that was thrown in there.

"Hopefully, I can stay here and help the team for years to come."

Barton was just 18 at the time of the trade, but he said he felt pressure to succeed after the A's made him the key component of the deal. If the Cardinals didn't include Barton, Oakland wasn't going to trade Mulder.

"I was the new guy and there were a lot of expectations that people had," Barton recalled. "Hopefully, I've lived up to those expectations. It took me awhile to establish myself as a big-league player, but hopefully, I'm doing that now ... and can continue to do what I've been doing this year."

Because he never wore the St. Louis uniform at the big-league level and since he's been with the A's organization long than he was with the Cardinals, Barton said being at Busch Stadium wasn't anything out of the ordinary.

"Baseball-wise, it's just another series that we play in interleague," Barton said. "Fans-wise, I think St. Louis probably has the best fans in baseball. It's going to be exciting going out there playing in front of this crowd. I know how they love their baseball, regardless of who's in town."

Barton has a handful of former teammates who have moved up to the Cardinals, guys like Brendan Ryan, Jason Motte, Blake Hawksworth and Kyle McCellan.

"Motte was a catcher back in the day," Barton said. "He was always ahead of me. It's going to be a little different seeing him on the mound, but it will be fun."

"I saw the reason he was catching, because he threw like a .716 (seconds) to second base. That's resulting in a 98-mph heater. Fortunately for him, it worked out on the mound. I'm sure he's happy with what he's doing now."

Barton couldn't be happier, either.

"I feel this is where I need to be statistics-wise," Barton said. "I feel like I'm doing what I can to help the ballteam win. Getting on base is my biggest thing, whether it be walks or hits."

"I'm not really a power hitter. That shows in my numbers. But if I can just do my job and get on base and help the big guys hit me in, that's all I'm really worried about. And playing good defense is just as important as getting on base."

That's not always what Barton believed. As a younger player struggling to reach the big league, he knew his bat was the ticket.

"They always say your bat gets you to the big leagues better than your defense," Barton said. "If I was to get to the big leagues (with the Cardinals), I don't know where I would have been. I obviously wouldn't be at first. I probably wouldn't be behind the plate, either. I had to either change positions or change teams."

Local pioneer nominated for big-time award

By Jeff Weisinger, Tri City Voice, 6/18/2010

Despite being born in a place where baseball is king, Amaury Pi-Gonzalez is more than just a baseball announcer.

The humble Fremont resident is the Spanish radio announcer for the Oakland Athletics, and, most recently had the honor of calling Dallas Braden's perfect game back on Mother's Day, where the A's beat Tampa Bay 4-0.

"It was a unique and almost out-of-body experience," Pi-Gonzalez said. "There's nothing close to a perfect game in baseball."

Yet, calling Braden's perfect game may not come as close to what could to happen to him on September 25 when he may be inducted into the Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame.

Pi-Gonzalez is nominated for the induction along with legendary long-time Giants announcer, and Bay Area native, Jon Miller, who also calls games on ESPN's Sunday Night Baseball, A's English announcer Ken Korach, Gary Radnich, Steve Bitker, Ken Dito and Hal Ramney.

"It's rewarding to see that my work has paid off," Pi-Gonzalez added. "Just to be mentioned with these people means a lot."

Pi-Gonzalez has been in the business for over 30 years, and has called games for the A's, San Francisco Giants, Los Angeles Angels, Florida Marlins and the Golden State Warriors. He has also called other big games like the 1988 World Series when the A's lost to the Dodgers, and the classic 2002 World Series when the Giants lost to the Anaheim Angels.

"I think I've done my job as best as I can," he said. "If you hang around long enough, this'll happen."

He got his start in sports journalism as a writer for a weekly paper called "La Voz" in Newark, N.J., in 1968, where he wrote obituaries, columns and social interviews. He got his start in sports shortly after, where he covered the Yankees and the New York Mets. He interviewed such players as Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle while in the East Coast.

After moving to the Bay Area in 1969, he found a job writing for another weekly paper called El Mundo, where he covered the Oakland A's.

Pi-Gonzalez got his start in radio with KBRG FM 104.5 shortly after that, and has done radio ever since. He is one of just

three Spanish announcers in the majors; Marlins Spanish announcer Jaime Jarrin and Rafael Ramirez of the Dodgers being the other two.

Pi-Gonzalez is also the first Spanish announcer to be nominated for the BARHOF, and was also nominated for a spot in Cooperstown in each of the last three years.

"Makes me very proud to be nominated," Pi-Gonzalez mentioned.

The baseball fan from Cuba who originally wanted to be an architect, built his dream, and soon, we may all see his name not just in the BARHOF, but also in Cooperstown.

To vote for Amaury Pi-Gonzalez, visit <http://www.bayarearadio.org/hof/>. Voting ends on July 18.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Crisp goes 5-for-5 as Sacramento rolls

By Robbie Enos / Sacramento River Cats

For the Bees, a lack of honey was probably the least of their problems.

The Salt Lake Bees, that is, who lost by 10 runs to the tune of 16-6 Friday night against the Sacramento River Cats. The Cats bats went on a pure slugging rampage, smacking a season-high 19 hits in one of their best offensive performances of the season in front of 11,283 fans at Raley Field.

In a flock of outstanding offensive feats, the one that stood out was center fielder Coco Crisp's 5-for-5 game. Crisp scored three runs and drove in five more to help the Cats start off their series against Salt Lake with a victory.

"It feels good," said Crisp, the Oakland A's center fielder who is rehabbing from a pulled muscle in his ribcage. "Things that have been bothering me haven't been bothering me, so hopefully it stays that way. Hopefully I can stay healthy and come back out to help the team win. I'm having a lot of fun down here with the guys. There were a lot of guys in spring training that I got to meet for the first time, and it's a really good group of guys down here. It's really easy to come down here and play."

Crisp's approach at the plate was just as usual, which wasn't a bad idea considering his nine-year major league experience.

"My approach was the same as always," he said. "Just stay inside the ball, see it, and hit it. I just try to hit the ball where it's pitched. That's it. See it and hit it. I just wanted to stay up the middle and to the opposite field, and just let it work tonight."

Another big contributor was center fielder Matt Carson, who went 2-for-5 with two runs scored and a big solo shot in the fifth inning.

"Their starter had some good stuff," Carson said after the game. "But we were really seeing the ball well. It was a good night to hit. The wind was blowing out, but it was blowing out for both teams so we just really came through."

Second baseman Eric Sogard extended his hitting streak to 12 with a 3-for-5, three-RBI performance. He also hit his second triple of the season in a big five-run fourth inning for Sacramento.

"Great team performance tonight," he said. "I mean we did it all around. Graham (starting pitcher Graham Godfrey) did great. The bats were on fire tonight, and so it was just a great game tonight."

Hitting coach Brian McArn was obviously pleased with his team's performance.

"It was really good to see," he said. "Lots of good at-bats. We were very selective. It was nice to see the team put up some runs." The Cats jumped out early against Bees starter Tim Kiely, courtesy of second baseman Sogard, who came into the game with 38 runs scored. Sogard boarded on a fielder's choice, and then advanced to second off of a swinging bunt by Chris Carter. Josh Donaldson drove Sogard home with a single to right-center.

Sacramento added another run in the third, starting with Sogard's double play partner Steve Tolleson. Tolleson pounded a one-out double to get in scoring position for Crisp.

The outfielder capitalized immediately by stroking a double to left center, a floating line drive that sliced away from Bees center fielder Peter Bourjos. Tolleson scored to give the Cats a two-run lead.

After warming up in the first and third, the Sacramento offense got into full swing in the fourth. Carson smoked a line drive into right field, followed by a Matt Watson drive into center. Adam Heether brought Carson home with the third consecutive single.

Outfielder Michael Taylor put even more pressure on Kiely, poking a Texas leaguer into right to load the bases. Kiely managed to strike out Tolleson in a 3-2 battle, but the celebration wouldn't last long when Crisp collected his third base knock of the night and two RBIs to top it off.

Sacramento finished off their performance with a Sogard triple, giving the Cats a 7-0 lead. Sogard's drive flew into the right-center gap, and fell barely out of reach of a diving Bourjos.

"I was just trying to get a ball to drive," Sogard said of his big hit. "Runners were in scoring position and we had a little two-out rally going there so I was just trying to keep it going."

Godfrey was perfect through four innings, striking out two batters. During the run he was well balanced in collecting his outs, getting six through the air and four on the ground.

But his streak ended in the fifth when 4-5 spot hitters Cory Alridge and Mark Trumbo hit back-to-back doubles, putting the Bees on the board. Godfrey's defense came through for him to end the inning, when a great throw to home from Taylor in right halted Trumbo's attempt to score on a sacrifice fly.

However, Taylor's and Godfrey's efforts could not keep Trumbo from scoring, as a Gary Patchett single up the middle gave Salt Lake its second run of the night. A great play by Sogard at second, who ran in on a dibbler from Carlos Colmenares and flipped to Carter at first just in time, ended the inning for Salt Lake.

Carson hit his solo shot in the sixth, a mammoth blast that landed in the back seats of the Jackson Rancheria Home Run Terrace. The home run came on the very first pitch of the at-bat.

"Those first at-bats I was taking the first pitch," Carson said. "But I came up there thinking, 'Okay, if he throws me a fastball or something I can hit, I'm gonna put a good swing on it'. And that's what he did, so that's what I did."

Kiely only hurt himself after that, allowing Heether to reach second on a wild pickoff attempt at first with two outs, and then a wild pitch to advance him to third. Taylor walked to get Kiely out of the game and bring in Eddie McKiernan.

Things got worse for McKiernan, as Taylor stole second, and then Tolleson drew a walk. The Coco Crisp show continued, as the outfielder smacked a hard ground ball up the middle to bring in Heether and Taylor.

Still only two outs in the inning, Eric Sogard singled to center to load the bases once more. Carter came up next and freed the beast inside, swatting a drive off the left-field fence. The first baseman reached second and cleared the bases for a three-RBI double. McKiernan struck out Donaldson to finally end the six-run inning.

"I was basically just looking for a good pitch to hit," Carter said of his double. "I just didn't want to try and hit a home run, just stay short and not try to do too much there."

The Bees tried to snatch some of their dignity back in the seventh. Alridge hit his second double of the game, and then scored off of a Paul McNulty single, a one-hopper off the backhand of Sogard at second.

Godfrey finished the night after 7.0 innings, allowing three earned runs. Godfrey is tied for third in the PCL for most walks allowed (35), but in this outing he completely revamped his control, walking zero batters.

Although Salt Lake's resilience was impressive, the Cats were merciless to finish the game. Reliever Marco Albano gave up back-to-back singles to Tolleson and Crisp, and then surrendered an RBI single to Sogard. Carter walked to load the bases, and Donaldson smacked a deep fly to center to score Crisp on the sacrifice.

Bourjos, exhausted from chasing down so many balls in the gap, took out his frustration on reliever Dan Giese by driving one of the right-hander's pitches over the left-field fence. The solo shot was Salt Lake's fourth run of the night.

Sacramento put the cherry on top in the bottom of the eighth. Anthony Recker and Adam Heether drew back-to-back walks, leading to a bases-loading single through the right side by Taylor. Corey Wimberly hit an infield single to bring in Recker.

Aldridge scored his third run of the night in the ninth, and Trumbo scored his second to give Salt Lake six runs.

McArn said the team can carry their momentum into the upcoming games, which include three more games against Salt Lake at home.

"We just need to stay with it," he said. "Stay in routine. Hopefully we build some confidence in some guys. Stay sharp and try to have the same good at-bats."

Added Taylor: "We're just gonna keep doing what we've been doing. Hopefully we continue to get great pitching performances, and throwing strikes right out of the bullpen. Obviously if we score 16 runs in one night I think we're going to do pretty well but the last couple of weeks we've been doing really well with driving runs in big situations. Guys have been doing a great job of leading off innings and answering when other teams score."

Missions beat Midland on Used Car Night

By GORDIE TAYLOR, samissions.com

SAN ANTONIO - The Wolff was electric Friday night as 6,247 fans were treated to great baseball and a great giveaway on Used Car Night presented by Security Service Federal Credit Union. The Missions gave away 11 used cars to lucky fans and picked up a 2-1 victory over Midland to cap a great night.

Cory Luebke (3-0, 0.86) continued his domination on the mound for the Missions (34-32), allowing just one run on eight hits and striking out four in his third win of the season. Luebke threw seven innings for San Antonio while All-Stars Evan Scribner and Craig Italiano (S, 13) closed out the game without allowing a baserunner.

Designated hitter Andrew Parrino was the only Mission with multiple hits (2-for-3, 2B, RBI), but San Antonio had four doubles against the Midland (32-34) pitching staff.

Travis Banwart (5-5, 2.92) picked up the loss for Midland, allowing two runs (one earned) on six hits over six innings of work.

The Missions will be back in action Saturday night with RHP Jeremy Hefner (5-3, 2.55) looking to win his fourth straight decision. Midland will counter with LHP Ryan Edell (2-1, 1.42) as the Missions continue their quest for a first-half division title. The magic number for elimination remains at two after Frisco (36-29) lost 14-0 at Corpus Christi (34-32).

The first pitch for Saturday's game is scheduled for 7:05 p.m. and fans will be treated to a Fireworks Celebration after the game, courtesy of St. Phillips College.

Visalia Defeats Stockton, 8-2

STOCKTON, Calif. - The Visalia Rawhide (36-33) continued to stay hot against the Stockton Ports (31-38), as they totaled 12 hits en route to an 8-2 win at Banner Island Ballpark on Friday night. The Ports have now lost 14 of their 18 games against Visalia.

The Ports collected eight hits, with four of them being provided by designated hitter Grant Green. Green and first baseman Mike Spina collected an RBI apiece for Stockton. Stockton stranded 12 runners in the contest. Ben Hornbeck collected the loss, allowing four runs on seven hits in 6.1 innings, while Taylor Sinclair collected the win, his fifth, tossing 6.0 scoreless innings.

Visalia took the lead in the second inning, plating two runs. First baseman Paul Goldschmidt led off the inning with a single up the middle. Catcher Josh Ford singled to right field to put runners on the corners with one out. Right fielder Kyle Greene

then singled to left field to score Goldschmidt. Ford crossed the plate on a wild pitch later in the inning to make it 2-0. The Rawhide pulled ahead 3-0 in the top of the third on a sacrifice fly by left fielder Marc Krauss.

Hornbeck kept Visalia scoreless from the fourth through sixth innings. Ports right fielder Jeremy Barfield had an amazing catch at the wall to put out Goldschmidt in the sixth frame.

In the seventh inning, Hornbeck struck out Greene before giving up a single to Brent Greer. The Ports then called on right-hander Scott Deal to pitch. He retired a batter before hitting Dan Kaczrowski. Both runners advanced on a wild pitch and then came around to score on a single to center field by Alfredo Marte to make it 5-0 in favor of Visalia.

The Ports scored their first run in the bottom of the seventh. Left fielder Shane Keough walked to start the inning, and advanced to second on a single by second baseman Michael Richard. Both runners advanced on a passed ball while Green was at-bat. Green then grounded out to shortstop Kaczrowski, and Keough scored on the play.

Both teams were held scoreless in the eighth. In the ninth, Visalia added another three runs to make it 8-1. Deal gave up back-to-back singles before striking out third baseman Ryan Wheeler. He then hit Goldschmidt to load the bases. Krauss then knocked a two-RBI single to right field, and advanced to second on an error by Barfield. The Ports then called on southpaw Lance Sewell to pitch. With Ford at the plate, Sewell threw a wild pitch, which allowed Goldschmidt to score. Sewell then retired Ford and Greene to end the ninth.

The Ports worked to rally in the ninth inning. With one out, Jermaine Mitchell walked. Green then doubled to the left field wall to put two on in scoring position. Visalia pitcher Victor Capellan then walked Stephen Parker to load the bases. Spina hit an RBI single to score Mitchell. Barfield hit into a game-ending, 6-4-3 double play.

The Ports will take on Visalia for the last game of the first half at 7:05 PM on Saturday at Banner Island Ballpark. RHP Kenny Smalley (2-4, 5.64) will start for Stockton while RHP Brett Moorhouse (1-2, 4.97) is slated to start for Visalia.