

Coco Crisp provides sole highlight as faltering A's lose to Cincinnati Reds

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

A's manager Bob Geren provided a surprise with his lineup Tuesday night, even as the scoreboard told the same tired story for his team.

Center fielder Coco Crisp was activated from the disabled list and connected for a two-run home run that provided the A's only offense in a 4-2 loss to the Cincinnati Reds.

That was the extent of the highlights, as Dallas Braden (4-7) lost his fifth straight decision and Oakland dropped even further back in the American League West standings.

The A's trailed 4-2 in the bottom of the ninth but put runners on the corners with one out against Reds closer Francisco Cordero. But Ryan Sweeney grounded into a 6-4-3 double play to end it.

There's little optimism surrounding the A's these days, but Crisp's presence atop the batting order was a lift considering he'd missed all but two games this season.

Crisp was six games into a rehab stint with Triple-A Sacramento that was supposed to last 10 days. Even as Crisp was tearing up Pacific Coast League pitching, Geren maintained the A's would stick to their schedule for him, just to make sure the oft-injured outfielder was recovered from a strained rib-cage muscle.

That plan went out the window.

"I was hoping to be up here earlier because I felt good," Crisp said before the game. "We'll see how this stint holds up. Hopefully I can finish the season without any more major injuries. We'll see how it goes."

To clear a roster spot, the A's designated outfielder Eric Patterson for assignment, meaning they have 10 days to trade him, release him or send him to the minors if he clears waivers.

Crisp missed the first 42 games with a fractured left pinkie finger. He came back and played well in two victories over the Giants on May 21-22 but then was sidelined 28 more games after hurting his rib cage.

Geren said Crisp proved he was ready by playing nine-inning stints with Sacramento, and Geren chuckled when asked if Crisp made a plea to be activated early.

"He let us know about five or six days ago that he was ready," Geren said.

But Crisp couldn't prevent the A's from losing for the ninth time in 11 games and falling to a season-high five games under .500. They trail first-place Texas by 9 1/2 games.

Braden, 0-5 with a 4.31 ERA since throwing a perfect game May 9 against Tampa Bay, allowed 10 hits and four runs (three earned) over six innings. For the 11th time in 15 starts, he received two runs or fewer of support.

His eight-start winless streak ties Mark Buehrle (in 2009) for the longest such streak in major league history after a perfect game.

Of his recent outings, Braden said: "As long as we're within striking distance, I consider that, not a job well done, but (decent)."

He added that he was able to throw his slider more after a sore left elbow limited him in his previous start.

Oakland trailed 3-0 in the third before Crisp belted a two-run homer to right off Bronson Arroyo (7-3).

Crisp started in center field and was flanked by Conor Jackson in left and Sweeney in right, which left Rajai Davis on the bench. Geren said he would try to rotate his outfielders as best he can.

"There will always be a couple of guys who are probably unhappy when they see the lineup," Geren said. "But we'll have to handle that on an individual basis."

TODAY: Reds (Johnny Cueto 6-2) at A's (Vin Mazzaro 2-1),
12:35 p.m.
TV: MLBN. Radio: 860-AM, 1640-AM

Oakland A's update: Team sends utility man Jake Fox to Baltimore Orioles for minor league reliever

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Fox is dealt to Orioles for minor league reliever

The A's traded utility man Jake Fox to the Baltimore Orioles on Tuesday for minor league reliever Ross Wolf and cash considerations.

Fox had been in limbo since being designated for assignment June 13. The A's had until Thursday to trade him, release him or send him to the minors.

Fox needed to clear waivers before going to the minors. All indications were that the Orioles would claim him, so Oakland worked out a deal to get Wolf, a right-hander who will report to Triple-A Sacramento.

The A's acquired Fox along with infielder Aaron Miles from the Chicago Cubs in December, hoping Fox could provide a power bat. But he never got regular playing time and didn't produce much when he did, hitting .214 with two homers and 12 RBIs in 98 at-bats.

Miles was traded to Cincinnati before the season started.

"Obviously we hoped he'd provide a little pop, but he never got untracked in spring training," A's general manager Billy Beane said of Fox. "It would have been nice to get him some at-bats in Triple-A, but it wasn't going to happen."

Wolf, 27, was 0-2 with a 2.11 ERA for Triple-A Norfolk.

Outfielder Travis Buck, on the disabled list since April 22, was scheduled to be examined by team doctors at the Oakland Coliseum on Tuesday. Buck is recovered from the oblique injury that originally sidelined him. Now he's experiencing what he calls "deadness and achiness" in his legs.

Buck began playing simulated games in Phoenix about 10 days ago, but the activity left his legs so sore that he said he could barely walk afterward.

"Now I just feel like I have dead legs, like they feel 100 pounds," he said. "I expected to be sore after (playing). But I've got no pep in my step. That's what got me a little worried."

Buck underwent blood and urine tests last week to try to determine if he has any dietary deficiencies, but he hasn't received results yet.

Shortstop Grant Green, who entered Tuesday batting .320 for Single-A Stockton, was picked to play in the Futures Game, set for July 11 at Angel Stadium. "... Right-hander Michael Ynoa made his professional debut Monday in the Arizona Rookie League, throwing three scoreless innings with four strikeouts. The Dominican signed with the A's for \$4.25 million in July 2008 but didn't pitch last season because of injuries.

Chin Music: Coco Crisp comes off DL to start in CF; Eric Patterson designated for assignment

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/22/2010 6:30PM

So much for Coco Crisp spending a full 10-day period in the minor leagues. The switch-hitter was activated from the disabled list and is leading off and playing center field tonight against the Reds. Outfielder Eric Patterson was designated for assignment to make room for Crisp on the 25-man roster. Patterson was out of options, so he couldn't simply be sent to Triple-A. I can't say I'm surprised that he was the outfielder to go. If he clears waivers, the A's could send him to the minors. He's in the same boat that Jake Fox was in. And speaking of Fox you probably know he was traded to Baltimore

today for minor league reliever Ross Wolf. You'll read more about that in tomorrow's A's notebook at www.contracostatimes.com and www.insidebayarea.com.

How much impact will Crisp make? How long will he stay healthy? The answer to that second question will help answer the first one. But the A's need some sort of spark. They were in a very similar scenario when Crisp came off the DL on May 21, and they looked terrific with him in the lineup. But that only lasted two days, as he suffered a strained rib-cage muscle. He's missed 28 games since then, but hit .591 (13-for-22) in six games for Triple-A Sacramento, a sign that he was definitely ready to return from the DL. "I was hoping to be up here earlier because I felt good," Crisp said. "... We'll see how this stint holds up. Hopefully I can finish the season without any more major injuries. We'll see how that goes."

How will manager Bob Geren handle his outfield rotation? Tonight the A's start Conor Jackson-Crisp-Ryan Sweeney from left to right, with Rajai Davis sitting out. Gabe Gross gets the start at DH over Jack Cust, since Gross is batting .346 (9-for-26) lifetime against Reds starter Bronson Arroyo. Geren was asked how he'll dole out outfield playing time. "I'm just going to try to put the best lineup out that I can each day," Geren said. "Try to rest certain guys so they don't get over-used, and play other guys so they don't get stale."

I see Sweeney taking more days off than usual just to rest his sore knees. Davis could play right field in those situations, putting Jackson, Crisp and Davis in the outfield together. Perhaps they could even DH Sweeney every now and then if they want. And if Cust doesn't start hitting for power, perhaps Jackson could see time at DH and Davis could slide to left field.

Again, this is assuming that Crisp can stay healthy. A's fans have to be crossing their fingers on that one ...

The lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Suzuki C, Sweeney RF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Gross DH, Ellis 2B, Pennington SS; Braden LHP.'

Reds — Cabrera SS, Phillips 2B, Votto 1B, Rolen 3B, Gomes DH, Bruce RF, Stubbs CF, Heisey LF, Miller C; Arroyo RHP.

A's free fall continues

Ray Ratto, Chronicle Staff Writer

On a day when the Warriors parted with Corey Maggette, the Sharks with Evgeni Nabokov and the World Cup with France, the A's struggles this month remain quiet, almost imperceptible. Why, it seems like the good old days were years ago.

On the 23rd of June, the A's are as flat as they've been all year, with Tuesday's 4-2 loss to Cincinnati the latest symptom of the same old illness - Dead Bat Disease.

Other than Coco Crisp, playing in his third game of the season, the A's were offensively torpid against Bronson Arroyo, making Cincinnati's collection of bloopers, well-eyed grounders and sharp line drives into a wall of offense the A's would need a good 27 innings to work around.

The good old days, you say? Yeah. May. Those good old days.

The A's led the AL West then, and times were good. But that was six wins and 15 defeats ago, and they have lost 10 1/2 games to the divisional field since then. Not by humiliating margins, but by slow, boa-constrictor-like squeezing. Pretty much Tuesday in a nutshell, really.

"Arroyo was a little tricky on us today," manager Bob Geren said, trying as always to find the upside on a down evening. "Lots of different angles, lots of different speeds. He really kept us off-balance."

Except, of course, that Arroyo explains only the latest defeat, not those before it in the A's current free fall. Crisp's return, highlighted by his first home run of the season, only reminded observers that the rest of the boys are pretty much in safe mode right now.

Dallas Braden was the familiar Oakland pitching victim, even though he got twice as many runs Tuesday as he had been averaging in his previous seven starts since the Mother's Day Special. He tried to metaphor his way through the postgame interviews, but the game itself - 10 hits of varying intensity and effect over six innings - were mostly death by paper cut.

A two-run single by Corky Miller in the second, an RBI double to right-center by Joey Votto in the third, a throwing error by shortstop Chad Pennington in the fifth that scored the Reds' fourth run - it all added up to one more lousy night for Braden, who still has the second-lowest run support in the majors this year.

"Too many speed bumps," Braden said. "The car ran pretty good. Turn 1 was good, Turns 2 and 3 had some speed bumps, Turn 4 was good, Turn 5, some speed bumps, Turn 6, kind of flattened out."

Good luck sorting out that analysis.

But that's the nature of the A's in June. Only Baltimore and Pittsburgh have fewer wins this month, and it is to the A's benefit that they see both the O's and Pirates, plus the nearly as dismal Indians, in the nine games after today's series finale. There is, then, light at the end of the tunnel. A Christmas-tree light, perhaps, but a light nonetheless.

And if that isn't enough to warm their souls, at least they're not playing for the French World Cup team. Nobody on the planet wants to be those guys right now.

Crisp returns - ponders Series share

Ray Ratto, Chronicle Staff Writer

Center fielder **Coco Crisp**'s second return from the disabled list caused him to wonder about that most coveted of baseball honors - the World Series share.

"I don't know if seven days will get me a ring, but hopefully if they win it all, I'll get half a ring," Crisp joked before Tuesday's game, in which his homer stood out amidst all the groundball outs. "I just roll with the punches. I don't dwell on it too much. There's nothing I can do about it. I enjoy cheerleading."

Crisp, who had a ribcage injury, went 13-for-22 with five RBIs, two doubles, a triple and seven runs in six games in a rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento.

Fox, Patterson gone: After trading **Jake Fox** to Baltimore for minor-league right-hander **Ross Wolf** and cash, the A's designated outfielder **Eric Patterson** for assignment to make room for Crisp. Between them, Fox and Patterson had produced six homers, 21 RBIs, 12 walks and 57 strikeouts in 49 starts.

Briefly: The A's have rescheduled their Saturday, Aug. 7, fireworks show to Aug. 6 because Fox Network took the Saturday game and will air it at 1 p.m., a difficult time to watch things explode. For you amateur pyromaniacs, tickets for the Aug. 7 game will be honored for any comparable game, including the Aug. 6 game. ... Today is the 19th day since **Brett Anderson** went on the disabled list with elbow inflammation, the longest stretch the A's have gone this season without putting a player in civilian clothes.

A's leading off

Steve Kroner, San Francisco Chronicle

Three deep, late: On Monday night, the Reds became the first team ever to hit three homers in an extra inning (10th) against Oakland. The Kansas City A's gave up four homers to Minnesota in the 11th inning May 2, 1964.

Crisp's blast in return not enough as A's fall

Braden surrenders four runs, three earned, in six innings

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Not even a bearded Dallas Braden could break his perfect game hex.

Baseball is a superstitious sport by nature and the eccentric southpaw appears to be no different. In an effort to squelch his winless streak since tossing baseball's 19th perfect game on May 9, Braden has been growing a beard to chase away the demons.

It failed to work Tuesday, as Braden struggled through six innings in a 4-2 loss to the Reds.

"It's been going since May 9," Braden said. "Might have a shaved head tomorrow."

Braden allowed at least one hit in each frame and 10 overall, en route to giving up four runs (three earned) and one walk while striking out four. Braden, who had been battling elbow tightness in his previous two starts, said the injury didn't affect his outing on Tuesday.

Braden said he threw too many pitches up in the zone. He is now 0-5 with a 4.31 ERA in eight starts since achieving perfection.

"The car ran real good," Braden said. "Turn 1 was good. Turn 2 and 3 had some speed bumps. Got into turn 4, 5 -- couple speed bumps. Turn 6 it kind of flattened out, but overall -- bumpy track."

The Reds opened the game's scoring when Corky Miller hit a two-run single to left field, one that Conor Jackson dived for, but couldn't catch. Miller's hit plated Jonny Gomes and Jay Bruce, who reached on consecutive singles to start the frame.

Cincinnati extended the lead to 3-0 when Joey Votto hit a double to right-center that rolled to the wall, scoring Brandon Phillips. It was enough for the Reds, who received a stellar outing from starter Bronson Arroyo.

"[Braden] threw strikes," said Oakland manager Bob Geren. "He got some end-of-the-bat contact -- a lot of them fell in for hits. It seemed like it was difficult to get a clean inning from him with some pretty good hitters. ... He battled and felt pretty good tonight which is a positive."

Outfielder Coco Crisp, who was reinstated from the 15-day disabled list earlier in the day, was the only A's hitter to solve Arroyo all night. Crisp delivered a two-run homer in the bottom of the third to cut Oakland's deficit to 3-2, but the A's couldn't muster up any more offense for the rest of the night.

Crisp missed the season's initial 42 contests with a broken left pinkie finger and only played in two games before going back on the DL with a rib muscle strain. After batting .591 (13-for-22) in six games with Triple-A Sacramento, Crisp joined the team a few days earlier than expected.

"I felt good," Crisp said. "It's not the results, obviously, we wanted as a team, but, personally, I felt good out there. I was a little nervous, as expected, but kept my approach."

Arroyo was able to dominate the Oakland lineup by giving it different looks throughout the night. The right-hander scattered five hits and didn't walk a batter over eight solid innings, while striking out one.

"He was a little tricky," Geren said. "He threw from a lot of different angles and a lot of different speeds. He made it tough, he did. He changed speeds -- I mean, the first pitch of the game was 74 [mph] followed up by an 89 the very next pitch. He had us pretty off-balance."

Arroyo retired 13 of the initial 15 batters he faced and recorded four 1-2-3 innings on the night. Aside from Crisp's home run, he never allowed more than two runners to be on the basepaths at the same time.

"My pitch count wasn't up a whole lot and it was really cool," Arroyo said. "That allows you to save you energy and makes you feel like you can stay in the game a little bit longer. Obviously, double plays give you a boost to go another inning."

The A's nearly mounted a comeback in the ninth against Cincinnati closer Francisco Cordero, putting runners on first and third with one out, but Cordero induced a 6-4-3 double play from Ryan Sweeney to end the game.

As for Oakland's relief corps, it delivered three scoreless innings after Braden. Brad Ziegler allowed a harmless single in the seventh, while Tyson Ross finished the eighth and ninth innings.

After struggling for nearly a month, the rookie right-hander appears to be on the upswing. Ross has now strung together a modest five-inning scoreless streak over his past three outings.

A's shortstop Cliff Pennington kept his recent hot streak going, as he went 2-for-3 with a run scored. He is now batting .500 (14-for-28) over his past nine contests.

Coupled with the Rangers' 6-3 win on Tuesday, the A's fell 9 1/2 games out of first place in the American League West.

"We got a long way to go," Crisp said. "I don't think anybody is panicking quite yet, but we do need to start winning some games."

Crisp homers in first game back from DL

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's outfielder Coco Crisp hit a two-run homer -- his first of the year -- in the third inning of his first game back from the 15-day disabled list.

After tearing it up at Triple-A Sacramento for a week, Crisp (rib muscle strain) was activated on Tuesday.

In a corresponding move, outfielder Eric Patterson has been designated for assignment, giving the A's 10 days to release, trade or outright him to the Minor Leagues.

Though he has only played in two of a possible 72 games with the A's since signing a one-year, \$5.25 million deal, Crisp said this season hasn't been taxing for him.

"It is what it is, I just roll with the punches," Crisp said. "It's not like it was something I could avoid. I just go with it and whatever happens, happens. I don't dwell too much. ... I enjoyed cheerleading and playing wherever they sent me. But I'm happy to be back here."

Originally, Crisp was expected to go on a 10-day rehab stint, starting on June 14. But after he played in two games on Sunday and Monday, the organization deemed Crisp fit to return. Crisp, 30, batted .591 (13-for-22) with five RBIs and seven runs in six games with the River Cats, who went 5-1 with him in the lineup.

"I don't know if seven days will get me a ring," Crisp said. "I hope that they'll win it all and maybe I can get like a half-a-ring or something."

Crisp missed the season's initial 42 games with a broken left pinkie finger before returning on May 21. He landed back on the DL with the intercostal strain just two days later. Crisp, who tried to talk the A's into bringing him up earlier this week, said he feels 100 percent and that his timing feels right.

Manager Bob Geren inserted Crisp into the leadoff spot as the starting center fielder on Tuesday, relegating Rajai Davis to the bench. Conor Jackson hit third and played left, while Ryan Sweeney manned right field and hit fifth.

"He's definitely an everyday player," Geren said of Crisp. "He's an electric player, a proven veteran guy that we've missed all year. We're glad to have him back."

Patterson, 27, hit .204 with four home runs and nine RBIs in 45 games this season. Since the acquisition of Jackson on June 15, Patterson had only appeared in three games, all as a pinch-hitter.

Jackson excited to be back in Bay Area

OAKLAND -- When he was traded to the A's from the D-backs on June 15, Conor Jackson got a fresh start near his old stomping grounds. Jackson, who played at nearby University of California-Berkeley from 2001-03, said he's happy to be back in the Bay Area.

"It's familiar ground for me," Jackson said. "I know a lot of people in this area and it's more comfortable for me to be here than on the East Coast."

Jackson was a career .347 hitter in 162 games for Cal, while totaling 30 home runs, 136 RBIs and 146 runs scored. He majored in theater and his father, John, was an actor on the TV show JAG.

Jackson said he still talks to Cal head baseball coach David Esquer frequently and that he plans on visiting the program once he gets settled in. A's reliever Tyson Ross is a fellow Cal baseball alum, as he played for Esquer from 2006-08.

"He's done a great job with that program," Jackson said. "I'm also a big Cal football follower and I'm a big supporting alumni."

Other recent Cal baseball alumni to make the Majors include Detroit rookie outfielder Brennan Boesch and Toronto starter Brandon Morrow.

Jackson recorded his first home RBI in an A's uniform during Monday's 6-4 loss to the Reds and is batting .333 (7-for-21) with five runs scored and three RBIs in seven games for Oakland.

Worth noting

Dallas Braden was charged with the loss in Tuesday's 4-2 defeat against the Reds, after giving up four runs (three earned) on 10 hits and a walk over six innings. He is now winless in his past eight starts since throwing his perfect game, tied for the second-longest such streak in Major League history. ... A's shortstop Cliff Pennington (2-for-3) is now batting .500 (14-for-28) over his past nine contests. ... Conor Jackson recorded the 500th hit of his career on Tuesday with an infield single in the sixth inning. ... The A's (34-39) dropped five games below .500 for the first time all season.

Cueto aims to start new streak in Oakland

By Didier Morais / MLB.com

Johnny Cueto's nine-start, unbeaten streak may be over, but his rise is just beginning. In his last outing, the Reds' right-hander dropped his first game since April 24 after the Mariners squeezed out an early run to clinch a 1-0 victory.

But it wasn't a momentum-breaking loss for Cueto. The 24-year-old still pitched well in his defeat, allowing one run and four hits in 5 2/3 innings of work in opposition to Seattle pitcher and former Cy Young winner Cliff Lee.

"It's part of the game," Cueto said of the close defeat. "I was trying to make some good pitches. [Lee is] an outstanding pitcher. I like the competition. Some day, I want to be like him -- one of the best pitchers in the big leagues."

In the meantime, Cueto is vying to resurrect his unbeaten streak against the Athletics, who have lost eight of their last 10 games. And now, instead of dueling against a veteran ace, Cueto will face one of his young counterparts in Vin Mazzaro.

Mazzaro only lasted five frames in his last start against the Cardinals, walking three batters en route to surrendering four runs and notching his first loss of the season.

"I wanted to go out and put zeros 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."

Aside from the previous outing, Mazzaro, who owns a 2-1 record, has logged quality starts in two of his last three outings.

Reds: Volquez making his way back

Edinson Volquez, who is on the 60-day DL recovering from Tommy John surgery, is scheduled to start for Triple-A Louisville against Toledo on Wednesday. The 26-year-old righty dazzled in two starts with Class A Lynchburg, striking out seven and tossing eight scoreless innings.

Athletics: Crisp activated

The Athletics recalled outfielder Coco Crisp from the 15-day DL on Tuesday night. Crisp, who was placed on the DL on May 26 with a strained right intercostal muscle, immediately made his presence felt, blasting his first home run of the season in the third inning.

Crisp spent the last week on a rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento. In six games with the River Cats, he went 13-for-22 with seven runs, two doubles, a triple and five RBIs. It was Crisp's second stint on the DL after he was sidelined with a fractured left pinky to start the season.

To make room for Crisp, the A's designated Eric Patterson for assignment. The outfielder, who started five games for Oakland, was batting .204 with four home runs and nine RBIs in 45 games.

Worth noting

Yonder Alonso and Philippe Valiquette, a pair of Cincinnati prospects that play at Triple-A Louisville, were invited to play for the World Team in the All-Star Futures Game on July 11 at Angel Stadium.

Alonso, Cincinnati's first-round pick in 2008, typically plays at first base, but also has experience in the outfield. Valiquette, who was selected in the seventh round of the 2004 Draft, is a left-handed pitcher and was recently promoted to the Triple-A squad.

The All-Star Futures Game annually showcases the Minor League's top talent during All-Star weekend. Current Reds players Jay Bruce, Joey Votto and Chris Heisey were all previous participants.

A's ship Fox to Baltimore, get Wolf and cash

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Nine days after he was designated for assignment by the A's, Jake Fox was shipped to the Baltimore Orioles on Tuesday for Minor League pitcher Ross Wolf and cash considerations.

Wolf, 27, is a right-hander who has only had one callup to the Majors, coming in 2007 with the Marlins. In 25 appearances for the Baltimore's Triple-A affiliate in Norfolk, Va., this season, Wolf is 0-2 with a 2.11 ERA. Over 38 1/3 innings of work, Wolf allowed 29 hits -- including one home run -- and 15 walks while striking out 26.

"We've got good reports on him," said A's assistant general manager David Forst. "He's had some success in Triple-A and the big leagues. With some of the injuries we've had, we're a little depleted in our depth in Triple-A. We'd like to have a guy with some big league experience."

Forst said Wolf features an average fastball and a good slider and will be assigned to Triple-A Sacramento. Currently, the River Cats feature two right-handed relievers that have seen Major League action this season: Edwar Ramirez (0-1, 5.28 ERA in 13 games) and Henry Rodriguez (0-2, 1.96 in 17 games).

In his eight-plus seasons of Minor League service, Wolf has a strikeout-to-walk ratio of 5.8-to-3. In his '07 callup to the big leagues, Wolf made 14 appearances, going 0-1 with an 11.68 ERA, allowing 24 hits and three walks while striking out six in 12 1/3 innings of work. Florida drafted Wolf in the 18th round of the 2002 First-Year Player Draft.

In 39 games for the A's this season, Fox made 11 starts as a designated hitter, seven at catcher, six in left field and also played a few innings of third base. He was hitting .214 with two home runs and 12 RBIs at the time of his designation.

"I'm happy for him," said Oakland manager Bob Geren. "Everybody liked Jake. ... You like to see him get an opportunity elsewhere. That's baseball -- it happens. He gave us his all and we're happy that he's over there."

Reds get jump on Braden

By JANIE McCAULEY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — What began as an awful road trip for the Cincinnati Reds is suddenly looking a lot better.

One total run in three losses at Seattle. Now, a pair of victories and a chance to sweep in Oakland.

"That'd be like a reverse sweep," manager Dusty Baker quipped.

Bronson Arroyo rediscovered his control and didn't walk a batter in eight strong innings, Corky Miller hit a two-run single and the Reds beat the Athletics 4-2 on Tuesday night.

"When you get swept like we did in Seattle, you take the mindset of we've got to win two of three from these guys," Arroyo said.

Joey Votto added an RBI double in the third as the Reds quickly jumped on Dallas Braden, whose winless skid reached eight starts since his perfect game against Tampa Bay on May 9. Braden is 0-5 during that stretch and he's even been growing a beard in an effort to get out of his funk.

"I may have a shaved head tomorrow," Braden said good-naturedly.

A's center fielder Coco Crisp hit a two-run homer in his third game this season following two stints on the disabled list, the latest with a strained rib cage. Crisp was activated earlier in the day and his third-inning drive was his first homer since May 12, 2009, for Kansas City at Oakland.

"I was a little nervous, as expected," Crisp said. "It's always nice when you can do something above and beyond."

Arroyo (7-3) was coming off a career-high six walks in a win over the Dodgers, but commanded the strike zone this time for his first start of the season without a walk.

"That's Bronson, he can get on a roll," Baker said. "It's much welcomed. He was dealing tonight and made just one mistake."

Arroyo allowed two runs and five hits in a 105-pitch performance, winning his third straight decision against the A's, but first since Sept. 17, 2005, for Boston.

Arroyo relied on his effective changeup and sinker, what Crisp described as "a weird assortment of pitches."

"He just flicks it up there," Crisp said.

Francisco Cordero allowed a pair of singles in the ninth but recovered for his 18th save in 23 chances as the Reds stayed within a game of NL Central-leading St. Louis, which won at Toronto. Ryan Sweeney grounded into a double play to end the 2-hour, 27-minute game.

The A's dropped to 34-39 and a season-worst five games under .500. They lost for the sixth time in seven games and ninth in 11.

Brandon Phillips and Jay Bruce each had three hits for Cincinnati, which rallied for a 6-4, 10-inning win in Monday's series opener to get back on track after the struggles at Safeco Field last weekend.

"I just think we learned our lesson in Seattle," Phillips said. "We've just got to get our pitches to hit. It's time to battle down, forget Seattle and move on."

Votto's double in the third marked his 31st straight game in which he's reached safely, the second-longest such streak in the majors this year.

Oakland is 6-15 in June and a season-high 9 1/2 games behind AL West-leading Texas after the A's led the division at the end of May.

Braden (4-7) allowed 10 hits, one off his season high, and four runs in six innings. The left-hander hasn't gone more than 6 1-3 innings in his last seven starts after lasting eight innings in his first outing after the perfecto, on May 14 against the Angels in Anaheim.

"Plenty of speed bumps," Braden said of his latest start.

"The car ran pretty good. Turn 1 was good, Turn 2 and 3 had some speed bumps. I got into Turn 4, 5, a couple speed bumps, Turn 6 kind of flattened out. Overall, bumpy track."

NOTES

*Oakland's Kevin Kouzmanoff, who came in batting .417 (20 for 48) in interleague play this season, went 0 for 3.

*Baker planned to rest 3B Scott Rolen for Wednesday afternoon's series finale, which would give him a two-day break with Thursday's off day.

*Baker's rotation is penciled in up until the All-Star break but he said he has the flexibility to give pitchers an extra day between starts if he determines someone needs it.

*Reds RHP Edinson Volquez, who had Tommy John surgery last Aug. 3, is still on track to return before the All-Star break. "Getting Volque back is like making a major trade and not giving up anybody," Baker said.

VETERAN JOURNALIST VISITS A'S BRADEN

By [Jason Anderson](#), Stockton Record, 6/22/2010

Oakland Athletics pitcher Dallas Braden and legendary journalist Frank Deford walked into a bar on the Miracle Mile, followed by an HBO camera crew.

Deford came to Stockton to profile Braden for a segment airing at 10 p.m. today on HBO's "Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel." Riding shotgun in Braden's new GMC 1500 pickup truck, Deford toured the city. Braden showed him where he lived and played Little League baseball as a kid, where he goes for Arizona Ice Tea while commuting to the Oakland Coliseum, and where he goes when he wants something stronger.

"We ended up at a place called The Matinee," Deford said by phone from New York. "I expected to see a couple of his friends, but there were about 40 people there, and it was quite a scene. Like an old western, Dallas told the bartender, 'Line 'em up,' and the bartender lined up 40 shot glasses across the bar."

Today's program

HBO's Real Sports with Bryant Gumbel

Premiere: 10 p.m. today, (HBO)

Other air times: 4:15 a.m. Wednesday; 8:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m. Saturday; 1:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Monday; 4:15 p.m. and 11 p.m. June 30; 12:30 a.m. July 2; 8:30 a.m. July 4; 1:30 a.m. July 7.

Information: hbo.com

Jameson Irish Whiskey.

Braden's treat.

"We brought our evening to a celebratory end," Braden said.

Deford didn't want to be impolite, so he had one, too.

"No way could I turn that down," Deford said. "Writers aren't supposed to get involved, but it was presented to me. I was sitting right there next to Dallas. It would have been an insult not to join in the toasting."

Deford, 71, is a senior contributing writer for Sports Illustrated, a commentator for National Public Radio and a correspondent for "Real Sports," which has won 12 Sports Emmy Awards in 15 years. He has authored 15 books and has a new novel, "Bliss, Remembered," due out July 14.

Deford has profiled some of the world's most popular sports figures during a distinguished career spanning more than five decades.

He once interviewed boxer Muhammad Ali on a train from Albany, N.Y., to New York City, and pressed former International Olympic Committee president Juan Antonio Samaranch for answers at IOC headquarters in Lausanne, Switzerland.

He interviewed Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to climb Mount Everest, at his home in New Zealand, and Roger Bannister, the first person to run a sub-4-minute mile, in Oxford, England.

"You're talking to an American icon as far as sports writing is concerned," said Braden, who pitched the 19th perfect game in Major League Baseball history on Mother's Day. "It was pretty nerve wracking. You want to be a good interview, and you don't want to break out the clichés because he's heard it all."

Deford interviewed Braden, his grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, and Frank Wanner, who coached Braden at Stagg High.

"His grandmother was terrifically important to the storytelling, and she was great," Deford said. "Frank Wanner was very, very well spoken, emotional and dramatic. It's a pretty good cast of characters."

Wanner said he became emotional when discussing the day Braden's mother, Jodie Atwood, died of cancer.

"It always hurts, so I always get emotional," Wanner said. "I apologized, but I can't help it."

Deford described Braden as smart, thoughtful and more contemplative than many athletes he has encountered.

"For somebody who's 26 years old, he's a damn good interview," Deford said. "I was surprised how introspective he is, how curious he is. He's a well-spoken, well-thought-out guy. He had a lot of very interesting things to say, and he has lived a much more intriguing life than most major leaguers."

Deford learned about Braden's community service efforts and was impressed by his loyalty to his hometown.

"Most athletes, once they get any money, they move to some gated community in Orlando, Fla.," Deford said. "The fact that he's still there, hanging out with his buddies, really adds an element to the story you don't usually find."

Deford mentioned Braden's feud with New York Yankees star Alex Rodriguez and said he wonders how Braden will be greeted when the A's visit Yankee Stadium Aug. 30-Sept. 2.

"The funny thing is, they'll probably boo him, but it's not like Alex Rodriguez is everybody's sweetheart here," Deford said. "Nobody really loves Alex Rodriguez, and I think they kind of like somebody like Dallas Braden."

Braden said he wanted Deford to see how his upbringing in Stockton shaped who he is today.

"The person doesn't always match the place they came from," Braden said. "A lot of people put on a big facade after they leave wherever they came from, and they're almost a shadow of their former selves. That's not who I am. I wanted Frank to understand who I am, where I come from and what keeps me here."

Braden said he is eager to see Deford's piece on HBO.

"I'm more anxious to step back and see it from Frank's point of view," Braden said. "To have a guy of his caliber and his status in the sports world come down and spend time with me in our city, you're thinking, 'Wow.' It's kind of unreal."

Oakland A's 2010 Draft Q&A: Eric Kubota

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Jun 22, 2010

What drew the Oakland A's to Michael Choice? What kind of pitcher is fifth-round pick Tyler Vail? Who are some sleepers in the A's draft class? We got those answers and more from Oakland A's Scouting Director Eric Kubota in a conversation on Monday.

OaklandClubhouse: How do you feel coming out of the draft? Did it go the way that you hoped it would?

Eric Kubota: I'm not sure you can ever really predict how it is going to go, but we were certainly pleased with how things fell.

OC: What drew you to Michael Choice [the A's first pick]?

EK: Just the power, first of all, the power and the strength and the hand speed. We felt as far as that goes there probably wasn't anyone else in the draft quite like him. Bat speed and hand speed is just tremendous and should translate into very good power at the major league level.

OC: How long had you been looking at Yordy Cabrera [A's second pick]? What do you project for him?

EK: Yordy's a guy who has been at the showcases for years, so we've seen him for probably two or three years quite a bit. He's another guy whose power is really his calling card. He is a very good athlete. He runs very well for his size. He's a big, strong kid who is only going to get bigger and stronger. He can really throw. We think he has a chance to play the infield and have very good power down the road.

OC: Do you feel like his father's experience as a hitting coach helps him?

EK: Yeah. It's certainly nice. Yordy's been around the game his whole life. His dad is not only a hitting coach now in the Tigers organization, but he was also a big prospect for them, as well. As far as pedigree and bloodlines and being around the game, Yordy scores very well in all of those categories.

OC: When I spoke to Aaron Shipman, he said that scouts had compared him to Denard Span of the Minnesota Twins. Do you think that is an accurate comparison?

EK: Well, I didn't see Denard Span in high school so I can't really say, but [Shipman] is certainly very athletic. He can really run and throw. We were really impressed with his hitting approach, which was really advanced for us, in our opinion. The one name that really came up when we talked about him was Curtis Granderson.

OC: Do you feel like he would be able to develop the power that Curtis did?

EK: We do think that there is a chance that he will come into some power as he matures and grows as a player.

OC: Was your familiarity with Marina High School something that played into your selection of Chad Lewis [A's fourth pick]?

EK: [laughs] I don't think that necessarily played into it. We certainly have scouted a lot of games at Marina High School over the past seven, eight or nine years or however long it has been since Daric [Barton] was there. But Chad's the same thing. He's a guy that we saw in the summer showcases and we've seen a lot of him. He's got profile corner, third base tools. He's got power potential. He's a very good athlete and he's a very good defender.

OC: Are you optimistic about signing those top four picks?

EK: Yeah, we feel good about our chances of getting them all signed.

OC: Tyler Vail [A's fifth pick] signed pretty quickly out of a Pennsylvania high school. What kind of pitcher is he?

EK: He's kind of a typical projection high school right-hander. He's a guy who our scouts in the Northeast kind of compare to Vinny Mazzaro. In fact, Jeff Bittiger, who signed Vin Mazzaro and is one of our pro scouts, has been around Tyler for quite awhile because Tyler and Jeff's son have played together on the same teams over the years. Jeff strongly recommended him.

OC: Are you concerned at all that Vail isn't your typical 6'4" right-hander [Vail is listed as 6'1"]?

EK: We think he is big enough. When you look at starters in the big leagues, they really come in all sizes. The prototype is the big, tall right-hander, but that is not necessarily what reality is. When you look across the board they come in all different shapes and sizes.

OC: [A's sixth pick] Tony Thompson's season at Kansas was derailed at the beginning with a kneecap injury. Did you scout him more on what he did last year?

EK: Winning the Triple Crown in the Big 12 [Thompson did that in 2009] was a big deal. He certainly commanded our notice a year ago. And yeah, we gave him some benefit of the doubt this year coming back from the injury. We've seen him a lot over the years and we know the coaches up at Kansas really well and everything was very positive in what we saw this year even though the numbers weren't necessarily there to add up to what he did last year.

OC: A.J. Kirby-Jones [A's ninth round pick] has already hit a homerun for Vancouver. Is his power at the top end of the scouting scale?

EK: [laughs] Yeah. As you can kind of see a little bit, we made a conscious effort to add power into the system and Kirby-Jones is a perfect example of that. The guy probably out-performed anyone at the college level for the past few years. We have scouts who went in and said that the power was real. It wasn't due to college baseball and it wasn't due to aluminum bats or anything. They strongly felt that the power was real and that it would translate to our game.

OC: I've seen Rashad Ramsey listed as both an outfielder and as a pitcher. Which position is he going to tackle with the A's?

EK: Outfielder. He's a very athletic kid. He was signed to play football, quarterback, at West Georgia. He's a middle-of-the-diamond athlete who really showed me a knack for making contact. He's a little green around the edges but the fact is that this kid made consistent hard contact at the games that I saw him.

OC: Were you able to sign him in a similar arrangement to how the team signed Rashun Dixon in 2008 because Ramsey had a football commit?

EK: No. It was a different situation. This kid really wanted to play baseball.

OC: He was one of several picks from the state of Georgia. Was this Georgia's best talent year?

EK: Georgia was great. Georgia – it's hard to say that it is underrated – but it doesn't often get mentioned in the same breadth as California, Texas and Florida, but we think they are right there with them on a yearly basis. We think that it was an exceptional year there.

OC: You had a chance to re-draft Ryan Lipkin out of San Francisco. Were you pleased to see him still available when the 24th round came along?

EK: Yeah, definitely. We've obviously seen a lot of Ryan over the years. We think he is a very good value for us for where we got him in the draft.

OC: Were there any sleeper picks who didn't get a lot of press that you are really excited about?

EK: I think Ramsey is one of them and we've talked about him. Jordan Tripp [A's seventh-round pick] is another one. He is a tremendous athlete. He's an above-average to a plus, plus runner. He's got power potential and he can really throw. His tools are comparative to really just about anybody in the draft as far as tools across the board. So we are excited to see what will happen with him once we get him out in our player development system.

Best baseball uniforms? Cardinals perched in first

By Patrick Saunders , The Denver Post

A while back, I sat down for a beer with a couple of buddies at Choppers Sports Grill in Cherry Creek. Somehow, the conversation turned to uniforms — the good, the bad and the truly ugly.

We all agreed that the San Diego Chargers' powder-blue throwback uniforms rate among the best of all time. Two of us loved the old-school style of the Colts. There was a consensus that the Seattle Seahawks' uniforms should be declared a public eyesore.

But when it came to baseball uniforms, the picks were all over the yard.

OK, OK, I know we're not talking world peace here, or figuring out how to plug up the BP oil spill, but a cool uniform is important. Remember how cool it felt when you slipped on that Little League uniform

for the first time?

With that in mind, I present my list of the top-five, current major league uniforms.

No. 5 — The New York Yankees. Their home whites with the vertical pinstripes are as timeless as a Rolex watch. But like everything else about the Yankees, the uniforms are a little too serious, a little too self-important for my taste.

No. 4 - The Boston Red Sox. The famed, old-fashioned Red Sox script set against the white jersey is old school and hip at the same time. When I see those uniforms, I automatically think of baseball history and Fenway Park. Or, as they say in Beantown "Fenway Pawk."

No. 3 - Oakland A's. The green and gold might be gaudy and garish, but it is unique and colorful. It makes a statement. I like it.

No. 2 - Detroit Tigers. The Olde English "D" on the home uniform is instantly recognizable. If a newer team tried it get away with something that looks like it came from the Middle Ages, it would come off as hokey and forced. But the "D" fits the Tigers perfectly. Their road grays, with the scripted Detroit in blue and orange are nice, too.

No. 1 - The St. Louis Cardinals. If you told somebody today to design a uniform logo featuring two red birds sitting on a bat, they might laugh. But the Cardinals' uniform works perfectly, whether worn by Stan Musial, Bob Gibson or Albert Pujols. The interlocking "STL" on the cap is classic.

Trivia time

What major league team was the first to make numbers a permanent part of the uniform? (Answer below)

Polling

After Rockies shortstop Troy Tulowitzki went down with a broken wrist, The Post asked fans where the Rockies will stand in the National League West by the time he returns in six weeks (or more). More than 59 percent said the Rockies will stay in the middle of the pack. Nearly 26 percent said the team is now on life support without Tulo. About 15 percent (wishful thinkers, no doubt) said

Trivia answer

The Yankees, who started wearing numbers in 1929. This is how the Yankees' official website explains it: "The initial distribution of numbers on the Yankees was made according to the player's position in the batting order. Therefore, in 1929, leadoff hitter Earle Combs wore No. 1, Mark Koenig No. 2, Babe Ruth No. 3, Lou Gehrig No. 4, Bob Meusel No. 5, Tony Lazzeri No. 6, Leo Durocher No. 7, Johnny Grabowski No. 8, Benny Bengough No. 9 and Bill Dickey No. 10. (Grabowski, Bengough and Dickey shared the catching duties).

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Green tapped for All-Star Futures Game

Last year's 13th overall Draft pick to play on U.S. team

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Grant Green, whom the A's selected with the No. 13 overall pick in the 2009 First-Year Player Draft, will represent the United States in the 2010 XM All-Star Futures Game on July 11 in Anaheim.

Green, a shortstop who played at Southern California, is batting .320 with five home runs and 30 RBIs for Class A Stockton this season. He has 20 walks and 62 strikeouts this year and has committed 18 errors in 67 games.

"He's got a good baseball body -- tall, lengthy, strong, athletic," said Oakland manager Bob Geren. "Obviously, our scouts thought very highly of him to make him our first-round pick. He's doing a great job and congratulations to him, that's quite an honor to make that team."

Geren, who has been selected as a coach for the All-Star Game on July 13, will get a chance to see Green in action.

Of the players who participated in the initial 11 Futures Games, 201 are currently on Major League active rosters or disabled lists. Sixty-two of those players have played in both the Futures Game and the MLB All-Star Game, including a record 30 All-Stars in 2009.

Green is listed at 6-feet-3, 180 pounds and batted .359 in 160 college games, along with 15 home runs and 102 RBIs.

The 12th annual Futures Game can be seen live on MLB.TV, ESPN2 and ESPN2 HD and followed live on MLB.com's Gameday. In addition, XM Radio will broadcast play-by-play coverage of the event live on XM 175. MLB.com will also provide complete coverage before, during and after the game.

Late Las Vegas rally sinks River Cats

Sacramento Bee, 6/23/2010

Turning point: Chris Lubanski tripled in two runs with two outs in the bottom of the eighth inning to lift the Las Vegas 51s to a 12-10 victory over the River Cats on Tuesday night. The River Cats tied the score 10-10 with three runs in the top of the seventh.

Who's hot: Dallas McPherson had five RBIs with two home runs – a three-run shot in the first and a two-run homer in the fifth.

Who's not: Five River Cats pitchers combined to allow 17 hits one night after two hurlers combined on a five-hit shutout against Salt Lake. The Cats' Matt Carson was 0 for 5.

So close, but so far: A win would have given the Cats a plus-.500 record for the first time since April 20, when they were 7-6.

Upcoming: Tonight, River Cats RHP Graham Godfrey (2-5, 4.63 ERA) vs. Las Vegas LHP Marc Rzepczynski (2-3, 8.50), 7:05 p.m., Cashman Field, Las Vegas.

RockHounds rally late but Frisco hangs on

Shawn Shroyer, Midland Reporter-Telegram

The concluding game of the Texas League's first half was an accurate reflection of the Midland RockHounds' first 70 games.

The RockHounds' side of the scoreboard contained too many goose eggs in a 6-3 loss to the Frisco RoughRiders on Tuesday before 7,565 fans at Citibank Ballpark. Of course, RoughRiders starting pitcher and No. 17 prospect in the Texas Rangers' system Blake Beavan had a little bit to do with that, holding the RockHounds to two runs, one earned, in 7 2/3 innings while striking out six.

"It was nice to see Blake go out and do what he's done all year," said RoughRiders hitting coach Brant Brown, who was acting manager with Steve Buechele in Omaha, Neb., to see his son play in the College World Series. "We finally gave him some run support. We hadn't given him any support his last three starts."

Thanks to Beavan's efforts, the RoughRiders capped off their first half South Division title to improve to 38-31 while the RockHounds dropped back to .500 at 35-35. In the loss, the RockHounds offense was brought to a screeching halt after averaging seven runs the last seven games.

"He located the ball well," RockHounds manager Darren Bush said. "He commanded the ball and it took us a while to get to him. You know what he's going to do, but he does it well. He commands the ball so well you have to take advantage of his mistakes, but he doesn't make many of them."

Beavan (9-4) labored early into his start, needing 20 pitches to retire three of the four batters he faced in the first inning. However, the two strikeouts he recorded were a sign of what was to come.

After facing four batters again in the second, Beavan faced the minimum the next four innings, retiring 10 straight batters at one point. He allowed an unearned run in the seventh, but with two on and one out, he induced an inning-ending double play.

Beavan departed in the eighth after surrendering his first earned run of the night, but it did little to lessen the staggering numbers he's posted against the RockHounds. In three starts against the RockHounds this season, Beavan is 3-0 with a 1.66 ERA. Tuesday's start was Beavan's first since the RockHounds added Adrian Cardenas and Corey Brown -- two proven hitters from last year's championship team -- to their lineup.

"With Cardenas and Brown and those guys, they're an efficient offensive team," Brown said. "Last year they showed what a good hitting team they are. They're always within reach."

The RockHounds rallied for their third run of the game later in the eighth with Beavan out of the game having thrown 89 pitches. However, it wasn't enough to climb out of the hole they fell in the first five innings as the RoughRiders touched up Capra.

While Beavan's only complaint in the first inning was his pitch count, Capra had a rocky beginning to his start, serving up a leadoff home run to Marcus Lemon.

Capra then let the first three batters of the second inning to reach and two of which scored to give Frisco an early 3-0 advantage. He blanked the RoughRiders the next two innings, but let the first two batters in the fifth reach base and he was pulled from the game.

"It was a good thing for us, he was in and out of the zone," Brown said. "We were lucky to get on the fastball because we've had our goods and our bads against him."

The RockHounds were able to contend late in the game thanks to the bullpen. Fautino de los Santos, Neil Wagner and Justin James combined to hold the RoughRiders to one run on five hits and a walk while accounting for six of the team's 11 strikeouts in the game.

"They did a good job," Bush said. "They put up zeroes, which gave us a chance to get back in the game and we did. We had our chances late."

Shawn Shroyer can be reached at sshroyer@mrt.com.

NOTEBOOK

BANWART PROMOTED: With six victories in their last seven games, things seemed to be coming together for a second half run for the RockHounds. That outlook took a hit Tuesday when starting pitcher Travis Banwart was promoted to Triple-A Sacramento.

Banwart was called up for a spot start with Sacramento last season, allowing seven runs on 11 hits and a walk while striking out five in six innings, but this move appears to be for the long haul. In 14 starts for the RockHounds, Banwart compiled a 5-5 record, 2.92 ERA and 1.22 WHIP in 83.1 innings.

Taking Banwart's spot on the roster will be Matt Wright, a right-handed pitcher and native of Waco. Wright hasn't pitched in affiliated ball this season after spending 2007-09 with the Omaha Royals, Triple-A affiliate of the Kansas City Royals. Wright was in the Atlanta Braves system from 2000-06.

Wright appeared in nine games last season for Omaha, eight starts, and posted a 1-5 record, 6.75 ERA and 1.55 WHIP in 40 innings. Wright will make his 2010 debut in today's 6:30 p.m. meeting with the Frisco RoughRiders at Citibank Ballpark.

'HOUND BITES: With Tuesday's roster move, another spot on the South Division All-Star roster opened up and RockHounds reliever Jared Lansford was selected to replace Travis Banwart. Even though the RockHounds lost Banwart and reliever Beau Vaughan as all-star representatives, infielder Jeff Baisley and Lansford have kept the number of RockHounds all-stars at seven. ... Tuesday's game marked the final game of the first half. Frisco took the first half crown in the South Division while Northwest Arkansas did the same in the North Division. Having clinched playoff spots, neither Frisco nor Northwest Arkansas can claim playoff spots in the second half, even if they finish first in their divisions again. Instead, should either finish first in their division in the second half, the team with the best overall season record in their division will claim the second playoff spot. All of which makes Midland's late first-half run significant. Entering Tuesday, Midland was 35-34 overall while division rivals Corpus Christi and San Antonio were 36-33 and 34-35, respectively. ... Midland and Frisco combined for five errors on Tuesday, but the biggest blunder came from RoughRiders catcher Taylor Teagarden on the base paths. In the top of the sixth, Teagarden hit what would have been a solid two-out single to right field. However, Teagarden didn't leave the batter's box until Matt Sulentic had fielded the ball in right and Sulentic fired to first base for the out.

TODAY'S PROBABLE PITCHERS: Frisco RoughRiders (38-31) -- Martin Perez (LHP, 2-4, 6.51); Midland RockHounds (35-35) -
- Matt Wright (RHP, NR)