

Cincinnati Reds Press Clippings June 23, 2010

CINCINNATI ENQUIRER

**Reds go for sweep of A's
Arroyo's quality outing stifles Oakland
By John Fay
June 22, 2010**

OAKLAND – The road trip from hell is suddenly salvageable.

The Reds defeated the Oakland A's 4-2 Tuesday night before a crowd of 12,136 at Oakland-Alameda Stadium. The second win in a row here puts the Reds at 2-3 on the trip heading into Wednesday afternoon's trip finale.

"In years past, things got away from us," starter Bronson Arroyo said. "When you get swept like we did in Seattle, you take the mindset that you have to take two of three from these guys. If we can take one more, we'll feel great about going 50-50 on the road trip."

Bronson Arroyo pitched eight quality innings. He allowed two runs on five hits. He walked none and struck out one.

"It was good," said Arroyo, who improved to 7-3 overall and 7-1 in his last 11 starts.

said. "My change-up was good. My sinker was moving a ton that gave me a chance to get some groundballs."

Arroyo threw 105 pitches. He was more than willing to turn the game over to Francisco Cordero.

"I told them I was done," Arroyo said. "I had used up my reserve. I felt like Coco had a better opportunity to get those lefties out with his power arm. They had been seeing me all night. I really didn't mix it up. I didn't feel like I could command the inner half of the plate to the lefties."

Closer Francisco Cordero, the night after his fifth blown save, pitched the ninth his 18th save. But it wasn't easy.

Daric Barton led off the ninth with a single. Cordero struck out Conor Jackson on a 3-2 pitch. Kurt Suzuki singled, sending Barton to third. Cordero then got Ryan Sweeney to hit into a 6-4-3 double play to end the game.

"When you give it up," Cordero said, "the best thing is to get out there the next night and get it done."

And Coco got it done.

"We made it exciting," Reds manager Dusty Baker said. "Bronson got the win, Coco got the save and we got the win."

The win kept the Reds within a game of the St. Louis Cardinals in the National League Central Division. The Cards beat the Toronto Blue Jays 9-4.

The Reds took a 2-0 lead in the second. Jonny Gomes and Jay Bruce led off with singles. Drew Stubbs bunted them over. Chris Heisey took a called third strike. But Corky Miller lined one into left to get both runners home.

The Reds added a run in the third. Brandon Phillips singled for his second hit of the game. Joey Votto shot one into the gap in right-center. Phillips scored easily.

Arroyo retired the first eight batters he faced before Cliff Pennington singled in the third. Coco Crisp, just activated from the DL, hit a home run to right field to cut the Reds' lead to 3-2.

"I didn't think it was that bad of a pitch," Arroyo said. "That's the way it is, man. You have a three-run you want to keep at three runs, if you possibly can. But with only one guy on base, you've got to go after guys. You change your mindset back to (thinking) it's 1-0."

The Reds added a run in the fifth. Scott Rolen singled with one out. An out later, Bruce doubled. Drew Stubbs hit one to shortstop Pennington. Pennington's throw pulled first baseman Daric Barton off the bag. Rolen scored to make it 4-2.

Arroyo allowed only one runner to reach second base after the third – and that was Mark Ellis, who got there when shortstop Orlando Cabrera threw a potential double-play ball in the dirt.

Oakland starter Dallas Braden's winless stretch 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.

Votto extends on-base streak to 31 games

By John Fay
June 22, 2010

OAKLAND, Calif. – Joey Votto doesn't like to talk about Joey Votto.

With an RBI single Tuesday night, the Reds first baseman has reached base via hit, walk or hit-by-pitch in 31 straight games, the majors' second-longest streak this year. Tampa Bay's Evan Longoria had a 32-game streak.

"It's something I take pride in, getting on base," Votto said.

But he's not keeping count.

"Honestly, I don't keep track of those kinds of things," he said of the streak.

If he did keep track of such things, he'd know he came into Tuesday hitting .382 with four home runs and eight RBI over his past nine games, with five of them two-hit games.

"I had a little rough stretch there," he said. "I'm in a good stretch now. As long as we get wins along the way, that's what matters."

That's not typical player talk.

"He's a different dude," Reds manager Dusty Baker said. "He's respectful. He lives clean. He takes care of himself."

Votto entered Tuesday fifth in the National League in hitting (.315), tied for fourth in home runs (15), third in on-base percentage (.409) and fifth in slugging percentage (.560). He was tied with San Diego's Adrian Gonzalez for the NL lead in on-base plus slugging at .969, a good indicator of offensive production.

"I'm playing within the team concept," Votto said. "But, at the same time, I'm trying to establish myself as a player."

His numbers say All-Star.

"I'd like to see him make it," Baker said. "He's got some tough competition at first base. But if he keeps raking, he'll get there."

Two levels up, Smith saves day **Double-A callup impressive in brief stint**

By John Fay
June 22, 2010

OAKLAND, Calif. -- When the Reds called up right-hander Jordan Smith from Double-A Carolina, it was not to close.

But that's what Smith did Monday night. He got the final two in the Reds' 6-4 victory over the Oakland A's.

Smith was safe in assuming he had the night off until the point Francisco Cordero blew the save in the ninth.

It was still a safe assumption when the 10th began. But after Cordero walked two, the Reds turned to Daniel Ray Herrera.

Smith didn't get the call until Herrera gave up a single and a run-scoring groundout.

Smith came in and got Kevin Kouzmanoff to ground out and struck out Jack Cust.

"It just kind of happened that way," Smith said. "I was glad I could get in there and help out."

It was the first big-league save for Smith, a 24-year-old right-hander, who has allowed only one run in 4 2/3 innings with the Reds.

"After I was able to get my first couple of outings under my belt, I'm starting to feel comfortable," he said. "Last night felt like another save down in Double-A."

Smith was 1-3 with 5.08 ERA at Double-A.

"I've always had good stuff," he said. "I'm just throwing good right now. I was throwing good down there - the last seven or eight outings. I'm on a hot streak now. I'm keeping the ball down. My sinker is moving a lot."

Smith throws a slider and change-up in addition to the fastball. His four-seam fastball hits 94 mph. His two-seamer, which sinks, is his out pitch.

"It just kind of developed," he said. "I started throwing it a lot in 2007 in Dayton. I had a hard time running the ball in on righties. My four-seamer cuts a little bit. Sometimes, I'd leave it out over the middle. I needed something to go back in.

"It's been my pitch since."

LEAKE PLAN: Rookie pitcher Mike Leake will get some extra rest as the All-Star Break approached. But Reds manager Dusty Baker is keeping the plan quiet.

"We've got our rotation penciled out to out to All-Star Break," Baker said. "We've got two of them actually. With off days, we can skip almost everybody. It depends on who's throwing well. We'll try not to skip a turn but give them extra days."

Leake has thrown 891/3 innings. That puts him on pace to throw 200. The Reds would like to keep him to around 170.

Edinson Volquez figures in the plan as well.

"(Leake) is pitching well," Baker said. "Volquez is throwing good too. We've got some decisions to make. But those are good decisions. Getting Volquez back is like making a major trade without giving anybody up."

HANIGAN CLOSE: Catcher Ryan Hanigan (broken left thumb) felt no ill effects of catching Johnny Cueto's bullpen session.

"It feels the same," Hanigan said. "There's a slight bone bruise. But I can tolerate it. I'm ready to go."

Hanigan said he is tentatively scheduled to begin a rehab assignment when the Reds return from road trip. The road trip ends Wednesday.

ROLEN OUT TODAY: Third baseman Scott Rolen will be out of the lineup today.

"That way with the off day (Thursday), he gets two days off," Baker said.

TESTING IN PROGRESS: Drug testers were in the Reds clubhouse. It was second time the team has been tested on the road trip.

FUTURES: First baseman Yonder Alonso and left-hander reliever Philippe Valiquette were selected to play for the World team at the Futures Game.

Both are playing at Louisville. Valiquette has only appeared in two games since being promoted from Double-A Carolina. He was 2-0 with 3.99 ERA at Carolina. Alonso is hitting .230 with two home runs and 15 RBI for the Bats.

TWO MORE SIGNED: The Reds signed their 10th-round pick Kevin Arico, a right-handed pitcher from University of Virginia, and their 11th-round pick, Andrew Hayes, a right-hander from Vanderbilt.

The Reds have signed seven of their top 11 picks.

WLW talk show host has lung cancer

Darrell 'Doc' Rodgers made announcement on Sunday's 'Extra Innings'

By John Kieseewetter
June 22, 2010

After the Mariners swept the Reds Sunday, Darrell "Doc" Rodgers wanted to talk about something else on his WLW-AM postgame show.

Rodgers, 47, stunned the "Extra Innings" audience by announcing he has terminal stage 4 lung cancer.

"I said, 'Hey, I've got something more important to talk about. This may be my last show,' " said Rodgers, a former Reds minor league pitcher and front office executive in his third season hosting the weekend post-game shows.

But it wasn't his final show. Rodgers said Tuesday he plans to be back on the air Friday after the Reds-Indians game, after treatment for lung and brain tumors.

"I feel great," he said. "I've never felt better, actually."

In early May, Rodgers had told "Extra Innings" listeners he was suffering through an acute migraine headache, and asked for their remedies. His doctor told him he had a "tension headache," he said.

He did not seek a second opinion.

"I'm a man. I'm a knucklehead. I'll keep going till I drop," said Rodgers, a real estate agent for Wyoming's Coldwell Banker West Shell office. He lives in Springfield Township with his wife, Dorothy, and two children, ages 10 and 7.

After two weeks of severe headaches, he said, his left knee, foot and arm went numb when he came home from WLW-AM on May 23.

"I thought I was having a stroke," he said.

Emergency room doctors determined he had a brain tumor about the size of a quarter. In preparation for brain surgery on May 25, a full-body scan revealed that he had non-small-cell lung cancer that had spread to his brain.

"I don't smoke. I don't drink. I eat more salads than I do red meat. I don't go to bars. I thought that's the way you live," Rodgers said.

Radiation treatments at Precision Radiotherapy in West Chester Township in the last two weeks have eliminated the brain tumor, Rodgers said.

"It's gone. And if it comes back, they'll zap it some more," he said.

Rodgers was meeting Tuesday with his oncologist to determine which drugs will best treat the lung cancer.

A Texas native, Rodgers settled in the Reds front office here, where he met his future wife, a Procter & Gamble Co. employee.

He resigned from the Reds in 2002, then sued the team claiming he had been demoted in late 2001 because he is African-American.

Rodgers moved back here in 2004, after the Baltimore Orioles fired him as director of minor-league operations. He then earned his real estate license, and started working for Coldwell Bank West Shell five year ago. He also has been a basketball official.

On WLW-AM Sunday, Rodgers choked up when he told his Father's Day listeners that he had a gift for them - advising dads to buy adequate life insurance coverage. He was emotional again Tuesday repeating the advice.

"Go get life insurance. Before you pay the mortgage, make sure you leave enough to take care of your family," said Rodgers, who bought a \$250,000 term policy for \$58 a month three years ago.

"I should have done a lot more than that. I made more than 58 bucks every day I refereed. Dads should be a provider. That's what Dads must do, whether they're there or not there."

MLB.COM

Arroyo holds Athletics at bay for victory

Right-hander gives up two runs on five hits over eight

By Mark Sheldon / MLB.com

06/23/10 1:55 AM ET

OAKLAND -- You can almost hear the screech of the wheels under the Reds as they attempt to pull a 180-degree turn on their West Coast swing.

Following the disaster of being swept three games in Seattle with no offense, come back-to-back wins in Oakland. A 4-2 Reds win over the A's on Tuesday featured 13 hits and a stellar eight-inning pitching performance from Bronson Arroyo.

"When you get swept like we did in Seattle, you just take the mindset that you have to take at least two out of three from these guys and get back home feeling somewhat positive about what we've done," Arroyo said. [Wednesday], if we can take one more, we'll feel great about going 50-50 on the road."

Second-place Cincinnati also kept pace with the first-place Cardinals and remains one game back in the National League Central.

Arroyo (7-3), who won the seventh of his last eight decisions, set the tone well as he retired the first eight batters. A two-out, two-run homer by Coco Crisp in the Oakland fourth was the only real blemish of his evening. Arroyo gave up five hits and on the heels of walking a career-high six in his last start, did not walk a batter on Tuesday.

"I didn't make any adjustments," Arroyo said. "Some days you can make free throws. Some days you can't. Last time out, I had horrible command. I just missed the plate a lot."

Against A's starter Dallas Braden (4-7) and his relievers, the Reds spread the offense well around between the second-through-sixth spots in the order -- which went 10-for-24. Brandon Phillips and Jay Bruce each collected three hits.

The Reds could've capitalized more, but went 1-for-11 with runners in scoring position while leaving 11 on base. But they got enough. It began when they took a 2-0 lead in the top of the second inning. Jonny Gomes and Bruce started it off with singles and were moved up on Drew Stubbs' first sacrifice bunt of the season. With two outs, Corky Miller flared a two-run single to left field that was missed by a diving Conor Jackson.

In the third inning, Phillips led off with a single and scored on Joey Votto's RBI double to the wall in right field to make it 3-0.

"That's the key -- to get production up and down the lineup," Reds manager Dusty Baker said. "We got a lot of hits today."

Following the Crisp home run, Arroyo retired 15 of his last 18 batters. As he used his sinker well, he notched 12 of his 24 outs on the ground. A key play came in the eighth after Cliff Pennington's one-out single. Crisp grounded into an inning-ending 4-6-3 double play.

"He was a little tricky," A's manager Bob Geren said of Arroyo. "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 had 105 pitches after eight innings, and told Baker he was done. It would be up to Francisco Cordero to pitch the ninth one night after he blew his fifth save and used up 33 pitches before the Reds came back to win in 10 innings.

"I had used up my reserve," Arroyo said. "I felt Coco had a better opportunity to get those lefties out with his power arm."

Cordero kept up with his penchant for drama as leadoff hitter Daric Barton hit a soft roller up the middle for a single and went to third base with one out on Kurt Suzuki's hard single into right field off Votto's glove. But the game ended when Cordero got Ryan Sweeney to hit into a 6-4-3 double play.

It gave Cordero 18 saves in 23 tries, and a nice 180-degree turn of his own following a lousy Monday night.

"I always say if you give it up, the best thing that can happen is come back in the next day and get it done," Cordero said. "That's not a good taste when you blow the game. Being able to come back today and get it done, that made me feel a lot better."

Mark Sheldon is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

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.

Reds plan to limit Leake's innings

By Mark Sheldon / MLB.com

06/22/10 9:55 PM ET

OAKLAND -- There is a plan to limit Reds rookie Mike Leake's innings total, but it appears to be under lock and key. And manager Dusty Baker ate the key.

Leake, who pitched a six-inning no-decision with 96 pitches vs. the A's on Monday, has 89 1/3 innings pitched through 14 starts. At the current pace, the 22-year-old will reach 203 innings.

The Reds have no plans on letting that happen. He'll likely be in the 150-175 innings range. Last season for Arizona State, Leake pitched his career high of 142 innings -- but wasn't in a five-man rotation.

This is what Baker said on Monday:

"We have to find a way to keep him strong. This is uncharted territory he's about to enter in right now," Baker said. "We're going to skip him a few times and help him stay strong."

When asked on Tuesday for more specifics on how or when Leake might get skipped, Baker wouldn't say.

"We have our rotation penciled out until the All-Star break, two of them actually," Baker said. "There are off-days in there. We can skip almost everybody maybe. It depends on who's the strongest, who's throwing well. We'll try not to skip a turn -- but give them extra days."

Edinson Volquez, who is scheduled to make a rehab assignment start Wednesday at Triple-A Louisville, is likely to be back with the Reds before the All-Star break. Could Volquez take some innings off of Leake's hands?

"I don't know yet," Baker said. "He's pitching pretty well and Volquez is throwing pretty good too. We have some decisions to make, but those are pretty good decisions."

Smith relishes first MLB save

OAKLAND -- Rookie reliever Jordan Smith was still smiling on Tuesday, the day after he earned his first big league save. Smith, who was called up from Double-A Carolina on June 15, notched the final two outs in the bottom of the 10th inning to preserve a 6-4 Reds win over the A's. He is still waiting for his first big league win.

"When you're a reliever, you want more saves than wins anyway," Smith said. "If you get the win, it means something bad happened -- especially late in the game. It was a real good feeling to get that first one. I'll keep that ball forever."

Smith entered with the tying run at the plate and two runners on base with one out after closer Francisco Cordero and Daniel Ray Herrera had faltered. The right-hander wasn't converted from a starter into a reliever until before Spring Training, but kept himself together.

"I kind of like situations like that," Smith said. "I've always felt at ease when stuff is about to go bad. I like pressure situations. I'm the kid who always felt it wasn't fun if it was easy. I'm starting to get comfortable out there. I was pretty relaxed coming into the game. I had a lot of confidence I was going to get the job done."

Worth noting

Injured outfielder Chris Dickerson (right hand/wrist surgeries) was scratched from beginning his rehab assignment with Triple-A Louisville on Tuesday after he felt soreness during batting practice. ... Reds first baseman Joey Votto liked how the Reds held the game together in the 10th inning as Oakland threatened. The inning started with the bases loaded and no outs when the Reds were leading, 6-2. "For us to grind through that -- in past years, I've seen us give that up," Votto said. "Last night, we didn't. That's how it should be. That's how it's going to be in the future sometimes. We have to chip away at that situation." ... The Reds signed two more 2010 Draft picks -- right-handed pitchers Kevin Arico (10th round) and Andrew Heyes (11th round).

Mark Sheldon is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

Alonso, Valiquette named to Futures Game
First baseman, southpaw reliever play for Louisville
By Mark Sheldon / MLB.com
06/22/10 8:40 PM ET

OAKLAND -- An invitation to the All-Star Futures Game often means the Major Leagues are not very far away.

Current Reds Joey Votto, Jay Bruce and Chris Heisey have played in the showcase of top Minor League talent in the past.

This year, the honor has been given to first baseman Yonder Alonso and lefty reliever Philippe Valiquette. They both play at Triple-A Louisville.

The 12th annual XM All-Stars Futures Game, which has prospects from the United States play against the best from the rest of the World, will be held at Angel Stadium on Sunday, July 12, at 6 p.m. ET. MLB.com will provide complete coverage before, during and after the game, which can be seen live on ESPN2 and ESPN2 HD and followed live on Gameday. In addition, XM Radio will broadcast play-by-play coverage of the event live on XM 175.

Both Alonso, a native of Cuba, and Valiquette, a Canadian from Montreal, will play for the World Team.

The 23-year-old Alonso, the club's 2008 first-round Draft pick, is batting a combined .245 with five home runs and 31 RBIs with Double-A Carolina and Louisville this season. He has played both first base and has been tried out in left field as well.

"He's played more first base, which has probably relaxed him in all facets of his game. The numbers may not reflect it, but he's hit the ball hard all year without much luck," said Terry Reynolds, the Reds senior director of player development. "He is as good of a hitting prospect as we have."

Valiquette, 23, was 2-0 with a 3.99 ERA in 25 games with 16 walks and 21 strikeouts. He was recently promoted to Louisville, where he has appeared in two games and allowed two runs in 1 1/3 innings.

Taken in the seventh round of the 2004 Draft, Valiquette can throw up to 98 mph, but had command issues during Spring Training in big league camp. Reports have indicated he's gotten more consistent in the strike zone.

"He's got one of the better arms in our organization," Reynolds said. "He has come a long way in the years since we drafted him. He was a Canadian kid that hadn't played a lot. He's worked hard to get where he is."

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Gomes' determination brightens his career
Reds left fielder goes from overlooked to All-Star candidate
By Mark Sheldon / MLB.com
06/22/10 10:00 AM ET

OAKLAND -- It's an irony that certainly isn't lost on the Reds' Jonny Gomes.

The most productive left fielder in the National League in terms of hitting, RBIs and slugging percentage, Gomes was virtually unwanted on the free agent market last winter. He has since stepped up and proven himself worthy of the highest consideration for the NL All-Star team.

Yet, Gomes didn't even sign back with Cincinnati until after pitchers and catchers had already reported to Spring Training.

"Only three months ago, on Feb. 21, I was without a job," Gomes said. "There were 30 teams that had passed. Just 200 at-bats later, I could possibly be in the All-Star Game. It would mean a lot to me and my career to know that I'm an All-Star. And to prove to everyone that I wasn't done. I wasn't the label that at least 29 teams put on me -- not this team because they came and got me. It would be pretty special."

Gomes, 29, was batting .287 with nine home runs and his 49 RBIs was ranked sixth in the league heading into Tuesday's action. This was even after a current 1-for-16 stretch in four games. When Gomes hits, runs are more often likely to follow -- he is second in NL with an RBI per every 4.3 at-bats and is second in hitting with runners in scoring position with a .442 average.

After he re-signed, Gomes was originally to have the same role he played in 2009 as the right-handed half of a platoon in left field. It meant being pinch-hit for in matchup situations and often being lifted for defensive reasons in the late innings.

One to always play with hunger and enthusiasm, Gomes says he isn't using his bat to exact revenge on the general managers who passed on him. He was close to signing with the Pirates, but they opted to ink Ryan Church. Ditto with the Cubs, who offered Gomes a Minor League deal before they signed Xavier Nady to a big league deal worth \$3.3 million. That was despite Nady coming off arm surgery and being limited in throwing.

"I'm not one to play with a grudge or a chip on my shoulder to be mad at someone else," Gomes said. "It was on my mind all offseason during my workouts -- to be an All-Star-caliber player by eating right and taking care of myself. I wanted to be in the top tier of MLB."

Starting with an April 8 walk-off homer against righty reliever Jason Motte in a win over St. Louis, Gomes shed his platoon typecast. He's hit as well against right-handers (.290) as lefties (.286), which has earned him the chance to be regularly in the lineup, even on nights like Saturday, when the Mariners started tough right-hander Felix Hernandez against the Reds.

"I don't even get that start in the past year," Gomes said. "That's where the fire comes. It's not the excitement of that play. It's the buildup to get to that play for me."

Gomes is producing more than some Tiffany's-priced left fielders but at a relative Costco price. He is making \$800,000 and has a \$1.75 million club option for 2011. The Reds likely won't act on the option until the offseason.

There are certainly better known -- and much higher paid -- left fielders in the league, especially within the NL Central. A few are giving substantially less bang for the buck. There's the Astros' Carlos Lee (earning \$18.5 million in 2010), the Cardinals' Matt Holliday (\$17 million) and the Cubs' Alfonso Soriano (\$18 million). Outside the division, add in the Dodgers' Manny Ramirez (\$25 million) or the Mets' Jason Bay (\$6.5 million).

"I'm really pleased. He's far exceeded what anybody could have planned," Reds GM Walt Jocketty said of Gomes. "We were able to re-sign him, because for whatever reason, there didn't seem to be much interest in him. I had trouble understanding that."

Last season in only 281 at-bats, Gomes slugged 20 home runs but had only 54 RBIs. After he signed during camp, he had a meeting with manager Dusty Baker about becoming a better run producer.

"I just told him I thought he was better than a slugger," Baker said. "Usually, a ribbie man, you want to be a 3-to-1 ratio of RBIs to homers and a lot less strikeouts. He has less homers but more RBIs and less strikeouts and a higher batting average. So, which guy has more value?"

In the latest All-Star balloting among NL outfielders, Gomes ranked 14th with 547,681 votes. The top three vote-getters start, which means he will have to hope the league notices when it names the reserves and the roster on July 4.

It just so happens that the family of Gomes' wife lives in Anaheim, where the July 13 All-Star Game is being played. Gomes is a Northern California native from Petaluma, from where it wouldn't be difficult for family and friends to travel to see him.

"It's interesting for me now that I'm kind of in the race for it," Gomes said. "It's weird that it's in my hands but out of my hands. It's in my hands as far as my results. This is a results-driven industry. At the end of the day, I don't pick. It would be something awesome for me that would put a smile on my face, knowing that I'm getting acknowledged as an All-Star."

Mark Sheldon is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

Dayton Daily News

Bronson was Reds' 'Mr. Majestyk'

By Hal McCoy

Wednesday, June 23, 2010, 12:42 AM

UNSOLICITED OBSERVATIONS from The Man Cave while reading a hilarious book between innings, Sh*t My Dad Says, by Justin Halpern.

Bronson Arroyo is named after Charles Bronson, Arroyo's mother's favorite movie actor, a tough-guy actor who starred in Mr. Majestyk.

And Arroyo certainly was 'majestyk' for the Cincinnati Reds Tuesday night against the Oakland Athletics, pitching a dandy in a 4-2 win that kept the Reds one full step behind the St. Louis Cardinals in the National League Central.

Arroyo, 7-1 over his last eight decisions, held the A's to two runs and five hits over eight innings and had only one blip as he forced the A's to pound the ball regularly into the ground.

He gave up a two-out, nobody-on single to No. 9 hitter Cliff Pennington in the third and Coco Crisp, a breakfast cereal disguised as a baseball player, hit a home run.

The Reds already were up, 3-0, at the time, so that made it 3-2.

Arroyo is a winner, a flat-out winner. If there is a game that the Reds need to win, manager Dusty Baker surely must want Arroyo on the mound confusing hitters with a mixed bag of pitches that is confounding. Broadcaster Chris Welsh said it best: "Sometimes Arroyo even makes up a pitch on the mound."

THE REDS gave Arroyo a 2-0 lead in the second when it looked as if they might not score after Johnny Gomes and Jay Bruce opened the inning with back-to-back singles. Drew Stubbs bunted the runners to second and third, but Chris Heisey took a called strike three.

With two outs, catcher Corky Miller, batting .143 at the time and batting ninth, lobbed a two-run single to left field. This guy doesn't hit much, but he is a team player, a professional. In the eighth inning, Heiser was on second with no outs. Miller had two strikes on him, but purposely pushed the ball to the right side, to the first baseman, enabling Heisey to take third.

Unfortunately, with one out, the Reds couldn't get Heisey home because Orlando Cabrera and Brandon Phillips both grounded out. But that was a prime example of giving yourself up for the team, to heck with the batting average. And Miller's work behind the plate is exemplary, which is why Arroyo prefers pitching to him.

The Reds moved the score from 3-2 to 4-2 in the fifth when Scott Rolen singled and scored on Jay Bruce's two-run double.

PHILLIPS AND BRUCE both had three hits and Joey Votto doubled home the Reds' third run in the third. Votto has been on base in 31 straight games.

Of course, there was the usual ninth-inning adventure with closer Coco Cordero. With the Reds leading 4-2, he gave up singles to two of the first three A's hitters, putting runners on first and third with one out.

Another Coco meltdown? Not this time. He thumb-tacked the save by getting Ryan Sweeney to roll into a game-ending double play - another breath-holder, but mission accomplished.

So after taking the first two in this series, the Reds hustled back to their San Francisco hotel for a quick night's sleep before playing the final game of this six-game west coast trip Wednesday afternoon.

THERE IS A nifty subway system (BART) between Oakland and San Francisco that I took to and from games when the Reds played in Oakland and I traveled. After one night game, as I was getting onto the extremely crowded subway. With my legal blindness I didn't see the the foot of this behemoth sitting in a seat sticking out in the aisle.

I stepped on it. Crunched it. Crushed it. The guy jumped from his seat, fist upraised. I quickly apologized and explained, "I'm sorry, sir, I'm legally blind." His demeanor did a 180. He smiled and offered me his seat. I wasn't certain what my stop was so I asked him, "What stop do I get off to get to the Westin St. Francis?"

"I'll show you," he said. "It's the stop before mine, but I'll get off and show you." I told him I didn't need his assistance, but he did it anyway and guided me up the escalator to the foot of Powell Street. I didn't argue. That fist looked awfully big.

DON'T FORGET those great Ask Hal questions that you keep providing. Need 'em by Thursday morning for them to appear in Sunday's Dayton Daily News. Send 'em to halmccoy@hotmail.com.

The Associated Press

Arroyo pitches Reds past A's

By Janie McCauley

1:01 AM Wednesday, June 23, 2010

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

Joey Votto added an RBI double in the second as the Reds quickly jumped on Dallas Braden, whose winless stretch 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.

A's center fielder Coco Crisp hit a two-run homer in his third game all 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.

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. He 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.

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 being swept in three games at Seattle over the weekend.

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 9½ 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.

Notes: Reds manager Dusty Baker hosted longtime buddy and blues and rock-and-roll musician Elvin Bishop in his office before the game. The two are regular fishing partners in Northern California during the offseason. ... Baker planned to rest 3B Scott Rolen for Wednesday afternoon's series finale, which would give him a two-day break with Thursday's day off. ... Baker's rotation is penciled in up until the All-Star break but 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 reconstructive elbow surgery last Aug. 3, is still on track to return before the All-Star break. "Getting Volquez back is like making a major trade and not giving up anybody," Baker said. ... Oakland's Kevin Kouzmanoff, who came in batting .417 (20 for 48) in interleague play this season, went 0 for 3.

TRANSACTIONS

Tuesday's Sports Transactions
By The Associated Press
June 22, 2010

BASEBALL

American League

Baltimore Orioles: Acquired INF-OF Jake Fox from Oakland for RHP Ross Wolf and cash. Optioned RHP Chris Tillman to Norfolk (IL). Designated RHP Cla Meredith for assignment.

Boston Red Sox: Recalled OF Josh Reddick from Pawtucket (IL). Assigned RHP Robert Manuel to Pawtucket.

Cleveland Indians: Recalled RHP Joe Smith from Columbus (IL). Optioned LHP David Huff Columbus.

Detroit Tigers: Purchased the contract of RHP Jay Sborz from Toledo (IL).

Los Angeles Angels: Agreed to terms with SS Taylor Lindsey, CF Ryan Bolden, RHP Daniel Tillman, SS Wendell Soto, RHP Donn Roach, LHP Max Russell, RHP Brian Diemer, CF Andrew Heid, LHP Aaron Meade, RHP Bryant George, LHP Carmine Giardina, 3B Thomas Nichols, SS Ryan Broussard, RHP Kevin Johnson, LF Gary Mitchell, 3B Michael Bolaski, SS Jesus Campos, RHP Andrew Schugel, LHP Dakota Robinson, 1B Brandon Decker, 2B Steven Irvine, 2B Michael Sodders, C Drew Beuerlein, RHP Eric Cedejas, RF Jerod Yakubik, 1B Ryan Rivers, C Andrew Oldfield, RHP William Mistic, LF Michael Turner, RHP Chad Yinger, LHP Alexander Burkard and LHP John Wiedenbauer.

Oakland Athletics: Activated CF Coco Crisp from the 15-day DL.

Texas Rangers: Activated OF Nelson Cruz from the 15-day DL. Optioned OF Craig Gentry to Oklahoma City (PCL).

National League

Atlanta Braves: Activated RHP Takashi Saito from the 15-day DL. Sent RHP Craig Kimbrel to Gwinnett (IL).

Chicago Cubs: Agreed to terms with C Micah Gibbs. Signed INF Pierre LePage, INF Elliot Soto, RHP Ryan Hartmant and C Chad Noble.

Colorado Rockies: Activated RHP Huston Street from the 15-day DL. Designated RHP Juan Rincon for assignment.

Florida Marlins: Purchased the contracts of RHP Alex Sanabia from Jacksonville (SL) and LHP James Houser from New Orleans (PCL). Designated RHP Jorge Sosa for assignment.

Houston Astros: Activated RHP Chris Sampson from the 15-day DL. Optioned LHP Wesley Wright to Round Rock (PCL). Purchased the contract of C Jason Castro and OF Jason Bourgeois from Round Rock. Recalled 3B Chris Johnson from Round Rock. Designated C Kevin Cash, RHP Casey Daigle and OF Cory Sullivan for assignment.

Philadelphia Phillies: Activated SS Jimmy Rollins from the 15-day DL. Placed C Carlos Ruiz on the 15-day DL, retroactive to June 19. Designated INF-OF Greg Dobbs for assignment. Recalled LHP Mike Zagurski from Lehigh Valley (IL). Optioned RHP Scott Mathieson to Lehigh Valley.

San Diego Padres: Recalled C Dusty Ryan from Portland (PCL). Optioned INF Lance Zawadzki to Portland. Agreed to terms with OF Noel Jablonski. Announced C Yorvit Torrealba dropped his appeal and started serving a three-game suspension for making contact with an umpire.

American Association

El Paso Diablos: Released RHP Eddie Pena.

Grand Prairie Airhogs: Signed RHP Jason Stover, C Chris Caves and RHP Wade Morrison. Traded LHP Edgar Estanga to New Jersey (Can-Am) for a player to be named.

Pensacola Pelicans: Released RHP Aaron Jackson.

Shreveport-bossier Captains: Released INF Mitch Elliott.

Sioux City Explorers: Signed 1B-OF Christopher Errecart. Traded RHP Julian Arballo to Florence (Frontier) for a player to be named.

Can-Am League

New Jersey Jackals: Released OF Michael Consolmagno.

Quebec Capitales: Signed RHP-INF Mark Pappas

Sussex Skyhawks: Signed RHP Matt Salvato. Released RHP Justin Dignelli.

Worcester Tornadoes: Signed OF Ryan Crespi.

Frontier League

Evansville Otters: Traded C Mike Dobre to Big Bend (CBL) for 1B Cody Ross, C Brett Urie and a player to be named. Placed C Frank Meade on the retired list. Released LHP Mitch Kramer and 1B Jon Waltenbury.

Florence Freedom: Acquired RHP Julian Arballo from Sioux City (AA) for a player to be named.

Kalamazoo Kings: Released RHP Kyle Jones.

Lake Erie Crushers: Signed LHP John Durket.

Normal Cornbelters: Signed LHP Andrew Guarrasi.

Oakland County Cruisers: Signed LHP Joe Rodriguez.

River City Rascals: Signed RHP Nick Phillips and C Cooper Stewart.

United League

Laredo Broncos: Released 1B Gabriel Memmert and C Jake Wells. Signed OF Carlos Arroyo and C D.J. Dixon.