

A's News Clips, Sunday, June 27, 2010

All-Star outing by Trevor Cahill lifts Oakland A's

By Joe Stiglich, Contra Costa Times

A's starter Trevor Cahill said he's likely to spend his All-Star break logging beach time in his hometown of Oceanside, just outside of San Diego.

As things are unfolding, Cahill's agenda could get redirected north to Anaheim. The All-Star Game is at Angel Stadium on July 13, and Cahill is making a bid to represent the A's.

He's building a case that's hard to ignore. Cahill limited the Pittsburgh Pirates to two hits over 72/3 innings in a 5-0 victory Saturday night in front of 25,068 fans at the Oakland Coliseum.

He struck out a career-high 10 and won his sixth straight decision, giving him the longest winning streak by an A's starting pitcher since Dan Haren won 10 straight from April 18-July 1, 2007.

The A's are likely to get just one player named to the All-Star team, and closer Andrew Bailey and catcher Kurt Suzuki figure to get strong consideration, too. Typical of his personality, Cahill (7-2, 2.88 ERA), who less than two months ago was at Triple-A Sacramento, takes a low-key approach about even hearing his name in the discussion.

"When I was in Sacramento, I never thought I'd be where I'm at now, or even in consideration," Cahill said. "So just being mentioned, it means a lot. We've got plenty of guys that are good enough to be named All-Stars."

The A's were bound to grab attention on 1970s Turn Back The Clock Night, regardless of how they played. They took the field decked out in bright gold jerseys and gold pants, similar to the ones worn periodically during their 1973 World Series championship season.

The Pirates sported black jerseys and black pants with gold hats, a look they had for much of the late '70s.

Cahill seemed to like the throwback touch. A classic rocker at heart, he usually takes the mound to Jefferson Airplane's "White Rabbit," a 1967 classic. On Saturday, he said he was thrown off when he left the dugout and heard Heart's "Barracuda." That 1977 selection better fit the theme of the night, though "White Rabbit" was playing by the time he finished his warm-ups.

"I was like, 'Hmm, they switched it up,' " Cahill said.

Through the first seven innings, the only hit Cahill allowed was Jose Tabata's third-inning infield chopper to third, in which Tabata beat Kevin Kouzmanoff's throw to first.

"His sinker was working tonight," Suzuki said of Cahill. "He was throwing his curveball for a put-away pitch. He basically did everything we talked about before the game off the scouting reports."

Cahill had a lot of help, as the A's won back-to-back games for the first time since May 28-29.

Daric Barton tied an Oakland record with three doubles and notched a career-high four RBIs. He said he recently spotted a mechanical flaw involving his lower body while watching video.

"I'm just slowing everything down, not jumping at the ball," Barton said.

Two of his run-scoring doubles went to left-center, the third went down the right field line.

"When he's hitting doubles to all fields, that's when he's really swinging the bat well," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Leadoff man Coco Crisp, who went 2 for 3, scored on all three of Barton's doubles and added his first stolen base of the season. Crisp is 7 for 16 in four games since coming off the disabled list.

Suzuki connected for his ninth homer in the fifth.

A's update: Joe Rudi honored

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Legend Rudi in lead role as team remembers '70s

Joe Rudi has lived in Oregon for several years now, so he doesn't get back to the Oakland Coliseum very often. But the former A's outfielder received the royal treatment Saturday, along with several of his old teammates, on 1970s Turn Back The Clock Night.

Rudi, one of the core leaders during the A's run of three straight World Series titles from 1972-74, threw out the ceremonial first pitch against the Pittsburgh Pirates. Replicas of his No. 26 jersey were handed out to fans.

As Rudi chatted with reporters in the A's dugout before the game, former Oakland shortstop Bert Campaneris talked baseball with Rajai Davis, and former pitcher Mike Norris dished advice to Gio Gonzalez.

Vida Blue, Ray Fosse and Billy North were among the other players taking part in pregame festivities.

The A's were known as a free-spirited bunch during their three-year championship run, but Rudi said unity was a key to the team's success.

"We came up together in the minor leagues," he said. "We knew each other so well — who to kick in the butt, who to pat on the back to get them going."

The Coliseum as it stands now is a far cry from the venue in which Rudi played from 1968-76 (he returned to the A's in 1982, his final season). Mount Davis, the enormous section of outfield seating built after the Raiders moved back to Oakland in 1995, doesn't sit well with him.

"I don't like that monster in center field," Rudi said. "That's an insult to baseball, really. Oakland's always bowed down to football here. Football's always been the lead dog."

The A's traded outfielder Eric Patterson to the Boston Red Sox for minor league left-hander Fabian Williamson. Patterson had been designated for assignment Tuesday.

His departure leaves Triple-A catcher Josh Donaldson as the only player left from the four the A's acquired from the Chicago Cubs in 2008 for pitchers Rich Harden and Chad Gaudin.

Pitcher Sean Gallagher was traded to San Diego in July 2009, and outfielder Matt Murton was dealt to Colorado in February 2009.

With Monday's day off, manager Bob Geren said he's considering skipping Vin Mazzaro's next turn in the rotation and using him in the bullpen temporarily.

Chin Music: Quite a scene on 1970's Night at the Coliseum; Eric Patterson traded to Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/26/2010 5:38PM

I walked into the A's clubhouse today and it was ... very bright. It's 1970's Turn Back The Clock Night at the Coliseum, and the A's are busting out the gold jerseys and pants from their 1973 World Series championship team. The players weren't wearing their tops yet, but they each had one hanging in their locker, and I almost needed sunglasses. The Pirates will be dressed in retro black jerseys and black pants. They're wearing their retro gold hats with the thin black stripes ringing the hat, and that gets a big thumbs-up from me. I remember wearing one of those when I was really young, and I wasn't even a Pirates fan.

If you tune in to the television broadcast, hopefully they get a shot of A's radio announcer Vince Cotroneo, who is decked out in a wig and full 70's attire. Words can't describe it. I hear Glen Kuiper has quite the look going also ...

–There's actual A's news to report: Eric Patterson, designated for assignment on Tuesday, was traded to the Boston Red Sox for minor league left-hander Fabian Williamson. I don't have a whole lot of info. on Williamson, 21, but he was 4-3 with 3.72 ERA in 14 starts for Single-A Salem this season.

The lineups:

A's –Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Suzuki C, Sweeney RF, Kouzmanoff 3B, Cust DH, Ellis 2B, Pennington SS; Cahill RHP.

Pirates — Tabata LF, Young DH, A. McCutchen CF, Jones 1B, Doumit C, Alvarez 3B, Milledge RF, Crosby 2B, Cedeno SS; D. McCutchen RHP.

Cahill good as gold uniform in 6th straight win

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The bright yellow uniforms weren't exactly flattering for any of the A's, but Trevor Cahill looked just as good as usual when it came to his work on the mound.

Cahill has emerged as the team's most consistently good starter during Brett Anderson's absence, and on Turn Back the Clock Night on Saturday, he dominated the Pirates. Cahill allowed one infield single and two walks in the first seven innings of Oakland's 5-0 victory. He struck out a career-high 10 and recorded his sixth win in a row.

"Great game. He had great command of his fastball," catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "He was keeping it down where they couldn't do too much with it."

Cahill (7-2) has turned into one of the A's All-Star candidates, but pitchers who start on the Sunday before the July 13 game are not eligible to be on the active roster. If A's manager Bob Geren chooses to skip fifth starter Vin Mazzaro after each of the team's two off days before the All-Star Game, Cahill would start on that Sunday, July 11.

Geren is considering skipping Mazzaro this week, and he said he won't take a potential All-Star appearance into account when it comes to rotation decisions.

"His main job is to help this team win," Geren said of Cahill. "That is the priority first."

The '70s were the featured decade at the Coliseum, so it was kismet when Suzuki hit a homer to left-center in the fifth: Longtime team broadcaster Monte Moore, visiting the TV booth, had his bell with him, and he gave Suzuki's solo shot the "dinger" treatment.

"It was fun going out there," Suzuki said of the evening's festivities. "Putting on the gold uniforms, that's always fun."

Coco Crisp singled and scored in each of his first two at-bats, and Daric Barton drove him in both times with doubles. When Crisp walked in the seventh, surprise, Barton sent him around with another double, tying the Oakland record of three in a game. Barton had four RBIs, tying his career high.

Barton said he'd seen on video the day before that he wasn't using his legs as well as usual, so he tried to slow everything down Saturday.

Suzuki also has felt less than comfortable at the plate: He said his timing has been off since he went home on bereavement leave earlier in the month. "Right now, my swing is not really where I want it to be," he said.

Cahill allowed two hits and three walks in all in his 7 2/3 innings, and Craig Breslow took over with two on in the eighth and got pinch-hitter Andy LaRoche to ground out, the 18th batter in a row he has retired. Andrew Bailey pitched a one-two-three ninth. The A's are 8-0 all-time against the Pirates, who also have dropped their past 16 games in a row on the road. Pittsburgh second baseman Neil Walker was out after incurring a concussion in a collision Friday night.

Patterson traded for minor-league left-hander

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Just a few hours after Boston placed second baseman **Dustin Pedroia** on the disabled list with a broken foot Saturday, the A's traded utility player **Eric Patterson** to the Red Sox.

In exchange, Oakland got a 21-year-old left-hander they've liked for some time, **Fabian Williamson**. Several days ago, sources said, Boston was unwilling to deal Williamson for Patterson, but the Pedroia injury changed that, especially with several other teams expressing interest in Patterson - teams who would have picked ahead of Boston in the event that Patterson was put on the waiver wire.

Assistant general manager **David Forst** said that scout **Rick Magnante** saw Williamson in high school in Southern California, and the team has paid attention to him since. Plus, the A's have been looking to add starting pitching throughout the organization.

Williamson, who has a good changeup and curveball to go along with an 87 to 91 mph fastball, will report to Class-A Stockton. He was 4-3 with a 3.72 ERA at Class-A Salem and was 10-5 with a 2.42 ERA at Class-A Greenville last year.

Boston originally acquired Williamson in its **David Aardsma** deal with Seattle, and Patterson came to the A's in the **Rich Harden** deal with the Cubs.

Briefly: Manager **Bob Geren** said that because of recent days off and extra rest for starters, he's considering pushing **Vin Mazzaro** back to Saturday and keeping **Ben Sheets** and **Trevor Cahill** on regular rest. ... Two A's took the opportunity to get advice from some of the franchise's greats on Turn Back the Clock Night. **Mike Norris** said he's going to teach **Gio Gonzalez** a screwball, and **Vida Blue** also talked pitching with Gonzalez, while outfielder **Rajai Davis** discussed defense and hitting with shortstop **Bert Campaneris** and outfielder **Bill North**.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Heating up: Michael Taylor, one of the A's top hitting prospects, appears to be emerging from his early season slump: He's 6-for-his-past-12 with two doubles and four RBIs at Triple-A Sacramento, lifting his average over .250.

Drumbeat: Patterson traded to Boston

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 6/26/2010 5:24pm

For the second time in less than a week, the A's have traded one of their out-of-options guys after designating them for assignment. Utility player Eric Patterson goes to Boston - which placed Dustring Pedroia on the DL with a broken foot today - for a 21-year-old lefty named Fabian Williamson.

I'd heard rumblings that the A's would lose Patterson on waivers if it got to the point of running him through, but I'd never heard the Red Sox mentioned. I'm curious if Boston jumped in because of the Pedroia injury, knowing a team with a better waiver claim (it's done in reverse order of standings) would take him. The A's sent Jake Fox to Baltimore earlier this week.

Conor Jackson is back in the lineup, and the broadcasters are really into the spirit of 70s night - Vince Cotroneo and Robert Buan are wearing Afros and I think we're all seeing more of Buan's chest than we wanted to. Lots of peace symbols around here.

UPDATE: Over at <http://twitter.com/susanslusser>, I've been tweeting photos of the 70s night activities, including Cotroneo and Buan and Glen "Howard Cosell" Kuiper. They're on the SFGate.com Twitter feed, too.

The writers are lame. We've done nothing at all.

Here's the lineup: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Jackson lf, Suzuki c, Sweeney rf, Kouzmanoff 3b, Cust dh, Ellis 2b, Pennington ss

Manager Bob Geren said he's considering skipping Vin Mazzaro next time through the rotation because of all the extra rest the starters have had lately.

Cahill puts it all together in dominating win

Starter K's career-high 10 as learning curve begins to spike

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- With a dominating sinker and devastating ball movement, Trevor Cahill made another strong start in his bid to become an All-Star on Saturday.

Behind 7 2/3 strong innings from Cahill, the A's beat the Pirates, 5-0, to claim their first series victory in eight tries.

Movement has never been an issue with Cahill. In fact, it used to be a problem, as Cahill's pitches once were too unpredictable to throw. But as he settles in to his second big league season, it appears the 22-year-old right-hander is figuring out his repertoire.

"It's kind of a thing that comes with experience," Cahill said. "I haven't been throwing the sinker for too long -- I started in the Minor Leagues a year in. I can kind of add and subtract, but sometimes I still don't know which way it's going -- running or sinking. But tonight I think I had a better idea than most nights."

Cahill had little trouble with Pittsburgh, as he recorded four 1-2-3 innings and allowed only two hits and three walks. His sinker consistently fooled the Pirates, leading to his career-high 10 strikeouts.

"He had really good movement on his fastball, sink," said Pirates first baseman Garrett Jones. "It had late, heavy sink. He hit his spots down and away, not giving us much to drive."

According to A's catcher Kurt Suzuki, Cahill successfully attacked the corners of the strike zone on Saturday. Only one Pirate reached second base all night, coming with two outs in the seventh inning.

With the win, Cahill (7-2) has won his last six decisions, the longest streak in his career. Over his past eight starts, Cahill is 6-0 with a 2.24 ERA, proving why A's manager Bob Geren thinks Cahill should be in the Midsummer Classic.

"If he got behind in the count, it seemed like he could just change the grip on his fastball and throw it wherever he wanted to," Geren said. "That's a good sign. That's what a veteran pitcher can do -- if they fall behind, they can always get back into the count. For a young guy to have that ability -- he's learned a lot."

With the evening Coco Crisp and Daric Barton had at the top of the lineup, Cahill had plenty of room for error. Crisp got on base thrice on Saturday, scoring all three times via a Daric Barton double. It was a banner day for Barton, as he went 3-for-4, setting career highs with three doubles and four RBIs.

"That just happens," Barton said. "Having Coco on the basepaths every time, you don't have to hit a homer. He's been great getting on base, and I'm just trying to do my job and get him in."

After Friday's game, Barton said he watched film and realized he wasn't using the lower half of his body as much as he should. With a tweaked approach, Barton wreaked havoc on the Pirates. The 24-year-old first baseman is riding a six-game hitting streak, batting .381 (8-for-21) in that span.

As for Crisp, it was just the latest example of the impact he can have on a team that has struggled at the plate this season. He also had a stellar day in the field, tracking down two fly balls on the warning track.

In four games since returning from the 15-day disabled list, Crisp is batting .438 (7-for-16) with seven runs.

"He's a good player," Geren said. "He's a guy -- if you look at where we're at -- we need a guy like that right now. He's an all-around player."

Kurt Suzuki also got into the act on Saturday, hitting a solo homer to left center in the fifth, his club-leading ninth. Since missing three games in mid-June due on the bereavement list, Suzuki said his timing hasn't been the same. For now, Suzuki said he's more concerned with how he feels in the batter's box rather than the results.

"Right now I'm really not as comfortable as I want to be," Suzuki said. "My swing's not really where I want it to be, it's always a work in progress, you're always trying to learn more about yourself. I look at this as a positive -- you learn more about yourself and about your swing in these kind of times."

Craig Breslow relieved Cahill and finished the eighth by getting Andy LaRoche to ground out to third. Breslow has retired the past 18 batters he has faced and opponents are batting .031 (1-for-32) against him in his past 12 outings.

Andrew Bailey pitched a perfect ninth for the A's, who won consecutive games for the first time since May 26-29.

A's swing back to franchise's golden era

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Though it has been nearly four decades since the Swingin' A's ruled baseball, there was plenty of nostalgia on Saturday night in the Oakland Coliseum.

As the A's and Pirates donned 1970s throwback uniforms -- the A's in full yellow outfits and the Pirates in black -- 15,000 fans in attendance wore replica Joe Rudi Jerseys.

Rudi, a three-time All-Star and two-time MVP runner-up in the 70s, said it was great to reunite with his former teammates like pitcher Vida Blue and shortstop Bert "Campy" Campaneris. Winners of three consecutive World Series from 1972-74, the Swingin' A's won with style, as many of their players featured outlandish facial hair and over-the-top personalities.

"We were a great fit, we really complemented each other well," Rudi said. "We had a lot of fun. We came up together, played together in the Minor Leagues, we knew each other so well. We knew what chains to pull, who to kick in the [rear] and who to pat on the back to keep people going."

For Rudi, the key to those teams were the bullpens. Of course, there was Hall of Fame closer Rollie Fingers, but Rudi also mentioned names like Paul Lindblad, Darold Knowles and Horacio Pina.

If it weren't for infamous owner Charlie O. Finley, who eventually dismantled the team, Rudi said the A's could have won a few more titles.

"No doubt," Rudi said.

According to Rudi, it all started falling apart when Finley let Catfish Hunter sign with the Yankees as a free agent after the 1974 season.

As for Campaneris, 68, he's still constantly analyzing the game and keeping up with the A's. On Saturday, he chatted with outfielder Rajai Davis about strategy for about 15 minutes before the game. As a table-setter himself, Campaneris said he wanted to see the A's put Coco Crisp and Davis at the top of the order.

"Davis and Coco -- they can run," Campaneris said. "They need to be 1-2. You need two guys who can put a lot of pressure there."

Campaneris showed up to the ballpark Saturday with a ring on each hand. On his right was a ring from the 1968 All-Star Game, the year he hit .276 and led the American League with 62 stolen bases and 177 hits. On his left hand was a ring from the 1974 World Series, a gold band complete with a large green gem in the middle. Unfortunately, it was a replacement, as all three of his rings from '72, '73 and '74 have been stolen.

"It's so nice to be here," Campaneris said. "To see all the players and be around the game, it's so great."

A's deal Patterson to Boston for prospect

OAKLAND -- The A's on Saturday traded outfielder Eric Patterson to the Red Sox for 21-year-old left-hander Fabian Williamson.

Oakland designated Patterson for assignment on Tuesday to make room for Coco Crisp, who was activated from the 15-day disabled list. After Conor Jackson was traded to the A's on June 15, Patterson made only three pinch-hit appearances in eight games before his designation.

Williamson is listed at 6 feet 2, 175 pounds and features an average fastball and changeup with an above average curveball. In 14 starts for Class A Salem this season, Williamson went 4-3 with a 3.72 ERA. Oakland is his third organization since turning pro, as he was traded from Seattle to Boston for David Aardsma on Jan. 20, 2009.

The southpaw was drafted by Seattle in the 22nd round of the 2006 First-Year Player Draft. In 68 career Minor League appearances (50 starts), Williamson is 24-13 with a 3.17 ERA. He has a career strikeout rate of 8.7 per nine innings, while averaging 4.3 walks per nine.

Patterson, 27, was hitting .204 with four home runs and nine RBIs in 45 games with Oakland.

Mazzaro could be skipped in rotation

OAKLAND -- With the A's having an off-day on Monday, manager Bob Geren said he plans on making changes to the rotation as it heads toward the All-Star break.

Geren said he will consider skipping Vin Mazzaro, the team's fifth starter, during the next time through the rotation.

"I want to wait through Sunday to see how everybody comes out of their starts and how many pitches they throw and how they feel," Geren said. "With the off-day I could skip Vinny and use him in the bullpen for a while."

Mazzaro, 23, has made four starts with the A's since filling in for injured starter Brett Anderson. In his previous outing on Wednesday, Mazzaro went a season-high seven innings, allowing two runs in a 3-0 loss to the Reds.

Looking ahead to the All-Star break, which starts on July 12, Geren said he won't adjust his rotation so Trevor Cahill doesn't pitch on the preceding Sunday, which would make him ineligible to play in the All-Star Game.

"His main job, obviously, is to help this team win," Geren said.

Oakland's skipper has vouched for Cahill to represent the A's at the Midsummer Classic, citing his recent win streak. Entering Saturday's outing, Cahill had won five straight decisions and led A's starters with his 3.21 ERA and 6-2 record.

Worth noting

After Saturday's win, Trevor Cahill is 3-0 with a 2.46 ERA in four Interleague starts this year. ... The A's recorded their eighth shutout of the year with Saturday's 5-0 win over the Pirates. ... Jack Cust (1-for-3) is batting .333 (18-for-54) over his past 18 games after hitting .229 in his previous 15.

Crisp tries to push A's to sweep

By Michael Bleach / MLB.com

If the Athletics are going to make up ground on the Angels and Rangers in the American League West division race they are going to need a spark to jump-start their season.

That spark may have just come off the 15-day disabled list on Tuesday.

Center fielder Coco Crisp's return has provided a boost in both the lineup and clubhouse.

Normally known as a defensive whiz with a light bat, Crisp has been crushing the ball since his return, batting .438 (7-for-16) with seven runs in four games.

Though obviously an extremely small sample size, the A's are 4-2 in games in which Crisp starts.

"He's a true leadoff hitter," Oakland pitcher Ben Sheets said. "He's a good player. There's a reason they went and got him. To be missing somebody like that for the year is a pretty tough hit. I think he sets our lineup up and puts everybody in different spots they need to be in."

The Athletics will send Gio Gonzalez to the mound to try to pick up the series sweep.

The left-hander is 6-5 with a 3.89 ERA, but the statistical splits at home are much stingier. In seven starts in Oakland, Gonzalez is 4-2 with a 2.47 ERA, limiting opponents to a .467 OPS.

For the Pirates, it will be a much more difficult of a test to avoid the sweep and a sixth straight loss with Ross Ohlendorf on the hill.

The righty is 0-6 in 10 starts, has a 5.43 ERA and doesn't miss many bats, striking out 5.6 batters per nine innings with a 1.36 strikeout-to-walk ratio.

Oakland: Pennington swinging hot bat

Besides Crisp getting it done with the bat, Oakland shortstop Cliff Pennington has been red hot over the past 10 games, collecting 17 hits in 35 at-bats. ... The Athletics are 22-16 at home and 13-24 on the road.

Pittsburgh: Pirates try to avoid broom No. 9

The Pirates have been swept eight times this season, with Oakland getting a chance to be team No. 9 on Sunday. ... The Pirates were shut out for the eighth time this year Saturday, with Oakland winning, 5-0.

Worth noting

The Athletics are 7-10 in Interleague Play this year. The Pirates are 2-12.

A's players, fans meet on links for charity

Community Fund Golf Classic means fun times for good cause

By Adam Loberstein / Special to MLB.com

PLEASANTON, Calif. -- Gio Gonzalez has walked the chalk line before.

On one side of the line lies the playing field at the Oakland Coliseum, the mound he's taken more than a few times by now. On the other side are the seats, with fans hoping for the best from their young left-hander.

There weren't any lines on Thursday, though, when current and former players took the course for the annual Oakland A's Community Fund Golf Classic at Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton.

"We always want to give back to A's fans," Gonzalez said. "The only thing that separates them and us is that chalk. Coming here and spending time with them is exciting. We like to look at it as us all just being friends playing a game."

The event, which is sponsored by Chevron and State Roofing Systems of San Leandro, brought out current players Daric Barton, Dallas Braden, Jerry Blevins, Craig Breslow, Gabe Gross, Cliff Pennington, Ryan Sweeney, Michael Wuertz and Brad Ziegler, among others.

Former players Shooty Babitt, Vida Blue, Bert Campaneris, Mike Norris, Billy North, John "Blue Moon" Odom and Joe Rudi were also on hand. Other participants included Billy Beane, Bob Geren and members of the A's broadcasting team.

"It's about the fans today," said Blue, who was a member of the A's teams that won three consecutive World Series titles from 1972 to 1974. "Whether you're a current player or a former player, the fans want to get to know you. It's a unique opportunity for them to get up close and personal with us.

"We get to be teammates with the fans here for a short while. They get to experience what it's like to play with a professional athlete, even though my golf sucks."

Braden, Gross and Wuertz got the day started by participating in the Pepsi Long Drive Contest. Wuertz's first-round shot of 301 yards landed him a spot in the finals, where he went on to best Braden with a 285-yard drive for the win.

Braden had the contest's final shot, but couldn't find the fairway.

"Just not 'perfect' enough," Wuertz joked.

A portion of the proceeds from this year's event will benefit Breslow's "Strike 3 Foundation." The foundation, which has raised over \$200,000 since 2008, was established to help find a cure for childhood cancer.

Breslow also created the foundation to honor his sister, Lesley, who is now a 15-year survivor of pediatric thyroid cancer.

"It's incredibly generous of the A's and the Community Fund," Breslow said. "It wasn't even my suggestion -- they approached me with it. ... It's a great day. All you have to do is put a golf club in a baseball player's hands, and you'll see that they're just regular guys trying to make par like everyone else."

A's Cahill shuts down Pirates

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Trevor Cahill hasn't allowed himself to think about his All-Star status. After opening the season on the disabled list, he wasn't sure he'd even be back in Oakland. These days he's the staff ace.

Cahill allowed two hits and struck out a career-high 10 in 7 2-3 innings and Daric Barton had three doubles and matched his career high with four RBIs and the Athletics earned a 5-0 victory over the Pittsburgh Pirates on Saturday night.

Cahill (7-2) walked three as the A's won two in a row for the first time since winning four straight May 26-29.

"A couple of months ago, when I was in Las Vegas and Sacramento I never thought I'd here," said Cahill, who had a stress reaction in his right shoulder toward the end of spring training. "It's an honor just to be considered. We have plenty of guys good enough to be named."

Cahill improved to 5-0 over his past eight starts and has lowered his ERA to 2.88. He's allowed 13 earned runs over his past 50 1-3 innings.

"The biggest thing is just going out there with confidence," Cahill said. "I was able to locate the sinker and go in and out to both right-handers and left-handers."

Kurt Suzuki homered as the A's remained unbeaten in eight games against the Pirates.

"I'm still trying to find my groove," Suzuki said. "I'm not worried about results right now. It's more able how I feel in the box. Right now I'm not as comfortable as I want to be."

Daniel McCutchen (0-3), recalled earlier in the day to replace Zach Duke, lasted six innings. He gave up four runs and seven hits, walking two and striking out two.

"Early on I had some jitters and some nerves," McCutchen said.

"I kind of sped everything up and didn't give myself a chance the first couple of innings. It's something to build off of. It would have been a whole different game if I was able to get strike one with the fastball. Pitching behind in the count I was forced to throw too many fastballs."

Pirates manager John Russell felt McCutchen did some good things.

"He did OK," Russell said. "He'd get two quick outs and had trouble putting them away. Two-out hits and two-out runs."

Cahill retired 19 of 21 hitters until tiring in the eighth. He gave up a leadoff single to Lastings Milledge and walked Jose Tabata with two outs before Craig Breslow ended the threat by retiring Andy LaRoche.

The Pirates lost their 16th consecutive road game, their second-longest streak in the past 25 years, and have lost 17 of 19 overall.

"We've been hitting pretty good overall but we haven't been able to outscore the other team," Pirates first baseman Garrett Jones said. "Today he was on. He was hitting his spots and he had good stuff. We never got much to hit."

Coco Crisp singled twice, walked and scored three runs and is hitting .438 since coming off the disabled list Tuesday.

It was 1970s Turn Back the Clock Game with both teams wearing flashy uniforms from the 70s, with the A's in bright yellow and green and the Pirates in black and gold. Pittsburgh even dusted off its famed pillbox caps. The Pirates and A's were dominant teams in the 70s, combining for five World Series titles.

Barton had an RBI double in the first, a two-run double in the second and another run-scoring double in the seventh.

"Coco has been getting on base a lot and it's helpful to me," Barton said. "I get a lot of pitches to hit and I'm slowing everything down."

Suzuki hit his ninth home run of the season in the fifth, a solo shot with two outs.

NOTES

*Pirates infielder Neil Walker suffered a concussion after colliding with OF Ryan Church during Friday night's game. He'll miss the rest of the road trip and get re-examined Monday in Pittsburgh.

*RHP Steven Jackson was optioned to Triple-A Indianapolis to make room for McCutchen.

*A's IF Eric Patterson was traded to the Boston Red Sox for LHP Fabian Williamson.

*A's manager Bob Geren said he's considering adjusting the pitching rotation with a day off on Monday.

*Barton tied the Oakland record with his three doubles.

*Cahill has yet to allow a first-inning run this season, with opponents hitting .071 (3 for 42) in the inning.

*Breslow has retired 18 in a row.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Tolleson helps Cats open homestand with victory

By Kevin Poveda / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats continued their hot play at Raley Field, defeating the visiting Tacoma Rainiers 6-2 on Saturday night before 11,614 fans to open a seven-game homestand.

Sacramento starting pitcher Kyle Middleton, who has been hot in June, came into Saturday's game with a 18.0 inning scoreless streak dating back to a May 29 relief appearance at Reno. Middleton threw 20 consecutive strikes to start the game and extended his streak to 21.0 scoreless innings before giving up a two-run home run to Tacoma center fielder Greg Halman in the fourth.

Halman's two-run blast were the only runs Tacoma scored against a strong performance by the River Cats pitching staff. Middleton and three relievers walked just two batters, gave up six hits and struck out nine on the night.

The River Cats got on the board in the second inning. After Tacoma right-hander Andrew Baldwin hit Matt Carson with a pitch and then walked catcher Josh Donaldson, third baseman Steve Tolleson unloaded on a three-run home run off the left field scoreboard, his fifth of the season.

The River Cats continued to pile up runs in the sixth inning with a Chris Carter double. Designated hitter Dallas McPherson's ground rule double scored Carter, giving Sacramento the 4-2 advantage. A Donaldson double and Tolleson single gave the River Cats their last two runs of the night, capping off a night where all but two Sacramento starters got at least one hit.

The victory is Sacramento's 39th victory of the season, putting the team above the .500 mark for the first time since April 20, when they had a record of 7-6. The climb back to .500 has been a long one for Sacramento, as they once found themselves nine games below .500 at 17-26 on May 22.

Two six-game winning streaks since that point has given the River Cats new life in the Pacific Coast League's South Division, as they currently sit 9.0 games behind division-leading Fresno.

Fresno comes to Raley Field for three games starting July 1.

RockHounds pick up first win of second half

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

SAN ANTONIO -- The Midland RockHounds finally have a number that isn't round in the win column.

The RockHounds picked up their first win of the second half of the Texas League season on Saturday with a 7-4 victory over the San Antonio Missions at Wolff Stadium.

The RockHounds scored a run in each of the first three innings, holding onto a 3-2 advantage heading into the fourth.

A solo homer by Archie Gilbert in the top of the first gave Midland 1-0 advantage, but San Antonio put two on the board in the bottom of the frame for the early lead.

James Darnell had the big hit for San Antonio, doubling to right and plating Drew Cumberland and Logan Forsythe.

A Petey Paramore single to left scored Corey Brown from second and brought the RockHounds even with San Antonio in the second.

Midland took the lead for good in the top of the third. Gilbert led off the frame with a double to center and advanced to third on an Adrian Cardenas, who went 4 for 5 on Saturday, single to left.

First baseman Jeff Baisley launched a fly ball to right deep enough to allow Gilbert to tag up at third and score for the 3-2 advantage.

Station-to-station baseball allowed Midland to break open the game in the sixth with three more runs. The RockHounds hit four consecutive singles off Wynn Pelzer to lead off the frame, beginning with Alex Valdez's infield base hit.

Three consecutive line-drive singles to center by Brown, Josh Horton and Matthew Sulentic pushed two runs across with Valdez and Brown being plated.

A double steal put Horton on third and Sulentic on second, allowing Horton to score on a fielder's choice hit by J.C. Holt to second.

Up 6-3, Midland added an insurance run in the top of the ninth when Valdez singled up the middle to score Cardenas.

The Missions managed to get two runs against reliever Fautino De Los Santos in the ninth. However, Jared Lansford came in to force Forsythe to fly out to right field for the game's final out and his 10th save of the season.

Carlos Hernandez (7-1) picked up the win for Midland, allowing two earned runs on four hits and two walks, while striking out six in 6 1/3 innings pitched.

The RockHounds play the Missions in the third game of a four-game series at Wolff Stadium at 6:05 p.m. today.

Ladendorf Leads The Way In 13-6 Win

06/26/2010 11:00 PM ET

LANCASTER, Calif. - On Saturday night at Clear Channel Stadium, Tyler Ladendorf turned in the fourth five-hit performance for the Stockton Ports on the season. Ladendorf went 5-for-6, drove in a run and scored twice as the Ports collected 17 hits and pounded the Lancaster JetHawks 13-6. With the win, the Ports improve to 3-0 to start the second half and aim to tie their longest winning streak of the season with a win in Sunday's series finale.

Stockton started the scoring in the second on one play. With runners at second and third and two down, JetHawks starter Ross Seaton (3-9) uncorked a wild pitch that allowed Ladendorf to score from third. Catcher John Curtis desperately heaved the ball to the covering Seaton at the plate and the ball went astray allowing David Thomas to also score and put the Ports up 2-0.

The Ports blew the game wide open in the third, loading the bases with nobody out. Ladendorf, with the sacks full, came through with his second hit of the night-an RBI single to left to make it 3-0. Thomas followed with a sac-fly to center for a 4-0 score. Ryan Ortiz came up next and drilled a three-run homer to left to make it a 7-0 lead and chase Seaton from the game.

Seaton would end up the losing pitcher, going 2.1 innings and allowing seven runs (six earned) on five hits while walking three and striking out one.

Stockton extended their lead to 8-0 in the fifth on an RBI double from Thomas off JetHawks reliever Ashton Mowdy. The eight-run lead was Stockton's largest lead of the series.

Lancaster got on the board in the fifth as Ports starter Kenny Smalley hit a wall after a solid four-plus innings. Smalley, with one on and two down in the fifth, yielded three straight hits resulting in three runs and cutting the Ports lead to 8-3. Smalley would get Lee Cruz to pop out to end the inning and his night.

Smalley received his first win since May 1st, going five full innings and allowing three runs on six hits while striking out three.

The JetHawks cut the lead to 8-4 with a run in the sixth off Ports reliever Lance Sewell. The run was unearned for Sewell because of a Grant Green error in the frame.

The Ports pulled farther ahead in the seventh. With the bases loaded and one out, Stephen Parker drew a walk to score Ortiz from third. Mike Spina followed with a fielder's choice groundout to score Jermaine Mitchell and put the lead at 10-4. Both runs in the seventh came off Mowdy, who allowed three runs on seven hits in three innings of work.

Lancaster scored two in the seventh off Ports reliever Brett Hunter to make it a 10-6 ballgame, but within four runs is as close as the JetHawks would come.

Stockton put the game away in with a big top of the ninth. Lancaster reliever Brian Wabick allowed a two-out walk to Parker. Spina followed with an RBI double to right. Jeremy Barfield came up next and blasted his eighth home run of the season to right-center to make it 13-6.

Trey Barham came on in the eighth inning and pitched the final two innings scoreless to finish the game. Barham allowed two hits and struck out one in an inning of work.

Green played his first game at shortstop for the Ports since June 8th as he recovers from a sore right shoulder.

Ladendorf's five-hit performance is the fourth on the season for Stockton. Green has accomplished the feat twice (5/6 vs. San Jose, 5/31 vs. Modesto) and Parker once (6/15 vs. Bakersfield). The Ports have more individual five-hit performances than any other team in the league.

The Ports will go for their second series sweep of the season in their series finale with the JetHawks at Clear Channel Stadium. Shawn Haviland (6-3, 4.07 ERA) will take the ball for Stockton, opposed by Lancaster left-hander Dallas Keuchel (3-5, 3.75 ERA). First pitch is set for 5 p.m. PDT.

Cougars Can't Hold Lead vs. Bandits

Kane County suffers stunning walk-off defeat in Game 2

DAVENPORT, Iowa – The Kane County Cougars led Saturday night's game in the Quad Cities, 7-3, heading to the bottom of the eighth inning and eventually were left stunned with an 8-7 loss at Modern Woodmen Park. The River Bandits scored once in the eighth and got four unearned runs in the bottom of the ninth off Jose Pina to beat the Cougars and even the three-game set.

The Cougars led, 1-0, in the fourth when Kent Walton tripled in a run and scored on a wild pitch to make it 3-0. The Bandits got two back against Dan Straily with single runs in the fourth and fifth to cut it to, 3-2, and Straily left before the inning was over. He gave up two runs on five hits over 4 2/3 innings in a no-decision. A.J. Huttenlocker handled the next 2 1/3 innings and gave up one run -- in the seventh.

The Cougars had scored twice in the top of the seventh on RBIs from Leonardo Gil and Tyreace House, and they added two more in the top of the eighth after Mike Gilmartin and Conner Crumbliss each drove in a run. Pina (0-1) yielded his first run in the eighth on three hits for a 7-4 score. Then in the ninth Luis Mateo poked a sacrifice fly, and Matt Adams ended the game with a two-out three-run double for a walk-off finish. All four ninth-inning runs were unearned due to an error by Gilmartin at the onset of the frame. Aaron Terry (3-2) recorded the victory.

The Cougars (1-1, 33-38) and River Bandits (1-1, 41-30) conclude their series Sunday afternoon at 5 CT. Ian Krol (5-2, 1.86) is scheduled to face Shelby Miller (1-3, 4.79). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at www.kccougars.com with pregame coverage starting at 4:45 p.m.