

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, June 30, 2010

### Baltimore Orioles' Jake Fox says Oakland A's took him out of comfort zone

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

BALTIMORE — Jake Fox didn't have the success he wanted with the A's partly because he felt he was being asked to become a different kind of hitter.

Fox — acquired by Baltimore on June 22 for minor league pitcher Ross Wolf after being designated for assignment by Oakland — likes to be aggressive in his at-bats and believes the A's were taking him out of his comfort zone by asking him to take pitches and work counts.

"The misconception they had of me was that I'm going to go up there and swing," Fox said.

Fox was supposed to be the Orioles' designated hitter Tuesday but was scratched when right-hander Vin Mazzaro replaced Dallas Braden (left elbow stiffness) as the A's starter. He said he was excited to face his former team.

"We wanted it to work out in the worst way, and it didn't," Fox said. "There's always a part of you that says you missed out on a really good player and you let me go before you really knew what I could do."

Fox never found a groove or a consistent amount of playing time with the A's. He had five walks and 26 strikeouts to go with a .264 on-base percentage in 106 plate appearances. Fox is 2 for 12 with the Orioles.

"I didn't mind his aggressiveness, it was just overaggressiveness — swinging at stuff that was out of the zone early in the count," A's hitting coach Jim Skaalen said. "I didn't mind that he was going up there ready to hit. But there's got to be a clear cut plan in mind. That was the thing that he might have taken issue with. But there's talent there. That's why they traded for him."

Third base coach Mike Gallego gave catcher Landon Powell a College World Series T-shirt that featured the logos of the teams in the championship series — UCLA and South Carolina. Gallego attended UCLA and his son, Nicholas, plays for the Bruins. Powell played in three CWS for South Carolina (2002-04) and was recently named to the All-Rosenblatt Stadium Legends team. "It's pretty special to have my alma mater play in the championship after getting named to the team," Powell said. "Pretty cool year for me."

A's manager Bob Geren said pitcher Brett Anderson (left elbow tendinitis) is on track to begin throwing off a mound early next month. ... Rajai Davis snapped an 0-for-19 streak with a single in the fourth. ... The A's had four stolen bases, including two by Coco Crisp.

### Chin Music: Braden to miss start; Mazzaro fills in

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune, 6/29/2010 3:07PM

Because of elbow stiffness, Dallas Braden will not start tonight's game against Baltimore. Braden's next start is TBA, but manager Bob Geren said Saturday night against Cleveland be a possibility as he aims to give Braden more rest. Vin Mazzaro will start tonight's game.

Just a couple of hours ago, Braden was going through a normal pregame routine as he prepared for his first start since June 22. But the six days off didn't do enough for Braden's problematic elbow, which has been an issue for about two weeks. In his last two starts, Braden has thrown mainly fastballs and changeups, with only a handful of breaking pitches mixed in.

Former Athletic Jake Fox was initially supposed to DH tonight for the Orioles, but he has been scratched in favor of Adam Jones. No Ryan Sweeney for the A's, as he rests his knees for another day. He should be good to go Wednesday. Mark Ellis starts at DH, as Geren starts more right handed bats against the lefty Brian Matusz.

The lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Rosales 2B, Ellis DH, Davis RF, Pennington SS, Mazzaro P.

O's — Patterson LF, Tejada 3B, Markakis RF, Wigginton 1B, Scott DH, Jones CF, Tatum C, Lugo 2B, Izturis SS, Matusz P.

## **Mazzaro subs for Braden superbly**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Vin Mazzaro subbed for tender-elbowed Dallas Braden on Tuesday night at Camden Yards, and he got a skosh more support than Braden usually does.

Not much more, but enough. The A's topped the Orioles 4-2, winning their season-high-tying fourth game in a row, and Mazzaro, whose turn initially was going to be pushed back to later in the week, allowed only one run in six-plus innings of work after getting the surprise start.

"It's not easy, three hours before, you're told you're going to start," he said. "But I was ready."

Braden's continued left elbow trouble, diagnosed as tendinitis, is becoming worrisome, including to Braden, who said, "Absolutely, there's always a fear. ... If you can't throw the baseball comfortably, you always get scared."

Although manager Bob Geren was optimistic Braden will be able to start Saturday at Cleveland, it is starting to appear as if Braden might need a more extended time to rest the elbow. Braden said his elbow is getting no better, and when he awoke Tuesday, it was so stiff, "it was like a right triangle."

Asked about the "wait and see" approach about Saturday, he said, "Yeah, we discussed that. I don't know what four days (more) will do for me."

With the All-Star break approaching, if the A's were to call up a spot starter for Saturday, Braden would not be needed again until July 20. The top possibility at Triple-A Sacramento is right-hander Clayton Mortensen, who is 4-0 with a 2.00 ERA in June. Tyson Ross made two spot starts this year, but Geren indicated he plans to use the rookie in his usual relief role this week.

Were Braden to go on the disabled list, the DL would include three-fifths of the team's projected rotation, with Justin Duchscherer (hip surgery) out for the year and Brett Anderson (elbow tendinitis) out until after the All-Star break.

Mazzaro gave up three hits, but he walked a career-high six and he also hit a batter (Julio Lugo, who took a few steps toward the mound) and he threw two wild pitches.

For the second time in four games, Coco Crisp had a single, a double and a triple, and he also scored twice, stole two bases and made a sprinting, falling catch in center in the seventh, flipping the ball to left fielder Conor Jackson as he tumbled.

The A's are likely to be viewed as sellers at the trade deadline, and Crisp would be a great target for a contender: He's 12-for-29 (.414), and there's a club option on him for next year.

If the A's skip Braden's spot in the rotation next week, it would ensure that Trevor Cahill would pitch the final Sunday before the All-Star Game, making him ineligible for the active All-Star roster.

## Destination Omaha, for father and son

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

En route to Camden Yards, third-base coach **Mike Gallego** made a quick side trip: He flew to Omaha, Neb., so he could watch his son play in the College World Series.

**Niko Gallego** is UCLA's starting shortstop, and his father said that Monday was just the second time he has been able to see him play for the Bruins in three years. "And he had a hat trick!" Mike Gallego said with a smile after his son struck out three times.

The elder Gallego was kind enough to bring catcher **Landon Powell** a shirt; Powell played at South Carolina, which beat UCLA on Monday and Tuesday to win the school's first-ever NCAA title in a men's sport. Niko Gallego drove in UCLA's only run Tuesday.

Gallego also brought **Kurt Suzuki** a shirt. He said it was only because of Suzuki's homer Sunday that he was able to catch his 5 p.m. flight to Omaha. On Tuesday, Gallego caught a 6 a.m. flight from Omaha connecting in Detroit to Baltimore after being up til 2 a.m.

Powell has close ties with South Carolina's baseball program; he works out there in the offseason and he exchanges daily texts with coach **Ray Tanner**.

**Cortisone for Sweeney:** **Ryan Sweeney's** chronically sore knees continue to trouble him and he got the night off.

He said he might have a cortisone shot in his right knee right before the All-Star break because fluid has been collecting under the kneecap.

**Briefly:** The A's stole a season-high four bases Tuesday. ... **Rajai Davis** snapped a career-high 19 at-bat hitless streak, and he also threw out **Luke Scott** at the plate in the second inning. ... **Craig Breslow** pitched the eighth and he appears to now be the setup man. "He's earned it," manager **Bob Geren** said. ... Left-hander **Jerry Blevins** returned from a family funeral in Ohio on Tuesday afternoon and he didn't make it back for team stretch, but he was in the bullpen and entered the game in the seventh.

## A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Bench mark:** One area the A's offense shines - and most years does *not* - is pinch hitting. Oakland pinch hitters are 11 for their past 27 with four walks, two homers and nine RBIs, and the A's lead the league in pinch hit-average and homers.

## Drumbeat: Braden scratched, Mazzaro starting

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Baltimore 6/29/2010 6:29PM

The A's weekly lineup scratch came tonight in the form of Dallas Braden, who has been battling elbow tendinitis for the past two weeks or so. Vin Mazzaro gets the start in his stead.

This shouldn't come as a real surprise: Braden has essentially turned into a two-pitch pitcher because he can't throw his slider much with his balky elbow. He threw one in 82 pitches at Chicago on the last road trip. That's a sign something is

wrong; I know Braden wants to go out there every time it's his turn, but a sore elbow is something that needs some rest. (He has been checked out already; it's tendinitis, they say, nothing structural.)

Manager Bob Geren believes that Braden will be OK to go Saturday - but with the All-Star break looming and the A's with another offday next week, why not give Braden a rest through the break and call up a spot starter for Saturday? Clayton Mortensen has been pitching well at Triple-A Sacramento, that seems like a good spot to him take the ball, at Cleveland. Kyle Middleton was the Pacific Coast Pitcher of the week. Seems like filling in one start if it gives Braden a rest that could til July 20 might be a good thing.

I know, he wouldn't face the Yankees then. But as things stood, Braden wasn't going to pitch in that series next week, anyway, whether he pitched today or if he pitches Saturday.

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

It's the usual sore knees for Ryan Sweeney, who's had some fluid buildup under the kneecap recently. He said he'll be in there tomorrow. Geren said he wanted to load up with right-handers against lefty Brian Matusz.

UPDATE: I just checked to see whose turn it would be Saturday for Sacramento....and it's our old friend John Halama. I doubt he'd get the nod if the A's need a starter, though; his ERA is approaching 6.00. I know there are a lot of fans of the Dalai around here, but I don't think he's in the plans anytime soon. If Mortensen is held out of his Thursday start, we'll have our answer. Not that it's a given Braden won't go, but they've got to have a backup plan in place.

## **A's hold on for fourth straight win**

### **Mazzaro turns in quality performance in spot start**

By Pete Kerzel / Special to MLB.com

BALTIMORE -- The way Vin Mazzaro pitched after being told three hours before game time that he was replacing the injured Dallas Braden, the A's might reconsider how much advance notice they give the right-hander the next time he's called upon in an emergency.

Mazzaro checked the Orioles on three hits over six-plus innings in a successful fill-in effort, Kurt Suzuki drove in three runs and Oakland beat the Baltimore Orioles 4-2 Tuesday night for its fourth straight victory.

"They gave me a heads-up beforehand to be ready for any situation coming in," said Mazzaro, who was informed he'd be pitching around 1 p.m. CT. "It's not easy three hours before the game to be told you're starting, but I was ready and I'm a competitor, you know? It didn't really bother me. I didn't care. You do what you've got to do. If you have to go out and pitch, you've got to do it."

Mazzaro (3-2) was subbing for left-hander Dallas Braden, who was scratched from his scheduled start because of tightness in his pitching elbow. Mazzaro, who last pitched June 23 in a loss to Cincinnati, allowed one run, walked a career-high six and struck out two. Three of Mazzaro's seven career victories have come against the Orioles, who had a four-game winning streak snapped.

"Actually it was [Mazzaro's] day to pitch, so physically he was ready to go," said A's manager Bob Geren. "He battled. He really didn't throw as many strikes as the scoreboard would indicate. It was almost 50-50, balls and strikes. But I guess he threw enough strikes to make it work for him."

Geren had told Mazzaro -- whose turn was supposed to be taken by Braden, who got an extra day's rest after his last start -- when he reported to Camden Yards to be ready to go in the first inning if Braden ran into trouble. Mazzaro was the logical replacement once Braden was scratched.

Mazzaro threw 94 pitches, 48 of them for strikes, and kept extricating himself from jams caused by walks. He had only one 1-2-3 inning -- his last, the sixth -- and departed after walking Julio Lugo to open the seventh.

Baltimore helped Mazzaro out by stranding seven of the runners he allowed -- and 10 for the night.

"Six walks is a lot. It's tough to pitch around that, but I battled and got into some jams and stuck with the fastball and got the ground balls when I needed them," Mazzaro said. "It worked out pretty well."

The right-hander was also helped out by two key defensive plays -- a double play in the second when right fielder Rajai Davis gunned down Luke Scott at the plate, and Coco Crisp's running catch in the left-center gap to deny Corey Patterson an extra-base hit in the seventh.

"Our pitching has been doing a good job of keeping us in games and keeping us ahead when we are ahead," said Crisp, who was 3-for-4 with two stolen bases and two runs scored. "For us, it's going to take a collective effort offensively to win games. That's what we've been able to do recently."

Even the offense the A's were able to muster against hard-luck loser Brian Matusz was hardly earth-shattering.

Suzuki drove in runs in the third and fifth innings to stake the A's to a 2-0 lead. In the second, Cliff Pennington led off with a single, went to second on Crisp's single to left, advanced to third as part of a double steal and scored on Suzuki's two-out infield single to third.

Crisp led off the fifth with a triple to right field off Matusz (2-9) and came home when Suzuki grounded out and first baseman Ty Wigington bobbled a possible double-play ball before throwing to Matusz covering at first.

The Orioles finally got to Mazzaro in the fifth, an inning that saw both benches warned after Baltimore leadoff hitter Lugo was hit in the back. Lugo jawed at Mazzaro as Suzuki and home-plate umpire Fieldin Culbreth ushered him to first base, and several Orioles spilled out of the dugout. Culbreth restored order and issued warnings to both benches, figuring Lugo's plunking was retaliation for Daric Barton being hit in the back in the top of the inning.

"I was just trying to go in. I had [Lugo] 1-1. I'm not trying to bag him, I'm trying to get him out," said Mazzaro. "Heat of the moment, he was a little upset, but whatever, it's done with."

After the game, Lugo was still steaming, claiming Mazzaro was a little too close to his head for comfort.

"I don't know if [Mazzaro] did it on purpose or not," Lugo said. "Like I said, I didn't like it -- he hit me too close to the head. It about hit me in the face. I didn't like that."

Mazzaro threw a wild pitch that the next batter, Cesar Izturis, claimed hit him in the foot, but Culbreth wouldn't allow him to take first base, insisting the ball had first struck the dirt. It worked out for the Orioles when Izturis followed with a run-scoring double to left.

Suzuki struck again in the seventh, when the A's chased Matusz. With one out Barton singled and Matusz was replaced by Jason Berken. Conor Jackson drew a walk and Suzuki chopped a grounder off the glove of third baseman Miguel Tejada for an RBI single and a 3-1 lead.

Matusz allowed three runs on seven hits over 6 1/3 innings, walking one and striking out two. He hasn't won in 13 starts since April 18 at Oakland.

The Orioles got within a run in the eighth when doubles by Nick Markakis and Scott off Craig Breslow made it 3-2. But Jackson's RBI single plated Crisp, who had led off the ninth with a double, for an insurance run and Andrew Bailey retired the side in order in the ninth for his 15th save in 18 tries.

## **Ellis gets rare start at DH vs. Orioles**

## **Geren packs lineup with right-handed hitters vs. Matusz**

By Pete Kerzel / Special to MLB.com

BALTIMORE -- Mark Ellis got a rare turn at designated hitter on Tuesday night, as the A's tried to pack their lineup with as many right-handed hitters as possible against Baltimore lefty Brian Matusz.

It's the third time this season that Ellis, normally Oakland's second baseman, has been in the DH role. Adam Rosales played second base. Ellis is 3-for-9 with two RBIs in his previous two games as a designated hitter.

"I just want to get some right-handers in the lineup today against [Matusz]," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I definitely want Rosey in there. It gives an opportunity for Ellis to stay in there, along with Rosey. A little break [for Ellis'] legs. It's perfect."

Tuesday's game is the start of a six-game road swing through Baltimore and Cleveland, and Geren might have been trying to shake Rosales out of a slump. Rosales is 2-for-20 with nine strikeouts in his last nine games after going 21-for-61 in his previous 18 games.

### **Braden scratched with left elbow stiffness**

BALTIMORE -- A's left-hander Dallas Braden, who has been bothered recently by soreness in his pitching elbow, was scratched from his scheduled start against Baltimore on Tuesday because of stiffness in the joint.

Braden said he knew he was in trouble when he awakened Tuesday morning with his arm bent at an awkward angle.

"I woke up and my elbow looked like a right triangle. It was just up and stiff. It's not painful, there's just no flexibility. ... I can't make 17 more starts, or however many we've got left. You can't pitch that way and I'm not doing my team a favor and I'm not doing myself any good," he said.

The move was announced about 2:20 p.m. PT when A's manager Bob Geren met with reporters, shortly after Geren made an in-person visit to the Orioles' clubhouse to inform Baltimore interim manager Juan Samuel that Braden would be replaced by right-hander Vin Mazzaro.

"[Braden] has a little stiffness in his elbow and we're going to put Vinny in there today and see how [Braden] responds to treatment the next few days," Geren said.

After the A's 4-2 win over the Orioles, Braden expressed frustration at the slow pace of his recovery. The arm problem has limited him throwing between starts and he's worried it isn't getting better more quickly.

"It's a little frustrating," he said. "I'm a guy who throws off the mound twice between my starts. I like to prepare, be 100 percent ready. No amount of video, no amount of scouting report, no amount of watching [games] gets you prepared like touching the baseball."

Braden last started a week ago at home against Cincinnati, allowing 10 hits and four runs -- three earned -- over six innings in a 4-2 loss to the Reds. The A's, hoping that a little more time between starts would be the cure for the soreness Braden had been experiencing, gave him an additional day of rest, pushing him to Tuesday's opener of a three-game series at Camden Yards.

That wasn't enough time for the soreness to subside and the tightness he experienced Tuesday would have made pitching difficult, Braden said.

"It doesn't feel great, by any means, but I can pitch. There again, I'm not using my full repertoire to the fullest. I can squeak some sliders and cutters in here and there. It's not how you want to pitch," he said.

But Braden, who is 4-7 with a 3.83 ERA in 15 starts, experienced stiffness in the elbow Tuesday afternoon and again ran into a problem against Baltimore. On May 25 at Camden Yards, he left after four innings with a sprained left ankle and got a no-decision in a 5-1 loss. In his career against the Orioles, Braden is 5-1 with a 1.41 ERA in seven games, six of them starts.

Geren said he hopes to have Braden available to pitch Saturday at Cleveland, though the start will be listed as TBD -- to be determined -- for now. Braden threw mostly fastballs and changeups against the Reds, hardly utilizing his breaking ball.

"We just think a little more rest might help it quite a bit. It's been six, seven days. He'll get a few more so it could be about a 10-day window ... that might do a lot of good," Geren said.

Braden has previously had the elbow examined by team doctors and undergone an MRI that showed no significant damage. Geren said the left-hander would only have further tests performed if the team's medical staff determined they were necessary.

"We'd like him to get a few more days [of rest] and hopefully knock it out completely and feel good in the second half," Geren said.

Braden hopes to avoid missing another start or a stint on the disabled list, even though the impending All-Star break would limit the amount of time he would miss if disabled.

"That's always a fear. Anytime your tool -- whatever it is you use to make a living -- is chipped or jagged or swollen or whatever, [you worry]," he said. "I make my living throwing baseballs and if I can't throw baseballs comfortably, you always get scared."

### **A's have eyes on College World Series**

BALTIMORE -- A's third-base coach Mike Gallego and backup catcher Landon Powell are closely watching what happens in Omaha, Neb., as the College World Series finals pitting UCLA against South Carolina has extremely personal ties.

Powell played for South Carolina, leading the Gamecocks to three straight College World Series tournament finals from 2002-04 and gaining all-tournament honors in 2002. Gallego's 21-year-old son Niko is UCLA's shortstop, following in the footsteps of his father, who was a three-year letter-winner for the Bruins from 1979-81.

Gallego attended Monday's game in the best-of-three finals -- a South Carolina victory- - and brought back a shirt from the event for Powell, who was selected to the College World Series Legends Team unveiled before the final round of games at venerable Rosenblatt Stadium.

"There's definitely a couple gentlemen's bets that happen to go on in the locker room," said Gallego. "I already collected from Mark Ellis when [UCLA] beat Florida. This one's got a better chance of going the other way at this point. Hopefully, UCLA will even it all up and take it to a third game, which is what we're all looking forward to."

Well, everyone, perhaps, except Powell.

"They're both great teams, but South Carolina's got a 1-0 lead, which really plays in their favor," Powell said. "South Carolina also has their pitching staff completely fresh. The last two games have been almost complete games. I don't know, UCLA has a really good guy pitching today. South Carolina's got to be the favorite, up 1-0, but they're both good teams, that's why they're there."

Gallego is thrilled that Major League schedule makers presented him with a Monday off-day that allowed him to see his son play for the first time in three seasons with the Bruins.

"I remember [Niko] telling me as a senior in high school when he decided to go to UCLA, 'One of my main goals of playing college ball is getting to the College World Series.' Obviously, that's one of his young boyhood dreams and to see that come true for your son is a special day," Gallego said.

Powell's rooting interests may be different, but he understands the bond the Gallegos share.

"For a college kid, that's your biggest stage. Every year, when you start the season, that first [team] meeting you have, the first thing you talk about is going to Omaha. Players write it on the inside of their cap the first day of practice. It's what you dream of."

### **Worth noting**

Longtime A's traveling secretary Mickey Morabito, in his 31st season with the club in that role, was one of the speakers at a memorial service held in Baltimore on Tuesday afternoon for Orioles traveling secretary Phil Itzoe, who died on Feb. 10 after spending 46 seasons with the Orioles, 42 of them coordinating team travel. ... No rehabilitation assignment has been scheduled for outfielder Travis Buck, who has been on the 15-day disabled list since April 21 with a strained right ribcage muscle. Buck was recently cleared to resume baseball activities. ... A's manager Bob Geren said left-hander Brett Anderson, who has been on the 15-day disabled list since June 4 with left elbow inflammation, "is doing fine, doing great." The next step for Anderson will be throwing off a mound, and Geren hopes that will happen soon.

## **Sheets, Millwood aim to continue recent success**

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com

Oakland had high hopes for Ben Sheets when it signed the veteran before the season. The same could be said about Baltimore when it traded for Kevin Millwood last December.

It appears that both pitchers are starting to pitch up to their potential.

Their clubs sure hope so.

Last Friday, Sheets picked up his first win in nearly seven weeks, striking out a season-high nine over six innings against the Pirates. He has seven losses this season.

"I like wins," Sheets said after the 14-4 win against Pittsburgh. "I like that we won, and as a starting pitcher, you want to get a victory. Those seven losses definitely mean a lot to me, too. I'm not doing real well, so every win counts."

Coco Crisp and the running game could be the difference for Oakland on Wednesday. Since being reinstated from the DL a week ago, Crisp is 10-for-23 with nine runs scored in six games. He stole two bases on Tuesday, part of a season-high four by the A's

"[The running game is] a big part of our offense, it really is," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "It's not something you go in and say tonight's the night we're going to steal a lot of bases. It's just if the opportunity presents itself, if the situations are there, we take our shots. We don't run wild, but we feel like if we can make it, we go."

After starting the season 0-8, Millwood has won his past two starts. The O's scored 11 runs to back his five innings and four runs allowed on Thursday against the Marlins. In 17 career starts against Oakland, Millwood is 6-4 with a 3.44 ERA.

### **Athletics: Club battling injury trouble**

The club has had at least seven players on the disabled list since April 21. Overall, 15 players have missed 591 games while on the DL this year. ... A's manager Bob Geren said he hopes to have Dallas Braden, who was scratched Tuesday, available to pitch Saturday at Cleveland, though the start will be listed as to be determined for now. ... No rehabilitation assignment has been scheduled for outfielder Travis Buck, who has been on the 15-day disabled list since April 21 with a strained right ribcage muscle. Buck was recently cleared to resume baseball activities. ... Left-hander Brett Anderson, who has been on the 15-day disabled list since June 4 with left elbow inflammation, "is doing fine, doing great," according to Geren. ... Cliff Pennington is hitting .447 with seven multi-hit games in his past 15 games.

### **Orioles: Pie hopes to rejoin O's on Friday**

Adam Jones' eight-game hitting streak ended on Tuesday. ... Orioles outfielder Felix Pie is hopeful he will join the team for Friday's series opener in Boston. Pie, who has played five games split between the Gulf Coast League and Frederick, went 4-for-5 at Bowie on Tuesday and will start again on Wednesday. According to interim manager Juan Samuel, he will be evaluated after that. ... Michael Gonzalez (left shoulder strain) pitched out of the bullpen for the first time on Tuesday for short-season Aberdeen. He pitched two-thirds of an inning and allowed a run, though it was not charged to him. The Orioles will let Gonzalez ease back into the ninth-inning role. ... Class A Advanced Frederick first baseman Joe Mahoney was named Carolina League player of the week for June 21-27, when he hit .389 with two homers and seven RBIs in four games.

### **Worth noting**

The O's are 13-11 in one-run games this year and 2-10 in games decided by two runs. Of their first 76 games, 36 were decided by one or two runs. ... The Orioles finished 7-11 in Interleague Play this year after going 11-7 last season. ... The O's are the only team in baseball without a home run from their third baseman. ... The A's are 10-16 this month and the club finished 8-10 in Interleague Play, the fourth consecutive year it finished with a losing record against the National League.

## **A's win fourth in a row**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BALTIMORE — Substitute starter Vin Mazzaro allowed three hits in six-plus innings, Kurt Suzuki had three RBIs and the Oakland Athletics beat the Baltimore Orioles 4-2 Tuesday night for their fourth straight win.

Coco Crisp had three hits, stole two bases and scored twice for the A's, whose winning streak matches their season high. Since returning from the disabled list a week ago, Crisp is 10 for 22 (.455) with nine runs scored in six games.

Cesar Izturis and Luke Scott had RBIs for the Orioles, whose season-high four-game winning streak ended.

After Oakland starter Dallas Braden was scratched because of elbow stiffness, Mazzaro (3-2) was pressed into action on short notice. Fortunately for Mazzaro, he was pitching on five days' rest following a solid start against Cincinnati on June 23.

The right-hander gave up one run, walked six and struck out two.

Three of his seven career wins have come against the Orioles.

Andrew Bailey worked a perfect ninth for his 15th save.



Baltimore starter Brian Matusz (2-9) allowed three runs and seven hits in 6 1-3 innings. The rookie is 0-9 in 13 starts since April 18.

The Orioles closed to 2-1 during a testy fifth inning that began when Julio Lugo was hit in the back by Mazzaro's pitch and angrily took two steps toward the mound. After Lugo backed off, Izturis argued that a pitch from Mazzaro hit him on the foot. Plate umpire Fieldin Culbreth said it didn't, so Izturis got back in the box and lined an RBI double to left.

Oakland added a run in the seventh. After Matusz gave up a one-out single to Daric Barton, Jason Berken walked Conor Jackson and yielded an RBI single to Suzuki.

Doubles by Nick Markakis and Scott made it 3-2 with one out in the eighth, but Adam Jones and Lugo stranded the potential tying run at second base.

A double by Crisp and an RBI single by Jackson provided Oakland with an insurance run in the ninth.

The Orioles had a chance to break on top in the second inning, but Scott was thrown out at the plate trying to score from third on a fly to right fielder Rajai Davis.

Oakland broke through in the third, using singles by Cliff Pennington, Crisp and Suzuki to take a 1-0 lead. A triple by Crisp and a run-scoring grounder by Suzuki made it 2-0 in the fifth.

NOTES: The A's (6-2) clinched the season series for the 11th time in 12 years. ... Baltimore went 2 for 11 with runners in scoring position. ... Davis ended a career-high 0-for-19 skid with a fourth-inning single. ... Oakland had a season-high four steals.

## MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

### **Sacramento win streak ends; Fresno up next**

Sacramento's five-game win streak came to an end Tuesday afternoon as the Tacoma Rainiers topped the River Cats, 5-3, at Raley Field.

Sacramento opened the game with consistent hitting, lacing with three singles to open the bottom of the first inning en route to five singles and two runs in the inning. The River Cats could have piled on more, but Josh Donalson's bases-loaded line drive with one out found second baseman Jack Hannahan, who tagged second base for the final out as Dallas McPherson couldn't retreat back to the bag in time.

Hannahan, a former River Cat, opened the scoring for Tacoma in the top of the inning with a solo home run.

Tacoma took control in the third, leaving Sacramento starter Travis Banwart sweating from more than just the afternoon heat. The right-hander, making his second Triple-A start this season, allowed two runs before striking out the final two batters of the inning to end the threat.

Banwart, who dominated in Double-A before being called up to Sacramento last week, got a victory at Las Vegas in his first start for Sacramento. On Tuesday afternoon, he was relieved after allowing four runs (three earned) in 4.0 innings.

Tacoma starting pitcher Luke French retired 10 in row after the first inning before Michael Taylor stopped the streak in the fifth. Taylor tripled to open the inning and scored on a Jared Price sacrifice fly to center field to make the score 4-3 Tacoma.

Tacoma tacked on an insurance run off Sacramento reliever Edwar Ramirez in the sixth inning. Sacramento reliever Jon Hunton entered in the eighth inning and struck out the side -- Matt Mangini, Chris Woodrow and Hannahan, all swinging - after giving up a lead-off double.

Former River Cat Scott Patterson closed the game for Tacoma.

Sacramento has an off-day Wednesday before returning to Raley Field on Thursday to face the Pacific Coast League-leading the Fresno Grizzlies in a critical three-game series. Sacramento trails the Grizzlies by 7.5 games and will look to reduce that margin starting Thursday at 7:05 p.m.

## **Ports overpower Blaze, 8-6**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** - The Stockton Ports (35-41) showcased their talent in their simulcast game on Comcast Hometown Network and MLB Network on Tuesday, collecting three home runs en route to an 8-6 victory over the Bakersfield Blaze (33-43).

David Thomas, Grant Green and Jeremy Barfield each slammed a home run in the game as the Ports totaled nine hits in their victory. Stephen Parker and Ryan Ortiz both collected two hits in the game as well. Southpaw starter Ben Hornbeck allowed three runs on two home runs and eight hits in 5.0 innings of work. Lance Sewell picked up the win for Stockton, tossing 2.1 shutout innings after the Ports broke a tied game for good in the seventh inning. Paul Smyth collected his 11th save on the year, striking out the side in the ninth.

After striking out the side in the first inning, Hornbeck ran into a little trouble in the second inning, allowing two runs. With one out, designated hitter Chris Gradoville slammed a home run to the Metro PCS Home Run Hill in right field to make it 1-0. Third baseman Erik Morrison followed that with a single to center field. Morrison scored the second Blaze run on an RBI double by left fielder David Paisano.

A solo home run by right fielder Mike Bianucci in the third inning made it 3-0 in favor of Bakersfield. Following Bianucci's homer, Hornbeck issued two walks and gave up a single to load the bases. He escaped the jam by retiring the next two batters.

The Ports took their first lead of the game in the bottom of the fourth. With one out, Parker singled to right field. He came around to score on a single to left by second baseman Tyler Ladendorf. Bakersfield starter Carlos Pimentel then walked Barfield to put two on for center fielder David Thomas. Thomas stepped up to the plate and dropped his first home run of the year in the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch in right field. The three-run homer put Stockton ahead, 4-3.

The lead lasted until the sixth inning when Brett Hunter took the mound, relieving Hornbeck. He gave up a leadoff single and then an RBI triple to center field to Paisano. He then retired the next two batters, but walked first baseman Johnny Whittleman. The Ports then called on lefty Sewell to pitch. Bianucci stepped up to the plate, and during his at-bat, the Ports caught Whittleman stealing for the third out of the inning.

The Ports were down 5-4 heading into the bottom of the sixth, and quickly tied the game. Parker led off the inning with a double. He came around to score later on Barfield's sacrifice fly.

The Ports added two more runs to take a 7-5 lead in the seventh. After catcher Ryan Ortiz doubled to lead off the inning, Green slammed a two-run home run over the Ports bullpen in left field. It was his seventh home run of the year, and gave the Ports the lead they needed.

Stockton made it 8-5 in the eighth on a towering solo shot by Barfield.

The Blaze scored their final run in the ninth as Whittleman hit a solo home run with two out in the ninth off Smyth.

The Ports will look to secure the series victory tomorrow against Bakersfield at 7:05 PM at Banner Island Ballpark. LHP Paul Oseguera (2-2, 5.14) will take the hill for Stockton, while RHP Wilmer Font (0-2, 4.38) will start for Bakersfield.

## **Cougars Doomed by Missed Chances**

### **Kane County knocks out 12 hits but scores 1 and strands 13**

**CLINTON, Iowa** – The Kane County Cougars had at least one hit in every inning Tuesday night against the Clinton LumberKings but managed only one run and stranded 13 runners in an 8-1 loss at Alliant Energy Field. The loss evened the series at one win apiece, and the Cougars fell to 4-9 against Clinton this season.

In the top of the first inning, Conner Crumbliss was thrown out at home plate trying to score, and the Cougars stranded two. Then they left the bases loaded in the second, one of four innings where multiple runners were stranded. The L'Kings scored against starter Justin Marks in the bottom of the fourth, and the Cougars tied it in the fifth. Max Stassi doubled home Anthony Aliotti for a 1-1 game, but Rashun Dixon was tagged out after missing home plate in an attempt to get the Cougars the lead.

The 1-1 tie remained until the bottom of the sixth when Clinton put up three runs on four hits against Marks (2-9). The southpaw, doomed by one rough frame, yielded four runs on seven hits, walked two and fanned seven in 5 1/3 innings. Josh Lansford got him out of the sixth-inning jam but allowed four in the seventh for the 8-1 final. The Cougars had 12 hits and have posted 10-plus hits in a season-high four straight games, but they are 1-3 in those contests.

The Cougars (2-3, 34-40) conclude the three-game series and six-game road trip Wednesday night at 7 CT. Rob Gilliam (5-5, 3.90) will be on the hill, and Jimmy Gillheeny (4-6, 3.36) will pitch for the LumberKings (3-2, 40-34). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com) with pre-game coverage starting at 6:45 p.m.