

## A's News Clips, Sunday, Fourth of July, 2010

### Oakland A's waste chances in loss to Cleveland Indians

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

Several A's players watched the replay of their 5-4, 10-inning loss to the Cleveland Indians on Saturday night. And a few heads inside their Progressive Field clubhouse shook when they watched Matt LaPorta's bouncing ball find a hole up the middle to score Anderson Hernandez for the game-winning RBI.

From the A's perspective, it probably didn't have to get to that point. They had tied the game 4-4 in the seventh inning on Daric Barton's single down the left field line, then stranded a combined four runners in the eighth, ninth and 10th innings.

The A's put runners on first and second with two outs in the ninth, but Kevin Kouzmanoff grounded out to end the threat. Kouzmanoff went 0 for 5 and is in the midst of a career-worst 0 for 29 hitless streak. A's manager Bob Geren said after the game that he'll give Kouzmanoff the day off today and play Adam Rosales at third base.

"A physical and mental break," Geren said. "Guys have their ups-and-downs; everybody on the team does. He's been really good for us."

LaPorta's single off Craig Breslow spoiled an otherwise solid night for A's starter Clay Mortensen and the Oakland bullpen. Mortensen was called up from Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday to replace Dallas Braden — now on the 15-day disabled list with a tender left elbow — and allowed three earned runs in six innings while striking out seven.

Mortensen was working on six days' rest and said he felt almost "too good" at the start of the game. As a result, he left a fastball up in the zone to Jayson Nix, the Indians' No. 2 hitter, and Nix deposited it over the left field wall for a 2-0 Cleveland lead.

"That wasn't part of the game plan," Mortensen said.

LaPorta singled off Mortensen in the fourth inning, and two runs scored on the play when the ball eluded outfielder Gabe Gross and went to the wall. But Mortensen showed the kind of composure that helped him win a Pacific Coast League-leading 10 games in 15 starts this year, getting through the next two innings.

Mortensen made six starts and had a 7.81 ERA after coming over from St. Louis last July in the Matt Holliday deal. He went into spring training this year with little or no chance of cracking the opening day roster, then gave up nine earned runs in three spring appearances.

But Mortensen said going down to Triple-A was the best thing for him, adding that he learned to be more efficient and have better command of his pitches.

"I needed it. I needed to go down and prove I could pitch at that level," Mortensen said. "Just fine tune everything. That was a really good thing for me. Being able to go down and compete with pretty good players in Triple-A."

Geren said it's possible that Mortensen could be used as a starter again before the All-Star break, even though the A's do not necessarily need a fifth starter. Shortly after the break, though, both Brett Anderson and Braden are expected to return.

TODAY: A's (Vin Mazzaro 3-2) at Indians (Fausto Carmona 7-6), 10:05 a.m.  
TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

### A's update: Daric Barton

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

Barton has carried out his approach during first half

CLEVELAND — A's first baseman Daric Barton basically had two goals for himself at the start of the season: Stay healthy and be disciplined at the plate.

Just past the season's midway point, things have pretty much worked out according to his hopes.

Barton is the only Athletic to have played all 82 games — a figure that leads the American League — and is second in the AL in walks (49). Barton has a .395 on-base percentage, which is up 17 points over last season when he played only 54 games with the A's. He went 2 for 3 with two walks Saturday, and drove in the tying run in the top of the seventh inning with a single down the left field line.

"I had to play through a couple little injuries. But other than that, everything's been good," Barton said of his season. "I feel like I'm back to my normal self, doing what I can do on the field and not trying to do too much."

Barton wasn't in the initial lineup for Friday's series opener against the Indians after suffering a right knee contusion during Thursday's game at Baltimore. But he felt better late Friday afternoon after receiving treatment and wound up starting and going 2 for 5.

"Little tiny injuries and little bangs here and there aren't going to keep me out of the lineup," Barton said. "If I can deal with the pain that I have, then I'm going to be in there."

Manager Bob Geren said pitcher Brett Anderson (left elbow tendinitis) will pitch in a simulated game today and in actual games on July 9 and 14. Anderson threw 40 pitches in a side session last week and, if he continues to progress, could be back in the A's rotation shortly after the All-Star break.

Stanford right-hander Jordan Pries — nephew of Ken Pries, the A's vice president of broadcasting and communication — threw a no-hitter on June 30 for Yarmouth-Dennis of the Cape Cod League. Jordan Pries had a perfect game through six innings and finished with three walks and four strikeouts.

Conor Jackson missed his second straight game with a sore right hamstring. ... The All-Star rosters will be announced today at 9 a.m. PST. Trevor Cahill is the most likely A's candidate, but Geren also said Andrew Bailey (15 saves) and Craig Breslow (3-2, 2.84 ERA) warranted consideration.

## **Chin Music: Dallas Braden placed on DL; Mark Ellis sits**

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune 7/3/2010 3:35PM

Not a ton of news on what's shaping up to be another nice night for baseball in Cleveland. As expected, Dallas Braden was placed on the 15-day DL to make room for tonight's starter, Clay Mortensen. Not sure if this just a spot start for Mortensen since the A's don't necessarily need a fifth starter next week, but he could certainly make a case for himself to make more appearances for the A's this season should he pitch well tonight.

A day off for Mark Ellis today, as Adam Rosales starts at second base. Gabe Gross is back in left field, as Conor Jackson still needs more time to rest his right hamstring. He said the discomfort is in a different spot than it was when he had to go on DL in April with a strained right hamstring.

A's manager Bob Geren said Brett Anderson will throw again tomorrow in a simulated game and possibly in an actual game on the 9th. Geren said it's too soon to speculate when he'll be back in the A's rotation, but the 19th in the series opener against the Red Sox at the Coliseum is a possibility (my words, not his).

The lineups

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Kouzmanoff 3B, Suzuki C, Sweeney RF, Cust DH, Rosales 2B, Gross LF, Pennington SS, Mortensen P.

Indians — Crowe CF, Nix 2B, Santana C, Hafner DH, Kearns RF, Peralta 3B, LaPorta 1B, Duncan LF, Donald SS, Westbrook P.

## **Different makes, models of baseball caps sadly keep flooding market**

By Cam Inman, Oakland Tribune columnist

Baseball caps are a wonderful slice of Americana.

Until you suddenly notice all the different, at times hideous, styles out there.

Take today, for instance. As noble as it is to honor Independence Day and raise funds for military veterans, it is almost unsightly to see all major league teams don white caps with a red or blue brim.

But it is part of baseball's overall "Great Cap Caper."

Remember the good ol' days when you could throw on the cap of your home team and root, root, root? Now teams are rooting for you to spend, spend, spend on all their caps that come in various styles, colors, logos and propellers.

That doesn't just go for caps designed for fashion-conscious fans (or fashion-challenged ones who drop \$34.99 on a grape-and-plaid A's cap, one of 81 options available for that club on New Era's online store; the New York Yankees have 221 options.)

The number of authentic, game-day lids are out of control, too. They're an apt target for baseball purists, who've been busy debating the designated hitter, instant replay and Bud Selig's hairstyle.

Only seven clubs remain loyal to one cap for (non-holiday) games: The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim (good thing they display an "A" on their cap instead of that run-on-sentence of a name), Chicago Cubs, Los Angeles Dodgers, Seattle Mariners, Florida Marlins, Tampa Bay Rays and Yankees.

The A's are among six clubs who rotate at least three caps. Yes, the A's offer their mass fan base enough options to feel like they're on Billy Beane's trading block: The classic green cap with a yellow lid, the all-green option for road trips and the black cap for whenever black uniforms are put on the hangers, as determined by either (a) the starting pitcher, (b) San Jose's mayor, or, (c), that day's lucky parking-lot attendant.

Do the Cleveland Indians and Minnesota Twins honestly need four different caps apiece? Maybe Cleveland will make a fifth with LeBron James' image on it to keep the NBA superstar from skipping town.

The Giants have gotten into the multiple-hat dance this season. Orange-bill caps are the Giants' staple for Sundays. Today, however, calls for the Stars & Stripes model, which also was worn Friday and Saturday, as well as Memorial Day and Patriot Day (Sept. 11).

Giants clubhouse manager Mike Murphy has plenty of room to stock the extra caps inside his plush AT&T Park confines. And he concurred that: "Teams now have 10 different hats in all different colors."

So, at this rate, how about offering up a different cap every day?

"It's up to Bill," Murphy said in reference to Giants managing general partner Bill Neukom. "He's the boss, and he's a good man."

Yes, but is the orange bill a good look? C'mon, it got banished once. But the Giants know how to cash in on headgear (see: \$20 panda cap in honor of Pablo Sandoval's nickname and \$10 wig to mimic Tim Lincecum's locks).

Wonder why Lincecum hasn't looked right in his past few losses? Forget about his fastball control. It must be his cap (wink, wink).

Well, he did wear that Stars & Stripes cap in Friday's defeat, as well as in a Memorial Day setback. And don't forget about his orange-lid loss June 27. Conspiracy theorists, unite!

Lincecum, you may have noticed, is magnificent in his all-black cap. He has the same one since he broke into the majors in 2007, and he is 7-1 in it this season. He wasn't much for talking about it the other day, preferring to nibble on an ice-cream bar ("I'm really into this") than discuss the most notorious black cap since Zorro's. But he did indicate he was an equal-opportunity-hat employer, willing to wear whatever hat reaches his locker hooks.

So what in the name of Cap Anson is going on here? (History lesson: Cap managed the New York Giants in 1958).

Well, since caps are a popular accessory, they are a gold mine. Baseball owners like money. So do the players. They would all wear sombreros, cowboy hats and crowns if it raked in more money. (Suggestion: A deerstalker-cap giveaway by the Giants and A's to honor the late Franklin Mieuli.)

Today's U.S. history lesson: Caps have changed since 2007. New Era introduced a fabric that doesn't shrink and can be easily cleaned by a nifty metal contraption in each clubhouse.

"Before, players would go every three weeks," Murphy said of a cap's former lifespan. "We'd go back East, it'd be warm, guys would change caps. Now guys don't want to change and they'll wear the same hat throughout the year."

Well, not exactly the same cap. There are options. After all, this is America, home of the brave (and three versions of Atlanta Braves authentic game-day hats). What a country.

## **A's fall in 10th on walkoff by Indians' LaPorta**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland opened the statistical second half of the season with a game that sounded many of the major notes of the first half. A player went on the disabled list, the A's showed some grit in a tight game but lost, and they still have no power.

The Indians, playing better than a last-place team of late, got an early two-run blast by Jayson Nix, and they also got a well-placed bouncer up the middle by Matt LaPorta with two on and two outs in the 10th inning to beat the A's 5-4 on Saturday night.

LaPorta's single was his third of the game, and it came off one of the A's All-Star candidates, left-handed reliever Craig Breslow. The All-Star teams will be announced today.

"I saw how big a hop it took over me, and then it bounced once behind me and it still went through," Breslow said. "That's a hard infield."

Breslow was working his second inning, and he threw 27 pitches. Breslow, who'd also gone 1 1/3 innings the previous night, said he'd like to limit two-inning appearances as much as possible, but, he said, "I felt strong, I didn't feel like my stuff was slipping."

The real problem, he said, was falling behind 3-0 on Travis Hafner, who'd doubled with one out.

LaPorta got a helpful bounce on another hit with two on and two outs. In the fourth, he whistled a line drive to left that skipped past Gabe Gross.

"It hit something and popped up," Gross said. "I've played baseball a long time and I've never whiffed one cleanly, and I hope I never do it again."

Clayton Mortensen made a spot start in place of Dallas Braden, out with elbow tendinitis, and Mortensen was quite good much of the way. Throw out the two-run homer by Nix, the second batter Mortensen faced, and it was more than decent.

"I was a little anxious, trying to do too much, and it's been a week since I'd thrown," Mortensen said of the homer. "My body felt too good and I left it up."

The 25-year-old settled in and retired 11 men in a row at one point. He went six innings and allowed six hits, two walks and four runs, three earned thanks to Gross' error. He also struck out a career-high seven.

"He did pretty well," manager Bob Geren said. "A lot better than what we'd seen last year."

There is some chance he'll get another start next week; Geren said the team will re-evaluate after this turn of the rotation. As expected, Braden went on the DL.

Cliff Pennington hit a two-run triple in the third and scored two runs for Oakland.

Kevin Kouzmanoff's struggles continue. After hitting .336 in June, he's a career-worst 0-for-29. He has hit into a double play in each of his past five games.

"I'm putting the ball in play, but I'm not hitting the ball solid," Kouzmanoff said before the game. "It's amazing how many at-bats, how many pitches - you'd think something would have gotten through, even a bloop, but no."

Kouzmanoff will get today off.

## **Rare groundout to right**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

When right fielder **Ryan Sweeney** threw out Indians catcher **Mike Redmond** at first on a bases-loaded liner Friday night, it was just the sixth 9-3 putout in the American League since 1950, according to stats expert **David Feldman**.

It was the first time in A's franchise history that a right fielder had nailed a runner at first, but Oakland has been on the other end. On June 18, 1976, Milwaukee's **Bernie Carbo** got **Phil Garner** at first in the sixth inning at Oakland.

Friday night's slick play was the result of alert thinking by outfield coach **Todd Steverson**, who realized that it might be a possibility with Sweeney's good arm, and Redmond, a slow runner, batting. Steverson signaled to Sweeney and first baseman **Daric Barton**, and two pitches later, everything unfolded as if by plan.

"I was like, 'Oh my God, it worked!' " Steverson said. Longtime umpire **Joe West** told me that was just the second time he'd seen it."

**Anderson schedule:** Manager **Bob Geren** said that **Brett Anderson** will throw 20 pitches in a simulated game, and he's then scheduled to throw Friday and July 14.

That means Anderson (left elbow tendinitis) could be back in Oakland on July 19 or 20, depending on where **Dallas Braden** gets slotted back into the rotation.

**Briefly:** **Justin Duchscherer** said via text that he's working five days per week with a therapist, but he won't know for several weeks if pitching again this season is a possibility. He had left hip surgery early last month, and the recovery time often is cited as six months. ... **Conor Jackson** missed his third game in a row with right hamstring tightness. ... **Landon Powell** will start at catcher today. ... **Brett Tomko** has recovered from nerve trouble in his right arm, but according to assistant general manager **David Forst**, hip soreness delayed him from joining Triple-A Sacramento.

## **A'S LEADING OFF**

Susan Slusserf, San Francisco Chronicle Sunday

**Another Skaalen in the organization:** Hitting coach Jim Skaalen's 22-year-old son, Chris, was signed as a free agent and is pitching for the A's rookie-ball team in Arizona. "It's awesome they've given him this opportunity," the elder Skaalen said.

## **Drumbeat: Thoughts on Mortensen; latest on Jackson, Anderson**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the former Jacobs Field 7/3/2010 2:55PM

Clayton Mortensen is set to go this evening against the Indians, and as expected, Dallas Braden went on the DL; he won't pitch again until at least a few days after the All-Star break, probably in the Boston series. Mortensen's numbers are so good, especially lately, it will be interesting to see how much progress he's made since last year. You'll probably recall he came over in the Holliday trade last year, and he had some rough outings with Oakland, plus the charges of driving under the influence late in the season.

What struck me after that episode, though, was how stand-up a guy Mortensen was when he discussed the incident with the media, and he showed such genuine contrition about it. He told us the hardest thing he ever had to do was call his dad and tell him the news, and he looked totally stricken as he relayed that; there was no doubt that he felt real remorse. And he didn't point fingers, didn't blame anyone else, didn't make light of a serious situation as some other athletes I've covered have done in similar situations. That's the sort of lesson that could make anyone grow up if approached the right way, and the signs are that that's what's happened.

Here's the lineup, with Mark Ellis just getting a night to rest his legs, plus manager Bob Geren mentioned there was a little bit of a matchup thing. It's a very small sample size for Adam Rosales, who is 1 for 2 off Jake Westbrook, but the record is a little more solid for Ellis, who is 5 for 24 with a walk and two strikeouts against the Indians starter.

Lineup - Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Kouzmanoff 3b, Suzuki c, Sweeney rf, Cust dh, Rosales 2b, Gross lf, Pennington ss

Conor Jackson remains out of action, and again, I believe he'll be a DL candidate if he's not ready by, say, Monday, when the A's return home. I don't think they want to go into a series against the Yankees without a full complement of players. No, it almost assuredly would not be Chris Carter or Michael Taylor getting called up. Neither is faring well enough at Triple-A Sacramento, especially not to throw them in against the Yankees. It likely would be Matt Carson again, giving the A's a right-handed hitter for some lefties they'd get against New York and the Angels. Matt Watson, a onetime A's callup himself, is faring best at Sacramento right now, but he's not on the 40-man, and Carson is.

Brett Anderson is throwing 20 pitches in a simulated game tomorrow, Geren says. Doing the math, if Anderson stays on the same schedule that Geren provided (throwing on July 4, 9, 14) and everything goes smoothly, he'd be looking at a July 19 return to Oakland, possibly July 20 depending on where Braden is slotted back in.

## **Neukom's hardball tactics bad for Bay Area**

Lawrence E. Stone, San Francisco Chronicle 7/3/2010

Baseball fans of all ages know that a "stopper" is a dependable relief pitcher who is called into a game late to stop the opponents from scoring and seal a win. Some of the finest stoppers in the game have played professional baseball in the Bay Area, including Hall of Famers Dennis Eckersley and Rollie Fingers of the A's and Rod Beck, Robb Nen and now Brian Wilson of the Giants.

Unfortunately, the term "stopper" has come to mean something entirely different when it comes to the future of one of the largest private economic stimulus proposals in the Bay Area. A "stopper" is trying to blow the save that will keep the A's in the Bay Area. His name? Bill Neukom, the managing partner of the San Francisco Giants. His attempts to stop the A's from building a new ballpark in San Jose will drive the team out of the Bay Area, which would be a true loss for our region.

After six years of exploring possible sites for a new stadium in Oakland, Fremont and elsewhere in Alameda County and beyond, the A's have expressed serious interest in relocating to San Jose and building a privately financed, modern downtown ballpark.

Two weeks ago, the San Jose City Council unanimously approved an environmental impact report for the downtown ballpark, which would be situated conveniently near public transit, freeways and existing downtown parking lots. The mayor and City Council have insisted and the A's have assured the community that the ballpark would have a positive impact on the city's general fund and will not require a tax increase on local residents.

In addition to keeping the A's in the Bay Area, this plan will create thousands of construction and permanent jobs and generate millions of dollars in additional revenue every year to support public safety and other vital services in San Jose.

Sounds like a great plan, right? It is, and I'm proud to join San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, City Council members, business and labor leaders, community activists and thousands of local residents in expressing support for this plan. The voters are with us, too: Recent private polls have shown that more than two-thirds of local voters support the plan.

Considering Neukom's motivations and his 25-year history as a litigator, we're not surprised that he has engaged a law firm to try to derail this plan. It's easier to do the math on this equation than it is to calculate an ERA or batting average. If the A's are forced to move, the Bay Area becomes a one-team market, and the Giants would reap the benefits for decades to come. And Giants fans can expect ticket prices to soar.

But Neukom hasn't stopped with the city of San Jose. Now he's trying to intimidate Major League Baseball and its attempt to resolve the dispute between the Giants and A's over territorial rights in the South Bay. While the Giants claim that a San Jose ballpark for the A's would hurt their fan base, we all know this just isn't true. Giants fans will still go to San Francisco, A's fans will go to San Jose, and baseball fans will be the true winners as they will have two of the finest teams, playing in two of the finest parks in the country, all within a close drive.

In the 1980s, San Jose was a territory shared by the A's and Giants. The A's gave it exclusively to the Giants for free when the Giants were exploring building a new ballpark in the South Bay. Though their plans never came to fruition, the South Bay remained part of the Giants' territory. Now that the A's are interested in a San Jose location, it seems Neukom is demanding Commissioner Bud Selig do his bidding or be sued.

As I understand it, the A's have agreed that following the opening of a San Jose ballpark, the Giants would have the right to ask Major League Baseball to arbitrate any damages to their fan base or revenue that were caused by the new stadium. Neukom has apparently rejected this fair and simple approach, most likely because projections conducted in a fair manner just might show that the San Jose ballpark would have a positive impact on the orange and black.

This game is in the final innings, and the time is now for Neukom to fire the lawyers and step up and be a regional leader. Major League Baseball must not allow one person, Bill Neukom, to control the decisions that rest with the commissioner and the other team owners. Mr. Neukom, drop the lawsuits and work with the A's, South Bay leaders and Major League Baseball to find a win-win solution that not only allows the A's to explore their options in the South Bay, but helps our entire region regain its economic footing.

This can work for everyone, but only if we all agree to keep the "stoppers" in the bullpens and the lawyers out of the courtrooms, and that starts with you.

Lawrence E. Stone is serving his fifth elected term as Santa Clara County assessor and is a leader of a civic organization trying to move the A's to a downtown San Jose ballpark. Send your feedback to us through our online form at [SFGate.com/chronicle/submissions/#1](http://SFGate.com/chronicle/submissions/#1).

## **A's drop extra-inning affair in Cleveland**

### **Breslow allows walk-off single in 10th; Mortensen solid**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- In a 5-4 extra-inning loss to the host Indians on Saturday night, the A's couldn't quite keep up with Matt LaPorta.

At least not the balls hit off his bat, anyway.

The Indians first baseman first reached third base in the sixth frame on what was deemed a two-base fielding error by left fielder Gabe Gross, who claimed the ball took a funny hop before sailing right past him, allowing not just one run to score, but two.

Then, in the bottom of the 10th in a tied game, LaPorta grounded one up the middle on a 3-2 count off reliever Craig Breslow with runners on first and second and two out.

"It was a chopper," manager Bob Geren said. "Exactly what we were looking for."

Except for the part when said chopper decided to continue on into the outfield to hand the Tribe a walk-off victory and spoil what was turning out to be yet another lights-out performance from the seemingly untouchable Breslow, who entered the game with an .068 opponents batting average over his last 15 games.

"[LaPorta] battled," Breslow said. "He put together a good at-bat, and I was trying to go in on him, but I left it out over the plate a bit.

"It took a big hop over my head. It took one hop in front of me and one behind me, and at that point, I pretty much knew it was hit hard enough to get out there."

It marked the third hit of the game for LaPorta and the 27th pitch for Breslow, who trapped the first baseman in a 1-2 count before offering him two straight balls to hand him the favorable count. After getting two outs to close the ninth, the A's lefty was brought back in and proceeded to tally a strikeout before surrendering a double to Travis Hafner and intentionally walking Austin Kearns to put runners at first and second for LaPorta.

"I just tried to hit the ball hard," LaPorta said, "just like if it was my first or second at-bat."

It marked the 10th time and second straight day Breslow has been called upon for more than one inning this year. After the game, the A's reliever said he'd prefer to be limited to one inning, but noted fatigue wasn't an issue for him Saturday.

"I felt pretty comfortable," Breslow said. "We're going to hold up a lot better if we throw one inning at a time, obviously, but I felt strong and didn't feel like my stuff suffered at all."

Breslow was one of 11 pitchers in the rather lengthy affair, which also featured A's starter Clay Mortensen, who was making his season debut for the injured Dallas Braden. His outing was quickly met with a two-run homer off the bat of Jayson Nix in the first frame, but he retired 11 consecutive batters thereafter and regained the lead in the third thanks to a two-run triple from Cliff Pennington and a run-scoring fielding error by Indians shortstop Jason Donald.

"That definitely wasn't the game plan," Mortensen said with a smile. "I was pretty anxious and think maybe my body felt a little too good, so I was trying to overthrow. It was nice later on to get going like that and have a better feel for my delivery."

In the fourth, Mortensen recorded two quick outs before surrendering a single and a walk to put runners on first and second. He then allowed the single to LaPorta that went past Gross in left field to allow both runners to score and put LaPorta on third base for a 4-3 Indians lead.

"I don't know what it hit," Gross said, "but it just kind of popped up over my glove and did it to the point where it carried right through. I didn't feel it in my glove and it was still going full speed. Playing baseball all this time, I've never seen a ball go by at full speed like that before, and I hope it never happens again."

Mortensen was pulled following the frame, having allowed four runs (three earned) on six hits and two walks with seven strikeouts, before Oakland tied the game at 4 in the seventh courtesy of an RBI single from Daric Barton off Rafael Perez that scored Pennington, who went 3-for-4 in the game.

Mortensen, who struggled with the A's last year in seven appearances (2-4, 7.63 ERA), admitted it was "a lot easier to come up having gotten a taste of it last year."

"I feel a lot better knowing what I can do," he said. "My focus has been getting guys out with as many pitches as possible, so being able to do that is key for me."

"He did pretty well," Geren said. "He had a rough start, but he settled in after that and was a lot better than what we saw last year. I'm happy to see him throw that well."

The A's skipper, who is likely to go with a four-man rotation until the All-Star break courtesy of an off-day Thursday, said he'd "re-evaluate" whether Mortensen may get another starting nod instead.



Jake Westbrook, meanwhile, gave the Tribe six innings of work, giving up three runs (two earned) on six hits with three walks and one strikeout. The A's left nine runners on base against the Tribe's pitching staff, which combined to hand Kevin Kouzmanoff an 0-for-5 outing.

The A's third baseman, who posted a .339 average in June, is suddenly hitless in his last 29 at-bats -- a career-high skid -- and will receive a "mental and physical day off" Sunday, when Geren said Adam Rosales will get the start at third.

"He's maybe getting around a few balls," Geren said. "We'll give him a day off. Every player has their ups and downs, and he's just going through a small stretch here."

## **A's give Braden shot to rest elbow on DL**

### **Mortensen recalled; Oakland lefty could return to hill on July 20**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- As expected, the A's on Saturday officially placed lefty Dallas Braden on the 15-day disabled list with left elbow stiffness and recalled Clay Mortensen from Triple-A Sacramento.

The 26-year-old Braden, who hasn't appeared on a mound since June 22 due to an ongoing bout with elbow tendinitis, came out of a 25-plus pitch bullpen session Thursday feeling well and hoped to make his scheduled Saturday start, but the A's want to make sure Mr. Perfect -- winless since his perfect game on May 9 -- is 100 percent healthy before handing him the ball again.

Braden's DL stint, the second of his career, is retroactive to June 23, and given the timing of off-days and the All-Star break, the club could potentially rest the southpaw until July 20, when he would likely slide into the back end of the rotation. Before being sidelined, Braden was 2-4 with a 3.83 ERA in 15 starts.

Mortensen's start against the Tribe on Saturday represented his first big league outing of the year. He was 10-2 with a 3.58 ERA in 15 starts with Sacramento, where he compiled 77 strikeouts, good for third in the Pacific Coast League. Recently named to the PCL All-Star team, the 25-year-old righty pitched at least seven innings in six of those outings, and he allowed two runs or fewer five times.

Acquired in the Matt Holliday trade with St. Louis last July, Mortensen made six starts with Oakland in 2009, posting a 2-4 record and 7.81 ERA. Saturday will likely mark his only start before the All-Star break, as Oakland can use Thursday's off-day to make use of a four-man rotation.

### **Jackson hopes to shake off hamstring soon**

CLEVELAND -- Conor Jackson walked around the A's clubhouse sporting quite a limp Saturday, his right hamstring tightness rather apparent.

Jackson, who hasn't played since Wednesday in Baltimore, has been receiving treatment for his injured hamstring on a daily basis, and he feels confident he can return to the lineup before the All-Star break begins July 12.

"That's the goal," the A's outfielder said Saturday in Cleveland. "I'm hoping by the time we get home Monday, I can test it out a little more."

Jackson is currently undergoing all baseball activity except running. He spent a handful of time on the disabled list in April while still with Arizona due to a strained right hamstring, but he said the pain is in a different location this time.

"It's frustrating," he said. "I've already missed a lot of time this year, and it makes it even more frustrating when you come over to a new team and want to make a good impression. It's a difficult process, but I'm hoping I can avoid the DL."

Jackson would seemingly need to be ready to go early this week in order to do so. The A's host an always tough pair of opponents in the Yankees and Angels, and they would likely want a completely healthy squad on board.

### **Anderson on track to return soon after break**

CLEVELAND -- Lefty Brett Anderson, sidelined with elbow tendinitis, is slated to pitch in a simulated game on Sunday, and he is on track to rejoin a rather depleted A's rotation soon after the All-Star break.

Anderson, who threw 40 pitches in a side session on Monday, is expected to throw 20 pitches Sunday, and if all goes well, he will continue to extend his throwing routine every five days. Thus, the southpaw could potentially make his anticipated return to Oakland as soon as July 19, which is around the same time the injured Dallas Braden is expected back in the fold.

This is the second trip to the DL this year for Anderson, who signed a four-year contract extension through 2013, with club options for '14 and '15, on April 16. He was sidelined April 25 to May 28 with the same injury.

### **Worth noting**

Mark Ellis received a day off Saturday simply in order to "rest his legs," manager Bob Geren said. The A's skipper also noted the day's pitching matchup as a reason, as Ellis is 5-for-24 (.208) in his career against Cleveland starter Jake Westbrook. Adam Rosales (1-for-2 against Westbrook) received a start at second base in Ellis' stead. ... Geren said Landon Powell, who hasn't received a start since June 20 at St. Louis, will be behind the plate in Sunday's series finale for A's probable starter Vin Mazzaro.

## **Carmona hopes to keep Tribe's rotation rolling**

By Matt Brown / MLB.com

Friday's game halted a season-long five-game winning streak for the Indians, as they were shut out by Gio Gonzalez and the A's.

But the Indians fought their way to a 10th inning, walk-off win Saturday night, and now the hope is to start another winning streak in a season that's been full of the opposite. The Tribe moved to 6-1 in the last seven games after dropping 11 of 12, thanks in large part to the starting pitching.

"Our [starting] rotation has been really good lately," Indians manager Manny Acta said before Friday's loss. "They've given us the opportunity to play with a lead and not play catch-up baseball. They've given us an opportunity to win."

Even in the loss Friday, Mitch Talbot kept the Indians in the game and allowed two earned runs. Since the Indians snapped a seven-game losing streak at Cincinnati last Sunday, no opponent has scored more than four runs. Jake Westbrook delivered a quality start Saturday night, and now it will be up to Fausto Carmona (7-6, 3.68 ERA) to do the same against the A's and Vin Mazzaro (3-2, 4.25).

Carmona certainly did so earlier in the season against Oakland. He pitched 7 1/3 innings on April 24, and allowed just one run. It was a big change of pace for Carmona, who had previously struggled against the A's and gone 2-3 with a 6.97 ERA against Oakland.

Mazzaro's lone start against Cleveland came one year ago Saturday, and he was tagged with the loss after allowing a pair of home runs.

### **A's: Powell gets rare start**

An unfamiliar face as of late will be behind the plate for the A's on Sunday. Landon Powell will make his first start since June 20 at St. Louis, and he's appeared in just one inning since then. Despite limited time, Powell's recorded at least one hit in each of his last six starts. He's in his fourth stint with the A's this season alone.

### **Indians: Change does Smith good**

Joe Smith's first stint with the Indians this season didn't end well, but a mechanical adjustment has helped him bounce back in his second time up.

"He made a little bit of a change in how he hunches over on the mound. It obviously has made a difference with his velocity," Acta said. "He feels this is what made him successful in the past, and I can't argue with that based on how he's pitched the last few outings."

While Smith did allow three earned runs June 25 at Cincinnati, he's held opponents scoreless in his other six outings since getting called back up.

### **Worth noting**

The A's have yet to sweep an opponent on the road this season. ... The A's lead the season series with the Indians 3-2, and in each of their three wins, they have held the Indians scoreless.

## Major League: Who's your A's All-Star?

Your obvious A's All-Star candidates are **Kurt Suzuki** and **Andrew Bailey**. Quickly making his way into that mix is **Trevor Cahill**, who has been downright nasty in his past couple of starts, particularly his last two, which has resulted in a 2-0 record and 1.31 ERA. Add in the 21/4 strikeout-to-walk ratio through those 20 2/3 innings of work, and the tale gets even better. He lost two of his first four starts but has since won his last seven decisions. Cahill's final two tests will come against a pair of power-loaded teams: first, the Yankees, against whom the 22-year-old has yet to face in his career; then come the Angels, whom Cahill has fared well against in five starts (2-1, 2.56 ERA). So, assuming he continues his hot streak against said teams, he should -- in my opinion -- be invited to the All-Star Game. The thing is, though, as we already know, he won't be allowed on the active roster since he's slated to pitch Sunday. And if you're a team like the A's who are likely to boast just one representative, don't you want that representative to actually step onto the field at some point? So, my other vote, who happened to rightfully be noted by Geren today, is **Craig Breslow**. When those outside of the A's community think of potential Oakland All-Star relievers, Bailey immediately comes to mind. And yes, Bailey is again having another good year (his 1.64 ERA is seventh lowest among AL relievers), but an All-Star year? I'm not sold on the idea. I would send Breslow in a heartbeat, though. As Geren said today, "If we need to win a game, I always put him in." His opponents are batting .156 against him, which happens to rank fourth lowest among AL relievers. And the amount of work he's been given (39 games, second in AL) speaks for itself. He'd automatically give the AL a dependable lefty in the 'pen, as he's done for the A's pretty much all season.

Bottom line: Cahill, without a doubt, deserves to be an All-Star. His current 2.74 ERA ranks fourth among all AL starters and his .274 opponents BA is good for third. Breslow, also, deserves to represent the A's. So send them both. One sits, one (hopefully) pitches. Both are honored, as they should be.

Of course, that's not taking anything away from Bailey or Suzuki, the latter whom I've yet to speak of. Suzuki's value to this team is undeniable, but I'm not so sure his current numbers (.258, 10 homers) are going to cut it in the competitive AL catchers race. Then again, Geren's on the coaching staff, and he's said countless times that Suzuki would be his pick, so it will be interesting to see how much pull he has in it all.

Either way, the All-Star representatives will be announced tomorrow, so make sure you keep an eye out on the A's site for who's headed to Anaheim in a week.

Who gets your vote? Comment, and tell me who and why.

- A. Andrew Bailey
- B. Craig Breslow
- C. Trevor Cahill
- D. Kurt Suzuki
- E. Other

## **A's lose in 10 innings; Braden placed on DL**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEVELAND Matt LaPorta hit a game-ending single in the 10th inning, giving the Indians a 5-4 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Saturday night.

Travis Hafner started the rally with a one-out double off Craig Breslow (3-2) and was run for by Anderson Hernandez. After Austin Kearns was intentionally walked, Jhonny Peralta flied out to deep center. LaPorta bounced a full-count pitch into center field, giving Cleveland its sixth win in seven games.

Oakland lost for only the second time in eight games.

Tony Sipp (1-2) pitched the 10th for Cleveland.

Jake Westbrook allowed three runs — two earned — and four hits in six innings.

Clay Mortensen started for Oakland in place of Dallas Braden, who was placed on the disabled list Saturday with elbow stiffness.

Mortensen, called up from Triple-A Sacramento, pitched six innings and allowed four runs and six hits. He struck out seven, a career high.

Oakland third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff was hitless in five at-bats and is in an 0-for-29 slump, the longest of his career.

Indians outfielder Shin-Soo Choo missed the game with an injured right thumb. Choo was hurt trying to make a diving catch in the eighth inning Friday. He was scheduled to have an MRI on Saturday.

Outfielder Michael Brantley was removed from the game at Triple-A Columbus on Saturday night and could possibly be added to Cleveland's roster, depending on Choo's status.

Jayson Nix hit a two-run homer in the first, giving Cleveland the early lead. Oakland scored three in the third with the help of two errors by shortstop Jason Donald. After Adam Rosales led off with a double, Donald fielded Gabe Gross' groundball, but his throw to first pulled LaPorta off the bag. Cliff Pennington tripled off the fence in center to tie it.

Donald couldn't field Coco Crisp's groundball for his second error. Pennington scored and Crisp was given an RBI.

Gross, the left fielder, helped give back the lead with an error of his own in the fourth. Mortensen retired the first two batters, but gave up a single to Kearns and walked Peralta. Gross charged LaPorta's single, but the ball skipped by him and rolled to the wall. LaPorta was given an RBI as Kearns and Peralta scored on the two-base error. LaPorta ended up at third.

Oakland tied it in the seventh against Rafael Perez. Pennington doubled with one out and scored on Daric Barton's two-out single that skipped over third base.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Sacramento unable to finish sweep of Fresno**

By Kevin Poveda / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats were unable to produce fireworks in front of a sold out crowd of 14,014 as they fell 5-1 to the Fresno Grizzlies on Saturday night.

The crowd, which enjoyed a Sutter Health Fireworks Extravaganza following the game, was the second sellout for the River Cats in as many nights at Raley Field, and was the 60th all-time sellout in franchise history. Tonight's game was also the sixth time that Sacramento has sold out this season, marking the first time since the 2001 season that Sacramento had sold out five games or more. The River Cats also sold out back-to-back games on June 19 and June 20. Prior to this season, the River cats have not had back-to-back sellouts since 2001.

Matt Watson belted a hit to the center field, bouncing it off the wall in the fourth inning. The hit seemed to be a double, as it hit the center-field wall and bounced back into play for Grizzlies center fielder Tyler Graham as Watson stumbled into second base. Watson's double was initially ruled a home run by the umpires and then overturned minutes later, causing confusion for fans, coaches and players.

It was not the only time of the night that the River Cats would be on the losing end of an umpire's call. With the River Cats trailing 4-1 in the eighth inning, first baseman Chris Carter gave the Cats the spark they needed to start a late-game rally. Carter's single, followed by Matt Carson double and a walk by catcher Josh Donaldson loaded the bases for the River Cats.

What would have been a wild pitch by Fresno pitcher Steve Edlefsen turned into a controversial call for the River Cats when home plate umpire Jason Arends called Chris Carter out at home. For the second night in a row, River Cats manager Tony DeFrancesco was thrown out of the game, this time after walking over from third base and aggressively arguing the call.

The next batter for Sacramento, right fielder Michael Taylor, struck out swinging, putting an end to any potential rally for the River Cats.

Despite a night of sloppy play and controversial calls, the River Cats won their best of three series with the PCL South Division leader, managing to cut the Grizzlies lead to only six games -- something most would have thought impossible just a couple weeks ago, when Sacramento was as many as 12.5 games back from first place.

The River Cats will travel to Reno for a four-game set before returning home Thursday face Portland before the All-Star break.

## **RockHounds split doubleheader**

Shawn Shroyer, Midland Reporter-Telegram

Saturday's doubleheader came and went and left the Midland RockHounds right where they began.

The RockHounds defeated the Arkansas Travelers 7-2 in the first game, but lost 6-5 in eight innings in the nightcap. The victory lifted the RockHounds to .500 for the Texas League second half, but it lasted merely four hours. The RockHounds (4-5) did win the series 2-1 -- a series that was almost washed away by rainy conditions.

"It was good to take two of three," RockHounds manager Darren Bush said. "That's what you want to do at home, win two of three."

RockHounds shortstop Josh Horton's performance at the plate in the winning effort was a statistical anomaly -- against a former Major Leaguer, no less -- while it took extra innings for one of the teams to decide it wanted to win the second contest.

Horton put up the rare batting line of going 1 for 1 with five RBI. His day started with a sacrifice fly in the second inning to give the RockHounds a 2-1 lead in the first game. They would never trail again thanks in part to Horton's next at bat.

With two on and one out in the fourth, Horton got ahead in the count 2-0 against Arkansas' Daniel Cabrera, who pitched in the big leagues for Baltimore, Washington and Arizona. He launched the next pitch he saw the opposite way for a home run that rose just over the left-center field wall.

Then in the fifth, with Adrian Cardenas on third and one out in the fifth, Horton flew out to center, allowing Cardenas to come home to score for the RockHounds' final run of the game and his fifth RBI despite having only one actual at bat.

"He's swinging the bat good," Bush said. "He was outstanding defensively and offensively -- all the way around."

Horton played a hand in a start to forget for Cabrera in the beginning stages of his hopeful return to the Majors.

Cabrera (0-1) left two batters after Horton's long ball, finishing his day with five runs allowed on four hits and three walks in 3 2/3 innings.

"We wanted to get a good pitch to hit," Bush said. "We wanted to make him throw strikes, get the ball up and hit his fastball."

Meanwhile, Matt Wright (1-0) lasted five innings for the RockHounds, allowing just one run on five hits.

"He threw the ball good," Bush said. "He gave us five strong innings. He did a nice job."

The second game, though, saw both teams combine to blow three save chances before deciding it in the eighth inning of a scheduled seven-inning game.

Trailing 1-0 going into the fifth, the RockHounds pulled ahead with an RBI single from Cardenas, who was 2 for 2 with three RBI in the game. However, Cardenas was thrown out trying to steal second base just before Jeff Baisley went deep to right, socking a home run over the visiting bullpen. That lost run would prove costly.

RockHounds starter Justin Murray came back out for the sixth and failed to record an out as the Travelers (4-5) rallied for three runs to take a 4-2 lead. The RockHounds bounced back with a three-spot of their own in the bottom of the sixth, though, when four straight batters reached with one out and Cardenas followed with a two-run, two-out single to left. But Cardenas got too greedy again and was thrown out trying to advance to second.

The RockHounds offense never got going again. Before those two productive innings, Travelers starter Tyler Chatwood, the No. 14 prospect in the Angels system, held the RockHounds scoreless through the fourth. He finished the night with two runs allowed on six hits and two walks while striking out four.

"He held us down for four innings -- he had good stuff," Bush said.

In the seventh, RockHounds reliever Justin James allowed a walk, a single and another walk with one out to load the bases. He then walked Efen Navarro to bring home the tying run for the Travelers.

Derrick Gordon (1-2) then entered in relief of James and induced an inning-ending double play, but a leadoff walk in the eighth gave the Travelers just enough of an opening to steal the victory.

After walking Kevin Ramos to start the eighth, Gordon retired the next two batters. But Alexi Amarista, who was promoted to Arkansas early Saturday, came through with the game-winning single up the middle.

Travelers reliever Ismael Carmona let on two RockHounds in the bottom of the eighth, but struck out the side to end it and pick up the save while Jordan Walden (1-0) earned the win.

Still, Bush couldn't be too disappointed in the fight his club showed in splitting the doubleheader.

"We got behind, we battled back, we took the lead, then we had to battle back again and took the lead again," Bush said. "Everybody had big hits for us, big swings."

TODAY'S PROBABLE PITCHERS: Springfield Cardinals (2-5) -- Nick Additon (LHP, 3-5, 4.80); Midland RockHounds (4-5) -- Anthony Capra (LHP, 5-7, 4.50)

## **Ports Come Back In Ninth, Fall In 10th**

**VISALIA, Calif.** - The Stockton Ports had perhaps their best opportunity to win their first series of the year against the Visalia Rawhide. After taking the first game of the series on Thursday, Stockton dropped Friday's contest, then let the opportunity to win Saturday's game slip on by. After tying the game while down to their final two outs in the ninth, Stockton fell 4-3 in the 10th on a game-winning single off the bat of Visalia's Alfredo Marte.

For the third straight night, Visalia scored runs in the first inning. With two on and two out, Marc Krauss singled to right. Dan Kaczowski scored on the hit, and Krauss aggressively rounded first and ended up in a rundown. Ports first baseman Mike Spina threw the ball wide of second, though, allowing a second run to score and giving the Rawhide a 2-0 lead.

The Ports broke through against Rawhide starter Billy Spottiswood in the fourth. Spina lead the inning off with a double and three batters later, came home on a David Thomas RBI single to make it 2-1.

The Rawhide quickly recovered the run in the last of the fourth. Kyle Greene reached base with a one-out double, then scored two batters later on an RBI single from Rossmel Perez.

The first three Visalia runs came off starter Mike Madsen, who also allowed six hits while striking out a season-high seven in four innings of work.

Stockton knocked Spottiswood out of the game in the sixth. Stephen Parker led off the inning with a double and scored on an ensuing single from Spina who went 4-for-5, pulling the Ports to within a run at 3-2.

Spottiswood would leave the game with a chance to win it, going 5.1 innings and allowing two runs on seven hits while striking out one.

Chase Anderson came on to start the seventh and retired the first six batters he faced to take him into the ninth. With the Ports trailing 3-2, Tyler Ladendorf led off the ninth with a double to right and was advanced to third on a sac-bunt by Thomas. Todd Johnson then hit a grounder to second that scored Ladendorf from third and tied the game at three. It was the only run allowed by Anderson in three innings of work.

After getting two hits but failing to score in the top of the 10th, the Ports gave the ball back to Paul Smyth (3-3) to start the bottom of the inning. Smyth, who set the side down in order in the ninth, recorded the first out but then yielded back-to-back walks to Brent Greer and Paul Goldschmidt. After striking out Krauss for the second out, Smyth gave up the game-winning single to Marte as he lined the ball to right field.

Brett Moorehouse (2-2), who pitched the top of the 10th, earned the win for Visalia.

After dropping two of three to Visalia, the Ports head home to begin a six-game homestand and will welcome the Modesto Nuts to town on Sunday night. Ben Hornbeck (1-2, 4.61 ERA) will head to the bump for the Ports, opposed by Nuts right-hander Rob Scahill (5-4, 6.09 ERA). First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

## **Cougars Break Out Bats to Beat Peoria**

### **House leads 14-hit Kane County attack to victory**

**GENEVA, III.** – In front of a crowd of 12,778 fans at Elfstrom Stadium, the Kane County Cougars broke a 5-5 tie in the bottom of the eighth inning with a four-run rally and beat the Peoria Chiefs, 9-5, Saturday night to claim two out of three in the series. Tyreace House went 3-for-4 with two doubles and hit his first professional homer to lead the Cougars' 14-hit attack. The Cougars had scored eight runs total in their previous four games and scored nine Saturday.

The Cougars scored two runs in the first inning on RBIs from Rashun Dixon and Max Stassi. After Peoria rallied for three in the second against Murphy Smith, the Cougars tied it in bottom half when Kent Walton bounced into a double play and scored Myrio Richard. House led off the third with a homer, Peoria got even in the fifth with an unearned tally against Smith, Anthony Aliotti launched a solo homer in the bottom of the fifth and Peoria got even again in the sixth for a 5-5 score.

Smith gave up five runs -- four earned on six hits in a no-decision, and Connor Hoehn handled the next 1 2/3 innings. Richard started the game-changing eighth against Larry Suarez (0-3) with a double. After Mike Gilmartin bunted him to third, Walton, Leonardo Gil and House nailed consecutive RBI doubles to make it, 8-5, and Conner Crumbliss squeezed home House for the 9-5 score. Max Peterson (3-2) recorded the win with two scoreless innings.

The Cougars (4-5, 36-42) continue their six-game homestand Sunday night at 6 CT when they welcome the Beloit Snappers to town for a three-game series. Justin Marks (2-9, 5.63) will face Miguel Munoz (5-5, 5.71). 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 5:45 p.m.