

## A's News Clips, Monday, July 5, 2010

### Oakland A's pitcher Trevor Cahill named to American League All-Star team

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

A's starting pitcher Trevor Cahill was already planning to fly into John Wayne Airport in Anaheim for the All-Star break. But instead of heading south on Interstate 5 to his hometown of Oceanside, he's making a detour to Angel Stadium.

Cahill, who started the season on the disabled list and was pitching for Triple-A Sacramento in late April, was rewarded for his remarkable performance the past two months by being selected as an American League reserve for the July 13 All-Star Game in Orange County. The announcement of the reserves, selected by New York Yankees manager Joe Girardi, was made before the A's beat the Cleveland Indians 3-1 Sunday at Progressive Field.

Cahill, 22, is one of eight AL pitchers who will be making his first appearance in the game, and it's the ninth straight year that at least one A's pitcher has been selected. He has an 8-2 record and a 2.74 ERA, best among healthy A's starters. In his past nine starts, Cahill is 7-0 — the longest winning streak for an A's pitcher in three years.

"Living in the north county, it's probably the same drive to Anaheim as it is to San Diego," Cahill said. "I couldn't think of a much better place to be."

There's a strong possibility that Cahill will be on the inactive list for the game, as he is scheduled to pitch next Sunday against the Los Angeles Angels. Should he pitch, another pitcher would be selected to replace him, although not necessarily from the A's.

A's manager Bob Geren has already told Girardi of his other strong pitching candidates, which include closer Andrew Bailey (17 saves, 1.59 ERA) and setup man Craig Breslow (3-2, 2.84). Cahill is also pitching Tuesday against the New York Yankees at the Oakland Coliseum.

"Just looking at the list of all the arms, there was probably a slim chance that I was going to pitch anyway," Cahill said. "That's not a big thing. The biggest thing is just being selected and being able to participate in all of the activities."

Cahill was competing to be the A's fifth starter during spring training but had to start the year on the disabled list with a stress reaction in his left scapula. He made two starts in Triple-A and was called up to Oakland on April 30 after an injury to Brett Anderson.

Cahill was roughed up in his 2010 big league debut against Toronto, giving up six earned runs in five innings. But he gradually started to settle down and by early June, he was locating his fastball to both sides of the plate and had better command of his heavy sinker. He also added a changeup, which helped make his fastball more effective.

In short, he's come a long way in less than three months.

"He got his opportunity and took full advantage of it," Geren said. "To actually be in Sacramento and then be named to the All-Star team shows how good his first half has really been."

Cahill's season mirrors that of Ben Sheets' rookie campaign in 2001. That year, also as a 22-year-old, Sheets struggled at the start of the season for Milwaukee and was sent down to Triple-A for two starts later in April.

When he came back, though, he found a rhythm and went 6-0 in seven starts from late May to late June to be named to the first of his four National League All-Star teams.

"This kind of makes me reminisce a lot about that year. I came back and kind of got on the same kind of run," Sheets said. "It'll be a shock at first. He's going to look up at his name and not feel like it belongs there, but it does."

TODAY:

Yankees (Javier Vazquez 6-7) at A's (Ben Sheets 3-7), 7:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

(All-) Star Power

Trevor Cahill was chosen as the A's representative for the All-Star game:

Rec.: 8-2

IP: 82.0

BB/K: 25/56  
ERA: 2.74

## **Oakland A's update: Outfielder Coco Crisp leaves game with tightness in his groin but believes it's nothing serious**

By Curtis Pashelka

CLEVELAND — Center fielder Coco Crisp had to field injury questions again after Sunday's 3-1 A's win over the Cleveland Indians at Progressive Field. Crisp was taken out of the game in the bottom of the second inning after experiencing tightness in his groin while running the bases in the first inning.

A's manager Bob Geren said Crisp is day-to-day and did not think, as of Sunday afternoon, that he would need to go on the disabled list for the third time this season. Crisp said he was taken out of Sunday's game as a precaution and thought he would be available for tonight's series opener against the New York Yankees at the Oakland Coliseum.

Crisp didn't have to run at full speed as he walked to lead off the game, went to second on a passed ball and went to third and home on two ground balls.

"They asked if I was OK, and I said, 'I'm a little sore,' " Crisp said. "They just said we'll give you a day. Not much I can say about it."

Since being reinstated from the DL on June 22, Crisp is 11 for 37 with 12 runs, seven RBIs and four stolen bases. Crisp suffered a right rib cage strain last month and started the season on the DL with a fractured left pinkie finger.

Vin Mazzaro tied a career-high by going 7 1/3 innings Sunday and recorded a season-high seven strikeouts to improve to 4-2. In his past six starts, Mazzaro has a 2.97 ERA and has pitched at least six innings four times.

Sunday's outing was an improvement over his start Tuesday against Baltimore when he allowed just three hits but walked six. His ERA of 3.81 is the lowest it has been this season.

Adam Rosales homered in the seventh inning off Indians starter Fausto Carmona to give the A's a 3-1 lead. Rosales was 4 for 11 during the series, and the homer was just his second off a right-handed pitcher this season.

Brett Anderson (left elbow tendinitis) pitched in a simulated game Sunday night in Arizona, but details were not available. If all went well, he would pitch in an minor league game Friday. "... Geren said Travis Buck (leg fatigue) took batting practice over the weekend and completed "baseball skills." "... Geren said outfielder Conor Jackson (right hamstring), who has missed the past four games, will be re-evaluated today. The team will need to determine soon whether it makes more sense to wait for him or put him on the DL and bring in another player.

## **Chin Music: Trevor Cahill named to AL All-Star team**

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune, 7/4/2010 10:16AM

In a somewhat expected announcement, A's starter Trevor Cahill was named to the American League All-Star team by New York Yankees manager Joe Girardi. Cahill, with an 8-2 record and a 2.74 ERA, got the nod over closer Andrew Bailey (15 saves, 1.64 ERA) and reliever Craig Breslow and catcher Kurt Suzuki.

Cahill had been mentioned as a candidate for a couple of weeks, but he really solidified his status with his past two outings with wins over Pittsburgh and Baltimore.

The lineups

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

Indians — Brantley CF, Nix 2B, Santana C, Hafner DH, Kearns RF, Peralta 3B, LaPorta 1B, Crowe LF, Hernandez SS, Carmona P.

## **Braden's injury defuses conflict with A-Rod**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland's week and a half of also-rans is over, and the team fared reasonably well against last-place Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Cleveland. A 3-1 victory over the Indians on Sunday gave the A's a 7-2 record for the stretch, and they're a game under .500.

Now, back to the tougher teams: The A's return home to face the Yankees and Angels before the All-Star break, perhaps a last chance to see if they can claw their way back into it before any significant pieces are traded.

The New York series, which opens tonight, carries its own subplot, though it's a bit more muted than it might have been because Dallas Braden is on the disabled list and won't pitch in the series.

The last time the Yankees were in Oakland, in April, Braden had his celebrated run-in with Alex Rodriguez, after taking exception to the New York star running over the top of the mound on his way back to first base. There are now T-shirts for sale at the Coliseum with Braden's barked phrase, minus expletives: Get Off My Mound.

Rodriguez responded by claiming ignorance of any unwritten rule about not running over the mound, and he said he thought it was amusing coming from a pitcher "with a handful of wins." And when the story kept rolling, Rodriguez said he didn't want to extend Braden's "15 minutes of fame." That was before Braden pitched a perfect game on Mother's Day, reviving the story yet again.

Braden said last week he's disappointed he won't pitch in the series because he loves to compete against the best, not because of the A-Rod flap.

"I'm way over it," Braden said Sunday, adding with a grin, "My 15-minute timer went off a long time ago."

He said he's not planning on rehashing the events today, and he's not overly enthusiastic about the T-shirts, either, though he realizes it's a marketing decision. "It looks like the A's are making light of the situation," he said. "In some ways, it might keep what happened alive."

Braden isn't the only one who thinks the "Get Off My Mound" shirts might not be helpful.

"That's probably not smart," A's designated hitter Jack Cust said. "We don't need to fuel anything with A-Rod, not with his ability."

Most of the A's believe that with Braden out of action, the issue is over and done with.

"Dallas isn't pitching, so I don't think it matters," tonight's starter, Ben Sheets, said. "If he was, it would be a lot more out there."

The only game the A's won in that first Yankees' series? Braden's start, a 4-2 victory. New York is leading the AL East and has 50 wins, the most in the majors.

## **Cahill gets A's All-Star nod, but won't pitch**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Trevor Cahill was locked in a battle for the fifth-starter spot this spring, which ultimately went to Gio Gonzalez when Cahill opened the season on the disabled list with a left shoulder strain. Cahill was sent down to Triple-A Sacramento when he came off the DL, and he didn't pitch for Oakland until late April, filling in for Brett Anderson.

Now Cahill is the A's All-Star representative.

"At the beginning of the year, I never dreamed I'd be in the situation, being hurt, getting sent down," the 22-year-old right-hander said Sunday. "This is a great feeling."

The only downer for Cahill and the A's is that he will start Sunday against the Angels. As soon as he throws his first pitch in that game, he'll become ineligible for the active American League All-Star roster and his spot will be replaced. He can take part in all the festivities, but he won't pitch in the game. He must be replaced by a pitcher, and there's no guarantee that would be Andrew Bailey (1.59 ERA, converted 17 of 20 save opportunities) or Craig Breslow (3-2, 2.84 ERA, 40 strikeouts in 38 innings), so the A's might have zero active participants.

Cahill noted that Bailey went last year but wasn't used. "Just looking at the list of all the arms (on the AL roster), there was a slim chance I'd get to pitch, anyway."

Manager Bob Geren, who is one of the AL coaches, said after the A's 3-1 win in Cleveland that he'll talk to AL manager Joe Girardi when the Yankees are in town this week about a possible A's replacement for Cahill, i.e. Bailey, who was the AL's Rookie of the Year, or Breslow, who has become the A's set-up man.

"I was hoping we'd get more than the one," Geren said. "I thought we had some really good candidates. But if you have to pick one, Trevor has been as good as any pitcher in the American League."

Geren also felt that catcher Kurt Suzuki (.252, 10 home runs, 35 RBIs despite a stint on the DL) was deserving, as did Cahill, who said, "Without him, we wouldn't be anywhere close to where we are."

Cahill is 8-2 with a 2.74 ERA and he's allowed more than three runs just twice all year. He's won his last seven decisions, with his last loss coming May 16.

## **Crisp makes precautionary early departure**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Coco Crisp** already has had two stints on the disabled list this season, so when he came out of Sunday's 3-1 victory over the Indians in the second inning, it was a potentially alarming development for the team.

However, Crisp said the injury is minor and he came out only as a precaution. He scored a hitless run (walk, passed ball, groundout, sacrifice fly) and the A's trainers apparently didn't like the looks of his running.

"I'm OK," he said. "I should be in there tomorrow."

Crisp said that the soreness is in the upper hamstring/groin area, but he believes it's ligament-related and not a muscle.

**Mazzaro's effective day: Vin Mazzaro** went a career-high 7 1/3 innings Sunday, and he got better as the game progressed, striking out the side in the sixth and needing only seven pitches for the seventh. He struck out seven in all.

"He was really pretty unhittable for a period there," manager **Bob Geren** said.

Mazzaro is trying to make as good an impression as possible. **Brett Anderson** is likely to rejoin the rotation after the break, bumping Mazzaro.

**Briefly: Adam Rosales** hit his sixth homer, sprinting as always, and he made a nice play at third on a liner in the seventh. ... **Conor Jackson** missed his fourth consecutive game with right hamstring tendinitis. Unless he is markedly improved today, the A's are likely to put him on the DL and call up outfielder **Matt Carson** from Triple-A Sacramento. **Matt Watson**, who has been very good since rejoining Sacramento from an independent league, has an outside shot, though he is not on the 40-man roster. ... The A's are unlikely to call up top outfield prospect **Michael Taylor** until he is ready, which he doesn't appear to be quite yet.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Still perfect:** Entering Sunday, A's second basemen hadn't committed an error all season - and then a grounder by Trevor Crowe got past Mark Ellis in the second inning and was ruled an error ... initially. The call was changed to a hit the next inning.

## **Drumbeat: A's lone All-Star, Trevor Cahill, won't be eligible to play**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Cleveland 7/4/2010 9:54AM

It's official, Trevor Cahill's remarkable season, which took him from the losing side of the fifth-starter battle to the DL to Triple-A has now culminated in an All-Star selection. Talk about an extra degree of difficulty - Cahill didn't even come up until the end of April, and only because Brett Anderson went on the DL.

What stinks for Cahill, though he is really very much happy just to be going, is that he won't be eligible to play in the game in Anaheim on July 13 because he is starting a week from today. He noted that Andrew Bailey didn't get into last year's game, though he was eligible, and, Cahill said, "Looking at the list of all the arms, there's a slim chance I'd pitch anyway."

You'll recall that Barry Zito is the first pitcher this happened to - he'd pitched on the Sunday before the 2003 game, and that presented an opportunity to wedge Roger Clemens onto the roster. It all happened at the last second, Zito wasn't told by the league but found out from reporters - he was not pleased at all. It was a weird scene. Finally, this year, it's been made official. Sunday starters aren't eligible and their active spots can be replaced.

Well, maybe they can replace him with Andrew Bailey so A's fans can have at least the potential of getting to see one of their players participate. Isn't that the whole idea behind having at least one representative from each team? If that guy is ineligible, the team should have at least one other representative who is eligible, in the spirit of the All-Star Game, especially now with the vastly expanded rosters.

I still believe Kurt Suzuki to be the most deserving potential All-Star on the team; his importance to this club is greatly overlooked. He'd be my pick, and I'm hoping maybe he'll get the spot that should be open because of Victor Martinez's injury. Of Suzuki, Cahill said, "He does so many things right. People don't see that if they don't see him every day. Without him, our team wouldn't be anywhere close to where it is."

**\*\*UPDATE\*\*** John Buck is among the AL reserves, and apparently he's getting the Martinez spot. And with the re-insertion rule for catchers now (how many changes can they make in this game?) the All-Star teams really only need two catchers, and the AL has Joe Mauer and Buck. Grrrrrr.

Cahill thought that Bailey would be the pick, so he was extra surprised in that sort of non-demonstrative way of his.

Here's the lineup: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Sweeney rf, Cust dh, Ellis 2b, Gross lf, Rosales 3b, Powell c, Pennington ss

I'm convinced Conor Jackson will go on the DL, even more so now. Manager Bob Geren lumped Jackson in with Brett Anderson and Dallas Braden when he was talking about return dates. He then clarified that by saying Jackson will get re-evaluated in Oakland tomorrow, but unless he's made some sort of full recovery in a day from that hamstring issue, there's no way the A's go into the Yankees series short. Matt Carson, come on down. Or maybe Matt Watson; he'd be a nice pick (and an even better story with his circular journey) and the team can just put Travis Buck on the 60-day DL. He's not there already is he? I'm kind of losing track. Buck is taking batting practice and doing "baseball skills" in Arizona today, but he's been out since late April. He's not going to be back any time soon.

Anderson is throwing a simulated game right about now in Phoenix, 20 pitches

## **Mazzaro's strong start shuts down Tribe**

### **Right-hander wins fourth behind seven strikeouts**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- On a day when all attention was directed toward newly appointed All-Star Trevor Cahill, another young pitcher quietly did his thing.

Vin Mazzaro, who battled alongside Cahill and Gio Gonzalez all spring for the fifth spot in the Opening Day rotation before being assigned to Triple-A Sacramento, unassumingly took to the mound Sunday for his seventh start of the season in the A's rubber match with the host Indians.

And for the second consecutive outing, the A's righty surrendered just one run. Five days after tossing six innings of one-run ball, Mazzaro pitched into the eighth and did the same thing, this time in a 3-1 victory for a three-game series win over Cleveland at Progressive Field.

It easily marked Mazzaro's most impressive start to date this season, which has seen him steadily build up his arm strength while once again getting acclimated to Oakland's rotation in place of the injured Brett Anderson.

"Mazzaro was tough," Cleveland manager Manny Acta said. "We couldn't get anything going against him. He had a good fastball and a good slider."

The 7 1/3 innings marked a career high for Mazzaro, whose seven strikeouts represented a season high. He compiled four 1-2-3 innings in the winning effort -- his fourth victory of the year -- and was pulled following 111 pitches and a one-out double to Jayson Nix in the eighth.

"Going into the eighth inning," Mazzaro said, "I felt strong. I felt good. I could've gone more, but you bring in the bullpen and you know they're going to shut it down."

They did just that, as Jerry Blevins stranded Nix at second by garnering two quick outs, which set up another Andrew Bailey save -- his 17th of the season -- in the ninth, when the A's closer boarded Jhonny Peralta on a single with one out before forcing Matt LaPorta to ground into a double play and end the rather quick affair.

Mazzaro has now pitched through the sixth inning in four of his last five starts, Sunday's performance resulting in what manager Bob Geren deemed "better than any of his starts."

"I know his last outing you see the same numbers," the A's skipper said, "but he wasn't throwing many strikes then. He threw a lot better today. He got better as the game went on. I think he found command of both of his pitches and was pretty unhittable there for awhile."

"I'm definitely feeling more comfortable," Mazzaro said. "I'm cutting down on the walks and getting groundballs when I need to. And the guys behind me are making great plays. Good stuff is happening."

One of the several defensive gems Sunday came from Adam Rosales, who took away a line drive hit to add to an already impressive day witnessed by his parents and girlfriend, Callie, in the stands.

The A's infielder, getting a start at third base in an effort to hand the struggling Kevin Kouzmanoff a day off, enjoyed a 2-for-4 day at the plate, where he picked up his sixth homer of the season with a shot to left in the seventh off Tribe starter Fausto Carmona, also invited to the Midsummer Classic on Sunday.

"My girlfriend and her family grew up Indians fans," Rosales said with a smile, "so it was just fun to have them here all weekend.

"The home run, it was a fastball more in on the plate. [Carmona] comes right after you, so you have to take advantage of every opportunity."

Rosales' long ball represented the A's third run of the day, which began with Oakland quickly ahead 1-0 thanks to a first-inning RBI groundout from Ryan Sweeney. The A's outfielder brought home Coco Crisp, who eventually exited the game in the second due to ligament pain near his hamstring and groin area.

An RBI base hit off the bat of Mark Ellis in the fourth frame gave the A's two runs compared to the Tribe's one, scored in the third on a run-scoring single from Austin Kearns.

The A's, who took the first and last games of the three-game set in Cleveland and finished their two-city road trip 4-2, have now won seven of their last eight contests following a stretch in which they lost 10 of 12. They return home Monday to kick off a six-game homestand against the Yankees and Angels.

"This trip was huge for us," Rosales said. "Momentum is everything for us, for any team. It definitely gives us confidence heading into this week for the Yankees series. Our pitching's been great, so with our pitching and defense, we'll be solid."

## **Cahill selected to All-Star Game**

### **Righty is lone A's representative at Midsummer Classic**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Trevor Cahill's name wasn't even on the A's Opening Day roster.

Rather, he was on the disabled list, where he spent a couple of weeks nursing a stress reaction near his left scapula.

Then, Cahill was found on the roster of Triple-A Sacramento, where he made two starts before being called upon by the big boys in Oakland -- only to fill in for the injured Brett Anderson.

Now, less than four months later, he's on the All-Star roster.

The 22-year-old Cahill, in just his second big league season, was officially selected by American League manager Joe Girardi on Sunday as the A's lone representative for this year's Midsummer Classic in Anaheim on July 13.

"I'm real happy for him," said manager Bob Geren, who was appointed by Girardi to the coaching staff last month. "I was hoping we'd get more than one, but if you had to pick just one, what he's done in the last month or six weeks, he's definitely worthy of being honored as an All-Star. He's been as good as any pitcher in the American League, so he deserves to be on the team with the best in the league."

Per usual, the always soft-spoken Cahill's words came in a humble form, his appreciativeness for the honor bestowed upon him undeniable.

"Pretty unbelievable," he said shortly after learning the news. "Just thinking where I was just a couple months ago on the disabled list with my left shoulder, then with Sacramento ... I didn't even have a good first start when I came back."

It was far from "good," in fact. Cahill got knocked around in Toronto on April 30 for seven hits, three of them home runs, and six earned runs in just five innings. Since then, though, he's surrendered more than three earned runs just once in 12 starts and owns an 8-2 record with a 2.74 ERA, good for sixth in the AL.

"At the beginning of the year, I never even dreamed I'd be in this situation right now," he said. "I think it's just a little extra edge having been hurt and then being sent down, so it's just a great feeling."

"I think the biggest thing is just confidence that I learned last year, not just knowing the hitters but knowing how to win, plus adding the new breaking ball and locating all my pitches."

The All-Star Game will be televised nationally by FOX and around the world by Major League Baseball International beginning at 5 p.m. PT. ESPN Radio will provide exclusive national radio play-by-play, while MLB.com will offer extensive online coverage.

Fans, having already decided the starters and this week the final player on each team, once again will have the opportunity to participate in the official voting for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player presented by Chevy via the 2010 All-Star Game MVP Vote Sponsored by Sprint on MLB.com during the All-Star Game.

This marks the ninth consecutive year the A's have sent at least one pitcher to the All-Star Game, where they haven't had a position player invited since catcher Ramon Hernandez was selected along with pitchers Keith Foulke, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito in 2003.

Mulder was again selected, next to Tim Hudson, in 2004, which marks the last time Oakland has had more than one player represented at baseball's storied game. However, there's still a chance Cahill could be joined by 2009 All-Star reliever Andrew Bailey, who -- along with catcher Kurt Suzuki -- was highly touted by Geren leading up to Sunday's announcement.

Cahill is scheduled to pitch the final Sunday before the All-Star Break, which would make him ineligible for the AL active roster. If he does indeed start, the alternate appointed in his place must be a pitcher.

"I thought he was easily going to make it again," Cahill said of Bailey, "and he still has a chance.

"I know Bailey's had a great year again, so I was kind of surprised it was me and not him, but I think we have a lot of deserving guys on this team, and this year I was lucky enough to go."

Geren echoed his pitcher's sentiments, saying he'll soon speak to Girardi -- the two skippers meet in Oakland beginning Monday for a three-game set -- and make a final push for his closer, who owns 17 saves and a 1.59 ERA. Cahill, meanwhile, doesn't mind watching as an inactive player from the sidelines, where Bailey sat last year when not afforded the chance to get in the game.

"Looking at the list of all the arms," he said, "there's probably a slim chance I'd get to pitch, anyways. There's guys with so much experience, so that's not a big thing. I think the biggest thing is just being selected and being able to participate in all the activities."

Suzuki, meanwhile, seemed to be another logical choice to represent the A's in Anaheim given his steady production and highly regarded work with the club's young pitching staff. The same notion arose last year, but Cahill doesn't think it will be too long before his battery mate finally gets his shot behind the plate, where fan-voted starter Joe Mauer of the Twins will be joined by Boston's Victor Martinez (DL, inactive) and Toronto's John Buck this year.

"I think he does so many things right that a lot of guys don't see when you're not watching him every day," Cahill said. "Without him, I don't think our team would be anywhere close to where it is. I think he's kind of underrated, has a good bat, but I think he'll have plenty more opportunities in the years to come. There's no doubt in my mind he'll make the team quite a bit."

Cahill, selected in the second round of the 2006 First-Year Player Draft, quickly climbed the ranks through Oakland's Minor League system, in which he was named the club's Organizational Pitcher of the Year in 2007 and 2008. He also was selected to the All-Star Futures Game, as well as the Summer Olympics in Beijing, China, in 2008.

None of those experiences quite match this one, though. In fact, Cahill likened the All-Star opportunity with only that of being told he made the big league roster following Spring Training last year. Even more thrilling for the youngster is knowing he'll be brushing shoulders with baseball's best just miles from where he grew up in Oceanside, Calif.

"I can't think of a better place to have it," he said. "I was just going to fly home for the break. I probably would have flown into John Wayne [Airport], anyways."

## **Veterans square off as Yanks visit A's**

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com

With the All-Star break looming, the Yankees are right where they want to be, in first place. But the American League East remains tight, and even though the break is coming, the Yanks have business to finish in Oakland.



The Athletics, battling to stay in contention after winning seven of their past nine games, get a tough test this week as they try to close out the first half on a winning note. They'll take on the AL West rival Angels to close out the first half, but up first is a battle with the Yankees.

Two veteran hurlers in Javier Vazquez and Ben Sheets will do battle on Monday. Neither has been particularly spectacular this year, but both have found solid ground of late, despite not earning many wins.

The right-handed Vazquez hasn't picked up a win since June 12, but that's not all his doing. Two of his three outings since have been quality starts, including an effort his last time out, against the Mariners, in which he allowed three runs in six innings. Vazquez struck out eight batters that night but was saddled with the loss upon being outpitched by Felix Hernandez.

"A lot of times, three runs in six innings will win a lot of games," Yanks manager Joe Girardi said. "Not tonight. Not against Felix. [Vazquez] limited the damage, but Felix was so good."

Vazquez won't be facing a pitcher as dominant as Hernandez this time around, although Sheets has shown the ability to be just as tough at times in his career. The right-hander has performed well recently, but his control remains a key issue. In his last outing, against the Orioles, Sheets walked three batters -- something the potent Yankees likely won't let him get away with.

"Two of my four runs [were] on walks," Sheets said of his last outing. "Walks will kill you -- they will. Put it in play."

Sheets has risen to the occasion in limited appearances against the Yankees. The right-hander has a 1.38 ERA in two career starts against New York, including one earlier this season. Sheets took the loss in that outing but allowed just two earned runs in six innings. Sheets, along with the rest of the A's starting rotation, has to be happy to return home to Oakland, where the staff a whole has been pitched well. Sheets has a 3.19 ERA at Oakland-Alameda Coliseum, compared to a 6.66 ERA on the road.

#### **Yankees: Thames returns with a bang**

The Yankees' lineup options got a bit deeper on Sunday, when they activated Marcus Thames from the disabled list. Thames made his presence immediately felt with a walk-off single in the 10th inning of New York's 7-6 win over the Toronto Blue Jays. Thames had been on the disabled list since injuring his right hamstring on June 12 against the Astros. "I'm happy to be back -- It feels like I've been gone forever," Thames said. "I was getting frustrated there for a bit, because I thought I was going to be back sooner than I was." Prior to going on the DL, Thames had been regularly serving as the fourth outfielder, hitting .276 on the year.

#### **Athletics: Crisp likely to play**

Coco Crisp gave the A's another injury scare on Sunday, when he exited Oakland's 3-1 win over the Cleveland Indians in the second inning with what was termed "left hamstring tightness." Crisp, 30, was playing in just his 12th game of the season, having already missed time with a fractured left pinkie and a right rib strain. But after the game, Crisp didn't seem overly concerned. "It's just a precautionary thing," Crisp said. "I'll be in there [Monday]."

#### **Worth noting**

The Yanks have now won nine of their past 14 games. ... Yankees pitching coach Dave Eiland will turn 44 on Monday. On Sunday, Mariano Rivera allowed his first run in a span of 16 appearances. ... After a slow start, Jack Cust has heated up over his past 24 games, hitting .362 over that span, including a 2-for-3 performance on Sunday.

### **Crisp lifted from Sunday's game vs. Tribe**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Coco Crisp was lifted from Sunday's 3-1 win over the Indians in the middle of the second inning with ligament pain near his left hamstring and groin area, but the A's outfielder said he plans on being back in the starting lineup for Monday's series opener against the visiting Yankees.

That's good news for the A's, who have already watched Crisp endure two stints on the disabled list this year due to a fractured left pinkie finger followed by a right intercostal (rib) strain. It follows a season in which he played just 49 games for the Royals before undergoing season-ending surgery on both shoulders.

Following Sunday's game, the injury-prone Crisp said he first experienced the soreness in Saturday night's contest but "didn't think much of it." In the first inning of Sunday's game, he led off with a walk, advanced to second on a passed ball, moved to third on a groundout and eventually scored on an RBI grounder off the bat of Ryan Sweeney. He was then taken out the next frame and replaced by Rajai Davis in center field.

"I didn't really have an opportunity there to really push it," Crisp said. "They're used to seeing me really go, so they asked how I was feeling and I said it was a little sore but fine.

"It's just a precautionary thing. I'll be in there tomorrow."

## **Mazzaro outduels All-Star in A's 3-1 win**

Associated Press

Vin Mazzaro pitched like an All-Star in order to beat one.

The Oakland Athletics' young right-hander worked into the eighth inning and upstaged Cleveland All-Star Fausto Carmona on Sunday in a 3-1 victory over the Indians.

"He was pretty unhittable for a period there," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "Today was a lot better than any of his starts."

Mazzaro (4-2) won his second straight outing, allowing just the one run on seven hits in 7 1-3 innings. He tied the longest start of his career set in June 2009 against Baltimore.

"I felt strong," Mazzaro said. "I could've went more, but the bullpen came in and did the job."

Andrew Bailey worked the ninth for his 17th save. He yielded a one-out single to Jhonny Peralta, then got Matt LaPorta to hit into a game-ending double play on the next pitch.

Mazzaro avoided giving up a home run for the third consecutive start, covering 20 1-3 innings. He had allowed seven homers in his first 29 1-3 innings this season.

"I've been working on keeping the ball down," he said. "It's definitely an encouraging sign. I'm throwing in the zone and cutting down on my walks. Guys are making plays behind me. Good stuff is happening out there."

Adam Rosales hit his sixth homer to give Oakland a 3-1 lead in the seventh off Carmona (7-7). It was the first home run allowed by Cleveland in 62 innings overall and the first given up at home in 83 innings since June 15.

"Fausto had another quality start," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "He deserves credit for turning things around after the past couple of seasons."

Carmona went 19-8 in 2007, then struggled to a combined 13-19 record the next two seasons. A year ago, he was back in the minors, seeking to smooth out his delivery.

"I feel so much better this year," he said. "I'm comfortable, but I still have work to do."

Oakland outfielder Coco Crisp left with tightness in his upper left hamstring in the second inning after giving the Athletics a 1-0 lead in the first.

Crisp walked, then took second base on a passed ball by Carlos Santana. He went to third on a groundout and scored on another groundout by Ryan Sweeney.

Geren doesn't think the injury will send Crisp back to the disabled list. Crisp has played in only 12 games and been on the DL twice this season, with a broken finger on his left hand in April and a pulled muscle in his right side in May and June. He was activated June 22 and is hitless in 12 at-bats with six strikeouts.

Cleveland lost for only the second time in eight games and was without outfielder Shin-Soo Choo. The Indians' top slugger, batting .286 with 13 homers and 43 RBIs, went on the 15-day disabled list Sunday with a strained right thumb that may require surgery.

"When we left Arizona in spring training, we didn't anticipate what is going now," Acta said. "The offense is missing its three best players."

Choo may need surgery that could sideline him for at least two months. Outfielder Grady Sizemore is out for the season after knee surgery and shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera may come back in late July after missing two months with a broken left forearm.

Oakland lowered its team ERA in day games to a major-league best 2.85, improving to 19-10. The Athletics' 22-32 night record is second-worst in the AL, ahead of only Baltimore.

Cleveland tied it 1-1 in the third with three straight two-out singles, capped by Austin Kearns driving home Santana from second base.

Mark Ellis singled home Jack Cust, who had doubled, to put Oakland ahead 2-1 in the fourth.

Carmona allowed three runs and seven hits over seven innings.

"I pitched good, but not good enough," he said. "I want to win, need to win."

Mazzaro walked one and struck out seven as he faced the Indians on July 4 for the second season in a row. A year ago, Cleveland handed him his first major-league loss, 5-2. The right-hander had started his career with 13 2-3 scoreless innings over two wins.

NOTES: Oakland has won nine of its last 11 meetings with the Indians. ... Oakland 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff, in an 0 for 29 slump, wasn't in the lineup. The skid is the longest of his career. ... Landon Powell started at catcher in place of Kurt Suzuki for the A's. ... Oakland OF Conor Jackson (hamstring) missed his fourth straight game. ... Indians rookie Santana lost track of the count and ran off the field with a 2-2 count on Cust in the sixth. He thought it was an inning-ending strikeout. ... Cleveland recalled OF Michael Brantley from Triple-A Columbus to take Choo's roster spot. He went 0 for 4 as the leadoff hitter.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Late-inning rally carries Sacramento past Reno**

Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento rallied from a five-run deficit, scoring seven runs in the final three innings to top the host Reno Aces 10-8 on Sunday night.

Eric Sogard provided the two-run, go-ahead double in the top of the ninth inning to give Sacramento its ninth consecutive win over Reno. Sogard also hit an RBI double in the top of the eighth inning.

After being spotted a three-run lead in the top of the first, River Cats starter Travis Banwart allowed eight runs over the next three-plus innings. Sacramento was forced to turn to its bullpen early, and the River Cats relievers delivered with 5.2 innings of shutout ball.

Sacramento trailed 8-3 until first baseman Chris Carter hit an opposite-field, two-run home run in the seventh. Michael Taylor singled to open the eighth and scored on Sogard's double -- Sogard was thrown out attempting to stretch it into a triple. Steve Tolleson rekindled the rally with a single and scored from first on a Matt Watson single down the left-field line to pull Sacramento within one run.

Dallas McPherson opened the ninth with a double, and pinch-runner Adam Heether moved to third on a Matt Carson single. A passed ball with Josh Donaldson at bat allowed Heether to score the tying run, and Donaldson's walk set up Sogard's go-ahead double.

Fernando Hernandez (1-6) pitched a scoreless eighth inning for his first victory of the season, and Ross Wolf shut the door in the ninth for his third save. Wolf has three saves in six outings with Sacramento.

With Fresno defeating Colorado Springs 5-4, Sacramento remains 6.0 games back in the PCL South Division race.

Sacramento has won eight of its last 10 games.

### **Hounds Fall In Extra Innings**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

At Least It Didn't Rain and a crowd of more than 6,000 saw a very good ballgame on the Fourth of July at Citibank Ballpark as Mother Nature finally cooperated with a very comfortable night at the ballyard. The only thing missing was a dramatic win for the home team, and even that was a strong possibility until the very end.

In a game dominated by defense, an unearned run in the top of the 10th would be the difference as the Springfield Cardinals edged the RockHounds, 3-2. Speedy Adron Chambers reached on a fielder's choice in the 10th, and stole second base, taking third when Petey Paramore's throw went high and wide into center field. Chambers then scored on a sacrifice fly, giving the Cardinals a 3-2 lead.

Archie Gilbert walked to open the home half of the 10th and the 'Hounds brought three of their "top guns" to the plate behind him in Adrian Cardenas, Jeff Baisley and Alex Valdez. Springfield reliever Francisco Samuel retired all three in order, the final out coming on another of the game's outstanding defensive plays as left fielder Tommy Pham tracked down Valdez' foul ball just before colliding with the left field wall, ending the game.

Chambers made not only a tremendous play but, as the game played out, a game-changing one in the first inning. His full tilt, on-the-run catch in right-center denied Baisley a sure RBI double, saving at least one run and perhaps more.

The RockHounds are at home Monday & Tuesday against Springfield with first pitch both evenings at 6:30. Why not make the most of the Independence Day weekend and take in a ballgame!

## **Parker Walk-Off Homer Lifts Ports, 7-5**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** - There was plenty of excitement and drama to be had at Banner Island Ballpark on Independence Day, from game-changing hits to ejections to batting order complications. But the Stockton Ports finished with a bang before a sellout crowd of 5,570.

The Stockton Ports (37-44) came from behind and collected their third extra-innings victory of the season against the Modesto Nuts (42-39), 7-5, powered by Stephen Parker's powerful two-run, walk-off home run in the twelfth inning.

Todd Johnson gave the Ports their first lead of the game in the seventh inning with a bases clearing triple, but the Paul Smyth blew the lead with two out in the top of the ninth, as Modesto tied the game. The two teams tangoed until Parker slammed his tenth homer of the year to end the game at four hours and eight minutes. It was the longest extra-innings game the Ports have played this season.

Johnson finished the game 3x5 with three RBI, and Grant Green and Kent Walton both added a pair of hits in the contest. Parker finished the game with three RBI as well. Lance Sewell picked up the win, his third, in the game, and Jonnathan Aristil collected his third loss. Ports relievers Scott Hodsdon, Scott Deal, Brett Hunter and Lance Sewell combined for 5.0 shutout innings in the contest.

Modesto started scoring early, plating their first run in the first frame. Left fielder Scott Robinson doubled to right field to leadoff the game. He came around to score on an RBI single by shortstop Thomas Field.

The Nuts took a 3-0 lead in the second inning. Right fielder David Christensen slammed a solo home run to left field to lead off the inning. Second baseman Radames Nazario then hit the ball to shallow left-center field, and Ports outfielders Jermaine Mitchell and David Thomas both gave chase. They collided in left field, and the ball kept rolling toward the wall. Shortstop Green ran to field the ball, and Nazario kept running around the bases. He made it safely home for an inside-the-park home run. It was his first home run of the season.

Both Mitchell and Thomas were inspected by athletic trainers and remained in the field to complete the inning. Mitchell later exited the game in the top of the fourth inning, and Todd Johnson took his place. Following the two home runs, Ports starter Ben Hornbeck struck out the side.

Hornbeck struck out seven of 10 consecutive batters he faced between the second and fourth innings. He gave up an RBI single to Field in the fifth inning, as Modesto made it 4-0.

The Ports collected their first hit of the game from designated hitter Walton in the third inning. Sunday was his Ports debut following a promotion from Single-A Kane county, and he also collected an RBI in the contest.

The Ports posted their first run in the fifth inning, on a sacrifice fly by Walton. Stockton made it 4-2 in the sixth inning as Johnson scored on an RBI sacrifice fly by Parker.

Stockton pulled ahead 5-4 in the bottom of the seventh. Second baseman Tyler Ladendorf singled to start the inning. Thomas then grounded out. Walton collected his second single of the game to put two on with one out for catcher Ryan Ortiz. Ortiz walked to load the bases for Johnson. Johnson slammed a triple to right field, clearing all the bases. Parker later walked in the inning, but first baseman Mike Spina struck out to end the Ports threat.

Things got interesting in the top of the eighth inning. Hodsdon was on the mound to start the eighth, and he issued back-to-back walks to Field and pinch hitter Jimmy Cesario. The Ports then called on righty Scott Deal to face pinch hitter Ben Paulsen. Paulsen flew out to a diving Thomas, and his diving catch kept the runners from advancing. Then Christensen came up to bat. He hit the ball to third base, and Parker fielded the ball, aiming to get Cesario out at second.

Matt Benham, the bases umpire, called Cesario safe, to load the bases. Parker began to argue the call, and Ports manager Steve Scarsone also ran out of the dugout to argue the call. Green also argued the call and was ejected from the game. Infielder Brandon Pinckney came into the game to play second and Ladendorf moved to shortstop. With bases loaded, Nazario grounded into a double play to end the inning.

In the top of the ninth, Smyth took the hill for Stockton. He retired the first batter before giving up a single to Robinson. Center fielder Tim Wheeler then grounded out to Spina. With two out and one on, designated hitter Jordan Pacheco singled to left field to score Robinson and tie the game. Field then stepped up to the plate. During his at-bat, Field got in the way of an attempt to catch Pacheco stealing. Field was called out on batter's interference.

In the top of the tenth inning, Field returned to bat to leadoff, rather than Cesario, causing the Nuts to bat out of order. For the rest of the game, the Nuts followed their sequential lineup, but that play in the tenth gave the Ports an opportunity to protest the game because the Nuts batted out of the correct order.

Hunter kept the Nuts scoreless in the tenth and eleventh innings. The Ports managed to put a runner on in the tenth, but were unable to move him past first base. Sewell tossed a 1-2-3 inning in the twelfth to maintain the 5-5 tie for the Ports.

In the bottom of the twelfth, Pinckney singled with one out to get things rolling. Parker then stepped up to the plate and launched a home run well over the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch in right field for the walk-off win. The Ports celebrated at home plate before clearing the field for the July 4 Fireworks Extravaganza.

The Stockton Ports will take on the Nuts for Game 2 of the three-game set on Monday at 7:05 p.m. LHP Paul Oseguera (2-3, 5.18) is slated to start for Stockton, while RHP Juan Nicasio (7-4, 3.39) will take the hill for Modesto.

## **Cougars Drop Opener to Snappers**

### **Kane County strands 13, misses chances against Beloit**

**GENEVA, III.** – The Kane County Cougars tried several rallies Sunday night against the Beloit Snappers but ultimately suffered a 6-4 loss in front of 10,073 at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars now are 2-2 so far on their six-game homestand and 3-7 against Beloit this season.

Starter Justin Marks (2-10) gave up two runs -- both in the second -- and got saddled with a hard-luck loss. He yielded five hits and one walk and also struck out nine batters for the third time this season. The only run the Cougars scored while he was in the game was in the bottom of the sixth on a Rashun Dixon RBI double.

Josh Lansford and Bo Schultz each gave up two runs in one inning, putting the Cougars behind, 6-1, heading to the bottom of the eighth. After stranding two in the sixth and three in the seventh, the Cougars broke through with three runs in the eighth. Mike Gilmartin and Leonardo Gil each drew a bases-loaded walk, and Jason Christian notched a sacrifice fly to make it 6-4. The Cougars left the bases loaded in that frame and then stranded two more in the ninth when the game ended. They left 13 on base for the game, including 10 over the final four innings. Miguel Munoz (6-5) got the win, and Eliecer Cardenas posted his second save.

The Cougars (4-6, 36-43) and Snappers (5-5, 42-37) continue the three-game series Monday afternoon at 1 CT. Rob Gilliam (5-6, 3.94) is scheduled to face Brad Stillings (7-4, 3.58). 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 12:45 p.m.