

## A's News Clips, Friday, July 9, 2010

### Oakland A's pitcher Vin Mazzaro teeming with confidence

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The depth of the A's young starting pitching is an asset for the organization.

For Vin Mazzaro, it's a hurdle.

Mazzaro is among that group of talented young pitchers, and when the right-hander didn't make Oakland's roster out of spring training, it was unclear when his next chance might arrive.

The opportunity came quickly because of injuries in the rotation, and Mazzaro is taking full advantage.

He's looking for his third straight victory tonight against the Los Angeles Angels, who arrive in Oakland for a three-game series.

As the A's try to right their ship after being swept in three games by the New York Yankees, Mazzaro's recent emergence offers a sliver of sunshine.

"Once you have a good game in you, it kind of gives you a big boost," Mazzaro said. "You see yourself achieving your goals in between starts with what you're working on. I'm just feeling good, strong, healthy. I've just got all the confidence in the world right now."

If Mazzaro, 23, is feeding off his positive vibes, he also knows the other end of the spectrum.

After getting called up in June 2009 and throwing back-to-back scoreless outings in his first two major league starts, his joy ride came to a screeching halt.

Mazzaro went 0-8 with a 7.22 ERA over his next 10 starts and he missed the final month with shoulder tendinitis.

"It was kind of a roller coaster," Mazzaro said. "But I know how to come back from a tough loss. I know how to battle through it. You're pitching in five days, so you've got to get ready for that."

Earlier this season, it was still unclear how Mazzaro fit into the A's puzzle.

He made a spot start May 4 against Texas but was optioned the next day after walking four in just three innings. Mazzaro came back later in the month in a relief role, was used sparingly, and struggled in the chances he did get.

But after starter Brett Anderson reinjured his elbow in a June 3 start at Boston, Mazzaro took Anderson's place in the rotation.

After three mediocre outings, Mazzaro is 2-1 over his last three starts and has surrendered just four earned runs in 20 1/3 innings.

He walked just one in 7 1/3 innings Sunday against Cleveland, tossing a career-high 111 pitches. That's significant considering his command issues have kept him from going deep in past games.

"I think he kind of learned (from last season) how important it is just to do the fundamental things," A's pitching coach Curt Young said. "Keep the baseball down, get ahead in the count, understand how to finish hitters."

Closer Andrew Bailey, Mazzaro's roommate last season and a fellow New Jersey native, notices a difference in his teammate from 2009.

"I think you see a lot more confidence and trusting his stuff," Bailey said. "I think he learned a lot starting the year in Triple-A and coming back up here with a little different attitude."

The A's talked highly of their starting pitching depth during spring training, and the work of Mazzaro and All-Star Trevor Cahill speaks to that. Neither pitcher broke camp with the team, but both have been major contributors with starters Anderson, Dallas Braden and Justin Duchscherer on the DL.

Oakland is using a four-man rotation leading into the All-Star break, with Braden expected to return shortly after. The A's hope Anderson comes back by the end of July, which could leave Mazzaro in limbo again.

Could he stay with the big club and return to the bullpen? That might depend on how recently acquired reliever Ross Wolf, promoted from Triple-A on Wednesday, performs.

Mazzaro isn't concerning himself with the future.

"All I can do is go out there and pitch my game and show them that I belong here."

TODAY: Angels

(Joel Pineiro 9-6) at A's (Vin Mazzaro 4-2), 7:05 p.m. TV: CSNCA. Radio: 860-AM; 1640-AM

## **Coliseum to star in "Moneyball" movie**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A movie based on Michael Lewis' best-selling book "Moneyball," which was derailed after Oscar-winning director Steven Soderbergh left the project last summer, is heading full steam toward the Coliseum with a new director and a new script.

One constant: Brad Pitt still will star as Billy Beane in the story of how the A's general manager built winning teams with small-market payrolls, with the 2002 season as a backdrop.

Filming at the ballpark begins July 26 and runs through Aug. 5. Many of the stadium and clubhouse personnel will be taking part in the production.

Soderbergh's version called for "Moneyball" figures such as Art Howe to portray themselves, with the baseball scenes filmed primarily at spring-training sites in Arizona, as well as at the Coliseum. The new version, written by Aaron Sorkin and directed by Bennett Miller ("Capote"), is taking another tack: Actors will rule the day (with Oscar-winner Philip Seymour Hoffman as Howe). The cast also includes Jonah Hill and Robin Wright.

As you might imagine, this has created a lot of excitement on Coliseum Way. Pitt has spent quite a bit of time at the Coliseum in recent months. He has wowed all who have met him, not for his acting accomplishments, his famous longtime girlfriend or his good looks, but for almost the opposite: He hasn't behaved like the standard notion of a Hollywood star at all.

"He's as down to earth as anyone I've ever met," A's director of stadium operations David Rinetti said.

"Ten minutes after meeting Brad, it's like, 'Oh, he's nobody special; he's just a guy,' " said Mike Thalblum, the A's visiting-clubhouse manager. "That's how comfortable he makes you feel. I'd compare him to Derek Jeter, two guys who are the best at what they do and who act like normal, nice people.

"Then you tell a few people, 'I met Brad Pitt,' and they flip, and it reminds you that he is a big deal. Or you're flipping through the channels, and there he is. It hits you: Wow, this is the movies. This is special."

Thalblum was extra impressed with Pitt because of his enthusiasm for the project and for getting it up and running again after Sony Pictures pulled the plug.

"He's flat-out fired up to do this," Thalblum said. "And he went and got all the people to make this movie happen; that's pretty impressive."

Beane said one of his stipulations about the production was it couldn't interfere with his job and, while he has consulted with Beane on numerous occasions, Pitt works around Beane's schedule. When Pitt recently called and asked to go over some things, Beane said he'd have to come up to Oakland quickly in the morning, because Beane wasn't going to change his plans to visit the Double-A Midland team later that day.

"Brad has been great," Beane said. "He's a great guy, very intelligent, very funny. I've been clear that this can't be a distraction from my duties, and he's been more than respectful of that."

"West Wing" auteur Sorkin also has among his credits the TV show "Sports Night" about the inner workings of an ESPN-style sports outlet. That might come in handy for a movie about the inner workings of a baseball team but, even with a business focus, there still will be plenty of baseball: The A's 20-game winning streak will feature prominently, and that's where the Coliseum comes in.

Filming begins the day the A's leave for a road trip but will continue when they return Aug. 2, which means that some of the work will take place before or after games. Rinetti said there are strict guarantees about wrap times the days the A's are in town.

The production schedule could run until 4 a.m., with things picking right back up a few hours later. Thalblum is among those who have been told to be on site 24 hours a day. (The production is compensating all A's employees asked to help with the movie.)

Fans are needed into the wee hours, too: Casting is underway for crowd scenes and the like, and full information can be found at <http://beinamovie.com/movie.php?mtitleid=87> or by calling (818) 985-8811. Former Giants shortstop Royce Clayton will be among the players.

The stadium will be altered to look as much as possible as it did in 2002, which means the tarps will come off the third deck - and Dallas Braden's perfect game logo will come off the outfield wall. "That's crap!" Braden jokingly protested.

The A's current batboys will be used.

"Being an A's fan at that time, 2002, it definitely will be a thrill," batboy Jordan Iserson said, adding with a grin, "I guess it will be cool hanging out with the Hollywood actors. Maybe I can join an entourage."

Rinetti is getting a kick out of seeing the Coliseum, usually criticized for its increasing dilapidation, through new eyes.

"The production people come in, and they're so artistic," Rinetti said. "They look down this old hallway to the F lot and they say, 'Wow, look at this! Look at the light!'"

"It adds an extra dimension to what we're doing every day. We don't get people like Brad Pitt or Philip Seymour Hoffman here very often. It's going to be cool."

## **A'S BEAT: Even Yankees fans aren't making trip to Oakland**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Disappointing attendance figures for the Yankees series, which averaged just more than 25,000 per game, were duly noted by fans and players.

"And 50 percent is Yankee fans," pitcher **Dallas Braden** said. "I didn't hear 'Let's go, Oakland' in three days; it's 'Let's go, Yankees.' "

Braden was quick to add that the players are grateful for those who come to games, saying, "What's bad is that the fans who do come out and support us fall through the cracks. It's the fair-weather fans who jump off the bandwagon after a losing streak in April. You almost want to say, 'Thanks for skipping out on us.' The fans who are here should know we appreciate their support. They're great."

Three times this season, the A's drew less than 22,000 for a Yankees game, which routinely used to be sellouts or near sellouts.

Still, despite focus on the team's efforts to leave the Coliseum and high player turnover, both cited as reasons for attendance dips, the A's are ahead of where they were at this point last year, and their attendance is not the worst in the league: Oakland is averaging 18,172 per game, and the Indians, playing in one of the nicest facilities in the league, are averaging 16,230.

**Angels in town:** The A's finish up the first half with a three-game series against the Angels, who are in second place, 5 1/2 games behind Texas. The A's are four games behind the Angels.

The Angels lead the season series 6-4. The A's have **Vin Mazzaro** and **Trevor Cahill**, who each won in a series against the Angels at the Coliseum in June, going this weekend - Mazzaro tonight and Cahill on Sunday.

**Briefly:** **Chris Carter** hit his 19th homer in Triple-A Sacramento's 4-3 win over Portland on Thursday night. **Michael Taylor**, who also homered Thursday, has hit safely in 11 of his past 13 games. ... Longtime big-leaguer **Jamey Wright** earned his first save for Sacramento on Wednesday.

### **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Power gap:** Ryan Sweeney has matched his career high with a 51-game homerless streak, and Jack Cust, considered the A's top home-run threat, has hit two in 42 games this season. Cust hasn't homered since June 8 against the Angels at the Coliseum.

## **Drumbeat: Some clarification on the Tyson Ross move**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser 7/8/2010 1:01PM

In yesterday's Drumbeat, I wrote that I'd been asking for weeks with no real answer about why Tyson Ross was still up pitching in a limited capacity in middle relief when his future is as a starter.

That was something of a mischaracterization, because I did get a full answer to the Ross questions yesterday before I'd finished writing the Drumbeat and didn't include the information, which was an oversight - I'm usually trying to get the Drumbeat done fast because I have to go get down to the field or clubhouse - but I should have gone back in and included it, because without that background info, it might have appeared as if the A's never had a real plan with Ross, when in reality they did all along.

So a day late, here's what I was told: The team wanted to get Ross back to Sacramento and back to starting some time ago, when it became apparent that he wasn't going to get a lot of work in the bullpen. But because of injuries in Sacramento - Brad Kilby's shoulder, Henry Rodriguez's hamstring - the A's didn't have a lot of options there. They picked up Jamey Wright as a possibility, and he got his first save just last night. They acquired Ross Wolf in the Jake Fox move, and he showed some good stuff when he got to Sacramento, so at last, the A's had an option they felt comfortable enough with to send Ross back to Sacramento.

As I mentioned yesterday, the six weeks or so Ross wasn't getting a lot of work won't impede him any, and I actually never thought that the team didn't have a plan for him. I figured they did, they just didn't want to detail it in public, which makes sense when Ross is still here. What are they going to say, "Yeah, we're trying to figure out a way to send him down, we just don't have anyone better right now"?

I expect we'll see Ross in September, and he'll be back where he should be, starting. And maybe if there's a need before then, he'll get the call once he's stretched out. There's no doubting his talent, he's just a young guy (23) best suited to starting who wasn't ever going to be at his best with only occasional relief work.

## **Rickey reflects on early days in the game**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- He stands near the third-base coach's box on Oakland's classic Greenman Field, his index finger pointing.

On this day, Louie Butler is decked out in a bright-red windbreaker and a matching cap. As his black and gray curls puff out from below the hat, his voice raspy and wise, Butler recalls a time about 40 years gone.

If you follow his finger, it'll take you to a playground past center field, to the land where Rickey Henderson once roamed.

See, Greenman Field's current home -- now called the Carter Gilmore Sports Complex -- wasn't built until 1983. By then, Butler had been coaching in Oakland's Little League for more than a decade.

During Butler's first years coaching, in the late 1960s, there were a couple of kids running around the field who would eventually become all-time greats at the Oakland Coliseum, less than a mile down 66th Avenue.

Henderson, then 11, and Dave Stewart, 12, were just two of the many kids Butler has coached over the years.

"The youngsters that grace the field -- that's what makes it special," Butler said.

Rickey remembers, too. Standing near the A's dugout during batting practice on Wednesday, he recounted his earliest baseball memories.

"As a kid I was just trying to get out of the house," Henderson said. "To tell you the truth, Mr. Butler used to come by the house and pick me up to go play the game.

"That helped me out a lot. He went and got me into probably being an athlete from doing other stuff that kids were doing then. Just him coming to get me and taking me to the ballpark gave me an opportunity to not get into any other trouble."

Sure, Henderson and Stewart played against each other as kids, but it was the time they spent as teammates that brought them together. Playing on All-Star teams with Stewart, Henderson said, the two became best friends.

Drafted by different organizations -- Stewart by the Dodgers in 1975 and Henderson by the A's in 1976 -- it wouldn't be long before they competed once again.

It was the summer of 1979, and Henderson, playing Triple-A ball for the Ogden (Utah) A's, traveled to New Mexico to face Stewart's Albuquerque Dukes. One night before Stewart was scheduled to start, he had his teammate, outfielder Rudy Law, take Henderson out for a night on the town.

"He kept me out all night, until about three o'clock in the morning," Henderson said. "I kept saying, 'Man, I've got to go back! You know I'm facing my homeboy!' Then I got up to the plate the first at-bat and he blew me down in three pitches: strike one, strike two, strike three."

Stewart laughed and mouthed a few words to Henderson, who walked back to the bench and found the lightest bat in the dugout.

"The next at-bat, I hit it off the wall or out of the ballpark -- one of the two -- and I was laughing," Henderson said. "It was a lot of fun."

Later that season, Henderson was called up to Oakland, and he started his Hall of Fame career. Stewart, who spent most of his early professional years trying to convert from a catcher into a pitcher, reached the big leagues for good in 1981. But it wasn't until Stewart was traded from the Phillies to the A's in the 1986 that he became a dominant force.

"When he got the opportunity with Oakland, he was back at home, and that's all he needed," Henderson said. "He started blossoming like he was doing when he was a young kid out in Oakland."

Stewart strung together four seasons with at least 20 wins, from 1987 to 1990, and was reunited with Henderson once he was traded to Oakland in 1989, the year the A's swept the Giants in the World Series. Henderson and Stewart would play together for the majority of the next six seasons in Oakland and Toronto before Stewart retired with the A's in 1995.

When Henderson was elected to the Hall of Fame in 2009, he was bronzed with an A's cap on his plaque.

"[There] wasn't another team that I was going to choose to go into the Hall of Fame with," Henderson said. "I think if I didn't take my hometown team, everybody would have got at me. It was a great feeling that I was from here."

Henderson had a chance to reunite with Butler recently, both when his number was retired at Oakland Tech High School and with the A's.

"He was always in my corner," he said. "If it wasn't for that, I probably would have never even have made it to the ball field."

## **Pineiro takes streak into Oakland**

By Cash Kruth / MLB.com

For the past four seasons, Angels pitcher Jered Weaver has been one of the club's top two starters. After the free-agent departure of John Lackey this offseason, Weaver has shifted to the role of bona fide ace, posting All-Star-caliber numbers.

With Weaver's ascension to the top of the rotation, Los Angeles was in need of a No. 2 pitcher. Look no further than Friday's starter, right-hander Joel Pineiro.

Pineiro (9-6, 3.96 ERA) has posted wins in his past six starts, boasting a 2.08 ERA in 43 1/3 innings during that span. In that time, he's also only walked 12 batters.

While Pineiro has been around the league for a decade, Oakland's Friday starter is a relatively new face, but a pitcher who has been solid this season.

Vin Mazzaro, a 23-year-old right-hander, is 4-2 with a 3.81 ERA in seven starts. Since replacing left-hander Brett Anderson (injury) in the starting rotation on June 8, Mazzaro is 3-2 with a 2.97 ERA.

In his last outing, a 3-1 win against the Indians, Mazzaro won his second straight start, holding Cleveland to one run on seven hits in 7 1/3 innings, striking out seven.

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

### **Angels: Big bats need to step up**

As the first half of the season nears completion, the Angels still need to get more production from Bobby Abreu and Hideki Matsui, two of their most important bats. Both got a day off from the starting lineup on Thursday in hopes that rest might rejuvenate their bats.

"They're just getting a day off," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "They're a little bit tired. They'll be back out there."

Abreu and Matsui have combined for six runs scored (three apiece) and 10 RBIs (five each) in the past 10 games. Abreu has only four hits and a .091 average, while Matsui is batting .206 with seven hits over that span.

### **A's: Hurlers headed back soon**

Oakland's starting rotation will get a post-All-Star break boost, when both Anderson and Dallas Braden are expected to return. Anderson (elbow tendinitis), could be back as early as July 19, while manager Bob Geren said Braden (left elbow stiffness) also is expected back during the first few games of the second half.

### **Worth noting**

Oakland called up right-handed pitcher Ross Wolf from Triple-A Sacramento and optioned right-hander Tyson Ross to Sacramento on Wednesday. ... The Angels scored a total of five runs in their four-game sweep at the hands of the White Sox, who scored 19 runs.

## **Braden and A-Rod at war no more**

By Rob Neyer, [espn.com](http://espn.com), 7/8/2010

Well, it looks like [the war is officially over](#). Ben Shpigel:

A détente was seemingly reached in the [Alex Rodriguez-Dallas Braden](#) feud Tuesday, when Braden sent over what could be construed as a peace offering. Rodriguez received a "[Get Off My Mound](#)" T-shirt and a personalized poster commemorating Braden's perfect game. According to The San Francisco Chronicle, Braden wrote, "Dear Alex, here's the poster you requested. I think you're right, it will look great over your mantel. .... I know you realize it's all in fun." Rodriguez signed 10 of those T-shirts to be auctioned off for charity. It is expected that Braden will also sign them. "It's all good," Rodriguez said. "It was really, really nice."

As a human being, these latest developments have me grinning stupidly and thinking, *Awwwww*. Like I'm watching a YouTube video of a kitten playing with a St. Bernard. It's nice to know that if someone's going to be rioting in Oakland this week, at least it won't be the baseball players.

As a baseball fan, though? This stinks. I love the t-shirt, which 1) was brilliantly executed by the designer, and 2) fits perfectly in the franchise's "Green Collar" marketing campaign (which is more than just propaganda, as anyone who's been to an A's game this year can tell you; the difference between the crowds at the Coliseum and across the Bay at AT&T Park is wonderfully dramatic). Also, I just don't see the T-shirt -- as Braden apparently does -- as a slap at Rodriguez. I read it as, "I'm Dallas Braden and I don't care who you are, that's my mound and stay the \$#&% off it."

Which is sort of cool.

Actually, what really stinks is that the Braden-Rodriguez feud, while it lasted, added some real color to the game. And now that everybody's pals again, that bit of color is mostly gone.

We'll always have fond memories of [Bradenia](#), though.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Walk-off single nets Sacramento 5th win in a row**

By Annie Becker / Sacramento River Cats

Corey Wimberly's walk-off single scored a fist-pumping Josh Donaldson in Sacramento's 4-3 victory over the Portland Beavers at Raley Field on Thursday night.

The hits came late for Sacramento, but the River Cats rallied back for the fifth consecutive game in the first game of a four-game homestand.

And the Brad Kilby Rally Pants came out again.

Steven Tolleson delivered the first hit for Sacramento in the fourth inning, recording a double to end Steve Garrison's no-hit bid.

"We just came off a big series in Reno with a lot of momentum," said Tolleson, who had several key hits in Sacramento's four-game sweep.

Chris Carter stepped up next and ripped a home-run, his 19th of the season, scoring Tolleson. Carter's homer, which brought Sacramento within one, was his second in as many games and his fourth of the month.

"It's good to keep the winning streak going and it feels really good to get a win late in the game," Carter said.

With Sacramento still down by one, Michael Taylor popped a game-tying, opposite-field home run to bring the Cats back in action.

"We knew in the dugout that we were going to win," Tolleson said. "It just started a little later and we waited for it."

Winning Sacramento pitcher Edwar Ramirez (3-1) replaced Clayton Mortensen after 8.0 innings. Ramirez faced just three Portland batters, ending the Beavers hope of a late-game surge before the Kilby's Rally Pants took the field.

"I have a formula ... and we have been sticking with it," explained Kilby about when he breaks out his skin-tight pants.

Mortensen returned to the mound at Raley Field for Thursday night's match up. Mortensen traveled to Oakland on Saturday for a spot start against the Cleveland Indians, where he pitched 6.0 solid innings for the Athletics and received a no-decision.

Sacramento manager Tony DeFrancesco continued his streak at Raley Field. DeFrancesco has been ejected in the past three home games in Sacramento beginning against the Fresno Grizzlies on July 2, continuing to July 3, and then again against the Beavers in Thursdays game.

With Fresno's loss at Tacoma, Sacramento moves within four games of the division lead. Sacramento will return to faceoff against the Beavers again Friday night 7:05 p.m.

## **Hounds Go Deep in Little Rock**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The home run has not been a primary weapon for the RockHounds in 2010. On Thursday at North Little Rock, Arkansas, the long ball became a lethal weapon, as the 'Hounds scored six runs on three swings. A "hat trick" of home runs accounted for all the scoring and, backed by outstanding pitching, added up to a 6-1 win over the Arkansas Travelers.

Top of the first, bases empty, two out: Alex Valdez belts a 400-plus-foot home run to center field, and the RockHounds lead, 1-0. The Travelers respond with three consecutive singles in the home half of the inning, tying the game at 1-1.

Top of the second, bases empty, two out: Matt Sulentic falls behind in the count, 0-2, before doubling down the left field line. Petey Paramore hits his first home run at the Double-A level, a towering, two-run home run to left, and the RockHounds take the lead for good, 3-1.

Top of the third, bases empty, two out: Val Majewski singles and Corey Brown walks on four pitches. Archie Gilbert rips the very next pitch, a line drive over the left field wall, for a three-run home run and a 6-1 lead.

Matt Wright went 5.0 solid innings for the win. After the three first inning singles, the right-hander allowed just two walks and a single over his next 4.0 innings. The bullpen of Justin Souza, Fautino De Los Santos and Justin James combined for 4.0 shutout innings, allowing just four hits (two of them infield singles, with no walks and five strikeouts. All three relievers were throwing fastballs in the 92-97 mile-per-hour range.

The game was the first of a three-game series at North Little Rock and the first of a six-game road trip (the 'Hounds travel on to Springfield, Missouri for a three-game series with the Cardinals beginning Sunday).



## San Jose Pounds Ports, 11-5

**STOCKTON, Calif.** - Stockton (37-48) enjoyed a 4-0 lead until the fifth inning, when the San Jose (50-35) offense sparked to life. The Giants piled 10 runs in the latter half of the game, to secure the series win with an 11-5 victory on Thursday night at Banner Island Ballpark.

Grant Green, Stephen Parker and Kent Walton collected two hits apiece for the Ports. First baseman Mike Spina went 1x3 with a single to extend his hitting streak to a season-high eight games. While the Ports were successful in the beginning of the game, Stockton was held to just one hit in the last four innings of the game, as San Jose relievers Ryan Verdugo and Craig Whitaker combined to retire 12 of the last 13 Stockton batters. Michael Madsen picked up his fourth loss on the year, allowing six runs on seven hits in 4.2 innings. Despite having five errors in the game (tying a single season high), 10 of the 11 San Jose runs were earned for Ports pitchers.

Stockton pulled to a quick 2-0 lead in the first inning. With one out, Green reached safely on an error by Giants shortstop Jose Flores. He scored on an RBI double by Parker. Right fielder Jeremy Barfield snapped an 0x6 hitless streak with an RBI double to center field to score Parker.

The Ports added another pair of runs in the third inning to pull ahead, 4-0. Green led off with a single and moved to second as Parker singled to left field. Spina then walked to load the bases with no out. While Barfield was batting, San Jose starter Justin Fitzgerald threw a wild pitch, which allowed Green to score. Barfield struck out for the first out of the inning. Ladendorf then smacked a long sacrifice fly to center field, which allowed Parker to score the fourth Stockton run of the game.

The Giants ended the shutout in the top of the fourth, as catcher Johnny Monell slammed a solo home run over the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch. It was his second home run of the series and eighth on the year. Four of his eight home runs have come off Stockton pitchers this year.

The Giants busted the game wide open in the fifth inning, as they scored five runs. Flores led off the inning with a single. Third baseman Joel Weeks then singled to left-center field, but Ports outfielder David Thomas made a fielding error. Flores took third safely on the play. With runners on the corners, Juan Perez hit into a fielder's choice that allowed Flores to score. Madsen tried to pick Perez off first while Wendell Fairley was batting, but the throw went wild, and Perez took second. Fairley then singled. Francisco Peguero continued the hit parade, singling toward third base to bring home Perez and make it 4-3. Madsen got first baseman Michael Ambort to ground out for the second out of the inning, but then walked second baseman Charlie Culberson.

Ports manager then called on Scott Deal to relieve Madsen. Deal gave up a two-RBI double to Monell to make it 6-4 in favor of San Jose before retiring designated hitter Michael Sandoval.

The Ports added their fifth and final run in the fifth inning. Green led off with a double, and came trotting home on an RBI single by Spina.

While Deal pitched a scoreless sixth and Andrew Carignan pitched a shutout seventh inning, the Giants weren't finished yet. In the eighth inning with Carignan still on the hill, San Jose advanced to 9-5. Monell started things off with a double to left field. Sandoval then collected his first RBI on a double. Flores grounded out to Ladendorf for the first out of the frame, but then Weeks hit an RBI single to pad the San Jose lead and make it 8-5. Carignan gave up a double to Perez, before exiting the game. Southpaw Trey Barham entered the game and struck out Fairley. Peguero then reached on an error by Parker, which allowed Weeks to score. Peguero was caught stealing while Ambort was at bat.

In the ninth, the Ports called on Scott Hodsdon to face the Giants. After retiring the first batter, he gave up a single to Culberson. Ports catcher Ramon Soto tried to throw Culberson out at second, but the throw went wild, and Culberson reached third. Monell next walked on four straight pitches. Sandoval stepped up to the plate and hit an RBI double to make it 10-5. Flores then grounded out to Green at shortstop, but Monell scored on the play to give San Jose a six-run advantage. Hodsdon got Weeks to ground out to end the ninth.

The Ports were retired in order from the seventh through the ninth innings.

The Ports will look to avoid being swept by the Giants on Friday night at 7:05 PM PST at Banner Island Ballpark. LHP Ben Hornbeck (1-2, 4.79) will take the hill for Stockton, while RHP Oliver Odle (9-2, 3.90).

## **Cougars Rally in 9<sup>th</sup> to Stun Chiefs**

## **Kane County trails all game until 9<sup>th</sup>, beats Peoria**

**PEORIA, III.** – With the Kane County Cougars down to their final out Thursday night against the Peoria Chiefs, Conner Crumbliss delivered a three-run double to give the Cougars an 8-6 lead, and they held on to win, 8-7, at O'Brien Field. The Cougars never led until Crumbliss' double, and they evened the three-game series at one win apiece with the comeback victory.

The Cougars trailed, 6-4, entering the top of the ninth when Peoria closer Jordan Latham (0-2) walked three straight hitters to load the bases. After a pair of strikeouts put the Cougars down to their final out, Tyreece House walked to make it 6-5. Then Ronny Morla entered for the Chiefs, and Crumbliss lifted a drive to right-center that fell between two outfielders, scored three runs for an 8-6 game and gave the Cougars their first lead of the night. Jose Guzman yielded one run in the bottom of the ninth before converting his ninth save and confirming a win for Jose Pina (2-1).

The Cougars fell behind, 2-0, in the first inning as starter Murphy Smith gave up a pair of unearned runs. Rashun Dixon grounded into a fourth-inning double play to score Crumbliss to make it 2-1, but the Chiefs answered with three more runs - one earned -- against Smith in the bottom half to make it 5-1. Leonardo Gil nailed a two-run triple in the fifth, and Juan Nunez followed with an RBI single to make it 5-4, and Smith got touched for one more in the bottom portion. He gave up six runs -- two earned -- on five hits over 4 2/3 innings, leaving in line for a loss but eventually getting a no-decision thanks to the ninth-inning rally.

The Cougars (7-7, 39-44) and Peoria (4-9, 42-40) finish their three-game set Friday night at 6:30 CT. Justin Marks (2-10, 5.44) is scheduled to oppose Nick Struck (2-8, 4.09). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com) with pre-game coverage starting at 6:15 p.m.

## **Oakland A's International Notebook**

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Melissa Lockard, [OaklandClubhouse.com](http://OaklandClubhouse.com)

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The Oakland A's are suddenly major players on the international amateur free agent market. We have more information on the A's three July 2nd signings and on three Dominican Summer League players off to good starts to their 2010 seasons.

For the third consecutive year, the Oakland A's handed out a significant bonus to an international amateur free agent on July 2nd. The A's announced three signings on July 2nd, including that of third-baseman Renato Nunez, who reportedly received a \$2.2 million bonus. That bonus would be the second-largest ever handed out by the A's to international amateur free agent, following only that of Michael Ynoa (\$4.25 million in 2008).

According to Oakland A's Coordinator of International Operations/Baseball Operations Analyst Dan Kantrovitz, who oversees the A's international scouting efforts, Nunez was the team's number one international target since the team started preparing for this year's July 2nd signing period.

"Needless to say, we are thrilled to be able to sign him," Kantrovitz said.

"Julio Franco and his team of scouts in Venezuela started the diligence process on him nearly three ago and since then, [A's Director of Player Personnel] Billy Owens and I have seen him multiple times."

The A's project Nunez, who was regarded by the team and by many around baseball as the top hitter in this year's international amateur class, as a middle of the order bat. Oakland had to fend off a number of other teams to sign Nunez. Kantrovitz credits the team's relationship with the 16-year-old as being the difference-maker in getting him to sign.

"We traveled to Venezuela early and often and got to know Renato and his family very well. In the end, I think our relationship with the family ended-up making the difference," Kantrovitz said.

The A's also inked two left-handed pitchers on July 2nd: 17-year-old Anderson Mata and 16-year-old Jose Torres. Both

pitchers are also from Venezuela.

Kantrovitz believes Mata could be a sleeper in the July 2nd class.

"It's not often that pitchability stands out in a young pitcher, but we have seen Anderson just carve-up hitters with fastball command, a 12-6 curveball that he can consistently throw for strikes and a change-up that bottoms out. He's got a repeatable delivery and good poise on the mound," Kantrovitz said.

In Torres, the A's see a pitcher who has a projectable frame who could profile as a starter down-the-road. His fastball already clocks in the high 80s and Kantrovitz says Torres has a "a body that suggests more development is still to come."

"This past year, he was also one of the top performers in his league in Caracas. We are optimistic on his projection," Kantrovitz said.

### **Past A's International Signees Starting To Make Impact**

Since 2008, the A's have been increasingly more active in the international market, handing out numerous six- and seven-figure bonuses. Three of the team's recent international signings are starting to make their presence felt for the A's Dominican Summer League team.

The A's highest-profile July 2nd signing last season was shortstop Wilfredo Solano who signed for a seven-figure bonus. Solano is batting only .209 in 29 games, but he is showing remarkable patience for a 17-year-old in his first professional season. He has 25 walks and a .372 OBP. A's Director of Player Development Keith Lieppman, who recently returned from a trip to the Dominican, says the walks are no fluke.

"Solano has a very good eye and plate discipline. We are trying to combine that with aggressiveness in his overall game," Lieppman said.

"[He's a] quick learner and [is] making good adjustments."

Lieppman said that Solano is a candidate to travel to the US for the A's Instructional League this fall.

Infielder Franklin Contreras signed with the team before the 2008 season, but he has struggled at the plate, hitting below .200 in 2008 and 2009 for the DSL A's. Contreras also battled injuries during that time. He has been a different hitter thus far this season. Over his first 10 games, Contreras is batting .333 with a homer, a double and five walks.

What makes this even more impressive is that Contreras is still not 100 percent. According to Lieppman, Contreras has been limited to hitting from the left-side only because of injury, but he is getting healthier. Contreras will spend the regular season in the Dominican, but Lieppman indicated that Contreras could also be invited to the US for the A's Instructional League camp.

First-baseman Michael Soto may also be on that US Instructional League invite list thanks to what is looking like a break-through season thus far. In 28 games for the DSL Athletics thus far, Soto has five homeruns in 28 games. According to Lieppman, Soto can play both corner infield positions and has a lot of raw power and soft hands defensively.