

## A's News Clips, Sunday, July 18, 2010

### Oakland A's shake off heat, Kansas City Royals, to win their fourth game in a row

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The gametime temperature was 106 degrees Saturday night with the heat index factored in at Kauffman Stadium.

Unbearably humid to most, but pretty ideal baseball weather in Adam Rosales' opinion.

Rosales played like a man in his element during the A's 6-5 come-from-behind victory over the Kansas City Royals.

He drew the start at second base and delivered three hits and two RBIs, including the game-winning single off All-Star closer Joakim Soria (0-2) in the top of the ninth.

That gave the A's their fourth straight win dating back to before the All-Star break and clinched a series victory on this mini three-game road trip to begin the second half of the season.

Rosales, born and raised in the Chicago area, is accustomed to playing baseball during steamy Midwestern summers. But he couldn't have been serious about enjoying the scorching conditions, right?

"I'd play in the heat 1,000 times more than in the cold," Rosales said. "You could feel it during batting practice. It was like you're cooking out there. But it keeps you loose."

His teammates didn't exactly share his enthusiasm.

"During batting practice, it was a freakin' sauna," shortstop Cliff Pennington said. "But that's how it's going to be (for today's afternoon series finale). Both teams have got to play in it."

The A's victory got right-hander Trevor Cahill off the hook.

Making his first start since going to his first All-Star Game, Cahill allowed all five of his runs in the second inning, wasting an early 3-0 lead.

The Royals' rally included a grand slam by Yunieski Betancourt, the second slam Cahill has served up in his past three outings.

But he steadied himself, retiring 16 in a row from the second to the seventh. He walked four in 6<sup>2</sup>/<sub>3</sub> innings but kept the A's within striking distance as they continued to chip away offensively.

"You've gotta like what he did after (the second)," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Take away four hitters in a row, and before and after that, he was outstanding."

Cahill said he had trouble gripping the ball early, one reason he was leaving pitches up. Betancourt's grand slam came on a sinker that was supposed to be down and away but came back over the plate.

"We're not used to that heat," Cahill said. "Playing in Oakland, it's one of the coolest places in the summer."

Geren flooded his lineup with eight right-handed hitters against Royals lefty Bruce Chen. Rosales, a utility man, played second while Mark Ellis slid into the designated hitter spot.

The A's jumped on Chen for three runs in the first, including Kevin Kouzmanoff's two-run double. Kouzmanoff is 4 for 9 in the series with five RBIs.

Chen found a groove after being handed the 5-3 lead. But Rosales legged out an infield hit to lead off the sixth and eventually scored on Pennington's single that chased Chen.

The A's tied the game in the seventh, when Daric Barton doubled and scored on Kouzmanoff's bloop single off Blake Wood.

Barton, who went 3 for 5 with two doubles, cramped up in his legs during his at-bat in the seventh. He couldn't have felt too bad because he stole third base before Kouzmanoff drove him in.

After Rosales' go-ahead RBI in the top of the ninth, the Royals advanced the tying run to third with two outs off A's closer Andrew Bailey in the bottom half.

But Bailey struck out Jason Kendall to end it.

## **A's notebook: Royals' Jason Kendall likes what he sees of former pupil Kurt Suzuki**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Jason Kendall is getting an up-close look at A's catcher Kurt Suzuki this weekend, and Kendall likes what he sees from his old protégé.

The A's called Suzuki up from the minors in June 2007 to observe Kendall, then in his third season as Oakland's catcher.

They were soon convinced Suzuki was ready to start, and Kendall was traded to the Chicago Cubs on July 16 of that season for reliever Jerry Blevins and catcher Rob Bowen.

Kendall is now starting for the Kansas City Royals. This weekend's series against Oakland is his first time facing the A's in the regular season since they traded him, so it's his first extended look at Suzuki as a polished big leaguer.

"He's going to be an All-Star," Kendall said. "I'm happy for him. He's got a good baseball mind and he's a good baseball person."

Suzuki has developed into one of the American League's best all-around catchers and gets particularly high marks for his work ethic and preparation, something he learned from Kendall.

"Playing behind him was probably the best thing for me," Suzuki said. "Not just with what he does behind the plate, but his demeanor and hard-nosed attitude."

Kendall talked often about having "sweet hands" — knowing how to receive the ball and not letting any pitch get by him.

"In my first at-bat (Friday), I went up there and said 'Sweet hands, Jas.' He said, 'That's right,'" Suzuki said.

Royals manager Ned Yost wasn't pleased with Friday's controversial call in the first inning, when Coco Crisp hit a foul down the right-field line that was overturned after an umpires' conference.

The umpires ruled the ball should have been fair and awarded Crisp a double. Crisp ended up scoring.

"There's a lot of human element in this game, and that includes umpires that make errors," Yost said. "I think it sets a dangerous precedent when you gather together and start changing calls. They were doing everything they could to get the call right, but where does it stop?"

Dallas Braden (left elbow) played catch but he'll throw a side session today to see if he's ready to pitch Tuesday against Boston. "... Ryan Sweeney (sore knees) remains day-to-day. "... Travis Buck (leg fatigue) is playing in rookie league games and nearing a rehab assignment.

## **Chin Music: The heat is on in Kansas City**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 7/17/2010 3:24PM

How do the Royals play in this weather on a regular basis? The temperature at 5:20 p.m. local time in Kansas City is 92 degrees, but it "feels like" 106 degrees with the heat index, according to weather.com. ... I can believe it.

The A's did their pregame stretching and then retreated to the dugout to escape the sun as the Royals finished up batting practice. It's pretty brutal out there, and I imagine it will be even worse for tomorrow's 1:10 p.m. local time start. ...

As for the A's news ...

–Dallas Braden's side session will actually take place tomorrow, not today. He's just playing catch today. So after tomorrow, we should have a clear idea of whether he'll start Tuesday against Boston. But all signs indicate he will.

–I talked to Royals manager Ned Yost briefly during batting practice about last night's first-inning reversal of Coco Crisp's foul ball, which was ruled a double after the umpires got together and discussed it. Not surprisingly, Yost wasn't crazy about the decision. I'll have more on this in tomorrow's notebook, but Yost's basic point was that umpire mistakes are part of the game, and it sets a bad precedent if umps start huddling too often and changing calls after they're made. Sounds similar to the argument that opponents of instant replay make ...

–First baseman Daric Barton is the only left-handed hitter in the A's lineup tonight against Royals lefty Bruce Chen. Barton jammed his left hand last night coming off the bag to make a nice tag after an off-target throw from Kevin Kouzmanoff, but Barton said he's OK ... Ryan Sweeney is out of the lineup again because of his sore knees, but he probably wouldn't have played anyway because Bob Geren wanted a righty-dominated batting order. Neither Sweeney nor Geren gave any indication of when the right fielder might return.

–The Kansas City A's will be honored tonight at Kauffman Stadium. The A's called Kansas City home from 1955-67, after which they moved to Oakland. Hmm, if Los Angeles gets another NFL team, does this mean the Raiders will be honored when they play there?

Tonight's lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Rosales 2B, Ellis DH, Carson RF, Davis LF, Pennington SS; Cahill RHP.

Royals — Podsednik LF, Kendall C, DeJesus CF, Butler 1B, Guillen DH, Callaspo 3B, Maier RF, Aviles 2B, Betancourt SS; Chen LHP.

## **A's overcome grand slam to win in 9th**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

All-Star Trevor Cahill had an off night, or an off inning, anyway, and the A's still won.

That's yet another good sign for Oakland going into the second half, along with the fact that the A's consistently have shown they can beat inferior teams. For the second night in a row, they topped the Royals, this time by a score of 6-5, with Adam Rosales providing a game-winning single with two outs in the ninth. The A's have won four in a row and 11 of their past 17, and they've inched back to a game under .500.

Rosales had three hits, two RBIs and scored a run, and Daric Barton had two doubles, a single, scored twice and stole his first base of the season, taking third in the seventh despite cramping up minutes earlier when fouling off a pitch.

With the heat index over 100 degrees Saturday, Barton cramped up two or three times during the game, according to manager Bob Geren. He got some fluids afterward, and while walking away from a reporter, Barton brusquely said, "I'm fine, I'm fine," brushing off other questions without slowing. His 22 doubles are a career high.

Cahill gave up five runs in the second inning, and he gave up his second grand slam in three starts, a drive to left by Yuniesky Betancourt with one out. (Alex Rodriguez hit the other in a Yankees' win at the Coliseum on July 6.) Nine of the 11 homers Cahill has allowed this year have come on the road.

Some of Cahill's problems that inning were because of the humidity; he couldn't get the grip he wanted on the ball. He was leaving a lot of pitches up, including the pitch to Betancourt, a sinker that didn't sink.

"I was fighting that a little," Cahill said. "I'm not used to the heat, playing in Oakland."

Then, Cahill snapped back and retired 16 men in a row, focusing on keeping the ball down, and his teammates kept pushing across runs here and there, eventually providing Cahill with a no-decision.

"The defense and the hitting picked me up," said Cahill, who was working on five days' rest. "The offense did a good job scratching for some runs."

Cahill's fellow All-Star, Andrew Bailey, recorded his 45th career save, passing Billy Koch and Keith Foulke for seventh on Oakland's all-time list.

Coco Crisp, involved in every unusual play on Friday night, had a rough night Saturday. He went 0-for-5 with an inning-ending double play, which came in the eighth, with two on and the game tied.

Crisp, who had surgery on both shoulders last year while playing for the Royals, missing most of the season, also made two poor throws, bouncing one into second in the second inning and throwing a soft lob in the seventh that ensured that Betancourt would make it to second with a double. Crisp has five pins in his right shoulder, but he said after the game that the shoulder is fine and that the throw into the ground was just a flub.

## **Yost still steaming over reversed call**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Royals manager **Ned Yost** wasn't too pleased about the call that was reversed in the first inning Friday night, saying that it is not a good precedent.

Oakland's leadoff man, **Coco Crisp**, stung a liner past first base that bounced on the line, but it was called foul by umpire **Larry Vanover**, who was jumping out of the way of the ball at the time. The ball kicked up chalk and left a clear impression, so when A's manager **Bob Geren** asked for Vanover to ask for help from the rest of the crew, the umpires convened and decided to give Crisp a double.

The A's, of course, liked the reversal; Geren said Saturday, "I've always believed whatever it takes to get a call right."

Yost said he didn't like it even when the Royals were on the successful side of a reversed call earlier in the season.

"I told them, 'Boys, you're setting a dangerous precedent,' " Yost said he told the crew for this series. "What's going to stop every manager from running out on anything and saying he wants it checked?"

"Human error comes into play with umpires throughout the history of major-league baseball. ... Let's have total replay on everything, or let's live with human error."

**Briefly:** With the heat index over 100, **Dallas Braden** played catch and said his arm felt great, but the rest of him was too warm. "I thought I might pass out," he said. He'll throw a side session today, and he remains a strong bet to start Tuesday. ... **John Meloan** visited the clubhouse and the right-hander, who had Tommy John surgery in March, said he'll begin throwing in four weeks. ... Yost called **Gio Gonzalez's** curveball "as good as any breaking ball we've seen in a while, big, hard-breaking curveballs." ... Onetime A's catcher **Jason Kendall** said he was impressed with Gonzalez and called him "effectively wild."

## A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**All batter:** In this spot Saturday, it was noted that Mark Ellis' errorless streak ended at 52 games. Saturday night, manager Bob Geren put the elite defensive second baseman at DH. "He called me 'Bootsy Collins,' " Ellis joked. "Yeah, I'm DH-ing. ... No glove."

## Drumbeat: Hot, humid Kansas City, game two

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Kauffman Stadium 7/17/2010 2:42PM

It's hotter than yesterday - Dallas Braden told me it was like an oven when he was playing catch today, so he moved over near the fountains, where there's a cooling mist - and tomorrow is expected to be hotter still, for a day game. That brings back memories of Jorge Velandia passing out here from the heat 11 years ago; I hope everyone stays nice and hydrated.

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

Still no Ryan Sweeney, but Geren had said yesterday that he was going right-handed heavy today, anyway. Sweeney was out playing catch earlier; I'm not sure if he's going to take batting practice.

Daric Barton confirmed that his wrist was jammed when he made a great play to put a hard tag on Willie Bloomquist racing by last night, but he said it's fine. Life of a first baseman: He's getting used to jammed wrists and fingers. He's always just happy when it's not a hyperextended elbow. Everyone knows catchers get beat up, but first basemen get their share of abuse, too.

Some other tidbits: Braden's catch went fine, he's sure he's OK for Tuesday. His side session is tomorrow, though we had been told it was today. We still don't know where Brett Anderson's minor-league rehab start Tuesday will be. Conor Jackson did more running, at a higher intensity level, and he's making progress with his right hamstring. And Travis Buck will head to another minor-league rehab assignment, likely with Sacramento, when he's able to play nine innings in Arizona.

John Meloan, coming back from Tommy John surgery, came by the A's clubhouse to say hi this afternoon; his recovery is going well, he said, and he should begin throwing again in another month or so. A lot of A's pitchers have had Tommy John surgery in the past year and a half, and the rehabs have not gone as smoothly as hoped: Joey Devine and Josh Outman have been shut down after repeated setbacks. Dan Giese, who'd come off the DL and was pitching at Triple-A Sacramento, just went back on the DL there, but he does not have a problem with his reconstructed elbow, it's a shoulder strain, according to assistant GM David Forst.

I asked Royals manager Ned Yost this afternoon about the reversed call in the first inning last night; he remains unhappy about it and thinks it sets a bad precedent. More on that in tomorrow's paper.

Jason Kendall told me he was impressed with Gio Gonzalez ("effectively wild") and Yost was raving about Gonzalez's curveball before today's game, saying it's the best the Royals have seen in a while.

## The Bull pen

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

-- The more agent **Scott Boras** talks about client **Prince Fielder**, the more it's clear the Brewers have no chance to re-sign the first baseman, a free agent after next season. Boras compares Fielder to **Mark Teixeira**, who got \$180 million from the Yanks. The Brewers wouldn't come close to such a commitment and will move him by the July 31 deadline or during the offseason.

-- **Stephen Strasburg** wasn't experienced enough to be an All-Star, but that didn't stop MLB from taking advantage of the pitcher's fame and selling Strasburg gear during the All-Star FanFest. MLB sold more Strasburg jerseys in June (78,000) than any other player's.

-- The Giants are baseball's seventh most popular team, one notch ahead of the Dodgers, according to a Harris poll of adults surveyed in June. The top six: Yankees, Red Sox, Braves, Phillies, Cubs, Mets. In last year's poll, the Giants were ninth, the Dodgers fourth. The A's are 23rd most popular, down from 20th in 2009.

-- **Bengie** (Rangers) and **Yadier Molina** (Cardinals) combined to go 6-for-8 with eight RBIs on Friday. Bengie hit for a cycle, including a triple in his final at-bat - more stunning than this year's four no-hitters? - but limped off with quadriceps tightness. As for **Jose Molina** (Blue Jays), he had the day off.

-- Bengie's cycle came at Fenway Park, and Boston's **David Ortiz** couldn't believe it: "Things just happen. I'd put my head in a tree trimmer betting that he won't hit a triple."

-- One of the prospects Seattle received from Texas in the **Cliff Lee** trade, **Josh Lueke**, pleaded no contest last year to a charge of false imprisonment with violence against a woman. The Mariners said they were unaware of the plea and his 40-day sentence. He was assigned to Double-A.

## Wolff weary of wait for stadium decision

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

**Lew Wolff** watched the All-Star Game in the commissioner's suite, along with a half-dozen other baseball owners, but he said he didn't push for insight on the **Bud Selig** committee that's taking an eternity to decide the future of the A's.

Wolff isn't happy with the length of the study — 16 months and counting — but he respected Selig's process enough not to corner him and demand answers as **Andrew Bailey** was pitching out of trouble in the seventh inning in Anaheim.

"I have 130 employees working their heads off dealing with a lot of things, and they deserve to know what the next step is for us," said Wolff, the A's managing general partner. "It's just frustrating."

Wolff and Co. hope the committee will conclude its study ASAP and recommend that San Jose should be a shared territory with the Giants, as it once was.

The deadline to place a measure on the November ballot in San Jose is Aug. 6, and the City Council's last meeting before the deadline is Aug. 3. To move ahead on the A's-to-San Jose plan, voters must approve the land use.

"I don't think that date is significant" to Major League Baseball, said Wolff, implying that MLB isn't working with the same deadline as San Jose. "We needed to know last Aug. 3. I feel the Giants and A's, certainly the A's, have had plenty of time to answer every question by the committee."

Here are possible recommendations the committee could make, knowing Selig is on record saying the A's can't survive at the Coliseum:

Ã» Revisit an East Bay site Wolff already researched.

Ã» Locate a site no one has considered.

Ã» Begin the process of having the teams share the South Bay territory and, if there's time, allow San Jose to put a ballpark referendum on the November ballot.

The third option, or something similar, wouldn't sit well with Giants ownership, which claims that the territorial rights were part of the package purchased from **Bob Lurie** in 1992 and, therefore, are included in the franchise value. They also say the A's would cut into their South Bay fan base and sponsorships.

Nobody's more adamant about that than managing general partner **Bill Neukom**, former lead lawyer of Microsoft. The Giants' law firm, San Franciscobased Pillsbury, Winthrop, Shaw, Pittman LLP, also is on the case, and the New York Times reported this week that Neukom is prepared to take legal action against MLB and the A's to stop a move.

Giants president **Larry Baer** didn't comment, other than to say, "We're continuing to cooperate with the commissioner's office in his thorough analysis of the issue."

The territorial rights to San Jose were given to the Giants by the Haas family in the early '90s so the Giants could put a

ballpark measure on the ballot. It failed, but the rights stayed in the Giants' hands. **John Fisher**, a onetime part owner of the Giants who's now majority owner of the A's, wants them returned.

"It was a way to get a new stadium for the Giants, and that's good for all of us," Wolff said. "If we had a new ballpark, we'd have a wonderful competition with the Giants. It would be fun. I don't know all the facts, but once the Giants lost the vote, the territory should've been reverted back. They got it on a fluke."

Selig could call for a vote of big-league owners, and a yes vote would virtually deem the Giants' rights nonexistent. Selig also could oversee a negotiation in which the Giants would be compensated for surrendering exclusive rights.

Wolff's opinion on compensation? "If the Giants show they're legitimately damaged, something fair would be done," he said, "but I don't know what that would be. That would be detailed by the commissioner. Not me."

Wolff, who spent several years focusing on options in Oakland and Fremont, insists a San Jose park would be completely privately financed. "We're absolutely convinced of that," he said.

All he needs is permission from MLB to move forward, and the Giants would like to see him not get it.

## **Rosales ready to deliver in clutch for A's**

### **Game-winning single in ninth caps comeback against Royals**

By Samuel Zuba / MLB.com

KANSAS CITY -- A's utility man Adam Rosales showed up to Kauffman Stadium on Saturday afternoon not knowing if he would even be in the starting lineup.

That's the way things usually are for the 27-year-old Chicago native. On this day, however, Rosales found his name penciled in at second base and hitting in the No. 5 spot.

Rosales took advantage of the opportunity, delivering the game-winning single with two out in the ninth, as the Athletics beat the Royals, 6-5.

With two strikes and the go-ahead run on second base, Rosales knew exactly what he needed to do.

"There was a guy in scoring position late in the game, you're doing your best to get a good pitch and put the barrel on the ball and square it up," he said. "That's about it, that's all I was thinking -- get a good pitch to hit."

Rosales then slapped All-Star closer Joakim Soria's next offering to center field, scoring Kurt Suzuki from second.

After the game, Rosales said regardless of whether he is in the lineup, he comes to the ballpark with the same attitude every day.

"In my mind, I'm in there every day," he said. "That's how you have to approach it, even if I'm not in the lineup. You do things to prepare and know that the opportunity is always there. You kind of have to be prepared every day no matter what."

Rosales was prepared Saturday, going 3-for-5 with two RBIs, while bailing out All-Star Trevor Cahill, who gave up five earned runs in 6 2/3 innings with four walks and three strikeouts in his first start of the second half.

All five runs came in the second inning, when Cahill loaded the bases for Royals shortstop Yuniesky Betancourt. With a 2-1 count, Betancourt drove Cahill's slider into the A's bullpen -- putting the Royals up 4-3 after the A's scored three runs in the first.

The pitch to Betancourt just didn't go where Cahill wanted it.

"It was supposed to go low and away and it went up and in," Cahill said. "That whole inning I was leaving the ball up. There were pitches up, and they were able to hit line drives."

After the grand slam, Cahill gave up a triple to Scott Podsednik. Jason Kendall's sacrifice fly drove in the Royals' fifth and final run of the inning. To Cahill's credit, after the rough second inning, he sat down the next 16 batters he faced.

"I like what he did after [the grand slam,]" A's manager Bob Geren said. "A lot of guys could fall apart after an inning like that, but he regrouped and retired [16 straight batters] after that. If you take away three or four hitters in a row before that, he was outstanding."

Kendall, who struck out with the tying run 90 feet away in the bottom of the ninth, credited Cahill's ability to overcome an early five-run inning.

"He settled down and had good movement on his fastball and kept it down," Kendall said. "He made one mistake to [Betancourt] and he kind of paid for it. But other than that, he was a No. 1 starter."

Working against both clubs Saturday was the scorching temperatures. It was 92 degrees with a heat index of 106 at game time, and the high temperatures came as a shock to the team from California.

"I was kind of fighting that the whole game," Cahill said of the blistering heat. "We're not used to this heat. Just playing in Oakland, it's probably one of the coolest places to play in the summer, so I tried to get acclimated [but] I was just fighting the sweat all game."

Temperatures in the 100s or not, the A's have put together four straight wins dating to before the All-Star break. That, coupled with the Rangers' loss to the Red Sox in extra innings on Saturday, leaves the A's seven games out of first place in the AL West.

Saturday's hero, Rosales, likes the post All-Star game streak, but just wants it to continue.

"We've got two under our belt now, but you always want to get a third and keep the momentum going," he said. Then, go back to Oakland and keep the second half strong."

## **Bannister lighting it up during day games for KC**

By Mike McCall / MLB.com

If Royals right-hander Brian Bannister keeps up his daytime dominance, it may be time to dedicate Garth Brooks' country hit "Ain't Goin' Down While the Sun's Up" in his honor.

In 38 career day starts, Bannister is 21-8 with a 3.95 ERA, while going 16-37 with a 5.42 ERA in 73 night contests. That stat prompted Royals manager Ned Yost to put his starter in the No. 3 spot in the rotation to give him more day outings.

He'll get one on Sunday in Kansas City's series finale with the A's at Kauffman Stadium. Bannister will be opposed by Oakland right-hander Vin Mazzaro.

The way Yost has his rotation laid out, Bannister is expected to make four of his next nine starts in day games, a good omen even if he can't figure out why he's better with the lights off.

"There's no explanation for it," Yost said. "You look at some guys and they may be 15-2 on Saturdays. I don't know why. If the numbers are there, what you do is try to play the percentages in anything that you do. Percentage-wise, it's in our favor.

"I'm not saying he's going to be lights-out on all four of those days, but to date he's got pretty good numbers in day games so you might as well maximize it."

Mazzaro will try to extend his streak of four straight quality starts, as he's gone seven innings or more in three of those outings. He's part of a staff that entered Saturday's action with a 3.82 ERA, the AL's third-best mark.

Oakland pitching coach Curt Young is the man responsible for shaping the staff, but he's quick to give some of the credit to the team's defense.



"I'll definitely say pitching and defense go hand-in-hand, they really do," Young said. "If you have a good defense, then you have a chance to have good pitching because you want the ball to be put in play, then the defense has to work for the pitching and vice versa.

"If we're all on the same page that way -- playing good defense and throwing strikes -- it's a great formula."

### **A's: Thieves on the basepaths**

Entering Saturday's game, Oakland was stealing bases at an 81.7 percent success rate, best in the AL and second in the Majors. The A's are 31-14 in games where they steal a base and 14-32 without one. They added two more on Saturday, putting them at 82.1 percent (69 for 84) on the season. The club record is 80.7 percent in 2008.

### **Royals: Betancourt grand again**

Shortstop Yuniesky Betancourt's second-inning grand slam on Saturday was the team's second of the season. He has both, as his first came against the Red Sox on May 28.

### **Worth noting**

Betancourt's grand slam was the 63rd homer allowed by the A's on the road this season, the most in the AL. Things have been much different in Oakland, where they've given up just 31 home runs.

## **Braden slated for duty against Red Sox**

## **Left-hander feeling confident after rehab start on Friday**

By Samuel Zuba / MLB.com

KANSAS CITY -- Athletics fans might be seeing the return of perfect-game hurler, Dallas Braden, sooner rather than later.

Braden rejoined the team on Friday after making a rehab start at Class A Stockton on Thursday. He is scheduled to make his return to the A's rotation Tuesday night in Boston.

Braden was placed on the disabled list July 3 -- retroactive to June 23 -- with left elbow stiffness. After his last rehab start, Braden felt sore, but reported no pain after throwing four innings and allowing three runs.

"The left side of my body feels like I got ran over by a Greyhound. It's just been a while," he said. "I felt good. I was able to throw some breaking balls. The biggest thing I was looking for was just to come away knowing that I was able to stand in there with no pain or hesitation, and that was there."

When Braden joined his teammates on Friday, he didn't do any hard throwing, but he did play catch before the game. After playing catch, again, he felt no pain.

"It was good to go into the day knowing that it was smooth sailing," he said. "There weren't any kind of hiccups, we didn't have to do any more than we've done so far to get my arm ready to play catch."

### **Ellis' errorless run ends against KC**

KANSAS CITY -- Consider Mark Ellis' errorless streak officially over.

Ellis entered Friday night's game carrying a 46-game errorless streak -- 52 games dating back to the 2009 season -- but that all ended in the sixth inning when he bobbled a ground ball by Kansas City's Alberto Callaspo.

Even with the error, Ellis certainly made up for the mistake.

"[On Friday] he made two or three plays to his right, though, that were just unbelievable," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Vintage Ellis -- just take a hit away, catch it to your right and throw it on the run. So he more than made up for that error with those great plays."

Ellis' streak was the 10th errorless stretch of 50 or more games by an Oakland second baseman, and he owns five of those. He was tabbed as the designated hitter for Saturday night's contest, but Geren said it had nothing to do with Friday's error.

## **A's armed with solid pitching**

KANSAS CITY -- If there is one thing that will lift the A's from third place in the AL West, it's the continued success of their pitching staff.

To date, Oakland's staff ranks first in the AL in shutouts with nine, third in ERA at 3.82, fourth in opponents batting average at .248 and first in fewest hit batters with 16.

Steering the A's staff, which features two All-Stars this season, is pitching coach Curt Young.

"It boils down to, as a staff, if we are a group of strike-throwers," Young said. "There's always room for improvement, and that's one area that we stress -- you gotta throw strikes.

"When you're making it happen and not giving free passes and pitching behind in the count, over the long run, you have a chance to be successful."

Young is in his seventh season as Oakland's pitching coach, and his 23rd overall in the organization. Coming into the 2010 season, the A's staff under Young had allowed the fewest home runs in the AL with 909, had the lowest opponent batting average at .259, while ranking second in ERA at 4.10.

"There's no magic formula," Young said of his success as pitching coach. "There's the fundamental things that work: getting ahead in the count, throwing strikes, knowing how to finish hitters and understanding the weaknesses of hitters. If you have guys that have control of [their pitches,] then you can attack hitters the way you want to."

## **Geren says reversal was correct call**

KANSAS CITY -- A day after umpires overturned a foul ball call to award Coco Crisp a double in the first inning, A's manager Bob Geren still supported the reversal.

"I've always believed that whatever it takes to get a call right is the right thing to do," Geren said.

Geren pointed to the fact that first-base umpire Larry Vanover jumped out of the way to avoid being struck by the ball, so Geren didn't think he had the best angle to make the call.

Immediately after Vanover ruled the ball foul, A's first-base coach Todd Steverson made it obvious that he thought the ball was fair. Geren then went out to argue the call.

"[Steverson] showed that he was pretty convinced, by his body language, that he thought it was fair," Geren said. "So I went out to figure out why he thought it was fair, and then I saw the mark [on the foul line.]"

## **A's overcome grand slam to win in 9th**

DOUG TUCKER, Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Kevin Kouzmanoff had three RBIs and Adam Rosales drove in the tiebreaking run against Joakim Soria in the ninth inning with his third single, leading the Oakland Athletics past Kansas City 6-5 on Saturday night.

Kurt Suzuki doubled with one out in the ninth against Soria (0-2), who started the ninth. With two outs, Rosales delivered the winner up the middle.

The A's won their fourth in a row. Craig Breslow (4-2) pitched one inning for the victory and Andrew Bailey worked the ninth for his 19th save in 22 opportunities, striking out Jason Kendall with the potential tying run on third.

Kansas City's Yuniesky Betancourt hit a grand slam in the second off Trevor Cahill for a 5-3 lead.

Cahill, making his first start since being named to the AL All-Star team, breezed through the first inning but ran into immediate trouble in the second, loading the bases on two singles and a walk before Betancourt, the No. 9 hitter, knocked a 2-1 pitch 366 feet over the fence in left. It was his third career grand slam and second this year.

Scott Podsednik tripled on Cahill's next pitch and put the Royals on top 5-3 on Kendall's sacrifice fly to Coco Crisp in shallow center. Cahill, 8-1 in his 11 previous starts, retired the next 15 in a row and was relieved by Jerry Blevins with the bases loaded and two outs in the seventh.

In a lefty-vs.-lefty matchup against David DeJesus, Blevins ended the threat with a popup. Cahill went 6 2/3 innings and gave up five runs on five hits, with four walks and three strikeouts.

Cliff Pennington had an RBI single in the sixth, chasing Royals starter Bruce Chen, and then the A's tied it in the seventh when Daric Barton hit his second double and scored on Kouzmanoff's RBI single off Blake Wood.

Chen gave up five hits and three runs in a shaky first inning, including a two-run double by Kouzmanoff, who has five RBIs in the past two nights against the Royals.

Kouzmanoff scored on an RBI by Rosales. But after a visit to the mound by pitching coach Bob McClure, Chen retired all but two of the next 15 batters until Rosales singled leading off the sixth and eventually scored on Pennington's RBI single. Chen allowed four runs on nine hits in 5 2/3 innings, with one walk and four strikeouts.

**NOTES:** A's manager Bob Geren said he still hadn't decided whether Dallas Braden would start on Tuesday against Boston. Braden's been on the disabled list since June 23 with left elbow stiffness. ... The defensive play of the night belonged to A's first baseman Barton, who dived to his left to stop Alberto Callaspo's smash down the line to end the third.

## Down the line

### So long Mr. November as MLB plans to finish 2011 postseason in October

By Bill Shaikin, LA Times

We already knew **Mike Scioscia** was the most powerful manager in baseball. What we did not know is that his power extends beyond the Angels' organization and directly to the desk of the commissioner.

Scioscia complained long and loud last October about the lengthy postseason schedule. In a sport where change often is measured in decades, **Bud Selig** has responded to Scioscia's concern in less than a year.

The tentative schedule for next year has clubs opening Thursday, March 31, or Friday, April 1, and closing the regular season Wednesday, Sept. 28.

By moving up each date by a few days, Selig can condense the postseason by a few days, still satisfy Fox with a midweek start for the World Series and finish the postseason before the calendar turns to November.

"I live in fear of November," Selig said.

The new schedule should rectify some of the issues that steamed Scioscia last fall, such as the Angels' getting three days off before starting the playoffs and the Philadelphia Phillies' and New York Yankees' each having more days off than game days between the end of the regular season and the start of the World Series.

The Yankees took advantage of the leisurely postseason schedule, using three starters in 15 games en route to the World Series championship.

"I think it is important to uphold the integrity of the season," Scioscia said. "You want to have the advantage of clinching early so you can reset your rotation. You want a flow through the playoffs, not these unusual breaks."

The October scheduling was addressed by Selig's blue ribbon committee, which includes Scioscia and Dodgers Manager **Joe Torre**. Scioscia took no credit for the reform.

"This would have happened if I said anything or not," Scioscia said.

#### **No A's for All-Cal bats**

The undistinguished first half for California's major league teams is reflected on our All-Cal squad. The pitching is in great shape, but we had to look long and hard to fill out the lineup.

The San Francisco Giants did not install touted rookie **Buster Posey** at catcher until July 1, but the veterans were so pedestrian that Posey gets our call.

The third basemen all posted mediocre numbers, but **Chase Headley** of the San Diego Padres can run a little bit, so we'll go with him. Whatever happened to **Pablo Sandoval**?

**Aubrey Huff**, who carried the Giants' offense in the first half while rotating among first base, left field and right field, earns a spot in left ahead of All-DL slugger **Manny Ramirez**.

Our annual All-Cal squad:

C: Posey, Giants; 1B: **Adrian Gonzalez**, Padres; 2B: **Howie Kendrick**, Angels; SS: **Rafael Furcal**, Dodgers; 3B: Headley, Padres; LF: Huff, Giants; CF: **Torii Hunter**, Angels; RF: **Andre Ethier**, Dodgers.

Starting pitchers: **Trevor Cahill**, Oakland Athletics; **Clayton Kershaw**, Dodgers; **Mat Latos**, Padres; **Tim Lincecum**, Giants; **Jered Weaver**, Angels.

Relief pitchers: **Heath Bell**, Padres; **Andrew Bailey**, A's; **Jonathan Broxton**, Dodgers; **Luke Gregerson**, Padres; **Hong-Chih Kuo**, Dodgers; **Brian Wilson**, Giants.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Cats' 3-run rally in ninth tops Salt Lake**

By Kevin Poveda / Sacramento River Cats

The Sacramento River Cats got back on track Saturday night as a late comeback gave them the 4-2 victory over the Salt Lake City Bees.

The River Cats got a run on the board in the third inning when catcher Josh Donaldson hit his 13th home run of the season to left field off of Salt Lake starting pitcher Eric Junge. However, the River Cats were unable to produce any sort of offense through five consecutive innings, and fell behind 2-1 when Bees left fielder Michael Ryan homered on a fly ball to center field.

Salt Lake City pitcher Eric Junge pitched a solid 8.1 innings and looked like he was going to pitch a complete game, before Sacramento's late-game heroics ruined Junge's strong outing.

Trailing by one run going into the final inning, Sacramento second baseman Eric Sogard started things off with a line-drive double to right field. Junge's wild pitch while facing Steve Tolleson then advanced Sogard to third base setting things up for Michael Taylor after Tolleson struck out swinging. Taylor, who had been held hitless, picked just the right time to double on a line drive to right field, as he drove in Sogard and advanced to third base on a throwing error by Salt Lake City right fielder Terry Evans.

In the end, errors would prove to be costly for the Bees, after Chris Carter reached base on a fielder's choice, Michael Taylor crossed home plate on a fielding error by catcher Ryan Budde .

Corey Wimberly, who was left out of the starting lineup, entered the game as a pinch-runner for Chris Carter and scored when Jeff Baisley doubled on a ground ball to left field. The Bees were unable to bounce back against Sacramento reliever Henry Rodriguez, as he picked up his 11th save of the season and the River Cats picked up their eighth win in their last 10 games.

In their last 10 victories, the River Cats have either come from behind to win or have won in extra innings. With the win, Sacramento now finds itself 2.0 games back behind Pacific Coast League division leaders Fresno. Sacramento will close out their series with Salt Lake City on Sunday before traveling to Colorado Springs for a four-game series.

### **Missions score 17 for 2nd straight day, top 'Hounds**

By Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter Telegram

The San Antonio Missions are not the same team that arrived to Citibank Ballpark on Thursday.

The Missions were struggling with their offense and had scored a total of 13 runs in their previous eight games and had been outscored 47-24 in their last 10. But Citibank Ballpark has been like home away from home for these Missions as their offense has not only come back to life but has really ramped up several notches going against the Midland RockHounds pitchers over the last two night.

On Saturday the Missions again pounded the baseball and the RockHounds with 17 hits in a 17-7 victory in front of 5,180 fans on Saturday night. This comes after the Missions blasted the 'Hounds 17-4 the night before when they equaled a season-high 16 hits.

The last two nights only adds to the success the Missions have had at Citibank Ballpark this season. The Missions are now 9-2 against the RockHounds at Citibank and 2-1 this series. Also, in 11 games against the RockHounds the Missions have scored 78 runs, are hitting .304 and have hit 12 home runs. And consider this: San Antonio came into the game as the worst hitting team in the Texas League with a .239 average and are on pace to score the fewest runs (560) in a season since the 2002 team scored 533.

Brad Chalk led the way by going 4 for 4 with a double, three runs scored and three RBI. James Darnell was 3 for 4 with a home run, two doubles and five RBI. And Blake Tekotte continued his recent tear against the RockHounds by going 3 for 5 with a triple, two runs scored and four RBI.

Once again a RockHounds starter could not give his team a quality start as Carlos Hernandez (8-2) was knocked out of the game after 3 1/3 innings. He gave up 10 runs on nine hits, walked three and struck out three. Hernandez, who has been one of the team's most consistent starters this season, gave up single runs in the second and third innings before things came apart for him in the fourth, when the Missions scored eight runs for a commanding 10-1 lead. After retiring the leadoff hitter, the next eight batters reached against the 23-year-old lefthander. The big hits came from Brad Chalk, who hit a three-run double, and James Darnell, who connected for a two-run double.

While things looked bleak at that point for the RockHounds, there was a ray of hope in the bottom of the fourth when they answered San Antonio's onslaught with a six-spot of their own to pull to within 10-7 against Nathan Culp, who left the game without retiring a batter in the frame. The first six RockHounds to the plate reached, including Matt Sulentic (3 for 5), who had a two-run double, and Petey Paramore (3 for 5), who blasted a two-run homer to left field.

But any hope of a comeback was dashed quickly in the top of the fifth when the Missions added five runs against Midland reliever Mickey Storey. Logan Forsythe had a two-run double and then Darnell added a three-run home run to left field to give the Missions a commanding 15-7 lead.

It also didn't help the RockHounds' cause that the Missions bullpen of Alexis Lara (2-3), Brandon Gomes, Colt Hynes and Evan Scribner combined to shut down the Midland offense. The five hurlers combined to allow seven of the 17 hits the RockHounds had in this game. The RockHounds also left 11 runners stranded after leaving 16 on base the night before.

The Missions will look to win the series at 6 p.m. today, while the RockHounds are not only hoping for a series split but to slow down this resurgent San Antonio offense.

#### ROCKHOUNDS NOTEBOOK

'HOUND BITES: RockHounds 2B Adrian Cardenas made a great play to get Blake Tekotte out in the first inning. Tekotte got a drag bunt down and the ball rolls to Cardenas, who could only scoop the ball with his glove from the ground to first baseman Shane Peterson to get the out. ...RockHounds hitting coach Webster Garrison got ejected by home plate umpire Seth Buckminster in the sixth inning for arguing balls and strikes from the dugout. ...Backup catcher Gabriel Ortiz made his second relief appearance in as many nights. Ortiz made his Double-A pitching debut on Friday night and went 2/3 of an inning and allowed one hit and had a strikeout. Ortiz pitched the ninth on Saturday, walked two and did not allow a run. His ERA remains at 0.00 in 1 2/3 innings of work this season. ...The Missions (44-47) have pulled within one game of the RockHounds (45-46) in the overall record and the wild card if necessary.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: The RockHounds are likely to send LHP Carlos Hernandez (8-1, 3.89 ERA), while San Antonio is expected to start RHP Simon Castro (5-2 2.74). First pitch is scheduled for 6 p.m. at Citibank Ballpark.

### **Ports Win Fifth Straight, 7-1**

### **Stockton sets new winning streak on Saturday**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** – The Stockton Ports (44-49) took the series opener against Rancho Cucamonga (52-41), 7-1, to secure their fifth consecutive win, setting a new winning streak. Stockton rolled with 12 hits, including a solo home run by Jermaine Mitchell and a three-run shot by Yusuf Carter.

Southpaw Fabian Williamson collected his first win for the Ports, allowing one run (a solo home run) on three hits in a season-high 6.0 innings. Williamson also struck out a season-high six batters in the outing. Brett Hunter tossed 2.0 shutout frames, and Jose Pina struck out the side in the ninth to close out the game.

The Ports pulled ahead, 3-0, in the first inning. Mitchell led off for the Ports and hit his second leadoff home run of the homestand, smacking a 2-2 pitch over the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch in right field. Third baseman Stephen Parker singled toward second base to keep things rolling. He stole second while first baseman Mike Spina was batting, and Parker

scored on a double by Spina. Catcher Carter flew out, but then right fielder Jeremy Barfield notched an RBI single to bring home Spina for the third Stockton run.

Williamson kept the Quakes off the board until the fourth inning, when designated hitter Luis Jimenez collected his sixth home run of the year, a shot to the Jackson Rancheria Back Porch.

The Ports had another offensive outburst in the fifth inning, as they scored their final four runs to make it 7-1. Mitchell, who finished the game 3x4 and is now 10x17 thus far in the homestand, singled to start the inning. Shortstop Grant Green doubled to right field for his first hit of the game, which brought home Mitchell. Parker then singled to put two on for Spina. Spina popped out to third baseman Dillon Baird for the first out of the frame. Carter then slammed another three-run shot to deep left field to put the Ports ahead, 7-1. Carter has five home runs on the year with 13 RBI.

The Ports collected a couple more hits in the final frames, but did not score. The Ports bullpen likewise kept the Quakes from scoring.

The Ports will take on the Quakes for Game 2 of the series on Sunday at 6:05 PM at Banner Island Ballpark. RHP Shawn Haviland (6-6, 4.08) will start for Stockton, while RHP Orangel Arenas (3-1, 5.64) will take the mound for Rancho Cucamonga. Fans can follow the game live on KWSX 1280 AM.

## **Straily Nets Cougars 5<sup>th</sup> Straight Win**

### **Kane County has won 12 of last 15**

**GENEVA, III.** – The Kane County Cougars moved their winning streak to a season-high five games Saturday night with a 7-3 victory over the West Michigan Whitecaps in front of 10,058 at Elfstrom Stadium. Dan Straily pitched six shutout innings, Leonardo Gil homered and drove in three and Jason Christian and Rashun Dixon each scored twice. The Cougars have won 12 of their last 15 games and are 6-1 on their nine-game homestand. They also have not trailed at any point during the win streak.

Straily (7-6) posted his seventh quality start, tossing six innings of five-hit ball. He walked and fanned seven in the victory. When A.J. Huttenlocker allowed an eighth-inning run, it snapped the Cougars' consecutive scoreless innings at 26 2/3. Max Peterson gave up two runs in the ninth before Jose Guzman entered and recorded his 13th save.

Conner Crumbliss drilled an RBI single in the third to put the Cougars ahead, 1-0, and then they put up three runs in the fourth off Giovanni Soto (5-6). Dixon walked with the bases loaded, Gil poked an RBI single and Juan Nunez notched a sacrifice fly to make it 4-0. Gil homered in the sixth and had a sacrifice fly in the eighth, and Dixon scored on a wild pitch to account for the Cougars' seventh run.

The Cougars (14-8, 4645) and Whitecaps (7-15, 33-58) continue the three-game series Sunday afternoon at 1 CT. Ian Krol (7-3, 2.28) will oppose Trevor Feeney (7-9, 3.49). 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.