

A's News Clips, Tuesday, August 3, 2010

Oakland A's open homestand with victory behind Trevor Cahill, Rajai Davis

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

Little question exists that the A's need to string together some wins to become a factor in the American League West again. So maybe the Kansas City Royals arrived at the Oakland Coliseum at just the right time.

After losing four of six games on a road trip to Texas and Chicago, the A's opened a six-game homestand Monday night with a 6-0 win over the perpetually struggling Royals.

Starting pitcher Trevor Cahill had his first career shutout and allowed just three hits, and outfielder Rajai Davis hit his fifth home run of the season in the fifth inning to help move Oakland eight games back of the AL West-leading Texas Rangers.

The A's have little choice but to win -- or sweep -- their series against the Royals if they want to stay within earshot of the Rangers, who come to Oakland for a three-game series that starts Friday. After Wednesday, only five of the A's 17 remaining series come against teams that currently have sub-.500 records.

"We've got to have all the momentum we can going into the Texas series," Cahill said. "It's definitely good to start (the homestand) off right."

Cahill's effort gave A's starters three consecutive complete games for the first time since Gil Heredia, Tim Hudson and Barry Zito did it from Sept. 8-10 in 2000. Dallas Braden and Gio Gonzalez pitched complete games on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, against the White Sox.

"We're all kind of building on each other's outings," Cahill said.

Davis also scored on a heady baserunning play in the fourth inning and made a sliding catch on Jose Guillen's flare in the seventh in what was just his third start in right field this season.

He finished the game 2 for 4 and is hitting .354 (17 for 48) since the All-Star Break. He shared top billing with Cahill, who improved his record to 11-4 to eclipse his victory total from last year with two months left in the season.

"It was another typical All-Star performance by an All-Star," Davis said of Cahill. "We have some good pitching. I'm excited about our guys just getting more confident and being able to go deeper."

Cahill retired nine of 10 batters after allowing a third-inning single to Mitch Maier. He also was the beneficiary of five double plays, including an unassisted twin-killing by shortstop Cliff Pennington in the sixth inning.

Cahill lasted until at least the eighth inning for the fifth time in his past seven starts and became the first A's pitcher since Bobby Witt in 1994 to go at least eight innings and allow no more than three hits in back-to-back starts. Cahill went eight innings and allowed two hits against the Rangers on Wednesday.

In the eighth, the Royals put runners on first and second with nobody out, but Cahill got Maier to fly out and Yuniesky Betancourt to ground into a double play.

Catcher Kurt Suzuki "said Cahill had a real good sinker, one of his best ones ever," A's manager Bob Geren said. "You could tell because anytime they got anybody on base, he could still get a ground ball."

The A's had a 1-0 lead in the bottom of the fourth inning before outfielder Matt Watson doubled to score Adam Rosales from second base. Watson eluded the tag from the Royals' Chris Getz as he slid into second base, and as Getz argued the call, Davis raced home from third base.

Oakland A's update: Andrew Bailey still sidelined

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune

Manager Bob Geren said closer Andrew Bailey (right rib strain) is feeling better but will not throw for at least the next two or three days. That means Bailey will not be available for the A's series opener against the AL West-leading Texas Rangers on Friday, as the team initially hoped.

Bailey was placed on the 15-day disabled list last Friday, retroactive to July 21, but Geren is still hopeful Bailey could be available Saturday or Sunday.

The good news for the A's going into Monday's game against the Kansas City Royals was that every member of the bullpen was available. Starters Dallas Braden and Gio Gonzalez threw complete games against the Chicago White Sox on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, and Geren said some relievers could be used in all three games against the Royals.

Pitcher Ben Sheets said he will have surgery next week in Dallas to repair the torn flexor tendon on his right elbow. Sheets, 32, said Rangers orthopedist Dr. Keith Meister will perform the surgery. Dr. James Andrews did Sheets' first flexor tendon operation in February 2009, which required a year of rehabilitation.

Last week, Sheets indicated the surgery likely will keep him out for the 2011 season as well. But he was happy to back in the A's clubhouse after spending a few days with his family in Louisiana.

"(Being here) really helps pass the time by for me, you know," Sheets said. "We have a good clubhouse."

Filming of "Moneyball" continued at the Oakland Coliseum. In the early afternoon, a scene was shot in which manager Art Howe -- played by Philip Seymour Hoffman -- came to take Tim Hudson out of the game in favor of Chad Bradford, which happened in during the final game of the A's 20-game win streak in 2002.

Later in the afternoon, announcers Greg Papa and Glen Kuiper shot scenes on the press box level where they reenacted their opening remarks before 2002's opening day and before the 20th consecutive win.

A few tickets are still available for Wednesday's Strike 3 Foundation fundraising event -- hosted by A's reliever Craig Breslow -- at Anchor Steam Brewery in San Francisco. The event, which benefits childhood cancer research, runs from 7-10 p.m. and will feature guest speaker Jeff Ma of the film "21" and members of his former MIT Blackjack Team. For more information, contact Kristy Fick at 510-381-3714 or kfick@oaklandathletics.com.

Chin Music: Lights! Camera! Let's do another take!

By Curtis Pashelka, Oakland Tribune, 8/2/2010 5:27PM

The filming of "Moneyball" continues today at the Coliseum, giving us novices a glimpse of how involved (and tedious) it is to make a movie. Right now, Greg Papa and Glen Kuiper are in a booth right next to the press box discussing the 2002 Opening Day game against the Rangers (sounds like Papa is going to be given a few actual lines to say in the movie other than giving the play-by-play).

Earlier today, they shot a scene on the field where Art Howe comes out of the dugout to take Tim Hudson out of the game and bring in Chad Bradford. I saw them shoot the same scene three times after I arrived at 2:45 p.m., but they wrapped things up on the field by 3 p.m.

Your 2002 A's lineup, just in case you're curious -- Jeremy Giambi LF, Randy Velarde 2B, Scott Hatteberg DH, David Justice RF, Eric Chavez 3B, Miguel Tejada SS, Terrence Long CF, Ramon Hernandez C, Carlos Pena 1B, Mark Mulder P.

Tejada hitting sixth? Really, Art Howe? Really?

As for the 2010 A's, closer Andrew Bailey (rib strain) will not throw for at least two or three more days. Bob Geren said that likely rules Bailey out for Friday's opener against Texas, but it's still possible he'll be available for Saturday or Sunday.

Ben Sheets was in the A's clubhouse Monday afternoon and said he'll have surgery to repair the torn flexor tendon on his right elbow next week in Dallas.

The A's lineup (2010 version) -- Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Suzuki C, Cust DH, Kouzmanoff 3B, Rosales 2B, Davis LF, Watson RF, Pennington SS, Cahill P.

Dave Newhouse: Dignity in an age of screamers

By Dave Newhouse, Oakland Tribune Columnist

BOB SHEPPARD, the New York Yankees' revered public address announcer, died July 11, and with his passing, civility took another pitch right under the chin.

Sheppard lived 99 years of dignity, his numerous admirers believed from listening to his dulcet, professorial speaking tone over a remarkable 56-year career at Yankee Stadium, the house that Sheppard graced with his voice.

Away from the ballpark, Sheppard actually was a professor of speech at St. John's University in Queens, N.Y. He taught perfect diction and exact pronunciation, and expected no less from himself. And being "The Voice of God" was an added bonus to this iconic figure considered the ultimate stadium announcer.

"A public address announcer should be clear, concise, correct," Sheppard said. "He should not be colorful, cute or comic."

Unfortunately, Sheppard's stately approach, if not extinct, is dying all the same. There are p.a. announcers, now clearly in the minority, who still believe in civility behind the microphone. But the no-longer-silent mic majority is divided between cheerleaders and outright screamers.

Civility, however, isn't just a baseball issue; it's a societal problem. Rudeness, selfishness, greediness, loudness — it's everywhere. On the highway or on the street. In the checkout line, classroom or corporate boardroom. On television talk shows or during the president's State of the Union address.

"All of that," Dick Callahan said. "People don't hold doors open for people. They sit on cell phones in restaurants with people across the table. We live in a very disposable society. People throw relationships away, loyalties away, long-term employees away. We've become too Teflon-ish."

Callahan, a Lafayette insurance agent who lives in Moraga, is 69.

"It's a generational thing, not people of our age group," he continued. "It's liberalizations that people have taken in succeeding generations, who are less conscious in treating people with civility. And it's carried over to some of my brethren in this job."

Callahan, if you don't know, is a reputable p.a. announcer, formerly the basketball voice of the Warriors and Saint Mary's College, and now announcing for the Oakland A's and UC Berkeley football.

The "brethren" of which he speaks are his stadium mic colleagues, who've increased their roles in decibels and lowered themselves in class.

"I'm certainly not a screamer," Callahan said, "and I don't even agree that they should be part of the game. What is the job title — a public address. I don't think people address others in public the way the screamers do."

"I probably try to fit in somewhere between the cheerleader and dignity sections. More on the dignified side. When it's your hometown, I do elevate my voice beyond normal conversational tone to recognize the player who's going to bat. I know Sheppard did not do that, but I don't build my presentation on how I would copy Bob Sheppard, but I certainly would like to be in that category."

The orator rather than the outrageous. And Callahan has achieved that end. He will say "Kevin KOOOOZ-manoff" is at the plate, but that's as far as he'll go.

Callahan is so professional, he asked Kouzmanoff, the A's third baseman, beforehand if he could announce him that way. Kouzmanoff was thrilled.

Callahan succeeded another "Voice of God" in Roy Steele, the venerable A's p.a. announcer who was the West Coast baseball version of Sheppard.

Callahan grew up in Avoca, Pa., 125 miles from New York City. His dad, a Yankee die-hard, took him as a boy to Yankee Stadium. There he heard Sheppard, whose Yankee career ran from 1951 to 2007.

"The dignity is what impressed me," Callahan recalled. "You almost wanted to stand at attention when he was making an announcement."

He finally met Sheppard at Yankee Stadium 15 years ago and had his photo taken with the man who most influenced his mic style — only Sheppard never would have done Dot Racing.

Davis pulls a fast one against Royals

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Rajai Davis will run at the slightest hint it's OK to do so, and Monday at the Coliseum, all it took to get Davis to take off from third was for Kansas City second baseman Chris Getz, still holding the ball, to turn to argue a call.

Before it even really registered with the Royals, Davis had crossed the plate. And his next time up, Davis didn't need any distracted infielders: He crushed a two-run homer to left, and the A's reeled off a 6-0 victory over Kansas City, with Trevor Cahill going the distance for the first time in his big-league career.

Davis wasn't finished, though. In the seventh, he robbed Jose Guillen of a hit with a sliding, backhand grab in right-center, ending the inning.

Davis' night relegated Cahill to second banana, even though the All-Star extended his scoreless streak to 18 innings and also threw the A's third complete game in a row, following Dallas Braden's effort Saturday and Gio Gonzalez's Sunday at Chicago. The last time Oakland had three straight complete games was September 2000 (Gil Heredia, Tim Hudson and Barry Zito).

"We're all kind of building on each other's outings," said Cahill, who gave up three hits and walked four. The A's turned five double plays behind him.

Last August, Davis also took advantage of a less-than-alert Royals team. When pitcher Luke Hochevar walked toward the mound, head down, after a Kansas City error let Davis get to third, Davis darted home. In the fourth inning Monday, Matt Watson's double to left-center drove in Adam Rosales and sent Davis to third. Watson made it to second just as Getz took the throw, and Getz whirled toward umpire Paul Emmel when he called Watson safe.

Time wasn't called, and that's all Davis needed.

"I was paying attention," he said. "Getz looked committed to the action at second base, so I committed myself to touching home plate."

"He's been known to do that," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "He's opportunistic."

Getz said after seeing the replay that he still believes Watson was out, but, he said, "I got caught up in the situation. It really is inexcusable."

The string of complete games comes with closer Andrew Bailey on the disabled list with a ribcage strain. Bailey did not throw for a fourth day in a row, and it will be at least two or three more before he resumes, according to Geren.

That makes it unlikely that Bailey will be available Friday against division-leading Texas, but Geren said Bailey might come off the DL during that series.

You complete three

Dallas Braden, Gio Gonzalez and Trevor Cahill have given the A's three consecutive complete games for the first time in a decade:

Pitcher	Opp.	H	ER	BB	SO	Result
Braden	Chi.	8	2	1	5	W, 6-2
Gonzalez	Chi.	6	4	0	11	L, 4-1
Cahill	K.C.	3	0	4	3	W, 6-0

Beat: Broadcasters make it into movie

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Some of the actors playing A's players in the movie version of "Moneyball" might look different from their real-life counterparts - **Royce Clayton** as **Miguel Tejada**? - but there will be an authentic sound to the broadcasts of the game within the movie.

Radio play-by-play man **Ken Korach** and television announcer **Glen Kuiper** filmed scenes in the press box with director **Bennett Miller** on Monday, and **Greg Papa**, the A's lead TV man in 2002, reprised that role for the film.

"Everyone on the crew was so nice, so professional," Korach said. "It really was fun. ... They said they wanted A's broadcasters because they felt it would add authenticity to it."

"The sounds of their voices are so great," location manager **Todd Christensen** said as the scene was being filmed. "Listen to that; that's why they didn't use actors for this."

Though scripts were provided, Miller encouraged the broadcasters to call action just as they usually would.

"With a script, I would have worried about screwing up lines," Kuiper said. "This was much better."

Many A's fans would like the film to use the late **Bill King**'s radio call of **Scott Hatteberg**'s dramatic homer in the record 20th consecutive win. Korach, King's longtime on-air partner, said, "Obviously, it would be great, I'd love it, but I don't know what they're planning."

Former big-league catcher **Chad Kreuter**, now the baseball coach at USC, is playing pitching coach **Rick Peterson** (talk about zero similarities), and he also provided baseball lingo and know-how for the production, including teaching right-handed actor **Chris Pratt**, playing Hatteberg, how to hit left-handed.

"Chris has come a long way," Kreuter said. "He's phenomenal as an actor playing a baseball player. It's tough as a right-hander to hit left, but on camera, it should look real good."

"There will be some great outtakes when they put the DVD together, though: With the cameras rolling for the big scene, he couldn't get the doughnut off the bat, and he tripped over third base (on the home-run trot)."

The crew is enjoying the 10-day shoot at the Coliseum, even the all-night affairs - "vampire hours," Kreuter said - and Christensen has become an A's fan. He's wearing an A's hat, and he won't take it off until the movie is completed.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Carter in the outfield: Prospect Chris Carter has played mostly first base, but he'll spend the rest of this season in left field. "He has the tools to play left," director of player development Keith Lieppman said. "He just hasn't done it every day."

Drumbeat: "Moneyball" invades the press box, also, some A's stuff

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 8/1/2010 5:49PM

Well, I now can officially recommend at last one thing about the "Moneyball" movie - Greg Papa is fantastic. They were filming Papa and Glen Kuiper doing Opening Day and 20-game winning streak TV announcer type stuff, and Greg's voice was booming here into the main writers' press box. He was in fine form.

I'm not sure I can say as much for the assemblage of extras "playing" print reporters. First of all, they were all wearing ties. Um....that's about 30 years out of date. You're lucky if you find baseball writers wearing collared shirts.

One was wearing a fedora. That's about 50 years out of date. And not a woman among them, which makes me sad, since I certainly seem to remember covering the A's that year. Well, since my only appearance in "Moneyball" the book is when I'm getting yelled at by Billy Beane on the other end of the phone, I suppose there will be nada in the movie, either. That's OK, I'm thrilled some of the broadcasters are being used, although I'm with a lot of the folks over at AthleticsNation - I think it would be wonderful if they used Bill King's call of the Hatteberg homer. You can't get better than Bill, and it would be so fitting.

It's weird seeing a film crew move into your work space. Some regulars were shushed - an A's PR person, a wire services reporter - and I'm not sure that was immensely appreciated. We're working. This is where we do it. Finish earlier if you want the press box to yourself.

Overall, though, the crew I talked to was super nice and they seemed to be as excited to be at the Coliseum as we were to have movie people here. It sounds as if they all have enjoyed their time here, even the all-night shoots. "Vampire time," they said. So filming during the day today and tomorrow was a nice change for them.

So.....not much news on the actual baseball front. (I hope, since I was up here watching all this hoo-hah.) I was at the manager's session, though, and here's what I gleaned: Andrew Bailey won't throw for two or three more days, which makes him extremely unlikely for Friday against Texas, although Bob Geren didn't rule him out for later in that series. Also, Chris Carter is playing left in Sacramento and he might be there most of the rest of the way. ... Interesting. I know there are a lot of doubts about his ability to be an everyday outfielder; maybe this is one of those let's-find-out-for-sure last-ditch efforts.

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

Cahill tosses three-hit shutout against Royals

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- By now, Oakland's relievers are probably tired of twiddling their thumbs in the bullpen. Such is life for the A's, who received their third straight complete-game effort from a starter in Monday's 6-0 victory over the Royals.

After Dallas Braden and Gio Gonzalez did the deed on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, it was the Trevor Cahill show on Monday.

"There's guys [in the bullpen] that haven't thrown in over a week now," reliever Brad Ziegler said. "Everybody's wanting their opportunities, but at the same time, if we're going to win games doing this, then no one is going to complain."

Cahill featured some of his best stuff of the year and limited the Royals to three hits and four walks on the evening. Cahill needed 108 pitches to toss the first complete game -- let alone shutout -- of his career. He said it was the first complete game he had thrown since his high school days in Vista, Calif.

"We're all kind of building on each other's outings," Cahill said.

For the A's, it was the first time they had received three straight complete games since Sept. 8-10, 2000, when Gil Heredia, Tim Hudson and Barry Zito accomplished the feat.

"It's very impressive," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Not only that, it's who it is against, too."

Braden and Gonzalez (in a losing effort) were able to throw back-to-back complete-game gems against a quality White Sox lineup at a hitter-friendly U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, while Cahill threw his against the Royals, who entered Monday's contest with the second-best average in the American League (.280).

In a vintage Cahill performance, his fastball was moving all over the zone and his sinker was looking as heavy as ever. Dating back to his July 23 outing, Cahill has now strung together 18 consecutive scoreless innings.

"His movement on his fastball was great," A's catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "He kept the ball down in the zone and he really just pitched aggressively. He got the big ground balls, double plays and early outs when he needed to -- that's really what made him go so far into the game."

With the win, Cahill earned his 11th victory of the year to best his 10-win rookie season of a year ago. Cahill said he's learned to pitch deeper into games by adding a curveball to his repertoire and that he expects himself to pitch deep in games because he's not a strikeout pitcher.

Suzuki echoed Cahill's sentiments and said the team as a whole has matured greatly from a year ago, citing examples like himself, Cahill, Gonzalez and shortstop Cliff Pennington.

"What I'm impressed with -- besides his stuff and his ability -- is his mentality," Suzuki said. "He's such a fun, happy-go-lucky guy off the field, but when he goes on the mound, he's a competitor."

Kansas City never really threatened against Cahill, as it only had one runner reach second base all night. Cahill was able to keep his pitch count down, thanks in large part to a defense that turned five double plays behind him.

"That was the key," Cahill said. "It's great knowing that if I'm going to get a ground ball, that they're going to turn a double play and it's going to be two quick outs."

Fittingly, the game ended on a 5-4-3 double play, despite a wide throw from third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff that nearly pulled second baseman Adam Rosales off the bag.

Cahill also induced inning-ending double plays in the second and sixth innings, the latter an unassisted double play by Pennington, who nabbed a Chris Getz line drive and tagged Gregor Blanco out near second base.

"He was phenomenal," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "I mean he'd just get us to hit out in front and hit the ball right to the second baseman, right to the shortstop. He just did a great job."

Offensively, the A's had little trouble chipping away at Royals starter Brian Bannister, who surrendered five runs over five innings.

The A's sent seven men to the plate in the bottom of the first -- all with two outs -- but could only score one run before leaving the bases loaded to end the inning. Oakland added to its lead in the fourth, thanks to a mental miscue by Getz.

After Matt Watson hit a solid shot to the left-center-field gap, easily scoring Rosales, he slid safely into second base just below the tag of Getz. The Royals second baseman immediately voiced his displeasure to second-base umpire John Tumpane and stopped paying attention to Rajai Davis, who bolted home from third and scored without a throw.

"I got caught up in the situation," Getz said. "It really is inexcusable. I've got to be aware of what's going on. But, granted, I was thrown off. I looked at the replay and I'm pretty sure he was out. If the call's right, you just move on and that's it."

Davis got into the act on defense, making a nice sliding grab in the top of seventh, robbing Jose Guillen of a base hit.

Davis also broke the game open with his two-run homer in the top of the fifth, which gave Oakland a 5-0 lead. He capitalized on a hanging breaking ball from Bannister, sending it just over the left-field wall to also score Jack Cust.

"I think it was a mistake and I was able to see it right away," Davis said. "We were just able to capitalize on the mistake they left over the middle of the plate. It happens sometimes."

Royals searching for first win this year vs. A's

By James Hall / MLB.com

After having their season-high three-game winning streak snapped with a 6-0 loss to the A's on Monday, the Royals will attempt to right the ship on Tuesday, and earn a win vs. an A's club which they are 0-4 against this year.

Fortunately for the Royals, starting pitcher Kyle Davies has been dominant against Oakland over the course of his career. In four starts vs. the A's, three which have come at the Coliseum, Davies has compiled a 2-1 mark with a 3.32 ERA over 21 2/3 innings. In his past seven outings this season, the right-hander has allowed three or fewer runs on four occasions, while hitting the four-run plateau in his remaining three starts.

If Davies is going to continue his success against the A's, he'll need improved run support. The Royals only amassed three hits and were shut out for the fifth time this year against the A's on Monday.

Opposing Davies will be 23-year-old Vin Mazzaro. Leading up to his last start, during which he was tagged for seven runs in 5 1/3 innings against Texas, the right-hander had a string of six consecutive quality starts. The youngster has shown impeccable control this season, walking four or more batters in only two of his 14 outings.

The A's offense which entered Monday having not collected an extra-base hit in four of its last seven games, smacked Royals starter Brian Bannister for seven hits, including two for extra-bases. The home run by Rajai Davis off Bannister in the fifth was only the club's third over the past eight games.

Royals: Oh so close

The Royals have won 35 games by one run this season, trailing only the Red Sox in the American League.

Athletics: Running wild

With stolen bases from Daric Barton and Coco Crisp on Monday night, the A's now have a Major League-leading 24 steals since the All-Star break. The club has been successful in 89 of its 109 attempts this season, which ranks amongst the top five in baseball. ... A's closer Andrew Bailey will not return for the team's remaining two games against the Royals on Tuesday and Wednesday. On the 15-day disabled list with a rib muscle strain, the right-hander is expected to be back sometime this week, but according to manager Bob Geren, will likely not be available until Saturday at the earliest.

Sheets to undergo surgery next week

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Although his season is a lost cause, Ben Sheets is still sticking around his teammates in the clubhouse. On Monday, Sheets told reporters he will undergo surgery next week to repair a torn flexor tendon in his right elbow, before he went out to the field to stretch and shag balls during batting practice.

Sheets was in good spirits and said he will approach the surgery "very cautiously," as he underwent similar elbow surgery prior to the 2009 season and it wiped out the whole campaign.

"It won't be the same, it will be slightly different," Sheets said. "But I ain't medical enough to talk in terms."

Sheets hasn't pitched since July 19 and said he doesn't expect to be available for Spring Training in 2011.

"It will be a significantly long time again," Sheets said. "Probably about 12 months, I think, then I'll be back dominating."

Sheets signed a one-year, \$10 million dollar deal with the A's shortly after a private workout in Louisiana in January. There's no denying Sheets has been a positive veteran presence that keeps the clubhouse loose, but he never consistently looked like the Sheets of old, he of four All-Star appearances in eight seasons with Milwaukee.

Sheets' 4-9 mark is a career-worst, while his 4.53 ERA will be his highest since posting a 4.76 in his 2001 rookie season.

"Ben wants to be here with his teammates before he has his surgery, so we obviously welcome it," manager Bob Geren said. "Everyone enjoys having him around and it's nice to see a guy that has that kind of connection with everybody."

Bonser ready to be A's long reliever

OAKLAND -- Since the A's promoted right-hander Boof Bonser from Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday, they haven't needed a long relief man. In fact, they haven't needed a reliever at all, as Dallas Braden and Gio Gonzalez have tossed consecutive complete games.

But when the time calls, the 28-year-old Bonser said he's comfortable with performing in a long relief role.

"It's no problem," Bonser said. "It was the same role I had in Minnesota and I was going to have the same role in Boston, too, so it's not a problem."

Bonser debuted with the Twins in 2006 and made 18 starts before making another 30 with the team in '07. But after two months with Minnesota's rotation in '08, Bonser was sent to the bullpen for the rest of the season. Bonser then missed all of '09 after having surgery to repair a torn labrum and rotator cuff during Spring Training.

"My shoulder's fine now," Bonser said. "I've been getting my innings in, so I haven't had any problems with my shoulder."

Bonser made two relief appearances with the Red Sox in June with mixed results: He allowed four earned runs without getting a batter out on June 9, before throwing two scoreless innings on June 11.

Of his 42 pitches thrown with Boston this season, none were changeups, but Bonser said it was a result of the situations. Bonser's velocity was also up to an average of 93 mph with Boston, about 1-2 mph faster than he averaged with Minnesota.

"I don't feel like [I'm throwing any harder]," Bonser said. "But I haven't radar-checked in a little while."

As far as the A's clubhouse goes, Bonser said he's happy to be back in the big leagues again.

"It's a good group of guys," Bonser said. "Everybody's awesome here and they just like to have fun and play the game. You can't ask for anything more than that."

Bailey could be out until Saturday

OAKLAND -- A's closer Andrew Bailey, who is on the 15-day disabled list with a rib muscle strain, will be out of commission for the three-game set with the Royals and likely unavailable until Saturday at the earliest.

"He's reported feeling better, but he hasn't done much yet," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He's not going to throw for at least a few more days and we'll go from there."

Bailey hasn't pitched since experiencing pain while throwing two innings on July 20.

Geren also said there are no significant developments with injured outfielder Conor Jackson, who is in Arizona rehabbing his right hamstring. Jackson hasn't played since June 30, but is starting to "step up" his running and has been able to throw and hit without problems.

Geren said he hasn't received a doctor's report on Ryan Sweeney, who underwent season-ending surgery on his right knee Friday. Geren said he did talk to Sweeney via text and that the 25-year-old "is feeling good and everything went well."

Worth noting

Chris Carter, one of the A's top prospects at Triple-A Sacramento, has started five of the past six contests in left field after playing almost exclusively at first base to start the season. Entering play Monday, Carter had a .254 average with 24 home runs and 76 RBIs. ... The Oakland press box was filled with a Hollywood film crew and equipment on Monday, as the movie "Moneyball" continues to be filmed at the Oakland Coliseum.

Cahill and Davis Shutout Royals

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post

Oakland, CA – In true All-Star form Trevor Cahill pitched his first career shutout and defeated the Kansas City Royals 6-0. Another great day of pitching from the Oakland A's followed by stellar defense.

Cahill pitched his first complete game since high school allowing three hits, four walks and three strikeouts. He is the third A's starter to pitch a complete game behind Dallas Braden and Gio Gonzalez this past Saturday and Sunday.

"We're all kind of building on each other's outings," Cahill said.

This is the first time the A's have recorded three straight complete games since the success of Gil Heredia, Tim Hudson and Barry Zito September 8-10, 2000. Great pitching leaves little movement from the bullpen, many of the pitchers haven't pitched in a full week.

"It was another All-Star performance by an All-Star," Rajai Davis said. "We have some good pitching, I'm excited when guys go deep and get better."

Davis provided a night of entertainment as well. He opened the game in the fifth frame with a two-run homer which gave Oakland a 5-0 lead. Then followed with a sliding catch on Jose Guillen's fly ball center field during the seventh frame to prevent a hit.

"I thought I might have dropped the ball but guess my speed got it," he explained.

The A's got going early in the first inning when Royals pitcher Brian Bannister walked three runners allowing Kevin Kouzmanoff to singled giving Oakland a 1-0 lead. Bottom of the fourth frame Matt Watson hit his first double of the season scoring both Adam Rosales and Davis.

"The experience factor has been the difference for us this season," said Kurt Suzuki. "We had to go through somethings in order to get better and learn from our mistakes." "This is the way we envisioned our team to be and the key is to have fun at all times."

After losing four of the six games on the road to Texas and Chicago, the A's needed this win to begin their six-game homestand. Now only eight games behind Texas in the American League West and back in second place. Oakland must continue their winning ways to stay in the race.

"We've got to have all the momentum we can going into the Texas series," said Cahill. "It's definitely good to start (the homestand) off right."

Cahill shuts out K.C. in A's 6-0 win

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Trevor Cahill threw a three-hitter for his first complete game, Rajai Davis hit a two-run homer and the Oakland Athletics beat Kansas City 3-0 on Monday night to end the Royals' three-game winning streak.

Matt Watson, Kevin Kouzmanoff and Coco Crisp also drove in runs for the A's, who won their fifth game of the last six played at home.

Mitch Maier, Wilson Betemit and Chris Getz collected the only hits for the Royals, who were shut out for the first time since July 4 and the fifth time overall.

Cahill (11-4) recorded the A's third consecutive complete game, after Dallas Braden beat the Chicago White Sox on Saturday and Gio Gonzalez lost on Sunday. The last time the A's recorded three consecutive complete games was Sept. 8-10, 2000, when Gil Heredia, Tim Hudson and Barry Zito accomplished the feat.

Royals starter Brian Bannister (7-11) lost his sixth straight decision and is winless since June 23. He allowed five runs on seven hits, walking four and striking out four.

Bannister has given up 32 runs over his last 39 innings for a 7.38 ERA. His last victory was a 1-0 decision over Stephen Strasburg and the Washington Nationals.

Cahill faced the minimum number of hitters through seven innings, benefiting from five double plays, while Bannister struck out the first two hitters he faced before walking three around Kouzmanoff's RBI single.

The A's scored twice in the fourth, with Davis sneaking home while Getz was arguing a call at second base on Watson's double, and Davis made it 5-0 with his fifth home run, a two-run shot in the fifth inning.

Crisp added an RBI single in the eighth off Greg Holland, who was making his major-league debut for the Royals in relief.

Notes: The A's only put four balls in play during a 34-pitch first inning. ... Bannister fell to 1-6 against the A's. ...

Betemit extended his hitting streak to seven games with his eighth-inning double. ... Cahill lowered his home ERA to 1.88 in nine starts. ... The A's are now 37-17 when they steal a base.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Nine-run Las Vegas fifth inning costs Sacramento

By Abbie Ellis / Sacramento River Cats

A three-run Dallas McPherson home run wasn't enough for Sacramento to rally back from a dominant Las Vegas start. A 12-run deficit was too much for Sacramento, which couldn't overcome a nine-run Las Vegas fifth inning en route to a 13-5 loss Monday night at Raley Field.

Sacramento struggled through the first half of the game, both offensively and defensively. The 51s managed to tack on a run through the first three innings to go up 3-0 on Sacramento. It was the fifth inning, which included five Las Vegas hits and five walks, that left Sacramento a staggering 12 runs back.

Brad Mills pitched a perfect game for Las Vegas through the first four innings. It was a Travis Buck double that ended his streak and started a string of River Cats hits. A Josh Donaldson walk followed by a McPherson three-run homer ended the shutout bid. A Corey Wimberly double scored Eric Sogard from first to make it a 12-4 game.

In the seventh inning McPherson, Adam Heether and Sogard managed to load the bases. Wimberly grounded into a double play and a chance to rally was over in a blink.

Steven Tolleson kicked off the eighth inning with a single, a 51s fielding error sent him to third, and he scored on a Buck groundout making the game 13-5.

McPherson singled again in the ninth inning to finish his night 3-for-4 with three RBIs. Chris Carter went 0-for-4 at bat, and ended his on-base streak at 29 consecutive games.

Reliever Justin James pitched well for Sacramento. James pitched the sixth and seventh inning for one hit, no runs, and two strikeouts. The loss went to Clayton Mortenson, who pitched 4.1 innings for four hits, seven runs, five walks and two strikeouts.

Sacramento has one more game against Las Vegas, with a chance to even the series Tuesday night at 7:05.

Brown & Edell Snap Skid Against Hooks

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Corey Brown got a 500-pound gorilla off the RockHounds' back with a 3-run home run in the sixth, as the 'Hounds broke a scoreless tie, scoring four times. In the first three games of the series at Corpus Christi, the 'Hounds had scored a total of five runs, and had struggled to take advantage of scoring opportunities ... looking for a big swing or two. They got three big swings Monday.

Val Majewski drove in Jemile Weeks with a single to right in the sixth, bringing in the game's first run. Brown followed with a towering drive over the right field wall. Brownny added an RBI double ... his fourth ribbie of the game ... in the eighth.

Ryan Edell has become one of the top "stories" of the 'Hounds season. After his release from the Cleveland Indians in mid-May, the lefty signed with Oakland and was assigned to the RockHounds. He went 7.0 scoreless innings Monday, allowing six hits and no walks with three strikeouts. Ryan, who sports a solid, "Bert Blyleven style" beard, earned the win, improving to 7-3 with a 2.98 ERA.

The 'Hounds dropped the first three games of the series with the Hooks ... each by one run ... before capturing the final game of the set. The club now completes a 7-game road trip with a 3-game series opening Tuesday night at Frisco.

The pennant race & the wild card: The 'Hounds now lead Frisco by two games in the South after San Antonio handed the RoughRiders their eighth straight loss. San Antonio also stays within four games of the RockHounds in both the second half pennant race and the wild card. Corpus is eight games back in the second half and seven in the wild card.

Cougars Unable to Pull off Sweep

Kane County ends home win streak at nine

GENEVA, III. – The Kane County Cougars saw a nine-game home winning streak come to an end Monday night with a 6-3 loss to the Burlington Bees at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars won the series but failed to get the finale in a game they never led.

Starter Chris Mederos gave up three first-inning runs, and the Cougars never recovered. Rashun Dixon poked an RBI single in the bottom of the first to cut it to, 3-1. Then the Bees got one more off Mederos in the second, and Mitch LeVier singled, stole third and came home on an error in the bottom half to make it 4-2. That score remained until the seventh. The Bees managed two against A.J. Huttenlocker, and Dixon hammered a run-scoring double to account for the 6-3 final.

Mederos (3-4) suffered the loss, and Josh Lansford and Connor Hoehn each tossed two scoreless relief innings. The Cougars' offense notched nine hits and went 1-2-3 just once but also stranded 10 runners.

The Cougars (21-15, 53-52) continue their seven-game homestand Tuesday night as they welcome the Cedar Rapids Kernels (20-15, 63-40) to town for a four-game set. Dan Straily (8-7, 4.36) will face Stephen Locke (6-3, 3.68). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at www.kccougars.com with pre-game coverage starting at 6:15 p.m.

Oakland A's Prospect Q&A: Chris Affinito

David Malamut, OaklandClubhouse.com

Aug 2, 2010

In 2009, Chris Affinito earned the A's Arizona League MVP award by hitting .300 with an 823 OPS in 48 games. This season, Affinito has split the year between short-season Vancouver and Low-A Kane County. He is currently with the Cougars. David Malamut spoke with Affinito about his season, his adjustment to new leagues and more...

David Malamut: How has the season gone thus far?

Chris Affinito: It's been ups and downs but it's been good, a lot of fun.

DM: What are you working on?

CA: Offensively I'm just trying to stay quiet at the plate and trying to smooth everything out. Always working on catching and first base. Just trying to refine those tools.

DM: What's your mentality at the plate?

CA: Just trying to get a good pitch to hit and put a nice easy swing on it.

DM: What did you learn from playing high school ball?

CA: For high school ball you learn how not to be an everyday player because you don't play everyday. It helps a lot from team to team if you're a starter guy or a backup, you can always look back and see how you prepared yourself day-in and day-out even though you don't have a game that day.

DM: How was playing at Seton Hall?

CA: Fun. Good experience. Nice small school, fun atmosphere.

DM: How was draft day?

CA: It was good. It went great. I got an opportunity to play, and make my dreams come true. It's awesome to be with Oakland. Great organization. I like how they have an outlook and how they have plans -- the workout schedule, the throwing program, everything. Everything they do is really nice.

DM: How was Vancouver?

CA: It was sweet. I loved it. Smaller park, great fans, great place.

DM: Playing in Kane County?

CA: Same thing, awesome. Little bigger crowd, great host families, great staff.

DM: How about going down to Vancouver in the middle of the year?

CA: It was good because I got to go down there and work on some stuff and work with Casey [Myers, C's hitting coach] and Skip [C's manager Rick Magnante] and all of those guys. I think it helped me out a lot being able to go back down there and trying to figure some things out. My swing feels good right now. There are some things that I have to keep reminding myself of.

DM: How has the Midwest League been?

CA: I like it. A lot of fun. The traveling is not that bad at all. I like going to all the different places.

DM: Top 5 artists in your iPod?

CA: Rodney Adkins, Montgomery Gentry, basically any country. Then I throw some DJ Pauly D in there.

DM: Besides baseball what do you like to do?

CA: I like to go fishing, playing some golf, playing some call of duty.

DM: If not for baseball what would you be doing?

CA: Hopefully be coaching somewhere and teaching. I love working with little kids, and hopefully when I'm done playing I will be able to do that. I would love to coach professionally or amateur. I just don't think I could ever be away from the game. It's something I put my whole life into and once I can't play anymore I still want to be involved in the game.

DM: Biggest baseball influence growing up?

CA: Don Mattingly. I loved him growing up. He was my favorite player. Just watching him how he went about his job every day and how he played, it was a great influence.