

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, August 4, 2010

### Mishaps costly for Oakland A's as Kansas City Royals even series

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

A's first baseman Daric Barton has gobbled up lots of difficult ground balls headed his way this season.

The ball that came off Alex Gordon's bat to lead off the top of the ninth inning seemed rather harmless. But it caught Barton on an in-between hop and skipped under his glove for what was ruled a double.

Gordon eventually scored on Gregor Blanco's fielder's choice grounder, the difference in the A's 3-2 defeat to the Kansas City Royals in front of 10,670 fans at the Oakland Coliseum.

On a night when the A's mustered just six hits and left nine men on base, they had little margin for error.

"It was an in-between hop," Barton said. "If I stay back, he's safe. I charged it. It was an in-between hop and I missed it. Definitely it shouldn't have been scored a hit. I should have at least knocked it down."

Barton entered the night tied with Detroit's Miguel Cabrera for most errors among American League first baseman with nine, but he's also turned in a collection of standout plays this season.

"As good as he is over there, I'd say (Barton makes the play) more than nine times out of 10," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Overall, it wasn't the best night for the A's defensively.

The Royals scored in the fifth with help from a two-base throwing error on A's third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff.

That was Kouzmanoff's ninth error in 106 games after he made just three in 139 games last season with San Diego.

But the A's Iso stranded runners in scoring position in three different innings and failed to break through against Kansas City starter Kyle Davies, who entered the night with a 5.48 ERA.

"It wasn't a good game overall for us," Geren said. "We didn't swing the bats like we should. It was not a real good offensive approach."

Gordon broke a scoreless tie in the second with a long opposite-field homer to left-center.

The A's tied the game in the fourth after Davies' wild pickoff throw allowed Rajai Davis to scamper from first all the way to third. He scored on Matt Watson's two-out single to right.

But Kansas City took the lead back in the fifth. Kouzmanoff made a charging barehanded grab on Blanco's bunt and threw off-target to first, allowing Blanco to advance all the way to third.

Chris Getz's grounder to second scored Blanco.

Oakland answered in the bottom half of that inning as Kurt Suzuki's double to left-center scored Barton to even it 2-2.

The A's streak of three straight complete games ended, though starter Vin Mazzaro was solid over six innings, allowing five hits and two runs (one earned).

It was a nice rebound effort after Mazzaro allowed seven earned runs in his previous outing against Texas.

Geren earned his third ejection of the season after a confusing play in the top of the seventh, where a Blanco bunt resulted in Royals base runners Mitch Maier and Yuniesky Betancourt both standing on third after a rundown.

A's reliever Jerry Blevins tagged both runners, and Geren wanted a double play. But the umpires ruled Maier left the base and was tagged before Betancourt, so Betancourt remained at third.

It didn't matter, as Blevins and Michael Wuertz retired the next two hitters to strand two runners in scoring position.

## **Oakland A's update: Brett Anderson expects better outing Wednesday**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Left-hander Brett Anderson expects a smoother outing this afternoon when he makes his second start since coming off the disabled list.

Anderson got tagged for 10 hits in 51/3 innings Friday against the Chicago White Sox.

"I didn't walk anybody, but my command within the strike zone wasn't very good," Anderson said before Tuesday's game against the Kansas City Royals.

Using his slider more effectively is a big key. Coming off an elbow injury, Anderson said he wasn't snapping off the pitch with confidence in Chicago.

"It's been my go-to pitch my whole career," he said. "It's more of a mental thing now, throwing it and knowing that nothing's going to happen. Throwing it in any count and not worrying about what my arm feels like."

Before batting practice, Anderson and several teammates caught a glimpse of actor Brad Pitt and his wife, Angelina Jolie, taking pictures with their children on the Oakland Coliseum field.

Pitt has been at the Coliseum filming scenes for the movie "Moneyball" for the past week. Anderson said he's a big fan of Pitt's movies.

Jolie ranks high on his list, as well.

"She's obviously good-looking in movies, but she's even better looking in person," he concluded.

Second baseman Mark Ellis was surprised when a stranger walked up and introduced himself before the game.

The individual was Brent Dohling, a former ballplayer who is portraying Ellis in "Moneyball."

"He came up and shook my hand and said he was going to play me," Ellis said.

It wasn't until Monday that Ellis found out his character would be in the movie. He's the only player on the active roster remaining from the 2002 A's squad that's the focus of "Moneyball."

Most of the actors portraying players in the movie have baseball backgrounds, but all had to go through a tryout, including former big leaguer Royce Clayton, who is playing Miguel Tejada.

The A's claimed corner infielder Jeff Larish, 27, off waivers from Detroit and assigned him to Triple-A Sacramento. Third baseman Adam Heether was designated for assignment to make room on the 40-man roster. "... Closer Andrew Bailey (rib-cage strain) said he'll play catch today, though it's still unclear when he'll throw off the mound and be activated from the DL.

## **Chin Music: Lineups and notes before A's-Royals, Game 2**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/3/2010 6:45PM

Greetings from the baseball field/Hollywood movie set that is the Oakland Coliseum ...

More "Moneyball" filming took place this afternoon, including a re-creation of the 2002 Opening Day ceremonies. Lots of players caught glimpses of Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie playing with their children on the field once afternoon filming was completed. I have yet to spot either myself. But word is, scenes are still being shot throughout the Coliseum this evening. People are getting "Sshhh"ed as the doors open at different floors on the press box elevator, so the Hollywood magic is happening somewhere close by.

As for A's news ...

—Andrew Bailey said he'd play catch tomorrow to test his strained rib-cage. That will be the first time in nearly a week that he's tried throwing. He mentioned Friday as a possible day for him to throw from the mound, but he said the training staff will have the final say on how quickly he progresses. It's tough to speculate right now on when he'll come off the DL.

—At long last, outfielder Conor Jackson (strained right hamstring) may be close to playing in games. Manager Bob Geren said Jackson is sprinting now. He'd been doing all baseball activity except running full speed.

—The A's claimed infielder Jeff Larish off waivers from the Detroit Tigers and assigned him to Triple-A Sacramento. Larish, 27, was a big-time prospect not that long ago, getting named the Tigers' Minor League Player of the Year in 2007. He can play either corner infield spot. Considering the A's made room for him on the 40-man roster by designating for assignment Adam Heether — who had been seeing lots of action at third base — perhaps Larish will get playing time there.

Today's lineups:

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

Royals — Getz 2B, Kendall C, Butler 1B, Guillen DH, Betemit 3B, Gordon LF, Maier RF, Betancourt SS, Blanco CF; Davies RHP.

## **Sloppy effort ends on a sour note**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Tuesday night's game at the Coliseum wasn't quite the well-played beaut that the A's had put together the previous night, and Oakland's roll over Kansas City came to an end.

"It wasn't a good game at all for us," A's manager Bob Geren said. "It wasn't a good night for us. We need to regroup."

The Royals scored in the ninth inning off left-hander Craig Breslow. Alex Gordon, who'd homered earlier, doubled on a strange topspin bouncer that shot under first baseman Daric Barton, a play that Geren said Barton makes more than nine times out of 10. Gordon went to third on a sacrifice and he scored on a fielder's choice by Gregor Blanco to top the A's 3-2.

Errors played a prominent role, with each pitcher allowing an unearned run. In the sixth, Blanco wound up at third after a two-base throwing error by third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff. Blanco scored on a groundout.

Rajai Davis' speed burned Kansas City yet again in the fourth, when Davis walked, went all the way to third on an errant pickoff attempt, and scored on a hit by Matt Watson.

Jerry Blevins replaced Vin Mazzaro to open the seventh and Mitch Maier doubled, then went to third on a base hit by Yuniesky Betancourt. Blanco put down a bunt that catcher Kurt Suzuki grabbed. Suzuki threw to third to start a rundown, and Kouzmanoff ran Maier back toward the plate and threw it to Blevins, who got Maier headed back toward third.

Maier wound up at the base, where Betancourt was already standing. Usually in such a case, the base belongs to the lead runner, and at one point, it appeared as if Betancourt had been ruled out. But Maier stepped off the bag just before Blevins tagged him, and Maier was called out, leaving Betancourt at third. Home-plate umpire Gary Darling told a pool reporter that Maier "abandoned his effort" before Betancourt was out.

Geren charged out to argue that both men should be out, vociferously enough to earn his third ejection of the season, but Betancourt remained and the A's got out of the inning without damage. "More of a judgment call than a rules call," Geren said after the game.

Mazzaro continued Oakland's run of fine starting pitching, though he couldn't extend the team's streak of complete games. He allowed just one earned in six innings, after giving up seven runs his last outing.

Brett Anderson will try to extend the A's strong string of starting pitching today in the series finale.

"It's unbelievable what they've been doing; if I try to do half of what they're doing, I'll be all right," Anderson said. "I'll try to stay up with these guys."

Anderson said he has been working on sharpening his slider and his changeup, the two pitches with which he was most tentative after elbow tendinitis.

## **Injured Sheets' question: To pitch or not to pitch?**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Ben Sheets** said his flexor-tendon surgery will take place Monday in Dallas with Dr. **Keith Meister**, and Sheets believes the tendon will be anchored to the bone differently than it was the first time, when it was sutured.

Sheets remains uncertain if he will pitch again. "My arm will tell me," he said.

Here's one consideration when it comes to a possible comeback: Sheets will have nine years of service time after this season. For the full major-league pension, players need 10 years of service.

In other A's surgery news, the team had thought that minor-league left-hander **Lenny DiNardo** might miss the rest of the season after surgery to remove bone chips in his elbow, but DiNardo is already throwing at the team's minor-league complex in Arizona, according to director of player development **Keith Lieppman**. He described it as "a miraculously quick recovery."

Right-hander **Jason Jennings**, who - like Sheets - required a second flexor-tendon surgery (his was two years ago), has been working out at the Phoenix complex for a week, according to Lieppman.

First baseman **Sean Doolittle**, once one of the A's top prospects, is having a second patella-tendon surgery for his left knee.

**Larish added:** The A's claimed minor-league infielder **Jeff Larish** off waivers from Detroit, optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento and designated infielder **Adam Heether** for assignment. Larish, 27, was batting .275 with 15 homers and 55 RBIs at Triple-A Toledo. He played in 77 games with the Tigers in the past two-plus years.

"Jeff has always hit for power, and that's something we're clearly on the lookout for," assistant general manager **David Forst** said.

**Briefly:** Manager **Bob Geren** said he's not sure if closer **Andrew Bailey** (ribcage strain) will need a rehab outing before he returns. Bailey said he'll play catch today. ... **Conor Jackson** (hamstring strain) has started sprinting in his running program in Phoenix.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**'Moneyball' madness:** Filming continued at the Coliseum, and several A's were delighted to see Brad Pitt, Angelina Jolie and their children on the field. "I don't get star-struck, but they're upper-echelon celebrities," pitcher Brett Anderson said. "That's pretty crazy to see here."

## **Drumbeat: More Moneyball doings, and the lineup**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 8/3/2010 6:22pm

It was another day of "Moneyball" filming here, and just about everyone seems to have seen Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie except me. Consensus: She looks even better in person, and that's the considered opinion of a batboy, a media member and Brett Anderson, so pretty scientifically accurate polling.

What I did see: all the extras playing A's and Rangers, and yes, Chris Pratt looks more like Scott Hatteberg than I would have imagined from "Parks and Recreation." The two I saw who are near ringers: The guy playing Barry Zito (he even had the same grin) and the guy playing Randy Velarde. I almost thought it was Velarde portraying himself for a moment.

It's weird: Walking in from the parking lot, I saw "Thad Bosley" smoking outside the door in full uniform.

The movie people are every bit as excited about the Coliseum as a backdrop as director of stadium David Rinetti had described, and that is also bizarre to hear. Todd Christensen, the location manager, keeps trying to explain to me how fantastic the lighting and the various parts of the structure are and how great the Coliseum will look on film. To me, it's something of a dreary dump, but Christensen was raving about the hallway from the parking lot. "It's got stripes!" he said.

Rinetti said he got a look at some footage on a monitor, and lo and behold, the Coliseum did look fantastic - the angles, the shadows. Christensen promised it will transform the way people who are here every day see the Coliseum, like, "That's where I work, really?" So I look forward to that, even if I remain a bit skeptical.

Everywhere I go today, people tell me I've just missed Brad Pitt. They were just shooting in that really fabulous hallway (sarcasm!) in the past hour, and all the people in the TV truck watched. Yeah, but did you guys all see Royce Clayton, huh? Did you? Did you? I didn't think so!

(Just as I wrote that a member of the PR staff came up and told me he'd just walked off the elevator and saw them filming something with Jonah Hill over at the A's offices.)

Tired of the movie ramblings? You might have one more day of it. It's A's/Royals, there are maybe 10,000 people here - a major Hollywood production, now that's unusual.

So, anyway, here's the lineup: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Suzuki c, Cust dh, Kouzmanoff 3b, Ellis 2b, Davis rf, Watson rf, Pennington ss

Andrew Bailey still isn't throwing and manager Bob Geren doesn't know if he'll need a rehab game before he returns. Conor Jackson is now sprinting at Arizona, which might be an indication he's getting closer to rehab games. That's sheer speculation on my part; Geren said there's nothing scheduled yet.

## **A's lose perfect record over Royals in ninth**

### **Hopper to Barton proves Oakland's foil in down-to-the-wire loss**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- What would usually be an unassisted putout for first baseman Daric Barton eventually proved to be the A's foil on Tuesday night, as the Royals notched a 3-2 victory to beat Oakland for the first time in five tries this season.

With the game tied at 2, Royals third baseman Alex Gordon led off the ninth inning with a sharp grounder to the right side of the infield. The ball took a nasty hop and Barton jumped and couldn't field it.

Gordon ended up on second with the ball rolling into shallow right field. Three batters later, Gregor Blanco delivered an RBI groundout to score the game-winner.

"As good as he is over there, I'd say more than nine times out of 10 he makes it," said Oakland manager Bob Geren.

Rajai Davis, playing deep in right field for the A's, didn't get to the ball in time to prevent Gordon from taking an extra base.

"It was a chopper and I thought, 'easy play,'" Davis said.

It all added up to a bitter defeat for the A's, who received a solid six-inning performance from starter Vin Mazzaro.

"I chopped it in the right place, I guess," Gordon said. "That's how baseball works sometimes."

Mazzaro had a tough act to follow -- well, three tough acts to follow -- as the preceding trio of Oakland pitchers all tossed complete games. A's righty Trevor Cahill blanked the Royals in a 6-0 victory on Monday to open the three-game set.

"Watching Trevor do what he did last night was awesome," Mazzaro said. "It motivated me to come out and try to do better or his equal. It's nice that our starters are doing good -- getting deep in the game and keeping the team in the ball game."

Still, Mazzaro held his own, limiting the Royals to two runs (one earned) on five hits and two walks while striking out five.

"He threw the ball pretty well," Geren said. "He missed a little bit side-to-side, but, in general, two runs in six innings is a quality outing."

Though it didn't live up to the recent standards of Oakland's pitching, it was far better than Mazzaro's previous start, when he was tagged for seven earned runs on 12 hits and a walk in a 7-4 loss at Texas.

"It was a tough outing," Mazzaro said. "It was nice to come back with a quality start."

Gordon also scored the Royals' lone earned run off Mazzaro on the evening, when he sent a 3-2 pitch over the left-center-field wall in the top of the second for a solo shot and the game's first run. The Royals tacked on another run the fifth, when Chris Getz hit an RBI groundout to second base to score Blanco, who reached third on a throwing error by A's third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff.

While the A's didn't have problems getting men on base against Royals starter Kyle Davies -- 10 batters reached safely against the right-hander over five innings -- they only scored two runs.

"It wasn't a good game overall for us," Geren said. "We didn't swing the bats like we should. It wasn't a real good offensive approach at all tonight."

Davis scored Oakland's first run in the fourth inning on a solid RBI single by Matt Watson after advancing from first to third on an errant Davies pickoff throw. Barton evened the score at 2 in the bottom of the fifth when he scored from first on a Kurt Suzuki double to left-center.

But the game will perhaps be remembered by a bizarre sequence of events in the seventh inning, one that eventually resulted in Geren's ejection.

With runners on first and third, Blanco bunted the ball in front of the plate and Suzuki threw the ball to third base, catching Mitch Maier in a rundown between third and home. Maier eventually was forced back to third base, where Yuniesky Betancourt was standing.

A's reliever Jerry Blevins tagged both Betancourt and Maier, who each were standing near the bag, but Maier was eventually ruled out after a lengthy discussion amongst all four umpires. Geren said he thought both runners were standing on third base, and therefore both should have been ruled out.

After the game, home-plate umpire Gary Darling offered an explanation for the ruling.

"They tagged [Maier] on the bag, and when they went to tag Betancourt, now Maier has stepped off the bag and he has abandoned his effort, which now legalized Betancourt," Darling said. "There are not two people on the base when they tag Betancourt. Maier is out for abandoning his effort."

Either way, the play proved to be inconsequential, as the A's got out of the jam without giving up a run.

"I still ain't figured that one out, but it worked out," said Royals manager Ned Yost.

## **Wild mixup at third leads to Geren's ejection**

### **A's manager tossed after two Royals left at bag on rundown**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's manager Bob Geren was ejected by home-plate umpire Gary Darling in the top of the seventh inning of Tuesday's 3-2 Royals victory following a strange play on the basepaths.

With Kansas City's Mitch Maier on third base and Yuniesky Betancourt on first in a 2-2 game with nobody out, Gregor Blanco placed a bunt down the third-base line on a squeeze play. A's catcher Kurt Suzuki picked up the ball and threw it to third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff with Maier caught halfway to the plate, and Kouzmanoff tossed the ball back to pitcher Jerry Blevins. Blevins chased Maier to third base, where Betancourt was standing.

Maier touched third before motioning toward second base, at which point Blevins tagged him and Betancourt, who was on the base. Third-base umpire Bill Hohn called out Betancourt right away. Blanco, meanwhile, reached on what was ruled a fielder's choice and advanced to second during the rundown.

All four umpires gathered to discuss the play for at least three minutes while Geren stood by. Once the ruling was made clear -- that Maier was the only out -- the A's skipper had a lengthy argument with Darling, who eventually tossed him out of the game.

"They tagged [Maier] on the bag, and when they went to tag Betancourt, now Maier has stepped off the bag and he has abandoned his effort, which now legalized Betancourt," Darling explained by way of rule 7.08 after the game. "There are not two people on the base when they tag Betancourt. Maier is out for abandoning his effort."

Geren's opinion differed.

"I just felt like both runners on the base and the trailing runner should be out, and the other guy vacated the base," Geren said. "I thought they both should be out. That's the rule. The explanation was that by the time he tagged Betancourt, the other runner had actually left the base. It turned into a judgment call more than a rules call."

Kansas City manager Ned Yost, meanwhile, simply stood near his dugout while awaiting the verdict, not once entering into conversation with any of the umpires.

"I still ain't figured that one out, but it worked out," Yost said. "Once he got in the rundown, he did a fantastic job of allowing the runners to advance. Once the runners advanced, he should have given up. I think they ended up getting the play right."

Either way, he mentioned, one thing was certain.

"Somebody was going -- either [Geren] or me," Yost said. "Someone was getting thrown out on that one."

By night's end, the debacle played no decision in the game's final outcome. Blevins forced Chris Getz to pop out before fellow reliever Michael Wuertz struck out Jason Kendall to end the inning without a run crossing the plate.

"It was one of those situations where I don't get involved in game play like that very much, so I was just happy I was able to respond," Blevins said. "I chased them back and they were both on the bag -- that's what I thought. You tag them both just to make sure. At the time, he had called Betancourt out, and Maier was jogging down. I looked at the film. His foot was about two inches off the bag at the time, so they got the call right. I was just happy to get out of that situation unscathed."

It was Geren's third ejection of the season and ninth of his career as A's manager. Oakland bench coach Tye Waller took over managerial duties.

"It ended up not really factoring in the game," Geren said. "[Blevins] did exactly what he was supposed to do. The other runner is going to tag at third if he can. We saved the run, obviously. That inning, they didn't score. So they did their job -- not only on that play, but after the play."

## **A's claim Larish off waivers from Tigers**

### **Infielder sent to Triple-A; Heether designated for assignment**

By Jane Lee and Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's claimed infielder Jeff Larish off waivers from the Tigers on Tuesday and optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento.

After starting the year at Triple-A Toledo, the 27-year-old Larish went 2-for-10 with an RBI in three games with Detroit before being designated for assignment on Friday. Before his promotion, he was batting .275 with 15 home runs and 55 RBIs in 84 games for the Mud Hens.

Larish -- originally selected by the Tigers in the fifth round of the 2005 First-Year Player Draft -- was named Detroit's Minor League Player of the Year in '07 after leading the Eastern League with 28 home runs and 101 RBIs, and he was rated as possessing the best power in the International League by Baseball America in '08. He made his big league debut that season, batting .260 with two homers in 42 games.

To clear a spot on the 40-man roster, the A's designated infielder Adam Heether for assignment. Heether was claimed off waivers from Milwaukee on June 3 and was batting .232 with a home run in 48 games with Sacramento after posting similar numbers in 50 games with Triple-A Nashville.

### **Cahill's season turning into coming out party**

OAKLAND -- Trevor Cahill's 2010 season has been something of a coming out party after he showed promise with his 10-win season in '09.

Two reasons behind Cahill's success are the addition of a curveball to his arsenal and his ability to give up fewer home runs, after serving up 27 last season to set an Oakland rookie record.

Cahill started tinkering with the curveball during his bullpen sessions at the end of last year and also worked on it during the offseason. Once the organization saw the pitch in Spring Training this year, they encouraged Cahill to include it. Through 19 starts, Cahill has thrown the curveball almost three times as often as he throws his slider.

"I was just trying to figure out a different breaking ball," Cahill said. "My breaking ball I threw at the end of last year was my slider, and I consider that a below-average pitch for me. I kind of figured I needed something else."

Cahill said he throws the pitch to give hitters another look, also saying it improves the slider because of the change of pace. It also features a different action than most of his other pitches, as his changeup, fastball and sinker naturally cut into right-handed hitters and away from lefties.

"Between his sinker, changeup and curveball, it gives him basically three different speeds," said A's pitching coach Curt Young. "And with him changing speeds on his fastball, he's probably got five or six different speeds. It's really helped him -- it's an offspeed pitch other than his changeup that he's throwing for strikes."

In 18 starts at the Coliseum last year, Cahill gave up 20 home runs. This season, he's only given up two -- both against the Yankees on July 6 -- in nine home starts.

"He's making adjustments," said A's catcher Kurt Suzuki. "He's keeping the ball down and out of the middle of the plate. That's been huge -- keeping the ball in the corner and keeping it down where it will be harder to lift the ball out of the park."

### **Wolf gaining confidence sticking in bigs**

OAKLAND -- Coming from a small town in Illinois, Ross Wolf is still getting used to the big-city feel of the Bay Area. At least he has the support of a clubhouse full of welcoming teammates.

"You can't ask for anything better," Wolf said. "This is one of the best clubhouses I've ever been in. One of the best group of guys I've been around, too."

The A's acquired Wolf from Baltimore for Jake Fox on June 22 and promoted Wolf from Triple-A Sacramento on July 7. Since Wolf has been up with the big league club, the A's have optioned a reliever to the Minor Leagues on two separate occasions -- and it wasn't Wolf either time.

Asked if he viewed the moves as a vote of confidence from the organization, Wolf said, "I hope. I always take it that way."



Wolf has only made four appearances for the A's, but he has racked up a 2.45 ERA. A's pitching coach Curt Young suggested Wolf move closer to the first-base side of the rubber so his arm slot brings the ball into the middle of the plate more.

Wolf's repertoire features an average fastball of 90 mph and a changeup that runs about 85 mph, but that's not a speed difference Young wants to alter.

"He has a great changeup," Young said. "There's really no reason to try and tinker with velocity, and especially his arm speed. That's kind of his plus-pitch, his putaway pitch, so that's not something you ever really mess with."

Added Wolf: "I tried to slow it up a few years ago and it just stayed up. I've had pitching coaches in the past just say, 'As long as you have that movement, just stick with it.' It's what got me here."

### **Worth noting**

Conor Jackson (right hamstring) has progressed to the sprinting level of his running rehab program, as designed by A's strength and conditioning coach Bob Alejo, A's manager Bob Geren said on Tuesday. However, there is still no timetable for a Minor League rehab stint. ... A's closer Andrew Bailey, battling an intercostal (rib) strain, said he will play catch Wednesday. He will likely not be ready when eligible to be activated from the disabled list on Friday, but the club is hoping he can return at some point over the weekend during its three-game home set with Texas. ... A's first-round Draft pick Michael Choice made his pro debut with A's Arizona Rookie League team on Tuesday night, going 0-for-2 with a strikeout in the designated hitter's spot.

## **Anderson hoping to get back to '09 form**

By Zach Schonbrun / MLB.com

After winning 11 games in 30 starts for the A's last season, left-hander Brett Anderson hasn't had the same impact this year.

Two different stints on the disabled list for his left elbow have fractured his sophomore season, but Oakland is hoping a strong second half can propel him into next season. Anderson came off the disabled list Friday to make his first start in nearly two months against the White Sox.

The outing didn't blow anybody away, but it also didn't feature any setbacks or warning signs.

"The only good thing about this start is that it will get me to the next one," Anderson said. "If I can get to the next one, I can get to the next, and then the next."

Now the 22-year-old is looking to refocus on having a strong finish to the season.

"I had control," Anderson said. "I could throw strikes, but I couldn't command it within the strike zone. If I can get back to the way I was, throw strike one and strike two, I'll be fine. I can tweak some things and get things back to the way I had last year."

Anderson matches up against another 22-year-old, Royals right-hander Sean O'Sullivan, who will be making his third start since coming to Kansas City from Anaheim in exchange for infielder Alberto Callaspo on July 22. The San Diego native gave up three runs on four hits in six innings in a no-decision in his first start on Friday.

O'Sullivan looks to give Kansas City its fifth win in the past six games, though its road record has faltered lately. Before Tuesday's 3-2 win, the Royals had lost seven of eight away from Kauffman Stadium.

### **Royals: Yost may skip Bannister's start**

Manager Ned Yost said he's considering skipping right-hander Brian Bannister's next start after he extended his streak to seven consecutive starts without a victory on Monday. Bannister allowed five runs in five innings in the 6-0 loss, and is now 0-6 with a 7.38 ERA in his past seven games.

### **A's: Bailey to play catch**

A's closer Andrew Bailey is scheduled to play catch on Wednesday as he rehabs from a rib muscle strain. Bailey, who has 20 saves and a 1.56 ERA this season, has been out since July 21. There is no timetable yet for when he may begin a rehab assignment.

### **Worth noting**

Oakland claimed infielder Jeff Larish off waivers from the Tigers on Tuesday and optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento. ...

Royals third baseman Wilson Betemit went 0-for-4 Tuesday to snap a seven-game hitting streak. ... Royals closer Joakim Soria notched his 30th save of the season in Tuesday's 3-2 victory, the third consecutive year he has reached that mark.

## **A's lose to Royals, 3-2**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Alex Gordon hit a leadoff double and scored on Greg Blanco's groundout in the ninth inning, and the Kansas City Royals beat the Oakland Athletics 3-2 on Tuesday night.

Gordon also homered, while Mitch Maier and Yuniesky Betancourt added two hits apiece for the Royals, who snapped a four-game losing streak to the A's.

Newly acquired reliever Jesse Chavez pitched two scoreless innings for the win before Joakim Soria worked the ninth for his 30th save in 32 chances.

The Royals bounced back after getting shut out by Oakland's Trevor Cahill a day earlier and have won four of five following their five-game losing streak.

Gordon doubled leading off the ninth against Craig Breslow (4-3) and was sacrificed to second. After Yuniesky Betancourt was intentionally walked, Blanco hit a sharp grounder to third.

Oakland's Kevin Kouzmanoff fielded the ball and threw to second baseman Mark Ellis to retire Betancourt, but Ellis was unable to make the relay throw to first as Gordon scored.

Gordon's homer in the second, a solo shot to center with one out, was his fourth overall and third in five games after being recalled from the minors on July 23.

Oakland scored an unearned run off Kansas City starter Kyle Davies in the fourth, though the pitcher had only himself to blame.

His errant pickoff attempt allowed Rajai Davis to move from first to third with two outs. Davis then scored on Matt Watson's line single to right.

The A's returned the favor in the fifth when third baseman Kouzmanoff threw wildly on Blanco's infield single. Blanco raced to third on the error and scored on Chris Getz's groundout.

Oakland tied the game on Kurt Suzuki's RBI double in the fifth but got only one hit the rest of the game.

The Royals ran themselves out of potentially big inning in the seventh. Maier hit a leadoff double and took third on Yuniesky Betancourt's single. When Blanco attempted to bunt, Oakland catcher Suzuki fielded the ball and caught Maier in a rundown.

Maier ran back to third, where Betancourt was standing, and reliever Jerry Blevins tagged Maier. Maier was called out but Oakland manager Bob Geren argued that both runners should be out.

Baseball rules state the trailing runner will be called out when two players occupy the same base.

Umpires ruled that Maier was not on the base when he was tagged by Blevins and Geren was ejected after a lengthy argument with home plate umpire and crew chief Gary Darling.

Davies allowed two runs with six strikeouts and five walks but left with a no-decision for the seventh time in his last 11 starts.

Oakland starter Vin Mazzaro wasn't around for the decision, either. He gave up Gordon's home run and scattered five hits over six innings, snapping a string of three straight complete games thrown by A's pitchers.

Notes: The A's claimed IF Jeff Larish off waivers from Detroit and optioned him to Triple-A Sacramento. To make room on their 40-man roster, the A's designated IF Adam Heether for assignment.

... Geren's ejection was his third this season.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **51s' victory over Cats a walk in the park**

By Annie Becker / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento pitchers walked a franchise-record 15 batters Tuesday night as the Las Vegas 51s capitalized with a 7-5 victory at Raley Field.

River Cats starter Kyle Middleton walked seven, and relievers Edwar Ramirez (two), Cedrick Bowers (three) and Michael Benacka (three) combined to walk eight more. The 15 walks are the most allowed in the Pacific Coast League this season, and are only four off the PCL all-time record of 19, set in 1949 by Portland.

Despite all the misfires, Sacramento scored two runs in the ninth inning and had the tying run on second base, but Travis Buck struck out looking to end the game.

With Fresno's 6-1 loss to visiting Colorado Springs, Sacramento remains 2.0 games behind the first-place Grizzlies in the PCL South Division race. The River Cats (60-51) next head on an eight-game road trip to Albuquerque (55-54) and Round Rock (44-67). Fresno (62-49) makes the same trip, but in reverse order.

Sacramento's loss was its third in a row against Las Vegas, and the season series stands tied 6-6.

Sacramento lead-off batter Corey Wimberly walked to open the game, then scored after Eric Sogard and Chris Carter singled. Sogard then scored on a Michael Taylor single for a 2-0 lead.

Middleton breezed through the first two innings before escaping a bases-loaded jam with just one run in the third.

The Cats answered in the third when Taylor walked, moved to second on a Dallas McPherson hit by pitch and scored on a Steve Tolleson single.

A McPherson throwing error in the fourth led to two unearned runs for Las Vegas to tie the score. Jason Lane stepped up in the fifth for the 51s and recorded his fourth home run against the Cats on a 2-1 pitch, scoring three for a 6-3 lead.

After Wimberly grounded out to open the ninth, Sacramento began to mount a comeback. Sogard walked and Carter singled on a pop up that fell between the Vegas infielders. After Taylor struck out, McPherson doubled to left to score Sogard.

Tolleson then singled to score Carter, and stole second to put the tying run in scoring position for Buck. Buck, however, looked at strike three and Sacramento missed an opportunity to gain ground on Fresno.

### **Frisco Snaps Losing Streak At Hounds Expense**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

In baseball, one split second can mean the difference between safe or out.

Tuesday night, with the RockHounds leading, 2-1, a split-second bobble of a bases-empty, two-out ground ball to second base kept the Friso third inning alive. Four batters later, the RoughRiders led, 5-2, and would go on to a 9-3 win in the opener of a 3-game series at Dr Pepper Ballpark in the Metroplex.

Jemile Weeks bobbled Marcus Lemon's bouncer, and Lemon's speed made the miscue a costly one, beating the throw and extending the inning. James Tomlin followed with a bloop single to left, and the RoughRiders then busted loose for four runs, scoring two each on 400-foot doubles by Emerson Frostad and Johnny Whittleman.

The RoughRiders' win got the proverbial "500-pound gorilla" off the club's back, as the Texas League South first half champs snapped an 8-game losing streak. Three of the eight defeats came at Citibank Ballpark against the RockHounds, and Frisco had just been swept at home by San Antonio in a 4-game series.

Joey Butler added a 3-run home run in the seventh, putting the game out of reach. Not only did Frisco break its 8-game slide ... the RoughRiders climbed back within one game of the RockHounds in a Texas League South race that has become increasingly tighter, top-to-bottom, in the last five days (see next paragraph and above).

The pennant race & the wild card: The 'Hounds now lead Frisco by one game in the South, with San Antonio four games out and Corpus Christi seven games back. San Antonio also stays within four games of the RockHounds in the wild card race with Corpus now six games out in the wild card race, which takes effect if Frisco wins the second half.

**Personnel moves:** Pitcher Justin Souza has been placed on the disabled list (right elbow) and catcher Gabriel Ortiz has been re-assigned to Stockton of the (Advanced-A) California League.

Catcher Jared Price has been assigned to the RockHounds from (Triple-A) Sacramento. A former draft choice of the Los Angeles Dodgers (in 2000 out of high school in his home of Rupert, Idaho), Jared has spent the last two seasons in the Chicago White Sox organization. He signed with Oakland in late June and had played briefly (five games) with the RiverCats.

Also joining the RockHounds from Sacramento is pitcher Graham Godfrey, who helped lead the 'Hounds to the 2009 Texas League championship, going 11-8 with a 3.50 ERA and being named the club's pitcher of the year. Graham will pitch out of the bullpen, at least initially, for the RockHounds. He was 4-7, 4.12 in 22 games (16 starts) with Sacramento.

## **Errors Cost Ports In 5-4 Loss To Giants**

**SAN JOSE, Calif.** - The Stockton Ports lost a game on Tuesday night in which they trailed for less than an inning. The San Jose Giants took advantage of two Stockton errors in scoring five unanswered runs after falling behind 4-0, handing the Ports a painful 5-4 loss at Municipal Stadium. It was just the fifth home win for the Giants in the second half.

The Ports broke the ice with two runs in the top of the second. With runners at second and third, Yusuf Carter drove in the game's first run with a groundout to short. Todd Johnson followed with an RBI single to right to make it a 2-0 game.

Stockton added a pair of runs in the fourth. Mike Spina led off the inning with his 21st home run of the year off Giants starter Kyle Nicholson to make it a 3-0 advantage. Carter followed by reaching on an infield single and went to third on a two-base throwing error made by Nicholson. With Carter at third and one out, David Thomas blooped an infield single to right to make it 4-0.

Nicholson would receive a no-decision after going six innings, allowing four runs (three earned) on 11 hits while striking out four.

San Jose got on the board in the fourth. After Ports starter Fabian Williamson retired nine of the first 10 he faced through three innings, Francisco Peguero started the fourth by reaching on an error made by Grant Green. Michael Sandoval followed with a single to center. After a strikeout of Johnny Monell, Charlie Culberson produced San Jose's first run with a sac-fly to right. Drew Biery followed with an RBI single to center to cut San Jose's deficit to 4-2.

The fourth inning runs were unearned for Williamson and the only two runs he allowed in a solid six innings of work. Williamson retired the last six batters he faced, allowing four hits while striking out six.

San Jose tied it in the seventh, taking advantage of Stockton's bullpen. Scott Deal came on to start the bullpen effort and hit Biery with his first offering. Ehire Adrianza followed with a single to right, chasing Deal from the game. Trey Barham was summoned and, after Wendell Fairley laid down a sac-bunt, he walked James Simmons to load the bases. Jose Pina (1-3) was then brought in from the 'pen and allowed a sac-fly to Juan Perez to make it 4-3. While pitching to Peguero, Pina threw a wild pitch that allowed Adrianza to cross the plate with the tying run.

Both seventh-inning runs were charged to Deal who faced two batters without recording an out.

The Giants took advantage of another Ports error to score the winning run in the eighth. With one out, Culberson hit a bouncing ball toward the third-base bag that was fielded by Stephen Parker. Parker made the tough field, then attempted a high-risk throw to first that went into right-field foul territory. Culberson was credited with a hit and reached third on a two-base throwing error. With the infield in, Biery hit a bouncing ball to second that was fielded by Tyler Ladendorf who threw home. The ball beat Culberson to the plate, but Culberson's slide avoided the tag of Carter who was blocking the plate with his leg. Culberson's run proved the difference in the game and gave the Giants a 5-4 lead.

The run, though unearned, was charged to Pina who took the loss after his 1.2 innings of relief work, allowing just the one hit.

The Ports offense was shut down in the seventh and eighth innings by Eric Stolp (6-8) who gave up a hit to Ladendorf, the first batter he faced, but retired the next five straight including a double-play. Stolp would earn the win with two scoreless innings of relief.

In the ninth, Jason Stoffel (SV, 19) struck out the side to earn his 19th save of the season.

Stockton will try and even the series on Wednesday night at Municipal Stadium. Shawn Haviland (7-6, 3.69 ERA) will head to the mound for the Ports, opposed by Giants right-hander Justin Fitzgerald (8-3, 3.60 ERA). First pitch is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

## **Cougars Claim Opener with Kernels**

### **Kane County wins 5<sup>th</sup> of last 6 with 11-hit attack**

**GENEVA, III.** – On the strength of two three-run innings, the Kane County Cougars sped past the Cedar Rapids Kernels, 6-4, on Tuesday night at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars are 3-1 so far on their seven-game homestand and have won five of their last six games and 20 of their last 30.

Down, 1-0, the Cougars scored three times in the bottom of the second. Conner Crumbliss singled home Max Stassi, Jason Christian scored on a fielding error and Rashun Dixon drew a bases loaded walk. After the Kernels scored single runs in the fourth and fifth, the Cougars put up three more in the last of the fifth. Dixon singled home Crumbliss, Anthony Aliotti scored on a wild pitch and Mitch LeVier smashed an RBI double to make it 6-2.

Starter Dan Straily gave up three runs -- two earned -- in 4 2/3 innings in a no-decision, Max Peterson (4-2) notched the victory, Ryan Doolittle pitched two scoreless innings and Jose Guzman handled a perfect ninth for his 15th save. Stephen Locke (6-4) took the loss for the Kernels. The Cougars' offense knocked out 11 hits and never went 1-2-3.

The Cougars (22-15, 54-52) and Kernels (20-16, 63-41) continue the four-game set Wednesday night at 6:30 CT. Ian Krol (7-4, 2.74) will face Buddy Boshers (1-0, 5.26). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com) with pre-game coverage starting at 6:15 p.m.