

## A's News Clips, Thursday, August 19, 2010

### Oakland A's walk-off victory in bottom of ninth saves usually reliable bullpen

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Some walk-off victories trigger mass celebrations, others sighs of relief.

Put Wednesday's 5-4 win in the latter category for the A's, who finished off the Toronto Blue Jays in more exciting fashion than anyone wearing green and gold would have preferred.

After the bullpen blew a 4-1 lead in the top of the ninth, Cliff Pennington delivered his first major league walk-off hit in the bottom half, a single through the right side of the infield that scored Steve Tolleson from second with the game winner.

"Our bullpen has been (a) strength all year," Pennington said. "For the offense to pick them up is nice."

The A's won't be picky about the manner in which they win.

They steadied themselves after a four-game losing streak, captured the series against visiting Toronto and picked up two games in the American League West standings over the past two days.

They're eight games back of first-place Texas after the Rangers were swept by the Tampa Bay Rays, who arrive in Oakland tonight for the start of a four-game series.

"It wasn't pretty, but we got it done," A's manager Bob Geren said.

The only Athletic who could have rightfully taken issue with the afternoon's events was left-hander Gio Gonzalez, who left with a 4-1 lead and deserved better than a no-decision.

Gonzalez went seven innings and gave up just two hits. The only run he allowed came in the fifth when a pop-up got lost in the sun and fell between third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and catcher Kurt Suzuki.

But Gonzalez continued the excellent work of Oakland's rotation, the main reason the A's believe they still have life in the division race.

The starters have allowed one earned run or fewer in eight of the past 11 games, and Gonzalez is 4-3 with a 1.88 ERA over his past 11 starts.

He was asked if the starters are trying to one-up each other.

"A friendly one-up maybe?" Gonzalez offered. "It doesn't matter who's winning as long as the team wins."

The A's took a 2-0 lead in the first without getting a hit as Toronto starter Marc Rzepczynski walked the first three batters.

Coco Crisp doubled home Pennington in the second, then homered to left in the seventh to put the A's ahead 4-1.

But Michael Wuertz, filling in for injured closer Andrew Bailey, couldn't close out the game.

Adam Lind doubled to lead off the top of the ninth, and, with one out, Wuertz walked consecutive hitters to load the bases.

Wuertz was making his third appearance in four days.

"He didn't have his usual command of the strike zone," Geren said. "He was possibly a little tired."

J.P. Arencibia followed with a blooper to right. The A's outfield was playing deep in a no-doubles alignment, so the ball easily dropped in front of Rajai Davis to score one run and make it 4-2.

With the bases still loaded and lefty Craig Breslow (bruised forearm) unavailable, Geren called on Jerry Blevins, who allowed Fred Lewis' game-tying, two-run single to center.

Brad Ziegler (3-4) entered and prevented further damage by coaxing Yunel Escobar into an inning-ending double play.

The A's struck quickly off Casey Janssen (4-1) in the bottom half.

Tolleson led off with a single and advanced to second on a passed ball.

Pennington, looking to pull a grounder to the right side, instead poked a 2-2 pitch through the hole, and Tolleson slid in well ahead of Dewayne Wise's throw home.

## **Oakland A's update: Versatile Coco Crisp has more than speed in his game**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Speed is the first thing typically mentioned when it comes to Coco Crisp's offense. But the switch-hitting leadoff man is demonstrating his well-rounded abilities in the batter's box.

Crisp homered and notched his second straight three-hit game as the A's beat the Toronto Blue Jays 5-4 on Wednesday at the Oakland Coliseum.

Over the past two games, Crisp has reached base in eight of nine plate appearances and has stolen three bases.

He's hitting .452 over his last 11 games and has eight extra-base hits (six doubles, two homers) over his past 13 games. After he missed most of the season's first half with two lengthy stints on the disabled list, Crisp is hitting .289 overall with five homers, 27 RBIs and 19 stolen bases in 47 games.

"I've been seeing the ball well," said Crisp, signed in the offseason as a free agent. "I'm seeing the ball well, and now balls are falling and hitting gaps. That's the game of baseball."

Getting on base has helped him ignite the A's running game. His 14 steals since the All-Star break lead the major leagues.

The A's lead the majors with 40 stolen bases since the break. They're 43-19 in games in which they steal a base and 16-41 when they don't.

Steve Tolleson was called up from Triple-A Sacramento to take the place of injured utility man Adam Rosales, and Tolleson is getting a chance to show his versatility.

He's drawn his first three major league starts since being promoted Friday -- one at shortstop, one at third base and one at second base, which came Wednesday. He's 5 for 10 in those starts, and he sparked the A's winning rally Wednesday, leading off the bottom of the ninth with a single and eventually scoring on Cliff Pennington's hit.

"As a young player, that's all you can ask for is a chance to go out and help win a game," Tolleson, 26, said.

Closer Andrew Bailey (rib cage strain) will make a rehab appearance with Sacramento on Friday against Iowa. That's expected to be Bailey's final step before coming off the DL.

Fellow reliever Craig Breslow was unavailable because of a bruised forearm but said he likely would be ready tonight.

The A's have won six consecutive home series, their most since winning six straight from July 27-Sept. 3, 2006.

## **Chin Music: Bullpen updates and other notes before A's-Blue Jays series finale**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/18/2010 11:50AM

There's just a couple of items to update you on this morning ...

-Andrew Bailey will make one rehab outing for Triple-A Sacramento before coming off the DL. We don't know what day that will be, but the A's might announce it after the game.

-Fellow reliever Craig Breslow's bruised forearm doesn't seem serious, but he said he'd have to play catch before the game before knowing if he'd be available today. If not, he said he should be ready for Thursday night's series opener against Tampa Bay.

–That was quite a play by Cliff Pennington on his spin-and-throw from behind second base on Jose Molina's grounder last night. Pennington was actually practicing such a throw during BP before that game, and he said the whole motion is still a work in progress as far as he's concerned. ...

–Steve Tolleson is getting a look all over the infield. He started at shortstop Saturday night against Minnesota and third base last night. He's at second base this afternoon with Mark Ellis taking a turn at DH.

The full lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Ellis DH, Davis RF, Tolleson 2B, Pennington SS; Gonzalez LHP.

Blue Jays — Lewis LF, Escobar SS, Bautista RF, Wells CF, Lind DH, Hill 2B, Overbay 1B, Encarnacion 3B, Arencibia C; Rzepczynski LHP.

## **A's rescue themselves**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland added a little twist to its victory over Toronto on Wednesday at the Coliseum: The team's hitting wound up being the story at the end of the day, eclipsing the continued superb starting pitching.

Reliever Michael Wuertz gave up three runs in the ninth, denying starter Gio Gonzalez a much-deserved win. But in the bottom of the inning, recently recalled Steve Tolleson got his second hit of the game, went to second on a passed ball and scored with a face-first slide on Cliff Pennington's soft single through the right side. The 5-4 victory gave the A's the series win against Toronto.

"I was just trying to get him to third, and it found a hole," Pennington said.

"We're showing signs of life, going out there, battling through it, sticking to it," Gonzalez said.

Were the team's offense keeping up with the starting pitchers, the A's might be making things more uncomfortable for division-leading Texas. Over the past 11 games, the A's starters have an ERA of 1.52.

Gonzalez allowed one run in seven innings, the eighth time in the past 11 games that Oakland starters have given up no more than one earned run. The team has the best ERA in the league, 3.55, and since June 25, the starters' ERA is 2.72.

"We rely on our Fab Five," said center fielder Coco Crisp. "They do a fantastic job."

The past two days, the A's lineup has started to emerge from a general funk, and Crisp has had much to do with that. He had his second three-hit, one-walk game in a row, with a solo homer, two doubles, two RBIs and two runs. Over the past 11 games, Crisp is batting .452.

Crisp led off the first with a walk, and the A's went on to score twice without a hit; Marc Rzepczynski walked the bases loaded and Kurt Suzuki and Kevin Kouzmanoff provided RBI groundouts. The next inning, Pennington drew a two-out walk and Crisp's double sent him in.

Wuertz hadn't allowed an earned run in 18 of his previous 20 appearances, and he had been 6-for-6 in save opportunities coming in, but Adam Lind doubled, and with one out, Wuertz issued two walks to load the bases.

"He didn't have his normal command of the strike zone," A's manager Bob Geren said, venturing that Wuertz might be a little tired.

J.P. Arencibia's bloop to right sent in a run - the outfield was playing "no-doubles" defense, according to Geren, who noted that a ball over Rajai Davis' head would have been more problematic. Jerry Blevins took over and, after getting ahead 0-2, he allowed a two-run single to former Giant Fred Lewis.

Brad Ziegler came in, and Yunel Escobar ripped a 2-1 pitch just foul down the first-base line - by inches, according to Blue Jays manager Cito Gaston. Then Ziegler got Escobar to hit into a double play.

Tolleson, who came up when Adam Rosales went on the DL with a stress fracture in his right ankle, has four hits in two days.

## **Beat: Defense is more than middling**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Cliff Pennington's** slick up-the-middle spin-and-throw to get **Jose Molina** on Tuesday night highlighted yet again how well the A's have played defensively this year, which is one reason the team's young starting pitchers are doing so well.

The A's aren't the Twins, who lead the league with only 48 errors through Wednesday. The A's have made plenty, 74, which puts them sixth in the American League in fewest errors made. Pennington and first baseman **Daric Barton**, good defensive players, are among the leaders in errors at their positions. Both are young, though, and they're both capable of spectacular plays. The tools are there; it's just a matter of experience.

When it comes to Oakland's pitching staff, what the team most prizes is the defense up the middle, and with catcher **Kurt Suzuki**, Pennington and second baseman **Mark Ellis**, and a healthy **Coco Crisp**, the A's have that.

"It's gone hand-in-hand with the pitching," manager **Bob Geren** said. "When you have solid pitching, which we do, and back that up with defense, (the pitchers') game plan going in is, 'There's incredible defense behind me, use my pitches and let the defense work.' "

**Plan for Bailey: Andrew Bailey** (ribcage strain) said the day before that he believed he'd throw a rehab inning at Triple-A Sacramento on Friday, and he was correct. The A's closer is likely to come off the disabled list Saturday if all goes well.

**Briefly:** Pennington's RBI single in the ninth inning Wednesday was his first career game-ending hit. ... **Craig Breslow** was unavailable after taking a liner off his left forearm the night before, but he's hoping to be OK for tonight against Tampa Bay. ... **Gio Gonzalez** is 6-1 with a 2.01 ERA during the day. ... Oakland has won six consecutive home series. ... Bailey's work for the Pepsi Refresh project helped the Miracle League of Alameda get a \$5,000 grant toward building a sports field for the disabled.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**No-hit matchup:** The last time Dallas Braden faced Tampa Bay on a Sunday at the Coliseum, on May 9, he threw the 19th perfect game in history. Braden will pitch in the series finale on Sunday against the Rays and Matt Garza. This will be the

second matchup in 2010 of pitchers who've thrown no-hitters in the same season (July 28, Roy Halladay vs. Edwin Jackson). Before 2010, this hadn't happened since 1991.

## **Drumbeat: Today's lineup, not much new on Bailey, some tidbits**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 8/18/2010, 11:56AM

It's right-handed heavy today against Toronto lefty (deep breath, hoping this is spelled correctly) Marc Rzepczynski:

Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Jackson lf, Suzuki c, Kouzmanoff 3b, Ellis dh, Davis rf, Tolleson 2b, Pennington ss

Mark Ellis is DHing because Bob Geren wants as many right-handers in as possible and he's got some DH experience, unlike Steve Tolleson. Nice to see Tolleson back in; after two hits last night, he came out for defensive replacement Kevin Kouzmanoff.

Craig Breslow said he needed to play catch before being able to tell if he's good to go today; he took a liner off the left forearm last night that left him bruised, and it's still very pink today. He said that even if he's out today, he believes he'll be fine for tomorrow.

Andrew Bailey also was going to play catch before any decisions were made about his rehab inning. He'd guessed Friday at Triple-A Sacramento, but it will depend on how he's feeling. He hasn't worked in a game in a month now because of that right intercostal strain.

Since there's not a ton of news today, here are bits and bobs that I haven't been able to wedge into the paper or blog recently:

\*\*Matt Watson told me that in the past week or so, he's heard many people compare kidney-stone pain to delivering a child. "But at least at the end of that, you have a baby to hold," he said. "What are you going to do, hold the kidney stone?"

Yeech!

\*\*I figured high-energy Adam Rosales would go a little stir-crazy when told to rest for a month to let his ankle stress fracture heal, and when I asked him how he'd spend his time - couch and remote? video games? - he responded that he doesn't watch much TV. He said he plans to do a lot of reading.

"I'll keep my mind active," he said.

That counts as an unusual answer in any pro sports setting. Anywhere, really, I guess.

\*\*Cliff Pennington's up-the-middle spin-and-throw that got Jose Molina last night was a good play - and Geren said Pennington would have gotten a fast runner, too. A scout I just spoke to disagreed with that; though he did think it was a good play, he said Molina's time to first was well over 5 seconds. That is very slow.

The scout said he's always taken with how many highlight plays on Sports Center or Baseball Tonight come with catchers running. He said, "Just watch. It's always catchers."

## **Sun shines on Pennington-led A's for walk-off**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The win didn't come easy, but simple hasn't exactly described the A's season, which has included a slew of injuries coupled with an up-and-down offense.

The ride got plenty bumpy Wednesday, when the A's jumped out to a lead, extended that lead, lost that lead and then permanently regained it in the bottom of the ninth inning -- all thanks to a walk-off RBI single from Cliff Pennington that gave the club a 5-4 victory and subsequent series win over the visiting Blue Jays.

Pennington's hit, which followed a Steve Tolleson single and passed ball by Blue Jays catcher Jose Molina, was only meant to move Tolleson to third base. Instead, the soft grounder rolled between Toronto's right infielders to expedite the win.

"I just wanted to get him to third, and I happened to find the hole there," Pennington said. "I looked up and saw it had a chance to get through, and luckily it did."

"Cliff was just doing the unselfish thing in that situation," manager Bob Geren said. "He was trying to move the runner over."

Geren, though, has no complaints about the way his club finished the game.

"We won," he said. "That's the bottom line. It wasn't real pretty, but we got it done."

The ugly part came in the top half of the ninth, with Michael Wuertz on the mound looking for his seventh save in a 4-1 game. Rather, the A's righty -- who entered having not given up a run in 18 of his past 20 appearances -- surrendered two walks and two hits in just one-third of an inning, which ended with three runs attached to his name and the game tied.

"He just didn't have his normal command of the strike zone," Geren said. "It's not like him at all, but he's been pitching in a lot of games recently, so he may have been a little tired. He was the guy to do it there, but he just didn't get it done."

"Our bullpen's been pretty steady all year. Just a bad day today."

Righty Brad Ziegler ultimately induced a double-play ball to put an end to Toronto's game-changing threat, setting the stage for his teammates' dramatic ninth-inning display that locked up his third win of the season.

"Wuertz is unbelievable," Coco Crisp said. "It was just one of those games where they were just laying off some of those tough pitches. He battled out there, and we were able to pull out the win."

Crisp, meanwhile, did his own part in the game, in which the A's outfielder posted his second straight three-hit day. Wednesday's effort included two doubles and a homer, along with two RBIs, and Crisp has now hit safely in 10 of his last 11 games, going 19-for-42 (.452) with five doubles, two home runs and eight RBIs over that span.

"He's been big for us," Geren said. "He hit a homer late, and we were talking in the dugout how that could really be a big run right there."

Geren and Co. didn't realize just how big Crisp's homer -- a seventh-inning solo shot -- could be, though. It ultimately made a rather large difference in a game that had the A's gnawing at the scoreboard from the very first frame against Toronto lefty Marc Rzepczynski.

Rzepczynski offered three consecutive free passes to load the bases in the bottom of the first inning, at which point Kurt Suzuki collected an RBI groundout and Kevin Kouzmanoff proceeded to hit into a run-scoring fielder's choice to make it 2-0.

"It's nice to start the game off that way," Crisp said. "It definitely feels good to get guys on base like that early on."

"Today my sinker was either running or sinking straight down, I had no idea where it was going," Rzepczynski said. "Especially that first inning when I was throwing them, it's just they were either down or away. When you walk the first three guys, usually it's not going to be a very good outing, and today for me, it wasn't."

The A's added a run in the second inning, thanks to an RBI double by Crisp that fell just feet short of a home run off the wall in left field. All the while, starter Gio Gonzalez was mowing down the power-heavy Jays lineup.

The southpaw gave up just one run on two hits while walking four and striking out six through seven innings of work. Toronto's lone run off Gonzalez came in the fifth courtesy of a bright sun, which helped give Fred Lewis an RBI single on a high infield popup that was lost in the sky by Suzuki and Kouzmanoff.

"The win is good," said Gonzalez, who settled for a no-decision. "Our guys battled out there. We look at it as a step forward. Everything came through today. It was an edge-of-your-seat kind of day."

Gonzalez's strong showing marked the eighth time in the club's last 11 games that a starter has allowed no more than one earned run.

"That's what we rely on," Crisp said. "They're our fab five. They keep doing a great job for us."

With the victory, the A's improved their day record to a Major League-best 29-12 and picked up their sixth consecutive home series win -- their longest such streak since July 27 to Sept. 3, 2006.

Furthermore, it represented their sixth walk-off win of the season.

"Our bullpen's been the strength of our team all year," Pennington said. "For the offense to pick one up for them is nice."

## **East meets West as Rays play the A's**

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com

Andy Sonnanstine's role in the Rays' starting rotation might be temporary, but the right-hander hasn't been pitching like it.

And for manager Joe Maddon, who will send Sonnanstine to the hill for Thursday's opener against the Athletics to open a West Coast road trip, Sonnanstine's approach has made a strong, positive impression.

"The thing that stands out to me is he's fearless," Maddon said. "Here's a guy who hasn't started all year, and he walks right into that Toronto cauldron up there just like he did, comes back down and follows that up with another good start. ... I think this may have been a difficult moment for him, but he's learned the right things out of it."

The results haven't been half-bad, either. In two starts since joining the rotation to fill in for the injured Wade Davis and Jeff Niemann, Sonnanstine has been consistent for the Rays. After eating a tough-luck loss in his first start against the Blue Jays, Sonnanstine allowed three runs in five innings to the Orioles last time out and earned the victory.

Thursday might be his last start for the time being depending on Davis and Niemann's return, but don't expect that to affect his outlook. In fact, it's his mental approach that makes him such a good fill-in for the Rays, Maddon said.

"With Sonny, the one thing I always know about him -- and I don't care what the venue is, who he's facing, whatever -- he's going to be the same cat. He might get beat up, I don't know that, but I know one thing: He's going to go out there and not be affected. I really appreciate that, and that's why I feel good about him getting the starts."

The Athletics have to feel pretty good about the starts they have been getting from their young pitcher Trevor Cahill who will oppose Sonnanstine on Thursday. Cahill has actually been better than his 12-5 record might indicate and is on the verge of breaking Nolan Ryan's streak of 20 starts with at least five innings and no more than six hits. Cahill tied the streak in his last outing in which run support issues became a problem again and the right-hander was forced to eat the loss despite only allowing one run.

He's been especially hot of late, going 2-1 with a 0.38 ERA in his last three outings. Seeing the run Cahill has been on of late, including the possibility of eclipsing Ryan's record, is something that fills A's manager Bob Geren with pride and hope for the rotation's future.

"That's one of those records that's hard to imagine doing," manager Bob Geren said. "It's so rare, and he keeps getting better. We've got to get him some runs. We have the best young rotation in baseball, and they continue to improve and keep pitching well. They're only going to get better. You think back to where they were a year ago, imagine where they'll be a year from now."

### **Rays: Rays playing better on the road**

Embarking on a seven-game West Coast road swing still may not be a picnic for the Rays as they continue to battle it out with the Yanks for first place, but it won't be a reason to panic as might have been the case in years past. That's because the Rays have been playing a much better brand of baseball this year against teams outside of their division and on the road. In fact, Tampa Bay holds the Majors best road record at 35-22. That's partly thanks to encouragement from Maddon, who has made improving against non-divisional foes a priority since Spring Training.

"You look at the Central and the West, we've done better against both of those divisions this year," Maddon said. "Obviously we've only played the Angels once, and they're having a little bit of a down year themselves. Seattle, of course, they're having a bit of a down year. I think from our perspective, I want to believe it's a maturation process on our part, that we're able to travel distances and play better, and we're going to find out."

### **Athletics: Base crime does pay**

The A's have begun picking up some speed on the base paths of late. Oakland stole four bases on Tuesday night and another on Wednesday, bringing it total to a Major League leading 40 thefts since the All-Star break. Oakland now has 105 stolen bases overall, good for fourth in the AL. It's proven to have a strong impact on their offense too, as the club is 43-19 in games when it steals a base compared to 16-41 when it doesn't.

Rajai Davis leads the team with 36 stolen bases, and Cliff Pennington and Coco Crisp have both stolen 18 bags apiece this season. After that high-octane trio, the A's don't have anyone with a double-digit steal total. Davis ranks third in the league, while both Pennington and Crisp rest right outside of the top 10 in steals.

### **Worth noting**

The Rays' win over the Rangers on Wednesday was the 900th in club history. ... Throughout the trip west, the Rays will sport Brayers (Rays + Blazers), which are plaid blazers in Rays colors with a sunburst to give the trip an AL West theme. ... Oakland's starters have allowed one or fewer earned runs in eight of their past 11 games. ... Oakland has won 12 of 14 day games and is a Major League-best 29-12 during the day this season. ... The A's have a Major League-best 2.67 ERA since the All-Star break and are 16-14 in that span.

## **Bailey bound for rehab stint this week**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Andrew Bailey will definitely take part in a Minor League rehab assignment this week, A's manager Bob Geren confirmed Wednesday.

The A's skipper said the date of his closer's Triple-A stint is still to be determined -- much of the decision depending on how Bailey came out of his throwing session Wednesday morning.

Once enduring an inning with Sacramento, Bailey -- who previously threw in a simulated game Tuesday -- said he hopes to be cleared for activation from the disabled list, where he's been stationed since July 30 with a right intercostal strain.

Bailey hasn't pitched since July 20, but Michael Wuertz and Craig Breslow have since led a bullpen that entered Wednesday's matchup with the visiting Blue Jays with a 3.13 ERA in the month of August. Wuertz, in particular, has been mightily consistent for the A's, having not allowed an earned run in 18 of his past 20 appearances.

### **A's Gross frustrated, but remains prepared**

OAKLAND -- More than two weeks have passed since Gabe Gross' last start, a time span of which the A's outfielder is well aware.

But like a true veteran, he's physically and mentally preparing himself the same way for every game, even the ones he doesn't start.

"I try to just worry about the things I can control," Gross said Wednesday morning. "That's my work ethic, and that hasn't changed. Mentally, you take the same approach every day, telling yourself you're going to play, because you can go in at any time."

The 30-year-old Gross, who last made a start in right field July 30 in Chicago, has appeared in five games since then, going 1-for-1 with two walks. He put together a .265 mark with 18 RBIs while playing in 60 games -- 39 of them starts -- in the first half, and he's collected just three hits in 28 at-bats during the second half.

The latter numbers don't exactly lend Gross the starts he's hoping to obtain. A crowded outfield, which also just got Conor Jackson back in the fold, doesn't help either.

"It is frustrating," Gross admitted. "But I think that's part of being a competitor. If you're not frustrated about not playing, then you're not much of a competitor. But, again, that's out of my control."

### **Worth noting**

Manager Bob Geren filled his lineup with a handful of righties Wednesday against Toronto lefty Marc Rzepczynski, who entered the matchup carrying a .176 opponents batting average against lefties. That meant a day off for Jack Cust, whose DH spot was filled by Mark Ellis. Steve Tolleson, meanwhile, got a start at second base. ... Chris Carter, who went 0-for-19 during his week-long stint with the A's, hit his 28th homer of the season for Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday. ... Carter's teammate, Dallas McPherson, has homered in three consecutive games for the River Cats. McPherson has also hit safely in 13 of his past 14 games and is batting .333 with seven home runs and 17 RBIs over that span. ... Highly touted A's pitching prospect Michael Ynoa, set to undergo what is expected to be Tommy John surgery Aug. 24, was officially placed on the 60-day disabled list by the A's Arizona Rookie League team with a right elbow strain Tuesday.

## **Breslow to host luncheon at Yankee Stadium**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

Craig Breslow and his fight to aid pediatric cancer research will soon take over Yankee Stadium, where the A's reliever will host an intimate charity luncheon at the park's NYY Steak restaurant in September.

Breslow, influenced by his older sister's successful battle with thyroid cancer as a child, founded the Strike 3 Foundation in 2008 in an effort to do his part to support and raise funds for childhood cancer research.



The A's lefty has since hosted several charity events, with the next one taking place at the Yankee Stadium steakhouse on Wednesday, Sept. 1, before Oakland and New York face off that night.

The luncheon, boasting quite the extravagant menu, will feature appearances by several A's players, including Andrew Bailey, Dallas Braden and Kurt Suzuki. The Yankees' Joba Chamberlain and Curtis Granderson are also set to be on hand.

"I was able to eat at the steakhouse last year, and I found it to be the perfect venue," Breslow said. "It's a great place, where fans can come and interact and mingle with players in a more formal and intimate environment."

Breslow said he is hoping to sell between 30-40 tickets, as only 50 seats are available for the exclusive event. Tickets are \$450 and can be purchased at [strike3foundation.org](http://strike3foundation.org) through Aug. 25.

"All the money goes straight to the foundation," he said. "That's what great about this. It's always directly helping kids."

## **A's defeat Blue Jays, 5-4**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — The biggest reason for the Athletics' perfect record this season when leading after eight innings is their stingy relievers.

On a day when the normally reliable bullpen failed, Cliff Pennington bailed the team out.

After failing to get a sacrifice down, Pennington managed to win the game with an RBI single in the bottom of the ninth inning that gave the A's a 5-4 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays on Wednesday.

"Our bullpen has been the strength of our team all year," Pennington said. "For the offense to pick them up one time is nice."

The A's blew a 4-1 lead in the top of the ninth but managed to pull out the victory to remain undefeated in 51 games this season when they led after eight innings.

Steve Tolleson started the winning rally with a leadoff single against Casey Janssen (4-1). Pennington tried to lay down a bunt but was unable to do it before getting two strikes. After Tolleson advanced on a passed ball by Jose Molina, Pennington was looking to advance the runner with a grounder to the right side.

Pennington did just that and ended up winning the game when the ball made it to right field. Tolleson easily beat Dewayne Wise's throw home to score the winning run.

"At contact, I knew I was going to be able to move him up," Pennington said. "When I looked up and saw where (second baseman Aaron) Hill was playing, I was like, 'That has a chance to get through.'"

Gio Gonzalez allowed two hits in seven innings and Coco Crisp had a homer, two doubles and two RBIs for the A's, who won their sixth straight home series.

"It's good that we're showing signs of life that we're going out there battling and sticking to it," Gonzalez said. "We look at it as a step forward."

Fill-in closer Michael Wuertz was unable to preserve a three-run lead while subbing for injured All-Star Andrew Bailey.

The Blue Jays entered the ninth with just two hits, including an infield popup that was lost in the sun. But Adam Lind started the rally with a double. One out later, Wuertz threw eight straight balls to Lyle Overbay and Edwin Encarnacion to load the bases.

J.P. Arencibia hit an RBI single to make it 4-2 and knock out Wuertz. Jerry Blevins came on and surrendered a tying two-run single to Fred Lewis. Brad Ziegler (3-4) got out of the jam by getting Yunel Escobar to hit into a double play.

"We didn't swing the bats at all well here," manager Cito Gaston said. "We did win one game and came back and tie one up. We just didn't hit the ball like we have been."

Toronto's lone run against Gonzalez was the result of bright sun and a lucky break. With runners on first and second and two outs in the fifth, Lewis hit a high popup in front of the plate. Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and catcher Kurt Suzuki lost the ball in the sun and Lewis got credit for an RBI single.

The only other hit off Gonzalez was Vernon Wells' second-inning double. The left-hander, quietly having a breakout season, struck out six and walked four.

The Blue Jays also lost a fly ball in the sun in the fifth but it didn't hurt them. Crisp was caught too far off second base after the ball fell in shallow left-center and was tagged out in a rundown.

"The sun was in the right spot today for a couple of cheap hits to land in," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Toronto starter Marc Rzepczynski, who had walked only two batters in 18 1-3 innings in the majors this season, walked the first three batters. Suzuki and Kouzmanoff hit run-scoring groundouts to give the A's a 2-0 lead.

Pennington then walked with two outs in the second and scored on Crisp's double. Rzepczynski left after walking Conor Jackson with one out in the fifth for his fifth walk of the game.

"My sinker was either running or sinking straight down especially in the first inning when I was throwing them," Rzepczynski said. "They were either down or away. I just had to relax but I had a hard time throwing a fastball for a strike. Today the fastball was also running and I had no control over it. So when you don't control your fastball it's hard to pitch."

NOTES: Oakland's starters have allowed one or fewer earned runs in eight of their past 11 games. ... Rzepczynski became the first Toronto starter to walk at least five and strike out nobody in a game since Miguel Batista on Aug. 13, 2004, against Baltimore. ...

Bailey (rib cage) will make a rehab appearance at Triple-A Sacramento on Friday. ... Arencibia snapped an 0-for-15 slide with his single in the ninth. He was optioned to Triple-A Las Vegas after the game and the Blue Jays will replace him Friday in Boston.

## **A's owner spends on art, not ballplayers**

Lowell Cohn, THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

SAN FRANCISCO

This is about baseball and art. Mostly it's about the Oakland A's being bad for baseball and good for art, and how that line about the A's being cash poor is a lot of baloney.

This is about how the A's greedily take money from the so-called big-market teams, the A's grabbing for revenue-sharing dough when the A's primary owner is one of the richest owners in baseball. Forget that, he's one of the richest men in the world. I'm talking about John Fisher, a billionaire. His two brothers also have stakes in the A's. They're billionaires, too. Not poor.

Maybe you don't know about the Fisher art exhibit at SFMOMA, the great art collection on loan to the museum from John Fisher's parents, Donald (deceased) and Don's wife, Doris. Don and Doris founded the Gap and made a ton of dough selling all those jeans, and with that money they bought paintings and sculpture by the ton. They went on a buying spree, gorging out on art the way you splurged on baseball cards when you were a kid, got those cards and popped the sweet fruity gum into your gob.

The Fishers bought so much art they couldn't possibly keep it all in their house. They have more than 1,100 pieces. Do you have 1,100 expensive paintings and works of sculpture? I don't. I have a few prints and three paintings my wife swears are cool.

I won't bore you with art talk. This is a sports column and I don't know from art. But I can tell you this. Only 160 pieces are on display with more to come in stages. The current exhibit is called Calder to Warhol, kind of self-explanatory and that lets you know the collection has Calders and Warhols up the wazoo — the Fishers own the New York Yankees of art collections.

There's also stuff by Roy Lichtenstein and Gerhard Richter, two power hitters of the art world, and there's a lot of stuff by a team of high-average hitters, if you get my point. I'm told the entire collection is worth more than a billion.

Poor? Is the A's ownership poor?

Oh, I know what you're thinking. The fancy art represents the Fishers' personal money, but the A's don't generate squat.

Please. Team owners should be sportspeople. They should love the game and have passion for the game like George Steinbrenner did, and they need to spend money to make money. The Fishers had no trouble buying all that art, shelling out big bucks for the art which brings in no income I can see. But the Fishers have trouble shelling out the going rate for a shortstop or a first baseman or a left fielder. When it comes to that, they're too poor. They should get out of the baseball business and sell to someone who loves ball more than art.

Here's something they can do right away. One artist at the exhibit, Ellsworth Kelly, painted a series of panels in various primary colors. Yeah, he's one of those. You look at a monochromatic panel and say, "Gladys, I could do that."

The blue one is shaped like a baseball diamond. This is perfect symmetry with the A's. The Fishers could sell "Blue Panel" for a bundle and use the money for baseball — to buy a real power hitter. Believe me, no one visiting the exhibit would miss "Blue Panel," but thousands of A's fans would notice the new heavy hitter and appreciate his existence. With a legit power hitter the A's might even attract a few more fans, if they really want more fans.

The art exhibit, according to my wife, who knows these things, is better than the A's and has more recognizable superstars. Andy Warhol is a lot better known than Jack Cust or Cliff Pennington. Frankly, I can't see why anyone would go to the Coliseum when they could go to SFMOMA and see this terrific collection, a real pleasure.

When you enter the exhibit you can read about the art from some text on the wall. I'll quote a few things, and please compare these words to what you know about the A's.

"In general the works in the collection are sensual and powerful, creating an impression of immediacy and boldness."

Do the A's create an impression of immediacy and boldness?

"The collection grew out of personal passion and pleasure."

Did this A's team grow out of passion and pleasure?

"(The Fishers built) an extraordinary collection of the art of our time."

Are the A's an extraordinary collection of the ballplayers of our time?

If the A's had to write their personal philosophy, it would go something like this: "We are committed to producing a below-average product and blaming it on Oakland and the Giants. We plan to suck until they let us move to San Jose. Then we'll be a real work of art. Just wait and see."

## **Former Lakeland Baseball star**

### **Cabrera Becomes Instant Millionaire With Athletics**

By BRANDT MERRITT, THE LEDGER 8/18/2010

Yordy Cabrera went from planning to be a poor college student to a 19-year-old millionaire Monday night.

Cabrera, a Lakeland High graduate, signed a contract with the Oakland Athletics just before the midnight deadline that included a \$1.25 million bonus, according to Baseball America. He said he was set to play for the University of Miami this year before his agent called at about 11:30 p.m. to tell him the deal with Oakland was done.

Cabrera said he was with his family in Lakeland when he got the call, and everyone had the same reaction.

"They were pretty excited, jumping around and laughing," said Cabrera, adding that the reported amount of his bonus was "about right."

Cabrera was a second-round pick by the A's in Major League Baseball's June draft. Many players go down to the final hours before signing contracts, including the Tampa Bay Rays' two first-round picks, and if Cabrera's deal hadn't been completed he would have had to wait two years while playing at Miami before being eligible again for the draft.

Instead, he is only the third graduate from a Polk County high school to sign a bonus worth more than \$1 million, joining Fort Meade's Andrew McCutchen (\$1.9 million in 2005, Pittsburgh Pirates) and another former Dreadnaught, Chris Sale (\$1.656 million in 2010, Chicago White Sox).

In addition to Sale, Lakeland has had a handful of other players join the minor leagues in recent seasons, including pitchers Josh Lucas and Drew Hutchison, and outfielders Keon Broxton and Evan Chambers. Cabrera said it was exciting to see so many players from the same program playing professional baseball.

"The best thing about it is we had a great, great coach that told all of us how to work hard and how to be ourselves everywhere we go," Cabrera said.

Mike Campbell was Lakeland's coach from 2006-09. Campbell said he received a text message from Cabrera soon after the deal was completed Monday, and he thinks choosing pro ball over college was the right decision for Cabrera.

"I think it's a good choice," Campbell said. "It's hard to turn down that kind of money."

Cabrera will fly out to Arizona today to join Oakland's rookie league team, and he said he expects to continue to play shortstop as he did at Lakeland.

"I'm just glad it got done," he said.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Mortensen wins 12th; Cats 1.0 game back**

By Abbie Ellis / Sacramento River Cats

The Cubs looked tame as Sacramento topped them 4-2 Wednesday night at Raley Field.

The River Cats offense came alive, as Sacramento collected 12 hits and handed Iowa starter Austin Bibens-Dirkx (5-1) his first loss.

Sacramento is back within one game to PCL South Division lead after Fresno was shut down by the Omaha Royals, 5-0.

Jeff Baisley's RBI single in the fourth inning scored Matt Carson to put the Cats on top 1-0. The Cubs grew tired of their zeros, too, and Jonathan Mota homered in the fifth inning to even the game 1-1.

Sacramento doubled their hits in the sixth inning and more than doubled their score. The River Cats scored another three runs thanks to a string of five hits from some hot bats. Carson kicked off the spree with a single, stole second and then scored off a Jeff Larish single. Dallas McPherson added a single of his own. Baisley continued to look relaxed at bat and doubled for his third consecutive hit. It was Adrian Cardenas with the two-run single that increased the lead to 4-1.

Iowa tacked on another run in the eighth, but it wasn't enough to come back from a Sacramento team on top of their game.

Clayton Mortenson earned the win, allowing five hits, one run and striking out seven. The save went to Justin James, who pitched a shutout ninth inning.

The Cats have won the series' first two games, with Game 3 of 4 on Thursday night at 7:05 p.m.

### **Hounds Cant Contain Drillers Offense**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

In Wednesday's win, the Drillers pounded out 16 hits, snapping a 3-3 midway through the game, and went on to a 10-4 win at ONEOK Field in Tulsa. The Drillers scored twice in the sixth to take a 5-3 lead, and Jason Van Kooten led off what would be a 4-run seventh inning with a 400-foot home run to center field.

Josh Horton and Petey Paramore each had three of the RockHounds' eight hits, with Matt Sulentic adding a 2-hit game (the top six hitters in the RockHounds batting order went hitless). Horton continued an amazing run, extending to six games a hit streak in which he is now 14-for-20 (a .700 average).

The game was the opener of a 3-game series in Tulsa and a 6-game road trip for the 'Hounds.

The pennant race & the wild card: The RockHounds lead San Antonio by three games ... Frisco by four and Corpus by six games in the South Division second half pennant race.

In the wild card race (which takes effect if Frisco wins the second half), San Antonio is three behind the 'Hounds and Corpus Christi stays five games back.

There are 19 games remaining in the 2010 Texas League regular season.

## **Ports Make it 11 Straight Wins with 3-1 Victory**

### **Stockton streak longest in California League since 2007**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** – The Stockton Ports (62-59) kept on rolling, winning their eleventh straight game on Wednesday night. The Ports handed the Lancaster JetHawks (48-73) a 3-1 loss at Banner Island Ballpark, powered by strong pitching. It is the longest winning streak by any team in the California League since the Lake Elsinore Storm won 13 straight games in 2007.

Southpaw Ben Hornbeck won his sixth game of the year, striking out eight batters in 6.0 innings. He allowed one unearned run on four hits in the outing. Jose Pina tossed 2.0 hitless, scoreless frames for his eighth hold, and Paul Smyth collected his 24<sup>th</sup> save for Stockton.

The JetHawks scored their lone run in the first inning. Center fielder Jay Austin singled toward second to start the game. With shortstop Jonathan Villar at bat, Hornbeck tried to pick off Austin. The throw went wild, and Austin made it to third on the error. Villar popped out for the first out of the inning. Right fielder Brandon Barnes then hit a sacrifice bunt, and Austin came running home to put Lancaster up, 1-0.

The JetHawks and starter Leandro Cespedes kept the Ports hitless until the fourth inning. With two out, catcher Yusuf Carter stepped up to the plate and slammed a 3-1 pitch over the left field wall for his tenth home run of the year. His solo shot tied up the game, 1-1.

The Ports added their winning runs in the fifth inning. Right fielder Jeremy Barfield singled to start the frame. He moved to second as center fielder David Thomas hit a sacrifice bunt. Third baseman Brandon Pinckney grounded out for the second out of the frame, and Barfield took third on the play. Left fielder Jermaine Mitchell then reached first on an error by shortstop Villar, which allowed Barfield to score. Shortstop Grant Green then slammed a double to score Mitchell and put the Ports ahead, 3-1.

The Ports had a couple of hits in the final few frames, but were unable to bring home their runners. The Stockton Ports had a tight lock on the JetHawks in the last few innings. Hornbeck and Pina combined to retire Lancaster in order in the sixth through eighth innings. Smyth allowed a hit to start the ninth inning to Villar, but then he then retired the next three batters in order to finish the game.

The Ports will take on the JetHawks in Game 3 of the series on Thursday night at 7:05 PM PST. RHP Matt Thomson will make his California League debut on Thursday for Stockton, while RHP Ross Seaton (6-10, 6.17). The Ports will draw the winners in their Legends of Baseball Memorabilia Raffle on Thursday night during the game. Fans can follow the game live on Comcast Hometown Network, (Channel 104 for Comcast customers in the Northern and Central California area) and on KWSX 1280 AM.

## **Cougars' Skid Hits Six**

### **Kane County's struggles at plate in key spots continue**

**CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa** – The Kane County Cougars' losing streak reached six Wednesday night after another night of missed opportunities at the plate and a 1-0 defeat against the Cedar Rapids Kernels at Veterans Stadium. Jonathan Joseph pitched five solid innings but took a tough-luck loss, and the Cougars stranded 10 runners at the dish and went 0-for-7 with runners in scoring position.

Joseph (1-5) walked none and fanned eight over five frames. The game's only run came against him in the fourth, as he hit a batter and gave up a single before Jose Jimenez connected for a sacrifice fly to make it 1-0. Rob Gilliam, who returned to the active roster Wednesday, tossed 1 2/3 scoreless innings, and Bo Schultz retired all four batters he faced.

The Cougars now are hitting .117 (7-for-60) at the plate with runners in scoring position during the losing streak, their longest since an eight-game skid in May. Wednesday they went 1-2-3 just once. Conner Crumbliss had two hits to move his hitting streak to 17, but he also grounded out in the top of the ninth with the bases loaded to end the game. Tyler Kehrer (5-4) got the win, and David Carpenter posted his fifth save.

The Cougars (27-23, 59-60) and Kernels (29-21, 72-46) play the middle game of their three-game set Thursday night at 6:35 CT. Chris Mederos (4-5, 3.21) will face Stephen Locke (7-5, 4.48). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and at [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com) with pre-game coverage starting at 6:20 p.m.