

## A's News Clips, Wednesday, August 25, 2010

### Gio Gonzalez's pitching, sudden power surge electrify Oakland A's

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

It was business as usual on the mound for the A's, as Gio Gonzalez spun another terrific outing Tuesday night against the Cleveland Indians.

The sight of A's hitters circling leisurely around the bases?

That was a new wrinkle, and manager Bob Geren can only hope it becomes more common.

The A's began a 10-game road trip by pounding three home runs in a 5-0 victory before a smallish crowd of 11,751 at Progressive Field.

Three homers is a decent night's work for some teams. When the A's do it, confetti should fall.

They entered the game with a major league-low 73 homers, and it had been exactly one month since they last enjoyed a multi-homer game. They also went deep three times in a July 24 win over the Chicago White Sox.

That 26-game streak of one homer or fewer was five games short of the Oakland record.

"It always makes it easier," said Jeff Larish, who hit a two-run shot in the second. "(Getting homers) is huge, especially when you get great pitching out there. You've got to give Gio credit."

Gonzalez (11-8) scattered five hits over seven innings and continued his mastery of the Indians this season. He's won all three starts against them and has yet to allow a run in 202/3 innings.

The left-hander struck out seven, walked one and allowed one run or fewer for the eighth time in his last 12 starts.

A's starters have pitched at least six innings in 22 straight games, three off the Oakland record. The staff as a whole has also allowed five or fewer runs in each of those 22 games, the longest streak in the American League since the 1989 California Angels had 22 straight.

The A's 11 shutouts are tied with Minnesota for the AL lead.

But it wasn't the smoothest ride for Gonzalez, which made his outing all the more impressive.

In the bottom of the second, a throwing error by shortstop Cliff Pennington and two errors from Larish -- on the same play -- put Cleveland runners on second and third with two outs.

But Gonzalez blew a fastball by Trevor Crowe for an inning-ending strikeout.

He escaped a bases-loaded jam in the fourth, and with two on and two outs in the fifth, he caught cleanup hitter Shelley Duncan looking on a pretty curveball.

"He's kept his composure a lot better this year," designated hitter Jack Cust said. "It shows in his performance. He's not getting knocked out of games when he shouldn't."

Gonzalez, 24, is aware that his damage control is a sign of maturity on the mound.

"I told (Geren), 'Little by little, I'm growing up,' " Gonzalez said.

Larish, starting at third base to give slumping Kevin Kouzmanoff a rest, got the A's on the board with a two-run shot off Fausto Carmona (11-12) in the second. It was Larish's first homer as an Athletic since being claimed off waivers from Detroit on Aug. 3.

Coco Crisp, who fell a triple short of the cycle, wrapped a solo homer around the right-field foul pole in the fifth. He's hitting .390 (25 for 64) in his past 16 games.

Cust greeted lefty reliever Tony Sipp with a two-run shot in the seventh that made it 5-0. It was the first of Cust's 10 homers to come against a left-hander.

Coming in, just one of his 32 RBIs had come against a lefty.

## **Oakland A's update: Struggling Travis Buck is sent back down to Sacramento**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

CLEVELAND -- Travis Buck's return to the major leagues was a short one, as the A's optioned the outfielder to Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday and recalled outfielder Matt Carson.

Buck was promoted on Aug. 16 and drew three starts in right field over his seven-game stay, going 0 for 10 with four strikeouts.

"Travis needs to go work on his swing a bit, and we could use a right-handed bat," manager Bob Geren said. "He hasn't had a ton of at-bats this year, and he has to tighten up his swing a little bit."

Buck made the A's opening day roster but was sidelined more than three months, first by a strained oblique and later by fatigue in his legs. He eventually got healthy and was hitting well for Sacramento at the time of his promotion.

It's tough to tell where Buck, 26, fits into the A's outfield picture right now. A hotshot prospect when he broke into the majors in 2007, Buck has had his career derailed by a string of injuries.

When left fielder Conor Jackson went on the disabled list Friday, it appeared Buck could get more playing time, particularly with the A's facing a string of right-handed starting pitchers coming up.

Instead, Geren indicated Gabe Gross -- a left-handed hitter, like Buck -- will handle right field for the time being. Gross is hitting just .242 after going 0 for 4 in a 5-0 victory over the Cleveland Indians on Tuesday.

Geren said the A's hadn't discussed whether Buck will return in September after rosters expand.

"He's a talented player, but he hasn't really gotten a chance to play consistently through different stints on the DL," Geren said.

Coco Crisp stole second in the first inning, his 14th straight successful steal attempt. The last Athletic with a longer streak was Rickey Henderson, who swiped 15 consecutive bases without being caught from July 22-Aug. 19, 1998.

Former A's closer Dennis Eckersley, in the Cleveland area to host a charity golf tournament, showed up at Progressive Field on Tuesday. He chatted in the visitor's dugout before the game with A's broadcaster Ray Fosse, the man who caught Eckersley's 1977 no-hitter while both were with the Indians.

## **Chin Music: Travis Buck sent down, Matt Carson brought up as A's open long road trip in Cleveland**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/24/2010 3:42PM

A blanket of gray clouds are starting to break up here in Cleveland. The forecast calls for just a 10 percent chance of rain so this series opener between the A's and Indians shouldn't be interrupted.

--The news of the day so far: Travis Buck was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento and fellow outfielder Matt Carson was called up. It was a pretty short return to the majors for Buck, who was recalled Aug. 16 and spent just seven games with the big club. He didn't do a whole lot to make an impression while he was up, going 0 for 10 with four strikeouts in three starts. But he didn't get a very long look either. When Buck came up, I thought it might be a good chance to evaluate him for an extended period (Conor Jackson's return to the DL seemed to open up even more opportunity). It's still tough to decipher what caliber of player the A's have in Buck. He hasn't stayed healthy for any length of time, and the A's aren't sold on him as an everyday player when he is healthy. "Travis needs to go work on his swing a bit, and we could use a right-handed bat," manager Bob Geren said. "He hasn't had a ton of at-bats this year, and he has to tighten up his swing a little bit."

Geren said he likes Carson's baserunning ability, as well as having a right-handed bat off the bench. And Geren indicated Gross will play regularly with the A's expected to see a string of right-handed starting pitchers to begin this road trip. Gross, who bats left-handed as does Buck, is hitting .247 in 186 at-bats, so he's hardly ripping the cover off the ball himself. But he had two hits Sunday, is good with the glove and has a strong arm. It's clear the A's see him as a better option in right field than Buck.

You have to figure a trade might be best for Buck's career. But I don't know what kind of interest he would draw given his injury history.

–That's about it for the news ... Kevin Kouzmanoff, 4 for 42 over his last 13 games, is sitting tonight with Jeff Larish getting a start at third base. Larish was promoted Friday for his second stint w/Oakland but has yet to get in a game since then.

–Surprise sighting: Hall of Famer and former A's closer Dennis Eckersley is back in Cleveland to host a charity golf tournament, and he was in the dugout chatting with A's broadcaster Ray Fosse, his former Indians teammate, before the game.

The lineups:

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

Indians — Donald 2B, Cabrera SS, Choo RF, Duncan LF, Nix DH, LaPorta 1B, Marte 3B, Crowe CF, Marson C; Carmona RHP.

## **Sharp Gio Gonzalez gets help from 3 homers**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The dream for Oakland would be to have the good young starting pitching whirring along and to add some power to go with it.

On Tuesday night, the A's got a glimpse of such a combination in a 5-0 victory over the Indians. Gio Gonzalez threw seven scoreless innings, and for the first time in 27 games, Oakland put together a multihomer game, with Jeff Larish, Coco Crisp and Jack Cust all going deep.

Oakland hadn't hit more than one homer in a game since July 24. The A's have hit 76 home runs overall, fewest in the majors.

"It always makes it easier, no matter who you are, when you get one run with a swing of the bat," said Larish, whose two-run shot with two outs in the second inning was his first hit with the A's. "That's huge, especially with good pitching."

No one doubts that Oakland has that. A's starters have worked at least six innings and allowed no more than three earned runs in each of the past 16 games, the longest streak since the Philadelphia A's had a string of 18 such games in 1927.

In eight of his past 12 starts, Gonzalez has allowed no more than a run, and he has a 2.20 ERA in that stretch.

He had to scramble a bit in the second inning Tuesday after errors by Cliff Pennington and Larish (who made two on one play) put men at second and third with two outs. No problem: Gonzalez struck out Trevor Crowe to end the inning.

"We gave them a couple of extra outs and he got in a jam and really kept his composure," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Our defense is so good, our young pitchers don't get to experience that so often, but that made it a great learning experience."

The Indians again loaded the bases with two outs in the fourth, and Gonzalez got Crowe to ground out. With two men on in the fifth, he struck out Shelley Duncan looking. As has been noted often this season, Gonzalez might have had a little meltdown in such occasions in other years.

"I told Bob, 'Little by little, I'm growing up and understanding the game,' " said Gonzalez, whose career ERA in five starts against Cleveland is 0.89.

Cust has homered just twice in 23 games, yet Geren said he believes the A's designated hitter is starting to come around. He liked the fact that the Indians brought in a left-hander, Tony Sipp, to face Cust and Cust hit a two-run homer to right on a 3-2 fastball.

Crisp, who hit a solo shot in the fifth inning, finished a triple shy of the cycle, and he said he was running hard on his flyball to center in the ninth.

Geren wouldn't say if Larish might get another start after a two-hit night; he wants to get Kevin Kouzmanoff's bat going again, and he gave him the night off to try to help do that.

Kouzmanoff, who is batting .095 over his past 13 games, said he thought a game off as sort of a mental break was a good idea. He has been working on several things in the batting cage, including better pitch selection.

## **Beat: Outfielder Buck just happy to be healthy**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Right now, just being healthy is success enough for **Travis Buck**. So being optioned out again, though disappointing, doesn't make him frustrated or upset.

"It's obviously a tough situation nowadays; you feel like you've got to get two or three hits a game to stay up there," Buck said by phone Tuesday. "But it's not going to affect me. The main thing for me is health, and it doesn't matter where I am as long as that's the case."

Buck went 0-for-10 with four strikeouts in three games during his weeklong callup, and manager **Bob Geren** said that he "needs to work on his swing a little bit."

Asked about Buck's future with the team, considering his injuries the past few years and his journeys between Oakland and Sacramento, Geren said, "He's a talented player. He hasn't had a chance to play consistently through those different stints on the DL."

Buck's third option, usually the last one, will be burned with this demotion, but the A's might gain a fourth option on him this offseason because of shortened seasons on the disabled list. He'll be 27 in November, though, and he clearly no longer ranks high on the A's outfield depth chart.

Buck said that has crossed his mind, but he can't really speculate about his future.

"If I'm healthy and play every day, I know the numbers will be there," he said. "When I played every day, the numbers spoke for themselves."

Outfielder **Matt Carson** was called up to provide a right-handed bench option. **Not done yet?** There's a reason the A's did not announce **Conor Jackson's** sports-hernia surgery, set for next Wednesday, as a season-ending procedure: Jackson said he'd like to try to play again this year, telling The Chronicle via text, "I'm definitely going to try to push and get back."

Jackson has played in 18 games since being acquired June 15 from Arizona, batting .228 with one home run.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Looking ahead:** Dallas Braden is on turn to pitch the series finale at Yankee Stadium next week. Braden has yet to pitch against New York since the "get off my mound" flap with Alex Rodriguez on April 22 in Oakland.

## **Drumbeat: Carson replaces Buck, night off for Kouzmanoff**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the former Jacobs Field 8/24/2010 2:52PM

After finding out yesterday that Travis Buck was getting optioned out, I got the impression that the roster spot was between the Matts, Watson and Carson, and it was Matt Carson who flew to Cleveland today.

Watson only has been on a rehab assignment for two days after a procedure to remove a kidney stone, and while he had two hits, including a double last night, the team must have decided to let him get in a bit more game time at Triple-A Sacramento before bringing him back. I'm sure he'll be back soon - definitely September - but Carson also provides a right-handed option off the bench, and he's a good runner and defensive player in late-innings situations.

Manager Bob Geren said that Buck, who was 0-for-10 in his callup last week, "needs to work on his swing a little bit. ... He's a talented player but he hasn't had a chance to play consistently through different stints on the DL."

I'd hoped, as many of you know, that the A's might throw Buck out there and let him play every day for a while, so everyone can see what's he's got now after all those DLs. Evaluating on occasional starts, especially against a tough pitcher like David Price, seems as if it might be difficult. Many players aren't at their best getting a start here and there rather than consistent time for a stretch. (That said, Buck did have an awful time of it against Price, no doubt about it.) I believe both Carson and Watson are good players and can help the A's, but I still wonder if Buck is a player who could be what he once was - a solid, everyday, big-league outfielder.

His chances are running out in Oakland, even if he winds up with a fourth option, which is possible based on service time and DL time. (His third option is definitely burned with this demotion. The fourth wouldn't be decided until the offseason based on service time, DL time, etc.) I hope that if he's not in the A's future, he gets a chance to find a spot elsewhere sooner than later. If he's not back up in early September, or certainly after Sacramento's playoffs, we'll have our answer about how Oakland regards his future with the team.

It is nice to see a recent callup get into the lineup tonight: Jeff Larish is at third, giving slumping third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff a night off; Geren said sometimes just sitting and watching can be beneficial for a player who's in a rough patch. Kouzmanoff is definitely frustrated, judging by a brief conversation I had with him before batting practice, and he said a day off might be good for him as a mental break.

Here's the lineup: Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Suzuki C, Cust DH, Ellis 2B, Gross RF, Davis LF, Larish 3B, Pennington SS, Gonzalez P

## **Some DMV workers extend their furlough**

Phillip Matier, Andrew Ross, San Francisco Chronicle

We've all heard of Furlough Fridays - well, at the San Francisco office of the Department of Motor Vehicles, they had a "Missing Monday" when nearly two-thirds of the staffers didn't show up.

In all, 20 of the 34 staffers at the Fell Street DMV office who had been forced to take Friday off without pay took Monday off as well.

DMV spokesman **Armando Botello** said the department had to bring in workers from other jurisdictions to help out with the "higher than usual absences."

**Naj Alikhan** of the Service Employees International Union, which represents the workers, said he hadn't heard of any sick-out call.

Even if he had, Alikhan said, he wouldn't be able to comment "because nothing like that would be union-sanctioned."

Whatever the case, the customer line snaked around the building. One unfortunate woman, **Maria Tiell**, said she stood in line twice, for a total of five hours, before finally being able to take her driver's license renewal exam.

**Oakland race:** As they round the first turn, **Don Perata** appears to be several lengths ahead in the race to be Oakland's next mayor.

A just-completed SurveyUSA/KPIX-TV poll of 800 Oakland voters shows the former state Senate president pro tem commanding 41 percent of the first-choice votes - a 15-point lead over his closest competitor, City Councilwoman **Jean Quan**.

Councilwoman **Rebecca Kaplan** comes in third with 14 percent. The remaining 10 candidates get a combined total of 12 percent, and 7 percent are undecided.

"If this holds, I don't see how Quan can possibly make up the difference," said **David Latterman**, whose firm, Fall Line Analytics, specializes in ranked-choice voting.

"Quan's best shot would have been a one-on-one race against Perata in a runoff," Latterman said. "But under ranked-choice voting, that's not going to happen."

**Batter up:** Las Vegas Mayor **Oscar Goodman** fueled speculation that the Oakland A's might be considering a move to the desert when he laid out plans the other day for a 45,000-seat domed ballpark downtown.

Goodman said at a news conference Friday that talks were already under way with a team.

"I'm not going to tell you that it's imminent," the mayor said, "but I'm going to tell you that the people who are participating in the discussions are very serious."

Team owner **Lew Wolff**, however, says the A's are holding no such discussions - nor is he interested in moving the club to Las Vegas.

"I can't imagine someone flying there to see **Lady Gaga** and a baseball game," Wolff said.

**Fare fight:** Police cracking down on Muni fare evaders got more than they bargained for the other day when they asked a young - and rather large - woman to show her ticket.

The woman was getting off the T-Line on Third Street with a baby stroller when an officer called out to see her stub.

The woman kept walking. When the officer grabbed her by the arm, all hell broke loose, with the woman's brother grabbing one officer to pull him away while the woman herself threw several head punches at the other cop.

The officers eventually got both siblings cuffed and on the ground, only to have the pair's 62-year-old mother jump in and scratch one officer on the face. (She later said she had simply been reaching for the baby carriage.)

All three wound up down at the Bayview police station where several of their friends and relatives soon showed up, wanting to know why police were spending their time on fare evaders instead of "the real bad guys."

Police ended up releasing all three suspects with misdemeanor citations for offenses ranging from fare evasion to assault and resisting arrest.

On the way out, grandma ripped a wanted poster off the wall. No, she wasn't angry.

"Hey, I know where this guy lives," she told the cops, politely providing them with an address.

The man, who was wanted on outstanding warrants for parole violations, was promptly arrested.

**Money matters:** San Francisco Mayor **Gavin Newsom's** order this week for city departments to hold off on any new spending makes both good fiscal and political sense.

Three rating agencies - Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings - will be in town in the next few days to size up the city's creditworthiness. The last thing the Democratic lieutenant governor nominee needs is a bond downgrade.

## **Welcome power surge backs Gonzalez gem**

## **Lefty extends rotation's roll as Larish, Crisp, Cust homer**

By John Barone / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- One streak continued. Another came to an end.

Both developments greatly pleased the Athletics.

Gio Gonzalez continued his mastery of the Indians on Tuesday night, firing seven shutout innings to support a three-home run effort from the A's in their 5-0 victory at Progressive Field.

The 24-year-old lefty scattered five hits and fanned seven in his 109-pitch outing, which extended a franchise record during which A's starters have worked at least six innings and yielded three or fewer earned runs in 16 consecutive games.

Gonzalez's effort, his third victory in as many starts against the Tribe this season, backed round-trippers from Jeff Larish, Coco Crisp and Jack Cust, who combined to award Oakland its first multi-homer contest since July 24, snapping a 26-game drought.

"It's always nice to see an offense come through like that," Gonzalez said. "They were swinging the bats and having fun."

Gonzalez and his fellow rotation mates have had plenty of fun authoring their collective stretch of effectiveness.

"I think they're all just kind of building off each other," A's manager Bob Geren said. "They all want to be the guy that continues the streak. Nobody wants to be the one that stops it, that's for sure."

What's also certain is that Gonzalez has dominated the Indians in 2010. With Tuesday's performance, the former first-round Draft pick hasn't permitted a run against them in 20 2/3 innings this season.

Just don't expect Gonzalez to pity the Tribe.

"That's a big league ballclub," Gonzalez said. "Every single one of those hitters was tough to face. You can't take away their name or their title. They're a good ballclub, and they can swing the bat pretty good."

Nonetheless, the Indians went 1-for-6 with runners in scoring position and stranded 10.

"He just dominated us all night," Cleveland manager Manny Acta said. "He's done that three times now."

This time, the A's spotted Gonzalez an early lead with a two-out rally in the second. Rajai Davis' ringing single to center field with two down brought up Larish, who clubbed Indians starter Fausto Carmona's 1-0 fastball into the right-center-field seats for a two-run home run.

The A's sloppy defense in the bottom of the inning tested Gonzalez's mettle. Shortstop Cliff Pennington's two-out throwing miscue and a two-error play by third baseman Larish put runners on second and third for Trevor Crowe. Gonzalez responded to the adversity in the finest of fashions, striking out Crowe after falling to a 3-0 count.

"He kept his composure well and picked his teammates up," Geren said. "Our defense is so good that a young pitcher doesn't get to experience that type of inning very often. You don't really want to have him experience that, but I liked it. It was a great learning experience when it was over."

Said Gonzalez: "I've had my fair share of messing up, too. You just try not to overthink it. Bob told me after, 'That was good out there.' I told him, 'Little by little, I'm growing up.' Little by little, I'm understanding the game and doing a better job of keeping my composure."

Gonzalez didn't allow a hit until the fourth, when the Indians coupled Shin-Soo Choo's one-out walk with two-out singles from Matt LaPorta and Andy Marte to load the bases. The threat proved inconsequential, as Gonzalez induced an inning-ending fielder's-choice groundout off the bat of Crowe.

It wasn't a flawless outing for Gonzalez, but it was a successful one all the same.

"My stuff was there," Gonzalez said. "I was just trying to settle down and find the glove and throw it where [catcher Kurt Suzuki] put it."

Crisp, who finished a triple shy of the cycle, made Gonzalez's fourth-inning escape act all the more significant in the fifth, when he led off by drilling Carmona's 3-2 fastball just inside the right-field foul pole to hand Oakland a 3-0 advantage.

After Carmona exited with one on and two outs in the seventh, Cust launched reliever Tony Sipp's 3-2 fastball to right-center for a two-run shot that gave the A's a 5-0 cushion.

"That was a big blow right there," Geren said. "It kept some of our guys in the bullpen out of the game, which was helpful.

"It was a good game all the way around."

Even if it didn't feature the type of offense the A's are accustomed to producing.

"Obviously, home runs are not part of our game offensively," Crisp said. "For Custy, it is. For myself, not so much. I hit them every now and then. But our backbone is our pitching. They do a fantastic job. Gio did a great job today.

"That's bonus baseball, the home runs. It helped today."

They certainly helped Gonzalez, who stopped short of labeling Tuesday's game a momentous victory.

"We had an exciting night, but we're taking it one step at a time," Gonzalez said. "Little by little, we're developing into a big ballclub that's going to make an impact in the upcoming weeks."



## **Arms race: A's rotation vs. Tribe's bullpen**

By Jonathan Mayo / MLB.com

The Cleveland Indians have boasted one of the better bullpens in the American League lately, but with the way Oakland A's starters have been throwing, the Indians might not be able to use that strength to their advantage.

Oakland got its 16th straight start of six innings or more with three earned runs or fewer allowed against Cleveland in Tuesday night's 5-0 win. With Trevor Cahill on the mound on Wednesday, No. 17 doesn't seem far-fetched.

The right-hander has gone at least seven frames with three or fewer runs allowed in six straight outings. The last time he went fewer than six innings was on June 15, a string of 12 starts. He's 3-1 with a 1.13 ERA in four August starts, each seven innings or more.

"I was just trying to throw strikes out there," Cahill said after he beat the Rays with eight innings of three-run ball in his previous start. "Baseball's kind of a streaky game, and I just happen to be on the positive side of things right now."

While the A's did hit three home runs on Tuesday against the Indians, there is a reason they've gone just 10-11 in August despite having a league-best 2.36 ERA. The offense was at the bottom of the AL with a .225 batting average, .300 on-base percentage and .322 slugging percentage for the month, perhaps giving Indians starter Mitch Talbot and company some reason for hope.

And if Talbot can somehow hand a lead over to the bullpen, then Cleveland might be in good shape to even this series. The run Tony Sipp allowed on Tuesday night was the only one Indians relievers have yielded over the past 9 1/3 innings. Over the past 12 games, the 'pen has a 1.86 ERA and over its past 158 1/3 innings, its ERA is 3.01. It's an area the Indians can certainly be proud of.

"The bullpen has had a number of guys solidify roles," assistant general manager Chris Antonetti said.

The most prominent of these roles, of course, belongs to Chris Perez, who took over closing duties from Kerry Wood and has a 2.17 ERA. But he's not alone. Sipp has allowed just 18.9 percent of inherited runners to score. Joe Smith is not far behind at 20 percent.

### **A's: On the run**

Since the All-Star break, Oakland has 46 stolen bases, tops in the Major Leagues. For the year, A's runners have 111 steals, third in the AL. It's just the second time in the past 12 seasons the club has topped the century mark in the category, and the A's are on pace to top the organization's record for success rate (currently 81 percent). It's the first time since 1992 the A's have had three players with 20 or more steals in a season.

These are more than just empty stats, however. Coco Crisp and Rajai Davis had steals on Tuesday, moving the team's record to 45-20 when stealing a base. They are 17-42 when they haven't had one.

### **Indians: Talbot looking to go deeper**

In April, Talbot went 3-1 with a 2.05 ERA over four starts. He averaged over six innings per outing then and went at least five frames over his first 11 starts of the year.

Things haven't gone as well recently. On July 29, the rookie came out of his start in the third inning with a back strain. He came back two weeks later and managed to go just four innings, allowing six runs (four earned) on eight hits. Five days later, he did pitch into the fifth, again yielding eight hits and allowing three runs (two earned). He did have a better feel for his pitches, which could give the Indians hope he can get the ball to that strong bullpen.

### **Worth noting**

Zach McAllister, the player to be named later in the Austin Kearns deal with the Yankees, made his Indians organization debut on Tuesday night. The right-hander had gone 8-10 with a 5.09 ERA in 24 starts for the Yankees' Triple-A affiliate in Scranton Wilkes-Barre, and he wasn't much better on Tuesday. McAllister picked up loss No. 11 by allowing five earned runs on four hits over six innings with Triple-A Columbus.

## **Buck optioned to Triple-A, Carson recalled**

By John Barone / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Oakland still views Travis Buck as a part of its future. For now, the team would like the 26-year-old outfielder to receive consistent at-bats with Triple-A Sacramento.

Oakland optioned Buck prior to Tuesday night's series opener against Cleveland at Progressive Field and recalled outfielder Matt Carson from Sacramento.

Buck went 0-for-10 with four strikeouts in three starts in right field following his Aug. 16 callup. The 2005 first-round Draft pick began the season with the A's before being placed on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to April 21 with a strained right oblique muscle. He was activated from the DL on July 30 and assigned to Sacramento.

In 14 Major League games this year, Buck is batting .167 with one home run and two RBIs.

"Travis needs to go down and tighten up his swing a little bit," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "He needs to get some at-bats and keep working."

"He's a talented player. He just hasn't had a ton of at-bats. He hasn't gotten a chance to play consistently because of his DL stint."

Buck's demotion opens the possibility of a right-field platoon between the right-handed hitting Carson and left-handed hitting Gabe Gross, who started in right Tuesday.

The 29-year-old Carson, making his fourth appearance of the season on the A's 25-man roster, has hit .195 with one homer and three RBIs over 16 games for Oakland in 2010.

"We could use another right-handed bat," Geren said. "He's a good runner, a good fielder and an option to pinch-hit against lefties."

### **Kouzmanoff rested to recharge quiet bat**

CLEVELAND -- Oakland manager Bob Geren hopes a pair of days off will awaken Kevin Kouzmanoff's quiet bat.

The A's third baseman did not start Tuesday night's series opener against the Indians at Progressive Field, which followed Monday's off-day. Jeff Larish started at third in Kouzmanoff's absence.

Kouzmanoff has struggled mightily this month, batting .145 (10-for-69) with no home runs and six RBIs in 20 August games.

"He could use a day [off]," Geren said. "He's struggling a little bit right now, but not for a lack of effort. He's been working hard on his swing. He was in the cage all day [Tuesday]."

"Hitting goes in cycles sometimes. We had the day off [Monday], and we'll give him another one [Tuesday], just so he can watch the game and take some extra [batting practice]. We'll get him back in there [Wednesday] and hope he sees the ball a little bit better."

In 119 games this season, Kouzmanoff is hitting .254 with 10 homers and 57 RBIs.

### **Worth noting**

The Athletics entered Tuesday night's series opener against the Indians at Progressive Field having played five consecutive one-run games, the second-longest streak in franchise history over the past 26 years. ... Through Sunday's action, A's starters had logged at least six innings and allowed three or fewer earned runs in a club-record 15 straight contests. ... With 102 stolen bases for Oakland, outfielder Rajai Davis is one steal shy of tying Stan Javier for ninth place on the team's all-time list. ... The A's began Tuesday having hit one home run or fewer in their past 26 games.

## **A's shut out Cleveland, 5-0**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEVELAND — Gio Gonzalez extended the Oakland Athletics' strong streak of pitching with seven solid innings in a 5-0 victory over the Cleveland Indians on Tuesday night.

Jeff Larish had a two-run homer and Coco Crisp a solo shot off Fausto Carmona (11-12) as Oakland snapped its streak without multiple homers at 26 games, longest since a team-record 31 games in 1978. Jack Cust hit a two-run homer off reliever Tony Sipp in the seventh to make it 5-0.

Gonzalez (11-8) gave up five hits over seven innings, becoming the 22nd consecutive Oakland starter to work at least six innings.

The Athletics staff has allowed five runs or fewer in all those games, the longest streak by an AL team since the 1989 California Angels.

Oakland starters have a 2.01 ERA and limited opponents to a .198 batting average since July 31, but the Athletics are only 11-11 over that stretch.

Michael Wuertz worked the eighth inning and Jerry Blevins the ninth for Oakland as Cleveland was shut out for the 11th time, tying Seattle for most in the AL. Oakland has four of the shutouts against the Indians, who have dropped 12 of their last 16 at home.

Gonzalez improved to 4-0 with a 0.89 ERA in four career starts against Cleveland. He worked out of jams in the second, fourth and fifth as the Athletics opened a 10-game trip to Cleveland, Texas and New York with only their third win in the last 11 road games.

Oakland is 24-35 on the road overall.

The left-hander struck out Trevor Crowe with runners on second and third to end the second. Both runners had reached on errors.

Cleveland got its first two hits and loaded the bases with two outs in the fourth before Crowe bounced into a forceout. Shelley Duncan took a called third strike with two on to end the fifth.

Carmona worked out of a bases-loaded threat, too, getting No. 9 hitter Cliff Pennington on a fly to right to end the fourth.

The right-hander allowed four runs and nine hits over 6 2-3 innings as the latest Cleveland starter to struggle. The Indians' rotation is 1-13 over the last 17 games, during which Cleveland is 5-12.

Carmona lost his fourth straight start since winning in Boston on Aug. 2.

Larish, in his first at-bat since being recalled from Triple-A Sacramento on Friday, followed a single by Rajai Davis with a homer to center for a 2-0 lead in the second.

Crisp opened the fifth by lining a 3-2 pitch over the wall in right for his sixth homer. The former Indians outfielder went 3 for 5, a triple shy of the cycle, and is hitting .391 (25 for 64) over his last 16 games.

Cust's homer was his 10th, but first in 42 at-bats against lefties this year.

NOTES: Oakland 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff, in a 4-for-42 slump (.095), did not start. He replaced Larish for defense in the eighth. Larish made two errors on one play in the second. Kouzmanoff has the AL's second-lowest batting average in August at .145. Oakland C Kurt Suzuki went 0 for 4 and is hitting .138, 9 for 65, in August. ...

Indians OF Michael Brantley missed his fourth game with a sprained left ankle. He took batting practice and could start Wednesday. ...

Cust has hit .330 (30 for 91) with eight homers and 26 RBIs in 27 career games against Cleveland, including 6 for 13 (.462) off Carmona.

## **AL West: Not too late for A's to make playoff push**

By Mike Castiglione, Sports Network

With eight weeks to play in the regular season, the Oakland Athletics have yet to bow out of the race in the American League West.

After taking the first two games of a four-game set with the Tampa Bay Rays, Oakland lost a pair of one-run games this weekend to settle for a series split. Still, the A's (61-62) entered Tuesday in second place in the AL West, 8 1/2 games behind first-place Texas.

Mathematically speaking, the A's are still very much in contention.

Realistically speaking, they face quite an uphill battle to erase the deficit from a team that seemingly plugged every hole it had at the trade deadline. The wild card is not a viable route to the postseason, thanks to the continued high-stakes battle for AL East supremacy between the Yankees and Rays.

Nevertheless, October baseball is not out of the question for the A's. However, it's imperative they take advantage of every opportunity presented to them to gain some ground. So far, they haven't been able to capitalize on that last part.

So far in the month of August, the Rangers have sputtered along with an 8-11 record entering Monday's series opener against the AL Central-leading Twins. Still, the 8 1/2 games separating the Rangers and A's is the same margin that separated those two at the end of July.

"Everybody's going to have their missteps, and we're going to falter but by no means do we feel like we're ready to roll over," Dallas Braden told the Oakland Tribune following Sunday's 3-2 loss to the Rays.

They'll have another chance to close the gap this week when they begin a three-game series against the last-place Cleveland Indians Tuesday night. Following that series, the A's will head to Texas for a three-game set with the Rangers. After that, they'll take on the Yankees in the Bronx.

Certainly, Oakland has an opportunity to impact its own destiny during the upcoming trip. That said, playing 10 road games in 10 days -- with a pair of stops against first-place teams -- is not a very forgiving stretch. Then again, it also helps having your All-Star closer back from injury.

Andrew Bailey, out since July 20th with a strained muscle in his rib cage, was reinstated from the 15-day disabled list on Sunday. In 38 appearances this season, he has converted 20-of-23 save opportunities while posting a 1.56 ERA.

During Bailey's absence, manager Bob Geren relied on relievers Michael Wuertz, Craig Breslow and Jerry Blevins to close out games. Bailey's return should have a domino effect on those guys, who can go back to focusing on their normal bullpen roles.

"These guys definitely picked me up while I was gone," Bailey said. "It's been a group effort. It's always been like that down there. It's not easy closing out games, but it just shows that a lot of guys on our team can do it."

### **RANGERS RELYING ON PITCHING DOWN THE STRETCH**

Despite a few notable injuries to their potent lineup throughout the season, the Texas Rangers still rank second in the AL in team batting average (.275), fourth in runs (609) and sixth in slugging average (.422). But if it weren't for their pitching, the Rangers likely wouldn't be enjoying the largest division lead in all of baseball at the moment.

It was the pitching that shined in Monday's showdown with the Twins, an intriguing matchup of division leaders. Rich Harden was activated from the disabled list prior to Monday's game, and he went on to pitch 6 2/3 innings of no-hit ball that required 111 pitches. Relievers Matt Harrison and Darren O'Day kept the no-hit bid intact until the ninth inning, when closer Neftali Feliz allowed a single to Joe Mauer. That hit spoiled what would have been the first combined no-hitter in club history. Still, the result was a 4-0 win for Texas.

"At times, when we have struggled to score runs, we have still been in games because our pitching staff has kept us there," Rangers owner and president and Nolan Ryan told the Star-Telegram. "And that's how you win games."

Few teams across the league can match the Rangers' blend of hitting and pitching. With All-Stars sprinkled up and down the lineup, it's easy to dismiss the team's pitching as secondary to its success. But with a staff 3.89 ERA that ranks fourth in the AL, the Rangers pitchers have made it clear they are a vital piece to what the team hopes to accomplish this season.

## WHO'S ON FIRST FOR ANGELS?

Angels manager Mike Scioscia has been on a season-long quest to find someone to replace injured starter Kendry Morales at first base. On Monday, he penciled Juan Rivera in at first base for the first time in his career. It also marked the tenth different player Scioscia has used at first base this season. However, he figured there would be quite a bit of shuffling when Morales went down on May 29th.

"If you're asking me if the possibility was that we could go through a bunch of first basemen, the answer is 'Sure,'" Scioscia told the OC Register. "We knew that. You could run through 15 first basemen when you lose a guy like Kendry."

To his credit, Rivera looked pretty comfortable there on Monday, making a run- saving play in the first inning while going 2-for-4 at the plate. He had started taking grounders there recently and also played some first base during Spring Training. With Scioscia shuffling the outfield earlier this month, playing time has been sparse for Rivera, who is hitting .260 with 12 homers and 44 RBI in 98 games this season.

"It's an opportunity to get some more at-bats, that's the way I see it," Rivera said through a translator. "I'm happy that they at least presented that option."

## HINDSIGHT IS 20/20 FOR SEATTLE

It didn't take long this season to find out that the Seattle Mariners, a chic contender pick entering the year, were not truly ready to take that next step.

The front office took a hack for the fences, and ultimately missed. The Cliff Lee era in Seattle was short-lived. Shelling out \$36 million to Chone Figgins hasn't paid off. Neither did giving extensive playing time to aging veterans. Given how things have played out, general manager Jack Zduriencik would no doubt like to have former No. 1 pick Brandon Morrow back instead of the bullpen help he got from Toronto in the offseason.

The Morrow and Lee deals cost the team some prospects, although at the moment it looks like the Mariners may have gotten a better return for Lee than what they originally gave up to get him. Justin Smoak will figure into the team's future plans at first base. Other prospects like Dustin Ackley, Mauricio Robles and Michael Pineda are also poised to contribute soon.

In hindsight, it's easy to argue the team could have waited another year, developed some prospects, and then made a move to challenge for a postseason bid. As it turned out, Zduriencik probably played his hand a year too early. But for a fan base that hasn't witnessed a playoff game in eight years, it's tough to fault him for trying.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Oakland A's 2010 Preliminary Instructs Roster**

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Aug 24, 2010

In the minor leagues, some of the most important player development work comes after the regular season ends. Every fall, teams host Instructional League camps for promising, but often inexperienced, prospects. In 2010, the Oakland A's will host 54 players at their annual Instructional League camp. We take a close look at those 54 players currently scheduled to attend inside...

In mid-September, the Oakland A's will begin their annual Instructional League camp. This season, the team will be hosting a significantly larger group of prospects, as the A's will field two Instructional League teams. While in past years Oakland has sent 36 prospects to Instructs, this year, the team will have more than 50 in camp.

The Instructional League, or Instructs, represents an opportunity for minor league coaching staffs to give one-on-one instruction to prospects, many of whom were drafted this season. Often times players make adjustments during Instructs that they carry with them for the rest of their careers.

Below is a list of the 54 players currently scheduled to attend the A's 2010 Instructional League. Two notable names not on the list are [Grant Green](#) and [Stephen Parker](#), both of whom have starred for the [Stockton Ports](#) this season. According to A's Director of Player Development Keith Lieppman, both Green and Parker are candidates to play in the prestigious Arizona Fall

League this October, although a final decision on that won't come until the selection process for the AFL is completed in a few weeks.

## Oakland A's Preliminary 2010 Instructional League Roster

### Pitchers (27)

Andres Avila: Mexican League acquisition had a 4.43 ERA in 20.1 innings in Mexico and has a 3.72 ERA with 10 strike-outs and five walks in 9.2 AZL innings.

Andrew Bailey: A's 35th-round pick from Concord University has a 4.38 and 11 strike-outs and 11 walks in 12.1 innings. He hasn't pitched since August 10.

Josh Bowman: Oakland's 10th round pick has struck-out 16 and has walked five in 16.2 innings for Vancouver (he also had one scoreless inning with the AZL A's). His ERA with Vancouver is 4.86.

Jake Brown: The A's 26th round pick is having a strong first season with a 27:4 K:BB ratio in 25.2 innings for Vancouver. The lefty's ERA is 2.10.

Andrew Carignan: Carignan has been on the DL since July 21 and he missed virtually all of last season with an arm injury. When he was healthy with Stockton, Carignan struck-out 39 in 29.2 innings, but he struggled with his mechanics and walked 31 and posted a 6.37 ERA.

Logan Chitwood: Chitwood, the A's 19th round pick, has split this season between the AZL and Northwest League and he has a 5.25 ERA and a 14:4 K:BB ratio in 12 innings.

**Gary Daley**: The A's recently signed Daley, a former third-round pick of the St. Louis Cardinals, to a minor league deal. The right-hander had a 6.70 ERA and a 62:53 K:BB in 88.2 innings for the Double-A Springfield Cardinals.

Omar Duran: The A's signed Duran out of the Dominican Republic in 2008 to a six-figure signing bonus. The hard-throwing lefty missed much of last season with injury, but he has been excellent while being on a strict pitch count for the AZL A's in 2010. He has struck-out 53 and hasn't allowed a homer in 37.1 innings for the A's.

Seth Frankoff: Oakland's 27th round pick began his first season with the AZL A's but moved up to Vancouver after posting a 2.28 ERA in 27.2 innings. He has done just as well for the C's, posting a 1.99 ERA in five starts. Combined, he has 58 strike-outs in 50 innings and he has given up only 34 hits.

A.J. Griffin: Griffin, the A's 13th round pick, has served as the C's closer, saving 12 games for Vancouver. He hasn't allowed a run over his last four appearances and has a 23:7 K:BB ratio in 18.1 innings.

Blake Hassebrock: The A's eighth-round pick has struggled in his first pro season, posting a 6.32 ERA in 15.2 innings for the AZL A's and Vancouver. He has struck-out 18, however, and has allowed only three runs over his last 7.1 innings.

Connor Hoehn: Hoehn is a returning participant in Instructs. He will be coming off of an outstanding season as a hard-throwing long reliever in the Kane County bullpen. His ERA is 3.33 and he has a 96:36 K:BB ratio in 81 innings. He has also held opposing batters to a .203 average.

Ben Hornbeck: After a break-out 2009 season, Hornbeck has struggled in 2010. He posted a 5.87 ERA in 38.1 innings for Double-A Midland before being demoted to High-A Stockton. With the Ports, his ERA has been mediocre (4.44), but he has struck-out 112 in 93.1 innings. Hornbeck has allowed only three earned runs in his last 23 innings, so he is finishing strong.

Ryan Hughes: The A's have been careful with Hughes, the team's 16th round pick, limiting his innings to only 10 for the AZL A's. The hard-throwing left-hander only threw 24 innings in college the past two seasons.

Jonathan Joseph: Joseph was the Cougars Opening Day starter, but he was on the DL for a stretch early in the season. He made eight starts for Vancouver and posted a 2.68 ERA before being sent back up to Kane County. Since returning to the Cougars, he has a 2.45 ERA in five starts.

Josh Lansford: The A's signed Lansford as a minor league free agent during spring training and he has spent the entire season in Kane County's bullpen. Lansford's ERA is 4.57, but his K:BB is 46:15.

Jeff Lyman: The former Braves second-round pick was a waiver claim by the A's during the season. The East Bay native has struggled with Double-A Midland, posting an 8.58 ERA and walking 15 in 28.1 innings. Lyman will be a reclamation project for Gil Patterson and his staff.

J.C. Menna: Menna was taken in the 14th round out of a New Jersey JC. He has pitched exclusively for the AZL A's, and he has struggled, posting a 5.87 ERA and a 15:10 K:BB in 23 innings.

Argenis Paez: The Venezuelan right-hander has been outstanding for the AZL A's this season, posting a 3.26 ERA and walking only 14 in 60.2 innings. His groundball out-to-flyball out ratio is an outstanding 2.76.

Max Peterson: Peterson will return to Instructs after an excellent season in the Kane County bullpen. The southpaw has a 3.30 ERA and a 63:25 K:BB ratio in 46.1 innings this season.

Ryan Quigley: Quigley will also be returning to Instructs. The left-hander has had an up-and-down season with Kane County and Vancouver. His ERA is 6.02 in 49.1 innings and opposing batters have hit .329 against him.

Robin Rosario: Rosario was a six-figure bonus baby out of the Dominican Republic in 2008 as an outfielder. He struggled at the plate, so the A's moved him to the mound to take advantage of his strong right arm. According to A's Director of Player Development Keith Lieppman, Rosario has been throwing in simulated games and has reached the mid-90s with his fastball.

Murphy Smith: Smith reached Kane County last season after being drafted in the 13th round. He began the 2010 season with High-A Stockton, but was sent back to Kane County after posting a 6.19 ERA in 48 innings. He has thrown much better with the Cougars, posting a 3.90 ERA in 85.1 innings.

Zach Thornton: The righty from Oregon was the A's 23rd round pick. The 6'6" reliever has a 2.70 ERA with 20 strike-outs in 20 innings for Vancouver.

Drew Tyson: Tyson, the A's 17th round pick, got off to a rough start with Vancouver, allowing seven hits and three walks in 4.1 innings. He was sent down to the AZL and he has thrived there, posting a 1.13 ERA in 24 innings. He has struck-out 36 and has walked only three.

Tyler Vail: The A's fifth-round pick (and first pitcher selected) has been outstanding just months removed from high school. In 28.2 innings, he has a 3.14 ERA and a 25:8 K:BB ratio. Vail has also been a groundball machine for the AZL A's.

Fabian Williamson: Acquired from Boston for Eric Patterson mid-season, Williamson has pitched exclusively for the Stockton Ports since the trade. In 10 starts, Williamson has a 4.47 ERA and a 38:29 K:BB ratio in 46.1 innings.

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## Catchers (6)

Ryan Lipkin: Lipkin was drafted for a second time by the A's this season. After signing, he was sent to Vancouver. He got off to a rough start at the plate, batting around .200 in June and July. Lipkin has turned it around in August, hitting .365 with an 873 OPS.

John Nester: The A's 39th round pick was known as a defensive specialist coming out of Clemson and that has held true in the pros. He is batting only .183 for Vancouver, but he has played well behind the plate.

Daniel Petitti: Another strong defensive catcher, Petitti was the A's 37th round pick. He is batting only .119 in 24 games for Vancouver.

Max Stassi: It has been a year of learning for Stassi, who was the A's fourth-round pick last year and a star at Instructs in 2009. Stassi has played for Kane County all season and has shown good power with 13 homers, but he has struck-out 129 times in 100 games. His defense was poor early in the season, but he has improved as the season has gone on.

Ramon Soto: The Dominican backstop has swung the bat well for the AZL A's after a brief stint with Stockton earlier this year. In 23 games, he is batting .288 with an 817 OPS.

Chris Affinito: Affinito has jumped around the A's lower-level affiliates this season, playing for Kane County, Vancouver and the AZL A's. In 57 games between the three clubs, he is batting .226 with a 743 OPS.

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## Infielders (11)

Michael Gilmartin: It has been a solid first full season for Gilmartin, who has spent the entire year with Kane County. Overall, he is batting .249 with a 712 OPS, but since the All-Star break, Gilmartin is batting .284 with an 838 OPS.

A.J. Kirby-Jones: The A's ninth-round pick was pegged as a power prospect, and he hasn't disappointed with Vancouver, hitting 12 homers in 64 games for the C's. He has walked 56 times and has an 855 OPS.

Wade Kirkland: Kirkland, the A's 11th round pick, has hit for average with the C's, batting .288 in 57 games. He hasn't hit for power yet, posting a .379 SLG and he has walked only eight times against 48 strike-outs.

Tyler Ladendorf: Ladendorf, a mid-season acquisition last season, caught the eyes of the A's coaching staff at Instructs last year when he flashed a plus glove in the outfield, as well as in the infield. Ladendorf has continued to shine with the glove this season for Stockton and has hit .272 with 20 stolen bases in 23 chances.

**Zhi-Fang Pan**: The A's first international signing out of Taiwan has put together a solid season at shortstop for the AZL A's. The 19-year-old has a .317/.379/.424 line in 39 games for the A's and has shown a solid glove.

Ryan Pineda: Pineda was the A's 28th round pick after a standout season with Cal-State Northridge and a stint in summer league baseball. The infielder was sent to Vancouver after a brief stint with the AZL A's and he has played well for the C's, batting .296 with 11 walks in 15 games.

Michael Spina: Despite a strong season with Kane County in 2009, Spina didn't attend last year's Instructional League so that he could finish off his degree at Cincinnati. He will be attending this year after a solid season for Stockton. A third-baseman in college, Spina moved to first base and is currently leading the Ports in homers with 22. He also has 83 RBIs.

Tony Thompson: The Big 12's Triple Crown winner in 2009, Thompson had an injury-plagued 2010 season with Kansas before being drafted in the sixth round by the A's. Thompson has been up-and-down with Vancouver, batting under .200 in June and August and .360 in July. He is hitting .254 with a 682 OPS overall.

Yordy Cabrera: The A's second-round pick was a deadline-day signing. The powerfully built shortstop made his pro debut on Tuesday, walking in three official at-bats.

Chad Lewis: Lewis, like Cabrera, was a deadline-day signing. The A's fourth-round pick has yet to debut, but he is expected to appear first with the AZL A's.

Wilfredo Solano: The A's 2009 seven-figure bonus baby from Venezuela has hit only .179 in the Dominican Summer League this season. However, he has walked 30 times against 30 strike-outs and he has played well defensively. According to Lieppman, the A's are challenging the 17-year-old Solano with an invitation to Instructs so that he can get "accustomed to the US and better competition." Lieppman is hoping that the level of competition will up Solano's level of play.

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## Outfielders (10)

Jeremy Barfield: The powerful outfielder was putting together a solid season for Stockton before he fell apart in July, batting only .196 with a 469 OPS. However, he has bounced back in a big way in August, batting better than .360 with four homers in 21 games. Barfield has shown an outstanding arm in right-field, with an incredible 23 outfield assists. He attended Instructs last season but was limited by knee soreness.

Michael Choice: The A's top pick this season has lived up to his top billing thus far for Vancouver. In only 16 games, he already has five homeruns and six stolen bases. He has driven-in 19 and has walked nine times. Choice will likely be looking to cut down on his strike-outs, as he has 25 in 62 at-bats.

Royce Conigli: The A's 30th round pick last season has been the AZL A's top hitter in 2010, batting .319 with an 854 OPS in 38 games. The 18-year-old Canadian won the Most Improved Award for the A's Instructional League camp last season.

Rashun Dixon: Dixon was the A's Instructional League position player MVP last year. He will be returning to Instructs for a third time this year. Dixon has been streaky this season for Kane County, batting .179 and .206 in May and July, but hitting .268, .326 and .326 in April, June and August. The athletic outfielder has a 745 OPS in 107 games in his first stint with a full-season affiliate.

Tyreace House: House actually attended the A's Instructional League in the Dominican Republic last fall to work on his on-base and base-running skills. The speedy outfielder has stolen 35 bases and has posted a .397 OBP thanks to 88 walks, but he has hit for no power, posting a .284 SLG.

Rashad Ramsey: The A's 20th round pick this season, Ramsey was praised by A's scouting director Eric Kubota for his athleticism and potential, but Kubota warned that Ramsey was extremely raw. The 18-year-old has only hit .150 with one extra-base hit in 60 at-bats for the AZL A's, but he has stolen five bases in five chances.

Myrio Richard: An ankle injury has slowed Richard lately, but he has had an overall solid season with Kane County, batting .281 with a .353 OBP. Richard has hit .306 since the All-Star break.



Aaron Shipman: Like fellow deadline-day signee Cabrera, Shipman made his pro debut with the AZL A's on Tuesday night, going 0-for-4, but stealing his first base. The A's third-round pick is a stellar athlete who has been compared to Denard Span and Curtis Granderson.

Jordan Tripp: The A's seventh-round pick from a California junior college rates highly across the board for his tools, but he is a raw prospect and it has shown in his first pro stint. In 27 games with Vancouver and the AZL A's, Tripp has hit .178 with a 534 OPS. He hit his first pro homer on Monday night for the AZL A's.

Josh Whitaker: Whitaker, the A's 25th round pick, got off to a slow start with Vancouver, but he has picked it up in August. After batting only .179 in July, he has hit .306 with a 910 OPS and three homers in 18 August contests.

## **Salt Lake Bees 7, Sacramento Rivercats 4**

The Bees fell behind early and never recovered, as the Sacramento River Cats knocked off Salt Lake 7-4 on Tuesday night. After the River Cats took a 1-0 lead in the second, an error by shortstop Luis Figueroa helped set the table for a three-run homer by former Salt Lake slugger Dallas McPherson with all of the runs unearned. A two-run triple by Tyson Auer in the bottom of the fourth pulled the Bees to within two, but that would be as close as they would get.

Ryan Vogelsong (1-3) took the loss, as he allowed six runs, three earned, on five hits with four walks and three strikeouts. Hank Conger led the Bees with three hits, while Auer added two hits and two runs batted in. Angels reliever Jason Bulger worked a 1-2-3 ninth inning, as he continues his injury rehab assignment.

## **Edell Dazzles Again In 5-1 Win**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Monday, August 23, 11:30 p.m. The RockHounds board the bus in Springdale, Arkansas, after concluding a tough, 6-game road trip with a 1-5 record.

Tuesday, August 24, 9:00 pm. Fewer than 24 hours later, the 'Hounds had made an 11-hour trip home ... taken the field ... and posted a 5-1 win over the Corpus Christi Hooks at Citibank Ballpark, leaving the rigors of the road far behind.

Ryan Edell went 8.0 strong innings, earning his ninth win of the season, and Archie Gilbert belted a bases-loaded double in the third inning as the RockHounds opened a critical, 4-game home stand with a victory.

After giving up a run in the top of the first on three, consecutive singles, Edell settled in and would not allow another run over the next 7.0 innings of work, retiring the last nine batters he faced. Released by the Cleveland Indians organization in early May, Ryan has become one of the season's top stories for the RockHounds. His 3.04 ERA ranks among the top six in the Texas League and he leads all RockHounds pitchers with his nine wins.

Archie Gilbert broke out of a 3-for-40 slump last Saturday at Northwest Arkansas, and his bases-loaded double was the defining swing of the bat in Tuesday's win. The three RBI bring Archie's total for the year to 52.

The pennant race & the wild card: Frisco defeated the San Antonio Missions, 7-6, in 13 innings at Dr Pepper Ballpark (in Frisco) last night. The RockHounds continue to the RoughRiders by two games, with San Antonio now four games out and Corpus Christi falling to seven games behind the 'Hounds.

In the wild card race (which takes effect if Frisco wins the second half), the RockHounds now lead San Antonio by four games and Corpus Christi by six.

There are 13 games remaining in the 2010 Texas League regular season.

## **Ports Defeat Nuts, 8-4**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** - The Stockton Ports (66-61) gained a game in both the second half standings and in the wild card race, enjoying sole possession of first place in both races, following an 8-4 win against the Modesto Nuts (65-62) on Tuesday at Banner Island Ballpark.

Stockton is now 4.0 games ahead of Bakersfield in the second half standings, following a Bakersfield loss on Tuesday. Visalia also lost on Tuesday, along with Modesto, breaking the three-way tie for first in the wild card with Stockton, and giving the Ports a 1.0 game lead in the wild card.

Southpaw Ben Hornbeck picked up the win, allowing two unearned runs on four hits in 5.0 innings. Mike Hart tossed two shutout innings for his first save on the year. Jeremy Barfield and Stephen Parker both homered in the game to help lead the team to victory.

The Ports took an early 1-0 lead in the first inning. Center fielder David Thomas was hit by a pitch to start the game. The next two Stockton batters flew out, but then first baseman Mike Spina singled to put two on. Catcher Yusuf Carter then singled to center field to drive home Thomas.

Modesto tied the game up in the top of the second. With one out, designated hitter Michael Zuanich doubled to left field to get things rolling. Then third baseman Ryan Peisel stepped up to the plate. He hit the ball toward third and Parker made a diving catch to grab the ball. He threw it to Spina, but the throw pulled Spina off the bag. The error allowed runners to be safe on the corners with one out. Catcher Johnny Bowden then hit a sacrifice fly to bring home Zuanich. Hornbeck struck out David Christensen to end the frame.

The Ports answered by scoring four quick runs in the second. With two out, Kent Walton doubled to left field. He came around to score as Thomas doubled to right field. Shortstop Grant Green then reached on an error by second baseman Erik Wetzel, as the ball just went through Wetzel's legs. Thomas scored on the play to make it 3-1 in favor of the Ports. Stephen Parker then slammed a triple down the right field line to score Green. Spina kept the offense rolling with an RBI single to give the Ports a 5-1 lead.

Stockton added a run in each of the third and fourth frames, on solo home runs. Barfield hit his 13th homer of the year in the third inning, and Parker collected his 19th in the fourth.

In the top of the fifth, the Nuts collected their second run of the game to make it a 7-2 ballgame. Wetzel reached first on a fielding error by Spina. He stole second as left fielder Jimmy Cesario struck out. Wetzel took third on a passed ball while Field was batting. Field walked on a wild pitch, which also allowed Wetzel to score.

Modesto added another run on an RBI single by center fielder Scott Robinson in the sixth inning, and Cesario hit a solo home run in the seventh inning to make it 7-4.

The Ports added an insurance run in the eighth inning. Barfield walked with one out, and came around to score on an RBI single by Todd Johnson.

Hart retired the Nuts in order in the ninth to preserve the 8-4 lead.

The Ports will take on the Nuts in Game 2 of the series on Wednesday at 7:05 PM PST at Banner Island Ballpark. RHP Justin Murray (10-4, 3.52) will take the hill for Stockton, while RHP Josh Sullivan (1-2, 6.91) will start for Modesto. Fans can follow the game live on KWSX 1280 AM or the live audio stream on [www.stocktonports.com](http://www.stocktonports.com).

## **Ports Defeat Nuts, 8-4**

### **Stockton Gain Ground in Playoff Chase**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** – The Stockton Ports (66-61) gained a game in both the second half standings and in the wild card race, enjoying sole possession of first place in both races, following an 8-4 win against the Modesto Nuts (65-62) on Tuesday at Banner Island Ballpark.

Stockton is now 4.0 games ahead of Bakersfield in the second half standings, following a Bakersfield loss on Tuesday. Visalia also lost on Tuesday, along with Modesto, breaking the three-way tie for first in the wild card with Stockton, and giving the Ports a 1.0 game lead in the wild card.

Southpaw Ben Hornbeck picked up the win, allowing two unearned runs on four hits in 5.0 innings. Mike Hart tossed two shutout innings for his first save on the year. Jeremy Barfield and Stephen Parker both homered in the game to help lead the team to victory.

The Ports took an early 1-0 lead in the first inning. Center fielder David Thomas was hit by a pitch to start the game. The next two Stockton batters flew out, but then first baseman Mike Spina singled to put two on. Catcher Yusuf Carter then singled to center field to drive home Thomas.

Modesto tied the game up in the top of the second. With one out, designated hitter Michael Zuanich doubled to left field to get things rolling. Then third baseman Ryan Peisel stepped up to the plate. He hit the ball toward third and Parker made a diving catch to grab the ball. He threw it to Spina, but the throw pulled Spina off the bag. The error allowed runners to be safe on the corners with one out. Catcher Johnny Bowden then hit a sacrifice fly to bring home Zuanich. Hornbeck struck out David Christensen to end the frame.

The Ports answered by scoring four quick runs in the second. With two out, Kent Walton doubled to left field. He came around to score as Thomas doubled to right field. Shortstop Grant Green then reached on an error by second baseman Erik Wetzel, as the ball just went through Wetzel's legs. Thomas scored on the play to make it 3-1 in favor of the Ports. Stephen Parker then slammed a triple down the right field line to score Green. Spina kept the offense rolling with an RBI single to give the Ports a 5-1 lead.

Stockton added a run in each of the third and fourth frames, on solo home runs. Barfield hit his 13<sup>th</sup> homer of the year in the third inning, and Parker collected his 19<sup>th</sup> in the fourth.

In the top of the fifth, the Nuts collected their second run of the game to make it a 7-2 ballgame. Wetzel reached first on a fielding error by Spina. He stole second as left fielder Jimmy Cesario struck out. Wetzel took third on a passed ball while Field was batting. Field walked on a wild pitch, which also allowed Wetzel to score.

Modesto added another run on an RBI single by center fielder Scott Robinson in the sixth inning, and Cesario hit a solo home run in the seventh inning to make it 7-4.

The Ports added an insurance run in the eighth inning. Barfield walked with one out, and came around to score on an RBI single by Todd Johnson.

Hart retired the Nuts in order in the ninth to preserve the 8-4 lead.

## **Cougars Take Finale against Bandits** **Mederos leads Kane County to much-needed victory**

**GENEVA, III.** – Chris Mederos pitched seven strong innings for the second start in a row Tuesday night, and Mike Gilmartin, Tyreece House and Conner Crumbliss each drove in a run as the Kane County Cougars cruised past the Quad Cities River Bandits, 3-1, at Elfstrom Stadium. The Cougars snapped a three-game losing streak overall and a seven-game home losing skid.

Mederos (6-5) issued his second straight quality start and fifth overall in 11 tries. He gave up a second-inning homer to Rainel Rosario, and that became the Bandits' lone run. Mederos yielded four hits, walked two and fanned seven in the win. Max Peterson pitched 2 1/3 shutout innings, and Jose Guzman recorded the final out for his 17th save.

The Cougars, like the Bandits, did all of their damage in the second inning. They scored three off Eric Fornataro (7-14) to account for the difference in the game. Anthony Aliotti and Leonardo Gil singled, and Max Stassi walked to load the bases. Gilmartin walked to tie it, 1-1, House reached on an RBI infield single to make it 2-1, and Crumbliss notched a run-scoring fielder's choice for the 3-1 game.

The Cougars (30-26, 62-63) now hit the road for seven games starting Wednesday night at 7 CT with the opener of a three-game series with the Beloit Snappers. Dan Straily (8-7, 4.64) will face Martire Garcia (1-1, 9.75). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and [www.kccougars.com](http://www.kccougars.com) with pre-game coverage starting at 6:45 p.m.

## **Dixon Dedicated To Baseball**

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Bill Seals, [OaklandClubhouse.com](http://OaklandClubhouse.com)

Aug 24, 2010

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA - Although he was selected by the Oakland A's more than two years ago in the 10th round of the 2008 amateur draft, this summer is really the first time Rashun Dixon has exclusively played baseball.

As a Mississippi high-schooler, it was football and a scholarship waiting at [Mississippi State](http://Mississippi State) that took [Rashun Dixon's](http://Rashun Dixon) focus away from baseball. Then, during what was supposed to be his first full year of professional ball in 2009, an injury took the

promising athlete off the playing field for much of the summer.

Dixon's results are finally starting to line up with his impressive set of tools.

"I feel like I've developed a lot more than I did last year," Dixon said. "I was hurt most of last year and didn't get to play many games. I've played in over a hundred this year, so I've developed most parts of the game, from defense to hitting.

"And when I played football, it's all football. You don't really think of anything else. Now I'm playing baseball and have a routine. I come out here and take batting practice, stretch and do all that stuff every day. I didn't have a chance to do that playing football. I'm more prepared for the game and feel like I more I do, the more I get accustomed to."

After putting together an 11-game hitting streak between July 29-August 8, Dixon is batting .341 during the month of August after hitting only .206 in July.

"For the most part, I didn't have a good July and finished up in the low .200s," Dixon said.

"So I set out to have a good August. I have stuck to my approach in my playing. I've been taking my walks, seeing as many pitches as I can, and working on hitting the curveball and not giving up on it."

The first in his family to choose baseball as his career path, Dixon has been joined on the professional diamond by younger brother Deshun, who was drafted by the [Tampa Bay Rays](#) this year and is currently playing in the Gulf Coast League. Rashun Dixon has also taken interest in the football playing exploits of his two older brothers.

Oldest brother [Anthony Dixon](#) is poised to contribute as an NFL rookie after being drafted by the [San Francisco 49ers](#).

"I'm excited for him," Rashun said. "Hopefully after the season's over I can go out and see him play a few times. I'm happy that he's gotten the chance. He's been a Niner fan his entire life, so he's playing for the team he loves."

An untimely injury has stalled the career of senior [Antwon Dixon](#), who will seek a medical redshirt after tearing his ACL in spring practice at Midwestern State. Although his oldest brother is currently in an NFL camp, Rashun claims that Antwon, a free safety, is "the best athlete in the family."

Growing up, all four Dixon brothers played pretty much every sport where you could keep score. Rashun was set to follow in Anthony and Antwon's footsteps by accepting a scholarship offer from an SEC school, but the A's convinced him to play baseball exclusively.

"We did everything we could do – football, baseball, basketball, you name it," Rashun said. "The older we got, our bodies started forming. My two older brothers were getting bigger and playing football. I thought about playing football and was going to before I signed.

"Baseball has given me a different type of challenge. It's a lot harder than football. Football is just a grind physically, whereas baseball adds on the mental aspect."