

## A's News Clips, Thursday, August 26, 2010

### Another ho-hum victory for Oakland A's pitcher Trevor Cahill

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Maybe A's manager Bob Geren is a tough customer to please, or maybe he's just getting spoiled watching Trevor Cahill outing after outing.

Whatever the case, Geren didn't exactly gush with praise after Cahill held the Cleveland Indians to one unearned run over seven innings in Oakland's 6-1 win Wednesday at Progressive Field.

"He battled tonight," Geren said. "He didn't really have the command that he's had lately. But he had real good movement and got a lot of ground balls. It was a good outing overall."

Such mild praise is a testament to how high Cahill (14-5) is setting the bar for himself. He won for the fifth time in six outings and lowered his ERA to 2.43, second among American League starters behind only Boston's Clay Buchholz (2.26).

He already had a 5-0 lead when he took the mound as the A's jumped all over Mitch Talbot (8-11) in the top of the first inning. Kevin Kouzmanoff's three-run double highlighted the rally.

That was more than enough support for Cahill, who agreed he didn't have his best stuff. He allowed seven hits and two walks. He had just two strikeouts -- the final two batters he faced.

Cahill, though, induced double-play balls in the first and second innings, then got Trevor Crowe on a 6-4-3 double-play grounder to end the sixth with two runners aboard.

"I definitely didn't feel too great out there," Cahill said. "But I was keeping the ball down, and I got double plays when I needed them."

Cahill was the subject of an [espn.com](http://espn.com) piece Wednesday that discussed his candidacy for the AL Cy Young Award, and an argument can be made for his inclusion.

Opponents are hitting just .201 against him.

He's also tied for sixth in the league in wins. Having not been recalled from the minor leagues until April 30, Cahill is tied with the New York Yankees' CC Sabathia for most victories in the major leagues since May 1.

"You don't want to be down five runs before swinging the bat," Indians manager Manny Acta said, "especially against a guy competing for the Cy Young."

The A's have blended the offense and pitching effectively in winning the first two games of this three-city road trip.

They remain 8½ games behind Texas in the AL West and are looking to finish off a sweep of Cleveland tonight before beginning a three-game series against the Rangers in Arlington on Friday.

Kouzmanoff's big night was especially encouraging, as he had entered the game in a 4 for 42 slump and was held out of Tuesday's lineup to clear his head.

With the bases loaded in the first, he slammed a bases-clearing double high off the center field wall, stretching the A's lead to 5-0. He added a triple to deep center in the sixth and scored the A's final run on Gabe Gross' sacrifice fly.

Oakland's bullpen closed things out in dominant fashion. Craig Breslow allowed a hit but struck out three in the eighth, and Henry Rodriguez struck out each batter he faced in the ninth.

Rodriguez brought a fastball that cracked 100 mph and a nice slider to complement it.

"The potential is so high for him," Geren said. "You have to let him keep growing, but he really has taken some leaps lately."

## **Oakland A's update: Winning is No. 1 priority when roster is expanded**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

CLEVELAND -- The A's have yet to discuss which players they'll call up starting next Wednesday, when major league rosters can expand from 25 to 40.

But if they remain in contention in the American League West, they will add players with an eye toward enhancing the big league club, rather than just promoting prospects as a reward for a good minor league season.

"We're in a division that's undecided," assistant general manager David Forst said before Wednesday's 6-1 victory over Cleveland. "That's the priority -- to get guys that can help us."

Regardless of the standings, it would be a shock if outfielders Chris Carter and Michael Taylor -- the A's top prospects -- didn't get brought up at some point in September. Forst declined to discuss specific players.

After going hitless in his one-week stint with Oakland earlier this month, Carter entered Wednesday hitting .235 with three homers and four RBIs in nine games since returning to Triple-A Sacramento.

Others from the Triple-A roster who might provide a boost:

Corner infielder Dallas McPherson, who's spent parts of four seasons in the majors, had 21 homers in 299 at-bats entering Wednesday.

Speedy utility man Corey Wimberly, who has a Sacramento-record 48 stolen bases, would be a good option off the bench.

Whether Sacramento makes the playoffs could factor in the A's decision-making, as they will sometimes delay promoting a player just so he can experience playing in postseason pressure.

The River Cats entered Wednesday two games behind Fresno for first place in the Pacific Coast League Pacific South division.

In beating the Indians on Tuesday, A's left-hander Gio Gonzalez had to fight off swarms of bugs constantly hovering around him on the mound at Progressive Field.

The pesky creatures were midges -- tiny flying insects that invade northeast Ohio during the summer. Midges became quite the story line during the 2007 AL Division Series in Cleveland, when they threw New York Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain off his game.

"You're trying to see the (catcher's) signs and you've got bugs doing kamikaze dives in your eyes, in your mouth," Gonzalez said. "One landed in my mouth and I had to turn to my side and spit it out. You can understand Joba Chamberlain's situation. I'm not a big fan of insects at all."

Highly touted pitching prospect Michael Ynoa had ligament reconstruction surgery (Tommy John) on his right elbow Tuesday, as the A's assumed he'd require. Recovery time is typically 12 to 18 months.

## **Big 1st more than enough for Trevor Cahill**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A's manager Bob Geren hoped to get Kevin Kouzmanoff's bat going by giving him a breather in the first game of the series, and the third baseman used the opportunity to get in even more work in the batting cage.

On Wednesday evening, Kouzmanoff was back in the lineup, and although he was shuffled down the order, to seventh rather than his usual fourth or fifth spot, he came up with the big blow of the game in Oakland's 6-1 victory over the Indians.

Kouzmanoff's three-run double helped to give the A's their biggest first inning of the season and that, in turn, made starter Trevor Cahill Oakland's second-youngest starter ever to record 14 wins.

"When guys pitch games like that, it's our job to give them run support," Kouzmanoff said, adding later, "It feels good, that's for sure, being able to contribute, especially with guys on base."

Cahill, who allowed one unearned run in seven innings, is 22; Vida Blue recorded 24 wins at the age of 21 in 1971, and he won the Cy Young and MVP awards that year. Cahill has firmly put himself in Cy Young contention with his sensational season, and Wednesday, he lowered his ERA to 2.43, the second-best mark in the league behind the 2.26 of Boston's Clay Buchholz. Cahill has allowed four earned runs, total, in five August starts.

Against Cleveland, he did it without his best stuff. Geren and Cahill agreed his command wasn't quite as sharp as usual, but he had good movement on his pitches and he still got plenty of grounders, including three double-play balls.

Kouzmanoff's drive off the wall in center led to an unusual sight for the A's: All three runners scored bing, bang, boom, with Jack Cust trotting in and Mark Ellis sliding in a few moments later, nearly tripping up Rajai Davis, who was right on his heels.

"We did get a little bunched," Davis said. "I didn't know the slide was going to happen, that was extremely difficult, but we used our instincts to get out of a bad situation."

Oakland scored five in the inning; Cust and Davis had provided run-scoring grounders that found holes.

Kouzmanoff, who tripled to lead off the sixth and scored on Gabe Gross' sacrifice fly, came into the evening batting .095 in his previous 14 games. His .145 average in August was the league's second-lowest mark behind teammate Kurt Suzuki's .138.

Geren has remarked how hard both men have been working to get out of their slumps, spending hours in the batting cage. Suzuki said before Wednesday's game that he's not physically tired and he's doing everything possible to try to snap out of his funk.

"I'm not reinventing the wheel. I'm just trying to keep things simple, stay short to the ball," he said. "When you go through things like this, it's tough, but the biggest thing is trying to keep a clear head."

Suzuki has hit .206 overall since signing a multiyear deal July 23, but in the first week afterward, he hit .370. "I try to forget about that and focus on playing," Suzuki said of the four-year, \$16.25 million contract. "I'm glad it's out of the way, but maybe subconsciously something like that can make you put added pressure on yourself.

"And as long as we keep winning, it's all good. I just have to make sure I do well on one side of the ball."

No fears there: Over the past 23 games, Oakland's starters have a 1.93 ERA. The A's staff as a whole has allowed no more than five runs in each of those 23 games, the longest such streak by an AL team since the 1980 Royals' 25-gamer.

"We just build on each others' outings," Cahill said. "Everyone knows what we're capable of. Every time out there, we're confident we can get a win with anyone on the mound."

**Surgery for Ynoa:** The A's announced that pitching prospect Michael Ynoa, 18, had Tommy John surgery Tuesday and it went well.

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**K-crazy:** The A's recorded their final eight outs via strikeouts, an Oakland record for consecutive Ks, according to a team PR person. Relievers Craig Breslow and Henry Rodriguez provided three each, and the hard-throwing Rodriguez "keeps getting better and better," manager Bob Geren said.

## **Drumbeat: Kouzmanoff back in; Suzuki's slump, Pennington's D**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Cleveland, 8/25/2010, 2:24PM

Not much newsy here today, though Trevor Cahill is looking to extend the A's run of superb starting pitching and Kevin Kouzmanoff is back in the lineup and a little further down the order than usual, batting seventh. He's been working tremendously hard in the batting cage, as has catcher Kurt Suzuki, who is also in a funk. Manager Bob Geren noted yesterday that in both cases, it's not for lack of effort, and I've seen both players head to the cage for extended periods.

Suzuki told me he's not tired (he's a catcher, it's August, so it's the obvious question), he's just not hitting well. Geren pointed out that Suzuki has played less this year than any other after missing a month early with an oblique strain. Suzuki said that both times he was off for a bit - when he went on the DL, and when he went home to Hawaii after his grandfather's death - he was hitting well at the time, and then cooled off after his return.

He said he's had plenty of time to turn it around, and he went through those stretches where he was hitting the ball hard right at people, but right now, he's just putting in the work before the game and trying not to think too much during the game. If there's any fatigue, he said, it might be mental, with all the thinking he has to do behind the plate.

Suzuki (.138) and Kouzmanoff (.145) have the two lowest August averages in the league, but these things go in cycles and that would indicate that both are due to bust out soon.

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

Pennington is making remarkable plays at shortstop with regularity. I asked Geren if he's a Gold Glove candidate in the future, and he said Pennington should be considered even this year. Pennington does have a large number of errors (a league-leading 19), but it's his first full season in the big leagues, so that's to be expected. Such a figure usually would derail any Gold Glove hopes, but Geren called fielding percentage an "unfair" means to judge defensive work. He also said that Pennington has one of the strongest arms in the league, period, at any position.

He won't win it this year, but as he gains experience, I could see Pennington as a possibility down the line. Of course, he plays for a team often overlooked when it comes to Gold Gloves (which are voted on by managers and coaches, by the way). Mark Ellis has deserved a Gold Glove in 2006 and he was a viable pick in other seasons, and nothing.

## **Cahill handed early lead as A's thump Tribe**

By John Barone / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Trevor Cahill said he didn't feel particularly sharp on Wednesday night.

Had he not expressed that sentiment, the Athletics probably wouldn't have noticed a difference.

Armed with a five-run lead before he took the mound, Cahill limited the Indians to an unearned run over seven innings, buoying the A's to a series-clinching 6-1 victory at Progressive Field.

The 22-year-old righty scattered seven hits and two walks across his 104-pitch outing, but he minimized the damage thanks to three ground-ball double plays that helped him earn his 14th victory.

"He didn't really have the command that he's had lately, but he had real good movement and got a lot of ground balls," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Seven innings and one run? That's pretty good."

Certainly good enough to extend a franchise record during which Oakland starters have logged 17 consecutive quality starts.

Cahill kept the streak alive pitching in a park he's not overly fond of.

"Some stadiums, you just don't feel that good," Cahill said. "I remember last year I didn't feel that good here, either. I just tried to keep the ball down today. Fortunately, I got those DPs when I needed them.

"I'll just take the win. The offense did a good job putting up five right away. That helped me out a lot."

Kevin Kouzmanoff's 2-for-4, three-RBI effort was especially helpful. The third baseman made a triumphant return to the A's lineup after not starting Tuesday's series opener.

"I just tried to take advantage of the off-day and get some reps," Kouzmanoff said. "I'm just trying to see the ball and hit it. Fortunately, I got some pitches to hit and I hit 'em."

The A's hit Indians starter Mitch Talbot around in the first. Oakland assumed a lead it wouldn't relinquish four batters into the game, as Jack Cust's one-out single to right field plated Daric Barton.

Mark Ellis followed with a six-pitch walk that loaded the bases for Rajai Davis, who delivered an RBI knock to left. Kouzmanoff capped the outburst by striking a booming three-run double off the center-field wall.

The speedy Davis nearly overran a sliding Ellis at home plate following Kouzmanoff's bases-clearing swat.

"I was kind of holding my breath there for a second," Geren said. "That would have been interesting."

Did Kouzmanoff think he had a chance at a grand slam?

"I hit it pretty good," Kouzmanoff said. "I wasn't sure. It wasn't like I hit it and said, 'That's out.' I was like, 'I got that one pretty good. It might have a chance.'"

What it did was give the A's a 5-0 advantage that proved insurmountable for manager Manny Acta's struggling Indians.

"You don't want to be five down before you come to bat," Acta said. "Especially against a guy competing for the Cy Young."

Talbot settled in following his rough first, retiring 11 consecutive batters before Ellis' two-out double in the fifth. The Indians then touched up Cahill for an unearned run in the home half of the frame. Jason Donald reached via third baseman Kouzmanoff's fielding error to begin the inning and scored on Asdrubal Cabrera's two-out single to right.

Cahill would allow nothing further, displaying poise beyond his 22 years of age. Utilizing the heavy sinker that makes him so effective, he induced twin killings in the first, second and sixth.

"He pitched awesome," Kouzmanoff said. "He kept the game going and kept us on our toes on defense. When a guy pitches a game like that, it's our job to get run support behind them. We did a good job of that tonight.

"He keeps things going. There's not a whole lot of room for distraction, because you're always concentrating on the next pitch. The game just keeps rolling. It helps us a lot as infielders."

Geren cited Wednesday's win as an example of why he believes his team prevents runs as well as any club in the Major Leagues.

"Our entire defense is outstanding. I think it's the best in the league," Geren said. "[Second baseman] Ellis and [shortstop Cliff] Pennington just keep getting better together, and obviously Kouzmanoff and Barton on the corners, I think they're the best at their position, too.

"When you have a guy like Trevor with the ground balls, and those four guys standing out there, it makes the pitching that much better."

Kouzmanoff atoned for his fifth-inning miscue in the sixth, when he blasted a leadoff triple to center and scored the A's sixth run on Gabe Gross' ensuing sacrifice fly to center.

"He looked good today," Geren said of Kouzmanoff. "He's been working hard. Hopefully, this will get him going."

Cahill didn't record a strikeout until the seventh, when Donald and Lou Marson struck out to end the frame. Craig Breslow and Henry Rodriguez fanned the side in the eighth and ninth, respectively.

That Cahill emerged victorious on a night he lacked his best stuff earned him lofty praise from Geren.

"It shows that he's a competitor and has great movement on his pitches," Geren said. "That's the nice thing. When you have that kind of movement, you might not have to hit your spots perfectly. You just have to keep the ball in the strike zone, or close to it, and you can get ground balls. If you get in trouble, you can get two outs with one pitch."

And on three occasions, Cahill did just that. It all added up to yet another solid outing from an A's starter.

On this night, it was Cahill's turn to shine.

"We're not trying to do too much," Cahill said. "Everybody knows what they're capable of. I think every time we go out there we're confident about getting a win with whoever we have on the mound, which is huge. I think the offense knows that, too. They're more confident and having good at-bats. It's all coming together."

## **Mazzaro sets sights on sweep vs. Tribe**

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com

Dont' look now, but the Athletics pitching staff has fairly quietly become one of the best in the American League.

With one of the most impressive pitching streaks in franchise history growing by the day, Oakland will conclude a three-game series against the Indians in Cleveland on Thursday.

Athletics starters have now allowed three runs or fewer and gone at least six innings in each of the last 17 games, the longest such streak in Oakland history. The pitching has certainly been stellar, but manager Bob Geren was quick to draw attention to one area that has complimented the arms nicely.

"Our defense has probably been the biggest factor in the whole thing," said Geren, whose club's .983 fielding percentage ranked sixth in the American League through Tuesday's action. "The pitchers are throwing strikes, not walking guys and making the other team put the ball in play, which is helping them go deep into games, but the defense has really helped them. It's a big part of this streak, even if it's something that might go unnoticed.

The next man up in hopes of continuing the quality start streak is Vin Mazzaro. Mazzaro hasn't allowed more than three runs in the month of August, but also hasn't picked up a win in that four start stretch.

The Tribe's Thursday starter, Justin Masterson, hasn't found nearly the same level of consistency as Oakland's starters this season. Masterson has been all over the place this season sandwiching stellar starts between head-scratching losses. Last time out against the Mariners was one of the latter. Masterson allowed five earned runs in six innings of work for his fifth loss in nine starts.

"Justin, in the middle of the game, had some problems putting guys away," Indians manager Manny Acta said. "He gave up a few two-strike hits that cost him."

Masterson will be looking to wind down the 2010 season on a high note in his last few starts and finding a consistent footing will be key to that effort. That starts Thursday against the Athletics.

### **Athletics: Suzuki looks to get on track at plate**

Despite getting such strong efforts from the Athletics' pitching staff, they're just 8-8 during their consecutive quality start streak. Not surprisingly, it's due to a lack of offensive support from key players, like catcher Kurt Suzuki who has really hit a rough patch at the plate. Suzuki entered Wednesday night's game against the Indians at Progressive Field batting .138 (9-for-65) with no home runs and seven RBIs in 19 August contests. His manager isn't sure what the problem is, but he's also not particularly worried about the backstop's bat, citing more of a mental issues than a mechanical one. "Sometimes, when guys are struggling, they're just not seeing it well," Geren said. "It's hard to put a finger on it. It can turn around quickly, too."

### **Indians: Brantley makes his way back**

The Indians were happy to get center fielder Michael Brantley back in the lineup after missing four games with a left ankle sprain on Wednesday. At this point, Brantley should be good to go, which is a positive development for the Tribe's offense. Since being recalled from Columbus earlier this month, Brantley is 16-49, in 12 games, with two homers and seven RBI. "He's flying high with confidence right now," manager Manny Acta said. "At the beginning of the year, he didn't know whether he was going to stay [on the team]. That probably played into the guy's head. Now he knows he's here to stay every day."

### **Worth noting**

The Athletics are 33-49 during night games, which is second worst in the American League. That's a distinct contrast from their 29-13 record during the day. ... Cleveland is now 2-6 against the Athletics this season. ... The Indians are just 4-14 since Aug. 5.

## **A's hurlers backed by solid defense**

By John Barone / MLB.com

CLEVELAND -- Athletics starters deserve plenty of credit for the franchise record streak they took into Wednesday night's game against the Indians at Progressive Field.

That A's hurlers had worked at least six innings and yielded three or fewer earned runs in 16 consecutive contests is no small feat. But Oakland manager Bob Geren believes another component of his team has been overlooked: its defense.

"Our defense has probably been the biggest factor in the whole thing," said Geren, whose club's .983 fielding percentage ranked sixth in the American League through Tuesday's action. "The pitchers are throwing strikes, not walking guys and making the other team put the ball in play, which is helping them go deep into games, but the defense has really helped them. It's a big part of this streak, even if it's something that might go unnoticed.

"The pitchers are who everyone is talking about, but the big factor is our defense, [shortstop Cliff] Pennington especially."

Geren thinks a Gold Glove Award could be in Pennington's future, despite the 26-year-old's 19 errors and .966 fielding percentage through 118 games this season.

"He's got one of the strongest arms I've ever seen at that position -- any position, really," Geren said. "You can't look at fielding percentage as a defensive measure of a shortstop, or any position, because it's one of the most unfair stats there are. You can't tell anything close to the whole story."

### **A's skipper Geren checks up on Suzuki**

CLEVELAND -- Athletics manager Bob Geren can't quite explain the offensive funk that has dogged catcher Kurt Suzuki this month. But not for a lack of inquiry.

"I asked him how he's seeing the ball," Geren said. "He said he's seeing it OK. His timing's just a touch off, I guess."

Suzuki entered Wednesday night's game against the Indians at Progressive Field batting .138 (9-for-65) with no home runs and seven RBIs in 19 August contests.

"Sometimes, when guys are struggling, they're just not seeing it well," Geren said. "It's hard to put a finger on it. It can turn around quickly, too."

Geren ruled out fatigue as a potential reason for the woes of the 26-year-old Suzuki, who paces the A's with 12 homers in 2010.

"He's feeling strong," Geren said. "This is just a couple-week stretch where he's not getting a lot of hits. I don't think it's physical or anything like that."

### **Worth noting**

Athletics closer Andrew Bailey, who returned to the active roster Sunday following a stint on the 15-day disabled list with a muscle strain in his right rib cage, will be eased back into pitching on consecutive days. Said Oakland manager Bob Geren: "He didn't hurt his arm, so in that respect, I'd say I would be able to use him on back-to-back days, because he's not coming off an elbow or shoulder injury. On the other hand, we have to monitor his arm, too. It's a wait-and-see kind of thing." ... Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff returned to the A's starting lineup for Wednesday night's game against the Indians at Progressive Field. He did not start Tuesday's series opener but entered in the eighth inning as a defensive replacement. ... Through Tuesday's action, six of Oakland's past eight contests had been decided by one run. ... The A's began Wednesday having accumulated a Major League-high 46 stolen bases since the All-Star break.

## A's win, Cahill improves to 14-5

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLEVELAND — Trevor Cahill didn't need his best stuff to put together another strong start for Oakland's overwhelming pitching staff.

Cahill (14-5) pitched seven strong innings to beat Cleveland 6-1 on Wednesday night, handing the Indians their fifth straight loss.

The right-hander was helped by three double plays as he improved to 5-1 with a 0.77 ERA in six starts since July 28.

"Cahill is one of the top guys right now," said Indians manager Manny Acta, who was very impressed by the 22-year-old right-hander. "He kept us hitting the ball on the ground the whole night."

Kevin Kouzmanoff lined a three-run double to cap Oakland's five-run first inning off Mitch Talbot (8-11).

"You don't want to be five down before you swing the bat, especially facing a guy who's competing for the Cy Young," Acta said. "That put us in a big hole."

Kouzmanoff broke a 4 for 42 slump (.095) with the shot off the center-field wall.

"I just wanted to see the ball and hit it," said Kouzmanoff, who hit a grand slam on the first pitch thrown to him when he debuted for the Indians in 2005. "I knew I hit it good, but it wasn't one of those where you know it's just gone."

Jack Cust gave the Athletics a 1-0 lead with an RBI single grounded between first and second. After Mark Ellis walked to load the bases, Rajai Davis grounded a single between third and short to make it 2-0.

The speedy Davis nearly caught Ellis rounding the bases on Kouzmanoff's drive. When Ellis slid in ahead of the late throw, Davis had to tiptoe to the plate to avoid steamrolling his teammate.

"I didn't see that and I'm glad I didn't," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "I was watching the throw."

Cleveland's first batter reached safely in each of the first six innings, but the Indians lost for the 13th time in 16 games. They have totaled four runs and hit only .168 (27 for 161) during their five-game skid.

The Indians struck out eight times — each of their last eight outs. Cahill fanned the last two men he faced, Craig Breslow got three strikeouts and allowed one hit in the eighth and Henry Rodriguez struck out the side in the ninth on 10 pitches — twice hitting 100 mph and six times registering 101 on the radar gun.

"It's really fun to watch him get better each time out," Cahill said of the hard-throwing rookie right-hander. "He's throwing 100-plus and painting his curve or slider on the corners."

Cahill gave up seven hits as Oakland had a starter work at least six innings for the 23rd consecutive game, two short of the club record set in 1980. The Athletics' staff has given up five or fewer runs in all those games, longest in the AL since Kansas City's 25-game streak in 1980.

"Everybody here knows what we are capable of doing and it is all kind of coming together," Cahill said.

Oakland starters have not allowed more than three runs in 17 consecutive games, longest by the franchise since the 1927 Philadelphia Athletics did it 18 times in a row.

The Indians' unearned run in the fifth ruined the Athletics' bid for a fifth shutout in eight games this year against Cleveland, which has been outscored 43-13 in going 2-6 against Oakland. It was Cleveland's first run in 22 innings, since the first inning Sunday in Detroit.

Jason Donald reached when his grounder went through Kouzmanoff's legs at third. Two outs later, Asdrubal Cabrera singled home Donald from second base, but was retired in a rundown that was scored 9-2-6-3-5.

Kouzmanoff tripled to lead off the sixth and scored on a sacrifice fly by Gabe Gross to make it 6-1.



Talbot gave up six hits and six runs over six innings to drop to 0-5 in eight starts since his last victory, June 27 over Cincinnati in an interleague game. The right-hander, in his third start since spending the first half of August on the disabled list with a strained back, walked three and struck out two.

NOTES: Oakland C Kurt Suzuki went 0 for 4, has an 0 for 15 streak and is hitting .130, 9 for 69, in August. ... Indians OF Michael Brantley went 1 for 4 in his first game after missing four games with a sprained left ankle. ... Cust went 2 for 4 and has hit .337 (32 for 95) with eight homers and 27 RBIs in 28 career games against Cleveland, including 8 for 15 (.533) in five games this year. ... OF Shin-Soo Choo had three of Cleveland's eight hits and is hitting .455, 10 for 22 against the Athletics this season. ...

Oakland 1B Daric Barton walked twice and leads the AL with 80.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Sacramento wins Game 1 of 99 Showdown**

By Abbie Ellis / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento held on to top Fresno 6-5 on Wednesday night at Raley Field, taking the first game of the season's most anticipated series and pulling the River Cats within 1.0 game of the PCL South division lead.

It was a blazing 101 degrees at first pitch, but Sacramento starter Travis Banwart threw the real heat. Banwart struck out five of the first six batters he faced and didn't let Fresno reach base until the third inning. Banwart earned the win, throwing 6.0 innings and allowing three hits and three runs while striking out seven.

Fresno starter Eric Hacker (16-6) was no match for Sacramento's star-studded lineup. The River Cats snapped Hacker's eight-game win streak. Hacker walked in Eric Sogard in the second inning to give Sacramento the early lead. Chris Carter hit home run No. 31 to kick off the third inning and increase the lead 3-0. Anthony Recker started the fourth inning with his sixth home run for a 5-1 lead.

"Winning Game 1 against Fresno was even better than my 31st home run," Carter said after the game. The first baseman is three home runs shy of tying the River Cats single-season home run record of 34, set in 2003 by Graham Koonce.

Brandon Belt put the Grizzlies on the scoreboard in the fourth inning with a solo home run to center field. A two-run Jesus Guzman homer in the sixth inning made the score 5-3 River Cats.

Eric Sogard continued his hot bat and singled to score Dallas McPherson in the seventh inning, making it 6-3.

The River Cats narrowly escaped the eighth inning with their lead intact. Eugenio Velez homered and made it 6-4. After two walks, reliever Justin James came in for Michael Benacka with one out. Belt made it home on a Brett Pill single, and suddenly Fresno was within one run with runners on second and third. After intentionally walking a batter, James got Ben Copeland to pop out to third. Then, James leapt to snag a one-hopper up the middle and threw to first for the inning's final out. James pitched a scoreless ninth for his fourth save.

"Now it becomes a four-game series and we have to go on and win at least three more," River Cats manager Tony DeFrancesco said after the game.

Sacramento and Fresno tangle again Thursday night at 7:05 p.m.

### **The 'Wright' Time For A Big Inning**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

After a rare poor performance in his start on the last road trip, Matt Wright returned to form, tossing 6.0 outstanding innings. The right-hander would earn his sixth win, and lower his ERA back under three in the process (2.98), as the RockHounds erupted for nine runs in the fourth inning and went on to defeat the Coprus Christi Hooks in front of more than five thousand (5,078) at Citibank Ballpark.

Through three, Wright and fellow veteran Bubbie Buzachero were matched up in a 1-0 game, each backed by outstanding defense. Alex Valdez robbed Alex Cartwright of a hit with a diving stop and strong throw in the top of the first ... and Cartwright, in turn, took a hit away from Jemile Weeks with a diving stop and tremendous throw in the third.

Archie Gilbert led off the RockHounds' fourth with a shot down the right field line, with Hooks first baseman Koby Clemens deflecting the ball on another outstanding defensive effort, limiting Archie to a single. Gilbert would score the inning's first run and later bat again in the inning, this time sending a triple to left, driving in the eighth run of the inning, then scoring the ninth (and final) run on Shane Peterson's sacrifice fly.

In the 9-run fourth, eight RockHounds scored (Gilbert twice) and every batter in the line-up either scored a run, drove in a run, or both. Josh Horton's 2-run double was the only multiple-RBI swing of the bat.

The RockHounds made it two-in-a-row midway through a short, 4-game home stand and series with Corpus Christi.

#### **The pennant race & the wild card:**

At Frisco ... the RoughRiders and San Antonio Missions went extra innings for the second straight night, with the RoughRiders again defeating the Missions, this time by the score of 4-3 (11 innings). Andy Jenkins singled in Engle Beltre with the game-winning run.

The win keeps the RoughRiders within two games of the RockHounds in the second half pennant race , and pushes the RockHounds five games ahead of the Missions in both the second half and wild card races. The wild card takes effect only if Frisco wins the second half.

Corpus Christi has now fallen to eight games out in the second half and seven games back in the wild card, pushing the Hooks to the brink of elimination. Corpus Christi, however, still has two games remaining with the RockHounds ... hosts Frisco for four ... and has a pair of 3-game series (home-and-home) against San Antonio.

There are 12 games remaining in the 2010 Texas League regular season.

## **Nuts Overcome Ports with Four Run Frame**

### **Stockton falls to Modesto, 5-3**

**STOCKTON, Calif.** – The Stockton Ports (66-62) lost the ground they had gained on Tuesday with a tough 5-3 loss to the Modesto Nuts (66-62) on Wednesday at Banner Island Ballpark.

Stockton's loss, combined with wins by Visalia and Bakersfield gives the Ports a three-way tie for first in the Wild Card, and just a 3.0 game lead in the Second Half standings.

Justin Murray allowed one run on seven hits in 6.0 frames, and Scott Hodsdon picked up the loss for the Ports. Hodsdon allowed four runs (two earned) on four straight hits in the seventh inning. Trey Barham tossed two scoreless frames, and A.J. Huttenlocker tossed a shutout ninth for the Ports. Grant Green and Kent Walton led the Ports with two hits apiece.

After Murray retired the side in order to start the game, the Ports scored their first run in their half of the first.

Center fielder David Thomas was hit by a pitch from Modesto starter Josh Sullivan to leadoff the game. It's the fourth time Thomas has been hit by a pitch in three games. Green stepped up to the plate and doubled to center field. Third baseman Stephen Parker then hit a sacrifice fly to left field to score Thomas and advance Green to third. But Green stayed on third as catcher Yusuf Carter grounded into a double play later in the inning.

The Nuts threatened in the second, loading the bases, but left fielder Scott Robinson grounded out to strand all three runners. The Nuts scored their first run in the top of the third to tie the game. Designated hitter Erik Wetzel doubled to left field to start the inning. Shortstop Thomas Field hit a sacrifice fly to bring him home.

Modesto broke the game open by scoring four runs in the seventh inning. Hodsdon started the inning for Stockton, and gave up a leadoff triple to Robinson. He then allowed an RBI single to Wetzell, before issuing back-to-back singles to Tim Wheeler and Field. The Ports then called on Barham to face Ben Paulsen. Paulsen flew out, and then Barham struck out Ryan Peisel. With two out and two on, right fielder Jimmy Cesario came up to bat. He then reached on a fielding error by Tyler Ladendorf, his second error on the night. Both Wheeler and Field came around to score on the play. Second baseman Joe Sanders lined out to Barham, who made a snappy catch to end the inning.

The Ports came back to within two runs in the eighth inning. Left fielder Kent Walton singled to lead off the inning. Green slammed a two-run shot over the left field bullpens to make it a 5-3 game. It was his 17<sup>th</sup> home run of the year. But the Ports would be retired in order from there to end the game.

Huttenlocker tossed the ninth for the Ports. After getting Wheeler to fly out, he gave up a single to Field. Field took second on a balk call while Paulsen was batting. Ports manager Steve Scarsons went out to argue the call, and was ejected by base umpire Jacob Danielson. Paulsen flew out and Peisel struck out swinging to end the inning.

The Ports and Nuts will play the rubber match of the three-game series on Thursday at 7:05 PM at Banner Island Ballpark. LHP Ian Kroll (1-0, 5.40) will start for Stockton, while RHP Parker Frazier (1-2, 4.09) will take the mound for Modesto. Fans can follow the game live on KWSX 1280 AM or on [stocktonports.com](http://stocktonports.com).

## **Richard's HR Lifts Cougars** **Kane County rallies to stun Beloit**

**BELOIT, Wisc.** – With the Kane County Cougars trailing by a run and down to their final out Wednesday night in Beloit, Myrio Richard belted a go-ahead two-run homer to propel the Cougars to a 4-3 victory over the Snappers at Pohlman Field. The win kept the Cougars 1.5 games behind Clinton for the top playoff spot in the Western Division and put them 2.0 games ahead of Beloit for the Wild Card spot with 12 games remaining.

The Cougars trailed, 3-0, after seven innings and had stranded seven runners on base to that point. They managed two in the eighth after there were two outs and none on base. Rashun Dixon took third on a Leonardo Gil single and scored on an error, and Gil scampered home on a wild pitch. Then in the ninth, Mike Gilmartin reached on an error with one out, and Richard launched a long two-run shot off Eliecer Cardenas (5-1) over the wall in the left-field corner for a 4-3 score. The homer was Richard's first since April 13.

Rob Gilliam (6-6) had tossed two scoreless relief innings and ended up with the win, and Josh Lansford posted his first career save with a scoreless ninth. Starter Dan Straily gave up two runs on four hits in five innings in a no-decision, and Kenny Smalley ceded a run in the sixth on a homer by Danny Rams to account for the 3-0 deficit.

The Cougars (31-26, 63-63) and Snappers (28-27, 65-59) continue the three-game series Thursday night at 7 CT. Jose Macias (0-1, 4.50) will face Tom Stuijbergen (6-2, 2.33). 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.