

A's News Clips, Sunday, August 29, 2010

Dallas Braden, Oakland A's cool off first-place Texas Rangers

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Dallas Braden doesn't have the attention-grabbing stuff of some of his teammates in the A's starting rotation.

But his credentials made him the ideal candidate to take the ball for the A's on Saturday.

One night after starter Brett Anderson lasted just two innings in a costly defeat, Braden threw his fifth complete game of the season in a 5-0 blanking of the Texas Rangers.

It was Braden's second major league shutout -- his other came on Mother's Day when he threw the 19th perfect game in big league history. (Philadelphia's Roy Halladay has since thrown No. 20.)

This one didn't have the personal significance of that May 9 gem, but with the hourglass emptying on the A's chances of catching Texas in the American League West, Braden (9-9) knew what the victory meant for his team.

The A's pulled back to within 8½ games of the first-place Rangers with the series finale this afternoon.

"It feels good to kind of stymie an offense like that," Braden said. "In reality, it's a game we needed to win. And that's what I take away from it."

Braden allowed just four hits and didn't walk a batter, dealing the Rangers their first shutout at home since Sept. 18. It was just the 12th time that Texas has been blanked at Rangers Ballpark, a hitter's paradise that opened in 1994.

"What can you say?" A's manager Bob Geren said. "A shutout in the heat, in Arlington, against that team "..."

Braden said he couldn't really tell how his stuff compared with his perfect game against Tampa Bay.

A's catcher Landon Powell, who was behind the plate that day and caught Braden on Saturday, said it's tough to differentiate between any of Braden's starts.

"He's very consistent," Powell said. "Obviously he (throws) the fastball on both sides of the plate. He hits the corners with the best of them. And he has that nice changeup."

If it was a rebound game for the A's after Friday's 7-3 defeat, it's been a rebound series for Kurt Suzuki.

With Powell giving him a break from catching duties, Suzuki served as DH and went 4-for-5 with two RBIs. Suzuki came into the series mired in an 0-for-22 slump, and his .143 average in August entering Saturday was the lowest in the AL. But he's 6 for 9 over the past two games.

"I had a really good feeling about his swing in Cleveland (during the previous series)," Geren said. "He's come in this series and hit every ball well."

The A's chased Texas starter Rich Harden (5-5) in the fifth inning. The former Athletic threw 62/3 no-hit innings against Minnesota in his last start, but he surrendered eight hits and four runs in 41/3 innings Saturday.

Kevin Kouzmanoff got the A's rolling with an RBI single in the first. Daric Barton connected for his second homer in two days, a two-run shot in the third that made it 3-0.

Barton extended his hitting streak to 11 games, during which he's batting .410 (16 for 39). He also scored four of the A's five runs.

The first-pitch temperature was 92 degrees, but Braden -- who lowered his ERA to 3.28 -- showed no sign of wilting, tossing a season-high 120 pitches.

There was bullpen activity in the late innings, but Braden never gave Geren a reason to make a switch.

Braden was asked how badly he wanted to finish the game.

"About as bad as you wanted to wake up today," he replied.

A's update: Top prospect Chris Carter goes on Triple-A Sacramento's disabled list

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

ARLINGTON, Texas -- Outfielder Chris Carter was placed on Triple-A Sacramento's 15-day disabled list Saturday with a sprained left thumb and sprained right ankle, casting doubt on whether the A's top prospect will get a September call-up to the major leagues.

Carter hurt his thumb while diving for a ball in left field Friday against Fresno. Assistant general manager David Forst said X-rays showed no fracture.

In the same game, Carter hurt his ankle playing defense while trying to avoid a collision with another player, according to A's director of player development Keith Lieppman.

There's no timetable for his return.

Major league rosters can expand to 40 starting Wednesday, and Carter, 23, seemed like an obvious candidate to join the A's at some point.

He received his first big league call-up Aug. 9 but struggled and was sent back to Sacramento after just a week. He started six games in left field and went 0 for 19 with nine strikeouts.

Carter has played first base for most of his professional career, but the A's switched him to left field recently as a trial run for the rest of the season.

He's hitting .258 with 31 homers and 94 RBIs in 125 games for Sacramento.

If Carter doesn't get promoted, attention would shift to whether another outfielder, Michael Taylor, would join the A's sometime next month. Taylor, 24, is ranked as the team's No. 2 prospect by Baseball America.

Left-hander Brett Anderson said his hyperextended right knee was feeling better a day after he left Friday's outing after just two innings. There was little swelling and no bruising, leaving Anderson and manager Bob Geren optimistic Anderson will be ready for Wednesday's start against the New York Yankees. "It's still tender to the touch but nothing major," Anderson said. "(Today) will be a big test when I play catch."

The healthy return of closer Andrew Bailey and the emergence of hard-throwing Henry Rodriguez gives Geren a surplus of right-handed relief options. That's cut into the work of Brad Ziegler. The submariner appeared in games Thursday and Friday but has pitched in just six of the A's past 26 games overall. "The bottom line is, our starting pitching has been so good lately, there's not a lot of innings for anybody," Ziegler said.

Chin Music: Chris Carter goes on Triple-A DL with sprained left thumb

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/28/2010 5:33PM

Quick update folks ... First baseman/outfielder Chris Carter, the A's top prospect, was placed on Triple-A Sacramento's 15-day disabled list today with a sprained left thumb. He suffered the injury while diving for a ball in left field Friday against Fresno. A's assistant GM David Forst said X-rays showed no fracture, but there's no timetable for his return. It seems this would greatly hinder Carter's chances of getting a September call-up to Oakland. Major league rosters can expand to 40 on Wednesday.

More in tomorrow's paper ...

Carl Steward In Our Backyard: Reliving Pacific Coast League glory

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

The glory days of the classic pre-1958 Pacific Coast League are becoming more distant by the day. So its living history becomes more precious with each passing year.

Estimates indicate that about only 125 players who logged time in the old PCL are still alive. The old PCL was the beacon of West Coast baseball and very close in caliber of play to the American and National leagues before the Dodgers and Giants moved West from New York in '58. The moves radically changed the league's competitive dynamic.

Fortunately, enough people still care about the PCL's illustrious tradition to preserve and celebrate it for those few players who still survive, as well as those who never saw them play. In San Leandro on Saturday, 19 former players -- most of them in their 80s, a few in their 90s -- turned out for the 16th annual Northern California Dick Dobbins PCL Player Reunion. The event was jointly coordinated and conducted by the PCL Historical Society and the Lefty O'Doul/Bay Area chapter of the Society for American Baseball Research (SABR).

Needless to say, the stories were flying fast and furiously. Remembrances of the 1940s and '50s were ushered up as though they happened yesterday.

"It was a great time, and I'm proud to have been part of that era," native San Franciscan Charlie Silvera said. "It was right after the war, and television hadn't taken its grip on people. People were trying to get themselves established here on the West Coast, and baseball was the thing. It was their life, and all the teams drew well. It was real good baseball, too."

Silvera, now 85 and about to celebrate his 70th year in the game as a player and scout, played two years as a catcher for the PCL's Portland club from 1947-48 and caught the fancy of the Oakland Oaks manager, Casey Stengel.

In 1949, Stengel was hired to manage the New York Yankees, and Silvera joined him that season after making his major league debut in September 1948.

Silvera played in just 227 games in the majors over parts of 10 seasons -- he was Yogi Berra's backup -- but won six World Series rings and was one of eight players who were on the Yankees' five consecutive world champions from 1949-53.

Most of the men on hand for Saturday's reunion weren't as fortunate.

Rugger Ardizoia, 90, is one of the few surviving men who played for the PCL's Mission Reds, second bananas to the Seals in San Francisco from 1926 to 1937. Ardizoia played with that club in its final year before moving to Salt Lake City when he was just 17 years old. He played in one major league game, in 1947, for the Yankees, pitching two innings.

Ardizoia, a native Italian who has lived in same Millbrae house he bought for \$5,000 in 1940, more fondly remembered the 1946 season. He won 15 games for a Stengel-managed Oakland team that won 111 games only to lose the PCL title to Lefty O'Doul's Seals, who won 115.

Ardizoia, who played much of his PCL career with the celebrity-favorite Hollywood Stars, also offered a little disdain for modern-day pitchers.

"This guy (Tim) Lincecum has two Cy Young Awards, and I think he has something like five complete games (seven, actually) in his career," he said. "I pitched 118 complete games. It was nothing to throw 160-180 pitches, and you pitched every fourth day. Don't get me started."

Joe Kirrene, a native San Franciscan who now lives in San Ramon, played 10 games in the big leagues as an outfielder with the Chicago White Sox. But perhaps his most treasured memory was being the player of the month to begin his first PCL season in 1955.

"I opened the season hotter than a firecracker, 15 for 30," he said. "They gave a prize for rookie of the month, and I won a TV set. And I think Joan Crawford, the movie star, was the one who donated the prize."

Others former PCL players who attended the ceremony included Oakland native Jim Moran, Tony Munoz and Fenton Mole of San Leandro, Elmer Orella of Castro Valley, Lil Arnerich of Alameda and Lloyd Hittle of Lodi, who pitched for the Oaks in the late '40s and early '50s.

The common lament among all of them was the dwindling numbers of their brethren.

"I come here every year, and I have a great time," Silvera said. "The down side is there are fewer people every year. I think there are six who were here last year who didn't make it, either because they've passed on or they were too ill to make it. It's a shame, because you look forward to seeing them."

Indeed, baseball historians are there to keep the legacy of the PCL alive for decades to come. But the living history can't be replaced. It needs to be cherished for the short time we still have it.

San Jose officials tout their plan to woo A's, but hurdles remain

Cash-strapped redevelopment agency may have to sell off land under Fairmont Hotel garage, other parcels

By Tracy Seipel tseipel@mercurynews.com

When San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed talks about the selling points of his city's efforts to woo the Oakland A's, he gets right to the point: "We have the best site, we're ahead of the others and this is the place that makes the most sense."

There's an economic analysis that touts the \$130 million annual impact of a proposed 32,000 seat ballpark near Diridon Station. There's San Jose's place atop the list of highest median household incomes among major US metro areas. There's the South Bay's strong corporate base: 14 Fortune 500 companies are located in Silicon Valley, compared to five listed in the A's current territory.

On top of all that, Reed notes, the city has acquired just over half the 14 acres needed for a downtown ballpark; an environmental review of the site is done; and the city council is officially on board with the project.

Perhaps most significant, the A's will pay to build and run the \$461 million ballpark with help from investors and sponsors, said team owner Lew Wolff. Cisco Systems has asked for naming rights to the field, though a company spokesman won't speculate on how much the firm might pay.

Still, such pluses aside, potentially significant hurdles loom.

Even after spending \$24.4 million, the city's redevelopment agency has much work ahead to complete the site. Negotiations with the two hold-out owners -- including AT&T, which says its land is not for sale -- come as the agency's budget has been squeezed drastically after local property assessments plunged.

While that means the land should be less expensive, the cash-strapped agency will likely be forced to sell more of its own assets to complete any deal. Reed and redevelopment chief Harry Mavrogenes said they're willing to sell pieces of the agency's \$150 million real estate portfolio, including land under the Fairmont Hotel garage, if necessary.

Critics of the project, including a grassroots group backed by the San Francisco Giants, cite problems with the stadium's environmental report. In analyzing the traffic impact on nearby freeways and intersections, the city mainly focused on the hour between 5 and 6 p.m. But the dissenters contend that's insufficient since games will most likely start at 7 p.m. And even those traffic studies done by the city between 6 and 7 p.m. were incomplete, they say.

If a city-sponsored ballpark measure goes to the ballot, such issues could ultimately spark lawsuits by opponents, who also include residents concerned about the ballpark's impacts on their neighborhoods. Any litigation could slow down the project, which requires approval from city voters before the A's can use public land.

City officials say the traffic studies can always be re-done. And Reed, an environmental attorney familiar with such reports, doesn't believe the concerns will jeopardize the project.

"The fact that there will be traffic -- what a surprise," he said dryly. "We hope there will be traffic. We are looking forward to the day when something is going on at HP Pavilion and baseball and lots of things are happening."

But the biggest obstacle to San Jose's proposal is that it pulls the city into a battle over Major League Baseball's boundaries.

If Wolff stays in Oakland, he draws no ire from the cross-bay Giants, who were granted baseball's territorial rights to Santa Clara County in 1990. Those rights can only be rescinded by a vote of three-quarters of baseball's 30 team owners.

Nor would the Giants object to the latest effort by Fremont, part of the A's current territory. Having failed in its first two overtures to Wolff, the city has submitted its third and perhaps best offer to a panel considering the territorial rights issue for the league. It envisions using more than 100 acres on part of the former NUMMI auto factory property.

However, there's no plan yet as to whether the city or team would buy the NUMMI parcel, which is being eyed by private developers. "We didn't even call it a proposal. It was just really a conceptual approach to developing a stadium," said Fred Diaz, Fremont's city manager.

The baseball panel, appointed 17 months ago by Commissioner Bud Selig to study the A's options, has yet to reach a conclusion, and it's unknown when the group will issue its recommendation.

That hasn't stopped San Jose.

"I can only guess what is important to MLB," said Mayor Reed. "Based on what Lew has told me, he spent millions of dollars in Fremont and he struck out. It's over. He spent years and lots of money in Oakland, and they struck out. It's over. San Jose is the best place for the A's."

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ECONOMIC IMPACT OF PROPOSED BALLPARK

An economic analysis done last year predicts a 32,000-seat stadium near San Jose's Diridon Station would lead to \$130 million in annual spending throughout the local economy and \$2.9 billion over a 30-year-period. The A's -- not taxpayers -- would be responsible for financing and building the stadium, estimated to cost \$461 million. If voters approve, the city would lease the land to the team.

Source: San Jose Redevelopment Agency

Rotation back at it: Dallas Braden pitches shutout

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Dallas Braden made Josh Hamilton look normal. He made the first-place Rangers look ordinary. He made a sold-out crowd of 47,411 look bored.

In his most dominant start since his perfect game on Mother's Day, Braden tossed a four-hitter in a 5-0 victory over the Rangers, who were shut out at home for the first time this season. The A's evened the series at a win apiece, and today's matinee will decide whether they head to New York 7 1/2 games behind Texas in the American League West or 9 1/2.

Braden has five complete games and is the first A's pitcher since Tim Hudson in 2004 with two shutouts. He did it by striking out just one batter, Michael Young in the sixth, walking nobody and registering 15 of his 27 outs on grounders.

The best he felt since the perfect?

"To be honest, I couldn't tell you because there was no radar gun," Braden said. "I like the radar gun because I do a lot of adding and subtracting to see where I'm pitching at on average. It might've told me how good I felt. But it was nothing different for me than it was that day in May."

Just one other 2010 big-league game featured a shutout with fewer than two strikeouts, and that gem belonged to Pittsburgh's Paul Maholm. The last American Leaguer to get it done was Cleveland's Paul Byrd in 2007.

One day after the bullpen worked six innings, Braden gave the relievers a break. He surrendered a double to Jorge Cantu and an infield single to Hamilton, facing two men over the minimum until Alex Cora's two-out single in the eighth.

Closer Andrew Bailey warmed up in the ninth, but the Rangers didn't rally to create a save opportunity. Elvin Andrus singled to open the inning, but second baseman Mark Ellis robbed Michael Young, and Braden easily retired Hamilton and Vladimir Guerrero to end it.

It was no secret Braden wanted the complete game.

"Real bad," he said. "As bad as you want to wake up every morning."

Former A's pitcher Rich Harden threw 6 2/3 hitless innings in his previous start, but the A's got eight hits and four runs off him in 4 1/3 . No. 2 hitter Daric Barton homered and scored a career-high four runs, and No. 3 hitter Kurt Suzuki had four hits.

Braden said he wasn't thinking about catching the Rangers in the standings.

"Let's not be ignorant and naive. This series is huge for us," he said. "But you can't put that kind of pressure on yourself. If I'm worried about standings, I'm not worried about a 1-1 pitch or the runner on second or the guy at the plate."

Braden's next start is in New York, his first start against the Yankees since the April 22 get-off-my-mound incident with Alex Rodriguez, who'll miss the game (strained left calf) because he's not eligible to come off the disabled list until Sept. 5.

Asked about possible hostility in the Bronx, Braden said, "It was a non-factor 10 minutes afterward."

Low-hitter

Dallas Braden hasn't allowed more than five hits in any of his past five starts.

Date	IP	H	R	ER	K	BB
Saturday 9	4	0	0	1	0	
Aug. 22	6	4	3	3	3	2
Aug. 17	7	3	2	1	5	2
Aug. 11	9	4	1	1	6	2
Aug. 6	6	5	4	4	1	2

A's top hitting prospect, Chris Carter, on the DL

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Chris Carter isn't finishing his season as he and the A's had anticipated.

The club's top hitting prospect was returned to Triple-A Sacramento after going 0-for-19 with nine strikeouts in his first big-league experience, then Carter was placed on the disabled list with a sprained left thumb. The injury came on a dive in the outfield at Sacramento on Friday. He also hurt his ankle on another play.

X-rays showed no thumb fracture, according to assistant general manager **David Forst**, who said there's no timetable for a return but it's questionable if Carter will play for the A's again this season.

"We'll see how he heals up," manager **Bob Geren** said. "He's on the DL now, so we'll see when he's ready to play."

Anderson optimistic: One day after hyperextending his right knee and lasting just two innings, **Brett Anderson** said the chances are good he'll start Wednesday in New York, as scheduled. He felt stiffness but had no significant swelling and plans to throw long toss today and off a mound Monday.

"I think I should be fine," Anderson said.

Bonser appears: Boof Bonser's four innings Friday marked the longest relief appearance of his career. Sixty of Bonser's first 61 major-league appearances, for Minnesota, were starts before he moved to the bullpen in 2008. He was summoned from Sacramento on July 31 to be Oakland's long reliever, not an active role when the rotation compiles lots of innings.

Friday's appearance was his first in 10 games.

In one of the Giants' all-time most-criticized trades, Bonser (a first-round draft pick in 2000), **Joe Nathan** and **Francisco Liriano** were shipped to the Twins in 2003 for **A.J. Pierzynski**.

"In Minnesota, they say it's one of the best trades they ever made," Bonser said. "I thought I was going to be in the big leagues with San Francisco."

Bonser said he spoke with the Giants, among other teams, after he was let go by Boston this summer. He decided the A's were the best fit.

A's leading off

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Sweet relief: The A's rotation has gotten a lot of pub lately, but the bullpen hasn't been half-bad, either. The A's are 56-0 when leading after eight innings. The only perfect record in Oakland franchise history was 2002, when the A's were 91-0 when leading after eight.

Drumbeat: Carter shelved, Anderson seems OK

John Shea from Texas, where the A's didn't concede like the Angels; they still have their closer . . . 8/28/2010 5:42PM

Good and bad news on injury front.

Brett Anderson is optimistic he'll make his start Wednesday in New York. One day after he hyperextended his right knee, Anderson showed limited swelling, a sign he could move forward. He plans to throw long toss tomorrow and throw off a bullpen mound Monday.

Meantime, Chris Carter was placed on Triple-A Sacramento's DL with a sprained left thumb. X-rays showed no fracture, and assistant GM David Forst said there's no timetable, but it seems unlikely he'll appear again with the A's this season.

Braden bulldogs way to shutout of Texas

Barton scores four, Suzuki gets four hits in key AL West win

By / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- The competitive nature exuding from Dallas Braden every five days is undeniable.

The A's lefty has recently admitted feeling a sense of fatigue, the result of a natural wear and tear on his body as the season reaches the end.

Until that end comes, though, it's go time. Every time.

That feeling came to life on the mound in Texas on Saturday, when the ultra-competitive Braden reminded the Rangers via a 5-0 complete game that their first-place standing in the American League West is not entirely secure.

"I know he's the type of guy who will be aggressive and pitch," A's manager Bob Geren said. "This game was very important for a lot of reasons. It was important for our pitching to go deep to save our bullpen. It was important to even the series, and it was important to gain ground on them."

Never mind that Texas still leads Oakland by 8 1/2 games. Or that the A's continue to straddle the .500 mark, where they reached Saturday for the 25th time this year. Saturday's showing -- one that came after Brett Anderson lasted just two innings due to injury in a 7-3 loss Friday -- proved that the A's aren't shying away from this race.

"This is big as far as momentum is concerned," Braden said. "You come back a night after getting the wind knocked out of you, so to speak, you need that victory. It's huge to come back and swing the bats well, play defense well."

Oh, and pitch well.

Braden masterfully put away the Rangers, allowing just four hits and no walks as he faced four over the minimum while compiling a strikeout and, more importantly, 15 ground balls, en route to becoming the first pitcher since Sept. 18 to shut out Texas in Arlington.

"I don't know that it's any type of accomplishment," Braden said. "It feels good to kind of stymie an offense like that. We needed to win, and that's what I came to do."

"The ground-ball factor, when you have a defense like we do, there's no letup. You look at Web Gems every night, you'll find a bunch of Oakland A's plays. That's what I think. I know I can put the ball in play and get some pretty good results because of the guys behind me."

Braden, who entered the contest with a 4.15 ERA in 10 career games against Texas, is 5-2 with a 2.37 ERA in eight starts since returning from the 15-day disabled list July 20.

"What can you say?" Geren said. "A shutout in the heat in Arlington against a lineup like that. What else can you say? That's about it."

Said Landon Powell, who has caught four of Braden's five complete games this season: "Same stuff he always gives you. He's very consistent. Obviously he's got the fastball on both sides of the plate, but he can also mix it up with his changeup to give you a good combo."

"We had to win this one when we're trying to keep up with them."

Braden's counterpart, Rich Harden, had a rough go of it against his former team. The A's pounded the righty for four runs on eight hits and two walks in just 4 1/3 innings.

An RBI single off the bat of Kevin Kouzmanoff put the A's on the board early in the first, and a two-run homer from Daric Barton -- his seventh of the year and second in as many days -- gave Oakland a 3-0 lead in the third. Then, in the fifth, Kurt Suzuki drove home Barton with an RBI single to force Harden out of the game.

Texas lefty Derek Holland, called up by the Rangers on Saturday, replaced Harden and surrendered Oakland's final run as a result of another run-scoring hit from Suzuki, this time a double, in the seventh.

The A's duo of Suzuki and Barton is 9-for-16 in the series, and they provided more than enough support Saturday for Braden, as evidenced by a career-high-tying four hits from Suzuki, and a career-high four runs, not to mention two hits and two walks, from Barton.

But by night's end, all eyes were on Braden, who entered the ninth having thrown 99 pitches and, despite allowing a leadoff single to Elvis Andrus to force Andrew Bailey to be called on to get warmed up in the bullpen, finished with 120 pitches. And, given that competitiveness, of course Braden wanted to finish it up himself.

"Real bad," Braden said. "About as bad as you want to wake up every morning."

Said Rangers manager Ron Washington: "All Dallas Braden. We certainly would have liked to have seen [Harden] go out there and hold them down, but we didn't put anything on the board either. We didn't do anything against Dallas Braden. We just got shut down."

Braden is well aware of the meaning behind Saturday's game, but he's not about to let standings dictate his club's performance the rest of the season.

"I know I've got a locker," Braden said. "I know I've got a jersey hanging in my locker, and I come to the field every day to put it on and go to work. When that last day comes, if we're standing, we're standing. If we're not, we're not."

"Yes, this series is huge for us, but you can't put that kind of pressure on yourself day in and day out. You have to go out and give yourself a chance to work your plan. If I'm worried about standings, I'm not worried about a 1-1 pitch. I'm not worried about the guy at the plate. There's no space in my head for those thoughts."

Upstarts Gonzalez, Lewis face off in key game

By Rhett Bollinger / MLB.com

The Rangers are seemingly running away with the American League West, but the second-place A's are doing their best to make the division race an interesting one.

With Oakland's 5-0 win over Texas on Saturday, the Rangers lead the division by 8 1/2 games with just a little more than a month remaining and five more meetings between the clubs, including Sunday's rubber match at the Ballpark in Arlington.

Two pitchers who have been pleasant surprises for their clubs this season will be on display in the series finale with Rangers right-hander Colby Lewis squaring off against A's left-hander Gio Gonzalez.

Lewis, who is 9-10 with a 3.40 ERA this year, has been solid after spending the previous two seasons pitching in Japan. He also had been impressive recently with a 3.33 ERA over his past seven starts, but he has gone 0-5 over that span with the Rangers scoring just 12 runs.

"Sometimes you get pitchers who go out there and they don't have the luxury of getting runs, and just lately, Colby has been that guy," Rangers manager Ron Washington said recently. "We just haven't been able to put runs on the board for him. He battles and we battle, and the time is going to come when we're going to pick him up."

Gonzalez has also been impressive this season with an 11-8 record and 3.24 ERA after posting a 5.75 ERA last season. He always has had the stuff, but this year he's starting to harness it better, including over his past six outings in which he has a 1.76 ERA.

He certainly has impressed manager Bob Geren, especially after his previous outing, when he tossed seven scoreless innings against the Indians on Tuesday.

"I've had my fair share of messing up, too," Gonzalez admitted. "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.' "

A's: Injured Anderson might not miss start

Left-hander Brett Anderson, who hyperextended his right knee in the second inning of Friday's 7-3 loss to Texas, said Saturday that he's hopeful he'll make his next start with the swelling in his knee going down. "It's a little tender," Anderson said Saturday, "but nothing major. I'll rest today, and after playing catch [Sunday] I should be good to go."

Rangers: Francisco on mend as postseason looms

Before Saturday's game, the Rangers placed reliever Frank Francisco on the 15-day disabled list with a strained muscle in his right rib cage and recalled Derek Holland from Triple-A Oklahoma City. There's no timetable for Francisco's return, but the Rangers are hoping he'll return in September as they make their push for the postseason. "No doubt about it, he's a huge piece," Washington said. "I still say we don't get this done without Frankie. I said that earlier, and I still say that."

Worth noting

Rangers third baseman Michael Young hit his 30th double of the season on Friday night and has at least 30 doubles in eight straight seasons. The only active player with a longer streak is Albert Pujols, who has at least 30 doubles in 10 straight seasons. ... Rangers outfielder Josh Hamilton had his 24th three-hit game of the season on Friday to set a club record previously held by Mickey Rivers (1980) and Ivan Rodriguez (1997), who both had 23 three-hit games. ... A's Minor League outfielder Chris Carter was placed on Triple-A Sacramento's 15-day disabled list Saturday with a left thumb sprain, seemingly hindering his chances of being recalled when Major League rosters expand to 40 on Wednesday.

Geren keeping Cust's hot bat in lineup

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- Jack Cust received his third start in left field in as many days Saturday, signaling that manager Bob Geren is quite content with keeping the slugger's bat in the lineup.

"He's been swinging the bat well," Geren said before the club's second meeting of a three-game set with the Rangers. "I think he's been swinging the bat better lately, getting better contact."

That much is evident by Cust's numbers on the current road swing through Cleveland, Texas and New York. He entered Saturday's contest 5-for-12 (.417) on the trip -- a mark that looks mightily better than his .213 average over his past 26 games.

Also coming out of a slump, Geren noted, is Kurt Suzuki, who collected two hits Friday while snapping an 0-for-22 streak. His .142 mark in August is the lowest in the American League and third lowest in the Majors, but Geren sees his catcher -- placed in the designated hitter's slot Saturday -- turning things around.

"He actually hit the ball pretty good with no luck during that stretch," Geren said. "I know he was getting a little frustrated because nothing was falling for hits. He lined out [a] couple hard ones, but he's been feeling a lot better. Last night he hit four balls perfectly."

Suzuki's DH start gave Landon Powell a start behind the plate, marking just the eighth time in the A's past 35 games that he has appeared in a game.

Anderson hopeful to make next start

ARLINGTON -- One day after hyperextending his right knee in the second inning of a 7-3 loss to Texas, A's lefty Brett Anderson delivered good news in the form of no swelling, and he still believes he'll be able to make his next start.

Anderson, who stepped in the mound hole created by Rangers hurler Tommy Hunter and subsequently fell on Friday, took Saturday off from all baseball activity and said his knee is a little stiff but not enough to keep him from throwing long toss Sunday.

That will represent Anderson's biggest test, so if all goes well, he'll go through his normal bullpen session Monday before taking the mound for his next start in New York.

"It's a little tender," Anderson said Saturday, "but nothing major. I'll rest today, and after playing catch tomorrow I should be good to go.

"I feel pretty good. Tomorrow is a big factor, but it should be fine."

That's what manager Bob Geren likes to hear, especially after witnessing a stretch of 18 consecutive quality starts by his pitchers before Anderson's two-inning, four-run stint Friday.

"We're very encouraged," Geren said. "Both the trainer and doctor said how he feels tomorrow will be a good indicator. But right now, it's a very positive sign that he'll be OK."

Thus, Geren went so far as to say he's "hopeful" Anderson will be ready for Wednesday's meeting with the Yankees.

DL hinders Carter's promotion chances

ARLINGTON -- Chris Carter was placed on Triple-A Sacramento's 15-day disabled list Saturday with a left thumb sprain, seemingly hindering his chances of being recalled again when Major League rosters expand to 40 on Wednesday.

Carter suffered the injury during the River Cats' home game against Fresno on Friday while diving for a ball in the outfield, A's assistant general manager David Forst confirmed. He also sprained his right ankle in the same game, but A's manager Bob Geren noted his ankle is more of a "day-to-day thing."

X-rays were negative, but Forst said there is no timetable for the return of Carter, Oakland's highly touted prospect who received his first taste of the big leagues this month but struggled, going 0-for-19 with nine strikeouts before being optioned to work on his swing.

Carter, who reached the 30-homer mark with Sacramento this week, appeared to be an easy choice for a September roster addition with the A's. He's hitting .258 with 31 home runs and 94 RBIs for the River Cats, but his injury will likely force his Oakland return to be delayed for a handful of weeks.

Worth noting

Rajai Davis entered Saturday's game at Texas just one steal shy of becoming the fourth player in Oakland history with two 40-steal seasons. Rickey Henderson, Bert Campaneris and Billy North have accomplished the feat. ... Also making his way into the A's record books by way of stolen bases is Coco Crisp, who has been successful in each of his past 14 attempts, which is the longest such streak by an A's player since Henderson tallied 15 straight in 1998.

Major League: Chris Carter lands on DL

Jane Lee, mlb.com

Here's a quick item on Chris Carter's recent move to the DL. Talk about bad timing, considering rosters will expand in four days and he was a likely choice to join the A's again.

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X-rays were negative, but Forst said there is currently no timetable for the return of Carter, Oakland's highly touted prospect who received his first taste of the big leagues earlier this month but struggled, going 0-for-19 with nine strikeouts before being optioned to work on his swing.

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Gammons: Rebuilding A's start with Cahill

Young right-hander flashing Cy Young-caliber stuff to lead staff

By Peter Gammons, mlb.com.

If it hadn't happened the way it did, Trevor Cahill would have graduated from Dartmouth College this June and would now be out in Tri-City, State College or Lowell, getting ready for the Instructional League.

But during Cahill's senior year in high school at Oceanside, Calif., it so happened that the fastball that was 84-86 mph -- not bad for a shortstop/pitcher -- and led to the right-hander's best offer from that Ivy League school in Hanover, N.H., dialed up into the 90s, with run and sink.

"Once I knew I could be drafted pretty high, I knew I wanted to sign," said Cahill. "It was pro baseball, after all. The education was important, and Dartmouth was the only school other than St. Mary's that I was interested in, but I always dreamed of playing."

The Oakland A's drafted Cahill in the second round of the 2006 First-Year Player Draft, which came as a surprise to some other teams. The A's wish they could have signed their sixth-round pick, Mike Leake, another shortstop/pitcher and high school rival who went to Arizona State en route to the Cincinnati Reds.

Cahill claims he got a few hits -- "flairs" -- off Leake and that Leake didn't get lucky off him, but the point is that Athletics scout Craig Weissman did yeoman work projecting the two infielders-turned-pitchers.

So here we are in the final weekend of August, and the 22-year-old Cahill is 14-5 with a 2.43 ERA that is the second-best in the American League, behind Red Sox youngster Clay Buchholz. Cahill had a run of 20 consecutive starts in which he allowed six or fewer hits, a feat matched only by Nolan Ryan over the past 30 years.

Cahill has allowed 110 hits in his 152 2/3 innings as a starter this year, and in August he has allowed four earned runs over 39 innings for a 0.92 ERA. His 1.00 WHIP this season is the best in the league.

A's general manager Billy Beane compares Cahill to D-backs sinkerballer Brandon Webb, before Webb unfortunately got hurt. Beane's not alone.

"He's strong as a bull, he's got one of those hard-running sinkers hitters can't put in the air, and he's athletic," said one advance scout. "He's a premium guy, and because he gets balls put in play so softly, he's great to pitch behind."

"I've been fortunate to be able to learn and build off my experiences, good and bad," said Cahill. "Being in the Majors as young as I was last season, [going 10-13 with a 4.63 ERA], was something I could learn from. So was going back at the beginning of this season."

Now that Cahill has been an All-Star and is even on the fringe of some AL Cy Young Award discussions, many have forgotten that the right-hander opened the season by making two starts in the Pacific Coast League.

"It was good for me," Cahill said. "I had things I needed to work on."

Cahill has emerged at the front of the youngest starting staff in the Major Leagues.

"It's a great experience being able to develop in the big leagues with other pitchers my age," said Cahill. "We've developed a spirit and camaraderie together. It's a great experience to be growing up with these guys."

A's lefty Gio Gonzalez is 24 years old and eighth in the AL in ERA, having allowed 134 hits in 161 innings. Fellow lefty Brett Anderson is 22, and despite minor injuries and Friday night's loss to the Rangers, he has an ERA in the low 3.00's and No. 1 starter stuff.

Vin Mazzaro is 23 and has a 3.61 ERA. Dallas Braden is the old man at 27 but has been in the top 15 in AL ERA and has a perfect game, to boot. Then go to Andrew Bailey closing and watch Henry Rodriguez throwing 100 mph in Cleveland on Wednesday night.

Oakland's starters this season, which once included Ben Sheets, lead the league in ERA at 3.48 -- with Seattle next at 3.78 -- quality starts (83), batting average against and opponents' on-base plus slugging percentage.

Beane is trying to rebuild the Athletics from pitching and defense on out. When the Tim Hudson/Mark Mulder/Barry Zito generation sprung Oakland into the playoffs, detractors insisted that the reason the A's didn't win in the postseason was Beane's reliance on the home run, as if teams in the past 20 years won without hitting homers.

This Oakland team has a positive run differential and has walked the .500 line with the 11th-most runs in the AL, the fewest homers, highest stolen-base percentage and third-most sacrifice bunts. In reality, if the A's had two or three more big bats, they'd be a lot closer to the Rangers in the AL West race.

The defensive metrics many teams like to use show that Cahill has benefited from what has been the best infield defense in the AL; Daric Barton, for instance, is the league's premier first baseman by such metrics, and Cliff Pennington is near the top among shortstops. The A's haven't received much power from their outfielders, but Coco Crisp and Ryan Sweeney have been among the best at their positions.

The trick is going to be finding offense. The A's have to decide who are keepers and who are not among outfielder Michael Taylor, slugging first baseman Chris Carter and infielders Grant Green, Jemile Weeks and Adrian Cardenas. With so much low-cost quality starting pitching, Beane can scour the market and try to find a couple of veteran hitters. Last offseason, he thought he had a legitimate shot at Adrian Beltre with a three-year offer, but the third baseman took a one-year contract to play in Boston.

The reality is that it's hard to attract good players to spend 81 games at the Oakland Coliseum, which brings the Athletics back to their hope that they will be allowed to build a stadium in San Jose -- a stadium they will build without public funding, for those of you following the revenue-sharing tales of Florida, Pittsburgh, et al.

It's an issue that is very difficult for MLB Commissioner Bud Selig to resolve, because San Jose has been Giants territory since former owner Peter Magowan began his initiative to privately finance the masterpiece once known as Pac Bell.

If the issues can be resolved, the pitching is in place. If the A's can find a kid to turn down a Dartmouth education and four years later be in the Cy Young discussion, they may be able to do most anything.

A's blank Rangers, 5-0

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARLINGTON, Texas — Dallas Braden pitched a four-hitter for his second career shutout, Daric Barton homered and the Oakland Athletics cut a game off Texas' big lead in the AL West with a 5-0 victory over the Rangers on Saturday night.

Braden (9-9) had been 4-7 since his perfect game against Tampa Bay on May 9, but the left-hander was in command from the start of this one. He didn't walk a batter and let only one runner reach third base.

The Rangers were shut out for only the third time this season and first at Rangers Ballpark. They still hold an 8½-game edge over the second-place A's, largest among the six major league divisions.

The teams have five games against each other, including Sunday's series finale.

Braden struck out in his fifth complete game of the season and for his career.

Oakland's Kurt Suzuki matched a career high with four hits.

Barton was 2 for 3, reached base four times and scored a career-high four runs.

Josh Hamilton went 1 for 4 for Texas as his major league-high average fell one percentage point to .357.

Rangers starter Rich Harden (5-5) allowed four runs and eight hits in 4 2-3 innings after the former Athletic pitched 6 2-3 no-hit innings against Minnesota in his previous start Monday.

Kevin Kouzmanoff's RBI single in the first gave Oakland a 1-0 lead, and Barton lofted an 0-1 pitch into the right field seats for a two-run homer in the third. That gave Barton an 11-game hitting streak, matching his career high.

Suzuki's bloop single in the fifth drove in Barton, who had doubled, and Oakland had a 4-0 pad.

When Harden issued a one-out walk to Jack Cust in the fifth, manager Ron Washington brought in left-hander Derek Holland, recalled from Triple-A Oklahoma City earlier in the day.

NOTES: The Rangers put RHP Frank Francisco on the 15-day DL after he reinjured his right ribcage during Friday night's game.

Holland takes Francisco's place in the bullpen. An MRI revealed inflammation in a muscle in Francisco's side and he will be shut down until he shows improvement. ... Oakland LHP Brett Anderson experienced no swelling in his hyperextended right knee and is on schedule to make his normal start on Wednesday. Anderson was removed from Friday night's start prior to the third inning after his right foot landed in a hole on the mound during his follow through on a pitch in the second. Anderson fell awkwardly and the A's were concerned that the injury might be serious. ... 2B Alex Cora went 1 for 3 in his first appearance for Texas. Cora signed a minor league contract with the Rangers on Aug. 18, a week after being released by the New York Mets, and was called up from Oklahoma City on Tuesday. ... Suzuki had his second four-hit game of the season, fifth of his career.

A's Game 127 Report Card: Oakland merely chasing a .500 season now

Sam McPherson, examiner.com 8/28/2010

Offense: The A's had nine at-bats with RISP, and they got one hit: Kevin Kouzmanoff's two-run home run. By then, though, Oakland was already behind 7-0, so it was a matter of too little, too late. Overall, the A's collected eight hits and three walks. Oddly, Oakland had four extra-base hits; usually that would translate into more runs, but three is all they could muster (all off the two HRs hit in the game). **GRADE: C-**

Defense: With all the offense the Rangers generated, the A's were fortunate to get three double plays to "limit" the damage. They also nabbed a runner trying to steal a base; think about how this game could have been worse without the defense. **GRADE: A**

Pitching: So the streaks ended. Brett Anderson gave up eight base runners in only two innings, and he didn't strike out a batter. Absolutely terrible outing, no matter what way you slice it. And the relief was almost as bad: Boof Bonser gave up eight base runners in his four innings. So Texas had 16 guys on base in the first six innings. No wonder it was 7-0. At least Brad Ziegler and Andrew Bailey didn't give up any runs in the final two innings. **GRADE: D**

Coaching: Like the easy wins, there wasn't much Bob Geren could do in a blowout loss like this but hope it would end sooner. Mark Ellis went 0-for-4 seeing only nine pitches; perhaps he could have used a reminder about patience at the plate. **GRADE: A-**

Overall Game Grade: C+ (78.8%). Sometimes these grades are too low, and sometimes they are too high. Considering the A's were knocked out early, maybe it's a testament to their resolve they earned a C+ in this one?

Overall Season Grade: B (83.81%). As noted before many times, the playoffs have been a pipe dream for awhile. Even the most diehard A's fan has to admit this team is playing for a mere .500 season right now. Considering Texas also played .500 ball while the A's pitching staff was on a hot streak, it's clear Oakland couldn't catch their own shadow in the standings.

A's Record: 63-64. Four games into the road trip, Oakland is 2-2 with two games left against Texas and four upcoming in New York. At worst, they have to win at least one game in Texas to have some confidence heading into the Bronx.

A's "Should Be" Record: 67-60. Random thought: Why didn't the offense-starved A's put in a waiver claim on Manny Ramirez? Talk about an opportunity to get a potential big bat into your lineup for a minimal commitment. Instead, Oakland turned the other cheek. Sometimes you have to wonder if this ownership group *wants* to win.

Pitching streaks end in Oakland's 7-3 loss to Texas; Anderson hurt again as well

Sam McPherson, examiner.com 8/28/2010

All good things must end, and the symbolism of Friday night's defeat surely isn't lost upon the Oakland Athletics.

After 24 games of excellent pitching, the A's starter, Brett Anderson, got rocked against the Texas Rangers last night, as Oakland dropped the game, 7-3.

It was the first time since July 30 the A's staff as a whole had given up more than five runs in a game, and it was also the first time since that same day an Oakland starter had failed to go six innings while giving up three runs or less (the definition of a "quality start").

Coincidentally, that was Anderson's start against the White Sox on July 30, and since then he'd put together a sterling 2.33 ERA in his four subsequent starts.

But that all went out the door quickly on Friday night in Arlington.

Two infield singles opened the door to four runs in the first two innings off Anderson, immediately terminating one of the aforementioned pitching streaks of excellence.

After Anderson left the game with a knee injury after two innings, reliever Boof Bonser gave up three runs in the next four innings -- thereby erasing the other impressive pitching streak.

When the A's pitching streaks began, the team was 8.5 games out of first place, and they were unable to gain at all on the Rangers during those 24 games because of an anemic offense that is near the bottom of most offensive categories in the AL.

And by the end of the night, Oakland found itself 9.5 games out of first place in the American League West -- thoroughly unable to capitalize on its previous pitching excellence and now thoroughly humbled at the knees of its main adversary in 2010.

And with another injured player, as Anderson's knee may require the A's to shut him down for the season. With the playoffs all but beyond reach and considering Anderson's previous arm ailments this season, it makes no sense for Oakland to damage its prized possession -- one the organization invested thoroughly in with a multi-year contract extension this spring worth \$12.5M.

With this loss, Anderson's season record is now 3-5 with a 3.32 ERA -- an improvement over his rookie year in 2009 when he went 11-11 with a 4.06 ERA, but hardly what the A's were expecting out of their young lefty this year.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento, Fresno tied entering Sunday's finale

By Kevin Poveda / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento used two Anthony Recker home runs to cruise past Fresno 12-4 before a sellout crowd at Raley Field on Saturday night, setting up the biggest game in River Cats regular season history.

The River Cats and Grizzlies are now tied atop the Pacific Coast League South Division standings, and Sunday's game (1:05 p.m. first pitch) will determine who leaves this five-game series with the division lead. Sunday's winner will also hold the playoff tie-breaker, meaning the game is essentially worth two games in the standings.

Recker helped put the game out of reach, going 3-for-4 with two home runs, five RBIs and two runs. The catcher has four of his eight home run on the season in this series, to go along with nine RBIs.

"I'm starting to get some consistent playing time," said Recker, who took over the starting job after Josh Donaldson went down with a knee injury. "I'm seeing the ball really well, and I'm getting some good pitches to hit."

Recker wasn't the only River Cat who stood out Saturday night, as the River Cats sold out Raley Field for the eighth time this season. Ten of Sacramento's 12 hits came off Fresno left-handed starter Matt Yourkin. Corey Wimberly started things off for Sacramento, hitting his sixth triple of the year into right-center. Dallas McPherson then scored Wimberly with an opposite-field double to left. The River Cats never looked back after their six-run first inning, capped by a Recker two-run homer to center field.

Recker's second home run came in the eighth inning, when he hit a tape-measure blast over the Jackson Rancheria Home Run Terrace in left field. Sacramento starter Clayton Mortensen picked up his 13th victory of the season after pitching 6.2 innings. The right-hander allowed seven hits, three earned runs, and walked five batters while striking out three. Mortensen moved into a tie for second place on the River Cats all-time single-season wins list, behind Justin Duchscherer, who recorded 14 wins in 2003.

"Tomorrow is definitely the most important game of the season, whoever wins is a game up," Recker said. "Hopefully we can continue to pitch well, play good defense and hope for the best."

Sacramento right-hander Jason Jennings (0-0, 6.00) will face off against Fresno right-hander Kevin Pucetas (5-7, 5.72) in Sunday's finale.

Despite 3 Major Leaguers, 'Hounds shutout Frisco

Midland Reporter-Telegram

FRISCO -- Looking at the first three batters in the Frisco RoughRiders' lineup, one might have thought the Midland RockHounds were pitted against the Texas Rangers.

With Christian Guzman, Ian Kinsler and Nelson Cruz making up the top three spots, the Frisco lineup was deceiving, and some might say intimidating.

Some, but not all, including Midland starter Carlos Hernandez (9-3), who pitched seven shutout innings to lead the RockHounds to a 2-0 win over Frisco.

RockHounds relievers Mickey Storey and Daniel Sattler each pitched a scoreless inning, combining with Hernandez for a four-hit shutout. Sattler picked up his first save of the season in the process. The trio held Guzman, Kinsler and Cruz a combined 2 for 9.

Both of Midland's runs came in the top of the sixth. Right fielder Matt Sulentic led off the inning with an infield single and catcher Gabriel Ortiz made it runners at first and second with no outs for the RockHounds with a single of his own.

Speedy second baseman Jemile Weeks laid down a bunt for a single to load the bases, leading to Sulentic scoring when J.C. Holt hit into a fielder's choice to Kinsler at second. Shane Peterson hit a sacrifice fly to left, bringing in Ortiz for the final run of the game.

Early Lead Lifts Ports to 7-5 win

Magic number now 5 for Stockton

STOCKTON, Calif. – The Stockton Ports (69-62) jumped to an early 7-0 lead, and managed to keep enough of a hold on the San Jose offense to finish Saturday night with a 7-5 victory over the San Jose Giants (70-61) at Banner Island Ballpark.

The Ports retain their 5.0 game lead over the second-place Bakersfield Blaze in the second half standings, and reduced their magic number to 5 games.

RHP Shawn Haviland struck out seven in 6.0 innings and allowed four runs on seven hits en route to his ninth win. Trey Barham allowed a run in 2.0 innings for his 18th hold and Paul Smyth collected his 27th save, after tossing a scoreless ninth.

The Ports outhit the Giants, 11-10, in the contest. Grant Green had three hits, while Jeremy Barfield, Yusuf Carter and Kent Walton each collected a pair of hits.

The Ports brought home four runs in the first inning to jump to a 4-0 lead. With one out, Green singled to jump start the Stockton offense. Stephen Parker collected his 20th home run of the season, slamming a two-run shot over the bullpens in left field. First baseman Mike Spina popped out to catcher Matt Klimas for the second out of the inning. Right Jeremy Barfield then slammed a triple to center field to keep things rolling. Carter stepped up to the plate, and dropped a two-run home run over the mini monster wall in left field to bring home the third and fourth Stockton runs.

The Ports added a trio of runs in the second inning. Left fielder Todd Johnson led off with a double. He moved to third on a bunt single by designated hitter Kent Walton. Center fielder David Thomas then hit a sacrifice bunt which scored Johnson, and moved Walton to second. Green next singled to right field to put runners on the corners with one out. Parker came up to bat, and hit into a fielder's choice, as Walton was caught out in a rundown on the base path to home plate. Green took third and Parker took second on the play. Spina next walked to load the bases. While Barfield was batting, San Jose starter Oliver Odle threw a wild pitch, which allowed Green to score to make it a 6-0 game. Barfield hit an RBI single to make it 7-0.

Haviland kept San Jose scoreless through the first four frames, but the Giants began to close the gap by scoring two runs in the fifth. Designated hitter Wendell Fairley singled to start the inning. He was followed on base by James Simmons who singled. As Drew Biery struck out, the Ports tried to pick off Fairley. Ladendorf made a throwing error, which allowed Fairley to score the first run. Haviland retired the next batter and then walked shortstop Ehre Adrianza. Right fielder Juan Perez hit an RBI single to make it 7-2.

The Giants scored two more runs in the sixth inning on a two-run home run by James Simmons. San Jose scored their fifth and final run in the eighth inning off Barham on an RBI single by Klimas.

Ports Earn Several Post Season Awards

Justin Clarke and Vic Zapien earn field awards, three post season all-stars named

STOCKTON, Calif. – The Stockton Ports, 11-time champions of the California League, are excited to announce that two members of their staff earned 2010 California League Field Awards, and that three of their players have been named to the 2010 California League Post Season All-Star team. Head Groundskeeper Justin Clarke won the Turf Manager of the Year Award, while Vic Zapien earned the Clubbie of the Year award. Stephen Parker, Grant Green and Shawn Haviland were named to the Post Season All-Star team.

This is Vic Zapien's first Clubbie of the Year Award. Zapien has been the Stockton Ports clubhouse manager since 2003. The 2010 Turf Manager of the Year Award is the second such title bestowed on Justin Clarke. He was named the California League Turf Manager of the Year in 2007 as well.

Stephen Parker was selected as the Post Season All-Star third baseman. Parker was also the only Ports player named to the California League mid-season All-Star team. Parker, a native of American Fork, Utah, collected the game-winning RBI in the 2010 California-Carolina League All-Star team. Parker, who was named the League Player of the Week for April 26-May 3, is leading the club with 87 RBI and 78 walks. He also ranks among team leaders in average (.293), doubles (35), home runs (19), and total bases (259). Parker also ranks among the Top 10 batters in the A's organization, and is fourth among A's minor leaguers in home runs and second in RBI. The Brigham Young University product is also fifth in the League in RBI, tied for third in doubles, tied for fourth in runs scored, and is second in walks. He batted safely in a season-high nine straight games from August 17 to August 25, batting .343 with a double, a triple, two home runs and nine RBI in that span. Parker was selected in the 5th Round of the 2009 First-Year Player Draft.

Grant Green was selected as the Post Season All-Star shortstop. Green, who was the lone A's representative in the 2010 Futures Game, leads the Stockton Ports in average (.311), hits (159), and total bases (259). Green also ranks among team leaders in home runs (17), and RBI (79). He ranks among the Top 10 batters in both the California League and Oakland A's organization. He is second in the League in hits, and is second in the League with 37 doubles. The University of Southern California product posted a 14-game hitting streak from July 16 to 30, batting .377 with seven doubles, two home runs and 12 RBI in that span. Green was named the League Player of the Week from August 16-22. This is Green's first full season of professional baseball, after being selected by the A's in the First Round of the 2009 First-Year Player Draft.

Shawn Haviland was one of the four pitchers selected to the Post Season All-Star team. A Harvard University graduate, Haviland leads the team, A's organization and California League with 152 strikeouts. He also leads the Stockton club with 138.1 innings pitched. Haviland has also walked just 37 batters this season in a team-leading 25 starts. He is fifth in the League with a 3.64 ERA, and also ranks among the top pitchers in the A's organization for ERA. Haviland was named the League Pitcher of the Week for July 26-August 2 and from August 16-22. He tossed a one-hitter on July 29, and combined for a shutout win on August 17, fanning a season-high 11 batters in 6.0 scoreless frames in that game. Haviland was selected in the 33rd Round of the 2008 First-Year Player Draft.

The Ports are proud of their field staff and players, and congratulate them on their award-winning performances.

Gil Powers Cougars Past Rattlers **Kane County infielder drives in 4 to lead team to crucial win**

APPLETON, Wisc. – Leonardo Gil had three hits and four RBIs, and Jonathan Joseph gave up one earned run in six innings Saturday night as the Kane County Cougars cruised past the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers, 8-4, at Time Warner Cable Field. The Cougars' win, combined with Clinton's loss in Peoria, put the Cougars 1.0 game behind Clinton for the top playoff spot in the Western Division with nine games remaining. The Cougars also still lead Beloit by 2.0 games for the Wild Card spot.

Gil homered and missed the cycle by one hit for the second night in a row. He doubled home Myrio Richard in the third to tie the game, 1-1, and had a sacrifice fly during a two-run fifth that put the Cougars ahead, 3-1. They never gave back that lead. After the Rattlers managed an unearned run off Joseph in the bottom of the fifth, Gil singled home Tyreece House in the sixth after a two-run single by Mitch LeVier and then homered in the eighth for his team's final run. Conner Crumbliss

also reached base four times and scored three runs to help the 12-hit attack.

Joseph (2-5) gave up two runs -- one earned -- on four hits, walked three and fanned five over six innings in the win. Rob Gilliam gave up two runs -- one earned -- in two innings, and Kenny Smalley pitched a perfect ninth to end it.

The Cougars (33-27, 65-64) and Timber Rattlers (29-32, 55-74) continue the four-game set Sunday afternoon at 1:05 CT. Chris Mederos (6-5, 2.63) will face Damon Krestalude (2-9, 7.29). The game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and www.kccougars.com with pre-game coverage starting at 12:50 p.m.