

A's News Clips, Saturday, September 11, 2010

Trevor Cahill wins 16th as Oakland A's blank Boston Red Sox

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Trevor Cahill may still be a long shot for the American League Cy Young Award, but if nothing else, he bolstered his chances Friday night by vastly outperforming another top contender for the honor.

The A's pounded Boston's Clay Buchholz, a 15-game winner and the AL's ERA leader, for five runs in the first two innings while Cahill pitched seven scoreless innings of three-hit ball in a 5-0 Oakland victory.

Cahill (16-6) was once again in total control at the Coliseum, where he is now 11-2 with a 1.58 ERA this year. He lowered his overall ERA to 2.61, and opposing hitters are now hitting just .200 against him, lowest among qualifying AL starters.

In short, he's definitely in the hunt for the Cy Young and could still be a 20-game winner if he wins his four remaining scheduled starts. For now, he is the A's first 16-game winner since Joe Blanton and Barry Zito each won 16 in 2006.

But for Cahill's part, he's less concerned about individual achievements than the team goal of trying to make a late AL West run.

"I don't think anyone in this clubhouse has thrown up the white flag," said Cahill, despite the Texas Rangers beating the Yankees in 13 innings to keep the A's 7 1/2 games back with 22 to go. "It's going to be tough, but I think if we can be close enough to them when they come here (for a four-game series Sept. 23-26), I think we'll be in a good position."

Cahill's biggest mistake of the night came against the game's first hitter, and even that wound up being just a loud out. Ryan Kalish slammed what appeared to a game-opening homer for the Red Sox, but center fielder Coco Crisp made a well-timed leap and extended his arm at least two feet over the wall and snared it.

A's manager Bob Geren called it the outfield catch of the year for his club, and Crisp said it may rank as No. 1 on his all-time personal list as well.

"I didn't know how to react after I caught that," said Crisp, who also reached base all four times and stole three bases. "It's probably one of the best home runs I've ever robbed. I kind of wanted to jump up and down and start break-dancing, I was so excited."

After Crisp's spectacular grab, Cahill took it from there. He allowed a runner past first base in just one inning, the second, when Jed Lowrie walked with two out and Josh Reddick doubled him to third. Cahill retired Bill Hall on a grounder to short and never was in serious trouble after that. He finished off a 1-2-3 seventh on just 10 pitches.

Cahill said it helped to get a big early lead against the power-packed Red Sox lineup.

"That was huge for us because I wasn't having to worry about giving up a solo home run, it was more so not letting guys get on base," he said.

From the outset, it was clear Buchholz (15-7) just didn't have it. The right-hander, whose league-leading 2.25 ERA was even better on the road (2.13), allowed the first four hitters to reach in both the first and second innings, and he was quickly pulled after he did it a second time.

The A's struck for three runs in the first, the big blow a two-run double by Kurt Suzuki. They added two more in the second on a no-out, bases-loaded single by Daric Barton that signaled the end for Buchholz after just 39 pitches. His ERA jumped from 2.25 to 2.53 with the loss.

Crisp's three successful steals gave him 19 consecutive without being caught. He is 27 for 29 on steals for the year.

Oakland A's update: Radio flagship station in turmoil but vows to stay on the air

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

KTRB-860 struggling but will stay on the air

The A's 50,000-watt flagship radio station, KTRB-860, is suddenly in financial turmoil, but a team spokesman said it will not impact the game broadcasts or ancillary programming, at least for the rest of this season.

KTRB, owned by Harry and Jim Pappas, went into receivership to Comerica Bank on Friday and some personnel were subsequently terminated, including the station's program director. Syndicated talk-show host Michael Savage also was dropped.

But as far as the A's are concerned, the only change is that postgame talk-show host Chris Townsend will be employed by the club instead of the station.

"The bank will continue to run the station as is and is honoring the (team's) contract," said Ken Pries, A's vice president of broadcasting and communications. "So as far as the A's are concerned, fans are not going to notice a difference."

Rumors flew after the bank takeover, many of them unfounded, including one that the station might possibly go off the air at midnight Friday.

"That's absolutely 100 percent incorrect," Pries said. "I know that unequivocally. I've been on the phone with the chief engineer who is still on staff. He assures the station will remain on the air."

KTRB sports director Ken Dito, who was retained, said the station will maintain and hopefully improve its 24-hour sports programming format and still plans to broadcast A's and Stanford football games.

The A's have selected left-handed pitcher Bobby Cramer from Triple-A Sacramento, and the 30-year-old will start Monday's game in Kansas City.

Originally signed by Tampa Bay as an undrafted free agent in 2003, Cramer was out of baseball in 2005 and 2006, when he worked as a substitute teacher and as a maintenance technician for Shell Oil Co., and played in a Sunday adult league.

He signed a minor league deal with the A's in 2007 but was released, whereupon he pitched for the Orange County Flyers in the Golden Baseball League in 2008. He rejoined the A's in 2009, where he pitched at all three minor league levels.

This season, he was leased out to Quintana Roo of the Mexican League and posted a 13-3 record with a 2.95 ERA in 22 starts, including three shutouts. He was returned to the A's system Aug. 3, where he went 2-2 with a 1.94 ERA in seven starts at Triple-A Sacramento.

"It's been a long time coming for me," said Cramer.

Chin Music: More on KTRB; who's better than Cahill; Coco's big night

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 9/11/2010 12:33AM

Carl Steward, filling in for Joe Stiglich tonight ...

Since Joe gave the early report on KTRB, here's an update. Talked to A's VP Ken Pries as well as KTRB sports director Ken Dito and I filed a report in the A's notebook basically stating that nothing much will change with A's broadcasts through the end of the season, and that includes pre- and post-game shows. The financially troubled station was placed in receivership Friday, but Comerica Bank, which is now in control the station, plans to keep things up and running for now, even though there were some personnel casualties. Dito, however, has been retained.

It could be the toughest ballot among postseason award voters: the AL Cy Young. CC Sabathia has to be the favorite at this point with 19 wins, but he only has three more wins than Cahill playing for the best team in the league, while Cahill is 10 games over .500 for a team that's 70-70. Opposing hitters are batting just .200 against him, which is the lowest among qualifying starters in the AL. And let's not forget, Cahill didn't make his first start until April 30. Imagine if he'd pitched the first month. He still has four more starts. He could actually get 20 wins, which would be quite a feat for a 22-year-old guy in just his second season. He moved past Clay Buchholz Friday night. But the votes are going to be all over the place. Tampa Bay's David Price will get some. Jon Lester, too.

Cahill has a chance if you look at last year. Zack Greinke won it a 16-8 record and 2.16 ERA. Cahill's not far off what Greinke did.

Coco Crisp's first-inning catch to rob Boston's Ryan Kalish of a home run is the best outfield catch I've seen in a long time. He not only went up above but over the wall to catch the ball, and his arm was extended at least two feet above the top of the fence and behind it a bit. Coco said afterward that to make a catch like that, it's best not to get too close to the wall before the leap because you can't get as high. Great night for Coco all around, reaching base four times with three steals. Rickey Henderson was on the bench Friday night, and Coco admitted he might have been putting on a bit of a show for his idol. Crisp has 19 steals in a row without being caught, the most since Rickey had 17 straight in 1998. Don Baylor, of all people, holds the club record with 25 straight in 1976. I know, because I was there the night he got No. 25 covering the game.

Yeah, I'm an old-timer. That's why I'm turning it back to Joe post-haste. I gotta go take a nap.

Chin Music: A's promote left-hander Bobby Cramer, plus a note on 860-AM

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 9/10/2010 2:31PM

Quick news update for you ... The A's have promoted left-hander Bobby Cramer from Triple-A Sacramento, and all signs point to Cramer sliding into Vin Mazzaro's rotation spot. Unless the A's change their plans, Cramer would start Monday's road trip opener at Kansas City. Manager Bob Geren said Wednesday night — following Gio Gonzalez's 117-pitch outing against Seattle — that he wanted to give Gonzalez an extra day's rest and pitch him Tuesday. That would mean Cramer would be needed Monday. It's been quite a road for Cramer, who will make his major league debut at age 30. [Check out all the stops along his career.](#) I bet he and reliever Justin James could swap some stories. James made his big league debut at Yankee Stadium last week, just 12 days shy of his 29th birthday.

I figured Clayton Mortensen was a strong bet to get promoted from Sacramento and fill Mazzaro's shoes. But Mortensen got roughed up in three innings Wednesday against Tacoma. Surely that didn't help his chances. To make room for Cramer on the 40-man roster, infielder Adam Rosales was transferred to the 60-day DL.

Another quick note: It's my understanding that there was a shakeup over at KTRB 860-AM, the A's flagship station, with some of the station's high-level personnel being let go. I've been told this won't affect A's broadcasts for the rest of this season, and that none of the station's current sports programming will be changed. Can't say how this might affect A's broadcasts beyond this season, if at all ...

Cahill wins 16th as A's shell Buchholz

[Ron Kroichick, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

It felt almost like a division race Friday night at the Coliseum. The A's dispatched the Red Sox 5-0, behind Trevor Cahill and Coco Crisp, and then retreated to their clubhouse to watch American League West-leading Texas tussle with the Yankees into the 13th inning.

If the Rangers had lost, the A's would have trailed by 6 1/2 games - the first time since mid-June they were closer than seven games. But former Oakland minor leaguer Nelson Cruz's homer gave Texas the win, preventing the A's from creeping any closer.

"No one on the team has thrown up the white flag yet," Cahill said.

Or, as manager Bob Geren said, "We just try to win every night. We know the calendar is running out."

The A's have 22 games left, including four at home against Texas, Sept. 23-26.

They returned to the .500 mark, at 70-70, by beating Boston. Most notably, they spun their league-high 14th shutout of the season, with Cahill leading the way (seven innings) and Craig Breslow (one) and Henry Rodriguez (one) finishing the job.

Cahill stretched his streak of scoreless innings to 13 and pocketed his 16th victory. That's the most wins by an A's pitcher since Barry Zito and Joe Blanton each won 16 in 2006.

The matchup of longshot Cy Young candidates - Cahill for the A's and Clay Buchholz for the Red Sox - quickly tilted Oakland's way. Cahill permitted only one Boston runner to reach third. Buchholz collected just three outs before manager Terry Francona replaced him.

Buchholz allowed nine of the 11 batters he faced to reach base (four walks, five hits). Kurt Suzuki's two-run double and Daric Barton's two-run single were the big blows.

Cahill got an early, splashy assist from Crisp. The game's first batter, Ryan Kalish, crushed a Cahill fastball over the center-field wall - but Crisp timed his leap perfectly, reached over the wall backhanded and made a spectacular catch.

"That kind of set the momentum for the game," Cahill said.

Crisp also rapped out three hits, all singles, and stole three bases. He has been successful on his past 19 stolen-base attempts, the longest A's streak since Stan Javier stole 28 straight in 1995.

"He's just a real dynamic player," Geren said of Crisp.

Before the game, the A's promoted pitcher Bobby Cramer from Triple-A Sacramento and announced he will start Monday's game in Kansas City. That might not sound extraordinary, until you learn of Cramer's long, winding path to The Show.

He will make his major-league debut, at age 30, after seven-plus adventurous years. He endured three elbow surgeries, spent two years out of pro baseball (he pitched in a Sunday rec league), played winter ball in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic (among other places) and spent last year in the independent Golden League and most of this season in the Mexican League (on loan from the A's).

Cramer, a left-hander who relies on control more than power, went 13-3 with a 2.95 ERA in Mexico and 2-2 with a 1.94 ERA at Sacramento.

"I'm old and I've been around," he said. "I'm the guy who had to scratch and claw to get here."

Briefly: The A's stole four bases in all, including one by Rajai Davis, to boost their season total to 132. ... Vin Mazzaro pitched five strong innings and Michael Taylor smacked a three-run homer as Sacramento stayed alive in its playoff series with a 6-2 win over Tacoma.

A's leading off

Ron Kroichick

Could be worse: Bobby Cramer's long road to the majors included 20 starts this season in the Mexican League, but he wasn't exactly roughing it. "I was playing in Cancun, for crying out loud," he said. "I stayed in a hotel at the beach."

Drumbeat: Cramer's long, strange trip to A's

Ron Kroichick, San Francisco Chronicle 6:23PM 9/10/2010

Bobby Cramer's winding road led him to the major leagues, after all. He was wearing A's colors, shagging fly balls with other major-league pitchers and trying to get his mind around the fact he will start Monday night's game in Kansas City.

The A's promoted Cramer from Triple-A Sacramento today. Then manager Bob Geren announced Cramer will fill the vacancy in Oakland's rotation for the team's series opener against the Royals.

That will mark Cramer's major-league debut, more than seven years after he originally signed with Tampa Bay as a non-drafted free agent in April 2003. He's been around the Western Hemisphere since then, basically, playing in the Mexican League and the Golden League, making winter-league stops in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, slinging pitches virtually everywhere but in The Show.

"You always hope," Cramer said after the A's completed batting practice before tonight's game against the Boston Red Sox. "You try not to lose hope, but you start to think maybe it's not in the cards."

Cramer grew so frustrated with persistent arm trouble -- he's had three surgeries on his left elbow -- he spent two-plus years (2005 and '06) out of baseball entirely. He landed real jobs with Shell Oil and as a substitute teacher in Southern California, and he kept his arm sharp by pitching in Sunday rec league with some college buddies from Long Beach State.

Then, in May '07, Cramer signed a minor-league deal with the A's. He pitched for the Orange County Flyers of the independent Golden League in '08 and then returned to the A's organization last year.

The A's summoned him to replace Vin Mazzaro in the rotation because Cramer has posted some mind-blowing numbers this season. He went 13-2 with a 2.95 ERA with the Quintana Roo of the Mexican League -- the A's had loaned him there -- and then was 2-2 with a 1.94 ERA in seven starts with Sacramento.

"I'm not typically a guy who's going to get a shot unless I have the kind of season I had," Cramer said.

Quick scouting report: Cramer is a left-hander who doesn't throw especially hard. He still collected 158 strikeouts in 169-2/3 innings this season, between Mexico and Sacramento combined. "I don't throw hard, but I have good control and I keep the ball down," Cramer said. "That'll work at any level."

Cahill cruises after A's knock around Sox

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- It was billed as a battle between a pair of American League Cy Young Award candidates, but one could barely tell by looking at the final box score.

While Red Sox righty Clay Buchholz looked like a shell of himself, Trevor Cahill's magic was in full effect. Behind seven shutout innings from their baby-faced ace, Oakland rolled to a 5-0 victory on Friday to open a three-game set.

Cahill has an outside chance to become a 20-game winner at the age of 22, despite pitching in Triple-A for a month to start the season. But the laid-back righty said he hasn't let any Cy Young talk go to his head.

"I don't pay attention to that too much," Cahill said. "I think all that stuff can take care of itself. I just try to go out there and execute each pitch one at a time and let the pieces fall where they may."

Coco Crisp set the tone for the A's in the game's first at-bat, as he robbed outfielder Ryan Kalish of a home run. It was the closest the Red Sox would get to scoring all night.

That's because Cahill's sinker was falling off the table, keeping the Red Sox in check, as Boston could only move two runners past first base against him all night. Cahill used 107 pitches, allowing three hits and two walks while striking out four.

"That was one of the best home runs I've ever robbed," Crisp said. "I kind of wanted to jump up and down and start breakdancing. I really didn't know how to react, I was so excited. For them not to draw first blood, it makes a huge difference."

Cahill has now tossed 13 consecutive scoreless innings en route to becoming Oakland's first 16-game winner since Joe Blanton and Barry Zito did it in 2006.

While Cahill didn't bust out of the gates with his best command, he settled down as the game went on. Manager Bob Geren said he thought Cahill's strongest inning was his last, when he used 10 pitches to retire the Red Sox in order.

"We didn't have a whole lot going," Boston skipper Terry Francona said. "Coco makes a great catch to kind of take a run off the board first hitter of the game. Other than that, when we did elevate it, he kept us in the middle of the field. We didn't have a whole lot going."

The A's, meanwhile, had no such problems against Buchholz. They hung a five-spot on the 26-year-old before he could even record four outs, even though Buchholz entered the game with the AL's best ERA (2.25).

After Buchholz started off his evening by giving up a single to Crisp and walking Daric Barton, Kurt Suzuki belted a double off the left-field wall to give Oakland a 2-0 lead. Suzuki would come around to score three batters later on Jeremy Hermida's double-play grounder.

Buchholz couldn't find a rhythm to start the second inning, as he gave up two walks and a single. Barton then delivered a two-run single to give the A's a commanding 5-0 advantage.

"I know how good of a pitcher Buchholz is," Suzuki said. "If he settles in, it's going to be tough. We tried to jump on him early and get a few runs across the board, and doing that was a big confidence boost for us."

The outburst served as a boost to Cahill, too.

"That was huge for us," Cahill said. "I wasn't having to worry about giving up a solo home run, it was more not letting guys get on base. It's definitely a lot easier to pitch with a lead like that, especially early on."

Following Cahill, Craig Breslow pitched a scoreless eighth before Henry Rodriguez notched a 1-2-3 ninth to seal Oakland's 14th shutout of the year, which is tops in the AL. The A's also lead the AL with a 3.53 ERA.

"They've been doing it all year. It's pretty unbelievable," Suzuki said. "It's a big testament to them and how well they prepare themselves. It's all about them."

Besides the stellar catch to start the game, Crisp matched his career-high three stolen bases. He has now converted 19 straight stolen-base attempts, the longest such streak for an Athletics player since Stan Javier stole 28 straight in 1995.

If it weren't for a pair of home runs by Rangers outfielder Nelson Cruz, who hit one to send Friday's game with the Yankees to extra innings and another to beat them, 6-5, Oakland would be trailing Texas by less than seven games for the first time since June 17. As it stands now, Oakland sits 7 1/2 games back.

With 22 games remaining, including four against the Rangers, Cahill said the A's aren't out of it just yet. Since losing four straight games against the Yankees in the Bronx, Oakland has gone 5-2 to pick up 2 1/2 games on Texas.

"I think the ball is in our court," Cahill said. "I think if we keep winning and doing our job, good things will happen."

A's top Sox in battle for playoff hope

By John Schlegel / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The Red Sox and A's met Friday night in the opener of a series that in some Septembers past might have been a playoff preview. Not this year, and not this series.

This year, it's more of a battle for survival, one with both teams' playoff chances elusive, at best, but still flickering.

They're meeting in the Oakland Coliseum, but it's more like the intersection of Hope Road and Desperation Avenue. These two teams are right on the edge of contending, neither real sure what lies around the corner, or what the end of the regular-season road will bring.

After the A's and Trevor Cahill cruised to a 5-0 victory in the opener, one team's voyage pointed a tiny bit more toward hope and the other took another turn toward desperation.

The Red Sox lost on the field and on the calendar. They dropped their own game, leaving just 21 to play. And even though they kept the Yankees' American League East lead from hitting double figures, the Wild Card-leading Rays won to up their lead in that race to 7 1/2 games, while the White Sox won to pull even with Boston for second.

Not only that, but their ace, Clay Buchholz, who entered the game with the AL's best ERA at 2.25, suffered the shortest healthy start of his career, lasting just one inning and four batters in the second, watching his ERA jump to 2.53 with five runs scored and three outs recorded.

In short, it was not a red-letter night for the Red Sox and their playoff hopes. And while being on the wrong end of a Cy Young Award showdown with Cahill didn't do much for Buchholz's candidacy, either, that wasn't what resonated with the young right-hander.

"I'm not worried about the whole Cy Young deal. I'm worried about this team winning games," Buchholz said. "Definitely not a good night to go one-plus out there, and the team's trying to battle and stay in the position where we can catch up with the guys ahead of us."

The A's? Well, they're back to .500 -- and probably in better shape than the Red Sox, who have eight more wins to their credit. Oakland remained 7 1/2 games behind the Rangers in the AL West, missing an opportunity to creep within 6 1/2 for the first time since June 17 when Nelson Cruz's two homers beat the Yankees in 13 innings.

"Being a .500 team, it's a little surprising that we have the opportunity to make a run at it, but it is an opportunity at this point, so we just have to make the most of every game," said veteran center fielder Coco Crisp, who started off Friday's game by robbing Sox leadoff hitter Ryan Kalish of a homer.

The performance Cahill turned in -- allowing just three hits in seven shutout innings -- is a big reason why the A's might be able to stay on Hope Road a little while longer. The A's and their pitching -- the starters topping the Majors with a 3.45 ERA and their overall mark of 3.53 leading the AL -- keeps them in the hunt.

"Basically, I think the ball's in our court," said Cahill, who lowered his ERA to 2.61 with his 16th victory. "If we keep doing our job, good things will happen."

Indeed, the A's still have four home games with the Rangers, so they can take care of a bit of their own business.

First things first, the A's have the Red Sox this weekend and a run through AL Central foes -- first the Royals and then the contending Twins on the road -- then the White Sox before they can think about the Rangers.

As for the Red Sox, if they're unable to somehow upend the race, the situation they face can't really be put into a simple box and called coming up short. Injuries and the two best teams in baseball in front of them in the AL East have conspired to make 78 wins at this point pretty impressive.

Friday night's starting lineup featured Lars Anderson at first base, not Kevin Youkilis. Bill Hall's tour through seven positions, including pitcher, this season had him at second base, not Dustin Pedroia. Josh Reddick and Kalish were in left and center, not Jacoby Ellsbury and Mike Cameron.

With all those would-be starters on the disabled list, it's little wonder the Red Sox might be closer to the season off-ramp than they are to the on-ramp to the playoffs.

Sure, the Red Sox have six more with the Yankees -- but they still have the Rays ahead in the division, too. They have four more with the White Sox -- but they still have the Rays sitting atop the Wild Card there, too. And that's in addition to their own internal issues of filling out a lineup card.

The rest of this weekend series might not tell these teams exactly the road they're on heading into the final three weeks.

But Friday night's outcome helped only one team's dimming hopes, and that was the A's.

A's continue playoff chase against Sox

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com

It's hard to blame the A's for scoreboard watching these days.

Oakland topped Boston, 5-0, on Friday and could have come within 6 1/2 games of the first-place Rangers in the American League West if Texas would have lost to New York late Friday night.

Things did not go as planned.

The Rangers won, 5-4, in extra innings. Now, the A's, who have won two in a row, will have to keep on winning and hope the Rangers start losing.

The task won't be an easy one.

First, they'll also have to get past Boston starter John Lackey on Saturday. Lackey turned in a strong performance in his last start, giving up four hits and one earned run over seven innings, but the Red Sox didn't give him any run support in the tough-luck loss to the White Sox.

"You never, ever want to make excuses," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said. "That's not a good idea. [Lackey] just seems like he's kind of been the hard-luck guy. I don't think he'd ever say that. I don't want him to."

Excuses aside, this much is true: Opponents are hitting .285 against the big Texan.

As for Oakland starter Brett Anderson, he was in top form on Monday against the Mariners, going a season-high 7 2/3 innings and allowing an earned run on four hits while walking none.

He's hoping for a repeat performance on Saturday.

"He had a good changeup when he needed it," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He also had a good slider, but that's pretty normal for him. His fastball command was pretty good, too -- and it looked like he was able to command it real well on the outside corner."

Red Sox: Papi eyes another No. 30

David Ortiz remains one home run shy of his sixth 30-home run campaign and his first since 2007. The feat would tie him with Manny Ramirez for the second-most 30-homer seasons in Red Sox history behind Ted Williams, who had eight. ... Reliever Felix Doubront stayed in Boston to get medical tests. He hasn't pitched since Aug. 31 because of troublesome upper pectoral muscle. ... Pawtucket manager Torey Lovullo joined the Red Sox for this road trip and will stay on the Major League staff for the rest of the season. ... Injured outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury will turn 27 on Saturday.

Athletics: Power numbers on the upswing

The A's have hit 16 home runs over 17 games after hitting only seven in their previous 26. ... Coco Crisp is heating up. He went 3-for-3 on Friday and drove in at least two runs in all three games against Seattle. ... Kurt Suzuki is 16-for-50 in his last 12 games to snap an 0-for-22 streak. He has hit safely in 27 of 28 games in his career against the Red Sox.

Worth noting

In remembrance of Sept. 11, the Red Sox -- in conjunction with the American Red Cross and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center -- will hold a blood drive at Fenway Park between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. ET on Saturday. Over 1,000 people are expected. ... The A's have won 15 of their past 20 day games and are 32-15 in day games for the season.

Davis' bunt work paying dividends

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- For the second time all season on Wednesday, Rajai Davis reached first base safely on a bunt. It proved to be a big one, too, as he scored the game-tying run in a 4-3 victory over the Mariners.

Though Davis has tried to bunt -- both to get on base and in sacrifice situations -- on several occasions throughout the season, he's appeared to have trouble being consistent with it.

"I was just rushing it before, a lot of the time," Davis said. "That time, I slowed everything down, squared a little earlier and was able to get a good pitch. ... Having a good pitch selection helps with that, too."

Davis said bunting was a focus of his development while with the Pirates' organization in the early stages of the Minor Leagues, but he admitted it was a skill he "kind of got away from." Davis said confidence is also a big factor in his ability to lay down a bunt, something he said is growing.

"He actually practices bunting more than anybody on the team," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "He's out here all the time working on it, but it's a skill he's still getting better at."

Given his speed, Davis' ability to consistently lay down bunts could put pressure on opposing defenses, as he could be a stolen base away from scoring position. Geren said bunting could also affect the opposition in other ways.

"It brings infielders in closer, and it opens up holes for him to swing," Geren said.

Korach discusses King's influence

OAKLAND -- When Ken Korach signed with the A's radio broadcast team before the 1996 season, he had some big shoes to fill, those of Bay Area legend Lon Simmons. Together with the late Bill King, Simmons helped give a voice to a franchise needing an identity in 1981.

"They were like Jerry Lewis and Dean Martin," said A's Spanish broadcaster Amaury Pi-Gonzalez.

Having listened to King for three decades before joining him, Korach was expecting a bit of a transition period, but found it to be seamless.

"I felt a certain degree of pressure to live up to his expectations," Korach said. "But I never felt one bit of pressure once we started to work together. I felt comfortable from the first day. ... I never felt intimidated by him; I never felt uncomfortable. He was so willing to welcome me to the booth."

King -- who is up for the Ford C. Frick Award again this year -- worked with Korach for 10 years before his death shortly after the 2005 season. Though it's been nearly five years since King passed, Korach said he and his comrades think about the icon frequently.

After all, it's named the Bill King Broadcast Booth and there's a picture of King and his trademark handlebar mustache hanging on the wall.

"If you look back over your life and think of the people that influenced you, he was right of the top of the list," Korach said.

Cramer's long journey leads to A's

Lefty's unorthodox path to Majors ends with starting nod

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- From substitute teacher to starting southpaw for the Oakland A's, Bobby Cramer's path to the big leagues was unorthodox to say the least.

The A's on Friday promoted the 30-year-old hurler from Triple-A Sacramento, and he will make his Major League debut on Monday in Kansas City in place of recently demoted Vin Mazzaro.

"I love competing," Cramer said. "I was released in the spring of '05 and didn't play [professionally] for two years. I had to play Sunday ball just for fun. I just need some type of competition in my life."

Drafted in the 38th round of the 2001 First-Year Player Draft by Seattle, Cramer underwent Tommy John surgery in '02 before making his professional debut with the Tampa Bay organization in '03.

Once he walked away from the game in '05, Cramer took a job in Shell's pipeline division, working in maintenance and safety. After Shell let him go, Cramer started teaching at a continuation school in Orange County, Calif., where he used to substitute.

"Math was probably my worst subject in high school," Cramer said. "I basically had to take the book home and stay one section ahead of the kids every night and work out the problems myself and take tests and relearn it all, just so I could explain it to them and sound like I knew what I was talking about."

But the A's gave Cramer another shot in 2007. He pitched for Class A Stockton and Double-A Midland, going a combined 9-2 with a 2.77 ERA in 21 appearances (15 starts). The next season, Oakland invited Cramer to Spring Training, but a balky shoulder ended his first tenure with the club.

Once Cramer's shoulder healed, he signed with the Orange County Flyers of the independent Golden League on the advice of his agent. Cramer said he had conversations with a few clubs during the 2008 season, but that no one was interested enough to offer him a job until the A's re-signed him before the '09 campaign.

Cramer then went 5-5 with a 3.88 ERA across three levels of the Minors, including Triple-A, before the A's lent him to the Tigres de Quintana Roo in Cancun, Mexico, for the 2010 season. After Cramer went 13-3 with a 2.95 ERA, he was added to the Triple-A Sacramento roster on Aug. 5. He went 2-2 with a 1.94 ERA in seven starts with the RiverCats.

"I don't base my outings on how I'm doing against that current team," Cramer said. "I try to gauge it on what I think I would have done against a big league team that day. I felt like I had good enough stuff [in Mexico] that I would have got people out in Sacramento or maybe even here. To stay down there for the whole year was a little frustrating, but in hindsight, it worked out."

When comparing the Mexican League competition to its American counterpart, Cramer said the pitching was akin to Double-A quality, the hitting to Triple-A and the fielding to Class A. Cramer also has plenty of experience in the Latin American winter leagues, as he has played in Puerto Rico, Mexico and the Dominican Republic.

"I'm not going to light up the radar gun. I'm not going to blow anybody away. I don't have electric stuff," Cramer said. "I'm a control guy. I try and keep the ball down, move it in and out, try to change speeds. I'm your typical crafty lefty."

Sounds a bit like Dallas Braden, no?

A's manager Bob Geren said Cramer's position within the staff will be evaluated after his start on Monday. Since the A's have an off-day on Thursday, they could elect to skip Cramer's spot in the rotation.

"It's a good story on a personal level," Geren said. "But on a baseball level, he's been [Sacramento's] best pitcher, and that's what we tend to do. If we need a spot, we go with who's the hottest, and he's been throwing the ball well."

Cahill records 16th win, most for Oakland pitcher since 2006

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Trevor Cahill became Oakland's first 16-game winner in four years and Kurt Suzuki hit a two-run double as the A's beat the Boston Red Sox 5-0 on Friday night.

Daric Barton added a two-run single in the second as the A's knocked Clay Buchholz (15-7) out after only an inning-plus, his second-shortest outing as a starter and shortest in a noninjury situation.

Cahill (16-6), who began the year in the minors, became the first A's pitcher to reach 16 wins since Joe Blanton and Barry Zito in 2006. The only other pitcher in Oakland history to win more games without getting a victory in April was Vida Blue, who posted 17 wins in 1974.

This one hardly lived up to the billing of a pitchers' duel featuring 15-game winners and All-Star right-handers.

"Both are tops in baseball as far as ERA goes and performance," A's manager Bob Geren said beforehand.

Buchholz entered with a 2.25 ERA, to 2.72 for Cahill — Nos. 1 and 3 in the AL, respectively. Buchholz's went up to 2.53, while Cahill lowered his to 2.61.

The A's jumped on Buchholz in a hurry, starting with Coco Crisp's leadoff single in the first. Barton walked and Suzuki followed with his double.

Barton's big hit chased Buchholz after 39 pitches. His only shorter outing came in a one-inning stint at San Francisco on June 26. He left that one with a hyperextended left knee that he hurt running the bases.

Buchholz is winless in his last three outings following a four-start winning streak.

On the first play of the game, Crisp went over the center-field wall to steal a home run from Ryan Kalish.

Crisp also hit three singles against his former team and matched his career high with three stolen bases. He last stole three bags in a game on June 20, 2004, at Atlanta while with Cleveland.

This marks Boston's third trip to the Bay Area of the season — including one other visit to the Coliseum in July and a stop across the bay in San Francisco to play the Giants in June.

Cahill won for the fourth time in five starts, beating Boston for the first time in three career tries. He didn't allow an earned run for the sixth time in his last nine.

After a walk to No. 9 hitter Lars Anderson in the third, Cahill retired 10 of the next 11 batters. He allowed three hits, struck out four and walked two in seven innings.

Oakland's visiting clubhouse staff brought in extra lockers typically used by the NFL's Oakland Raiders in order to handle all the additional Red Sox. Their roster is at 34 after pitcher Matt Fox joined the team Friday. He was claimed off waivers from Minnesota on Thursday.

Craig Breslow and Henry Rodriguez each pitched an inning to complete the three-hitter.

NOTES

-- A's SS Kevin Kouzmanoff missed his fourth straight game and was still listed as day to day after experiencing lower back spasms Sunday at New York.

-- Oakland LHP Josh Outman threw a bullpen session and RHP Joey Devine, who like Outman is coming back from Tommy John reconstructive elbow surgery, played catch on flat ground.

-- Hall of Famer Rickey Henderson spent some of the game in the A's dugout.

Cahill and A's Shutout Red Sox

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post

Oakland, CA – One catch set the momentum of the game. A strategic, well practiced leap over the wall prevented the Boston Red Sox from scoring their first and only run. Falling 5-0, the Red Sox were shutout by the Oakland A's.

Top of the first frame Ryan Kalish hit what appeared to be a game opening home run. But center fielder Coco Crisp jumped over the wall extending his hand to grab the ball was definitely worthy of an ESPN Highlight.

"That was one of the best home runs I've ever robbed," Crisp said. "The key is not getting too close to the wall which allows you to jump into it." "For them not to draw first blood, it makes a huge difference."

Sox pitcher Clay Buchholz got a rocky start, he gave up a single to Crisp, a walk to Daric Barton, Kurt Suzuki hit a two-run double and scored the final run before the inning ended. By the second frame Barton hit another two-run double to give Oakland the lead 5-0.

"It wasn't a good night," manager Terry Francona said. "Buchholz was kinda flat and with four walks he never established a rhythm." "Coco made a great catch to take a run off the game, we just didn't have a whole lot going."

Francona pulled his starting pitcher bottom of the second inning. Buchholz gave up five hits, five runs (all earned), four walks and one strike. His last start he lost 3-1 to the Chicago White Socks giving up 2 runs on six hits, one walk and two strikeouts.

As for the A's Trevor Cahill, he notched his 14th shutout and advanced to 16-6. He lowered his overall ERA to 2.61 and opposing hitters against him are just .200, which is the lowest among qualifying American League starters. With 20 games left Cahill could still be in the running for the AL Cy Young Award if he wins his remaining four starts.

"This was a hug win for us," said Cahill. "I think the ball is in our court, I think if we keep winning and doing our job, good things will happen."

Good things did happen, like Crisp matching his career-high with three stolen bases just as he did June 20, 2004 in Atlanta. He has now converted 19 straight stolen base attempts, the longest streak for an Athletic since Stan Javier stole 28 straight in 1995.

Crisp also got a pre-game "pep" talk from MLB legend Rickey Henderson, who worked with both he and Rajai Davis during Spring Training on base running. Henderson who frequently visits the A's likes to check in and make sure guys are doing well.

"I just wanted to go out and do something in comparison to one of the greatest athletes of all time," said explained Crisp.

Cramer Added to A's Roster

Melissa Lockard, oaklandclubhouse.com 9/10/2010

Five years ago, Bobby Cramer was out of baseball and working for Shell Oil. Next week, he is expected to be pitching at Kaufmann Stadium against the Kansas City Royals.

The Oakland A's announced on Friday that left-hander Bobby Cramer has been added to the team's 40-man roster, with infielder Adam Rosales being moved to the 60-day disabled list. Cramer, who had been in the Triple-A Sacramento River Cats' rotation, is likely to start for the A's next week in the place of right-hander Vince Mazzaro, who was optioned to Sacramento in a surprise move earlier this week.

Cramer's path to the big leagues has been far from ordinary. While pitching for Long Beach State in 2002, Cramer injured his elbow and had Tommy John surgery. He would sign with the Tampa Bay Devil Rays that season and pitched for the Devil Rays' A-ball teams in 2003 and 2004. Despite posting ERAs in the threes at three different A-ball levels, Cramer was released by Tampa during spring training 2005.

Following his release, Cramer was out of baseball, taking a job with Shell Oil and later as a substitute high school teacher, teaching math. Craig Weissman, the scout who signed Cramer out of college, had joined the A's scouting staff and kept trying to convince Cramer to return to baseball and pitch for the A's. Weissman finally succeeded during the 2007.

Cramer joined the High-A Stockton Ports midway through that season and he quickly became one of the Ports' best pitchers. In 45 innings, he posted a 3.80 ERA and had a more than 4:1 K:BB ratio. He was promoted to Double-A Midland, where he performed even better, posting a 1.89 ERA in 52.1 innings. He made a start for the River Cats that post-season.

Cramer seemed poised to make the jump to Triple-A full-time in 2008, but a sore left shoulder limited him in winter ball and eventually led to his release by the A's. Cramer spent the entire 2008 season pitching in the Golden Baseball League, an independent league, where he had a 3.88 ERA and 95 strike-outs in 92.2 innings for his hometown Orange County Flyers. He would follow-up that showing with a standout season in the Puerto Rican Winter League.

Now healthy, Cramer was re-signed by the A's for the 2009 season. He began the year with Sacramento, but struggled for the first time in his career in the A's organization. In six outings, he had a 6.43 ERA and eight walks in 14 innings. Cramer was sent all the way back to Stockton temporarily, where he allowed only a run in 5.2 innings. Eventually, he settled in on the Rockhounds' roster. In 43 innings, he had a 3.35 ERA, but he saw his season once again cut short by injury.

Before the start of the 2010 season, Cramer's contract was loaned out by the A's to a team in the Mexican Summer League, the Quintana Roo Tigres in Cancun. Cramer led the Mexican League in wins (13), WHIP (1.12), complete games (5) and shut-outs (3). He was also the league's strike-out king and he had a 123:27 K:BB and a 2.95 ERA in 128 innings. At the conclusion of the Mexican League season, the A's re-acquired Cramer and added him to the Sacramento rotation.

The Southern California native picked up just where he left off in Mexico upon joining the River Cats. In seven starts, Cramer had a 1.94 ERA and 35 strike-outs against 11 walks over 41.2 innings. Six of those 11 walks came in one start, as he walked no more than one batter in any of the six other starts. He allowed no more than two runs in any start for Sacramento, as well.

Cramer will turn 32 this October, making him the oldest pitcher in the A's starting rotation despite having the least major

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento uses two blasts for Game 3 victory

Sacramento River Cats

Rolling over is for the dogs. These Cats come back.

The Sacramento River Cats avoided elimination with a 6-2 victory over the Tacoma Rainiers on Friday night in Seattle, and look to even the series at 2-2 Saturday night.

Matt Watson gave Sacramento an early 2-0 lead with a two-run home run in the first inning, and Michael Taylor put it out of reach with a three-run bomb in the sixth inning.

Vince Mazzaro, recently sent down from the Oakland A's, allowed one run over 5.0 innings for the victory, striking out five and walking two.

Sacramento has come back from a 2-0 series deficit once before, clawing from the hole against Salt Lake in 2007. The difference in that series is that Sacramento won the final three games at home. This time, after dropping the first two games against the Rainiers at home on Wednesday and Thursday, the River Cats will need to win three in a row on the road. With Cheney Stadium undergoing construction immediately following the regular season, Tacoma is playing its first-round home games at nearby Safeco Field, home of the Seattle Mariners.

It wouldn't be the first time Sacramento came back this season.

The River Cats overcame a 12.5-game deficit to the Fresno Grizzlies in the Pacific Coast League South Division standings to make these Playoffs. During that riveting tear up the standings, the River Cats used a franchise record 11-run comeback to defeat the Round Rock Express 13-11 on August 11.

And for the River Cats to come back on the road isn't out of the question either. Sacramento posted the league's second best road record this season (42-30), a mark far better than the team's home record (37-35).

In reversed roles, this scenario played out in the 2005 Playoffs, when Tacoma lost Games 1 and 2 at home to Sacramento, then beat the River Cats at Raley Field in Games 3, 4 and 5 to take the series.

On Friday, Eric Sogard walked in the first inning and scored on Watson's line drive over the right field wall.

Mazzaro opened on a roll, striking out all three batters swinging in the first inning. It was much needed consistency on the mound for Sacramento, which allowed 18 runs and 19 walks over the first two games of the series. Mazzaro walked two Saturday, with the Sacramento bullpen not allowing any bases on balls in 4.0 innings.

Sogard created more offense in the third inning. The shortstop opened the inning with a walk, and then advanced to second on a wild pitch and third on a stolen base. Josh Donaldson drove Sogard home with a sacrifice fly to center field for a 3-0 lead.

Greg Halman scored Eliezer Alfonzo on a sacrifice fly in the bottom of the third, and the score remained 3-1 until the sixth.

Watson singled to open the sixth, and Chris Carter walked to set the table for Taylor's opposite-field three-run blast.

Sacramento reliever Edwar Ramirez allowed one run over 2.0 innings, and Lenny DiNardo closed the game with 2.0 scoreless innings for the victory.

Hounds Pound In 10 Runs To Take 2-1 Advantage

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The franchise now known as the RockHounds was born in 1972 as the Midland Cubs, the Double-A affiliate of the Chicago Cubs. The original affiliation continued until 1985, when the California Angels became the franchise's parent club. The Midland Angels took the diamond from 1985 through 1998.

Why do we offer this history lesson?

From 1972 through 1998, the franchise reached the Texas League Championship Series twice in 27 seasons, with the Cubs sharing the title in 1975 (rain washed away the deciding games of the series).

Enter the Oakland A's and the beginning of the RockHounds era in 1999. While the RockHounds did not reach the post-season in their first six seasons, they consistently had winning records. In 2001, the RockHounds had the second best record in all of Double-A Baseball (30 teams), only to have the team with the best record (Round Rock) playing not only in the same league but in the same division as the 'Hounds.

In 2005, the RockHounds broke through, sweeping both half-seasons and capturing the first outright Texas League championship in franchise history, under manager Von Hayes. The next season, the club produced the first ever back-to-

back playoff appearances in franchise history, falling to eventual league champion Corpus Christi in the division championship.

The RockHounds won a second title, under manager Darren Bush, last season. "Bushy" has now guided the RockHounds to within one win of the first-ever back-to-back trips to the Texas League Championship Series.

The RockHounds defeated the Frisco RoughRiders, 10-7, Friday night at Citibank Ballpark to take a 2-games-to-1 lead in the best-of-5 South Division Championship Series.

With the teams splitting the first two games at Frisco, the third game is pivotal in a best-of-5, and the RoughRiders got on the board quickly. Marcus Lemon led the game off with a solo home run, and Engel Beltre followed with a 2-out, 2-run triple.

By the time the 'Hounds came to bat for the first time, they were down, 3-0. The RockHounds rallied right back in the home half of the 1st, tying the game at 3-3, and took the lead with a 3-run 2nd inning.

After a rough 1st inning, starter Matt Wright battle back, pitching through the 6th inning and allowing only one more run in that time, as the RockHounds pushed the lead to 10-4. Wright struck out eight Frisco batters, and his strong performance after the 3-run 1st was critical.

Fautino De Los Santos struggled in relief of Wright, giving up a 3-run home run to Renny Osuna, cutting the lead to 10-7.

Mickey Storey came in and allowed an infield single on a slow roller, but got an inning-ending double-play moments later, and dodged a rally to pitch a scoreless 8th (both clubs threatened in the 8th, but neither scored).

In the 9th, Neil Wagner came on to close, and continued a sensational late-season run, in which he has closed three games ... now including games 1 and 3 of the playoff series. In his three saves in September, Wagner has faced nine batters, retired them all, striking out five. He struck out the side in the last of the 10th Wednesday night in the series-opening win. Friday night, he struck out Guilder Rodriguez ... got Osuna on a checked-swing roller to first base (perhaps more impressive than the whiffs) ... and struck out Joey Butler on another 95-plus fastball to end the game and bring the RockHounds to one win from a pennant.

Offensively, the win was a complete "team" effort, with the 'Hounds scoring 10 runs and each of the 10 came on a single swing (no multiple-run RBI).

Jermaine Mitchell, again, was a major factor, going 3-for-4 with two walks, scoring three runs and driving in another. Jermaine took the roster spot vacated when Corey Brown was promoted back to Triple-A.

Alex Valdez went 3-for-5 with a double and drove in three runs for the 'Hounds, with Josh Horton adding a pair of ribbies. Matt Sulentic went 2-for-5 with a run scored and catcher Petey Paramore (who has been one of the the team's most consistent hitters down the stretch) went 1-for-3 and scored twice.

The RockHounds host Frisco Saturday night with a trip to the Texas League Championship Series on the line and ...

POST-GAME FIREWORKS!!

Game 4 Saturday night playoff baseball with post-game Fireworks ...

Game 5 ff there is a decisive fifth game, the RockHounds will host it Sunday at 6!

Stockton Ports: 2010 Season in Review

STOCKTON, Calif.-- In their 61st season in the California League, the Stockton Ports used a terrific second half to vault from fourth place in the North Division of the California League to second place, just 2.0 games out of first. The Ports, who finished the year 74-66 after finishing 31-39 in the first half, won the 2nd Half Championship to advance to the postseason, in search of an unprecedented 12th California League championship title. It was their first 2nd Half crown since 2005, and their first playoff appearance since 2008. But a red-hot Modesto Nuts team swept the Ports in the California League Mini-Series to end the season for the Boys of Banner Island. The Ports' success in the second half is best illustrated by their 14-game winning streak in August, which featured four consecutive sweeps. It was the longest winning streak in the League since the Lake Elsinore Storm won 13 straight games in 2007.

The Ports finished the regular season two games behind the first-place San Jose Giants in their division. They ended the year seventh in the League with a .269 team batting average and seventh in the League with a 4.60 team ERA. The Ports pitching staff was again first in the League with 1,163 strikeouts.

The 2010 club featured several A's prospects including: Grant Green (1st Round, 2009 draft), Stephen Parker (5th, 2009), Ryan Ortiz (6th, 2009), Petey Paramore (3rd, 2008), Jeremy Barfield (8th, 2008), Shawn Haviland (33rd, 2008), and many more. The Ports also welcomed several MLB players in rehab appearances with the club, including Dallas Braden, Coco Crisp, Mark Ellis, Conor Jackson, Brett Tomko, and Michael Wuertz. The Ports also welcomed A's legend and Hall of Famer Rickey Henderson to Banner Island Ballpark several times during the season, as a Roving Instructor with the Oakland Athletics.

The Ports were honored to end the season with several League Post Season Award winners including the 2010 Turf Manager of the Year (Justin Clarke), the 2010 Clubbie of the Year (Vic Zapien) and three Post Season All-Stars (Grant Green, Shawn Haviland and Stephen Parker). The Ports also had several players rank among League leaders this summer. Shortstop Grant Green finished the regular season ranking among the Top 10 Batters in the league with a .318 average, 174 hits, 107 runs scored, 39 doubles, six triples, 20 home runs and 87 RBI. Green was named the 2010 Ports Player of the Year for his performance. The 2010 season was his first full season of professional baseball. Right-handers Shawn Haviland and Justin Murray finished among the Top 10 Pitchers in the League. Shawn Haviland finished the year 9-6 with a 3.65 ERA and 166 strikeouts in 150.1 innings. Justin Murray posted a 10-4 record with a 3.67 ERA and 83 in 117.2 innings. Haviland finished the year second in the League in strikeouts, while Murray led the league with a .714 winning percentage.

Other Ports players ranked among League leaders as well. Third baseman Stephen Parker led the League with 139 games, and finished fourth in RBI (98), fourth in doubles (38), and second in walks (84). Parker also led among League third basemen with the most games (129), most putouts (94) and most double plays (35). Ports closer Paul Smyth finished tied for second in the League with 28 saves, while Ports lefty specialist Trey Barham finished first with 19 holds and second with 59 appearances. Ports outfielder Jeremy Barfield led the League with 24 outfield assists and tied for the League lead with most double plays by an outfielder (5).

The Ports were also the first team in the League this season to sweep the Weekly Awards. For the Week of August 16-23, Grant Green was selected as the League Player of the Week, while Shawn Haviland was the League Pitcher of the Week for the second time. Haviland won the League Pitcher of the Week award as well for his performance from July 26-August 2. Stephen Parker also won a League Player of the Week award for his work from April 26-May 3, while Jermaine Mitchell won the title for his performance from August 2-9.

But the Ports didn't just rank among League leaders, but also Oakland A's farm system leaders. Green and Parker both ranked among the Top 10 Batters in the organization, while Ian Krol, Murray and Haviland were among the Top 10 Pitchers in the farm system. Three of the top five strikeout kings competed with the Ports this summer. Haviland led all A's minor leaguers with 169 strikeouts. Ben Hornbeck was third among A's strikeout kings with 138, while Justin Marks had 136. Paul Smyth led the farm system with his 28 saves. Mike Spina was second among A's minor leaguers with 23 home runs, while Stephen Parker was fourth with 21 and Grant Green fifth with 20. Parker was also first among A's farmhands with 98 RBI. Jeremy Barfield finished third with 92, Mike Spina fourth with 88 and Grant Green fifth with 87. The Ports finished second among A's affiliates with a .269 team batting average. The Ports pitching staff had the highest team ERA among A's affiliates, but also led affiliates with 1,163 strikeouts.

The Ports congratulate their players on a great season, and look to build upon their success in the 2010 season next year with another crop of top A's prospects.

With the 2010 regular season in the books, the Ports look back at some of the highlights of the season.

Stockton Shutouts Rivals- On April 28, the Stockton Ports achieved something that hadn't been done in nearly a year: beat the San Jose Giants in a series at Municipal Stadium. The Ports did so by tossing their first shutout of the 2010 season, blanking San Jose by a final of 3-0 on Wednesday. Michael Wuertz made a rehab start for Stockton, while Justin Murray

tossed 5.1 shutout frames to pick up the win. Trey Barham and Paul Smyth also helped combine for the shutout win. Smyth collected his first of 28 saves in the contest.

Barfield Walk-Off Sac Fly- The Stockton Ports picked up their first walk-off victory of the year on May 4, coming back from a three-run deficit against the San Jose Giants in the bottom of the ninth, to win 8-7. Outfielder Jeremy Barfield collected the game-winning RBI, his 16th of the season, on a sacrifice fly to right. It was the first game the Ports have won after being behind after eight innings this season in addition to being the club's first walk-off of the year. The Ports were down 7-4 heading into the bottom of the ninth, with the bottom of the order due. Petey Paramore got things started with a single up the middle. Giants pitcher Jason Stoffel then issued a walk to the No. 9 batter, Kala Ka'aihue. Center fielder Shane Keough then reached first safely on an error by left fielder Wendell Fairley, who bobbled the fly ball. That loaded the bases with no out for Grant Green. Green worked a full count and fouled off a few pitches before striking out. Stephen Parker then stepped up to the plate and also worked a full count before walking. His walk scored Paramore to make it 7-5. Spina then slammed his second hit of the night, a double to right field to tie the game. With one out and two on, Jeremy Barfield came up to bat. He hit a long sacrifice fly to right field to bring home Parker and secure the win for the Ports.

Weather Changes for Storm- On Thursday, May 20, the Stockton Ports came within three outs of dropping the rubber match of their series with the Lake Elsinore Storm and dropping five of seven on their South Division road trip. For the second time this season, however, the Ports rallied when trailing after eight innings to score four in the ninth, stealing the series away from the Storm and winning by a final of 7-5. Trailing 5-3 heading into the top of the ninth, the Ports got their game-winning rally started with the bottom of their order. With Storm reliever Aaron Breit (2-3) on the hill, Jeremy Barfield and Todd Johnson each singled to start the inning. Michael Richard came up next and laid down a terrific sacrifice bunt between the mound and home plate. The ball was mishandled by Breit and Richard reached on the error, loading the bases with nobody out. Shane Keough came up next and, after working the count full, drilled a 3-2 pitch down the right field line to score Barfield and Johnson and tie the game. Grant Green followed and, saddled with an 0-for-12 mark in the series to that point, singled to left to score both Richard and Keough and give the Ports their first lead of the night at 7-5. Ports reliever Andrew Carignan (2-0) pitched a perfect eighth and recording back-to-back strikeouts to end his inning, Paul Smyth (SV, 7) came on to pitch the ninth and struck out the first two batters he faced en route to setting the side down in order and recording his second save of the series.

Stockton Salutes Dallas Braden- The Ports joined City of Stockton officials to honor Dallas Braden and display their pride in their Oakland A's pitcher who grew up in Stockton on May 22. Braden threw the 19th perfect game in Major League Baseball history, and second in Oakland A's history, on Mother's Day, May 9, at Oakland against the Tampa Bay Rays. Braden was honored in an on-field ceremony at Banner Island Ballpark on May 22. In addition to recognition by the Stockton Ports, Mayor Ann Johnston presented Braden with a key to the city and a proclamation. The Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce also presented Braden with the Chamber's newly published table top book about Stockton with a personal inscription and with a Lifetime Honorary Membership in the Chamber. The Ports also gave away a commemorative Dallas Braden poster to fans on May 23 to continue the weekend Dallas Braden celebration.

Spina Walk-off Win- First baseman Mike Spina powered the Stockton Ports to a 6-5 walk-off win over the San Jose Giants (, by collecting a three-run home run in the first inning and the game-winning two-RBI double in the ninth on May 28. It was the second Stockton walk-off of the year, and second at the expense of the Giants. The Ports pitching staff was also terrific in Friday night's game. Starter Kenny Smalley struck out five in 4.1 innings. Lance Sewell, Scott Hodsdon and Paul Smyth combined for 4.2 hitless, shutout innings of baseball for Stockton. The top of the Ports order was active in the game as well, as shortstop Grant Green finished the contest 3x4 and Todd Johnson finished 2x4 with an RBI to extend his hitting streak to 14 games. Spina collected just two hits in the game, but both came when it mattered most. Smyth collected the win, his second, while Jason Stoffel collected his second blown save and third loss of the year for San Jose.

Ladendorf Walks it Off- The Ports won their tenth home game of the year and their 25th game of the season in exciting fashion-a walk-off victory against the Bakersfield Blaze on June 7. Stockton's come-from-behind win was powered by second baseman Tyler Ladendorf, whose RBI single with one out in the ninth inning sealed the 9-8 walk-off victory. All Ports starters

collected a hit in the game, and Ladendorf finished 4x4 with two RBI. Ryan Ortiz collected three RBI in the contest, including a two-run home run. Grant Green and Stephen Parker also homered in the game for Stockton.

Ports Tie League Records- On Tuesday, June 15, the bats of the Stockton Ports were as hot as the Bakersfield sun. The Boys of Banner Island authored an offensive script that included a season-high 14 runs on 21 hits in a 14-3 win over the Bakersfield Blaze at Sam Lynn Ballpark. In the offensive outburst, the Ports tied a pair of Cal-League records. The Ports offense slugged 11 doubles in the game, matching a record set twice (High Desert vs. Bakersfield, May 23, 2000, Lake Elsinore vs. High Desert, June 28, 2009), and Stephen Parker hit four doubles in the contest, becoming the 14th player in league history to accomplish the feat.

Ports Showcase Offense on MLB Network- The Stockton Ports showcased their talent in their simulcast game on Comcast Hometown Network and MLB Network on Tuesday, June 29, collecting three home runs en route to an 8-6 victory over the Bakersfield Blaze. David Thomas, Grant Green and Jeremy Barfield each slammed a home run in the game as the Ports totaled nine hits in their victory. Stephen Parker and Ryan Ortiz both collected two hits in the game as well. Southpaw starter Ben Hornbeck allowed three runs on two home runs and eight hits in 5.0 innings of work. Lance Sewell picked up the win for Stockton, tossing 2.1 shutout innings after the Ports broke a tied game for good in the seventh inning. Paul Smyth collected his 11th save on the year, striking out the side in the ninth.

Independence Day Fireworks- There was plenty of excitement and drama to be had at Banner Island Ballpark on Independence Day, from game-changing hits to ejections to batting order complications. But the Stockton Ports finished with a bang before a sellout crowd of 5,570. The Stockton Ports came from behind and collected their third extra-innings victory of the season against the Modesto Nuts, 7-5, powered by Stephen Parker's powerful two-run, walk-off home run in the twelfth inning. Todd Johnson gave the Ports their first lead of the game in the seventh inning with a bases clearing triple, but the Paul Smyth blew the lead with two out in the top of the ninth, as Modesto tied the game. The two teams tangoed until Parker slammed his tenth homer of the year to end the game at four hours and eight minutes. It was the longest extra-innings game the Ports have played this season. Johnson finished the game 3x5 with three RBI, and Grant Green and Kent Walton both added a pair of hits in the contest. Parker finished the game with three RBI as well. Lance Sewell picked up the win, his third, in the game, and Jonathan Aristil collected his third loss. Ports relievers Scott Hodsdon, Scott Deal, Brett Hunter and Sewell combined for 5.0 shutout innings in the contest.

Late Heroics Lift Ports- The Stockton Ports put on an exciting game for 3,837 folks at Banner Island Ballpark on Thursday, July 15. Hometown hero LHP Dallas Braden made a rehab start in the game, and Mike Spina hit a walk-off three-run home run to center field to lift the Ports 10-9 over the Visalia Rawhide. It was the second straight win over the Rawhide, and secured the series victory for the Ports. Stockton hasn't defeated Visalia in two consecutive games since April 8 and 9. Scott Hodsdon picked up his first win of the season in the contest. Braden allowed three runs on seven hits in 4.0 innings in his rehab start. Trey Barham tossed 1.1 shutout innings in the contest to help hold the Rawhide. The Ports collected 12 hits in the game, and all but two players had a hit in the game. Jermaine Mitchell and Yusuf Carter homered in the game as well.

Stockton Sweeps Visalia- The Stockton Ports struggled mightily against the Visalia Rawhide, posting just a 4-15 record against them in the First Half. But the Ports found great success against the Rawhide in the second half, and completed a sweep of the Rawhide on July 16 with a 7-5 win at Banner Island Ballpark. The last time the Ports swept an opponent was on June 7-10, when they took four games from Bakersfield at home. This was their second sweep of the season, and their fifth win in their last six games. Stephen Parker sealed the win and the sweep with a three-run shot in the seventh inning off Ryan Robowski. Brett Tomko had a solid start, allowing five runs on seven hits (including two home runs) in 5.0 innings with three strikeouts. Lance Sewell picked up his sixth win, tossing 3.0 hitless and scoreless frames. Sewell hasn't allowed an earned run in his last 16.1 innings, and has allowed just four hits in that span. Paul Smyth collected his 15th save on the year as well.

Sewell Shuts Down Opponents- LHP Lance Sewell had a tremendous season with the Ports, ending the year with a 7-0 record, a 1.76 ERA 41 strikeouts in 46.0 innings. He held opposing batters to a .181 average before being promoted to Double-A Midland in July. For the Ports, Sewell retired 26 consecutive batters and 49 of 50 batters at one point of the

season. He tossed 24.0 consecutive innings without giving up an earned run from June 18 to July 27 to end his stint with the Ports.

Ports Make History with 40,000th League Game- The Stockton Ports made a bit of history on Tuesday, July 27, at Banner Island Ballpark, playing the 40,000th game in California League history. But the Ports dropped the milestone game, as the Lake Elsinore Storm scored eight runs in the tenth inning to defeat Stockton, 14-6. The Ports had a 6-5 lead heading into the top of the ninth, but Paul Smyth blew the save, allowing the tying run to score on an RBI single by Cole Figueroa. Smyth and Jose Pina combined to give up eight runs in the tenth inning. Smyth, in addition to collecting his ninth blown save of the year, also collected his fifth loss. Aaron Breit was the winner for Lake Elsinore. Ports starter Brett Tomko was in line for the win, as the Ports had a 6-5 lead when he left the game after five innings. Tomko allowed five runs (including four solo home runs) on six hits in 5.0 innings. Lance Sewell tossed two shutout frames to extend his scoreless streak to 22.1 innings. He has not allowed a run since June 26. The Ports scored all six of their runs on three hits, including two home runs.

Haviland, Ports One-Hit Storm- Shawn Haviland turned in a great performance on Thursday, July 29, one-hitting the Lake Elsinore Storm, to help lead the Stockton Ports to a 2-1 win. The lone hit he allowed was a solo home run by Cody Decker. The win was Haviland's seventh this season, which also snapped his three-game losing streak. Haviland struck out eight in 7.0 innings. It was the fourth time this season he's tossed a season-high seven innings. Paul Smyth bounced back well from his blown save and loss on Tuesday, as he picked up his 17th save by tossing 2.0 shutout innings with four strikeouts. Grant Green finished the game 1x4 with an RBI single to extend his hitting streak to 13 games. He's batting .375 (21x56) with five doubles, two home runs and 11 RBI in that span. He's just the second Ports batter to hit safely in 12 or more consecutive games. Todd Johnson set the team hitting streak with 15 games in the spring.

Thomson Terrific in Twelfth Straight Triumph- Matt Thomson is no stranger to helping his team keep a winning streak alive. Thomson was a part of the 2008 University of San Diego club that won 16 consecutive games, and he helped the Stockton Ports win their 12th straight game on Thursday, August 19, by striking out 10 batters in 5.0 shutout innings in his California League debut. The Ports defeated the Lancaster JetHawks by a 6-2 final to extend their streak. The win, combined with a Bakersfield loss, gave the Ports a 2.0 game lead in the Second Half standings. After walking the leadoff batter, Thomson settled in and struck out the next six batters he faced. He didn't give up a hit until the third inning. Thomson, the 12th round draft pick by the A's in the 2010 First-Year Player Draft, allowed just two hits and two walks in his 5.0 innings, and picked up the win. He joined the Ports on Thursday after starting the season with the Vancouver Canadians.

Ports Win 14th Straight Game- Returning to the site of their last loss, the Stockton Ports, for the 14th time in a row, refused to lose. The Boys of Banner Island scored early and often as they defeated the San Jose Giants by a final of 9-6 on August 21. The Ports, with losses from Bakersfield and Modesto, now hold a four game lead in the North Division standings and are alone atop the Wild Card standings. Stockton also had a starting pitcher making his Cal-League debut in left-hander Ian Krol (1-0). Krol allowed four runs on four hits in 5.0 innings. Yusuf Carter finished the game 2x5 with a two-run home run while Jeremy Barfield ended the game 3x4.

Ports Come From Behind to Win Home Finale- The Stockton Ports wrapped up the regular season at home with an exciting come-from-behind win on August 30, overcoming the San Jose Giants, by a 9-5 final with a six-run eighth inning. The Ports retain their 4.0 game lead over the second-place Bakersfield Blaze in the second half standings, decreasing their magic number to 4, to clinch the division. Grant Green hit a three-run home run to put the Ports ahead, 6-5, in the eighth, and the Ports went through the order as they added some insurance runs that inning. Green, along with Tyler Ladendorf and David Thomas, collected two hits in the contest. The Ports totaled 11 hits in Monday's win. Stockton starter Justin Murray allowed four runs on five hits in 5.1 frames. Scott Deal picked up his second win on the year, tossing three perfect frames to shut down the Giants and close out the game.

Ports Second-Half Champs After 9-8 Win- For the 11th time in franchise history, the Stockton Ports won a second half division crown, clinching the title on September 3 at Historic Sam Lynn Ballpark. Despite nearly blowing an early six-run lead and a late three-run advantage, the Ports were able to hang on in a thrilling finish, stranding the possible-tying run in scoring position and defeating the Blaze by a final of 9-8. The loss not only clinched the second-half crown for Stockton, but

also eliminated the Blaze from playoff contention. Stockton went without a hit from Parker's three-run homer in the second until the start of the eighth when Jeremy Barfield reached on an infield single. The score remained 7-6 until the ninth when the Ports scored two huge insurance runs on RBI singles from Grant Green and Yusuf Carter to make it a 9-6 lead. The runs were charged to Hector Nelo who pitched an inning-plus in relief.

Cougars Rout Bandits, Go to Round 2

Kane County advances playoff run by winning consecutive road games

DAVENPORT, Iowa – The Kane County Cougars' post-season run will continue for another series. The Cougars crushed the Quad Cities River Bandits, 15-7, Friday night at Modern Woodmen Park to win the series, 2 games to 1, and advance to the Division Championship round of the Midwest League playoffs. The Cougars will take on the Clinton LumberKings on Saturday night at 6 CT at Elfstrom Stadium. Game 2 and, if necessary, Game 3 will be in Clinton, Iowa, on Sunday and Monday, respectively.

The Cougars trailed, 3-0, and had only one hit through five innings but they broke through with a seven-run sixth inning and never looked back. The Cougars also added three runs in the seventh, one in the eighth and four in the ninth. They ended with 16 hits, 15 of which came after the fifth inning. Rashun Dixon drove in three, and Myrio Richard, Leonardo Gil and Tyreace House each had two RBIs. Five Cougars had multiple hits, and every player either had a hit or drove in a run.

On the mound starter Chris Mederos (1-0) got the win with five innings of three-run ball. Rob Gilliam gave up three runs in 1 1/3 innings, Aaron Larsen and Max Peterson turned in scoreless relief and Connor Hoehn allowed one run in the ninth before recording the final out. The Cougars won their first playoff series since 2006.

Game 1 against Clinton begins Saturday night at 6 CT at Elfstrom Stadium. Dan Straily (10-7, 4.32) will pitch for the Cougars, and Taylor Stanton is expected to start for Clinton, who beat Cedar Rapids on Friday night to advance. The Cougars' game will be broadcast on WBIG 1280-AM and online at kccougars.com with pre-game coverage starting at 5:45 p.m.