

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, September 14, 2010

### Castoff Bobby Cramer wins in major league debut as Oakland A's topple Kansas City Royals

By Tom Keegan, special to Oakland Tribune

Pitching Monday afternoon for the A's and for all released minor leaguers, left-hander Bobby Cramer earned a victory that should give hope to every young ballplayer who's been told he doesn't have what it takes.

Making his major league debut a month-and-a-half shy of his 31st birthday, Cramer pitched one out into the sixth inning in the A's 3-1 victory over the Kansas City Royals at Kauffman Stadium. He allowed one run, four hits and one walk while striking out four.

"It validates all the tough times I've been through," said Cramer, who has had three elbow surgeries.

Times such as when he worked for Shell Oil after being released by Tampa Bay, which signed him as an undrafted free agent out of Long Beach State. Times such as when he worked as a substitute teacher at a high school where students with attitude problems were sent.

"I had Angels season seats in 2006, up there in the stands with my roommate, and it was tough," said Cramer, out of baseball in 2005 and 2006. "I never made that transition to fan. I felt like I was a player who was just taking some time off. I knew I had something more in me."

Craig Weissmann, a scout with the A's, never put the idea of Cramer wearing a major league uniform out of his mind. He signed Cramer with Tampa Bay in 2003 and twice recommended him to the A's.

"I wouldn't be here if not for him," Cramer said. "He's got a nice present coming for this September call-up."

Back in May 2007, Cramer was helping coach baseball at his alma mater, Loara High in Anaheim.

"It was a Wednesday morning, I was sick at home, lying in bed and Craig called me," Cramer said.

Weissmann asked him how his job at Shell was going, and Cramer told him he lost it after the union was voted out. Weissmann asked if he wanted to pitch. When Cramer asked where and was told Stockton, he didn't do back flips.

"Man, I'm 27, going to A ball, but the beautiful thing is they were actually playing in Rancho Cucamonga, which is 40 miles from my home in Anaheim," Cramer said. "I was like, 'Why not? What else am I going to do?' I joined the team. No tryout. No bullpen. Nothing."

He rode with the team to Stockton and was activated that night.

"I (struck out) six of the first seven batters I faced, which kind of reassured me that maybe I made the right decision," Cramer said.

A's manager Bob Geren said he was not surprised at Cramer's poise.

"When you travel a road as tough as the one he has, I think he's more appreciative of this opportunity and a little older, more mature, a little tougher mentally, sometimes, than a young kid," Geren said.

Cramer began the season with the Quintana Roos of the Mexican League and then pitched for the A's Triple-A affiliate in Sacramento.

He received a boost Monday from the Royals' shoddy defense -- three errors and a passed ball -- and teammate Jack Cust, who hit his 11th home run of the season in the sixth inning to put the A's up 3-1.

Mike Aviles homered in the fourth for the Royals' lone run.

Relievers Brad Ziegler, Jerry Blevins, Michael Wuertz, Craig Breslow and Andrew Bailey (save No. 24 on the season) followed Cramer to the mound.

Geren said he hadn't made up his mind whether he'll skip Cramer's next turn or use Thursday's off day to give everyone extra rest.

Either way, Cramer isn't likely to have control problems.

"I really hate walking guys," said Cramer, who pitching with a 1-0 lead, fell behind Jarrod Dyson, his first major league hitter, 2-0, and then surrendered a double. He quickly picked him off second, a play called from the dugout. "I'm a control guy and I had it today."

Notes: An A's source confirmed four players are expected to be called up from Sacramento: first baseman/outfielder Chris Carter, right-hander Vin Mazzaro, catcher Josh Donaldson and middle infielder Eric Sogard. All except Sogard saw time with Oakland earlier this season. ... Cust's homer was career No. 100. "It's definitely good to get it over with," he said. "I've been sitting on it for a while. It's nice to get it when we needed another run and everybody wanted (Cramer) to get the win." ... Akinori Iwamura played third base, walked twice and was hitless in two at-bats in his A's debut. ... Coco Crisp stole two bases to push his career-best total to 32.

## **Federal appeals court keeps lid on seizure of baseball players' steroids tests**

By Howard Mintz [hmintz@mercurynews.com](mailto:hmintz@mercurynews.com)

A federal appeals court on Monday reinforced an earlier ruling barring federal prosecutors from using the names and urine samples of more than 100 major league baseball players who testified positive for steroids in 2003 but scaled back the legal sweep of a prior decision that outlined how far investigators can go in searching electronic records.

In a 9-2 ruling, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals once again found that federal agents overreached in searches that resulted in the seizure of the testing results, which were connected to what was supposed to be an anonymous testing program by professional baseball to evaluate the scope of the steroid problem in the sport.

The ruling is likely to cut off any further investigation into the steroid tests that could publicly expose the names of 104 players who allegedly tested positive, although some of them have already been revealed in published reports, including New York Yankees slugger Alex Rodriguez and Boston Red Sox slugger David Ortiz.

It remains to be seen whether the ruling has any impact on the perjury prosecution of home run king Barry Bonds, who is alleged to have tested positive in the 2003 testing program and is set for trial in March on allegations that he lied to a federal grand jury that same year about using performance-enhancing drugs.

The 9th Circuit, as it did in an August 2009 ruling, found that investigators violated search and seizure protections by seizing information on computer records in Long Beach and Nevada unrelated to their probe of the Balco steroids scandal. But unlike last year's ruling, when the 9th Circuit established clear guidelines for the search of electronic records, the court this time limited the scope of their decision to the Balco investigation and removed firm rules on such searches that government lawyers insisted were too restrictive.

While calling the search an "obvious case of overreaching," the 9th Circuit cautioned that it underscores "the challenges faced by modern law enforcement in retrieving information it needs to pursue and prosecute wrongdoers and the threat to the privacy of innocent parties from a vigorous criminal investigation."

The U.S. Justice Department had asked the 9th Circuit to revisit the issue and appeared to gain some relief from the strict guidelines authored by Chief Judge Alex Kozinski. Nevertheless, the government could still ask the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case because of the finding that the drug test results cannot be used in further investigations.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew Parrella declined to comment.

Elliot Peters, the lawyer for the major league baseball players' union, said he remained pleased with the result, even if the case has less overall impact on government searches.

"We still win, so we're happy," he said.

## **Opinion: Why Silicon Valley CEOs are cheering on a San Jose ballpark for the A's**

By Tom Werner and Mike Klayko, special to the Mercury News, 9/14/2010

When most of us think of "green jobs", the first thing that comes to mind might be solar power, hybrid vehicles or clean technology. However, there's another kind of green job on the horizon in San Jose, and it's one that 75 Silicon Valley CEOs, including ourselves, are proud to support: the thousands of new jobs that will be generated by the construction and operation of a downtown San Jose ballpark for the baseball team in green -- the future San Jose A's.

Describing the jobs that would be created by construction and operation of the ballpark as green is more than just a catchy pun. It's reality. A's ownership has already committed to building a ballpark that meets LEED standards by utilizing some of the latest models in sustainable building and operations. The ballpark will be built on a site in downtown San Jose and located near multiple public transit options -- Caltrain, light rail, bus and the future BART line -- enabling fans to leave the car (and traffic) at home.

As we've seen with the tremendous success of the Sharks and nearby HP Pavilion, the jobs generated by a community asset like an arena or ballpark extend beyond the immediate site and into surrounding restaurants, hotels and retail. The addition of another entertainment venue in downtown San Jose will also help attract employers downtown and throughout Silicon Valley.

But our support for the A's stadium isn't limited to jobs or attracting new businesses. It would be a home run for all of us who call Silicon Valley home. That's why the Silicon Valley Leadership Group sponsored a recent letter to Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig urging him to approve moving the A's to San Jose.

In unprecedented fashion, business leaders including Cisco's John Chambers, Yahoo!'s Carol Bartz, eBay's John Donahoe, Adobe's Shantanu Narayen and Kleiner Perkins' John Doerr joined us, and 68 others, in signing the letter. While many of us are business competitors, we are community collaborators when it comes to improving the quality of life for our employees and neighbors.

Still, good economic development is undeniably important to our region. A recent independent economic impact report projects that the ballpark would generate \$130 million in annual economic impact locally. Over a 30-year period the ballpark is projected to generate a total economic impact of \$2.9 billion for the local economy.

In addition, the ballpark is projected to generate more than \$1.5 million per year in net new tax revenues for the city's general fund -- money that could be used to support vital public services in our neighborhoods, not just downtown but across the city. Another \$1.9 million per year would be generated to support other public agencies and services including affordable homes, county services, schools, community colleges and flood protection.

The Silicon Valley Leadership Group, with more than 300 member companies from the innovation economy, is comprised of both devoted A's and Giants fans. We strongly believe that both teams will thrive in a vibrant two-team market -- and that the Bay Area should join other two-team markets in Major League Baseball where the teams successfully share their common geographic territory. Along with other respected and diverse organizations, we stand ready to offer any support needed to move this important project forward.

The commissioner has been studying the proposed move for 18 months. In Silicon Valley, that's three product cycles. We hope to hear of his positive response soon.

TOM WERNER, CEO of SunPower Corp. and MIKE KLAYKO, CEO of Brocade, are the board chair and vice chair respectively of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. They wrote this article for this newspaper.

### **Cramer's path leads to 1st MLB win, A's beat KC**

Associated Press

Bobby Cramer kept believing in himself all those years, even if few others did.

Cramer's long and winding trek culminated with a win in his major league debut Monday when he pitched the Oakland Athletics past the Kansas City Royals 3-1.

"Just getting here was amazing in itself, but now that I'm here I want to pitch well and want to show everybody who I think I can be up here," he said.

Cramer (1-0), a left-hander who turns 31 next month, started his pro career in 2003 in the Tampa Bay system. Cut by the Rays, he was a substitute high school math teacher and worked in pipeline maintenance while out of baseball in 2005-06.

Cramer played in an independent league in 2008, then began this year in the Mexican League.

"There were times I felt this was an uphill battle, that I may never get over that hump," he said. "I never doubted my own ability. I had a lot of internal confidence. I felt like I was good enough. That's what made me persist. I wanted to challenge myself to get to the next level."

Cramer held the Royals to one run and four hits in 5 1-3 innings. He struck out four and walked one.

Cramer went 13-3 with a 2.95 ERA in 22 games with Quintana in Mexico this season.

At that point, he wasn't about to give up.

"When I got released in '05, I tried to convince myself I was done," he said. "I was with Tampa and at the time they were a struggling organization, that would give young guys a chance and promote you if you played well. I couldn't even get out of A ball with them. I thought that was God's way of trying to tell me that this just isn't it. The problem is I quit physically, but I never quit mentally."

Cramer became the oldest pitcher in Athletics franchise history to make a start in his big league debut since Steve Gerkin for the Philadelphia A's on May 13, 1945.

"When you travel a road as tough as the one he has, I think he's more appreciative of this opportunity, a little older, more mature, tougher mentally sometimes than a young kid," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I'm very happy with him going that deep into the game and keeping a lead. You'll definitely see him again."

Andrew Bailey worked the ninth for his 24th save in 27 opportunities.

Jack Cust hit his 100th home run, connecting in the Oakland sixth off Bryan Bullington.

Mike Aviles homered in the fourth for the only run off Cramer. Aviles hit his first home run since May 9, a span of 316 at-bats, and finished with three of the Royals' seven hits.

Luke Hochevar (5-5) lost in his first start since missing nearly three months with a sprained right elbow. He gave up two unearned runs and two hits in five innings. He walked three and threw just 39 strikes in 78 pitches.

"I didn't feel like my command was sharp," Hochevar said. "I had too many three-ball counts. I put myself in that situation. If I'm on top of my game the defense is going to be there. But when I'm lulling my defenders to sleep, that's when errors happen. I'm past the elbow issue. Now it's about executing pitches and getting batters out."

The A's took advantage of sloppy Royals fielding to take an early lead.

"I wouldn't even classify it as an eyesore," Royals manager Ned Yost said of his defense. "It was worse. It wasn't good baseball. We'd still be out there playing if we hadn't given them a couple."

In the first inning, Aviles and Hochevar made errors and rookie catcher Lucas May was charged with a passed ball. Aviles' wild throw from second base on what could have been a double-play grounder by Kurt Suzuki allowed Coco Crisp to score.

Crisp began the game reaching on Hochevar's error and stealing second. Crisp has stolen at least one base in five straight games, totaling nine in that span, to run his total to a career-high 32.

Crisp's string of 24 steals ended in the fifth when he was caught trying to swipe third base.

Royals center fielder Jarrod Dyson, making his first big league start, dropped Cliff Pennington's fly in the second for an error that let Aki Iwamura score.

Notes: KC utilityman Willie Bloomquist was pulled from the starting lineup and traded to the Cincinnati Reds. The Royals will receive a player to be named or cash. ... The A's transferred OF-1B Conor Jackson, who had sports hernia surgery Sept. 1, to the 60-day disabled list to make roster space for Iwamura, who was signed as a free agent. Iwamura started at third as 3B Kevin Kouzmanoff missed his seventh straight game with lower back spasms.

## **A's call-ups to include Carter and Mazzaro**

Staff and News Services, San Francisco Chronicle

The A's will call up four players now that Triple-A Sacramento's season is over, The Chronicle has learned: first baseman/outfielder Chris Carter, right-hander Vin Mazzaro, catcher Josh Donaldson and infielder Eric Sogard.

It is unclear if Mazzaro, the team's fifth starter until he was demoted last week, will return to the rotation immediately, especially considering that his replacement, Bobby Cramer, won his big-league debut Monday. If the A's were to at least briefly use a six-man rotation, however, it is the only way the team would be able to have the top four starters lined up for next week's series against the division-leading Rangers.

Because Sogard is not on the 40-man roster, the team will have to take a player off the roster.

Outfielder Travis Buck, a onetime starter in Oakland, will not be called up, and he said Monday that if he's no longer in the A's plans, "I'm OK with that. I've seen the big picture; I know there's a business side of the game. If my time is up in Oakland, I've enjoyed it."

Buck said he's just happy he finished the season healthy after several years of battling injuries, and he realized he probably wouldn't come up when the A's acquired Jeremy Hermida, which he called "a good pickup."

**San Jose Giants win:** The Giants' Class-A affiliate rallied to beat Modesto 8-2, winning its North Division playoff series 3-0. Michael Sandoval and Ehire Adrianza homered for the Giants.

**Reds get outfield help:** Down to two fully healthy outfielders for their playoff push, the Reds acquired utilityman Willie Bloomquist from the Royals on Monday for a player to be named or cash. The Reds also recalled right-handed reliever Jared Burton from Triple-A Louisville.

**Briefly:** Josh Johnson, who went 11-6 with a career-best 2.30 ERA this season, was shut down by the Marlins as a precaution for back pain. ... Johan Santana is set to have shoulder surgery today. The Mets say a second opinion given by noted orthopedist Dr. James Andrews confirms that the two-time AL Cy Young Award winner has a torn anterior capsule on the front and bottom of his left shoulder and that surgery is the best course of action.

## **A's leading off**

San Francisco Chronicle

**Caught nabbing:** Coco Crisp's string of 24 successful stealing attempts ended when he was caught trying to swipe third base. Stan Javier holds the A's record of 28, set in 1995.

## **Cramer caps journey with debut win vs. KC**

### **Lefty earns first big league victory; Cust hits 100th career home run**

By Robert Falkoff / Special to MLB.com | 09/13/10 8:39 PM ET

KANSAS CITY -- Whether he was pitching in Mexico, watching the Angels from the stands during a baseball sabbatical or toiling in the Minor Leagues, Bobby Cramer never gave up hope that he might some day find a "W" next to his name in a Major League box score.

It finally happened for Cramer on Monday.

In his Major League debut, Cramer allowed just four hits and one run through 5 1/3 innings as the A's brushed past the Royals, 3-1, at Kauffman Stadium. Five Oakland relievers chipped in to do their part in making sure that Cramer's debut ended with a victory.

Cramer's only glitch was a fourth-inning homer to straightaway center by Mike Aviles. The A's, who cashed in a couple of early unearned runs, got a bit of breathing room in the sixth on Jack Cust's 100th career home run. Then Cramer retired Jarrod Dyson in a lefty-vs.-lefty matchup to start the Kansas City sixth. Manager Bob Geren went to the bullpen at that juncture and Cramer, who had waited so long to get a Major League win, was forced to wait a little longer from the Oakland bench.

A few nervous innings later, Cramer wore a contented smile in the A's clubhouse. At 30, Cramer was the fourth oldest player in Oakland history to make his Major League debut.

"Everybody knows that I didn't have the easy road," Cramer said. "I've been here and been there. Just getting the call finally was a dream come true, but then to go out, have the game I did and get the win in my first Major League game is unreal."

Cramer walked only one and was able to keep his pitches down for the most part.

"I missed the fat part of the bat on everybody except one," Cramer said.

Cramer's big break this year came after he flourished in the Mexican League, returned to the Oakland organization and had a 1.94 ERA in seven starts for Triple-A Sacramento.

The A's saw enough to give him the opportunity and Cramer took full advantage.

"I'm a control guy and I had it today," Cramer said.

Cramer, who originally signed with Tampa Bay in 2003, didn't play baseball in 2005 and '06. He had season tickets to Angels' games in '06.

"It was tough because I never made that transition to being a fan," Cramer said. "I felt like I was a player who was just taking some time off. I knew I had something more in me."

Cramer's first significant exposure to Triple-A came during his seven starts at Sacramento this year.

"I've just concentrated on getting to the next level and then to the level above that," Cramer said. "Right time, right place is what it's about. Oakland is the right place for me this year."

Cramer's mother, girlfriend and best buddy made the trip to Kansas City for his debut. Geren said that although it's up in the air about when Cramer might start again because of an off-day on Thursday, the lefty will get more opportunities this season.

"He looked very comfortable," Geren said. "He threw strikes and I was very happy about him going that deep into the game and keeping a lead."

Kansas City manager Ned Yost was also taken by Cramer's poise in his Major League debut.

"He didn't look scared," Yost said. "He was on the attack and looked like a guy who has been through it enough to understand he has to be able to do everything well."

The A's benefitted from some sloppy Kansas City defense to give Cramer an early lead. The Royals committed two errors in the first and the second one -- an errant throw from second baseman Aviles -- allowed Coco Crisp to score.

In the second, center fielder Jarrod Dyson misplayed a Cliff Pennington liner to cost Kansas City another run. After the Aviles homer brought the Royals within 2-1 in the fourth, the left-handed-hitting Cust responded to a pronounced defensive shift by taking an outside pitch by reliever Bryan Bullington to the left-field seats.

"You just have to hit the ball where it's pitched," Cust said. "I've hit a lot of homers the other way, but mostly to left-center. Not too many of mine have gone to dead left like that."

The A's managed just four hits, but that turned out to be enough to reward Cramer.

"He has had a long road," Cust said. "We wanted to get a 'W' for the guy. Luckily, we got a couple of breaks early and then I hit the home run. I'm sure this was a day he'll cherish forever."

### **No hits, no prob: A's plate two without a knock**

By Tom Singer / MLB.com | 09/13/10 9:09 PM ET

In the baseball lexicon, "You can't win if you don't play" must be closely followed by "You can't score if you don't hit."

Not necessarily, as the Oakland A's again proved early in their game against the Royals on Monday afternoon.

The A's plated one run in the first on a pair of errors, and another in the second on a walk, a balk and another error.

By taking a 2-0 lead long before Mark Ellis would register the A's first hit with a leadoff single in the fourth, Oakland claimed a rarity.

But it was hardly a record for most runs scored in a game by a team before it notched its first hit.

This is one of those nebulous baseball records. In fact, the most runs without a hit were posted by a team that still hasn't gotten that first knock.

On July 1, 1990, the Chicago White Sox did not get a hit against the Yankees' Andy Hawkins, yet won 4-0.

Hawkins, not credited with a no-hitter since the game was in Chicago (hence he did not get to pitch a ninth inning), stepped into a sinkhole after retiring the first two batters in the bottom of the eighth.

Sammy Sosa (yes, that Sammy Sosa) reached on an error by third baseman Mike Blowers. Hawkins then walked the bases loaded and watched as left fielder Jim Leyritz and right fielder Jesse Barfield dropped consecutive fly balls to escort the four runs home.

As for "normal" circumstances, the unofficial record for most runs scored before the first hit is held by the Philadelphia Phillies, who were helped to a 3-0 lead over the Cardinals on June 26, 1991.

St. Louis starter Pat Combs began the game with three consecutive walks, surrendered a sacrifice fly, then issued two more walks to force in another run. Reliever Bruce Ruffin took over to give up a sacrifice fly for the third run. An intentional walk reloaded the bases before the Phillies' first hit, a two-run single by pitcher Bryn Smith, made it 5-0.

All five runs of course were charged to Combs, who thus gave up five runs but no hits.

Remarkably, as such, Combs only tied a record: He is one of five starting pitchers (plus reliever Mitch Williams, in 1988) to allow five earned runs without giving up a hit.

However, in all those circumstances, the hapless starter was yanked with men on base, and subsequent base hits off the reliever finished the damage.

This is not ancient history, however. Dontrelle Willis was the latest victim, on June 4, 2009, against Boston in Detroit's Comerica Park.

After having retired the first six men he faced, Willis began the third by hitting Jacoby Ellsbury. Two walks sandwiched around a strikeout loaded the bases. Two more walks forced in two runs, and Willis made way for reliever Zach Miner -- who promptly served up a two-run double to Jason Bay, then a run-scoring infield grounder that completed Willis' line.

The two-runs-before-a-hit trick has been turned numerous other times, including by two other teams that found ways to win while being no-hit -- by 2-1 scores in both instances.

On April 30, 1967, the Tigers beat the Orioles despite being held hitless by Steve Barber and Stu Miller, who came on to get the final out in the top of the ninth.

On April 12, 1992, the Indians beat the Red Sox despite being held hitless by Matt Young (also not credited with a no-no, the game having taken place in Cleveland).

Those qualify as post-graduate courses in the school of hard knocks. Still, these are Major Leaguers, professional ballplayers, so there is a limit to the freakiness.

Not so in the wonderful world of amateur ball, where it's all about the joy of playing -- and sometimes that's a good thing.

In Mississippi prep softball this spring, the Resurrection Eagles beat Sacred Heart 14-2. Didn't get a single hit.



## **Iwamura joins club, contributes to win**

By Robert Falkoff / Special to MLB.com

KANSAS CITY -- When the Oakland A's got off the team bus and filed into the visitors' clubhouse Monday morning, Aki Iwamura was already there waiting for them.

Iwamura, who has been signed to fill a void at third base as Kevin Kouzmanoff recovers from lower back pain, had an early-morning wakeup call in Tampa Bay and was on a 7:45 a.m. ET flight bound for Kansas City. Manager Bob Geren immediately penciled Iwamura's name into the lineup for Monday's series opener against the Royals.

Iwamura was 0-for-2 with one walk, one strikeout and scored a run in the A's 3-1 victory over the Royals.

"My agent called me [Sunday] and said, 'You're going to Oakland.' "I'm just excited to be here," Iwamura said. "I'm focused on helping this team however I can the rest of this season."

Iwamura, who was released by the Pirates on Friday, burst into prominence in 2008 at Tampa Bay when he helped the Rays reach the World Series. It was Iwamura who fielded Jed Lowrie's grounder and stepped on second for the final out against the Red Sox in the American League Championship Series.

Iwamura has been reunited with Gabe Gross, who was also on that Rays AL championship club.

"He's an experienced guy, a Gold Glover in Japan," Geren said. "He's a solid, fundamental player who gives you a real good at-bat."

Geren put Iwamura in the No. 7 slot in the batting order for his Oakland debut.

"That's where we'll start him now, and we'll see how he looks and how the rest of the team is swinging," Geren said. "Our lineup has been very consistent with Coco [Crisp] No. 1 and [Daric] Barton No. 2. I'm going to leave that the way it is because they've been doing a good job in those spots."

### **Geren knows A's still in division hunt**

KANSAS CITY -- A's manager Bob Geren knows his club faces long odds in its quest to catch Texas in the American League West. But Geren points to that four-game series against the Rangers on Sept. 23-26 as a reason to hope.

"It's a real good experience for our young guys to be playing in meaningful September games," Geren said. "We still have an outside chance to catch them."

Geren's message is that the A's need to concentrate on being within range heading into that Texas series 10 days out. After facing the Royals, Oakland will face the Twins and White Sox before seeing the Rangers.

Texas is coming off a sweep of the Yankees and riding a five-game winning streak.

"They were down two of those games late and came back and won," Geren said. "That gives them a nice little boost, but we still feel like we're alive."

### **A's ready for some football**

KANSAS CITY -- It was baseball by day and football by night for a big part of the A's traveling party.

Manager Bob Geren and several Oakland players have plans to take in the Chargers-Chiefs game after their matinee against the Royals. All the A's had to do was walk across the parking lot for Monday Night Football at adjacent Arrowhead Stadium.

Geren, who is from San Diego, has strong interest in the Chargers. Reliever Brad Ziegler, who grew up in nearby Odessa, Mo., is a life-long Chiefs fan.

"I've got my Jamaal Charles jersey hanging in my locker," Ziegler said. "I told the guys that the atmosphere you're going to get on Monday night in the opener against a division team will be tough to beat."

Monday's A's-Royals game was originally scheduled as a night game, but was switched to the afternoon to accommodate Monday Night Football.

### **Back pain puts Kouzmanoff out of KC series**

KANSAS CITY -- A's manager Bob Geren has ruled out third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff for the remainder of the Kansas City series. Kouzmanoff is officially listed as day-to-day with lower back pain.

"We'll see how he makes progress," Geren said. "But it won't be [Tuesday] or the next day. It's going to be a few more days. He still has to pass some tests on the field and take some batting practice and fielding practice before he would be considered ready to play in a game. That's still a ways off."

## **A's September run continues Tuesday in KC**

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com

While the Athletics are hanging on to the fringes of playoff contention, the Royals have their gaze planted firmly on next season.

The two teams will lock horns again on Tuesday, continuing a three-game series after the A's took Game 1, 3-1. Oakland, currently eight games back in the American League West, will need to continue to string together some wins to have even a shot at catching the Rangers.

At this point, it would take a fairly miraculous comeback for the Athletics to enter serious playoff contention, as the club hasn't been any closer than seven games back since June 25. Still, A's manager Bob Geren isn't giving up on the club's playoff hopes.

"It's a real good experience for our young guys to be playing in meaningful September games," Geren said. "We still have an outside chance to catch them."

The A's will need another strong outing from Gio Gonzalez, who will try to build on an already strong season by going for his 15th win. The left-hander has won each of his past four starts, all quality starts. His emergence in the rotation has been a big reason the A's have stayed in the conversation at all.

In his previous start, a win over the Mariners, Gonzalez allowed three runs -- all via the home run. But it was all the damage he allowed, and in a feat that impressed his manager, Gonzalez didn't allow the early home runs to derail his gameplan.

"He stayed with his game and didn't let the home runs affect him," Geren said. "It seems like we've talked about the way he's matured a lot this year, and that was just another example of how he didn't let anything affect him. He keeps calm about it."

While Gonzalez has breezed through his past four starts to get wins, the opposite has been true for Tuesday's Kansas City starter, Zack Greinke. Greinke, who is likely chief among those who is looking ahead to next season, hasn't won any of his past four starts, despite turning in some pretty solid efforts although none as impressive as the Greinke of 2009.

Greinke took a no-hitter into the fifth inning, before allowing four earned runs to the Twins in eight innings in his last start.

"Overall, I pitched all right," Greinke said. "I definitely wasn't pitching good enough to do a no-hitter."

### **Athletics: Kouzmanoff out for Royals series**

A's third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff will remain on the bench throughout, at least for the Kansas City series, according to Geren. Kouzmanoff, suffering from lower back pain, is listed as day-to-day, but isn't expected to return imminently.

"We'll see how he makes progress," Geren said. "But it won't be [Tuesday] or the next day. It's going to be a few more days. He still has to pass some tests on the field and take some batting practice and fielding practice before he would be considered ready to play in a game. That's still a ways off."

The Athletics will have the recently-signed Aki Iwamura fill the void in the meantime. Iwamura's signing was announced on Monday and he was in uniform on Monday afternoon, starting at third. "I'm just excited to be here," Iwamura said. "I'm focused on helping this team however I can the rest of this season."

### **Royals: Getz getting better after concussion**

Royals manager Ned Yost kept second baseman Chris Getz out of Monday's lineup after he suffered a mild concussion during Sunday's loss in Chicago. Getz, who was hit by a throw on the back of the head while attempting to steal second, was available to Yost on Monday, though despite not starting. His status for Tuesday wasn't specifically defined, but Yost seemed positive about his condition. "He had some dizziness, a slight concussion. He felt much better after the game so he's fine," Yost said.

Royals catcher Brayan Pena was named the American League Player of the Week on Monday. Pena, 28, recorded a hit in all six games last week. Pena hit .435 with nine RBIs over that span.

### **Worth noting**

On Monday, Coco Crisp stole two bases, but was caught stealing later to end his streak of 24 consecutive successful stolen base attempts. ... Geren said with Triple-A Sacramento's season ending on Sunday night, the A's anticipate having some callups available for Tuesday's game against the Royals. ... The A's have a 33-16 day record, good for tops in the Majors. ... The Royals have now gone 1-6 this season against the A's.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Mitchell coming out of slump to help 'Hounds**

Shawn Shroyer, Midland Reporter-Telegram

When Midland RockHounds' Player of the Year Corey Brown was promoted to Triple-A on Aug. 31, the repercussions could have been devastating.

The RockHounds were still amid a playoff race and they were replacing their best all-around player with Jermaine Mitchell, an outfielder who scuffled in his first trip to Double-A.

After hitting .400 with four walks and five runs in the Texas League South Divisional Series, Mitchell could be the player who puts the RockHounds over the top in their quest for a second straight Texas League Championship.

The RockHounds will need him to remain locked in at the plate as they prepare to take on the Northwest Arkansas Naturals in the Texas League Championship.

Game 1 is at 7 p.m. today at Northwest Arkansas after the Naturals finished off the Cardinals in the North Divisional Series on Monday night.

"Jermaine has been outstanding for us," RockHounds manager Darren Bush said. "He plays hard. He brings a lot to the field every time he shows up. He can score from first on a single. With his mentality, the way he goes about it, he creates things."

Mitchell has always been a creator, but it took a return to Single-A Stockton to remind him what got him to this level.

In a 30-game stretch with the RockHounds earlier this season, Mitchell hit .234 with limited power. Through his first five games after his Aug. 31 return to Midland, Mitchell's average dipped to .207 with 39 strikeouts to 19 walks and just 12 runs in 111 at-bats.

But just as it was beginning to look like Mitchell just didn't have what it takes to stick in Double-A, he remembered what he'd spent the last two months working on in Stockton.

"I went into a little slump right before I left Stockton and when I got here I was still in a little funk," Mitchell said. "The last couple games, I was like, 'Hey, it can't get no worse. What do I got to lose? I've just got to go out and be me.' The biggest thing for me was trusting my hands."

Mitchell said he started using his hands again with the Ports and stopped trying to hit home runs. After his first five games back with the RockHounds, Mitchell noticed he was chasing too many bad pitches and decided to be more patient. The adjustment paid off instantly.

Mitchell finished the season with back-to-back 2 for 5 games against Frisco, scoring four runs between the two games with a double and two RBI in the last game of the season, which clinched home field for the RockHounds in the first round.

"He's more confident in what he's doing and he's throwing the bat more," RockHounds hitting coach Webster Garrison said. "He's swinging the bat with some authority and trying to make something happen, rather than wait for something happen."

That momentum carried over into the RockHounds divisional series meeting with the RoughRiders where Mitchell reached base eight times in three games and scored five runs.

With second baseman Jemile Weeks' status for the series up in the air, the RockHounds will need Mitchell's bat and speed at the top of the lineup. During his stops in Single-A, Double-A and Triple-A this season, Mitchell has stolen 24 bases and hit 10 triples.

"We haven't hit a lot of home runs this year, so we have to create runs by taking advantage of other team's mistakes, by being able to go from first to third and score from second on a hit," Bush said.

Although realistic expectations weren't for Mitchell to replace Brown's production, in many ways he has. And the timing of his return to Midland was just right to allow him to settle in for the playoffs.

"You always want to finish the season strong, especially when you're going into the playoffs," Mitchell said. "You want to end on a good note. It helps you mentally."

## **Cougars Drop Game 3 to End Season** **Kane County's 2010 campaign comes to a close**

**CLINTON, Iowa** – The 20th season of Kane County Cougars baseball came to end Monday night in Clinton, Iowa, as the Cougars lost, 4-1, to the Clinton LumberKings in Game 3 of the Western Division Championship Series. The Cougars had won Game 1 but failed to win either of the next two in hopes of a return trip to the League Championship Series.

Murphy Smith (0-2) delivered his second quality start of the post-season but suffered his second loss. He was locked in a scoreless pitcher's duel with Tom Wilhelmsen through five innings before Clinton broke through in the sixth. Mickey Wiswall hit a two-run homer and Tim Morris tripled home Blake Ochoa. Smith gave up three runs -- two earned -- on five hits, walked three and fanned six over six innings in the loss.

The Cougars got on the board against Forrest Snow with an unearned run in the eighth. Jose Crisotomo reached on an error and took second on a wild pitch, and Rashun Dixon doubled him home to make it 3-1. The LumberKings countered with one in the bottom of the frame off Rob Gilliam, and the Cougars did not score in the ninth despite having the tying run at the plate with no outs. Wilhelmsen (1-0) got the win, and Forrest Snow recorded his first save.