

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, September 21, 2010

### Chris Carter's first big league hit ignites Oakland A's three-run seventh against Chicago White Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

In the seventh inning of an extremely nondescript game Monday night, Chris Carter threw the monkey off his back that he'd been carrying around since his major league debut Aug. 9.

More accurately, he lined it to left field.

Carter's single to lead off the bottom of the seventh against the Chicago White Sox's Scott Linebrink ignited a three-run rally that lifted the A's to a 3-0 victory in a game neither Oakland nor Chicago seemed particularly interested in winning up to that point.

The hit snapped a career-opening 0-for-33 streak for the A's top-rated prospect, the longest hitless streak to start a major league career in Oakland history.

"I feel like I'm part of the team now," Carter said.

Until Carter's memorable moment, the biggest A's news of the day was the revelation that center fielder Coco Crisp would likely miss the rest of the season with a fractured left pinkie he suffered Saturday.

A crowd of 10,090 burst into loud applause as soon as Carter lined a 2-2 pitch from Linebrink into left for a clean single.

Carter was called up from Triple-A Sacramento Aug. 9, only to go 0 for 19 and get shipped right back to the River Cats.

He was recalled last Tuesday but was 0 for 13 during his current stint entering Monday.

He stepped to the plate in the seventh 0 for 33 overall, the longest hitless streak to start a major league career by a non-pitcher since Vic Harris went 0 for 36 with Texas in 1972.

A's Manger Bob Geren inserted Gabe Gross to pinch-run for Carter after his hit, and Carter received a standing ovation from the crowd and hugs and high-fives from his teammates.

"That was the loudest I've heard the dugout in a while," designated hitter Jack Cust said. "Obviously it was a tough way (for Carter) to start. Hopefully he can relax up there now."

The A's loaded the bases after Carter's single, and Daric Barton's fielder's choice grounder broke the scoreless tie. Kurt Suzuki delivered a two-run single later in the inning to make it 3-0.

Boof Bonser (1-0) pitched a scoreless seventh and was credited with his first victory since June 4, 2008.

He came on in relief of Gio Gonzalez, who threw six shutout innings despite four walks.

Crisp's season is ending just how it began -- with a fractured left pinkie that happened during a baserunning mishap. His most recent injury occurred Saturday as he was sliding into third against Minnesota.

He also fractured his finger during the preseason Bay Bridge series, which sidelined him for the first 42 games. A strained rib cage muscle cost him 28 more games during the first half.

With just 13 games remaining, A's manager Bob Geren confirmed Crisp is unlikely to return.

Despite Crisp's injury-marred year, and his various injuries of past seasons, he was a terrific spark plug in the leadoff spot during the second half. He hit .279 with eight homers, 38 RBIs and a career-high 32 stolen bases in 75 games overall.

That production, combined with his terrific defense, would indicate there's a strong likelihood the A's will pick up his \$5.75 million option for 2011.

Crisp declined to speculate on whether he'd return.

"I'm not the general manager," he said. " ... I like these guys. I agreed for them to have that option on me just for the fact I wanted to come here. So it's up to them to make any decision they feel is helpful to the team."

## **Oakland A's notebook: Closer Andrew Bailey sidelined by sore right elbow**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Closer Andrew Bailey has been temporarily shut down with a sore right elbow, and the two-time All-Star said he will visit Alabama-based specialist Dr. James Andrews later this week.

Bailey's elbow injury wasn't known until after the A's 3-0 victory over the Chicago White Sox on Monday, when manager Bob Geren revealed that Bailey wasn't available out of the bullpen.

"He's not going to throw for a couple days and get checked out," Geren said.

Bailey said his elbow has bothered him "off and on. Mostly my last outing it sparked up more so."

He last pitched Friday, throwing a scoreless ninth and earning his 25th save in a win at Minnesota.

Andrews has performed elbow ligament replacement surgery -- or Tommy John surgery -- on several A's pitchers over the past two years. Bailey had that procedure himself while pitching at Wagner College.

There's nothing to this point to suggest Bailey's current injury is serious. He said it feels similar to how it did during spring training, when tendinitis sidelined him for a couple weeks.

"Obviously something is up, but we'll see what happens," Bailey said.

Though the A's have just 13 games left, he's not ruling himself out for the season.

Bailey missed 28 games earlier this season with a strained rib cage.

Craig Breslow has been named the recipient of the Dave Stewart Community Service Award, given annually to an A's player in recognition of their charitable contributions.

In the past year, the reliever has raised close to \$150,000 for childhood cancer research and education through his Strike 3 Foundation.

Stewart will present Breslow the award before Wednesday's 12:35 p.m. game against Chicago.

The A's threw their AL-best 15th shutout. ... White Sox starter Gavin Floyd left Monday in the first inning with tightness in the back of his right shoulder, having thrown just seven pitches. ... Neither the A's nor the Sox took batting practice on the field Monday as groundskeepers were applying finishing touches after Sunday's Raiders game. ... A story in the Burlington Free Press mentioned the A's as a candidate to move their short-season Single-A affiliate to Burlington, Vt. The Vancouver Canadians previously served as the A's short-season squad, but Vancouver now will operate as a Toronto Blue Jays affiliate.

## **Chin Music: Andrew Bailey shut down with sore elbow, he'll visit Dr. James Andrews**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 9/20/2010 11:39PM

A postgame update following the A's 3-0 victory over the Chicago White Sox ...

Closer Andrew Bailey has been temporarily shut down with soreness in his right elbow. Bailey isn't ruling his season over yet, but he did say he'll visit Alabama-based specialist Dr. James Andrews later this week ...

Yes, Andrews' name is synonymous with Tommy John elbow surgery, and you've had your fill of reading about A's pitchers recovering from that procedure over the past two years. But this shouldn't sound major alarms just yet. Bailey said his elbow has been bothering him off and on for a while, and that it "sparked up" a little more intensely following his last outing Friday at Minnesota. But he added that his elbow feels similar to how it did in spring training. He was diagnosed with tendinitis back then and was sidelined about two weeks. It seems a similar diagnosis now would be very good news for Bailey and the A's.

You can read more about Bailey's status, Chris Carter's first major league hit and Coco Crisp's season likely being finished when these stories are posted soon at [contracostatimes.com](http://contracostatimes.com). They'll also be in tomorrow's Contra Costa Times, Oakland Tribune and San Jose Mercury News.

## **Chin Music: Coco Crisp likely done for season with fractured pinkie, other A's updates**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 9/20/2010 6:38PM

Ah yes ... It's good to be back in action after being away from the team on the just-completed road trip. We'll cut to the chase and get right to the A's pregame news as they open a three-game series with the White Sox ...

—It appears Coco Crisp is definitely out for the season. A visit to a hand specialist today verified the fracture in his left pinkie. It's the same type of fracture — on the same finger — as the one Crisp suffered in early April that sidelined him for the first 42 games. The last fracture was on the outside of his knuckle, while this one is on the inside. He did it while sliding into third base on Saturday against Minnesota.

What is it about sliding into bases that puts this man at such risk? Crisp doesn't think there's any preventive measures he can take, but offered tongue-in-cheek: "I could try to steal bases standing up." Crisp said there's an outside chance he could try to play if the A's jumped back into contention, but Oakland is nine games out with just 14 left, so you can do the math there. And manager Bob Geren confirmed it was recommended Crisp doesn't play again this season.

What do we make of Crisp's first year with the A's? He definitely had trouble staying on the field, not too surprising given his injury woes of past years. But when he played consistently in the second half, he was a definite force atop the lineup. Factor in his terrific defense (his range and athleticism in center field help offset a below-average arm) and his career-high 32 stolen bases, and I think it's a given the A's have to pick up his \$5.75 million option for 2011. "I had a lot of fun out here. I like these guys," Crisp said. "The fans treat me very well. They have that option on me. I agreed for them to have that option on me just for the fact I wanted to come here. So it's up to them to make any decision they feel is helpful to the team."

—Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff (back spasms) was scheduled to take full batting practice today, and all indications are he continues to make incremental improvement. Still no word on when he'll return, but Geren sounded encouraged Kouzmanoff's return could be close.

—It's hard to believe tonight will be Chris Carter's first game at the Coliseum. His entire first stint in the majors took place during a six-game road trip in August, and he was recalled at the start of the A's most recent trip. Carter is 0-for-32 to start his career, the longest hitless streak to start a major league career (for a non-pitcher) since Vic Harris went 0-for-36 for Texas in 1972.

—On a final note, my apologies for not providing many blog/twitter updates while the team was on the last trip. A nasty stomach bug landed me on the DL for part of that time. I'm back to game speed now ...

Tonight's lineups:

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

White Sox — Lillibridge 2B, Ramirez SS, Rios CF, Konerko 1B, Ramirez DH, Jones LF, Quentin RF, Castro C, Morel 3B; Floyd RHP.

## **A's beat White Sox; Crisp likely done for year**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Coco Crisp's season appears very much over, and now Andrew Bailey's is in doubt.

Crisp said before the A's 3-0 victory over the White Sox on Monday that a hand specialist, Dr. J. Theodore Schwartz of Webster Orthopedic, had told him that he should not play while his fractured left pinkie heals.

Bailey, the A's two-time All-Star closer, has been shut down for several days with elbow soreness and will see Dr. James Andrews in Alabama this week. Bailey believes the issue is the same one he had in the spring: tennis elbow.

"We just want to be cautious with this," said Bailey, who said he has been able to pitch with the problem, so he hopes it is not season-ending. "It's nothing to do with the inside of my elbow, if nothing else. ... It's been a little off and on, and the last outing, it sparked up a little more. We'll see what Dr. Andrews says."

Crisp also holds out a bit of hope that he might play if the playoffs become a possibility. "If we can make a run at it, it's in striking distance," Crisp said of a possible return before the end of the season.

With 13 games remaining, however, and Oakland eight games behind Texas, Crisp acknowledged, "It's a stretch."

Crisp's nondisplaced fracture is similar to the one that landed him on the disabled list for more than six weeks at the start of the season, just in a slightly different spot, closer to the fingertip. If the recovery time is even remotely close, there's no chance he'd be in uniform again this season.

That means that Crisp's first year as an A's player is over, and now the club must decide about his \$5.75 million option for next season. Though he missed time with three different injuries, including this one, it's largely expected that Crisp will be back; he hit .279 with eight homers and 38 RBIs in 75 games, and he scored 51 runs and stole a career-high 32 bases. Double those numbers, Crisp suggested, and it's a pretty good year.

Crisp hinted that he would like to return. "I've had a lot of fun," he said. "I love these guys. The fans have treated me well. I took the option because I wanted to come here. But it's up to them to make the decisions they feel will help the team."

Crisp has had three finger fractures in his career. Asked if there's any way to prevent broken fingers, he said with a grin, "I could try to steal bases standing up."

The broken pinkie in April came on a hard tag; the other two sliding into third headfirst. A's first-base coach Todd Steverson said that is largely because Crisp goes in with so much more speed than most runners, leading to harder impact.

In this latest case, though, Crisp blamed himself for bad baserunning. Steverson told him to go from first to third on an overthrow Saturday, and instead of picking up third-base coach Mike Gallego when he rounded second, Crisp took a second to see where the ball was.

## **A's beat: Ziegler renews call for maple bat ban**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Earlier this month, reliever **Brad Ziegler** was speared in the back by a piece of broken maple bat, leaving a lengthy cut under his right shoulder blade. And after **Tyler Colvin** of the Cubs was stabbed in the chest by a bat shard Sunday while running down the third-base line, landing him in the hospital and ending his season, Ziegler renewed his call for baseball to eliminate maple bats.

Ziegler said that he has expressed concerns to the players' union since he became the A's player representative last year and that Colvin's punctured chest highlights even more the need to ban the bats.

"A little higher and it could have struck him in the throat," Ziegler said. "I'm worried there won't be interest in doing anything until it's too late and it takes a lawsuit when a player or fan gets hurt."

Maple bats now must meet stricter standards to be approved, but, Ziegler said, "Until they are eliminated, the danger is still there. ... This is like having a 2-pound tomahawk flying through the air."

**Carter's breakthrough:** With a leadoff single in the seventh, **Chris Carter** ended his Oakland-record hitless streak to start his career at 33 at-bats. That's the longest streak in the majors at the start of a career since 1972, and Oakland's sixth-longest hitless streak overall.

"Best feeling ever," Carter said. "And it's good, you know, it got a rally started."

Carter had some difficulty in left; he drifted back to the wall for a flyball by **Andruw Jones** in the sixth, and it ticked off the top of his glove for a double as he made a small jump. Jones was stranded at second when **Gio Gonzalez** got a pop-up and a strikeout.

Gonzalez worked six scoreless innings, but the A's didn't score until Carter's hit sparked a three-run rally. **Kurt Suzuki** contributed a two-run single on an 0-2 count with two outs.

**Boof Bonser** earned his first win in more than two years with a scoreless seventh.

## **A'S leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Kouz close:** Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff (back spasms) took batting practice in the cage Monday, and he'll be re-evaluated today. "He's close to returning," manager Bob Geren said. Kouzmanoff has missed 13 games.

## **Drumbeat: Crisp done for the year, basically**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 9/20/2010 6:20PM

Coco Crisp saw a hand specialist today and he was told that his fractured left pinkie finger needs to heal, and he should not play again in the regular season.

Crisp said he's hoping to be ready enough to go should the A's make the playoffs - and I bet if they even made it close the final weekend he'd lobby to play - but considering that he missed more than six weeks with a similar injury at the start of the season, I doubt the team would want him out there if the finger has not healed.

The break is in a different spot from the one in April, closer to the finger tip, but it's the same type of non-displaced fracture.

The A's have a \$5.75 million option on Crisp for next year, and it seems likely they'd exercise it, which is good because Crisp indicated today that he'd like to be back. He said he enjoyed the year, likes his teammates, felt welcomed by the fans. Crisp also feels as if he had a good season, minus the DL time - double his numbers, he said, and it wouldn't be bad at all. (He'd have 64 steals, for starters.)

Kevin Kouzmanoff (back spasms) is inching back toward action; he'll see how he feels after full batting practice in the batting cage today.

Here's the lineup: Davis cf, Barton 1b, Ellis 2b, Cust dh, Suzuki c, Iwamura 3b, Hermida rf, Carter lf, Pennington ss

In other news, A's player rep Brad Ziegler, stabbed by a flying bat shard himself several weeks ago, said he'll continue his efforts to get maple bats eliminated from the major leagues in the wake of the Cubs' Tyler Colvin getting pierced in the chest by a bat shard yesterday. Ziegler compared maple bat pieces to "two-pound tomahawks flying through the air."

White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen noted pre-game that he's seen far fewer broken maple bats this year than in recent seasons; a few years ago, he felt that there were far too many incidents, but he believes the majors' requirements for maple bat specifications have worked well.

Guillen also was showing off a baseball signed by "Moneyball" star Brad Pitt, delivered by A's visiting clubhouse manager Mike Thalblum. Guillen has been a supporter of autism charities since Thalblum gave him a Cure Autism Now hat a few years ago; Guillen wore it during a post-game TV interview and donations poured in. Guillen said the Brad Pitt ball likely will be auctioned for his foundation, which supports autism causes among other charities.

## **Carter's first hit sparks A's to victory**

### **Suzuki belts two-run single in seventh-inning rally vs. Chicago**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Though Chris Carter's average sits at a paltry .029, it's infinitely better than before.

Oakland's heralded prospect had a rough start to his career, but after 33 hitless at-bats he finally broke through Monday. With the A's and the White Sox deadlocked in a scoreless stalemate, Carter stroked a solid single in the seventh inning.

Aside from getting the gargantuan monkey off his back, Carter's hit also sparked a three-run rally, one which ultimately gave the A's a 3-0 victory.

"Best feeling ever," Carter said.

For the first 11 games of his big league career, Carter played exclusively on the road, going 0-for-32 along the way. But in his third career plate appearance at the Oakland Coliseum, Carter drilled a 2-2 pitch from Chicago reliever Scott Linebrink into left field.

Carter was promptly replaced by pinch-runner Gabe Gross upon reaching first base, but received a warm welcome to the dugout. A's bench coach Tye Waller eventually got a hold of the ball, while one of Carter's teammates also threw a decoy ball into the crowd.

"I feel like part of the team," Carter said. "I got [the ball]. They colored and did everything they could to it."

Carter, the organization's top power-hitting prospect, went 0-for-19 in his first stint with the A's in August before being sent back down to Triple-A Sacramento. Given the high expectations surrounding Carter, his slump seemed to be magnified.

So to start his second stint with an 0-for-14 slide, Carter's ear-to-ear smile Monday was a long time in the making.

"It started getting kind of stressful," Carter said. "But I got the monkey off my back and hopefully this gets me going."

The A's then capitalized on Carter's hit, as Cliff Pennington hustled down the line to reach on an infield error before Rajai Davis laid down a picturesque bunt -- something he's had trouble doing all year -- to load the bases. That all set the stage for Daric Barton's RBI fielder's choice, which scored Gross from third base and broke a scoreless tie.

Three batters later, Kurt Suzuki delivered a two-run single to right field to bring the game to its final margin.

"Suzuki had a real nice night," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "He's been struggling a little bit the last month and he's had some flashes like he was coming out of it, but when he starts lining balls up the middle over the second baseman's head like he did today, then everything in his swing is working correctly."

Before Gavin Floyd could even complete one at-bat, the dynamic of the contest changed drastically. That's because Chicago's righty was lifted from the game after seven pitches due to tightness in the back of his right shoulder, something he felt since his previous start.

Right-hander Tony Pena relieved Floyd and turned in a six-inning shutout. Not bad for a last-second replacement. All told, Pena gave up six hits and two walks while striking out three.

"It's a little bit of an interesting scenario when you get ready for somebody that we faced before [and he leaves the game]," Geren said.

Gio Gonzalez matched Pena's scoreless effort frame for frame, but left with a no-decision. Gonzalez (14-9) finished six innings, allowing four hits and four walks while striking out seven, but couldn't become Oakland's second 15-game winner alongside Trevor Cahill.

The southpaw, who turned 25 on Sunday, was largely effective but struggled with his command in the fourth inning. After getting two quick outs to start the frame, Gonzalez issued three consecutive walks before striking out Ramon Castro on three pitches to get out of the jam.

It was the latest example of Gonzalez's mental development, as he may have reacted differently in years past.

"I would have probably lost it and try to do more than what I should have done," Gonzalez said. "The new Gio Gonzalez -- I'm not going to use myself as third person -- the new me has definitely made a huge change."

White Sox skipper Ozzie Guillen noticed, too.

"He's come a long way," Guillen said "This kid threw a lot of strikes. Gio's always got confidence in himself. He always wants to be good; ever since high school he wants to be good, he wants to be noticed, he wants people to talk about him. I think the difference now is he's obviously matured and he throws more strikes."

Following Gonzalez, Boof Bonser pitched a scoreless seventh to receive his first victory since June 4, 2008. After Michael Wuertz tossed a shutout eighth inning, Craig Breslow nailed the coffin to pick up his third save of the year.

After the contest, Geren said A's closer Andrew Bailey was unavailable due to elbow soreness. Bailey said he will see renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews sometime this week, but that he hopes to return before the season ends. Oakland has 13 games remaining.

"I've been hurt a little bit this year," Bailey said. "We just want to be precautionary with this and see what the doctor says."

## **A's Cahill out to contain White Sox thief**

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

The White Sox and A's aren't among the top contenders for the postseason this year, but both have a host of players having successful seasons, and two will be showcased when the clubs meet Tuesday night in the second game of their series at Oakland Alameda Coliseum.

For the White Sox, it's been a memorable year of milestones for outfielder Juan Pierre, who has a chance to win the Major League stolen-base crown.

Pierre enters Tuesday's game with 58 stolen bases, giving him a six-steal lead over Houston's Michael Bourn for the big league lead. He also needs one steal to tie Scott Podsednik (59 in 2005) for second place on the club's all-time single-season list. Pierre also is one bag behind Patsy Donovan for 30th on the all-time list with 518.

Pierre is attempting to become the first White Sox player since Luis Aparicio (1961) to lead the Major Leagues in steals.

Meanwhile, the A's headline player Tuesday, Trevor Cahill, does his work from the mound and would have a huge chance at the American League Cy Young Award if his team were in first place.

The young starter, who is matched up against lefty Mark Buehrle of the White Sox, is shooting for his 17th win, and all of his wins have come since the beginning of May. In the Majors, only CC Sabathia of the Yankees and Jon Lester of the Red Sox have more wins since May 1.

Going into Tuesday, Cahill has the lowest opponents' batting average in the AL (.210), which is the lowest by an A's pitcher since Mike Norris had a mark of .209 in 1980. Cahill also ranks fourth in the AL in ERA (2.84) and fifth in opponents' slugging percentage (.324).

He's 10-2 with a 1.58 ERA and .190 opponents' batting average in 13 starts at home and is 0-1 with a 3.74 ERA in four career starts against Chicago.

### **White Sox: Manny needs to heat up**

New White Sox designated hitter Manny Ramirez is hitting .269 (14-for-52) with one home run and one RBI in 18 games with the White Sox. Thirteen of his 14 hits are singles. ... Buehrle needs 7 2/3 innings pitched to reach 200 innings for the 10th time in his career. He earned the win in his only start of 2010 at Oakland, giving up one run in a nine-inning effort. He's 4-12 with a 3.75 ERA in 25 career games against the A's and 1-6 with a 4.23 ERA in 13 games (11 starts) at the Coliseum.

### **A's: Pitching on a roll**

The A's have compiled a Major League-leading 3.07 ERA (179 earned runs in 524 1/3 innings) since the All-Star break after posting a 3.85 ERA before the break. They lead the AL in ERA, shutouts (15) and fewest extra-base hits allowed (363) and are tied for the lead in pickoffs (24). ... First baseman Daric Barton leads the Majors with 103 walks, and second baseman Mark Ellis is batting .406 (26-for-64) in September and leads the AL in hits this month.

### **Worth noting**

Twenty-three of Chicago's 27 runs allowed in its last four games have come in the seventh inning or later. The White Sox have lost a season-high seven games, and Sox starters are 0-8 with a 7.09 ERA in the last 15 games. ... The A's lead the Majors in steals since the All-Star break and have 140 for the season, which ranks third in the AL and the Majors. It's the most steals by an A's team since the 1992 club had 143.

## **Crisp unlikely to return this season**

By Alex Espinoza / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Barring a miraculous late-season comeback by his teammates, Coco Crisp said Monday he will likely miss the remainder of the season after learning he suffered another non-displaced fracture of his left pinkie.

"It's not looking like I'll probably be playing in any games," Crisp said. "Unless we get close [to Texas]."

Entering Monday's series opener against the White Sox, the A's sat nine games back of the first-place Rangers in the American League West with 14 to play, making Texas' magic number six.

It marks the second time this season that Crisp will miss time due to a broken left pinkie. In an exhibition game against the Giants on April 2, Crisp fractured the outside of his left pinkie and missed the season's initial 40 contests.

Crisp said the fracture occurred on the inside of his pinkie Saturday, as he was tagged out sliding into third base after trying to advance from first to third on an errant pickoff throw by Twins pitcher Kevin Slowey.

"It's bad baserunning that led to the injury," Crisp said. "What do they say, adding injury to insult? Adding insult to injury?"

Once Slowey's throw went off line, A's first-base coach Todd Steverson told Crisp to go for third base, but the outfielder looked back and hesitated before finally committing.

"All I had to do was really just pick up [third-base coach Mike Gallego]," Crisp said.



With the A's holding a \$5.75 million team option for next season, Crisp was asked whether he would like to return to Oakland. After initially sidestepping the question, Crisp sounded like he would welcome a second season in the green and gold.

"I chose to come here last year over other teams," Crisp said. "I had a lot of fun out here, I love these guys and the fans treat me very well. They have the option with me and I agree for them to have that option on me, just for the fact that I wanted to come here. It's up to them to make any decisions that they feel is helpful for the team."

The A's are 40-35 in the 75 games Crisp played this season, compared to 34-39 without him. Crisp proved to be an effective spark plug at the top of the order this year while also turning in several stellar catches in center field.

"Obviously, pitching is the hugest part of any championship team as far as field performance," Crisp said. "Then you have your chemistry, which is huge. We have great chemistry here; we have great pitching. I think the only thing we might be lacking here ... is probably that home run presence."

### **Bailey to have sore elbow checked out**

OAKLAND -- Following Monday's 3-0 victory over the White Sox, Oakland manager Bob Geren said closer Andrew Bailey was unavailable due to elbow soreness.

Bailey said the injury feels much like the one he had in Spring Training, adding he will see renowned orthopedic surgeon Dr. James Andrews in Alabama sometime this week.

"It's been kind of off-and-on," Bailey said, "but last outing I would say it kind of sparked up."

Bailey last pitched Friday in Minnesota. Bailey, who underwent Tommy John surgery in college, was sidelined for a couple of weeks during Spring Training with tennis elbow, though he never missed any game action because of it. Bailey said he hasn't received an MRI on his elbow yet.

"It has nothing to do with the inside of the elbow, which is good," Bailey said.

Bailey said he won't be doing any throwing for the time being, but that he hopes to return during one of Oakland's 13 remaining contests this year.

"I've obviously pitched with it a couple times," Bailey said. "We'll see what Dr. Andrews has to say, take his opinion and figure out what to do with the rest of the season."

### **Ziegler would like maple bats banned**

OAKLAND -- With Sunday's scary incident involving Cubs outfielder Tyler Colvin, who was impaled by a small chunk of a broken bat, questions regarding maple bats were naturally posed to A's reliever Brad Ziegler on Monday.

In addition to being the A's player representative, Ziegler endured his own scary episode on Sept. 3, when he was hit in the back by a flying broken bat.

"I've already been proactive [about the issue] for all two years I've been player rep," Ziegler said. "That was one of the first things after I got elected and realized that was an issue that I could help address. I've been working on it since then, working with lawyers and representatives from the union."

Colvin was hospitalized for pneumothorax, a condition which often leads to collapsed lungs, in Miami following the accident, which occurred when Colvin was struck by a piece of teammate Wellington Castillo's bat. Colvin said he was OK on Monday, though he will be held in the hospital a few more days for observation.

For Ziegler, the solution is simple: ban maple bats. Though baseball has made efforts to hold maple bats up to higher standards, Ziegler said he would prefer to see batters hit with ash or birch ones, as the woods tend to fray and splinter in smaller, less dangerous ways.

"Improvement, to me, is not good enough," Ziegler said. "Until you eliminate the problem, then there's always going to be that risk that one player or one fan could be fatally injured. At that point, it's too late."

## **Kouzmanoff has strong batting practice**

Oakland manager Bob Geren said Kevin Kouzmanoff went nearly 100 percent during batting practice Monday. Kouzmanoff, who has missed 13 games since straining his lower back on Sept. 5, said he hopes to return before the season ends.

"I want to go into the offseason in playing mode, healthy," Kouzmanoff said. "I believe that's a realistic goal because I've come a long way in the last two weeks."

## **Suzuki, Bonser lead A's over White Sox, 3-0**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Chris Carter finally got his first major league hit, Boof Bonser won for the first time in more than two years and the A's sent the White Sox to their seventh straight loss, beating Chicago, 3-0, on Monday night.

Kurt Suzuki had three hits and two RBIs as the A's won their third in four games.

Daric Barton also drove in a run.

Andruw Jones doubled and singled for the White Sox, who matched their longest losing streak since April 28 to May 5, 2008.

Chicago is on the brink of being eliminated from the AL Central race. The White Sox fell 11 games behind the first-place Minnesota Twins, who can clinch their second consecutive division title Tuesday night with a win over Cleveland and a Chicago loss in Oakland.

A's starter Gio Gonzalez allowed four hits in six innings, striking out seven and walking four. Bonser (1-0) tossed a perfect seventh for his first major league win since June 4, 2008, with Minnesota against Baltimore.

Michael Wuertz worked the eighth and Craig Breslow got three outs for his third save.

White Sox starter Gavin Floyd left after only seven pitches with tightness in the back of his right shoulder. He did not get an out.

Tony Pena pitched six shutout innings in relief, allowing six hits. He walked two and struck out two.

Scott Linebrink (3-2) allowed all three runs — one earned — in the seventh.

Carter's single leading off the seventh sparked the decisive rally. Carter was hitless in his first 33 at-bats, the longest streak to start a career by a non-pitcher since Texas' Vic Harris began 0 for 36 in 1972.

Linebrink's throwing error on Cliff Pennington's bunt put runners on first and second, and Rajai Davis beat out a bunt to load the bases. Barton's groundout allowed pinch-runner Greg Gross to score, and one out later Suzuki added a two-run single.

Chicago had runners on second and third with one out in the second but failed to score, and Gonzalez walked the bases loaded with two outs in the fourth before escaping.

**NOTES:** Floyd, who has struggled in his last few outings, is 3-0 with a 1.32 ERA in five career starts against Oakland. ... A's OF Coco Crisp missed his second game with a fractured pinkie and will likely miss the rest of the season. ...

Breslow has four career saves. ... The White Sox have allowed 23 of their last 27 runs in the seventh inning or later.

## **Carter's first major-league hit sparks Oakland to 3-0 win over Chicago**

Sam McPherson, examiner.com

It doesn't seem fair that some rookies can make their major-league debut and get a hit in their first at-bat, while others can struggle for a bit to break the ice.

Luck plays a factor in a lot of base hits in baseball. Broken-bat flares, dying quails and swinging bunts all end up in the boxscore as the proverbial line drive for the "lucky" ones.

Chris Carter had been historically unlucky, however, until tonight -- despite his extreme talent level.

So after an 0-for-33 start to his career, Carter's simple single into left field to lead off the seventh inning kept him from moving closer to a record no one would want.

And in the end, all that the crowd in attendance tonight will remember is the rookie's first career hit sparked a three-run outburst that was the difference in Oakland's 3-0 win over the Chicago White Sox.

Carter's hit drought was the longest at the beginning of a player's career since 1972, as earlier in the game, he grounded into an inning-ending double play with runners on first and second base.

Thus, even though he walked in the fourth inning -- his second career walk to go with 13 strikeouts -- Carter was still seeking that elusive first hit when he stepped to the plate in the seventh inning against White Sox reliever Scott Linebrink. And on a 2-2 pitch, Carter stroked the ball into left field to reach base safely.

The ball was tossed to the dugout, Carter allowed himself a small smile, and the frustration of his previous 33 at-bats became a memory. When Gabe Gross came in to pinch run for Carter, the crowd at the Coliseum gave the A's rookie a nice ovation for his perseverance and long-awaited success.

And then his teammates went out and won the ball game.

Cliff Pennington sacrificed Gross to second and was safe at first on an error by Linebrink. Rajai Davis -- now playing center field every day as it looks like Coco Crisp is out for the remainder of the season with another finger injury -- bunted his way on safely to load the bases with no one out.

Daric Barton hit a ground ball that scored Gross while forcing Davis at second. After Mark Ellis flied out and Jack Cust walked, Kurt Suzuki singled to right scoring Pennington and Barton.

Just like that, Oakland had scored three runs in the seventh inning, initiated by the rookie and securely delivered by the veterans.

Meanwhile, the A's pitching staff registered its American League-leading 15th shutout of the season, behind six innings from Gio Gonzalez and an inning each from Boof Bonser (with his first major-league win in more than two years), Michael Wuertz and Craig Breslow (getting his third save of the year).

Even though the A's pitchers issued six walks -- four from Gio -- they also held the potent White Sox lineup to only four hits. Manny Ramirez, Andruw Jones and Carlos Quentin got three of those Chicago hits, but no single hit was more impressive tonight than Carter's first career proverbial line drive.

Gonzalez summed it up nicely after the game talking to the media, in regards to his rookie teammate's effort at the plate.

"He couldn't do it at a better time," Gonzalez said. "He did it in style, in front of the home crowd. He stepped it up big-time."

And that's what Carter will remember most about his major-league efforts in 2010: not the 0-for-33, not the misfortune, but the joy at being in the center of a well-deserved home victory.

## **Urban: Monday in Bay Ball (Sept. 20 Edition)**

Mychael Urban, CSNBayArea.com

After two days of famine, the Giants feasted their way back into first place. The A's, meanwhile, got another solid outing from the mysterious Mr. Cramer in beating the playoff-bound Twins.

A solid Sunday in Bay Ball, providing a perfect springboard off which we jack-knife into McCovey Cove and dolphin-kick to Jack London Square and back on our daily quest to make sense of it all ...

... Jose Guillen said he's finally a Giant because he finally did something when it meant something. So refreshing for an athlete to recognize that hitting .300, which Guillen has done since he arrived, isn't the end-all.

Going 2-for-3 with two singles, both with two out and nobody on, looks good on paper but doesn't quite register in the clubhouse. Single-handedly lifting a temporarily moribund offense in a hugely important game makes you the most popular guy in the room.

... It should surprise exactly nobody that the A's are going as hard right now as they were when the playoffs were within reason. That's the defining characteristic of Bob Geren's teams in Oakland. Even after four years, the jury is still out on Geren as a big-league skipper, but you have to give him credit for fashioning teams -- ALL of his teams -- that grind and grind and grind some more, and they don't stop grinding until they've exhausted their allotment of outs, regardless of the score.

... If the A's maintain that trait, stay relatively healthy on the mound and upgrade the lineup during the offseason, there's no reason to think they won't be up the Rangers' keester in 2011. Perhaps then we'll look at Geren as more than Billy Beane's good friend. Is it unfair to view him as such now? Probably. But it's certainly understandable, too. Not many manager in the bigs have a bad record and tremendous job security.

... Barry Zito has a 3.32 ERA in four September starts, he came up big in the Giants' biggest game of the year Sunday, and his career record when he gets four runs of support is 110-6. Fifth starter? Laughable. Some people still can't get past the money. But hey, if that's your No. 5, you're sitting pretty going into these final 12 games.

... Coco Crisp has a broken pinkie again, and that's going to hurt Oakland's chances of finishing over .500 in a big way. He's proven to be a genuine difference-maker, and if he'll be back. The A's will pick up their option on him, and Crisp -- if he stays healthy (always a massive "if" in Oakland) -- is my early pick for Comeback Player of the Year in 2011.

... Now batting leadoff for the Giants: Who cares? There's no ideal option with Andres Torres unavailable, so it's going to be a steady diet of "Huh?" and "What the ...?" and "Nooooo!" from here on out. And you know what? It's not that big of a deal. It's about Buster Posey, Pat Burrell, Aubrey Huff and Guillen. If they do their jobs in the middle of the order, the Giants will be just fine.

... Bobby Cramer likely won't be heard from again once the regular season ends -- at least not in Oakland, where the starting rotation appears set for the next six or seven years. But what a series of memories he's created for himself. Fifteen or so years from now, there are going to be some wide-eyes kids around the campfire as Uncle Bobby regales them with tales of his magical big-league adventure in the fall of 2010.

... And finally, our "Why?" of the day: The mini-uproar over Tim Lincecum's truncated outing Saturday was much ado about nothing. Say he's left in there. Say he draws the same walk as did pinch hitter Nate Schierholtz. Say he throws up goose eggs the rest of the way. What do you get? The same 2-1 loss.

... Instead, you got a 2-1 loss and a few saved bullets in the gun that is Lincecum's right arm. Don't underestimate the value of a few innings off this late in the year. That was a no-brainer call for Bruce Bochy.

That's all for which we have time today, folks. Time to pack for our trip to Chicago and Colorado, and here's what that means for Giants fans: Wall-to-wall coverage of the biggest road trip in recent memory, including in-game chats every single night, ridiculously silly home movies from Wrigleyville and the Coors Field humidior, blogs, Insider Takes, and columns

after each of the six games at CSNBayArea.com. I'll also be part of the equally comprehensive TV coverage on CSN Bay Area, the only network taking you into the fire in deep September.

So keep your home page set right here. We'll wear you out in the best possible way. Until then, we offer peace, fully loaded potato skins and "U Will Know" by Black Men United to all.