

A's News Clips, Wednesday, October 20, 2010

Oakland A's head trainer Steve Sayles is fired following another injury-plagued season

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's have fired head athletic trainer Steve Sayles on the heels of another season that was sabotaged by injuries. The team made no announcement Tuesday, but Sayles confirmed his dismissal via a text message to the Bay Area News Group, declining to discuss the situation further.

A's general manager Billy Beane didn't return phone messages, and manager Bob Geren declined to comment when contacted.

The A's used the disabled list 23 times in 2010, the second-highest total in Oakland history after the 25 in 2008. But the injury problems began to mount in 2007. Since the start of that season, the A's have used the DL 87 times, second-most in the major leagues.

The A's made a concerted effort to improve their health after the 2007 season. They promoted Sayles to replace Larry Davis as head trainer (Davis moved into a job as coordinator of medical services). They also required players to report for occasional offseason checkups.

The problems have persisted, but the A's deserve some blame for targeting injury-prone players.

Right-hander Ben Sheets and center fielder Coco Crisp were signed as free agents last winter although both were coming off major surgery in 2009. Sheets' 2010 season ended in July with a right elbow injury, and Crisp missed most of the first half with a fractured pinkie finger and strained rib cage.

Right-hander Justin Duchscherer was re-signed despite injury struggles in previous seasons, and he lasted just five starts before a hip injury ended his year. The A's acquired outfielder Conor Jackson from Arizona in June despite him battling a strained right hamstring earlier in the season. He missed 78 games with Oakland because of that hamstring and a sports hernia.

Oft-disabled A's part ways with head trainer, sources say

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

After another season marked by numerous injuries, the A's have decided not to renew head trainer Stephen "Soup" Sayles' contract, several major-league sources told The Chronicle on Tuesday morning.

Sayles has been the A's head trainer for the past three years, and in that time, the team has used the disabled list 65 times, including 23 times this past season, the second-most in Oakland history.

The A's lost 1,426 player games to injuries in 2010, setting an Oakland record.

Oakland officials declined to comment. It's unlikely any announcement will be made until the A's decide on whether the entire coaching staff will be back, something that is expected to happen near the end of the week.

The A's also must make decisions on three players with options for 2011 by three days after the World Series and it appears as if the team might wait the full time allotted before any announcement, though it remains likely that Eric Chavez's \$12 million option will not be picked up and that Coco Crisp (\$5.75 million) and Mark Ellis (\$6 million) will get their picked up.

Sayles has been with the A's staff since 1998, serving as assistant trainer under Larry Davis for 10 years.

Another longtime team employee, broadcast director Robert Buan, also has been let go after 16 seasons with the team. Buan was replaced as the A's postgame radio host by Chris Townsend at the start of the season.

Oakland A's consider buying KTRB AM 860

Eric Young, San Francisco Business Times 10/19/2010

The Oakland A's are weighing the purchase of their flagship radio station, a move that would give the team control over a broadcast medium that has been problematic for the club.

KTRB AM 860, known as Xtra Sports 860, went into receivership last month. The station switched to an all-sports format in 2009 when it entered into a deal with the A's to carry the team's games.

KTRB is a San Francisco-based station that used to be owned by Pappas Telecasting Companies, a privately held television broadcaster.

The A's move to KTRB in 2009 marked the third time the baseball club switched flagship radio stations since 2005. The team had deals with KFRC 1550 AM and KIFR 106.9 FM.

Ken Pries, who oversees broadcast deals for the team, said the club is "just at the beginning stages" of a possible KTRB deal. He declined further comment.

The A's are not the only entity possibly pursuing the radio station, according to news reports. The station could go for about \$12 million, not including debt, according to Bay Area media business reporter **Rich Lieberma**

Tuesday's Arizona Fall League roundup

De Jesus falls a triple short of cycle in Desert Dogs' victory

By / MLB.com

Desert Dogs 7, Saguaros 3

Ivan De Jesus (Dodgers) was 3-for-4 with three RBIs, falling a triple shy of the cycle to help the Phoenix snap a three-game losing streak. Yankees prospect Austin Romine drove in three runs, and Tyler Pastornicky (Braves) scored twice. Former White Sox first-rounder Jared Mitchell collected two hits to raise his average to .304 for Peoria. Travis Banwart (Athletics) got the win after allowing three runs on five hits over three innings for Phoenix.

Solar Sox 6, Javelinas 5

Kai Gronauer (Mets) broke a 4-4 tie with an eighth-inning triple to lead Mesa past Peoria. Gronauer, who was 0-for-11 heading into the at-bat, knocked in two runs. Fellow Mets farmhand Jordany Valdespin had two RBIs and Josh Vitters (Cubs) was 2-for-5 with a run scored. Fellow Cubs prospect David Cales was credited with the win in relief, surrendering two hits over two shutout innings. Indians prospect Jason Kipnis smacked an RBI double in a losing cause for Peoria.

Scorpions 5, Rafters 4

Rockies prospect Charlie Blackmon ended his hitless start to the AFL season by going 2-for-3 with a two-run homer in Scottsdale's victory. Derek Norris smacked an RBI triple and fellow Nationals farmhand scored twice for the Scorpions. Diamondbacks prospect Josh Collmenter improved to 2-0 by allowing a run on two hits over three innings. Davis Stoneburner (Rangers) doubled in a pair of runs for Surprise.

Report says Vt. field needs \$9.2m in upgrades

Boston.com, October 20, 2010

BURLINGTON, Vt. --An engineering report says the home field used by the Vermont Lake Monsters needs about \$9.2 million in upgrades to bring it up to professional baseball standards.

In recent years, the Single A Lake Monsters, now affiliated with the Oakland Athletics, have received waivers from Major League Baseball to be able to continue using the Burlington field owned by the University of Vermont.

Reports have found an uneven playing surface, the pitching mound is not regulation; the field lighting fails to meet minimum requirements and the dugouts and clubhouses are undersized.

The Burlington Free Press says team and state officials are trying to find ways to raise the money to upgrade the field.