

A's News Clips, Monday, October 25, 2010

Pitching coach Curt Young decides to leave Oakland A's 'to pursue another opportunity in Major League Baseball'

By Joe Stiglich_Oakland Tribune

The A's are searching for a new pitching coach after announcing Sunday that Curt Young won't return next season.

Technically, Young declined a contract offer for 2011, choosing "to pursue another opportunity within Major League Baseball," according to a team release.

Manager Bob Geren said he was surprised when he got the news from Young in a phone call Saturday night.

"He explained to me that he was just trying to see what else is out there, explore some different opportunities," Geren said. "I hope he gets what he's looking for. I'm happy for everything he's done for our young pitchers and wish him the best.

"I'm sure it wasn't easy to walk away from one of the best young pitching staffs in baseball."

Young, who spent the past seven seasons as Oakland's pitching coach, said in a text to the Bay Area News Group that he was "not quite ready to comment yet."

Just Wednesday, the A's announced the hiring of hitting coach Gerald Perry and bench coach Joel Skinner. The same release stated Young, third base coach Mike Gallego and bullpen coach Ron Romanick would return next season.

So circumstances have changed to make Young, 50, want to explore his options.

The Arizona Diamondbacks have a pitching coach vacancy and Young makes his offseason home in Scottsdale, so that could be attractive to him were they to show interest.

The Boston Red Sox need a pitching coach after losing John Farrell, who reportedly has been hired as the Toronto Blue Jays' new manager.

The A's led the American League with a 3.56 ERA this season, and Young helped groom what's considered one of the major league's top starting rotations.

"They say (there are) players' managers. He's like a player's coach," said right-hander Trevor Cahill, an All-Star this season. "I struggled my first year and I felt he had just as much confidence in me my first year as he did (this) year, when I had more success. He's just a guy I can't say enough about."

Young pitched on the A's three American League championship teams from 1988-90 and spent 10 of his 11 big league seasons with the team. He also won a World Series ring in 1989.

Geren said there's no timetable for replacing Young. He added that Romanick, who has spent the past three seasons as bullpen coach, is "a very strong candidate."

In other news, the A's have until three days after the conclusion of the World Series to decide whether to pick up club options on second baseman Mark Ellis (\$6 million for 2011), center fielder Coco Crisp (\$5.75 million) and infielder Eric Chavez (\$12.5 million). It's assumed the A's will buy out Chavez's option for \$3 million.

Pitching coach Curt Young leaves A's

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 10/24/2010 12:35PM

The A's announced today that pitching coach Curt Young is leaving the team "to pursue another opportunity within Major League Baseball." That opportunity must have presented itself in the past couple of days. The A's sent out a release Wednesday announcing the hiring of hitting coach Gerald Perry and bench coach Joel Skinner. That same release indicated that Young, third-base coach Mike Gallego and bullpen coach Ron Romanick all would be returning in 2011.

So who came calling for Young? The Boston Red Sox just lost pitching coach John Farrell, who was hired as Toronto's manager. And Boston manager Terry Francona is familiar with Young, as both coached in the Oakland organization before Francona was hired as the Red Sox skipper. Perhaps Young winds up in Boston, though that's speculation at this point. I haven't talked to him yet. But Young obviously received an opportunity he felt he couldn't pass on.

He served seven years as the A's pitching coach. I'll have a story posted at contracostatimes.com, insidebayarea.com and mercurynews.com later in the day ...

Curt Young won't be back as A's pitching coach

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Although the A's young pitching staff put up the best ERA in the league in 2010, the team announced that longtime pitching coach Curt Young has declined a contract offer and instead will pursue another opportunity.

Young, who has served as the A's pitching coach the past seven seasons and who also pitched for Oakland's three consecutive pennant winners in 1988, 1989 and 1990, said by phone that it was "a tough decision.

"I've been with this organization basically 27 years," he said, "but I'm kind of looking in a different direction and hopefully everything will work out."

Arizona is expected to have a strong interest in Young, who lives in the Phoenix area in the offseason. His success with young pitchers would be particularly attractive to a team such as the Diamondbacks, who are trying to improve their pitching. Several major-league sources believe Young is heading there.

Boston is among the prominent teams looking for a pitching coach, and Red Sox manager Terry Francona is Oakland's former bench coach.

The A's offered Young a substantial raise, nearly 40 percent according to a major-league source, but like other members of the staff, Young, who has had a two-year deal before, was offered a one-year deal. That isn't uncommon for coaching staffs when a manager is signed through only the following season.

In a statement released by the team, assistant general manager David Forst described the A's as "disappointed" that Young is leaving.

Oakland's pitchers feel the same way.

"It's a surprise, given the young pitching staff," two-time All-Star closer Andrew Bailey said. "Obviously, Curt meant a lot to all of us and we wish him well wherever he goes. Someone is getting a great coach."

"This came as a complete shock," starter Dallas Braden said. "He's been that accessible, everyone's-favorite-uncle figure, a guiding light for us. He taught me how to study within the game, what to look for. He always understood my role and put me in the best position to succeed."

Trevor Cahill, an All-Star this season, said that Young's confidence in him, "helped me mentally, knowing that, and he worked so hard with me every single day."

Young said he has had a great time watching the young pitchers progress and, he said, "I'm going to miss those guys, but the game goes on whether players or coaches come or go."

The top candidate to replace Young from within Oakland's system is bullpen coach Ron Romanick, who was the pitching coordinator for most of the A's pitchers as they were coming up through the system. Among other things, Romanick is credited for changing Brad Ziegler to a sidearm style. Current pitching coordinator Gil Patterson is also highly regarded, as is Triple-A pitching coach Rick Rodriguez.

Former A's pitching coach Rick Peterson, who was instrumental in the development of Tim Hudson, Barry Zito and Mark Mulder, has a year remaining on his deal with Milwaukee. The A's would have to obtain permission from the Brewers to discuss the position with him.

Young leaves A's to go in different direction

Pitching coach spent 27 years with Oakland organization

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 10/24/2010

OAKLAND -- More than half of Curt Young's life has been spent with the A's organization, making Sunday's announcement all the more difficult for the hurler turned pitching coach.

Young decided not to accept Oakland's contract offer to return as pitching coach for the 2011 season, instead opting to pursue another opportunity within Major League Baseball.

"It's tough," Young said Sunday. "Any time you leave a place you're comfortable with and enjoy being around all the people -- sometimes you have to make a decision to move on and go in a different direction."

Young, 50, was selected by the A's in the fourth round of the 1982 First-Year Player Draft and had spent 27 years in the Oakland organization -- 12 as a player, eight as a Minor League coach, then seven as pitching coach.

"Curt has a long history within our organization, and we appreciate all of his contributions to the A's," assistant general manager David Forst said in a statement. "We are disappointed that he has chosen not to accept our offer to return in 2011, but we wish him well as he explores other opportunities within the game."

Young was a member of an Oakland starting rotation that helped the A's win three consecutive American League pennants from 1988-90. Most recently, he guided a youthful A's pitching staff that compiled a Major League-leading 3.47 ERA this season, the lowest by an American League team since 1990, when Boston put together a 3.32 mark.

Boston -- which appears to be losing pitching coach John Farrell to the open managerial job in Toronto -- may be an attractive opportunity for Young, who could be looking to join former A's bench coach and current Red Sox manager Terry Francona. There are a handful of other clubs also in need of a pitching coach, including Pittsburgh and Arizona.

Young, though, did not hint at any specific offers, saying only that it was simply time to go elsewhere. The news came just four days after the A's announced that Young, third-base coach Mike Gallego and bullpen coach Ron Romanick would all return to their roles in 2011.

"Being with the organization for that long, all the great people you meet, all the great people you compete with, it definitely gives you mixed emotions," Young said. "I'm just going to look into some other options, and that's the way I want to leave it."

"I had a great experience with everybody that I worked with, from the coaching staff to the front office to the security guards. Everything was great. It was just a decision to move on."

Braden files negligence suit against surgeon

A's left-hander contends surgery caused nerve damage in foot

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 10/23/2010

OAKLAND -- A's left-hander Dallas Braden has filed a medical negligence suit in Alameda County Superior Court against Oakland-based orthopedic surgeon Dr. Thomas Peatman and the Webster Orthopedic Medical Group.

The suit, filed earlier this week, alleges that the 27-year-old Braden has permanent nerve damage in his left foot related to an August 2009 procedure conducted by Peatman, whom the pitcher accuses of severing his peroneal nerve while attempting to remove a cyst. Braden subsequently missed the remainder of the 2009 season and has since been pitching with two numb toes.

According to court documents, the suit not only maintains that Braden "experiences numbness and extreme and excessive pain while pitching," but that such symptoms cause fatigue in the later innings of his starts. The complaint also contends that the "damage, instability and sensitivity of his left foot will cause biomechanical problems with his pitching delivery system, which will likely result in further injury and shortening of his pitching career."

On Friday, an A's official confirmed that the organization has parted ways with the Webster Orthopedic Group, longtime team medical providers.

Peatman and the Webster Orthopedic Group have not responded to the suit

Inbox: What's next for Kouz, Davis?

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 10/23/2010

I'm wondering how you evaluate the A's attitude toward Rajai Davis and Kevin Kouzmanoff, who may both represent a larger problem. Offensively, neither provided quite enough to be a starter on a contending team, but it's fair to describe both as defensive pluses, and there's no obvious way to upgrade. Do you think either or both will be back as 2011 starters?

-- Andrew O., New York City

I think both will be back, but I can't say for certain both will be starting on Opening Day. Unless the A's go with what would be a surprising decision to non-tender his contract, Kouzmanoff will again be at third base next year. He's not making a ton of money to begin with (\$3.1 million) and isn't expected to receive much of a raise by way of arbitration this year. Plus, the A's are not about to pay Adrian Beltre -- who already turned down a deal with Oakland last offseason -- the big bucks he'll demand, and there are not many other worthy options at the hot corner available through free agency.

That being said, Kouzmanoff stays, and he starts. You're not the only one who's worried about his offensive numbers, though. I think Kouz would be the first to say he wasn't very satisfied with his 2010 season, which saw his batting average (.247) drop for a fourth consecutive year. His home run and RBI totals were also down, as was his OPS. However, I think given an offensive addition in the middle of the lineup, the A's could slide Kouzmanoff to the sixth spot, an area much more suitable for his abilities. In that situation, I think he could create some consistency at the plate -- a facet of his game which was lacking this year.

As for Davis, there's no doubt what his presence -- mainly in the form of speed -- has done for this injury-marred A's team over the last couple of years. If the A's brass has it their way, though, I say we see Chris Carter in left, Coco Crisp in center and Ryan Sweeney -- or an offensive upgrade -- in right field on Opening Day next year. That leaves Davis out of the starting mix, but I do think he's a high-quality bench player who has the ability to provide the A's with a late-inning spark and/or a solid backup option. His offensive numbers were respectable this season (.284 average, 52 RBIs) and his running ways (50 stolen bases) were impressive, but the A's need power in their outfield. Given its history with health, though, Oakland may have no other choice but to throw the arbitration-eligible Davis -- who made \$1.35 million this year -- out there on Opening Day.

What are some realistic scenarios where Billy Beane can upgrade the lineup through free-agent acquisitions? Carl Crawford is a long shot, but what about Jayson Werth?

-- David N., Santa Monica, Calif.

You're right. Crawford is very much a long shot and has already been linked to pinstripe rumors. If -- and likely when -- he hits the free agent market, he'll be seen by many clubs as the most well-rounded position player available. Only one other outfielder will be deemed as having similar value, and that's Werth.

The 31-year-old Werth represents the quintessential corner-outfield power the A's need. He sees more pitches than any other hitter in baseball, and he rewards his own patience with plenty of pop, as seen by the 27 home runs, 85 RBIs and .532 slugging percentage he compiled during the regular season this year. Even more, he fits right into the club's aggressive baserunning philosophy and would immediately offer the lineup plenty of leverage.

But, just like any other attractive free agent, Werth is expected to come with a hefty price tag -- super-agent Scott Boras is hoping to land his client a multi-year deal worth upwards of \$20 million per year. The A's certainly have a lot of money coming off the books this offseason, thanks to Ben Sheets' \$10 million and Eric Chavez's \$12 million option that won't be picked up. Even still, that doesn't mean they can necessarily afford Werth, who will surely receive plenty of offers. Beane isn't afraid of Boras, though, so trying isn't out of the question.

One significant hurdle for Beane this winter, however, is influencing free agents such as Werth to come play in the aged Oakland Coliseum, which has deterred a handful of players from signing with the A's in the past. Thus, Werth -- like Crawford -- is a long shot, but one worth fighting for in order to upgrade a weak lineup, which may have to be enhanced via trade.

Any chance of the A's re-signing Justin Duchscherer? I realize that pitching is hardly a problem area for the A's. But he would come at a very low price and, if healthy (I have faith that he will be), could potentially round out the best rotation in all of baseball along with Brett Anderson, Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez and Dallas Braden.

-- Jackson O., San Jose, Calif.

I, too, have faith that Duchscherer will be healthy next season -- but not so much in the A's willingness to bring him on board again. I think he'll be a great addition to another team's rotation if given the right opportunity, and the A's have plenty other viable options for the fifth starter spot. Duchscherer is indeed inexpensive, but so are Vin Mazzaro, Josh Outman and Tyson Ross -- three guys who will be at the front of the race in camp. Like you said, pitching isn't of worry this offseason, so it's a perfect time for the A's to peacefully part ways with Duke, who will turn 33 in November.

If Michael Taylor has a real great Spring Training next year, do you think he'll be playing in the Coliseum on April 1? And where will he play if he makes the team?

-- Joe M., Alameda, Calif.

My immediate answer is, "no," but a lot can change between now and April -- especially in Oakland. Taylor's obviously been regarded as the organization's next great thing, alongside Carter, but I think it would serve him well to start the year at Triple-A again. He's tearing up the Arizona Fall League right now -- as of Friday morning, he was batting .308 with two homers and six RBIs in seven games for Phoenix -- but that doesn't exactly wipe away the up-and-down regular season he endured with Sacramento.

The A's already have a handful of outfielders and could very well add to that mix by way of free agency or trade, so that doesn't exactly bode well for Taylor's chances of breaking camp with the club. That doesn't mean he won't get an opportunity to compete for a big league job, though, and I would highly suspect that -- if held off the Opening Day roster -- it won't be long before he gets the call.

Rumor has it that the A's are dropping the black alternate jersey and bringing back a yellow alternate. Any truth behind that?

-- Sven N., Alameda, Calif.

An A's official says that, at this point, no announcement has been planned for a color change. However, I've heard the same rumors and wouldn't be surprised if they make the switch based on fan reaction received from the club's June "Turn Back the Clock Night," which had A's players donning the memorable 1970s yellow unis reminiscent of the "Swingin' A's." I'm not so sure how the players would react to a color alteration given their love for the black, but the yellow ones get my vote and could draw heavy fan interest at the Coliseum.

I'm an A's fan, but I kind of want to see the Giants play the Rangers in the World Series. Is that so wrong?

-- Michael R., Arlington, Va.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to see good baseball. You can be a fan of the A's and a fan of the game at the same time. And being a fan of the game means wanting to see a Tim Lincecum and Cliff Lee matchup.

Stat Speak: Fingers still stands up in history

By Roger Schlueter / MLB.com

Hall of Famer Rollie Fingers made 30 appearances in the postseason over the course of his 17-year career. His first was in Game 1 of the 1971 American League Championship Series, when Fingers and the core group of Athletics that would go on to win three straight World Series were all getting their first taste of playoff baseball. Fingers' last postseason appearance occurred 10 years later, when he earned the save in Game 4 of the 1981 AL Division Series, putting the Brewers one win away from defeating the Yankees (Milwaukee lost Game 5).

Fingers is tied for the 16th-most appearances in postseason history, and his 13 relief appearances of two-plus innings leaves him third all-time, behind Tug McGraw (15) and Mariano Rivera (33). And despite the fact that he hasn't appeared in a postseason game in nearly 30 years, and despite the fact that during those 30 years the role of the ace reliever has evolved into the "closer" role and plays a much larger role in how games are finished, Fingers is still tied for the fourth-longest streak of converted save opportunities in postseason history.

From Game 1 of the 1972 ALCS through Game 5 of the 1974 World Series, Fingers made 24 appearances, pitched 46 1/3 innings, won three games and lost three, put up a 1.55 ERA, held batters to a .619 OPS-against, and converted all eight of his save opportunities.

SAVING GRACE

Brad Lidge's 12 consecutive converted save opportunities is the second-longest streak in postseason history.

PITCHER	NO.	DATES
Mariano Rivera	23	9/29/1998-10/30/2001
Brad Lidge	12	10/1/2008-current
Mariano Rivera	10	10/4/2005-current
Rollie Fingers	8	10/15/1972-10/17/1974
Jason Isringhausen	8	10/3/2000-10/14/2004
Randy Myers	8	10/5/1990-10/8/1997

NLCS Game 5

Four Phillies relievers (Jose Contreras, J.C. Romero, Ryan Madson and Brad Lidge) combined for three scoreless innings, allowing one hit and striking out five, as the Phillies defeated the Giants, 4-2. San Francisco leads the series three games to two.

- Lidge earned the save with a scoreless ninth inning, the 12th straight postseason save opportunity he has converted. That is the second-longest such streak in history. Mariano Rivera owns the record with 23 consecutive successful save opportunities. Rivera also has an active streak of 10 straight, dating to 2005.

- The Phillies stole three bases, two by Jimmy Rollins and one by Chase Utley. They have seven steals against one caught in the NLCS. The LCS record for most steals by a team is 16, by the 1992 Oakland A's. The high mark for an NLCS is 14, by the Braves in 1999.

DEEP THOUGHTS

Jayson Werth's postseason home run total ranks ninth all-time.

No.	PLAYER	HOME RUNS
1.	Manny Ramirez	29
2.	Bernie Williams	22
3.	Derek Jeter	20
4.	Mickey Mantle	18 (all in WS)
4.	Reggie Jackson	18
6.	Jim Thome	17
7.	Babe Ruth	15 (all in WS)
8.	David Justice	14
9.	Jim Edmonds	13
9.	Chipper Jones	13
9.	Albert Pujols	13

Jayson Werth's postseason home run total ranks ninth all-time.

No.	PLAYER	HOME RUNS
9.	Alex Rodriguez	13
9.	Jayson Werth	13

- Jayson Werth hit his 13th career postseason home run, and 11th with the Phillies (he hit two while a member of the Dodgers in 2004). Werth's 11 home runs are the most in Phillies history, and his 13 career home runs are tied for ninth-most by any player.

Werth is tied with Chipper Jones, Alex Rodriguez, Jim Edmonds and Albert Pujols, and trails David Justice, who had 14. Manny Ramirez (29), Bernie Williams (22) and Derek Jeter (20) have the most postseason homers.

- Tim Lincecum took the loss, allowing three runs (two earned) on four hits while striking out seven in seven innings. Lincecum has 29 strikeouts through his first three career postseason appearances, the second-most ever behind Bob Gibson, who struck out 31 Yankees in his three starts in the Cardinals' seven-game victory in the 1964 World Series.

In each of his first three starts, Lincecum has pitched at least seven innings and allowed no more than six hits (two, six and four). He is the 11th pitcher in postseason history to accomplish that. Some others: Hall of Famers Christy Mathewson, Stan Coveleski, Chief Bender and Don Sutton. And Cliff Lee.

HOW THEY STACK UP

Rangers and Yankees statistical totals entering Friday's Game 6 of the ALCS:

CATEGORY	RANGERS	YANKEES
Runs	32	18
Hits	56	35
Extra-base hits	19	15
Home runs	8	6
Steals	9	2
Batting avg.	.316	.217
OPS	.902	.709
ERA	3.48	6.55
Strikeouts	43	40
Walks	22	18
WHIP	1.295	1.682

ALCS Game 6: A look ahead

The Yankees have played in 27 Game 6s and won 17 of them. The last time they played in a Game 6 in which they were down in the series, 3-2, was in the 2003 World Series, when they lost the game and the Series to the Marlins.

Here is the Yankees' history in Game 6s when trailing 3-2 in a postseason series. All occurred in World Series play.

- 1952: Beat Dodgers, won Game 7.
- 1955: Beat Dodgers, lost Game 7.
- 1957: Beat Braves, lost Game 7.
- 1958: Beat Braves, won Game 7 (trailed 3-1 in Series).
- 1960: Beat Pirates, lost Game 7.
- 1964: Beat Cardinals, lost Game 7.
- 1981: Lost to Dodgers.
- 2003: Lost to Marlins.

- Both Elvis Andrus and Nelson Cruz are riding 10-game hitting streaks. They are tied with three others for the sixth-longest hitting streak to begin a postseason career. Marquis Grissom (15), Greg Luzinski (13), Darin Erstad (12), Thurman Munson (11) and Roberto Alomar (11) had longer streaks.

NOTEBOOK

Disabled list in works strictly for concussions

Susan Slusser, Associated Press 10/22/2010

The NFL is not the only sport figuring out how to deal with head injuries. Major League Baseball might create a 7-day disabled list just for players with concussions as soon as next season, a person familiar with the proposal told the Associated Press.

The new DL would be in addition to the 15- and 60-day lists that already exist. Concussions can happen on all fields of play, and officials at Major League Baseball, the NHL and NBA are following the developments in the NFL.

If a baseball subcommittee OKs the idea, it would need to be approved by Commissioner Bud Selig, then the players' union. A change to the disabled list rules would be subject to collective bargaining with the union.

A's changes: The A's have parted ways with the Webster Orthopedic Group, longtime team medical providers.

Earlier this week, A's starter Dallas Braden filed a complaint against the group and Dr. Thomas Peatman for medical negligence. Braden has permanent nerve damage related to a cyst removal from his left foot during the 2009 season. Among other things, the legal action contends that Braden incurs greater fatigue late in games as a result of the alleged negligence.

The A's also are not renewing advance scout Joe Sparks' contract, according to major-league sources.

- Susan Slusser

Briefly: Brandon Inge signed an \$11.5 million, two-year contract to stay with the Tigers. Inge hit .247 with 13 homers and 70 RBIs this season and led AL third basemen in fielding percentage (97.7). ... The Indians acquired right-hander Andrew Shive and infielder Matt Cusick, both minor-leaguers, from the Yankees to complete the July 31 trade that brought Kerry Wood to New York. ... Major-league home run leader Jose Bautista (54) had surgery to repair a sports hernia. He will need about a month to heal.

Oakland A's shake up staff by adding Gerald Perry (hitting coach) and Joel Skinner (bench coach)

By Joe Stiglich_Oakland Tribune 10/21/2010

The A's shook up their coaching staff Wednesday, hiring Gerald Perry as hitting coach and Joel Skinner as bench coach.

Perry replaces Jim Skaalen, who was dismissed after two seasons in which the A's ranked at or near the bottom of the American League in several offensive categories.

Skinner takes over as bench coach from Tye Waller, who'll now handle first-base coaching duties. Former first base coach Todd Steverson has been offered a job in the minor league system.

Skaalen, hired before the 2009 season, was well-liked by A's players and earned praise from manager Bob Geren earlier this season.

But Oakland's lack of offensive punch was glaring. The A's 109 home runs were third-fewest in the major leagues, and they ranked 11th out of 14 AL teams with 663 runs.

News of his firing shook Skaalen.

"There doesn't seem to be any rhyme or reason for it," he said by phone. "We never had a set lineup (because) guys were hurt. And even if we had the lineup we wanted, it was a group of contact hitters, doubles hitters, guys that can run a little bit. There was not a whole lot of power."

This will mark Perry's second stint as Oakland's hitting coach. He held that job in 2006, when he worked alongside Geren on manager Ken Macha's staff.

Perry left after that season to become the Chicago Cubs hitting coach. He was fired in June 2009 after 2 1/2 seasons in that role. Perry was the hitting coach for the Boston Red Sox's Triple-A Pawtucket team this season.

"I'd just like to see what (Perry) is going to bring to the table," Geren said. "He can help our young guys with his approach, and I think he'll get the best out of our guys."

Skinner coached in Cleveland's organization for the past 10 years and has interviewed three times for big league managerial openings. He was the Indians' interim manager in 2002.

He has ties to Geren and A's general manager Billy Beane. All three were raised in the San Diego area, and Skinner and Beane were teammates on a Little League All-Star team.

Geren said he liked the idea of Waller shifting to coach first base because Waller also is the A's baserunning coach.

The team also confirmed the dismissal of head trainer Steve Sayles, which the Bay Area News Group reported Wednesday.

In other news, A's left-hander Dallas Braden filed a medical negligence suit in Alameda County Superior Court against Dr. Thomas Peatman and the Webster Orthopaedic Medical Group.

A nerve in Braden's left foot was unintentionally severed during an August 2009 procedure in which Braden had a cyst removed. Braden has said he has permanent numbness in two toes, and he's pitched with constant pain since the procedure.

Jim Skaalen out as A's hitting coach, Gerald Perry replaces him, plus other staff changes

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 10/20/2010 4:23PM

The A's just announced a shakeup of their coaching staff. I'll have a story online a little later. Here's the nuts and bolts:

–Jim Skaalen has been dismissed after two seasons as hitting coach, with Gerald Perry hired to replace him. You'll remember Perry was the A's hitting coach in 2006.

–Joel Skinner was hired as the A's new bench coach, with former bench coach Tye Waller sliding over to first-base coaching duties. Todd Steverson, the first base coach for the past two years, has been offered a minor league position.

The A's also confirmed that head trainer Steve Sayles has been let go ...

–It's not a huge surprise that Skaalen was fired considering the team's offensive woes the past two seasons. But players and manager Bob Geren did speak highly of him during the 2010 season.

More to come later at contracostatimes.com and insidebayarea.com ...

A's fire hitting coach

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, 10/21/2010

Jim Skaalen was let go as the A's hitting coach Wednesday after two seasons with the club.

During his tenure, Oakland was at or near the bottom of the league in runs, batting average and on-base percentage. The A's were last in homers last year, second to last this year.

Replacing him will be former hitting coach Gerald Perry, who served in that capacity for the 2006 A's team that went to the ALCS. Frank Thomas hit 39 homers for the A's that season.

In addition, the A's named Joel Skinner as bench coach, with Tye Waller shifting to first-base coach. Todd Steverson, the first-base coach the past two years, was offered another position within the organization.

"It was a really difficult decision with both of the guys," manager Bob Geren said of Skaalen and Steverson. "But this was the right mix going forward."

Geren said that he'd hoped to have Perry on his staff his first year as manager but Perry chose to leave for an opportunity with the Cubs.

Skinner and Geren played against each other in Little League in San Diego and were teammates with the Yankees in 1988. Then Skinner was traded to the Indians, opening up a fulltime slot for Geren.

Skinner went 25-41 as the Indians' interim manager in 2002 and served as their bench coach in 2006. This year, his Double-A Akron team went 71-71.

"Having managed at all levels in the minors, and in the majors, I'm looking forward to this challenge," Skinner said.

The A's officially announced that trainer Stephen Sayles will not be back.

Drumbeat: Skaalen out as hitting coach, Perry back: Skinner new bench coach

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at AT&T Park 10/20/2010 4:33PM

Jim Skaalen was let go as the A's hitting coach on Wednesday after two seasons with the club; during that time, Oakland was at or near the bottom of the American League in runs, batting average and on-base percentage. In addition, with few power hitters, Oakland was last in the league in homers last year, second to last this year.

Returning to the A's as hitting coach is Gerald Perry, who served in that capacity for the 2006 Oakland team that went to the ALCS. Frank Thomas, late in his career and coming off numerous injuries, hit 39 homers for the A's that season.

In addition, the A's named Joel Skinner as bench coach, with Tye Waller moving from bench coach, a position he held for two seasons, to first-base coach. Todd Steverson, who served as first base coach the past two seasons, has been offered another position within the organization.

"It was a really difficult decision with both of the guys," manager Bob Geren said of Skaalen's dismissal and Steverson's reassignment. "They're both good guys, hard workers. But this was the right mix going forward."

Geren said that he'd hoped to have Perry on his staff his first year as manager but Perry chose to leave for an opportunity with the Cubs.

Skinner played on an All-Star team in high school with Billy Beane, the A's general manager, and now Skinner is working for Beane - earlier today, the A's hired Skinner, a longtime Indians player, minor-league manager and, briefly, big-league manager, to be the team's bench coach.

Skinner has known Geren even longer. They played against each other in Little League, Geren was in the same elementary class as Skinner's sister-in-law, and they were drafted the same year out of San Diego-area high schools.

"Bob was drafted on the first day," Skinner said with a chuckle. "I was drafted on the third day."

The two wound up teammates with the Yankees briefly in 1988 - and the following spring, Skinner was traded to the Indians, which opened up a slot on the Yankees' roster for another catcher - who turned out to be Geren.

"Our history goes way back," Skinner told the Chronicle by phone.

Skinner's name has been floated as a managerial candidate in recent years; he went 25-41 as the Indians' interim manager in 2002 after current Phillies manager Charlie Manuel was fired. Skinner also served as the Indians bench coach in 2006. He was most recently the manager at Double-A Akron, where his team went 71-71.

"Having managed at all levels in the minors, and in the majors, I'm looking forward to this challenge," Skinner said.

After more than 20 years with the Indians' organization, Skinner said that leaving took a lot of thought. "Looking back, the time flew by," he said. "Cleveland is still my home, but this is a good opportunity. ... Everything revolves around pitching, and it's nice to see a good crop of young pitchers."

The A's also officially announced that trainer Stephen Sayles will not be back, which was first reported by the Chronicle yesterday.

A's shore up staff with addition of two coaches

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's announced a handful of staff changes, including the hiring of hitting coach Gerald Perry and bench coach Joel Skinner, on Wednesday afternoon.

Perry replaces Jim Skaalen, whose contract was not renewed after two years of service. Skinner, meanwhile, becomes manager Bob Geren's right-hand man on the bench in place of Tye Waller, who has been reassigned to the role of first-base coach after two years as bench coach.

Todd Steverson, who served as the A's first-base coach for each of the past two seasons, has been offered a position in the organization's Minor League system. The other familiar faces of 2010 -- pitching coach Curt Young, third-base coach Mike Gallego and bullpen coach Ron Romanick -- are all slated to return in their same capacities.

Perry has 10 years of experience as a hitting coach -- five of which resulted in playoff appearances -- under his belt, including 2006 in Oakland when the A's made it to the American League Championship Series. He most recently served the role of hitting coach for Boston's Triple-A affiliate this season and has also worked with the Mariners, Pirates and Cubs.

Perry played parts of 13 Major League seasons from 1983 to 1995 with the Braves, Royals and Cardinals, and was named to the National League All-Star team in 1988 when he batted .300 with 29 doubles, eight home runs, 74 RBIs and 29 stolen bases for Atlanta.

Skinner, son of former Major League outfielder Bob Skinner, managed Cleveland's Double-A affiliate to a 71-71 record this past season. He served as bench coach for Cleveland during the 2006 season, but most of his time with the Indians' Major League staff was spent coaching at third base, where he was stationed for parts of eight seasons. Skinner was also named interim manager of the Indians midway through the 2002 season in Charlie Manuel's place, compiling a 25-41 record.

Skinner played 15 seasons in professional baseball prior to his coaching days, including nine years at the big league level with the White Sox, Yankees and Indians.

A's part ways with head athletic trainer Sayles

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 10/20/2010

OAKLAND -- Following yet another season hindered by injuries, the A's have dismissed head athletic trainer Steve Sayles, according to published reports.

The club had not officially announced the move as of Wednesday morning.

Sayles recently completed his third season as the team's head trainer following 10 years as assistant trainer under Larry Davis.

The A's used the disabled list 23 times this season, representing the second-highest total -- next to the mark of 25 set in 2008 -- in franchise history. In Sayles' three years as head athletic trainer, the team used the DL 65 times.

Many of the players who missed a good chunk of the 2010 season, however, had a history of injuries. Hurlers Ben Sheets and Justin Duchscherer, both of whom were sidelined in 2009, managed to combine for just 25 starts this season before going down to injury again.

Outfielder Conor Jackson, acquired by the A's from Arizona in June despite having battled a strained right hamstring early in the season, proceeded to play in just 18 games with Oakland because of hamstring issues and a sports hernia.

Fellow outfielder Coco Crisp, coming off two shoulder surgeries in 2009, suffered a fractured left pinkie finger when sliding into a base that forced him to miss much of the first half. Meanwhile, Ryan Sweeney played in just 82 games after undergoing season-ending surgery on a right knee that had been problematic for years.

Overall, the 23 injured A's players combined to miss a franchise-record 1,426 games in 2010.