

A's News Clips, Tuesday, October 26, 2010

Chin Music: A little more on Curt Young

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 10/25/2010

Just a quick update on the possible destination for former A's pitching coach Curt Young, who left Oakland on Sunday to pursue other options.

It was widely assumed that Young could be a natural to land with the Arizona Diamondbacks as their pitching coach, being that he lives in Scottsdale. But the Arizona Republic is reporting that Charles Nagy is the front runner for that position. Everything I'm now hearing points to Young getting consideration from the Boston Red Sox to be their pitching coach. The Sox have a vacancy now that John Farrell has left to become Toronto's new manager. Of course, with today's news that the Yankees will part ways with pitching coach Dave Eiland, perhaps that could open up another opportunity for Young. We shall see ...

Ron Washington wouldn't have worked out for A's

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle, 10/26/2010

I'd like to think Billy Beane took a moment to congratulate Ron Washington for managing the Texas Rangers into the World Series. Washington was an Oakland A's coach for 11 years, and no man who ever passed through that clubhouse was more respected by the players.

I wonder, too, if Beane ever considered hiring such an engaging, soulful manager. Someone with a pulse, someone who speaks from the heart, someone who manages aggressively and is a little bit unpredictable. Someone who unabashedly lights up a cigarette, at the proper time, because that's just how he operates.

Nobody wonders too long about that, because the answer is an emphatic NO. Beane has his ideal manager in Bob Geren, a solid baseball man whose substance and fiber have yet to be revealed. The two have a friendship that allows Beane, in essence, to manage the team. And how can you argue with second place in the AL West? That was the absolute ceiling for this year's A's team. People aren't crying out for change, unless they've become bored to the point of insanity.

It's just such a great thing that Washington left Oakland and joined a team he could really *manage*. There's no pervasive offensive philosophy on the Rangers, no strict directive to go up there and watch a million pitches pass by. Some of the Rangers hit that way, others (like Vladimir Guerrero) go up there hacking. As Mariano Rivera said, after his Yankees were eliminated in the ALCS, "When you see a team that never gives up, that's always attacking, attacking, attacking - pitching-wise and hitting-wise - you just have to give it to them."

There's a sense of freedom to Ron Washington, within his persona and in the way he treats his players. He's a man with the courage to admit his weaknesses, and with the strength to rebuild his New Orleans home, from scratch, after it was destroyed by Hurricane Katrina. He's a bit like Dusty Baker, with that seen-it-all perspective, and even a bit like Bruce Bochy, for both of these World Series managers thrive on instinct, with a raging pulse underneath the calm exterior. Players charge into battle for men like that.

Other World Series thoughts:

-- When Washington's cocaine episode came to light, we heard this: How can a man make proper decisions on the baseball field when he can't do so in his own life? Hell, it's easy. Billy Martin made a career of that daily double. Tony La Russa isn't a bad example, either.

-- Let's pause for a moment to realize why we're in San Francisco, instead of Texas, for Games 1 and 2: because Atlanta's Brian McCann hit a three-run double off Chicago's Matt Thornton in the All-Star Game. You just have to marvel at that brand of reasoning.

-- Buster Posey buried Bengie Molina in the second-half headlines, but Molina has a distinct edge right now. He's catching a World Series pitching staff for the second time (2002 Angels). He had the biggest hit in the ALCS, a three-run homer in Game 4, and he set the tone in Game 6 by throwing out Curtis Granderson trying to steal in the first inning. He's also going to get a financial share from both teams and a World Series championship ring, no matter how it ends.

-- A smiling Molina on his inspired postseason: "Not bad for a fat kid that everyone makes fun of when he runs."

-- If you're still thinking of Brian Sabean in terms of Barry Zito, Aaron Rowand and Edgar Renteria, you'd better get back down to the basement and those "CHiPs" reruns.

-- What Sabean should be saying to the talk-show callers now, except he's too dignified to do so: "Whaddya think now, ya morons?"

-- What he did say, to executive cohort Dick Tidrow, during Game 6 in Philly: "This is a street fight, and we win those."

-- The weather doesn't look that good, but it won't be as bad as 1962, when there were three consecutive rain-forced postponements of Game 6 at Candlestick.

-- The Rangers used Vladimir Guerrero almost strictly as a DH to keep his legs fresh. Washington's right: Now that the World Series is here, there's no reason not to put him in the outfield.

-- When NBC handled the World Series in the 1970s, it brought in local announcers (such as the A's Monte Moore and the Reds' Al Michaels) to join the network telecast. How sweet if Fox could give viewers a taste of Mike Krukow, Duane Kuiper and Eric Nadel, the Rangers' beloved radio voice since 1979.

-- The Giants get a huge response when they play "Don't Stop Believing" (Steve Perry at his finest), but catch this, from the Phils' Ryan Madson, after he blew away the Giants in Game 5: "Great song. That song pumped me up. I got the chills. It kept me loose. It took my mind off everything."

-- Out-of-towners must be surprised that in a city as sophisticated as San Francisco, with such a world-class ballpark, fans are constantly bombarded by dumb musical riffs and annoying "Make Noise" exhortations. It's awful, no doubt, but the New York writers won't mind. After Yankee Stadium, where good taste went the way of the condor, AT&T sounds like a funeral home.

A's like in-house pitching coach options

Romanick leads a number of internal candidates for open job

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 10/26/2010

OAKLAND -- A's general manager Billy Beane is in no hurry to hire a new pitching coach, let alone in any big rush to seek out options away from Oakland. That's because he has at least four internal candidates, all of whom will strongly be considered before an outside alternative, Beane said Monday.

The top contender to replace Curt Young, who has chosen to pursue another opportunity within Major League Baseball, seemingly appears to be bullpen coach Ron Romanick. The 49-year-old Romanick just finished his third season on the A's big league staff after spending nine years as the club's Minor League roving pitching instructor, a role that proved instrumental in the upbringings of several of the team's starting hurlers -- including Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson and Dallas Braden.

When asked about Romanick's candidacy, Beane didn't hesitate at all.

"Absolutely," he said. "Not only will he be considered, but he should be. He's the guy who has been with us for a number of years and has been influential in the development of these young pitchers as much as anybody. He's a very active bullpen coach and has a lot of history with these guys in the Minor Leagues. There's no question Ronnie will be a candidate."

Romanick has essentially jump-started careers, rebooted careers -- he's responsible for the creation of Brad Ziegler's sidearm style -- and led other careers in a healthy direction, thanks to his highly effective throwing and rehab programs used by the likes of Braden, Joey Devine and Josh Outman.

At the same time, there's no question Romanick does a fine job in his current role, one which allows him the time to do the homework necessary of establishing such programs. So should the A's choose to keep him where he's at, they could dip into the Minors for a handful of other candidates.

Very much respected by all are pitching coordinator Gil Patterson, Triple-A pitching coach Rick Rodriguez and Double-A pitching coach Scott Emerson. All three figure to be in the race to join manager Bob Geren's coaching staff in 2011.

"We certainly have a lot of candidates in-house that we'll certainly give strong consideration, and I think, as standard procedure, we'll take a look outside," Beane said. "But I will say this. We do think highly of a number of people within our organization, so it would be foolish not to strongly consider one of those."

"I think we'll consider them first. I don't think we'll consider them only. Whenever you have vacancies, I think you owe it to yourself to at least explore external options. With that being said, we're very comfortable internally with the options we have."

Beane noted there's currently no timeline to fill the vacant position, one which will be rewarded with a starting staff that compiled a Major League-leading 3.47 ERA this season. Braden, the eldest of the bunch at age 27, is quite in tune with the makeup of his fellow hurlers, and he mentioned he would like to see a pitching coach who can tap in to not only each of their physical abilities, but human side, as well.

"I'm in favor of whatever is going to help us get to where we want to be as a pitching staff," Braden said. "I think the guy who is best suited for the staff is the guy who knows when to be hands-on and, for the most part, knows that we're going to work through what's coming our way on our own."

"We're trying to develop into big league pitchers, frontline big league guys, and I think the guy that can differentiate between trying to put his thumbprint on someone and just working through a process, that's the guy that's going to help us, especially the younger guys. The younger guys are good. They know they're good. They've had success. Nobody's going to tell them that they're not good. The whole world knows it. If someone can come in and just kind of get in touch with their personality and get to know them, that's going to be the biggest thing."

With the job up for grabs, the A's will see just two coaches not named Geren return to their same roles next year. That number could shrink to one -- Mike Gallego as third-base coach -- if Romanick is named pitching coach. Either way, Beane is looking for a rather straightforward task come from the position.

"Our guys are still young," he said, "so that means there's still room for improvement and growth. We want to make sure we have someone in there who can continue that development and help them reach that next level."

Column: Burley's Ron Romanick armed and ready in Oakland

By Steve Crump, Twin Falls Times-News, 10/26/2010

He threw his first pitch as a toddler in Burley. Now Ron Romanick is poised to inherit the best pitching staff in the American League.

Two Bay Area newspapers and MLB.com reported Monday that Romanick, who was born in Burley 50 years ago next week, is likely to become the next pitching coach for the Oakland Athletics, succeeding Curt Young. Young resigned over the weekend.

The A's had the lowest staff earned run average in the American League last year, 3.56. The team also led the league in shutouts and quality starts, and left-hander Dallas Braden pitched a perfect game on May 9.

Romanick has been the bullpen coach for the A's for the past three seasons. Oakland's closer, Andrew Bailey, was the 2009 American League Rookie of the Year.

"Not only will he be considered, but he should be," A's General Manager Billy Beane told MLB.com. "He's the guy who has been with us for a number of years and has been influential in the development of these young pitchers as much as anybody."

Romanick moved from Idaho to the Seattle area as a youngster, and graduated from Newport High School in Bellevue, Wash., in 1979. A 6-foot, 4-inch right-handed pitcher, he earned a scholarship to Arizona State University. Romanick pitched for two years in Tempe before being drafted by the California Angels in the first round in 1981.

His league career spanned three seasons (1984-86) with the Angels, as Romanick compiled a career record of 31-29 and a 4.24 ERA in 82 appearances, all starts. After going 5-8 in 1986, he was traded to the New York Yankees organization and spent the 1987 season with Triple-A Columbus. Romanick retired in 1988, at age 27, after spending one year in the Milwaukee farm system.

In 1992, he was hired by the Seattle Mariners as minor league pitching coordinator, and he left to take the same job with the A's organization in 1999.

The last Idahoan to serve as a MLB coach was Caldwell's Frank Reberger, who was the bullpen coach for the Florida Marlins in 1993-94. The last Idaho pitching coach on a big league staff was Meridian's Vernon Law, a onetime National League Cy Young winner, who coached for the Pittsburgh Pirates in 1968-69.

A's Co-owner Gives \$10,000 to Perata Group After Ex-Senator Says Team Is Moving to San Jose

Robert Gammon, East Bay Express, 10/25/2010

A's co-owner Lew Wolff, who desperately wants to move his team to San Jose, is trying to influence the outcome of the Oakland mayor's race, **pumping \$10,000** into a political committee that is backing ex-state Senator Don Perata. The move is unusual because Oakland sports team owners don't typically attempt to sway city elections and because Wolff is known for being frugal with his money. The large donation also came after recent statements made by Perata that stopping the A's move to the South Bay will not be a priority if he becomes mayor.

At a debate last month sponsored by the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, Perata answered "no" when asked whether he would consider spending any taxpayer funds on helping keep the A's in Oakland. By contrast, two of his main competitors, Rebecca Kaplan and Jean Quan said they would try to keep the A's from leaving with the use of city redevelopment funds — which typically cannot be used for basic services, such a police, fire, libraries, and parks and recreation.

Quan favors a new ballpark for the A's in Jack London Square, at the so-called Victory Court site along the Lake Merritt Channel. Kaplan supports a new ballpark on the existing Oakland Coliseum property surrounded by a shopping and entertainment district.

It's becoming more common for cities to use redevelopment funds to help sports teams build new stadiums. San Jose plans to use such funds to acquire land for a new A's ballpark and build needed infrastructure. And San Francisco limited its use of public money to redevelopment funds in helping the Giants build AT&T Park. Quan, Kaplan, Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums, and Council President Jane Brunner have ruled out using general fund money for the A's, but support using redevelopment funds to acquire land and build infrastructure for a new stadium. Indeed, it likely would be impossible to keep the A's from moving without spending redevelopment dollars.

In addition, at a recent editorial board meeting with the *Oakland Tribune*, Perata appeared uninterested in talking about keeping the A's in town, according to several attendees. "He was very evasive," said Kaplan, who was at the meeting with Quan, Perata, and fellow mayoral candidate Joe Tuman. "He basically conveyed that keeping the A's is not very important."

After the editorial board meeting, one of the attendees, *Tribune* columnist Dave Newhouse, **published a piece** on October 6 about the mayoral candidates and their thoughts on the A's and the Golden State Warriors. Newhouse quoted Perata as being resigned to the fact that the A's are leaving. "I don't think the A's are going to stay here," Perata said. "We can't play in this game, putting up the money. We haven't been smart with our franchises."

In an interview, Wolff denied that Perata's stance on the A's had anything to do with his \$10,000 donation, saying he's supporting the ex-senator because he thinks he's the best mayoral candidate. "I've known him for years," Wolff said, "and I respect him." Wolff also said he hasn't been paying attention to what Perata has been saying on the campaign trail.

But an attempt by an Oakland sports team owner to affect the outcome of a mayor's race may be unprecedented in recent decades. "I've been in Oakland since 1964, and I've never heard of anything like this," Newhouse said in an interview after being told of what Wolff had done. Newhouse also said that Perata's disinterest in keeping the A's in Oakland "makes more sense" in light of Wolff's attempt to get the ex-senator elected.

Indeed, it seems unlikely that Wolff would support a candidate who would try to stop his San Jose plans. The A's co-owner has been adamant in recent years that the team can't survive in Oakland and that he's determined to move the ballclub to San Jose. He expressed deep frustration earlier this year when Dellums, Brunner, and a local booster group led by Planning Commissioner Doug Boxer submitted a plan for a new A's ballpark in Jack London Square. Wolff views the proposal as an unnecessary roadblock to his planned move to the South Bay and is angry that a Major League Baseball blue-ribbon panel has been studying Oakland's idea.

Newly filed campaign finance reports show that Wolff donated \$10,000 on October 12 to a group with close ties to Perata called Coalition for a Safer California — after the chamber debate and after Newhouse's piece was published. Coalition for a Safer California has reported **spending at least \$141,000** trying to get Perata elected mayor of Oakland. The group is run by Perata's longtime friend, Paul Kinney, and is financed primarily by the ex-senator's employer, the California Prison guard's union. The group also has sent out three hit-piece mailers that were full of falsehoods, attacking Quan and Kaplan — the two mayoral candidates who most strongly favor keeping the A's in Oakland.

Earlier this year, Wolff **also donated \$500** to another Perata committee, Hope 2010. The committee is supposed to back a 2012 statewide ballot measure that would tax cigarettes to fund cancer research, but there's some evidence that Perata has been using the committee **to assist his mayoral candidacy** — an apparent violation of state and local election laws.

Monday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Braves' Harrilchak has perfect day in Desert Dogs' victory

By MLB.com 10/26/2010

Desert Dogs 8, Solar Sox 6

Braves infield prospect Cory Harrilchak enjoyed a perfect day at the plate, collecting four hits for Phoenix. Harrilchak, who hit his first homer of the fall season, drove in three runs, while Treyvon Robinson (Dodgers) hit a three-run blast for the Desert Dogs. Brett Jackson (Cubs) and Jeremy Moore (Angels) had a pair of RBIs for Mesa. Athletics farmhand Travis Banwart earned his third win, fanning three over the first three innings of the game.

Saguaros 5, Scorpions 4

Twins prospect Chris Parmelee ended an 0-for-10 slump with a pair of two-run doubles to pace Peoria. Leslie Anderson (Rays) was 2-for-4 with a solo homer and a double, while fellow Rays farmhand Jose Ruiz added three hits and scored once. Josh Collmenter (Diamondbacks) didn't get a decision after allowing a run on five hits and fanning three over four innings for Scottsdale. Padres farmhand Brad Brach pitched 1 1/3 perfect innings of relief for the win.

Javelinas 9, Rafters 9 (11 innings)

Dustin Ackley, the No. 2 overall pick by the Mariners in 2009, drew five walks and drove in a pair of runs in the tie. Cuban import Jose Iglesias was 2-for-6 with an RBI and fellow Red Sox farmhand Ryan Lavarney plated a run with a double. Engel Beltre (Rangers) fell a triple short of the cycle and drove in three runs for Surprise. Zack Cox (Cardinals) sparked the Rafters' rally with a one-out double in the ninth inning.

Saturday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Mets prospect Holt helps Sox snap Rafters' winning streak

By / MLB.com

Solar Sox 7, Rafters 2

Mets prospect Brad Holt struck out five and allowed one hit over three scoreless innings to maintain a spotless AFL ERA for Mesa. Andrew Lambo provided the offense for the Solar Sox with a two-run homer and an RBI double. Fellow Pirates farmhand Josh Harrison was 3-for-5 with a pair of triples and two runs scored. Cardinals prospect Zack Cox doubled and scored a run for Surprise, which had a three-game winning streak snapped.

Javelinas 7, Saguaros 2

Indians Minor League Player of the Year Jason Kipnis broke out of a 2-for-14 slump with a game-tying two-run homer as the Javelinas won the Battle of Peoria. Eastern League RBI leader Eric Thames (Blue Jays) snapped the deadlock with a two-run blast and Astros prospect Koby Clemens followed with a solo shot. Former first-round pick Ben Revere (Twins) had three hits and his fifth stolen base to raise his average to .410 for the Saguaros.

Scorpions 6, Desert Dogs 1

Giants prospect Ryan Verdugo earned his first win, fanning five and allowing two hits over three shutout innings for Scottsdale. Derek Norris (Nationals) hit a solo homer and drew a bases-loaded walk for the Scorpions. No. 1 overall pick Bryce Harper was 2-for-4 in his second AFL start and fellow Nationals farmhand Michael Burgess drove in a pair of runs. Eastern League MVP Brandon Laird (Yankees) had two hits in a losing cause.

Friday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Krauss hits grand slam, plates seven runs in Scorpions' rout

By / MLB.com

Javalinas 4, Scorpions 12

Marc Krauss slugged a grand slam and plated seven runs as Scottsdale improved to a league-best 7-3. The D-Backs prospect also laced a bases-loaded double and leads the AFL with 12 RBIs in seven games. Charlie Culberson (Giants) went 3-for-5 with two RBIs to raise his average to a league-leading .548.

Rafters 7, Desert Dogs 6

Johnny Giavotella plated a run in his fifth consecutive game while raising his batting average to .545 (12-for-22) as Surprise edged Phoenix. The Royals' second-round pick in the 2008 Draft went 3-for-4 with a pair of doubles and a two-run homer. Hunter Morris (Brewers) chipped in two hits and two RBIs, while former first-rounder Eric Hosmer (Royals) was 2-for-5 with an RBI and a run scored for Surprise.

Saguaros 6, Solar Sox 2

Rays farmhand Leslie Anderson went 3-for-4 with an RBI and White Sox prospect Eduardo Escobar homered and lifted his average to .455 as the Sags snapped a three-game losing streak. Henry Wrigley (Rays) added a two-run shot in the sixth to put Peoria ahead to stay. Jeremy Moore (Angels) had two hits for Mesa

Thursday's Arizona Fall League roundup

Sanchez follows Harper's lead, powers Sox past Scorpions

By/ MLB.com

Solar Sox 4, Scorpions 2

Pirates prospect Tony Sanchez hit his first Fall League homer, a two-run shot as Mesa climbed into a first-place tie with Scottsdale in the Eastern Division. Solar Sox starter Robert Carson (Mets) scattered three hits over three scoreless innings for the win. Scottsdale's Charlie Culberson (Giants) went 4-for-4 with a pair of doubles and a run scored to raise his average to a league-leading .538.

Desert Dogs 4, Javelinas 3

Eastern League MVP and Rookie of the Year Brandon Laird (Yankees) homered, doubled and drove in all four runs as Phoenix rallied past the Javelinas. With the Desert Dogs down to their final out, Laird blasted a two-run shot to erase a 3-2 deficit. Astros prospect Brandon Barnes was 2-for-2 in a losing cause.

Rafters 11, Saguaros 4

Tigers prospect Ben Guez fell a triple shy of the cycle, scored three times and drove in two runs as Surprise moved into first place in the Western Division. Eric Farris continued his torrid start, going 3-for-3 with a pair of runs scored to raise his average to .500. Eduardo Escobar collected two hits, an RBI and a run scored for the Saguaros, who have lost seven of eight.