

## A's News Clips, Friday, November 12, 2010

### Chin Music: A's 2011 Promotion Days schedule

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 11/11/2010 12:47PM

Here's a quick rundown of some of the A's top promotions for next season's home schedule:

–April 30: Rickey Henderson Bobblehead Day vs. Texas

–June 30: Root Beer Float Day vs. Florida

–July 16: Doubheader vs. the Angels beginning at 1:07 p.m. Second game will follow shortly after first, with one ticket good for both games.

–Five fireworks shows, including July 2 vs. Arizona

–August 13: Ray Fosse Bobblehead Day vs. Texas

### Thursday's Arizona Fall League roundup

#### Cardinals' Chambers plates three to lead Surprise to victory

By MLB.com

##### **Rafters 6, Solar Sox 5**

Cardinals outfielder Adron Chambers went 3-for-4 with two doubles and three RBIs and Kansas City catching prospect Salvador Perez plated two runs as Surprise rallied to beat Mesa. Chambers has driven in eight runs over his last nine games for the Rafters. Solar Sox backstop Tony Sanchez (Pirates) homered twice in the losing effort, bringing his fall tally to four -- as many as he hit in 59 games in the Florida State League in 2010.

##### **Javelinas 9, Saguaros 4**

Blue Jays outfield prospect John Tolisano slugged a solo homer, plated two runs and drew three walks as the Javelinas improved to an AFL-best 16-8. Tolisano has hit safely in each of the four games he has played on the circuit. Top Mariners prospect Dustin Ackley singled, walked three times and stole his fourth base of the campaign.

##### **Scorpions 5, Desert Dogs 1**

D-backs second-round Draft pick Marc Krauss went 4-for-4 and Giants farmhand Ryan Verdugo struck out a career-high nine batters as Scottsdale remained at the top of the AFL East. Krauss has hit safely in nine of his last 10 games, raising his average to .292. Bryan Evans (Marlins) allowed two runs on three hits and a walk over four innings in the losing effort.

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### Will MLB expand the playoffs? We'll soon have a much clearer answer

Tom Verducci, SI.com, 11/12/2010

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Should baseball expand its postseason, and if so, how? The next four weeks will provide commissioner Bud Selig with the information to begin answering those questions.

Baseball general managers are expected to discuss the issue of adding two playoff teams when they hold their annual meetings next week. Three weeks later, during the winter meetings in Orlando, Selig will present the issue to his 14-man committee for on-field matters.

When I asked Selig what has caused the groundswell for expanding the playoffs -- fearing it was about TV ratings and not competition -- he said, "I think it's fair to ask the question, 'Is eight out of 30 enough?' Is that fair? That's the basic question."

Baseball could add two playoff teams and still have a lower percentage of its teams in the playoffs (33 percent) than the NFL, NBA and NHL. But, as with instant replay, the most important question is how?

What scares me is that the managers and GMs who like expanding the playoffs are pushing Selig for two wild-card teams to play a best-of-three *series* instead of a one-game elimination. It's such a horrible idea that baseball would be better off keeping the current system.

Their argument goes like this: "It's not fair for my season to come down to one game." Selig's counter should go something like this: "Yo, you had 162 games to win your division and you didn't do it."

A play-in series is a terrible idea because it makes the division winners sit around too long -- as many as five or six days -- while second- and possibly third-place teams have the stage to themselves. It's bad for ratings, too; baseball needs more ultimate playoff games (winner-take-all) but not more playoff games that may or may not decide a series.

And the length of the regular season and postseason already are creating a fatigue factor that is undermining the excitement of the World Series. The postseason took 14 days in 1990, 26 days in 2000 and 28 days in 2010. People just don't have the hours and nights to devote to postseason baseball viewing for a month straight, so why ask them to make an even longer investment?

We'll have a better idea of where Selig is headed with this in a month. And if second-place teams complain about having to play a one-game elimination, he should tell them to look at the Chiba Lotte Marines. They finished in third place in Japan's Pacific League (half of the 12 teams in Nippon Pro Baseball make the playoffs). They played a best-of-three series against the second place team and then a best-of-seven series against the first-place team -- *all on the road!*

The Marines somehow advanced to the Nippon Series, where they played Games 1 and 2 on the road. They wound up playing 10 straight playoff games on the road before they played a home game. And yes, the Marines wound up winning the Nippon Series.

### **Wanted: outfield stability in Oakland**

The Athletics made a good decision to trade from their inventory of pitching (Vin Mazzaro) to try to find any offense whatsoever (David DeJesus). But at some point can Oakland actually identify and develop a good-hitting outfielder with some staying power? The Athletics' recent track record for developing, trading for or keeping outfielders is abysmal. DeJesus is just the latest in a long line of what Oakland treats as interchangeable parts. Consider these numbers just in the four seasons since 2007:

- The Athletics have used 43 players in the outfield. Forty-three.
- Only one of Oakland's 43 outfielders over the past four seasons has hit more than 13 home runs: Jack Cust in 2008.
- Only one of Oakland's 43 outfielders over the past four seasons has posted an OPS+ better than 100 with enough plate appearances to qualify for the batting title: Cust again in 2008.
- Only four of those 43 outfielders even qualified for the batting title: Cust, Shannon Stewart, Ryan Sweeney and Rajai Davis --none were homegrown.
- In the past decade the Athletics have just three 20-home run seasons from homegrown outfielders: Nick Swisher twice and Eric Byrnes once.
- Last year alone Oakland used 16 outfielders, with only Davis playing enough to qualify for the batting title.

DeJesus can leave as a free agent after next season or, as Oakland operates, be flipped during the season for other parts. The feeling is that DeJesus is Conor Jackson, who was Coco Crisp, who was Scott Hairston, who was Matt Murton, who was Mark Kotsay, who was... you get the idea. Why can't the A's find a gem like Carlos Gonzalez or Andre Ethier? Of course, they did, but traded both as young players.

Oakland's home park plays huge, especially at night early and late in the season. There is no doubt that it harms power numbers. And the Athletics have a nice foundation for contending with a strong, young rotation backed by a terrific defensive infield. But at some point the Athletics are going to have to find some consistency and some offense with this never-ending parade of outfielders. Last year Oakland's outfielders posted the worst OPS in the league (.692).

Hey, maybe the Athletics can give their neighbors a call for some help about how to find some offense in the outfield cheaply. Castoffs Pat Burrell, Andres Torres and Cody Ross did OK for the Giants this year.

### **Why Jeter's Gold Glove makes sense**

The Gold Glove Awards are given to the best fielder at each position in each league *as determined by major league managers and coaches*. And that is why Derek Jeter won another Gold Glove this week. You must understand who is voting on the award and how and why they make their choices, and once you do you understand the respect that people in uniform have for Jeter.

It is not some great travesty that a 36-year-old shortstop with diminishing range won the award. I've seen coaches fill out ballots. They are not poring over advanced fielding metrics. They want guys who they see as reliable. And as one coach told me, Jeter is extremely reliable at every phase of defense -- a sure-handed fielder and accurate thrower who also is excellent at relays, tags, pop-ups, double plays, decision-making and positioning.

Jeter fielded 437 batted balls this year and had only one fielding error. He played 1,303 2/3 innings at shortstop and put only five runners on base with an error. He doesn't take a poor at-bat into the field and doesn't make careless mistakes.

Night after night, inning after inning, hit the ball to him and you're out. Those things matter to coaches.

I get all the valid arguments about Jeter's range issues, about how Rush Limbaugh goes to his left better and all that. I thought Elvis Andrus of Texas was the best fielding shortstop. There's no way Jeter wins such an award if writers armed with defensive metrics are voting for it.

But the Gold Glove Award is unlike most awards because of who votes and why. It is a coach's award and Jeter is a coach's player.

## **Wolff: MLB should OK A's move to San Jose**

Eric Young, San Francisco Business Times, 11/11/2010

The owner of the Oakland A's said he sees no reason why Major League Baseball or the Giants "should not" approve the team's move to San Jose.

**Lew Wolff**, who wants the A's to have a baseball-only park so the team can earn higher revenues, told AthleticsNation: "There is actually no reason in the world that any of us can come up with that either the Giants or the baseball commissioner should not approve us to move 50-60 miles away to San Jose so the A's can get a new ballpark."

Wolff is waiting for a Major League Baseball committee to wrap up its study of whether the A's should stay in the East Bay. That three-person committee has been working on the issue for more than a year. It is unclear when it will finish its work.

The Giants have said they will fight an A's move to San Jose. Baseball granted the Giants marketing rights to Santa Clara County and the Giants have said they alone should have the rights to that region.

Wolff, who was part of an ownership group that bought the team in 1995, said he exhausted every possibility for building a new stadium in Oakland.

"Some fans may not agree," Wolff told AthleticsNation, "but we have left no option out in seeking to build a new venue in Oakland. We have exhausted every option in Oakland."

San Jose wants the A's to relocate to a parcel of land near its downtown. The city is trying to negotiate a purchase of two parcels that would give Wolff enough land to build a ballpark.

The A's, who have shared the Oakland Coliseum with the Oakland Raiders since 1968, have agreed to play in Oakland through 2011.

## **Urban: DeJesus Trade First Domino For A's**

Mychael Urban, CSNBayArea.com 11/11/2010

SAN FRANCISCO -- Ten things we learned when the A's traded righty starter Vin Mazzaro and lefty pitching prospect Justin Marks to the Royals for outfielder David DeJesus on Wednesday:

1) Oakland general manager Billy Beane feels pretty good about landing Japanese pitching star Hisashi Iwakuma, to whom he recently won the rights for a 30-day negotiating window via Japan's posting process. Adding Iwakuma, as noted here Monday, will add to the A's surplus of quality pitching, and Beane was expected to deal some of those arms to address his team's glaring offensive deficiencies. Wednesday's trade was the first domino to fall.

2) Undeterred by what surely will be a skeptical fan reaction to Oakland adding yet another player with a very recent history of major injury, Beane feels pretty good about DeJesus' recovery from the right-thumb surgery that ended his 2010 season after 91 games. It's important and not at all unfair to note, though, that Beane felt pretty good about Coco Crisp, signed to a relatively pricey free-agent contract -- \$10.75 million over two years, including the 2011 option recently picked up -- last offseason after missing all but 49 games with shoulder injuries in 2009. Crisp played in 75 games this season.

3) Beane likes former Royals. Crisp was a Royal in 2009. Mark Ellis, Mike Sweeney, Johnny Damon and Jermaine Dye are among other players plucked by Oakland out of the Kansas City organization.

4) The A's still don't believe in Rajai Davis as an everyday outfielder. As of now, Oakland's starting outfield is DeJesus, Crisp and Ryan Sweeney, who has quite the injury history of his own. That leaves Davis, who has put together consecutive solid second halves, looking at the fourth outfielder spot again.

5) Chris Carter is a safe bet to be Oakland's designated hitter in 2011. Assuming he learns to better identify his kryptonite -- aka a big-league slider -- in the offseason, Carter should make the team next spring, and unless Daric Barton is packaged in another domino deal, Carter has no other spot in the starting lineup than DH.

6) Jack Cust is done in green and gold. See above.

7) Mazzaro wore out his welcome. Beane, in a Wednesday night conference call, disputed as much, but whispers about Mazzaro's makeup -- particularly his mental toughness and drive -- started in 2009, when he made a splashy debut but struggled mightily thereafter, then proclaimed his year an overall success at the end of the season despite having made almost zero adjustments. His 2010 struggles sealed his fate.

8) Either Marks is expected to develop into a No. 3 starter at worst, or Beane is still a heck of a salesman, or both. A third-round pick in 2009, Marks went a combined 6-13 with a 4.87 ERA in 25 games (24 starts) at Class-A and -AA ball last season, but he's a 22-year-old lefty, and those are always worth developing. Marks might have been the key to the deal from the K.C. perspective, because some of those aforementioned whispers about Mazzaro came from scouts. Beane likely talked over those whispers.

9) The A's have money. The Royals last month picked up their club option on DeJesus for 2011, when he'll pull down a salary even -- \$6 million -- higher than that of Crisp. No cash changed hands on Wednesday's deal, so Oakland has \$11.75 million invested in two-thirds of their starting outfield. Again, important and not unfair to note that those two players combined to play in 166 games last year.

And last but far, far from least ...

10) The A's still haven't addressed their most glaring need: middle-of-the-order power. DeJesus is a solid left-handed hitter with the type of plate discipline the A's love (.360 career on-base percentage), but he has 61 career homers with a single-season high of 13. In short, he's a smaller, slightly better version of Sweeney. More dominoes are sure to fall, but as of Wednesday night, the A's remain without truly proven impact run producers in the Nos. 3, 4 and 5 spots in their lineup.