

## A's News Clips, Monday, November 29, 2010

### Baseball revving up for Winter Meetings

By Tom Singer / MLB.com 11/29/2010

The games have been put into the books. The awards have been put into the trophy cases. The turkeys have been removed from the ovens.

Time to put baseball to bed for the winter? Not a chance. The temperature may be dropping, but the sport's offseason drama is just warming up. They don't call it the *Hot Stove League* for nothing.

The stretch drive to winter's main attraction -- the annual Winter Meetings, beginning a four-day run on Dec. 6 in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. -- will be congested. Baseball folks face far tougher decisions than whether to get the natural fir or the flocked plastic for the living room.

First up: Ranked free agents offered salary arbitration last week by their 2010 teams must decide by Tuesday 11:59 p.m. ET whether to accept or decline. That call will have to be made by 30 (13 A's and 17 B's) of the 35 ranked free agents; four others have already signed 2011 deals, and Javier Vazquez is close to finalizing an agreement with the Marlins that had been anticipated for days.

Among those facing the decision are outfielders Jayson Werth and Carl Crawford, third baseman Adrian Beltre, left-handed starter Cliff Lee and closer Rafael Soriano. For them, the deadline is a mere technicality, since they will reject with the assurance of finding long-term deals. Others must weigh the certainty of arbitrated salary versus playing the open market.

On deck: Teams face a Thursday deadline to offer 2011 contracts to unsigned players under their control; those not tendered contracts jump into the free-agency pool, inflating the ranks of players available on the open market.

This tender date could very well also be called clean-slate day. Not tendering a contract renewal to players whom clubs may still be interested in retaining is all about that: Allowing new contracts to be negotiated without the 20-percent salary cut limit imposed by the game's labor rules.

In the hole: Those Winter Meetings, which will open next Monday as the centerpiece of the offseason counter, revving up free-agent negotiations and trade talks.

But this week leading up to the start of the Winter Meetings could see the most alluring free agent of them all make an early decision. Lee's agent, Darek Braunecker, is set to meet this week with representatives of three teams in serious contention for the left-hander amid the perception his courtship might be headed to a quick resolution.

Could that possibly happen, at a time most premium free agents extend negotiations deeper into December? Yes, there are always those who dislike dragging these things out and prefer quick calls. Consider Troy Percival, an A-list closer off his 33-save season for the Angels in 2004 who liked what he heard from the first team with which he met and signed with Detroit on Nov. 18 -- within hours of the start of free-agent bidding.

Lee could be a similar nonconformist.

And speaking of the Tigers, they have again been quick-strike artists. Twice, in fact, snapping up DH/catcher Victor Martinez and premier setup reliever Joaquin Benoit, two of the ranked free agents who have already signed with new teams. Also double-dipping have been the Marlins, about to add Vazquez to their earlier signing of catcher John Buck. The other signee is right-hander Jon Garland (Dodgers, from the Padres).

For the most part, though, free-agent decisions will be deferred up to and through the Winter Meetings -- and in many cases, far beyond. As you watch this develop, bear in mind the usual factors at play: Positional bottlenecks in the market (Crawford and Werth in the outfield, for instance), and a musical-chairs sort of waiting game played out on the lower end of the pool by marginal players holding out for better deals.

Something else of which to be mindful as the courtship proceeds for the majority of ranked free agents who will decline the offer of arbitration: Teams might be facing a steeper price than usual for signing a Type-A stud at the cost of a 2011 First-Year Player Draft selection; next June's Draft is already "shaping up to be terrific," as noted by Boston GM Theo Epstein.

The Yankees typically will continue to be featured in the offseason's most intriguing chapters. In addition to their craving for Lee -- only heightened by Andy Pettitte's apparent indecision about returning for another season -- the Yankees are engaging captain-in-limbo Derek Jeter in fascinating negotiations.

What makes those talks so riveting is the consensus view that neither side can do better than with each other -- Jeter monetarily, the Yankees intangibly -- yet are so far apart. After the player's camp lowered a reported opening request of six years and \$150 million to five years between \$110 million and \$120 million, the next step would appear to belong to the Yankees, who had made an initial offer of three years and \$45 million.

## **Bay Area's 25 Most Powerful Sports People**

By Mark Purdy, Mercury News Columnist 11/25/2010

### POWER PLAYERS

1. Bill Neukom, managing general partner and CEO, San Francisco Giants: Has taken the franchise to another level on the baseball and business fronts.

Last year's ranking: 4.

2. Jed York, president and owner, San Francisco 49ers: Despite awful season, he accomplished his most important off-field mission: Santa Clara stadium ballot issue passed. He also is likely to be picking a new coach soon.

Last year: 1.

3. Ted Griggs, vice president and general manager, Comcast SportsNet Bay Area: Continues to assemble and expand the go-to spot for live Bay Area sports telecasts.

Last year: 2.

4. Al Davis, owner, Oakland Raiders: Negotiated a stadium lease extension with the Coliseum through 2013 and made some football moves that might actually get the team back to the playoffs before then.

Last year: 3.

5. Lew Wolff, owner, Oakland A's and San Jose Earthquakes: In a holding pattern on new stadiums for his baseball and soccer teams. His decision to increase the Earthquakes' payroll helped team make the playoffs.

Last year: 5.

6. Kevin Compton, owner, San Jose Sharks: With the abdication of former team CEO Greg Jamison and with no official replacement, it's unclear where exactly the buck stops. However, Compton has the most respected business voice in the 11-person ownership group.

Last year: NR.

7. Joe Lacob and Peter Guber, owners, Golden State Warriors: New guys on the block and not enough evidence to say what difference they will really make. But they have to be better than Chris Cohan.

Last year: NR.

8. Brian Sabean, senior vice president and general manager, San Francisco Giants: Made almost no mistakes as he restructured the team on the fly during the season; is also taking a role in non-baseball decisions.

Last year: 9.

9. Amy Trask, chief executive, Oakland Raiders: Runs the day-to-day operations for the resurgent Silver and Black. Could play an even bigger role if NFL forces Raiders and 49ers to cooperate on a new Bay Area NFL stadium.

Last year: 10.

10. Sandy Barbour, athletic director, Cal: Made firm but tough call to wipe out several sports at Cal to balance budget, while somehow keeping the stadium remodel on track.

Last year: 12.

11. Billy Beane, vice president and general manager, A's: Still trusted wholly by ownership but needs more than a film starting Brad Pitt to fully regain his mojo. How about contending into September?

Last year: 11.

12. Bob Bowlsby, athletic director, Stanford: Makes a hard job look easy in terms of satisfying boosters and coaches. Now if he could only improve football attendance.

Last year: 13.

13. Doug Wilson, general manager, Sharks: His formula gives the Bay Area its most consistent winning professional team, season after season. The conference finals were a step up in 2010. One more step, please.

Last year: 21.

14. John Fry, PGA Tour sponsor and Arena Football League owner: The inaugural [Frys.com](http://Frys.com) Open had a troublesome date and sketchy weather. But the SaberCats are back!

Last year: NR.

15. Steve Page, CEO, Infineon Raceway: Recession has been tougher on racing than any other sport, but he keeps his facility churning along as the go-to Bay Area motor sports venue.

Last year: 15.

16. Lee Hammer, program director, KNBR Radio: Continues to steer the Bay Area's top sports-talk ship with a steady rudder and fend off upstart competition.

Last year: 17.

17. Larry Riley, general manager, Golden State Warriors: Sly old fox has survived Don Nelson and has the team on moderate upswing. Will he survive the new owners?

Last year: NR.

18. RJ Harper, senior vice president for golf, Pebble Beach Co.: Successfully staged a U.S. Open and landed another one in 2019. The AT&T Pro-Am remains NorCal's top annual golf event.

Last year: 20.

19. Scott Coker, CEO, Strikeforce: Continues to steadily grow his mixed martial arts empire out of a modest Willow Glen office.

Last year: 18.

20. Dan Coonan, athletic director, Santa Clara University: Has built the Bay Area's most well-rounded athletic program outside of Stanford and Cal.

Last year: 23.

21. Tim Lincecum, pitcher, San Francisco Giants: Sells the most tickets for the World Series champs and is their most recognizable personality. Will he use his power for good or evil?

Last year: NR.

22. John Arrillaga, Stanford athletic booster and major donor: Total role unclear, but you know he has consulted on major decisions. Can he and his pals ante up enough bucks to keep Jim Harbaugh from leaving?

Last year: NR.

23. Gary Radnich, broadcast personality, KRON Television, KNBR Radio, Comcast SportsNet Bay Area Cable TV: Some say he is overexposed and too old. But no one brings more energy and loopy tangents to the party. And his takes still matter.

Last year: 25.

24. Chuck Reed, mayor, San Jose: If the A's ballpark project gets the green light, he will lead effort to pass a city ballot measure.

Last year: NR.

25. Tom Bowen, athletic director, San Jose State: Will have his hands full trying to hold things together as the Western Athletic Conference melts down into "... who knows?"

Last year: 24.

Honorable mention

In alphabetical order:

Larry Baer (president, San Francisco Giants), Randy Bennett (men's basketball coach, Saint Mary's College), Gary Cavalli (executive director, Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl Game), Joey Chestnut (competitive eating champion), Bill Duffy (sports agent), Patricia Ernstrom (executive director, San Jose Sports Authority), Mike Montgomery (men's basketball coach, Cal), Tara VanDerveer (women's basketball coach, Stanford).

## **Giving back to Bay Area an A's specialty**

### **Ballclub donated about \$600,000 to 1,500 charitable organizations**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The 2010 season saw the A's organization unleash a laundry list of accomplishments, many of which came off the field in the form of contributions to more than 1,500 charitable organizations.

Constantly a leader in charity work, the Oakland A's Community Fund donated approximately \$600,000 to a diversified group of community programs this year in an effort to improve the quality of life for people throughout the Bay Area.

The organization specifically aimed to improve education programs, aid the underprivileged, assist in crime and drug prevention, promote health awareness and support children and senior welfare.

"I'm proud of what we've done," said Detra Paige, the A's director of community relations. "We can always do more, but I'm pretty proud of what we've been able to do. It's important for us to be out in the community as much as we can. We may not be out there as much as people would like to see us, but we do our best. I feel great about the efforts we made this year."

A large portion of the raised funds came Sept. 5, when the A's garnered \$70,650 on Breast Cancer Awareness Day, with all proceeds benefiting the American Cancer Society, Cancer Prevention Institute and Susan G. Komen for the Cure. It marked the 12th year in which the A's have proudly honored the day, which has raised more than \$1.145 million for breast cancer education and research in that time span.

One month prior, the club celebrated its 11th annual MUG Root Beer Float Day and raised more than \$31,000 for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, which has collected over \$300,000 from the A's since 2003.

Another longstanding event, the Oakland A's Community Fund Golf Classic, raised more than \$100,000 through the tournament and live and silent auctions. Staged at Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton, Calif., it brought out A's players Daric Barton, Dallas Braden, Craig Breslow, Cliff Pennington, Ryan Sweeney and Michael Wuertz, among others.

Former players Shooty Babitt, Vida Blue, Bert Campaneris, Mike Norris, Billy North, John "Blue Moon" Odom and Joe Rudi were also on hand, as A's alumni have long been a part of the organization's ongoing charity efforts.

That list includes Dave Stewart, who in May appeared at the fourth annual Dave Stewart/Oakland A's High School Baseball Showdown. Hosted by De La Salle High School and the A's Community Fund in hopes of promoting youth interaction at the high school level, the event featured games between local high schools and raised \$9,600 -- all of which will benefit inner-city youth programs.

The Community Fund saw its largest single-event monetary gain come through on July 24, when more than \$100,000 was raised for the Fund, as well as PLAYWORKS (supporters of after-school activities in low-income schools), at Dinner on the Diamond -- attended by nearly every A's player. Funds were brought in through the sale of sponsorship packages and a live auction.

The A's community efforts were also felt beyond the realm of the Bay Area this year, most notably through \$42,000 raised to aid Haitian earthquake victims. The organization contributed \$20,000 on top of \$22,000 that was raised by A's fans, thus allowing approximately \$21,000 to go to both UNICEF and Doctors Without Borders -- two agencies that have played significant roles in relief help in Haiti.

The support did not stop there, though. The organization has had and continues to have a successfully busy 2010, as evidenced by the aforementioned work, as well as the following triumphs:

- The A's collected 2,416 pounds of food and more than \$3,600 on Food Bank Wednesdays throughout the season, allowing them to provide 14,500 meals for children and adults facing hunger in Alameda County.
- Eric Chavez and A's owner Lew Wolff each donated a semi truck filled with food supplies at the Oakland Coliseum in May in an effort to aid Feed The Children's Americans Feeding Americans Caravan tour. A total of 10 trucks, unloaded by Chavez and Wolff, as well as A's players Gio Gonzalez and Andrew Bailey, were on hand for the 4,000 families who showed up.
- In partnership with California Donor Transplant Network and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, the A's hosted Donate Life Night and saw more than \$12,000 raised for the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Social Services Transplant Fund.
- The A's Home Run Readers program saw participation from more than 20,000 students in 100 Bay Area schools during the 2009-10 school year. Nearly 70 schools reached their goals, and 10 received a visit from a member of the A's front office and mascot Stomper. Furthermore, six of those schools welcomed in an A's player or coach and received congratulations for reaching their goals, as well as encouragement to continue reading outside of the classroom.
- In reaching out to schools, the A's also designed and distributed thousands of "Mathletics" workbooks, which utilize simple formulas for calculating statistics of A's players, to students in an effort to stress the importance of math among Bay Area youth. Students who complete the workbooks correctly receive two ticket vouchers to an A's game.
- Local at-risk students were offered tutoring sessions by volunteers at the Oakland Coliseum prior to selected A's home games as part of the Green Stampede Homework Club. Participants were rewarded with game tickets, and if in attendance at all eight study groups, they received a visit from an A's player.
- The A's Amigos program allowed Hispanic children the opportunity to hear an A's player speak about the importance of education, sportsmanship and hard work.
- More than 10,000 children, all from Bay Area youth groups from low- to moderate-income families, were treated to A's games as part of the Little A's program. Each child received a game ticket, water bottle and family passes to the Oakland Zoo.
- More than 6,500 A's tickets were donated to local charities and non-profit agencies by A's players Chavez, Braden, Mark Ellis, Tyson Ross and Brad Ziegler.

## Fighting cancer a way for Breslow to give thanks

### Reliever founded Strike 3 Foundation in honor of sister's survival

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

Reflection and appreciation.

Two rather simple but often times forgotten -- possibly ignored -- acts.

Both, though, are pervasive in the Breslow household -- especially during the holidays, a time of thanks in which Craig Breslow annually watches the duo of gestures intertwine to form a common underlying theme at his family's dinner table.

"I think a lot of people will be searching for things to be thankful for," Breslow said. "I guess, for us, luckily and fortunately, they're pretty apparent."

Some even apparent to the general public, or at least to the baseball community. Breslow has finally found a stable home with the Oakland A's -- his fifth team in five years -- and is eligible for arbitration, meaning his salary is likely to soon bump to seven figures following a season in which he ranked among the top American League relievers in several categories.

The life and earnings of a professional baseball player are generous, no doubt. Breslow is neither blind nor careless of that notion. He understands it well and is grateful. He will surely make a toast of appreciation for that on Thanksgiving Day. And in turn, he will reflect on the days that led him to this point.

Those days, spanning 30 years, were not always full of happy Thanksgivings. In fact, there was that "worst Thanksgiving we ever had" -- as described by Breslow's mother, Ann -- 18 years ago. Breslow was 12, and his sister, Lesley, was 14. Lesley had a large lump on her neck.

"The doctors were watching it and treating it with antibiotics," Ann recalled. "They knew something wasn't right, and in our hearts we all knew something was terribly wrong."

Lesley had thyroid cancer. At the time, no one knew it. And it was the not knowing that made it hard to enjoy Thanksgiving that year. A daughter was sick, and her parents were trying to protect their son from fearing more than he should.

Please note: the Breslows -- Craig, Lesley, Ann and father Abe -- are not about to deem this a sad story. Because it's not.

Spoiler alerts in this case would speak of a happy outcome, with healthy and rich lives for all. They would highlight Craig's Strike 3 Foundation, influenced by Lesley's battle, which is continuously growing to combat cancer. And they would rejoice in Lesley's current life, one enriched by her husband, Paul Palange, and 15-month-old son Jagger -- "the best-dressed baby, thanks to Uncle Craig," Lesley said.

All of this, the tales of a blessed family stationed in Connecticut, is true. But to appreciate it, as the Breslows do every Thanksgiving, is to reflect on it all -- the good *and* the bad.

This is their story.

#### **The exchange**

When thinking back on that fateful year of 1992, certain recollections are a blur for Ann. Others, not so much -- like when Lesley came down the stairs one day and pointed her mom to a big lump on her neck.

"I remember that," Ann said. "Something was not right. It was too big and too obvious to be a little infection."

The doctor informed them it had been there awhile, possibly months or even a year. But the way it protruded, well, that was a result of Lesley turning her neck a certain way, which turned out to be a fortunate happening -- the first of several in this story.

"Because it was so big," Ann said, "we knew something was wrong and we could ultimately treat it."

But not before several other attempts, ones that involved antibiotics and weekly measuring. The lump didn't go down and it didn't go away, so a biopsy was ordered in December. Instead of being sent home to hear of the results a week later, as is custom, Ann and Abe were told to stay with Lesley in the waiting room.

"I think, at that point, they knew it wasn't good," Ann said. "They checked it right away. Within an hour, they came back and told us it was malignant."

Lesley was officially diagnosed with pediatric thyroid cancer. Craig, meanwhile, was at a friend's house. He was unaware that his older sister had been making regular visits to the doctor. On this day, he found out. And only one thing came to mind.

"I remember my dad saying, 'She has cancer,'" he said. "And I said, 'Is she going to die?' That was the exchange. I'll remember it forever."

"I think he was more scared than anything because he didn't understand it," Ann said. "His sister had cancer, and cancer meant somebody was going to die."

"It was a horrible, horrible time in our lives. No one should ever have to go through it. It humbles you in a heartbeat. It really does. You just have a million emotions, and you immediately wonder why it couldn't be me and not my child."

"And then you have another child that you still want everything to be as normal as possible. So you still want to take him to soccer and baseball and maintain a normalcy while your insides are just scraping trying to take care of your daughter. Just awful."

Ann was sure of Craig's astuteness and his ability to see this pain. He did, but he also watched Lesley's reaction to it all.

### **Dealing with it**

"I can remember when my sister would be in her room, which is where most 14-year-olds spend a lot of their time, and the rest of the family would be downstairs crying," Craig said. "She would come down and say, 'Why are you guys crying?'"

Ann recalls the tears well.

"We did nothing except cry," she said. "We tried for the kids, but in your heart you're just scared to death."

Lesley, though, was more worried about her high school future. Here she was a freshman at Trumbull High, trying to make her way through the already tough teen years, simply wanting to get back to school, see her friends and join the track team.

"I think it was a given in my family -- if you're given something you're not happy with, you're going to deal with it," she said. "It was never about the negative. It was about, this is what we're going to do, we're with the best doctors, and we're going to be fine. I think that's the way I looked at it. I have to deal with it, I'm in the best hands, and that's it."

"I was a typical selfish teen, just wanting to get back to a normal high school life. I don't think I was educated or old enough to realize what the cancer meant. I just remember my parents being upset, which obviously made me upset, but I don't think I really understood what that meant for the future. All I knew was I was going to have to have surgery to remove the cancer."

She did, just before Christmas. This made for another worst holiday for the Breslows -- "the worst Christmas in the world," Ann said. The surgery was a success, but Ann remembers nothing but a worry-filled winter.

"My first feeling was, am I sure they got it all?" she said. "How do we know they got it all? I would watch her like a hawk. Every time she would sneeze or cough or, really, anything, I would think, 'Something else is wrong.' That they didn't get it all."

Lesley endured a second surgery after the New Year for good measure, a cleanup procedure of sorts. The tears slowly stopped, and the Breslows -- still understandably overcome with a dose of apprehension -- began realizing they were, as Craig believes, "the lucky ones."

### **Cancer-free**

The cancer was said to be gone, but the nerves proved slower to leave. Still, Ann and Abe were thankful for not having to watch their daughter undergo the trials and tribulations of chemotherapy or radiation. This realization fell under the good-fortune category, the one that continued to grow.

"Once she had the first scan come back clean, we were all relieved, but subsequent scans were still nerve-wracking," Craig said. "Anytime she had to see the endocrinologist or oncologist, it was nerve-wracking. But once you hear the words 'cancer free,' that's when you realize you made it."

"Craig kept asking if she would really be all right, and we kept saying, 'Yes, absolutely.'" Ann said. "We made ourselves believe it. Fortunately, things worked out as well as they could, and this all goes back to Thanksgiving. That's what we have to be thankful for."

Lesley was limited in her activities during the early months of 1993, but by June she was caught up with schoolwork. Three years later, she was headed to Indiana University, and, later, grad school at Fordham University.

To this day, Ann is still very protective of her daughter -- as well as Craig -- and now her grandson. Lesley, now a 32-year-old guidance counselor and in remission for more than 20 years, still goes in for regular scans and blood work. That part of it will be with her forever. For Craig, the experience will be embedded in his mind for the rest of his days, too.

That's OK, though. It's those memories, more so the joyful ones than the distressing ones, which have him on a mission to aid in the fight to cure cancer.

## **Celebration**

In 2007, when Craig found himself in the middle of winning a World Series championship with the Boston Red Sox, he also found himself thinking of using his name, with what little notoriety he had gained, to do some good in the world.

He had always thought he'd fulfill that longing to do good as a doctor. After all, he had received degrees in molecular biophysics and biochemistry from Yale in 2002, and was on the cusp of attending medical school at New York University before baseball called him to continue pitching.

"I had always been interested in medicine," he said. "I broke my wrist when I was 9 or 10, and I was fascinated by the fact I could go to the doctor's office and they could put a cast on me and fix me. Then, going through with my sister's situation, that was confirmation. Medicine was high on my list of priorities as long as baseball has been."

Craig didn't dare let the big leagues change that. So, in 2008, while sitting around with good friend Joe Lizza -- a teacher who often used to catch Craig during the offseason -- at his parents' house, Craig threw around different ideas to get the wheels going on a lifelong goal.

"We were thinking it would be really neat to do something good for people," Craig said. "We were trying to find some cause to get behind. Then we just thought, 'Let's do the whole thing ourselves. Let's make our own charity with our own cause.'"

Enter the Strike 3 Foundation, formed to heighten awareness, mobilize support and raise funds for childhood cancer research. This is where all that good fortune comes in. Craig was ready to give it back, to celebrate the triumphs rather than dwell on the negative.

"My sister's case was pretty straightforward," he said. "Fortunately, the prognosis was really good. I thought that was really important. I thought, and still think, that's the most important impetus for starting a charity, in my opinion -- celebrating the successes instead of highlighting the tragic story. The importance of funding research and raising awareness is because of the success stories. It's because people survive as a result of funding and research and treatment."

To that end, Craig has raised more than a quarter of a million dollars, and the foundation's \$100,000-a-year grant has allowed Yale's Smilow Cancer Hospital to start a Pediatric Bone Marrow Transplant Program.

"I don't know how I would have been affected had Lesley's situation been graver," he said, "but to me, the fact that she could be afflicted with such a terrible disease and be cured within six months and live a fully unrestricted life, that's the reason why we celebrate."

## **The pillars**

Much of that mindset comes from Craig's vision of Lesley, occupied in her bedroom, not wanting to add to the tears downstairs while she was sick. Lesley was the bravest of them all, the solid rock during a time when many expected her to break apart.

"It's funny, because I've found that, through meeting a number of cancer patients, and my sister included, the patients themselves seem to be the strongest," Craig said. "It turns out that family members and friends lean on them, and they become the pillar. That's the way she was, and that's what I've seen."

He's witnessed it in a handful of hospitals, where children welcome his visits and appreciate his positive attitude. Craig enjoys it just as much as them, if not more.



It was at the Yale-New Haven Children's Hospital where he met Isaias Valentin, a young boy diagnosed with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia. The two swapped words and laughter as Valentin underwent a chemotherapy treatment. Months later, the upbeat personality that was Valentin passed away at age 9. To honor his heroic fight, Craig created the Isaias Valentin Award for Courage, to be awarded to a child at his First Pitch Gala every year.

"That's something that's remarkable, and I think that's probably one of the most noteworthy comments I can make," Craig said. "When you go to the hospital and visit a kid who is 9 years old and he's got no anger, and he's hooked up to IVs and on his way to a chemo treatment, and he's smiling and asking why everybody is so sad. There's no event, there's no amount of money, there's no donation that could ever substitute seeing that."

On Nov. 13, at the foundation's third annual gala, Craig presented the first Isaias Valentin Award for Courage to Daniel Trainor, a 12-year-old boy who was diagnosed with brain tumors three years ago and has since undergone 12 brain surgeries. Trainor, despite the odds, has -- like Craig -- found fortune in his situation. This amazes Craig, who -- still clearly taken aback by his new friend -- enthusiastically spoke of Trainor's surprisingly peaceful demeanor.

"He's weak, and we gave him an award and he spoke, and he was saying that he's lucky," Craig explained. "When we told him that he would be receiving this reward, his reaction was, 'Why? Why do I deserve this award? I'm just a happy kid.'"

"Here's a kid who can't walk without assistance of a walker, he's got a patch over one eye, he's got double vision, he's short of breath, he can barely stand up. But he's lucky because he's awake and he can recognize his parents and remembers all of his relations, he's been able to keep up with his schoolwork, and he's in a hospital next to people who haven't opened their eyes in months. Perception is everything."

### **Thanks and giving**

The Breslows will be reminded of that notion on Thanksgiving. They will descend upon a friend's home, where Craig will be encompassed by his biggest fans, the family that has lent much of their own time and efforts to his charity.

"It's a phenomenal time when we look back on how much we're thankful for," Ann said. "Lesley is fine, she's married, we have a grandson, and Craig is doing terrific work. I couldn't be more proud of him. We're thankful for a huge amount every year."

Craig and Lesley have grown closer, knowing full well that that worst Thanksgiving and that worst Christmas is behind them.

"When I was 14, if you had asked me the impact this had on me, I probably would have said it was a sad time in my life but we've moved on," Craig said. "Now I'm seeing another generation where my contemporaries are having kids themselves, and I'm realizing the importance of charity and community and family. Progressively, we've had more and more to be thankful for."

All through the lens of reflection. And appreciation.

### **Giving thanks to baseball, community**

By Mark Newman / MLB.com

Thanks to 73,061,781 fans who attended Major League Baseball games during the 2010 regular season, making it seven straight years over the 73-million mark and the seven best-attended seasons in the National Pastime's history.

Thanks to Most Valuable Players Josh Hamilton and Joey Votto, Cy Young Award winners Felix Hernandez and Roy Halladay, Rookies of the Year Neftali Feliz and Buster Posey, Managers of the Year Ron Gardenhire and Bud Black, Roberto Clemente Award winner Tim Wakefield and all the on-field personnel who fill our summers with memories of a lifetime.

Thanks to all 30 clubs for the tireless work they do off the field within their own communities, including the first recipient of the Commissioner's Award for Philanthropic Excellence, the Boston Red Sox. On this tradition-filled holiday, MLB.com pauses to thank those who have done so much on and off the field, and the fans who join in. Thirty club stories demonstrate what happens year-round.

"Once again we are thankful that our fans give us, baseball, the chance to serve their communities," said Tom Brasuell, MLB vice president of community affairs. "We are thankful for the opportunity to serve those less fortunate and those in times of need; thankful for the role we are allowed to play in making our communities better places to live, work and play."

Thanks to 30 **All-Stars Among Us** who got your votes at MLB.com and then were introduced on the field during pregame ceremonies at the All-Star Game. It was inspirational and moving to see them shaking hands with All-Stars, heroes meeting heroes. Their individual stories are worth looking at again now, and their causes worth helping this holiday season.

Thanks to every San Francisco Giants fan who unleashed the kind of unbridled joy that reminds you just what it means for a community to **win** the World Series -- the first for that city. Thanks to Brian Wilson, Cody Ross and others who brought the beard back into vogue; to Edgar Renteria for saving his best for last; and to Posey for reminding us that it is a kid's game at heart.

Thanks to **Ubaldo Jimenez**, **Dallas Braden** (perfect), **Halladay** (perfect), **Edwin Jackson** and **Matt Garza** for no-hitters during the regular season -- defining 2010 as the Year of the Pitcher. Thanks to Halladay for treating us to the second postseason no-hitter in history with **Doctober** -- his second no-no of the season, in his postseason debut.

Thanks to returning U.S. military and their families. Game 4 of the World Series was dedicated to them, and fans can help their transition back to civilian life by donating at **<http://WelcomeBackVeterans.org>**.

Thanks to Target Field for bringing outdoor ball to Minnesota in a glorious way. Thanks to Twins fans for a club **home-attendance record** of 3,223,640, and for a franchise-record 79 sellouts (including 78 in a row). They also drew crowds of 40,000 or more in 22 consecutive games from July 3rd to Aug. 31st, eclipsing the previous mark of seven consecutive games of 40,000 or more fans set from Aug. 10-20, 1988. They saw their team clinch a title before anyone else.

Thanks to Cubs fundraising events and donations that raised more than \$1 million. Thanks to the Rays Baseball Foundation for its golf tournament in the spring, two broadcast auctions during the year, and the "shirts off our backs" fundraising event in which the jerseys of Rays players are sold off their backs at the end of the season -- among many other endeavors.

"One constant for our organization is community involvement," Rays president Matt Silverman said. "Wins and losses will wax and wane, but our involvement and service to our region does not waver. It's part of the glue that binds us to our fans, and that bond is so much stronger today than it was just a few years ago."

Thanks for that tailor-made 6-4-3 double play just when you needed it the most.

Thanks to Jose Bautista for 54 home runs, most of the screeching-rocket variety, to shatter the Blue Jays single-season record. He earned the prestigious Hank Aaron Award for outstanding offensive player in the AL, and Votto took the honor in the NL. Thanks as always to Hammerin' Hank himself for gracing that presentation and other events with his enormous presence.

Thanks to more than 15 million fans who follow Major League Baseball on **Facebook** and **Twitter**.

Thanks to all those wonderful team foundations like the Oakland A's Community Fund, which donated approximately \$600,000 to a diversified group of community programs this year in an effort to improve the quality of life for people throughout the Bay Area. The organization specifically aimed to improve education programs, aid the underprivileged, assist in crime and drug prevention, promote health awareness and support children and senior welfare.

"I'm proud of what we've done," said Detra Paige, the A's director of community relations. "We can always do more, but I'm pretty proud of what we've been able to do. It's important for us to be out in the community as much as we can. We may not be out there as much as people would like to see us, but we do our best. I feel great about the efforts we made this year."

Thanks to Mother Nature for the longest **opening stretch** of games without a rainout in 25 years -- 235 games before snow/rain finally crashed a Marlins at Rockies date. Thanks also for the dreamy World Series weather and for overall optimum postseason conditions.

For everyone involved with **Stand Up To Cancer** and the ongoing relentless drive to beat cancer, thank you. That includes the **Padres for their club leadership** and everyone associated with the **Sept. 10 telethon** across major TV networks. Please keep donating and help Dream Team scientists make real breakthroughs.

Thanks, Anaheim. Thanks, Disney. What an amazing All-Star Week we had there.

Thanks to Brian McCann for making us believe in fairy tales again. The NL really can win a Midsummer Classic. Go to Cooperstown and you will find the Braves catcher's bat right there in the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum for evidence.

Thanks for those dazzling debuts. Stephen Stasburg made us remember **Mr. Precedent** with 14 strikeouts one summer day. We saw Jason Heyward **burst upon the scene** with an Opening Day home run in his first at-bat for Atlanta. Daniel Nava hit a **grand slam** for Boston on his first Major League pitch. J.P. Arencibia hit a three-run homer on his first pitch, and added another three-run bomb and two doubles in that historic **debut** with Toronto.

On the other side, thanks to Stan "The Man" Musial for 90 years -- beloved by so many throughout RedBird Nation and across the game. A Congressional Medal of Freedom now comes his way.

Thanks to every concessionaire who served up millions of ballpark dogs.

Thanks to the umpires. No one ever really says that. It's not easy being very human arbiters, especially in an ever-more watchful world of technology, and it's not easy being the subject of traditional derision for more than a century now. They know it comes with the territory, and an occasional thanks should come with it as well -- for umps at any level.

Thanks to Armando Galarraga and umpire Jim Joyce, because even if they were part of an imperfect ending, they showed class and dignity as a world seemed to grapple over the issue of instant replay on that loud baseball night. Much could be learned in that aftermath.

Thanks to the Glass family, which, since purchasing the Royals 10 years ago, has continued to reach out to the Kansas City community and has overseen more than \$4 million in contributions to area charities. And to the team's players like Billy Butler, whose "Hit It A Ton" program generated 400 tons of food for the St. James Place kitchen at the Bishop Sullivan Center in Kansas City in 2010 -- and 1.95 million pounds of food overall for the hungry.

"When it first started, we didn't know the economy was going to do what it did. It ended up being in a time when Kansas City desperately needed it," Butler said.

Thanks to the mascots for making us smile. Do you know which four clubs don't have one? Trivia fun: Angels, Cubs, Dodgers and Yankees. The Braves have one but don't use it. Follow [@MLB/mascots](#) on Twitter and you can see what many of them are up to.

Thanks to Big Papi for the power display in the State Farm Home Run Derby -- and to the players who raised \$573,000 for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America for smashing one gold ball after another that night.

Thanks to Gold Glove and Silver Slugger winner Troy Tulowitzki, who grew his hair into a mullet to encourage fans to donate to the "Wins for Kids" program. Fans were encouraged to donate for each Rockies victory. The program benefited the Children's Hospital of Denver and Special Olympics in Colorado.

"There are things he does that he keeps quiet," said Jim Kellogg, the Rockies' vice president of community and retail operations. "But Troy understands the importance of people seeing the Rockies as a whole getting involved."

Thanks for another fabulous baseball season, and for the opportunity to do it all again when the weather warms and the pitchers and catchers report to Arizona and Florida in February for Spring Training.

Happy Thanksgiving.

## **Two Japanese Stars get Posted**

### **Iwakuma, Nishioka look for major league opportunity**

Wayne Gradzyk, Baseball America, 11/24/2010

Two of the top players in the Pacific League were posted for major league service after the 2010 Japanese season.

Rakuten Eagles righthander Hisashi Iwakuma and Chiba Lotte Marines shortstop Tsuyoshi Nishioka are looking to test their skills in North America in 2011.

The Athletics already won the posting battle to negotiate exclusively with Iwakuma, 29, after Rakuten accepted a bid believed to be between \$16 million-\$18 million. The A's had until Dec. 7 to work out a deal with Iwakuma, but negotiations got off to a rocky start and Iwakuma was already threatening to return to Japan for another season. If no deal gets done, Oakland would recoup the posting fee.

Nishioka, 26, was still waiting to hear which team would win his posting battle. Japanese media speculated as many as six teams were interested, naming the Padres, Dodgers, Tigers, Twins, Orioles and Red Sox. The posting period ends Tuesday.

Iwakuma has a 101-62, 3.32 record in nine seasons with the Kintetsu Buffaloes and Eagles, the team formed in 2005 when Kintetsu merged with the Orix BlueWave. He missed most of the 2006 and '07 seasons with shoulder problems but restructured his mechanics and was the Pacific League MVP in 2008, when he went 21-4, 1.87. He finished 2010 at 10-9, 2.82, striking out 153 in 201 innings.

Iwakuma drew widespread international attention with his excellent work in the 2009 World Baseball Classic. He mixes a live fastball (touching 152 kph or 95 mph) and sharp-breaking slider with a forkball. He also consistently spots his pitches low in the strike zone.

Nishioka, the captain and leadoff man for the 2010 Japan Series champion Marines, is a switch-hitter with skills similar to those of Kaz Matsui. A career .293 hitter, he led the Pacific League in batting (.346), runs (121), hits (206) and total bases (287) this season. He is a speedster and a smart baserunner who stole 22 bases and hit eight triples this season. In 2005 when the Marines also won the Japan Series, Nishimura led the Pacific League with 41 steals and 11 triples.

Nishioka came up as a second baseman and can play either middle-infield position. Though he has excellent range, he is inconsistent and led the PL with 19 errors in 2010. He matured as a player under former Lotte manager Bobby Valentine from 2004-09. In 2006, he played for the Japan team that won the first World Baseball Classic, and he also played in the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

## **Sports News**

### **Baseball: Iwakuma could still be in A's uniform: Agent**

Mainichi Daily News 11/24/2010

SENDAI (Kyodo) -- Hisashi Iwakuma could still end up with the Oakland Athletics if the Rakuten Eagles ace wants to go at any price, his agent Don Nomura said Tuesday.

"I'm against accepting what's currently on the table," Nomura said at Kleenex Stadium Miyagi. "But if he wants to go no matter what, then I'll likely have to listen."

Nomura spoke a day after he said on his Twitter site that Oakland has put forth a take-it-or-leave-it offer of \$15.25 million over four years for the 29-year-old Iwakuma.

Nomura said the Athletics told him they do not have the budget to offer Iwakuma more money, after the \$19.1 million posting fee the team must pay Rakuten for exclusive negotiating rights to the former Sawamura Award winner, the Japanese equivalent of the Cy Young.

Nomura, the former agent for Hideo Nomo, said on Tuesday the two parties have been miles apart so far, adding that four years was too long. At the same time, however, Nomura feels less and less inclined to completely break off talks.

"We said no to their price, and we're waiting for them to throw the ball back," Nomura said. "There's a definite possibility (he could stay with Rakuten)."

Iwakuma was saddened to hear the Athletics weren't even willing to sit down and talk, but hoped a deal would somehow get done by the Dec. 7 deadline.

"There's still time to negotiate and all I can do is wait," Iwakuma said. "I want the team to reap something because I owe it to them. I just hope the talks go well from hereon."

## Anderson, Cahill lead annual Holiday Caravan

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

A's starting duo Trevor Cahill and Brett Anderson, along with fellow hurler Tyson Ross, will take to the Bay Area next week to kick off the holiday season, making several community appearances in a span of four days as part of the club's annual Holiday Caravan.

The Oakland pitchers have a busy schedule in tact, one which starts with the A's Community Fund's annual holiday party that will bring out more than 200 children from a local elementary school at the Oakland Zoo on Dec. 2. From there, the trio will make a pit stop at a supermarket for an autograph session before heading east to participate in the Walnut Creek Holiday Parade of Lights.

Cahill, Anderson and Ross, along with A's mascot Stomper, are slated to join 10 children from Oakland's Salvation Army Garden Center Shelter at a local Target the following morning. Five boys and five girls from the shelter, escorted by the A's players, will each receive a \$200 gift card to the store to purchase Christmas wish list items of their choice, as well as a \$50 gift card to use toward an item for a family member or person of their choice.

These children were specifically chosen to take part in this experience by the Lend A Hand Foundation, which offers youth in transition the opportunity to be involved in educational, sporting and cultural activities not otherwise available to them.

The day will conclude at Lafayette Elementary School in Oakland, where the pitchers and Stomper will visit 60 young students at their bilingual mentoring and after-school tutoring program.

On Dec. 3, Anderson and Cahill will make another visit, this time with teens at Alta Bates Summit Medical Center's adolescent substance abuse treatment center in Oakland. There, they will talk with the teens and sign autographs in an effort to shed a positive light on the youth -- most of whom are without role models or career paths -- undergoing substance abuse treatment.

Anderson and Cahill are then scheduled to ride in the Oakland Holiday parade in the downtown area before traveling to the East Bay to meet with shoppers at Stoneridge Shopping Center in Pleasanton. Shoppers who make a \$5 or more donation to the Simon Youth Foundation -- which fosters and improves educational opportunities, career development and life skills for at-risk youth -- will be able to pose for photographs and receive autographs from the A's duo.

The A's Caravan will wrap up Sunday, Dec. 6 at the San Jose Holiday Parade. In the early morning, Stomper is slated to take photos with kids at a special meet-and-greet session at Mrs. Claus' Breakfast nook. Then, from 8:30 a.m. to noon, Stomper will be joined by Anderson and Cahill to take part in the parade, considered to be one of the largest in the state.

It will mark the end of an exciting year for the young pitchers. The 22-year-old Cahill enjoyed his first All-Star season, going 18-8 with a 2.97 ERA and holding opponents to a .220 batting average in 30 starts. Anderson, also 22, recorded a 7-6 mark and 2.80 ERA despite being limited to 19 starts because of elbow issues that resulted in two disabled-list stints. Ross made the Opening Day roster as a Spring Training non-roster invitee and spent half the season in Oakland before being optioned to Triple-A in July.

## 2010 a year to remember for River Cat greats

By Nick Lozito / Sacramento River Cats 11/24/2010

The 2010 season was full of remarkable moments and great comeback stories for current and former River Cats. Here are just a few of those amazing tales:

### **Daric Barton, 1B, Oakland A's**

Barton, after struggling to prove himself at the Major League level over the previous three seasons, secured his spot as the A's first baseman with a strong 2010. The left-handed hitter led the American League in walks (110), placed fifth in on-base percentage (.393) and solidified himself as one of the best defensive first basemen in the game. Barton starred with the River Cats from 2006-2009, batting .276 with 21 homers over 257 games. In 2010 with Oakland, Barton hit .273 with 10 home runs and 57 RBIs.

### **Dallas Braden, LHP, Oakland A's**

On May 9, Braden pitched the 19th perfect game in Major League history, defeating the Tampa Bay Rays 4-0 on Mother's Day in Oakland. Braden, a Stockton native who had lost his mother to cancer while in high school, celebrated the moment

on the field with his grandmother. The final out was recorded during the River Cats' game against Colorado Springs at Raley Field, and River Cats faithful erupted in cheer when the perfect game was announced on the PA. Braden pitched for Sacramento in 2007 and 2008, posting a 5-4 record and 2.68 ERA in his time here. He finished 2010 with Oakland with an 11-14 record and 3.50 ERA. The 11 wins are a career-high.

### **Chris Carter, LF, Oakland A's**

Heading into the season, Carter was one of the biggest Minor League prospects to ever don a River Cats uniform. He lived up to the hype, and by season's end was making an impact with the Oakland A's. The left fielder hit 31 homers in 125 games with Sacramento, many of them tape-measure shots, and was named to the Topps Triple-A All-Star Team. After a slow start with Oakland, the 6-foot-5, 230-pound slugger hit .342 over his final 13 games of the season, with three home runs and seven RBIs.

### **Santiago Casilla, RHP, San Francisco Giants**

Casilla, who pitched for Sacramento in six separate seasons (2004-09), was one of two former Cats (along with left-hander Barry Zito) to earn World Series rings with the Giants, and the only former to Cat to play with San Francisco in the postseason. The right-handed reliever had a stunning 1.95 ERA over 55.1 innings of relief during the regular season, and allowed one run over 4.2 innings in the playoffs. Casilla compiled an 8-9 record and 3.98 ERA with the River Cats.

### **Brooks Conrad (2B) and Eric Hinske (IF), Atlanta Braves**

Conrad and Hinske, bench players during most of the season, played key roles during the Braves playoff run. On Sept. 28, Conrad hit a game-tying triple and Hinske put the Braves ahead with a two-run homer in the seventh inning of a 3-2 victory over the visiting Florida Marlins. The next night, Conrad hit a key three-run home run in a 5-1 Braves victory. In 2001 with Sacramento, Hinske hit .282 with 25 home runs and 79 RBIs. In 2008 with Sacramento, Conrad hit .243 with 28 home runs and 91 RBIs.

### **Bobby Cramer, LHP, Oakland A's**

Cramer, who began the season playing in the Mexican League, dominated when assigned to the River Cats and made his Major League debut on Sept. 13 at age 30. In his debut, the left-hander beat the Kansas City Royals, 3-1. Cramer, a career journeyman who has had Tommy John surgery, worked for Shell Oil and had three separate stints away from affiliated baseball, won PCL Pitcher of the Week in late August. Weeks later he was called up to Oakland, completing a most-improbable comeback story.

### **Andre Ethier, RF, Los Angeles Dodgers**

Ethier, who played briefly with Sacramento in 2005, made his first All-Star team with the Los Angeles Dodgers. The right fielder hit .292 with 23 home runs and 82 RBIs on the season. With three consecutive seasons of 20 or more home runs, Ethier is quickly distinguishing himself as one of the game's top players.

### **Carlos Gonzalez, CF, Colorado Rockies**

Gonzalez, who starred with the River Cats in 2008, had his breakout MLB season with Colorado, finishing third in MVP voting. Considered by many to be one of the few five-tool players (one who possesses good defense, speed, power, contact-hitting ability, and a strong arm) in the game, Gonzalez hit .336 with 34 homers, 117 RBIs and 26 stolen bases with the Rockies.

### **Gio Gonzalez, LHP, Oakland A's**

Heading into 2010, everyone knew Gonzalez had Major League pitches. The question was more about whether the young and emotional left-hander had the mental make-up to pitch at the top level. He quieted his critics with a solid 2010 season, going 15-9 with a 3.23 ERA. His emergence gives Oakland one of the top starting rotations in baseball, featuring four former River Cats in himself, Trevor Cahill, Dallas Braden and Brett Anderson. Gonzalez compiled a 12-8 record and 3.67 ERA with Sacramento, where he was a fan favorite in 2008 and 2009.

### **Colby Lewis, RHP, Texas Rangers**

Lewis, who played for Sacramento in 2007 and then spent 2008 and 2009 playing in Japan, was another great 2010 comeback story. He posted a 12-13 record and 3.72 with the Texas Rangers, whom he helped lead to the World Series. Lewis clinched Texas' World Series berth with a Game 6 victory over the New York Yankees in the American League Championship Series, allowing one run over 8.0 innings. He also won Game 3 of the World Series against the Giants, allowing two runs over 7.2 innings. The right-hander posted an 8-3 record and 1.88 ERA with Sacramento in 2007.

### **Nick Swisher, RF, New York Yankees**

Swisher enjoyed the first All-Star season of his career, smacking 29 home runs and driving in 89 runs for the New York Yankees. The left-handed hitter was a fan favorite with Sacramento in 2004, when he hit 29 home runs and drove in 92 runs. Swisher has now hit more than 20 home runs in six consecutive seasons.

### **Matt Watson, LF, Oakland Athletics**

Before the 2010 season began, Watson had etched his place in River Cats lore with his 2005 home run at the Triple-A All-Star Game at Raley Field. What he did this past season makes 2005 a distant memory. Watson, who played 2009 in South Korea and began 2010 playing independent ball in Lancaster, Pa., was signed to play for the River Cats in May. The outfielder dominated at the plate from the start, helping Sacramento turn around its season and gain ground on Fresno in the standings. Watson hit nine home runs and drove in 26 runs over 37 games with Sacramento before being called up to Oakland. On July 21, at age 31, he hit his first career home run off Clay Buchholz of the Boston Red Sox.

## **Updated: Dish Disconnects CSN California After Losing Arbitration Decision**

### **DBS Provider Drops RSN On Nov. 24, Hours After Losing FCC-Arbitration Call**

Mike Reynolds, Multichannel News, 11/24/2010

After losing an arbitration decision relative to its dispute with Comcast SportsNet California on Nov. 23, Dish Network disconnected the regional sports network at midnight. The parties had been out of contract since September 2009. Dish last year notified Comcast of its intent to seek arbitration, its right under a condition imposed upon Comcast's (and Time Warner Cable's) 2006 acquisition of Adelphia Communications that enabled the No. 2 DBS provider to ask for an FCC-mandated arbitrator to settle any pricing impasse. CSN California holds the rights to Major League Baseball's Oakland A's, the National Basketball Association's Sacramento Kings and the National Hockey League's San Jose Sharks. The Sharks' game against the defending Stanley Cup champion Chicago Blackhawks is slated for Nov. 24.

Terms of the arbitration decision -- which was baseball-style with Comcast's position favored over Dish's -- were not disclosed. However, such contract situations can center on price, duration, channel and tier placement, and considerations of most-favored nation clauses.

This isn't Dish's only dispute in the RSN arena. Fox Sports Net RSNs were off the the DBS provider's air for nearly a month, starting on Oct. 1,. They were restored as part of retransmission-consent deal reached with Fox on Oct. 29.

Elsewhere, its contract with MSG Network and MSG Plus expired on Oct. 1 and those channels have remained dark since then. Ironically, MSG said it would submit to arbitration as a means to reconnect with Dish.

CSN California issued this statement concerning Dish's move.

"EchoStar's Dish Network has disregarded the FCC arbitration process and turned its back on its own customers by unilaterally dropping Comcast SportsNet California. After losing the arbitration that they themselves initiated, Dish Network decided to deny fans access to this network rather than accept the outcome of the arbitration. We hope that Dish will quickly realize that refusing to accept the arbitration decision is detrimental to consumers, and restore Comcast SportsNet California under the contract decided by the arbitrator."

For its part, Dish countered late Wednesday afternoon with these remarks: "Plain and simple, Comcast is making unreasonable demands for continued carriage of Comcast SportsNet California - demands that would cause undue harm to our customers in the form of higher rates. If we accept Comcast's onerous demands, customers nationwide will suffer and it will embolden Comcast to continue to make similar demands for its other programming properties. Because the demands by

Comcast are ultimately detrimental to consumers, Dish Network is appealing to the Federal Communications Commission, as we respectfully believe that the arbitration decision was based upon significant legal and factual errors."

CSN California rebutted in kind: ""The major problem with Dish's position is that these are the very same arguments it made to an FCC arbitrator in an arbitration process that it and others requested and that it voluntarily opted into. After analyzing Dish's arguments, and Comcast Sportsnet's responses, the independent and expert arbitrator rejected Dish's position and decided that the contract terms submitted by Comcast Sportsnet represented the fair market value of the network. Dish's overblown and exaggerated arguments are no more accurate today than when they were rejected by the FCC arbitrator." Dish has also set up a Web site, <http://www.fairdealforyou.com/> about its standoff with CSN California.

## **Oakland A's might lose opportunity to sign Japanese pitcher Hisashi Iwakuma**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 11/23/2010

The A's biggest need this winter is finding a power hitter or two, but they might still be in the market for starting pitching.

Contract negotiations between the team and Japanese right-hander Hisashi Iwakuma have indeed stalled, a source familiar with the situation confirmed Monday to Bay Area News Group.

And while neither side has shut the door on an agreement being reached, it's not nearly as promising a situation as it appeared a couple days ago.

A's officials, always tight-lipped about player negotiations, declined to comment.

The A's bid \$19.1 million for negotiating rights for Iwakuma, regarded as the second-best pitcher in Japan behind Yu Darvish. They have until Dec. 7 to reach agreement on a contract, or Iwakuma, a 10-year veteran of Japanese professional ball, will return to the Rakuten Golden Eagles, for whom he played last season.

In that event, the A's would recover their \$19.1 million, money they could put to good use in pursuing free agents and signing the many arbitration-eligible players on their roster.

It was reported Sunday that the A's and Iwakuma were far apart on a contract.

The pitcher's agent, Don Nomura, relayed via his Twitter account Monday that the A's offered a four-year, \$15.25 million contract, which comes out to \$3.8 million per season (Bay Area News Group confirmed the A's offered four years, but not the dollar amount).

Nomura countered that Iwakuma should be paid similarly to what fellow Japanese pitchers Hiroki Kuroda and Daisuke Matsuzaka were given when they jumped to the majors.

Kuroda received a three-year deal from the Dodgers worth \$11.8 million annually. Matsuzaka got a six-year deal worth \$8.7 million annually from the Red Sox.

The \$19.1 million that the A's bid for negotiating rights -- an amount larger than previously reported -- is a separate transaction from any contract they finalize with Iwakuma.

Losing Iwakuma could persuade the A's to look for more depth in the starting rotation, being that they traded starter Vin Mazzaro to Kansas City in a package that brought outfielder David DeJesus. That trade came two days after the A's won the bidding for Iwakuma, signaling they were confident in signing him.

The A's have four-fifths of their rotation set with Brett Anderson, Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez and Dallas Braden. They have decent fifth-starter candidates in Josh Outman, Bobby Cramer and Tyson Ross.

But Outman missed all of last season recovering from elbow surgery, and Anderson, Braden and Ross battled injuries last season.

[Foxsports.com](http://foxsports.com) reported that the A's have interest in former Texas Rangers right-hander Brandon McCarthy, a free agent.

In other news, the A's hired Nick Paparesta as their new head trainer to replace Steve Sayles, who was let go Oct. 19. Paparesta has worked in the Tampa Bay and Cleveland organizations, both at the major- and minor-league levels.



## **Chin Music: A's going hard after Lance Berkman?**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 11/23/2010 3:20PM

Fox Sports' Ken Rosenthal has a story posted on free agent Lance Berkman that's pretty interesting reading for A's fans. Among other things, Berkman says the A's have been the "most aggressive" team in terms of making contact with him. He also says he's fully recovered from arthroscopic knee surgery that hindered him the entire 2010 season, and that he considers himself ready to play first base or the outfield. Last year, Berkman was the Astros' first baseman until his July 31 trade to the Yankees, who used him as a DH. The switch-hitter hasn't played the outfield since 2007. Berkman told Rosenthal that he believes the A's are searching for a DH, but that he still wants to play the field. He also notes the A's have Daric Barton at first base and lots of outfielders already.

I reported the A's had interest in Berkman in a Nov. 13 story, and from what I'm hearing, they might consider him on a one or two-year deal (Berkman turns 35 shortly before spring training begins). He's coming off a down year offensively, hitting .248 with 14 homers and 58 RBIs. But he hit 25 homers as recently as 2009. I would expect the A's are viewing him as a potential full-time DH. But all three of the A's projected starting outfielders at this point — David DeJesus, Coco Crisp and Ryan Sweeney — battled injuries last season, so I'd say there's a chance Berkman would get to play some outfield were he to join the A's.

Of course, he's just one of several power-hitting types who could make sense for Oakland. But how would you feel about Berkman's name in the 2011 lineup?

## **Japanese pitcher's agent is 'open for discussion'**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer 11/23/2010

Oakland's pursuit of Japanese pitcher Hisashi Iwakuma might be back on.

A day after talks appeared to stall - with Iwakuma's agent, Don Nomura, announcing on Twitter that the negotiations were probably done - Nomura told The Chronicle that he "deeply" hopes a deal can be completed.

"I don't know if the talks are dead," Nomura said in an e-mail. " I am assuming it's over, however I am open for discussion until 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 7."

That's the final day the A's can conclude a deal with the 29-year-old right-hander, who was the Pacific League MVP in 2008. There were indications Sunday that with talks at a halt, Iwakuma would announce his return to his Rakuten team as early as today, but that had not happened by early afternoon in Japan.

The A's remained silent on the matter, an indication that the team considers negotiations ongoing.

Nomura confirmed the \$19.1 million posting fee to The Chronicle, as well as the A's offer of \$3.8 million per year in salary - more than \$8 million per year with the posting fee included. Iwakuma is looking more in the range of \$11 million to 12 million per year, and he and Nomura were discussing a three-year deal. The A's wanted four years.

Though Nomura took some jabs at the A's on Twitter, he emphasized in his e-mail to the Chronicle that he likes and respects Oakland general manager Billy Beane.

**Briefly:** The A's announced they have hired Nick Paparesta as the team's head trainer. Paparesta was the Rays' assistant trainer the past three seasons. Walt Horn will return as assistant trainer.

## **Drumbeat: Iwakuma's agent still hopes for a deal**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser 11/22/2010 12:39

It's been a strange 24 hours here at Iwakuma Watch. There are signs that talks, which appeared stalled for good yesterday, could very well be back on before the Dec. 7 deadline (Dec. 8 in Japan) to sign pitcher Hisashi Iwakuma.

Iwakuma's agent, Don Nomura, told me via e-mail that he still deeply hopes that a deal can be concluded, even though it's clear the sides are fairly far apart.

"I don't know if the talks are dead," Nomura wrote. "I am assuming it's over, however I am open for discussion until 11:59 p.m. Dec 7."

That seems to indicate that Iwakuma is *not* making any announcement about returning to Rakuten today during the Golden Eagles' fan fest. Nomura also mentioned to me that Iwakuma wants to play for a winner and they know that the A's will have a good team.

We'll see. The business day is just beginning in Japan, so there's plenty of time for Iwakuma to declare that he's returning to Rakuten. If he does not, it's safe to assume that the talks aren't completely dead.

For the A's part: silence. They aren't expected to make any announcements today, so talks definitely aren't done as far as they are concerned. The team policy is not to discuss free agents, and the fact they won't talk about Iwakuma indicates that they still consider this a negotiation stage.

The one wrinkle in the past 12 hours has been Nomura on Twitter; he indicated that talks looked done and he denied that Iwakuma is seeking Barry Zito type numbers, among other things. He told me, however, that Zito and Daisuke Matsuzaka *were* brought up during talks as comparisons, but just to illustrate that Matsuzaka's total package, including posting fee, was comparable to the highest U.S. pitcher's compensation that offseason. For Iwakuma, the main comparison that Nomura came up with was Jason Schmidt's \$15.7 million per year deal with the Dodgers, as I mentioned in the previous Drumbeat. That would include the posting fee, so it would still be \$12 million per season in salary - a no-go for the A's. (Actually, doing the math with that \$19.1 million posting fee, it would be \$11 million/year in salary. Also a no-go.)

Though Nomura's tweets took some little digs at the A's, he emphasized to me today that he has nothing but warm feelings for Oakland general manager Billy Beane, asking me to make sure to mention that he said, "I still like Billy and do respect him a lot." Making nice.....that certainly would be a good start if an agent wanted to re-start talks.

I've had the posting fee confirmed as \$19.1 million, and as I reported late last night, the A's offer was \$3.8 million per year, not including the posting fee; with that factored in, the total was more like \$8.5 million based on a four-year deal. I can see the team potentially going up to \$9 million/year with the fee included, maybe a bit more but not a lot, so there'd still be as much as a \$3 million/year difference between the sides. Would the Iwakuma side come down that much? If he is eager to play in the U.S. this year, perhaps, and there were rumblings in Japan that he might like to pitch in the majors sooner rather than later. Well, eight more hours or so to find out if Rakuten makes any big announcements.

The real risk for Iwakuma is that the A's might move to find another option now if they don't believe that Nomura will move much off the \$11-12 million/year figure. With talks stalled, Oakland might find another option, and the A's were, in fact, linked to Brandon McCarthy today. As an option for a fifth starter, he wouldn't be a bad addition, and at a much, much smaller price.

Today's question is: Was this talks-are-over business a bluff by the Iwakuma camp? If so, they didn't know their audience very well. The A's aren't a team that plays the backward-forward game much; they make an offer and usually stick reasonably close to it, and they have other targets in mind, so they don't usually mess around, especially during a busy offseason like this one. They might have wiggle room, but not on the order of an extra \$4 million or so per year.

## **Talks break down between Iwakuma, A's**

## **Right-handed hurler could be heading back to Japanese club**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 11/23/2010

A Major League source confirmed Monday morning that talks between the A's and Japanese right-hander Hisashi Iwakuma have stalled, meaning the pitcher likely isn't geared for green and gold in 2011.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, it is widely expected that Iwakuma will announce his return to his Pacific League team, the Tohoku Rakuten Golden Eagles, as soon as Monday after discussions with Oakland broke down over the weekend.

The A's won bidding rights to Iwakuma this month, opening a 30-day window to reach an agreement on a contract. The hurler's agent, Don Nomura, said via Twitter that the club's posting fee amounted to \$19.1 million, and that negotiations have been slowed by substantial differences in salary offerings.

Nomura said the A's, using Texas' Colby Lewis (two years, \$5 million) and former Yankees pitcher Kei Igawa (five years, \$20 million) as comparables, offered Iwakuma a four-year deal worth \$15.25 million, for an average of \$3.81 million per year. The pitcher's agent, however, countered with a deal similar to those received by Hiroki Kuroda (three years, \$35.3 million) and Daisuke Matsuzaka (six years, \$52 million).

The A's will be refunded their posting fee if they can't reach an agreement with Iwakuma, who will be a free agent next year. If faced with that scenario, the club has several candidates for the fifth-starter spot, including Josh Outman, Bobby Cramer and Tyson Ross. They seemed confident, however, in signing Iwakuma by trading away promising righty Vin Mazzaro to Kansas City for outfielder David DeJesus two days after winning the rights to negotiate with the Japanese pitcher.

Nomura's messages on Twitter suggest that he is still open to a deal, and the sides have until Dec. 7 to iron out a contract. Given the large posting fee, though, it's unlikely the A's will increase their offer to Iwakuma's asking price. Oakland has not paid a pitcher more than \$10 million, which is what righty Ben Sheets received this year.

## **A's name Paparesta head athletic trainer**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com 11/23/2010

The A's on Monday filled their head trainer spot, bringing Nick Paparesta on board to replace Steve Sayles, whose contract was not renewed after a season in which the oft-injured A's used the disabled list 23 times.

Paparesta served as Tampa Bay's assistant trainer the past three seasons and had spent five years total in the Rays organization, the first two coming as Minor League head trainer and rehabilitation coordinator. He was promoted to join the Rays' big league staff in 2008, when he was a member of Tampa Bay's American League championship team.

Paparesta's experience also extends to the Cleveland Indians organization, where he spent 11 seasons before moving on to Tampa Bay. He is a graduate of Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea, Ohio, and holds certifications by the National Athletic Trainers' Association and National Strength and Conditioning Association.

As expected, the A's also announced that assistant trainer Walt Horn will return in his same capacity for a fourth season. The 2011 campaign will mark his 34th year in the A's organization, as he spent the first 30 in Oakland's Minor League system.

Together, Paparesta and Horn will look to combat an injury bug that has plagued the A's for several seasons. In Sayles' three years as head athletic trainer, the team used the DL 65 times, the most recent which saw the 23 injured A's players combine to miss a franchise-record 1,426 games.

## **Hot Stove roundup: Upton speculation continues**

By Bailey Stephens / MLB.com 11/23/2010

Thanksgiving week is upon us, but there's still plenty of time for the Hot Stove before the turkey hits the table.

- Speculation about D-backs right fielder Justin Upton continues following the General Managers Meetings. Joel Sherman of the New York Post reported last Friday that 15-16 teams had approached Arizona about acquiring the young slugger. Upton has four teams on his no-trade list: the Athletics, Mariners, Tigers and Royals. On Monday, Ken Rosenthal of FOXSports.com clarified on Twitter that the Mariners were one of the teams Upton had chosen to block from acquiring him, not the Indians as he had previously reported. The Blue Jays, Marlins, Orioles, Red Sox, Royals and Yankees have been said to have interest in Upton.

- The Yankees want to re-sign iconic closer Mariano Rivera to a one-year deal, but he wants a two-year contract worth about \$18 million per season, according to a Twitter report from Yahoo's Jeff Passan. Rivera made \$15 million in 2010.
- The deadline for clubs to decide if they want to offer arbitration to their eligible free agents is 11:59 p.m. ET on Tuesday. A lot of factors go into teams' decisions this time of year, but keep in mind that they can make offers of arbitration to free agents, even if the players plan to decline and depart, in order to reap the Draft benefits. Only time will tell what impact this will have on the free-agent market.
- Speaking of the arbitration deadline, one of the Orioles' biggest decisions leading up to it will be whether or not to offer arbitration to reliever Koji Uehara. According to MLB.com's Brittany Ghirolì, the O's have shown significant interest in retaining Uehara and have remained in contact with his representatives. Uehara, who served as the O's closer down the stretch, registered a 2.86 ERA out of the 'pen in 2010. His strong season could put him in line for a significant raise.
- Free agent Eric Hinske is being courted in the early stages of the offseason by the Braves and the Brewers, according to a Twitter report from Yahoo's Tim Brown. The 33-year-old hit .256 with 11 home runs in a bench/platoon role with Atlanta last year. Hinske has said he'd like to return to the Braves, who offered the outfielder/first baseman a one-year deal in the range of \$1.5 million last week, according to MLB.com's Mark Bowman. Hinske is said to be looking for a two-year deal.
- There are six or seven teams interested in free-agent right-hander Brandon McCarthy, according to a report from Jon Paul Morosi of FOXSports.com. Teams interested in McCarthy include the Athletics, Astros, D-backs, Brewers, Padres, Mariners and Tigers. McCarthy, who has endured his share of shoulder injuries, has been looking good in the Dominican Winter League, Morosi noted.
- The A's pitching situation for 2011 is apparently still evolving amidst the news that talks with Japanese right-hander Hisashi Iwakuma have stalled. The two sides will still have until Dec. 7 to hammer out a deal, but it's not looking good. According to Iwakuma's agent Don Nomura, the A's offered Iwakuma a four-year deal worth \$15.25 million. Iwakuma and his agent, though, were looking for something more similar to the contracts of Hiroki Kuroda (three years, \$35.3 million) or Daisuke Matsuzaka (six years, \$52 million).

## Hisashi Iwakuma's agent won't 'short-sell' pitcher to Oakland A's

Paul White USA Today 11/23/2010

Hisashi Iwakuma's chances of joining the Oakland Athletics aren't dead yet, but the Japanese pitcher could become the first victim of an impasse in the posting system that allows players to move from Japan to the major leagues.

It's a strong enough possibility that his agent is suggesting alternatives to a system he likens to a foreclosure sale.

"I am not short-selling Iwakuma," his agent, Don Nomura, told USA TODAY in an e-mail message.

Nomura is the agent most responsible for the posting system being set up in 1998 after he found loopholes to move pitcher Hideo Nomo and infielder Alfonso Soriano across the Pacific before they had reached free agency in Japan. Players there can become free agents after nine years.

But Nomura didn't set up the current system, which he says puts all the leverage in the hands of the team. If the A's can't reach a contract agreement, Iwakuma will return to his Japanese team, the Rakuten Golden Eagles, and no money changes hands. Iwakuma would reach free agency after the 2011 season.

Oakland was the high bidder for an exclusive 30-day window to negotiate with Iwakuma, 29, who was 10-9 with a 2.82 earned run average last season. He was 21-4, 1.87 in 2008 and a member of Japan's World Baseball Classic winners the following spring.

The amount of the bid was not disclosed, though the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports it at \$18 million and the A's contract offer for three years at \$3.5 million or \$3.8 million a year.

The A's are not commenting on the negotiations, but Nomura says they are at a standstill after what he characterized as a take-it-or-leave-it offer.

"I told them, if they change their mind, call me," Nomura said. "But I doubt it since they can spend the money saved on other players. But I hope there are chances of reviving the talks."

A deal must be completed by Dec. 7.

Nomura has long been a critic of the posting system, the method by which Red Sox pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka, Mariners outfielder Ichiro Suzuki and others came to the USA.

"It's a stupid idea," Nomura said in a 2007 interview with USA TODAY, during which he said he hoped he could throw the system into turmoil by enticing an elite Japanese high schooler to skip his country's pro leagues and come directly to the USA.

That hasn't happened, but his sentiments haven't changed much.

"This system is sooooo one-sided," Nomura said Monday, "That it wouldn't surprise me if a team offered a minor league deal. They can strong-arm you. ... The club has nothing to lose. The player gets the short end of the stick."

He says he understands the A's situation.

"They have a tight budget and are holding their position," he says. "My job is to sell how good the player is and they do understand the greatness of Iwakuma."

Nomura's solution to create leverage in negotiations is to take the three highest bids, make the average the amount of posting fee, which would be paid by which of the three teams is able to negotiate a contract with the player.

"The posting fee should come down," Nomura says of his proposal. "The (U.S.) GMs complain about the fee for the negotiating rights. It is absurd. But who invented this scheme? MLB, so I think they need to readjust this system."

## **Baseball pitcher Iwakuma victim of transfer rules**

(AFP)

TOKYO — Japanese star pitcher Hisashi Iwakuma's dream of playing in the United States next season has effectively ended, his agent and local media said Tuesday, fueling criticism of the rules for player transfer.

"Iwakuma becomes victim; Loophole in posting system," the Nikkan Sports said in major headlines, as the Oakland Athletics apparently refused to negotiate a deal to sign the 29-year-old right-hander from the Rakuten Golden Eagles.

Under the "posting system", as agreed between the Japanese and US professional leagues, American teams bid for negotiating rights to acquire Japanese players.

In the first round of negotiations, the Athletics offered Iwakuma about 1.25 billion yen (15 million dollars) for four years and refused to make any higher offer, according to his agent Don Nomura.

The figure was far below the pitcher's worth, he said.

The Athletics have said they could not spend more, considering that the 19.1-million-dollar "posting" fee they would have to pay separately to the Rakuten for the rights to negotiate with Iwakuma, local media said.

Japanese media speculated that the Athletics had offered a high bid for the rights without an actual plan to sign him up, in an effort to prevent rival teams from acquiring him.

Nomura told reporters that his talks with the Athletics over Iwakuma's contract "have broken down," as the American team's offer was no more attractive than his current Japanese club's.

"I'm against accepting what's currently on the table," Nomura told reporters, as quoted by Kyodo News.

The Athletics have until December 7 to conclude the deal.

But they would not have to pay anything, including the posting fee to the Rakuten, if no deal was reached.

If the talks fail, Iwakuma won't be able to go to the major league until the next season ends.

"Insincere A's," the Sports Nippon said in a headline, referring to the Athletics' suspected ploy.

"The Japanese ace pitcher, who was set to play in the major league baseball as he dreamed, was tossed about by the posting system," the Nikkan said.

The sluggish US economy as well as the high posting fee have discouraged the Athletics from signing Iwakuma, the Mainichi Shimbun said.

## **Green waiting for shot to wear Oakland's green and gold**

Harrell Miller, Napa Valley Register 11/23/2010

Fall League teammate Cory Harrilchak of the Atlanta Braves stretch before a recent game. Harrell Miller photo

PHOENIX — Grant Green loved playing baseball at USC.

"It was a lot of fun because I was playing with guys I grew up with," he told me one afternoon before an Arizona Fall League game in which he would be the shortstop for the Phoenix Desert Dogs.

Eventually we would talk about his 2010 season with the Stockton Ports — Oakland's Class A franchise in the California League.

However, it was obvious that nothing in his baseball life compared to his three years in Southern California as the Trojans' regular shortstop.

"I got really close with the class I went to SC with," he explained.

"In college, there is much more of a team atmosphere (than there is up here). We didn't really play that well on the field (at SC), but we had loads of fun."

Green received a baseball scholarship after a spectacular career at Canyon High School in Anaheim Hills, Calif.

He earned All-CIF Division I first team honors as a senior after batting .453 with four home runs, 22 RBIs and 14 stolen bases.

During his three years at USC he started 160 of the 166 games the Trojans played.

He recorded a .359 career batting average with 48 doubles, 20 triples and 15 home runs.

Many expected him to be one of the top five college players drafted in 2009. Actually, he was the 13th.

"I signed at the end of my third year at SC," he told me.

"That's the way it is in baseball. Football is different."

He went on to explain how football players almost always play their senior year, while baseball players tended to accept offers after their junior year.

"I signed my contract about 15 minutes before the deadline in mid- August."

I knew that Green had played all but a handful of his professional games at Class A Stockton, and thought it might be interesting to get his perspective on life at that level.

I began by asking about his salary.

"Actually, I got a signing bonus," he explained. "It came in a couple of equal payments, both of which I put in the bank.

"Otherwise, at Class A, we were paid \$1,200 a month before taxes. Two hundred a month went to the host family I lived with in Stockton. Not too many players lived with host families," he said, "but it worked well for me. Their son was a trainer up in Double-A. Mom was really nice. She did almost everything for us."

I asked what his average game day was like.

"I was usually up by 9 o'clock every morning," he said. "My housemates and I would go to the gym for an hour or so, then back to the house for a shower.

"I like to go to the field early, so me and the guys I lived with would get a Jamba Juice on the way and get to the park around 1 p.m.

"Early work started at 2:30 if you wanted it; otherwise, we started at 3:20, with batting practice until 4:30. We had dinner in the clubhouse and were back on the field stretching at 6:30 for a 7:05 game.

"Most of the time we would go home after the game. Eventually we met a couple of people from the University of the Pacific that we enjoyed hanging out with. We always tried to be home by midnight."

I asked if he'd ever played that much ball before.

"We had games almost every night with two or three days off a month. It was a long year — certainly the most games I'd ever played one after the other.

"We traveled everywhere by bus," he added when I asked about life on the road.

"The longest trip with Stockton was six hours to Lake Elsinore. However, I did make one 12-hour bus trip at the end of the year when I got called up for a few games with Double-A Midland. Midland, Texas, to Springdale, Arkansas, is a long road trip.

"On the road we stayed in ordinary hotels," he continued, "nothing special. I was lucky, however, since I lived down south. Any time we went down there, my manager let me go home and stay with my family."

It was obvious as we talked that nothing had been like USC, nor was it going to be.

"It's different up here," he said.

"It's pretty individual. Of course they'd like you to win, but that's not the point. The organization doesn't really look at the team. They are interested in individual performances."

In that regard, Green's year at Stockton was solid. He played in 131 games and collected 174 hits in 548 trips to the plate for a very respectable .318 batting average.

His statistics tapered off a bit this fall. Actually, he did not get to play as much as he would have liked. With a couple of days left in the season, he had only appeared in 11 games, in which he hit .200. Injuries had been a problem.

Like most AFLers, hope springs eternal.

"I'll probably start off next year in Double-A (Midland) where I ended up," he said hopefully. "You never know. If I play well enough, they'll call me up. If not, I'll stay there for the year."

### **Bay Area footnote to the AFL season**

The Scottsdale Scorpions met the Peoria Javelinas in the Arizona Fall League championship game. Three San Francisco hopefuls were in the starting lineup for the Scorpions — Brandon Belt at first base, Charlie Culberson at second and Connor Gillaspie at third.

Joe Paterson came out of the bullpen and struck out the side in the sixth and Dan Runzler finished the game.

The Scorpions were the winners, 3-2. Rings all around.