

A's News Clips, Monday, December 20, 2010

Moment of Year perfect end for Braden

Left-hander's post no-hitter celebration honored at GIBBYs

By Steve Gilbert / MLB.com

Mother's Day has not always been a happy one for Dallas Braden.

In 2010, however, Mother's Day was perfect for the Oakland A's left-hander.

Braden retired all 27 Tampa Bay Rays batters he faced on May 9 to record just the 19th perfect game in Major League history as the A's won 4-0 at Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum.

More than the game itself, the celebration afterwards was what made the accomplishment so special for Braden. His grandmother, Peggy Lindsey, who helped guide him after his mom died during his senior year of high school, came down onto the field following the game to share an embrace with her grandson.

That emotional celebration between Braden and Lindsey was named the Moment of the Year on Friday when Major League Baseball's top stars took home GIBBY Awards -- the ultimate honors of the recognition season -- as determined through comprehensive This Year In Baseball balloting. Winners were calculated based on votes by fans at MLB.com, media, front-office personnel and MLB alumni, collectively capping 2010 with the unveiling of the game's next generation of highly coveted trophies.

"It's a more important day for my grandmother than anything," Braden said after the game. "That's the biggest thing to be able to give her something like this on a day of this magnitude, considering everything we've been through together. It's more about her for me."

Lindsey made the hour-long drive that Sunday from Stockton as she does every time he pitches at home.

Regardless of the outcome of the game that day, having Lindsey there on Mother's Day was important to Braden.

"It hasn't been a joyous day for me in a while," he said of Mother's Day. "But to know that I still get to come out and compete and play a game on that day, that makes it a little better. With my grandma in the stands, that makes it a lot better. To be able to give her this today was perfect."

Braden and Lindsey hugged on the field following the final out, the tears flowing between them. Only a handful of words were exchanged, but nothing was left unsaid.

"He just said, 'I love you,'" Lindsey said. "I told him, 'Your mom would be so proud.'"

Braden's mom, Jodie Atwood, battled to raise her son amidst the crime, gangs and poverty all around him growing up. After skin cancer claimed Atwood's life, Lindsey would not let Braden slip down the wrong road.

That was no easy feat. Braden was kicked off the Amos Alonzo Stagg High School baseball team during his freshman and junior years and he said he missed 79 of 81 days during one quarter of his junior year.

That was when Lindsey delivered a stern message.

"I veered off enough to only play two years of high school baseball," Braden said. "I was not doing what I should have been doing when I should have been doing it. I was doing pretty much everything in my power to take every opportunity that my mother and grandmother have given me away. But she wasn't going to let that happen. My grandmother just made it very clear to me that all the sacrifices my mom had made and that she had made and the life that we had led up till that point was all to get me on the baseball field and to keep me out of jail. ... She made it very clear like, 'This is what we're going to do.' She didn't leave an option.

"Now we understand what it takes to make a sacrifice, and now I have an even better appreciation for being able to just give my grandma this."

A perfect gift on the perfect day. One that resulted in the year's top moment.

Miller encourages children to read

Rick Couch, Selma Times Journal, 12/18/2010

No matter what career path you choose, reading is important.

Selma resident and Major League Baseball player Jai Miller stressed this to students from the Black Belt Saturday morning at the Reading Is Fundamental breakfast at the Carl C. Morgan Convention Center.

Miller, Santa Claus, Curious George and Franklin the Turtle all served as guests of honor at the book giveaway and breakfast Saturday morning that saw a large number of participants.

Miller, who is currently with the Oakland Athletics, said he was excited when RIF coordinator Nancy Sewell contacted him about the breakfast.

"It's great to get a chance to come here and do something for the kids," he said. "Whenever they ask me there is no hesitation. Ms. Sewell got in touch with me and I told her I'd be there without a doubt. Just let me know where and when."

Bringing in Miller, Sewell said, is like bringing home a member of the family.

"I feel like he is one of my grandsons," she said.

During the program Miller read to a number of young children who made their way up to the stage. He also stressed the importance of becoming a strong reader and how it will benefit them in their future.

The program was a partnership between RIF and the local chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, also known as the Zeta Omega chapter, the Selma City Council, Dallas County Commissioners and volunteer helpers from Selma's Digital Divide AmeriCorps.

Zeta Omega president Juanda Maxwell said children always respond to Selma residents who have walked the same school halls as them and moved on to do great things.

The opportunity to reach young people, Miller said, is an honor. Making a difference in the lives of children from his hometown is something he always enjoys.

PACIFIC EVENT FEATURES A'S GENERAL MANAGER

By The Record

Oakland Athletics general manager Billy Beane will headline the fourth annual Pacific Baseball Community Night.

The event, sponsored by the Paulsen Family and New York Life, is at 5 p.m. on Feb. 3 at the Hilton Stockton.

Beane, other local baseball celebrities and the 2011 Pacific baseball team, including coach Ed Sprague Jr., will be in attendance.

Beane is the subject of Michael Lewis' novel "Moneyball," which has been adapted into a motion picture due for release early next year.

Stockton native Eddie Guardado will be honored for his achievements in professional baseball. Guardado spent 17 years in the big leagues as a relief pitcher with the Twins, Mariners, Reds and Rangers, and holds the Twins' all-time record for saves in a season. Pacific's 2010 most valuable player and current New York Mets farmhand Hunter Carnevale will receive the San Joaquin County Amateur Player of the Year Award.