

## A's News Clips, Monday, January 31, 2011

### Seattle GM downplays Figgins-to-A's talk

### Zduriencik says plan remains for veteran to stay with Mariners

By Jane Lee and Greg Johns / MLB.com

Despite several reports that the Mariners and A's are talking about swapping third basemen Chone Figgins and Kevin Kouzmanoff, Seattle general manager Jack Zduriencik said Friday his plan remains for Figgins to be with the Mariners this season.

The Contra Costa Times was the first to report that Oakland was pursuing Figgins in exchange for Kouzmanoff and possibly a pitcher.

"I'm looking forward to Figgins being our starting third baseman," Zduriencik said. "He'll be here tomorrow [for the Mariners' FanFest]. He's been agreeable to moving back to third base and that's our plan, to have Chone be our Opening Day third baseman."

Oakland officials have not commented on the report.

The A's previously -- and unsuccessfully -- attempted to lure in Adrian Beltre this winter, signaling the notion that they're not entirely satisfied with Kouzmanoff. Beltre ultimately turned down a six-year deal worth \$76 million from Oakland in favor of a tour with the Rangers.

It marked the second straight year in which Beltre spurned an offer from the A's, who subsequently avoided arbitration with Kouzmanoff last week by way of a one-year, \$4.75 million contract.

The 29-year-old Kouzmanoff compiled career lows in batting average (.247), on-base percentage (.283), slugging percentage (.396) and OPS (.679) in 2010 but also led the team with 16 home runs and 71 RBIs. Figgins, meanwhile, doesn't boast the same power potential but offers speed, versatility and a high on-base percentage.

Figgins has \$26 million remaining on his contract through 2013, along with a \$9 million vesting option for 2014 based on plate appearances -- numbers that appear high for a blue-collar A's team. But Oakland's brass has exuded no problem in giving away money this winter, as evidenced by the recent signings of relievers Grant Balfour and Brian Fuentes, both of whom garnered two-year deals worth \$8.1 million and \$10.5 million, respectively.

The 33-year-old Figgins hit just .259 as Seattle's second baseman last season but stole 42 bases and walked 74 times. Just a year prior, he led the league with 101 walks and stole 42 bases to go along with a .298/.395/.393 line for the Angels.

After trading Jose Lopez to Colorado, Zduriencik approached Figgins in December about moving back to third base this season. Figgins struggled out of the gate last year after signing his four-year deal with Seattle and then being moved to second base and also batting second behind Ichiro Suzuki in the Mariners' lineup.

New Seattle manager Eric Wedge says Figgins will remain in the No. 2 spot in the batting order, but the Mariners feel he got more comfortable in that role as last season progressed.

"A lot of things were tied into Chone's year last year," Zduriencik said at Thursday's pre-Spring Training media day in Seattle. "It was his first big contract, there was switching organizations, switching positions, batting in a different spot in the batting order. That's a lot. He got more comfortable the last two months. I think he was the player we thought he was going to be.

"This offseason as we evaluated our club, I called Chone and said this is what we're thinking. He said, 'Give me the reason why.' I told him he's an elite infielder at third base and we have other [middle] infielders. He said, 'If it helps us win, I'm in.'"

## Major Lee-ague: Korach: "The great ones love what they do"

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 1/26/2010 1:25PM

A's radio broadcaster **Ken Korach** recently passed along a rather personal and endearing piece of writing that I'm very excited to share. He'll continue writing throughout the season on an occasional basis at his own blog space, which will be created within the next month. For now, though, I'm delighted to share this space as a forum for his thoughts on a few extraordinary baseball men who passed away last year. Enjoy!

Any year-end necrology is going to bring a sense of sadness and reflection, but it seems 2010 was a particularly tough year for baseball.

The Boss and The Voice were just two of the greats we lost.

If imitation is the greatest form of flattery, The Voice, Bob Sheppard, will be the most flattered immortal of all time.

The list begins, both alphabetically and appropriately, with Sparky Anderson, the first manager to win a World Series in both leagues and one of game's great ambassadors.

I didn't know Sparky well; I was starting my career in the American League as he was winding down in Detroit. But, there are four others we lost in 2010 whose greatness was endearing and enduring, and who influenced me in a variety of ways.

Dave Niehaus was the voice of the Marines from their inception until he died shortly after the past season. Niehaus was one of those announcers whose enthusiasm was contagious, and it had to be because he suffered with the Mariners' fans through 14 consecutive losing seasons before the Mariners finally broke through in 1991. His call, and the unvarnished emotion, when the Mariners advanced past the Yankees in the 1995 ALDS, is one of the most memorable ever.

"The Mariners are going to play for the American League Championship!" Niehaus exclaimed, and then he added his signature punctuation: "My oh my."

They say it was Ken Griffey Jr. and that 1995 team that saved baseball for Seattle. Griffey thinks it was Niehaus, because the broadcasts always lived even during all the losing.

One time about 10 years ago the A's were in Seattle to play the Mariners and we had a night off while the M's were finishing a series at Safeco Field. Niehaus invited me to spend an inning with him on the air. It was an unforgettable experience because I could sense Dave's enthusiasm once I put on my headset. There was nothing contrived about Dave's energy -- you could feel it -- and I've always remembered that night and the lesson that the great ones love what they do and love the game.

The same could be said for Ron Santo, who probably lived through more physical and professional heartbreak than anyone. At the end, Ronnie's body gave out but his spirit will live with the Cubs' fans forever.

It is a shame that Santo didn't make the Hall of Fame during his lifetime. Even based on the numbers, you could make a compelling case. Five Gold Gloves, a nine-time All-Star, 342 homers, a .277 average and 1,331 RBI. He led the National League in walks four times.

But, there also has to be something luminous about a career in the game that was so exemplary, a Hall of Fame tie-breaker if you will. There have been many greats in the Windy City -- sure Hall of Famers like Ernie Banks (Let's Play Two) and Fergie Jenkins (and, I hope, Frank Thomas on the first ballot from the South Side), but has anyone meant more to his team's fans than Santo? He played 14 years for the Cubs and then broadcast for 20.

He hid, because of the stigma, his diabetes until he made the All-Star team for the first time, but then as an announcer he inspired thousands with his courage and his dignity.

I worked many games with only a thin pane of glass separating our booth from Santo's -- in Spring Training and also during interleague play at Wrigley, and it was amazing even last summer to see Santo, with cancer winning its inexorable battle and Ron walking on his two prostheses, always having time for autographs and pictures with the steady stream of Cubs fans that started before the game and never ended.

Pat Hughes, Ron's long time partner on WGN Radio, told me this year that the Cubs and their fans kept Santo alive. I think it was the other way around.

I've said many times that I could listen to Ernie Harwell say nothing for three hours and love it. He had that kind of voice, the southern drawl that was the perfect match for the game's laconic pace. Ernie voiced the Tigers games for 42 years,

retired after the 2002 season, and passed last summer at the age of 92. His grace is best exemplified by his writing of *The Game for All America*, which served as part of his acceptance speech for the Hall of Fame:

"In baseball, democracy shines its clearest. The only race that matters is the race to the bag, and the creed is the rule book. Color merely something to distinguish one team's uniform from another."

Ernie was a sage in a simple, but profound way. I liked to pose questions to him, knowing the answers would be little lessons for life. Once, when the Tigers were in the midst of a lousy season, I asked Ernie how he kept his focus:

"Every game is its own chapter," he said.

The other day, I was stuck at the airport in L.A. in bad weather. I thought of Ernie as I often do.

I asked him once, when he was in his 80s and facing another long night of travel after a late game, how he dealt with the travel:

"I have nothing better to do. I've got a good book."

How about this for the definition of the essence of a baseball broadcast?

"You call balls and strikes and give the score. But, that would be boring if that was all you do, so you mix in a little color."

For Ernie, nothing was too complicated.

I first interviewed Bob Feller when he was touring Minor League parks in the 1980s. Even then, in his late 60s, I think he thought he could blow his fastball by 90 percent of the young hitters at the park that day. He was and always will be Rapid Robert, the same brash kid who broke into the big leagues at 17. Feller was intractable and loved holding court, and his opinions flowed in the press room in Cleveland, even during the 2010 season at the age of 92.

I asked him once how many games he might have won -- he finished with 266, including three no-hitters -- if not for World War 11. He didn't hesitate before answering. "We won the big one."

Shortly after Feller died, I got an email from Joe Castiglione, the radio voice of the Red Sox, who once worked on cable in Cleveland with Feller. "I loved him," Joe said. "And, so did my kids."

That's one reason it is important and not just ceremonial for immortals like Feller to have a presence at the ballpark long after their playing days. They link the generations.

And, they live forever.

## **Chin Music: Media day leftovers and other tidbits**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 1/28/2011 9:09PM

I'm hearing a variety of fan reaction to the A's possible trade for Chone Figgins, but the majority of people seem to be against it. Mariners GM Jack Zduriencik told the Seattle Times and mlb.com that he plans to start the season with Figgins as his third baseman. I still wouldn't close the door on a deal, but money could be a major hang-up. Would the A's demand a boatload of cash in return to help offset Figgins' hefty contract? And would the Mariners be willing to fork it over? Consider that Seattle is still on the hook for \$6.5 million this season for former players Carlos Silva and Yunieski Betancourt, who they've traded away. Zduriencik may not want to blow any more on players no longer with his team.

Here's a few other A's tidbits, some left over from Thursday's media day:

—The A's outrighted infielder Steve Tolleson to Triple-A Sacramento after he cleared waivers. Retaining Tolleson is important for the team's depth at shortstop, as Adam Rosales will miss lots of spring training recovering from foot surgery. The good news for the A's is that starter Cliff Pennington, recovering from left shoulder surgery, told me he feels very confident he'll be ready for Opening Day, though he'll likely take it easy early in camp. In Rosales' absence, the depth chart at shortstop likely reads Pennington, Tolleson and Eric Sogard, who is more of a second baseman. The fact that Tolleson didn't get claimed on waivers could make the A's less inclined to acquire another shortstop.

Three of the five candidates for Oakland's fifth starter's spot attended media day — Josh Outman, Rich Harden and Brandon McCarthy (Tyson Ross and Bobby Cramer are the other two). Outman, who's been out since June 2009 because of Tommy John elbow surgery, said he's physically ready to compete for the No. 5 job. He gained confidence while facing hitters in the fall instructional league. Outman prefers starting but said he'd be comfortable in a relief role too. "I think I'm comfortable

doing what I've gotta do for the team," he said. "I just have to go in and hopefully make their decision (on choosing a fifth starter) hard." Outman's wife gave birth to daughter Sawyer, the couple's first child, on Dec. 22.

Harden said he's been spending lots of time working with pitching coach Ron Romanick on mechanics. Health is always the most important key for Harden, and he said he feels good right now. "I feel like I can go out there and make 30-plus starts." Like Outman, he added that he could adjust to a relief role, and the A's consider that an option.

McCarthy has been plagued by shoulder problems over his career. Last year with Texas, a stress fracture limited him to 11 appearances at Triple-A. But he caught the A's attention with an impressive stint in the Dominican Winter League. "I came back for the last month (of 2010) and pitched well, but I didn't feel like I was done," he said. "Going down to the Dominican to get another five starts or so allowed me to refine things I wanted to refine."

Prediction: The fifth spot will come down to a competition between Outman and Harden. Outman pitched well in a starting role in '09 before getting hurt, and Harden's experience gives him an edge over the others.

—Lefty reliever Jerry Blevins, coming off surgery to repair a torn labrum in his left hip, said he'll be full strength when pitchers and catchers report Feb. 15. The addition of Brian Fuentes and Grant Balfour could squeeze Blevins out of a spot in the A's seven-man bullpen to start the season, especially if Joey Devine is healthy. But Blevins remains optimistic. "I feel I've got as good a chance as anybody."

## **Chin Music: Some thoughts on A's potential trade for Chone Figgins**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 1/28/2011 11:01AM

Here's some follow-up on my report this morning that the A's are interested in trading for Seattle third baseman Chone Figgins. Oakland assistant GM David Forst wouldn't comment on any potential trade, but did offer: "We've got a long time until Opening Day. There's always room for improvement. We've proven in the past we're willing to do things up until spring training, and into spring training."

I see plusses and minuses on this move from Oakland's side, but I could see the thinking in pulling the trigger ...

Figgins is considered a very good defender at third base and would fit in with the A's emphasis on sound defense (quote from Bob Geren yesterday: "The best thing we did this winter was we didn't sacrifice any defense to improve our offense.") The A's want to stay solid with the glove all around the diamond.

Figgins also could add the speed and base-stealing component that the A's lost when they dealt Rajai Davis. Coco Crisp and Cliff Pennington help in that area as well, but Davis was the main catalyst in wreaking havoc on the bases. I would think the A's might cut back on the base-stealing a bit with the additions of some big hitters in the middle of the lineup. But Figgins would still add a nice dynamic. He's a good base runner in general, and the A's emphasize aggressiveness on the bases (taking the extra base, advancing on passed balls, etc.).

A drawback to the deal: Figgins' contract. He's owed \$26 million on a contract that runs through 2013, and he has a vesting option for \$9 million in 2014 that's guaranteed if he reaches 600 plate appearances in 2013. That's a big financial commitment (Figgins is 33, so his age is a consideration over the length of this deal, too). And Figgins is coming off a down year in 2010 — .259, 1 HR, 35 RBIs, though he added 42 stolen bases. He played second base last season, but the Mariners have planned to move him back to third, and there's thought that could help him rebound.

I'm hearing the A's would send third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and perhaps a pitcher to the Mariners in a potential deal. Kouzmanoff makes sense obviously — third baseman for third baseman — and it's no secret the A's have explored their options at third this winter. Kouzmanoff makes \$4.75 million this season, so the A's would be unloading a bit of salary. As for the pitcher? It makes sense the A's could deal from their loaded bullpen, but perhaps a minor league arm would suffice along with Kouzmanoff. And I have to think the A's would demand Seattle send some cash their way to help offset Figgins' contract.

This has been an interesting team to cover this offseason, to say the least ...

Any thoughts on this potential deal?

## **Purdy: San Francisco Giants' territorial claim to South Bay becoming impossible to defend**

By Mark Purdy, Mercury News Columnist 1/30/2011

In two days, the World Series trophy visits San Jose.

The handsome hunk of metal will travel to Municipal Stadium on Tuesday afternoon in a van provided by the Giants' corporate sponsors. Fans can donate money to have their picture taken with the trophy, which will be displayed at home plate. A large crowd is expected.

Excuse me for chuckling. Because according to the Giants, none of those fans would be showing up if the A's were now playing in the South Bay.

The official stance of team owner Bill Neukom is if the A's move to Santa Clara County, it would irretrievably damage the Giants' ability to compete and win championships.

Seriously? By extension, I guess the Giants believe they never would have won the World Series last season if the A's were already occupying a new downtown San Jose ballpark.

Neukom apparently lives in mortal fear that his team's grip on the locals is so tenuous, every Giants fan south of the county line would immediately become an A's fan if an American League ballpark is built here.

It is such a preposterous notion. It is why, with each passing day, the Giants' territorial claim to the South Bay becomes more difficult to defend.

And it is why, almost two years after Major League Baseball commissioner Bud Selig appointed a "blue-ribbon" committee to examine the territorial issue, San Jose deserves to know why Selig has taken no action.

Lew Wolff, the A's owner, has maintained his usual diplomatic tone about the situation. But he must be getting impatient. Right?

"Impatient?" Wolff said the other day. "No. I've fallen into a cone of complacency."

He meant it sarcastically, of course. Lately, the 74-year-old Wolff and his family have mused to themselves that by the time a new ballpark is built for the A's, he will need help from his son, Keith, and younger business partner, John Fisher, to get to the game.

"On Opening Day, I'll be rolled into the ballpark in a wheelchair," Wolff said. "My daughter-in-law says she'll wipe up the drool."

At least the man is keeping his sense of humor. But with each day, Wolff and San Jose officials are getting more antsy. Voters would have to approve any new ballpark proposal. It will take time to set up an election and campaign. For any sort of vote in 2011, all parties will have to know in the next three to six months.

"I think we need an answer much sooner," Wolff said. "We need to know 'yes' or 'no' much sooner than that."

What's taking so long? Good luck at getting a real answer. One baseball source says that the committee's work is done -- it was tasked with investigating whether the A's have better prospects to build in Oakland or San Jose -- and the information is sitting on Selig's desk, awaiting his action.

But wait. Another baseball source says the committee's work is not yet complete. And yet another source says Selig has been meeting with Neukom and discussing possible remedies to compensate the Giants. And some people in San Jose political circles believe Selig's plan is to dawdle long enough -- two years longer, maybe -- for Oakland to try to assemble a ballpark plan. Oakland has identified a proposed site and recently authorized an environmental impact study, steps that San Jose took more than three years ago.

The truth is, whether by design or accident, Selig has dawdled so much that any Northern California ballpark plan could be imperiled by new Gov. Jerry Brown's plan for the state to scarf up redevelopment funds. Oakland was counting on those funds to buy ballpark property. Fortunately, San Jose has already purchased most of its land and has a Plan B to obtain the rest -- selling other downtown parcels owned by the city and using that money to buy up the remaining ballpark footprint.

All of this must make the Giants very happy. Their claims to the South Bay have always been about business and nothing else, despite Neukom's talk of San Jose being "the heart" of the team's fan base.

When the San Francisco Giants bought majority interest in the San Jose Giants minor league franchise, it was all part of that business plan because Neukom's group would be in position to receive millions if the A's move to the South Bay.

Nothing wrong with any of that. But the Giants should be honest and publicly admit what their strategy's ultimate goal is -- which is to have the A's leave the Bay Area entirely.

If the Giants really believed that San Jose was their "territory" instead of simply a way to keep the South Bay at bay, Neukom would treat Santa Clara County as more than a subservient fiefdom thrown a few crumbs. The San Francisco Giants might have staged a separate World Series celebration in San Jose after the parade in San Francisco. Or perhaps Neukom might have invited the San Jose Giants' small front-office staff to the major league team's World Series party in San Francisco. Didn't happen.

To his credit, Neukom was kind enough to fly most of the San Francisco front-office employees to Texas to attend World Series games. But the San Jose Giants' general manager, Mark Wilson, had to pay his own way to Arlington and buy his own tickets from another source. This, after Wilson and his minor league operation -- which is owned by Neukom and is supposedly in "Giants territory" -- produced 10 players for the World Series roster.

The run to the championship was a great ride for Giants fans in the South Bay. They should soak up the opportunity to visit "their" championship trophy this week at Muni.

But they should also consider this bit of irony: Neukom's silly and stubborn stance on territorial rights is preventing his team's fans from seeing the Giants themselves actually play games in San Jose. That's what would happen, of course, during interleague games against the A's.

Wouldn't that be better than visiting a trophy?

## **Drumbeat: Figgins' no-trade clause to Oakland hasn't been waived yet, but...**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle, 1/28/2011 11:00AM

I'm hearing little bits here and there with the A's and any possible pursuit of Seattle's Chone Figgins, some of it conflicting, but here's what I can gather so far: While there may have been talks, nothing has reached the stage where Figgins has been asked to waive his limited-no trade clause, which includes Oakland.

The Contra Costa Times reported this morning that the A's have interest in Figgins, and ESPN's Buster Olney suggested that Toronto might be involved, too. Oakland could offer up third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and perhaps a pitcher, although certainly not one of the current starters, and take on most, if not all, that \$26 million Figgins is owed. Plus, Figgins has an option for 2014 that vests at \$9 million if he reaches 600 plate appearances in 2013.

Several people around baseball have told me this winter that the A's have tried a few different ways to move Kouzmanoff, and this would bring back a top-notch third baseman in return, but Figgins, like Kouzmanoff, is coming off a down year and he's making an awful lot more money. A's fans know what Figgins can do, though - he bedeviled Oakland for years with the Angels.

What happens at the top of the order, though? Does Coco Crisp continue to lead off? Does Figgins? If they hit back-to-back, does David DeJesus drop down to third? And....so on.

Figgins doesn't bring much pop to the A's lineup, and as we all know, that's what they've needed most, and Kouzmanoff sounded yesterday as if he's really bent on providing more power this season. But Figgins is fast, he's a switch-hitter, he's versatile, and he can get on base. He's a very good player. Is he what Oakland needs? I'd like to know which pitcher might get dealt before saying this is a big win for the A's, should it happen.

It's unclear to me what Toronto would be doing in this deal. Don't they need a third baseman, too, and wouldn't Seattle need one if Figgins is dealt? That's three teams, two third basemen. We know how frequently the A's swing deals that involve Toronto, but it makes more sense to me that Toronto might just be pursuing Figgins separately. Or does monthlong A's property Edwin Encarnacion, now back with the Blue Jays, wind up in Seattle?

This has been one wild offseason for the A's, and this would be the capper. I was told after the Brian Fuentes signing that this was it for the A's roster, but Billy Beane and David Forst never miss a chance to improve the club. This one's fascinating, if it goes through.

## **Stockton Ports to honor Dallas Braden**

By News-Sentinel Staff Lodi News-Sentinel 1/29/2011

Stockton's Dallas Braden is being honored again. This time the Stagg High School graduate who threw a perfect game for the Oakland Athletics last season has been named as the inaugural recipient of the University of the Pacific's Andy Prokop Community Service Award.

Braden, who played baseball for the Tigers, will be honored at the Pacific baseball team's annual community night on Thursday at the Hilton Stockton.

The Andy Prokop Community Service Award will be given annually to a local athlete, coach or sports booster who has exhibited outstanding volunteerism in the Stockton community. Prokop is in his 12th year as president and CEO of the United Way of San Joaquin County where his leadership has spawned over \$50 million in donations for various charities throughout San Joaquin County.

"Quite simply, Stockton is a better place to live and work because of Andy Prokop" said Pacific head baseball coach Ed Sprague. "We wanted to honor him for all that he does for Pacific and everyone else around him and I can't think of a better first recipient than Dallas whose community spirit is second to none."

Braden, who jettisoned onto the national sports scene after throwing Major League Baseball's 19th perfect game on Mother's Day, has focused his community service activities on encouraging children to achieve their athletic goals. He has purchased and donated over 1,000 A's tickets to Stockton's Hoover-Tyler Little League, while each year sponsoring a family with children being raised by a single mother.

He is a past recipient of the Dave Stewart Community Service award given annually to an A's player for their commitment to his community. Braden has also worked with St. Mary's Interfaith Services in Stockton to provide food for the needy, personally collecting and distributing thousands of pounds of food at Thanksgiving.

Braden will be in attendance to receive the award at Pacific Baseball Community Night along with Oakland's General Manager Billy Beane, who is the evening's keynote speaker.

As part of the festivities, former all-star and Stockton native Eddie Guardado will be honored for his achievements during his 17 year major league career.

For more information or to purchase tickets for the event, please contact Pat Bennett at 209-473-6677 or [pat@focusedsports.com](mailto:pat@focusedsports.com). 209-473-6677

## **A's deep roster problematic for prospects**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

While the A's are getting high marks for their offseason additions and are now considered a potential contender, the moves do have less pleasant consequences for some of the team's returning players. For every David DeJesus, Josh Willingham and Hideki Matsui, there's a Chris Carter who is probably squeezed out of a roster spot.

Even a non-move, the A's failed pursuit of Adrian Beltre, has ramifications. Oakland's returning third baseman, Kevin Kouzmanoff, knows full well that his club was trying to replace him, offering Beltre six years and \$76.8 million before backing out of the running.

"I don't have any thoughts about it," Kouzmanoff said Thursday at a media event at the Coliseum. "A team can try to do whatever they want to do to get bigger, stronger, faster. I was fine, like, 'OK, whatever you want to do.'

"I'm confident enough in my abilities to think I can play for any club given the opportunity, but I'm happy to be back with the A's. I like it here."

There are those in the organization who believe that Kouzmanoff might come into camp feeling he has something to prove, and while Kouzmanoff doesn't disagree with that, for him it doesn't relate to Beltre, but to his own 2010 season. He wasn't happy with his numbers, a .247 average and a team-high 16 homers.

"Of course I'm hungry and I want to improve on last year," he said. "Last year was a down year for me. ... I would like to see myself as a power-hitting third baseman."

Carter, the A's top power-hitting prospect, doesn't appear as if he can buy a roster spot. First base is his best position; Daric Barton is there. Carter started playing the outfield last year, and with DeJesus and Willingham, the A's have a full complement of five outfielders, with Ryan Sweeney and Conor Jackson manning the bench and Coco Crisp starting in center. Carter could be the designated hitter, but Matsui is there.

That doesn't enter Carter's thinking, though. "I'm going in thinking I can make the team out of camp," he said.

He does know the odds are not in his favor, "unless they trade a couple of guys or something," he said.

After the Willingham deal, Carter said that another high-profile A's outfield prospect, Michael Taylor, texted him to say, "What are we going to do now?"

But, Carter said, "I know they know I'm still here. They haven't forgotten me."

Manager Bob Geren, asked about Carter, said only that he'll get his at-bats during the spring, and, "We'll see how it goes."

With two new relievers, Grant Balfour and Brian Fuentes, there will be familiar faces fighting to keep their bullpen jobs this spring. Brad Ziegler, Jerry Blevins and Joey Devine are among those with options.

"I have faith in myself," Blevins said. "But it's a competition. The jobs are out there."

**Gold jerseys on display:** The A's unveiled their new alternate jerseys, a brilliant yellow from the 1970s and '80s teams.

"It's blinding me a little bit," Willingham joked.

"People are going to see us on TV and know who we are without even seeing the 'A.' " Kouzmanoff said.

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