

## **A's Daily News Clips; Sunday, February 27, 2011**

### **A's outfielders Chris Carter and Michael Taylor haven't developed as quickly as anticipated**

By Joe Stiglich, Bay Area News Group, 2/26/2011

PHOENIX -- Chris Carter and Michael Taylor have lockers next to each other inside the Phoenix Municipal Stadium clubhouse. It is difficult to forecast when they will be side by side in the A's batting order.

The team's two most talked-about prospects, Carter and Taylor were pegged as future cornerstones of the offense at the time they were acquired in separate trades. But neither outfielder is forcing his way into Oakland's plans as quickly as anticipated.

Carter, 24, was obtained from Arizona in the Dan Haren trade of December 2007 and showed flashes of his potential during his brief big league exposure last season. But he also struggled enough to convince the A's he needs more seasoning at Triple-A Sacramento.

Taylor, who came over from Toronto in December 2009 for infielder Brett Wallace, hit just .272 for Sacramento and showed little power. By all indications, Taylor, 25, is behind Carter in terms of big league readiness.

General manager Billy Beane was asked if he expected both prospects to be further along in their development.

"Not necessarily," Beane said. "I think, quite frankly, Chris has moved very quickly, given where he was when we acquired him and where he is now. In Michael's case, he finished (the 2009 season) in Triple-A and did quite well. So we know he's capable of playing at that level.

"The fact of the matter is, they're both right there, and they're really just a phone call away."

The A's are preaching patience with both, but there will be holes to fill beyond 2011. None of this year's projected starting outfielders -- Coco Crisp, David DeJesus and Josh Willingham -- are signed beyond this season.

Designated hitter Hideki Matsui is on a one-year contract.

Unless they re-sign all of them, the A's will be in need of offensive reinforcements, and they prefer those would come from within the organization.

"As far as their age is concerned, (2011) is an important year," said a major league scout who requested anonymity. "I wouldn't say it's make or break, but they have to prove it out on the field."

Carter endured an Oakland record 0-for-33 streak to begin his big league career in August. He was sent back to Sacramento, but after being recalled Sept. 14, he went 13 for 38 (.342) with three homers and seven RBIs over his final 13 games.

The A's point to that trend throughout Carter's career -- he has struggled initially at each level before making the adjustment.

Carter hit .337 with 24 homers and 101 RBIs for Double-A Midland in 2009, but that high average might have been deceptive. Scouts consider him a pure power hitter who will always rack up high strikeout totals.

Carter said he tries to take cues from hitters such as Albert Pujols and Alex Rodriguez.

"Watching Pujols and A-Rod hit, it looks like they have a plan," Carter said. "They have a zone, and they're not waiting for anything else."

Taylor had just six homers and 78 RBIs for Sacramento in 127 games, missing a good chunk of time with a calf injury.

"It really felt like a long year," Taylor said. "But in some ways it's kind of the season I'm most proud of because I didn't crack."

Despite Taylor's 6-foot-5, 256-pound frame, the above-mentioned scout said Taylor is suited to be a line-drive hitter rather than a home run machine.

He received swing advice from all directions last season.

"We all had ideas about how to do things," A's director of player development Keith Lieppman said. "In fact, he probably took on too many ideas."

Taylor also worked with Dodgers manager Don Mattingly -- his manager during the Arizona Fall League -- who helped him identify one area on which to focus.

"I had a stop in my swing," he said. "Some of it came about from working on mechanics so much that you lose your rhythm. Right now I'm trying to be real rhythmic."

The A's appear set with five outfielders -- Willingham, DeJesus, Crisp, Conor Jackson and Ryan Sweeney. But manager Bob Geren pointed out that Carter or Taylor could have his number called at any time.

"It's a crowded outfield situation," Geren said. "Then again, not one of those five guys (stayed healthy) last season. Anything can happen, and everybody's got to be ready."

## **A's Trevor Cahill looking to raise the bar in 2011**

**(02-27) 04:00 PST Phoenix - --**

Trevor Cahill will get the [A's Cactus League](#) season under way today when he starts against the Cubs in Mesa, and Cahill's a strong bet to be the [Opening Night](#) starter, too.

He's an All-Star and an 18-game winner, and he won't be 23 until Tuesday. Many people believe that 20-plus wins are within Cahill's reach, especially considering he didn't come up until late April last season.

"What's 18 plus five?" said left-hander [Dallas Braden](#) when asked about what Cahill might do with an extra month of starts.

"We've all become very aware of (Cahill's) ability to win big games, and it's fun to think about what he could do given a full year. He could set the tone for us from Day 1."

"You start with what he did last year: It's tough to win 18 games with a team that won 81," A's left-hander [Brett Anderson](#) said. "Anything on top of what he did last year would be great - and great for the team."

The A's aren't going to put any undue pressure on Cahill. He's pretty solid in their book right now.

"If Trevor duplicated what he did last year for the rest of his career, we'd be perfectly happy," Oakland general manager [Billy Beane](#) said. "It's hard to think that after such a great year, anyone can get better. There's no question that he can, but he's already so good and pretty consistent."

What the A's would like to see in the way of improvements this year: more fastballs, and a higher strike percentage. He threw 64.1 percent fastballs last year, and he threw 60 percent strikes overall, and pitching coach [Ron Romanick](#) wouldn't mind those going up a tick or two.

Romanick reasons that both of Cahill's fastballs move so well, he should take advantage of it, and a few more strikes translate into one more inning finished here, another big hitter finished off there, and it all adds up.

"You hang around one more inning, and just by hanging around, that can get you two to five more wins," Romanick said.

Getting Cahill to cooperate with Romanick's offseason program wasn't difficult at all - in fact, Cahill showed up with a calendar of his own, showing his training and workouts. Usually, Romanick is the one with the calendars.

"If anything, we have to pull him back a bit," Romanick said with a smile.

One thing Romanick likes best is that even after his successful 2010, Cahill isn't just counting on that to continue. Last year at this time, Cahill was battling to make the team, and he came up short, going on the disabled list with a sore left shoulder and then getting sent to Triple-A Sacramento.

"Trevor remembers vividly that he wasn't even on the team last year, and I told him to keep that mentality, because there are always things you can't anticipate," Romanick said. "You can't sit back and rest on your press clippings. You want to be aware of what you did and how you did it, then up the bar when it comes to what you need to improve on. Trevor is doing that."

### **Trevor Cahill rising**

Trevor Cahill finished ninth in [American League](#) Cy Young voting last season, his second in the majors.

Year	GS	W-L	ERA	IP	SO	BB
2009	32	10-13	4.63	178.2	90	72
2010	30	18-8	2.97	196.2	118	63

**Note:** Cahill tied for fourth in the AL in wins in 2010, was fourth in ERA, third in batting average against, fourth in on-base percentage against and sixth in slugging percentage against.

### **Rich Harden's return to mound pushed back 1 week**

By Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, 2/27/2011

**(02-27) 04:00 PST Phoenix - --**

**Rich Harden** had hoped to start throwing again today or Monday, but the A's, continuing their conservative approach to injuries this spring, decided to give the right-hander another week off.

Manager **Bob Geren** described it as a full week, but Harden said he hopes it won't be quite that long, though he's OK with the decision to hold him back awhile. "We've got lots of time," he said. "It's the smart thing to do."

Harden first felt lat stiffness under his right arm while throwing a bullpen session on Feb. 15, so he's looking at more than two weeks without throwing. That might make it difficult to win a spot on the roster, much less in the rotation.

Geren said he is "not ruling out" a roster spot for Harden and said he would pitch wherever he's the best fit, in the rotation or bullpen. Geren followed with praise for fifth-starter candidates **Josh Outman** and **Brandon McCarthy**, who have performed well this spring.

**Michael Wuertz**, shut down for a few days with shoulder tendinitis, will throw today and is less than two weeks away from a game appearance, according to Geren.

**Briefly:** Today's starter, **Trevor Cahill**, will be held to "under 40 pitches," according to pitching coach **Ron Romanick**. ... **Kurt Suzuki** will be the designated hitter in today's game at Mesa and catch Monday. ... Rain is in the forecast for today. ... **Hideki Matsui** won't play today, but he'll play against his former team, the Angels, on Monday, and he'll also play on Wednesday and Friday. ... New reliever **Grant Balfour** retired four in the final intrasquad game, striking out two, while the other addition to the bullpen, **Brian Fuentes**, allowed three runs in one inning. ... **Matt Carson** tripled and **Anthony Recker** sent him in with a single in the second. ... Catcher **Josh Donaldson** (bruised knee) was recovered enough to enter Saturday's intrasquad game. ... Umpire supervisor **Steve Palermo** met with the A's on Saturday morning, and among other things, said that no more white or gray will be allowed on position players' gloves. **Conor Jackson** said he'll take a black Sharpie to his favorite gray glove.

## The Drumbeat: A's last workout day before games: another week off for Harden

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Phoenix Muni, 2/26/2011

Today is the A's final intrasquad game and manager Bob Geren handed off lineup selection duties to bench coach Joel Skinner - but when Geren saw the first lineup, he realized a change might be in order. Skinner had Hideki Matsui batting leadoff, so he could get a second at-bat more quickly today, but Geren said he knew he'd have to explain at length why Matsui was batting leadoff to the Japanese media, so .... Matsui is batting third now.

Of course Geren came out and told all of us that story, anyway, and the Japanese media got a chuckle out of it, but it took about 30 seconds to explain, so why not just leave Matsui in the leadoff spot? It would be kind of cool and would give all of them a fun little story. Geren joked with the Japanese reporters that he expected Matsui to steal a lot of bases.

UPDATE: Matsui was waved out of the circle in the first inning, he went back into the dugout for a moment and suddenly he's batting cleanup, with Andy LaRoche moving in front of him. How... odd.

Some quick injury updates: Rich Harden had hoped to start throwing again tomorrow or Monday but the A's have decided to give him another full week off to make sure all that lat stiffness is gone. He'll be doing a lot of stretching and flexibility work. I have to say, I'm continuing to be impressed with the different approach the A's training staff is taking this spring. They're going to take their time with injuries and make sure the issue is gone before anyone winds up with a more long-term problem.

Michael Wuertz, shut down a few days with shoulder tendinitis, will throw tomorrow and should get into a game in under two weeks, according to Geren.

Geren didn't have an updated report on Josh Donaldson, who took a foul tip off his knee (the shin guard was on) on Friday, but he said Donaldson might even get into today's game if he wants to.

## DeJesus, Ross and what might have been in '10

By John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle, 2/27/2011

**David DeJesus** was ticketed to join the Giants' playoff push, equipped with good plate discipline and defensive instincts, someone who could possibly make a difference in the pursuit to overtake the Padres and win the National League West.

Then **Derek Jeter** hit a ball to deep center field. The Giants' most improbable and glorious season in their San Francisco history took a fateful twist on July 22, when DeJesus, then with the Royals, crashed against the outfield wall at Yankee Stadium and tore a ligament in his right thumb, ending his season and allowing for Jeter's first inside-the-park homer in nearly 14 years.

Suddenly, the Giants were forced to scurry for Plan B. On Aug. 13, they traded for DeJesus' old Kansas City teammate, **Jose Guillen**, who finished the season as the right fielder but was omitted from the playoff roster, enabling **Cody Ross** to become a postseason legend.

"That could've been me," beamed DeJesus, who wasn't totally serious, realizing that Ross was a perfect fit for the Giants as a clutch hitter.

Bummed that his season was over, DeJesus was thrilled to be able to spend precious time with his newborn, **David Jr.**, who was 3 months old when his dad got hurt.

"Things happen for a reason," DeJesus said. "I was able to be there with my wife and son. It would've been crazy (with the Giants), a total different end of the year.

But I'm excited to be with Oakland, a team that's on the rise."

The A's acquired DeJesus in the November trade that sent **Vin Mazzaro** to the Royals. If DeJesus hadn't broken his thumb and had become a Giant, it's impossible to know what would have happened.

But fascinating to imagine. Maybe the Giants wouldn't have reached the playoffs. Maybe they would have won the division by several games. Maybe DeJesus would have grown a foot-long beard.

Would the Giants still have landed Ross? Perhaps. Remember, their Aug. 22 waiver claim on the Marlin largely was to block him from going to the Padres.

As it turned out, Guillen disappeared on the eve of the playoffs with a neck injury and as the focus of federal investigation for a shipment of human growth hormone allegedly sent to his wife.

So Ross got a chance, drove in the only run in Game 1 of the Division Series and never stopped producing.

"DeJesus is a great guy. I played against him in the minor leagues, and he's always been a really good player," Ross said.

"You never want to wish for somebody to get hurt.

Who knows what would've happened? I'm sad for him that he didn't experience what I did.

What a twist of fate."

**Labor strife?** While the NFL and NBA scuffle with labor issues, MLB is in labor peace. Still tough to imagine, considering all the past turmoil. But beware. The collective bargaining agreement ends Dec. 11.

Union chief **Michael Weiner** is touring training camps to meet with players and said he'd open negotiations with **Bud Selig** and Co. before Opening Day. Baseball hasn't had a strike or lockout since 1994-95 and the cancellation of the '94 World Series.

Since then, revenue sharing has helped some organizations stay afloat, but now there's discontent on the owners' side.

The Yankees and Red Sox are griping about funding low-revenue teams, and consider the goofiness of the Giants paying millions into a fund that directly benefits the A's. Dodgers and Mets owners are involved in embarrassing legal hassles.

Meantime, White Sox general manager **Ken Williams** — in the wake of \$30 million-per-year talk for **Albert Pujols** — actually spoke of a salary cap (fighting words for the union) and "the game being shut down for the sake of bringing sanity to it."

MLB generated more than \$7 billion in revenue last season, Selig said, and the average player salary is more than \$3 million. Weiner will speak with Giants players March 13, A's players March 17.

**Spring spectacle:** For the first time since 2003, both World Series teams are training in Arizona, but the Giants and Rangers are just part of the desert buzz. The Cactus League, on the verge of extinction 20 years ago when the league was down to seven teams, now is the prime choice for spring training, with 15 teams working out in the greater Phoenix area. That's because the Diamondbacks and Rockies left Tucson — which had housed teams since the '40s — for Scottsdale, now the hub of the Cactus League.

The D'backs and Rockies play at a \$100 million facility called Salt River Fields at Talking Stick, about 15 minutes from Scottsdale Stadium.

While 15 teams training in Florida are spread throughout the state, the Cactus League is far more intimate and easier for players and fans to go from park to park. The Giants and A's are among five Arizona-based teams that don't share facilities.

#### **Around the majors:**

Team to beat in the NL West? Dodgers manager

**Don Mattingly** has no desire to become bulletin-board fodder. He said the Giants. ... In **Juan Uribe's** first batting practice session as a Dodger, he was asked to take a couple of pitches.

Triple-A manager **Lorenzo Bundy**, standing behind the cage, said, "He never took two pitches in a row in his life." ... Cubs chairman **Tom Ricketts** is on record saying his team will have plenty of dough to bring in a megastar, and he can't be talking about anyone other than Pujols. ... Role model for **Brandon Belt** as he began following baseball in the early 2000s: Barry Bonds? No, Pujols. ... A's catcher **Kurt Suzuki** is learning a little Japanese from **Hideki Matsui**.

Not just to communicate with his new teammate, but to talk smack to **Ichiro Suzuki**. Playfully, presumably.

### **A's excited to show off new look in spring action**

#### Cactus League slate begins with All-Star Cahill toeing rubber

By Jane Lee, MLB.com, 2/26/2011

PHOENIX -- Oakland's uniquely crafted lineup, subject to quite the winter makeover, will take to the field for the first time Sunday as the A's open their Cactus League schedule in preparation for what's expected to be a playoff-worthy season.

All-Star right-hander Trevor Cahill -- on a 35-pitch limit -- gets the nod against Ryan Dempster and the Cubs, who play host at HoHoKam Park in Mesa, Ariz., at 12:05 p.m. PT. Fifth-starter candidates Tyson Ross and Josh Outman, as well as relievers Brad Ziegler, Joey Devine and non-roster invitee Danny Farquhar, are expected to get work on the mound.

In an effort to balance playing time and afford fans the chance to see a handful of starters on a daily basis, manager Bob Geren won't send all of his projected starting nine out for Sunday's affair or many days thereafter, though plenty of new faces will be on display straight out of the chute -- including offseason acquisitions Josh Willingham and David DeJesus.

Meanwhile, veteran slugger Hideki Matsui will enjoy a day off before making his A's debut in the designated hitter's role Monday, when the team takes part in another road contest against the Angels. Given the OK to use a DH in the Cubs' home park, Geren will utilize Kurt Suzuki in that position.

The revamped Oakland team is looking to better its 2010 second-place finish and 81-81 mark in the American League West. The effort seemingly started months ago, as Geren has noted multiple times already that each of his players, with help from the staff, put in a tremendous amount of work this offseason.

"I'm looking forward to starting," said Geren, embarking on his fifth season at the helm. "It should be fun. Guys are right where they need to be."

Several will be watched closely, though. Ten players on the team's 40-man roster -- Devine, Outman, Willingham, DeJesus, Andrew Bailey, Jerry Blevins, Cliff Pennington, Adam Rosales, Ryan Sweeney and Conor Jackson -- are coming back from surgery. Bailey and fellow reliever Michael Wuertz, who is battling some early shoulder issues, won't be seen in games right away for precautionary measures, though an exact timeline is unknown.

Right-hander Rich Harden also won't see any Cactus League action anytime soon. The veteran hurler, dealing with lat stiffness, likely won't begin throwing again for at least another week, Geren said. However, he's still part of the fifth-starter race, one which will be streaming live in front of thousands of fans.

Pennington (left shoulder) will be held out of game action for at least a week before he's eased back into the shortstop role. And Rosales, not expected back until May, will simply be an observer, with Steve Tolleson, Eric Sogard, Andy LaRoche and Josh Horton slated to receive plenty of time at shortstop when Pennington is out of the mix.

"We have to be cautious not to rush judgment on some guys," Geren said.

The A's skipper is intent on handing game time to everyone in the crowded A's clubhouse, including 16 non-roster players -- among them top prospects Max Stassi, Grant Green, Jemile Weeks and Michael Choice.

"This is where it all starts," Geren said. "We'll obviously be closely monitoring the fifth starter and some utility spots. The rest of the guys are just slowly getting into shape and getting ready for April 1."

### **Major League: Preview Intrasquad Game No. 3**

By Jane Lee, MLB.com, 2/26/11 10:14 AM

The A's are preparing for their final intrasquad contest before the "real" games begin Sunday. Brett Anderson and Gio Gonzalez are among the hurlers that will throw 20 pitches -- no more, no less -- today.

**Grant Green** will bat for **Cliff Pennington**, with whom the A's want to be careful in bringing back from left shoulder surgery. Pennington's also been instructed to avoid diving in the infield, as that's how he initially injured the shoulder back in July of last year.

Other morning notes: Despite speculation that he might begin throwing again as soon as tomorrow, **Rich Harden** (lat stiffness) likely won't do so for another week, Geren said. There have been no other setbacks; they just want to give him the necessary time to strengthen his arm and make sure he's ready. When asked if that extra time makes it unlikely that Harden will be ready by season's start, Geren replied, "I don't know. Never say never." At this point, Harden may be best suited for a bullpen role, but the team isn't ready to rule out a starting job. "We don't want to put any limitations or a timeline on him," Geren said. ... **Michael Wuertz** (shoulder) will resume throwing tomorrow, but don't expect to see him in a game for at least another 12 days.

### **Anderson sharp in spring debut**

Pitcher retires all six batters he faces, needing just 20 pitches

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX — Brett Anderson raced off the mound, took a perfect feed from Sean Doolittle and completed one of the most rehearsed plays in baseball by touching first base. He raised his glove afterward, eliciting a round of hoots and hollers from his teammates.

He's not just making the pitches. He's also making the plays.

Anderson, 7-6 with a 2.80 ERA in 19 starts last season, forms one of baseball's top starting rotations with Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez and Dallas Braden, giving the Oakland Athletics the look of a title contender.

Anderson fulfilled everything the A's coaching staff could want Saturday when he retired all six batters in faced, five on grounders, and threw just 20 pitches in an intrasquad game. He faced several A's who will appear in the Opening Day roster.