

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, March 1, 2011

### Oakland A's first-round pick Michael Choice gets big-league help

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Outfielder Michael Choice is participating in his first spring camp with the A's, but his big league education began in the winter.

Choice, the A's first-round pick last June, spent time working out with Los Angeles Angels outfielder Torii Hunter, who lives near Choice's home in Arlington, Texas.

The two trained at the Athletes' Performance Institute in nearby Frisco, then went to Hunter's house and hit in his batting cage.

"It was cool to bring him over," Hunter said. "The guy has some power. He's an athlete and he worked pretty hard this offseason."

Hunter reached out to Choice through Armann Brown, the A's scout who signed Choice and is a former teammate of Hunter's in the Minnesota Twins' farm system.

The A's view Choice, 21, as a center fielder, so he's tapping into an excellent resource with Hunter, a nine-time Gold Glover at the position.

"A lot of it was just talking about professionalism, how you handle your business," Choice said. "When we'd hit, it'd be strictly focused on hitting. He saw my swing, just kind of helped me out from there."

The University of Texas-Arlington product is rated the No. 3 prospect in the A's system by Baseball America, behind shortstop Grant Green and outfielder Chris Carter.

Choice went 1 for 2 in Monday's 8-7 loss to the Angels and is 3 for 5 in two exhibitions. He showed speed Sunday against the Cubs in beating out an infield single.

He'll likely start the season at high Single-A Stockton.

Designated hitter Hideki Matsui went 0 for 2 with a walk against the Angels, making his A's debut against the team he played for in 2010.

Matsui flied out and struck out swinging in his first two at-bats. He came up with the bases loaded and two outs in the fifth, and the Angels brought in lefty Matt Meyer to face him. He walked on four pitches to force in a run.

His next start will be Wednesday against Cleveland.

The A's committed four errors Monday, with Carter having the roughest day in left field. He had errors on back-to-back hitters in the first, letting Vernon Wells' routine fly bounce off his glove and Howie Kendrick's ground single skip away from him.

Carter also misjudged Peter Bourjos' double in the fourth, freezing on a ball that landed over his head but was easily catchable.

Jai Miller had an error in left, and third baseman Wes Timmons committed one.

"I'd have to reach in my thesaurus to get a good word for you," manager Bob Geren said to describe his defense.

Carter, the A's top power-hitting prospect, has a long way to go in mastering left field. The A's converted him last season from first base, where they're committed to Daric Barton.

The defensive adventures led to a 32-pitch inning for starter Dallas Braden, who was scheduled for two innings but left after one. He didn't throw his cutter -- a pitch he thinks may have contributed to last year's elbow problems -- but said he'll gradually work it in. "... Michael Taylor went 2 for 5 with a three-run homer to left-center. "... Right fielder David DeJesus remained out with a stomach illness. "... Reliever Craig Breslow had a tender arm last week, so he's not pitching in games

yet. Closer Andrew Bailey (offseason elbow surgery) is five to seven days away from his first appearance, Geren said. Reliever Michael Wuertz (right shoulder) is scheduled to throw off the mound Thursday.

## **A's notebook: Michael Choice, A's top draft pick of 2010, benefits from working with nine-time Gold Glove outfielder Torii Hunter**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

TEMPE, Ariz. — Outfielder Michael Choice is participating in his first spring camp with the A's, but his big league education began over the offseason.

Choice, the A's first-round pick last June, spent time working out with Los Angeles Angels star outfielder Torii Hunter, who lives near Choice's home in Arlington, Texas.

The two worked out at the Athletes' Performance Institute in nearby Frisco, then went to Hunter's house and hit in his batting cage.

"It was cool to bring him over," Hunter said. "The guy has some power. He's an athlete and he worked pretty hard this offseason." Hunter reached out to Choice through Armann Brown, the A's scout who signed Choice and a former teammate of Hunter's in the Minnesota Twins' farm system.

A's director of player development Keith Lieppman said Choice, 21, is viewed as a center fielder, so he's tapping into a pretty good resource with Hunter, a nine-time Gold Glover at the position while with Twins and Angels.

"A lot of it was just talking about professionalism, how you handle your business," Choice said. "When we'd hit, it'd be strictly focused on hitting. He saw my swing, just kind of helped me out from there." Choice, drafted 10th overall out of the University of Texas-Arlington, has stood out among a pack of top prospects in the A's camp.

He singled twice in Sunday's Cactus League opener against the Cubs, showing speed in beating out a bouncer to second base that appeared

to be a routine out. He singled again in Monday's 8-7 loss to the Angels.

He's likely to begin the season at Single-A Stockton, looking to apply the wisdom he soaked up from Hunter.

"It's pretty rare that a guy of his stature would take the time out, but that's the kind of guy he is," Choice said.

Hideki Matsui served as DH against the Angels, making his exhibition debut against the team he spent 2010 with.

He chatted with Hunter and other former teammates before the game, but his day was uneventful otherwise.

Batting third in the order, he flied out to left in his first at-bat, then struck out swinging. He came up with the bases loaded and two outs in the fifth as the Angels brought in lefty Matt Meyer to face him.

Matsui walked on four pitches to force in a run.

He's likely to be the No. 5 hitter in the regular season.

## **Chin Music: A's relievers still being handled carefully; the batting order takes shape**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 2/28/2011 9:22AM

Hideki Matsui makes his A's debut today, but don't read too much into the rest of the lineup against the Angels with so many regulars getting the day off. David DeJesus is still trying to shake off a stomach bug, but it's possible he'll play tomorrow against the Reds. Here's your starting nine:

Ellis 2B  
Suzuki C  
Matsui DH  
Jackson 1B  
Kouzmanoff 3B

Carson CF  
Carter LF  
Taylor RF  
Tolleson SS

Braden P

\*\*Joel Pineiro is on the hill for the Angels.

–Michael Wuertz is scheduled to throw off the mound Thursday for the first time since his shoulder soreness started. Fellow reliever Craig Breslow has had some tenderness in his throwing arm, according to manager Bob Geren, so there's no indication yet when he'll appear in a game. Closer Andrew Bailey is probably 5-7 days away from his first game. Those are three key guys in the bullpen, but I'd attribute their inactivity to the A's precaution as opposed to anything seriously bothering any of these guys. The plan has been to limit their throwing early to preserve them for the regular season.

–A little insight into the batting order: Geren said he wants a right-handed hitter to bat behind Hideki Matsui (the likely No. 5 hitter). He mentioned Kurt Suzuki, Kevin Kouzmanoff and Mark Ellis as possibilities for the sixth spot. So bit by bit, we can piece together how the order will look. If I had to project right now, I'd say: Crisp, Barton, DeJesus, Willingham, Matsui, Kouzmanoff/Suzuki, Ellis, Pennington.

How would that lineup strike you, A's fans?

## **A'S**

### **Matsui gets easy RBI vs. old team**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A's starter Dallas Braden hasn't hidden his admiration for the A's new designated hitter, Hideki Matsui, so he was tickled that Matsui made his Oakland spring debut in a game Braden started.

Braden found it even better that Matsui's first appearance came against his former team, the Angels.

"It's like buying a Ferrari from someone else, then putting on a new paint job," Braden said. "You want to go out and honk the horn and have the guy you bought it from say, "Dang, that looks pretty great. Yeah, he looks better in green and gold.' "

Matsui didn't do anything really extraordinary Monday in the A's 8-7 loss at Tempe Diablo Stadium, but he did come up in precisely the situation the team would like him to hit all year: In the fifth inning, he stepped to the plate with the bases loaded and two outs.

The Angels decided to make a pitching change, substituting left-hander Matt Meyer for righty Matt Palmer, but Meyer couldn't find the strike zone.

Matsui walked on four pitches, driving in Oakland's first run.

"They were pretty much balls," Matsui said through translator Roger Kahlon when asked if anything was even close.

Was he disappointed he got nothing to hit? "Not necessarily," he said. "I was able to walk. That's a good result."

As for making his A's debut against the Angels, Matsui said, "I guess it was a little bit awkward. But a year and a half ago, they were opponents."

Matsui said it was nice to catch up with some of his former teammates, but he said nothing unusual happened, so apparently he caught no grief from the Angels for jumping to a division rival.

Matsui was especially popular with the Angels' players, according to Angels center fielder Torii Hunter, who became very friendly with Matsui. "He's a true professional," Hunter said before Monday's game. "They're going to love him over there."

There are no indications when Matsui might get time in the outfield, if he does at all. "That conversation hasn't happened yet," said Matsui, who again emphasized that he's happy to play wherever the A's would like.

The outfield wasn't a strong suit for Oakland on Monday: The team's left fielders made three errors, two by Chris Carter and one by Jai Miller.

Matsui's next appearance will be Wednesday at Phoenix Municipal Stadium against the Indians. He finished 0-for-2 Monday with a flyout and a strikeout.

## **A's Dallas Braden working on honing his cutter**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

At 27, **Dallas Braden** is the most experienced of the A's returning starters, and he has established in his spot in the rotation.

He's still trying to get better, though. This spring, he's working on improving the cutter he picked up from former A's reliever **Russ Springer** two years ago.

Braden threw the pitch a bit last season, but he was concerned that it might have led to some of the elbow discomfort he had after the All-Star break. So this spring, he's trying to make sure the mechanics are correct, so it doesn't cause injury, and he's trying to learn how to use it effectively.

"Right now, it's a matter of sequencing and presentation - trying to make it look like something it's not, and find ways to get people out," he said. "I'm trying to evolve."

Like minor-league pitching instructor **Gil Patterson**, Braden is a fan of new addition **Brandon McCarthy** and his cut fastball.

"I grabbed him and said, 'How do you do that?' " Braden said. "It's the same if he throws it 60 feet, 85 feet, 120 feet - it always breaks exactly the same distance away from the glove."

McCarthy also worked Monday, going two innings and allowing two hits and one run.

Manager **Bob Geren** said he has a couple of ideas about who might hit behind **Hideki Matsui** during the regular season, and it's likely to be **Kevin Kouzmanoff**, **Kurt Suzuki** or **Mark Ellis**. On Monday, it was **Conor Jackson**, who went 0-for-2 with a bases-loaded walk. Kouzmanoff hit fifth and had two singles.

Braden threw 32 pitches in the first inning, then finished his day by throwing another 15 to 20 pitches in the bullpen.

"He was scheduled to go two (innings), but the defense was such that it didn't allow him to go two," Geren said.

**Chris Carter** made two errors in left, one on a ball that Geren thought might have been lost in the sun. Carter also misplayed **Peter Bourjos'** liner over his head.

Carter "just doesn't have a ton of experience out there," Geren said. "He's a good athlete. He just needs to keep going out there."

**Briefly:** Geren said that **Rich Harden** (lat stiffness) will resume throwing at the end of the week, probably Friday. ... **David DeJesus**, recovering from an illness, took light batting practice and might make his A's spring debut today. ... **Gio Gonzalez** will start today's game against the Reds and **Brett Anderson** will follow him. They'll be split onto different days the next time through the rotation, and everyone will go from two days' rest between outings to three.

### **Cactus League recap**

**Monday's score:** Angels 8, A's 7

**Notable:** Former Stanford outfielder Michael Taylor hit a three-run homer with two outs in the eighth. ... Michael Choice and Jai Miller have had hits in each of the first two games; Miller made one of four Oakland errors. ... Jerry Blevins, who is coming off hip surgery, allowed three hits and two runs in an inning.

**Quotable:** "It happens. That's why it's spring training - you train in the spring, you get it right in the summer."

- *A's starter Dallas Braden on a day the team committed four errors*

**Today's game:** Reds (Mike Leake) at A's (Gio Gonzalez), 12:05 p.m. Audiocast: oaklandathletics.com.

## **Drumbeat: Daric Barton won't' sac bunt on his own this year**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Phoenix Muni 3/1/2011 9:23AM

I know this is a popular topic on the Drumbeat - Daric Barton's bunting on his own last year to move runners over drove some of you nuts. I asked manager Bob Geren this morning if Barton might be discouraged from doing so this year, with a new lineup, and Geren said that actually he asked Barton to stop it during the second half last year once "the sac bunts started mounting up on him and he was leading the league. ... He's too good a hitter to bunt all the time."

This year, Barton will only bunt when the sign is given, not on his own. "I'm taking that option away," Geren said.

Barton explained to me in May last year that he wanted to make sure he moved runners over from second after failing in some attempts early in the season. He's a confident bunter, and he wanted to get the job done. Geren said though that at some point, you wind up losing more runs by giving up the outs. And he pointed out to Barton that he doesn't just have to try to hit to the right side to move men over (that was what was giving him trouble). A deep fly ball to left can do the trick. A hit, even better. And, Geren told him, even if Barton didn't get the job done last year, Coco Crisp and Rajai Davis both had the speed to then steal a base if necessary.

Bunting was a topic today because Rickey Henderson is here working with baserunners and outfielders, and bunting is an area he's helped before.

Some other news: David DeJesus is getting another day to recover from illness, and he'll likely play tomorrow against the Indians. Michael Wuertz will throw a bullpen session tomorrow. Andrew Bailey is in action today - it's either a bullpen session or throwing to hitters.

Cliff Pennington is likely to make his first start of the spring at shortstop right around when Ryan Sweeney makes his spring debut, early next week.

Here's today lineup: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, Willingham lf, Jackson rf, Carter dh, Powell c, LaRoche 2b, Timmons 3b, Sogard ss. Gonzalez p. Brett Anderson also will get two innings today.

## **Drumbeat: Tidbits from Tempe, Braden vs. Angels**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Tempe Diablo Stadium 2/28/2011 9:35AM

David DeJesus is getting another day to recover from illness; he's taking some light batting practice and not doing much else. He's likely to make his A's spring debut tomorrow at Phoenix Muni if he's fully ready, but as manager Bob Geren said, there's no reason to push it.

Rich Harden will resume throwing late in the week, probably Friday, Geren said, and the same thing applies here: No reason to rush. Geren said the team wants to make sure that there is no further trouble with the lat stiffness Harden felt two weeks ago.

Here's today's lineup behind Dallas Braden: Ellis 2b, Suzuki c, Matsui dh, Jackson 1b, Kouzmanoff 3b, Carson cf, Carter lf, Taylor rf, Tolleson ss. We'll also get a look at fifth-starter candidate Brandon McCarthy; I've heard a lot of raves about his cutter, which he throws with an unusual grip. He's showed it to several of the A's other pitchers, who have tried it out.

Geren spent some time discussing the lineup today after one of the Japanese reporters asked about Kevin Kouzmanoff. Geren confirmed that Kouzmanoff will bat further down the order, as expected, but he might not necessarily be the man always batting behind Hideki Matsui, which had been my guess. Geren said that Kurt Suzuki and Mark Ellis also could hit there in the likely No. 6 spot in the order.

Geren did essentially confirm Josh Willingham in the spot ahead of Matsui, and I'm not sure what else would make sense unless Matsui hit third and Willingham behind him. Considering that DeJesus and Daric Barton are likely to hit high up in the order, DeJesus especially, and both are left-handed hitters, I can't see Matsui batting third much unless there are injuries. Geren likes to go left-right when he can and all three of those hitters bat left-handed.

Michael Choice has been the standout among the kids in camp so far - he's not at all intimidated, he seems to get a hit every time up (including a hit he beat out yesterday that was just pure speed, the play was made cleanly at second and Choice just hustled for an unlikely single). He's a good year and a half away from the majors, but he looks like a no-doubter.

## **Matsui walks the walk in A's debut**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Hideki Matsui didn't even have to lift the bat off his shoulder to do some damage in his spring debut on Monday.

Rather, Oakland's new designated hitter simply stared down his former Angels teammates in the batter's box, taking four straight balls with the bases loaded from hurler Matt Meyer in the fifth inning.

Make that RBI No. 1.

"I was able to walk," he said through translator Roger Kahlon. "That's a good result. I'm fine with it."

The A's are surely fine with it, too. Following a season in which they tallied just 663 runs, which ranked 12th in the American League, they'll take as many runs in as many ways as they can get.

"RBI situation," manager Bob Geren said. "That's what we want for him."

Matsui's free pass, which came in the middle of an 8-7 loss to the Angels at Tempe Diablo Stadium, marked his third and final plate appearance of the day. The veteran slugger went 0-for-2 with a flyout and a strikeout in his previous at-bats.

"I was able to at least make contact," Matsui said, "so in that sense it went well."

Matsui enjoyed catching up with his 2010 teammates, particularly Angels outfielder Torii Hunter, though he noted that facing them was "a bit awkward since I know everyone there."

"But on the other hand," he said, "just a year and a half ago they were opponents."

Matsui, like Oakland's other regulars, will likely continue to play every other day while gradually adjusting to game action again. He will spend the majority of the spring in the DH slot, where he'll hit this season, but could see the outfield occasionally as well.

"Whatever the team wants me to do," Matsui said, "that's what I'll do."

## **Taylor's long ball too late for A's**

By Lyle Spencer / MLB.com

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Once again, Joel Pineiro is off to an auspicious start. Even he was surprised to learn how dominant he's been this time of the year.

The Angels' veteran right-hander continued a remarkable stretch of springtime work on Monday, handcuffing the Athletics for two innings in an 8-7 victory at Tempe Diablo Stadium. Pineiro is 10-0 in Spring Training competition since last absorbing a loss in 2006.

"I had no idea," Pineiro said, grinning.

Bobby Abreu, making his spring debut as the Angels' designated hitter, cracked a pair of doubles in three at-bats, driving in a run in the fourth after Peter Bourjos' double. Bourjos also bunted for a hit.

Vernon Wells, acquired over the winter from the Blue Jays, debuted in left field for the Angels and had a line-drive single in three at-bats.

Hideki Matsui, in his Oakland debut as its designated hitter after spending last year with the Angels, flied out, struck out and walked with the bases loaded.

Right fielder Michael Taylor unloaded his first homer of the spring for the A's, a three-run blast in the eighth against right-hander Ryan Brasier.

A's starter Dallas Braden lasted one inning in his first spring start, yielding two runs, one earned, on two hits and a walk. Left fielder Chris Carter committed two errors in the inning.

Maicer Izturis' single started the two-run first. Torii Hunter walked with one out and Carter dropped Wells' fly ball, loading the bases. Howard Kendrick lined a single to left center, driving in Izturis, and Hunter scored on Carter's throwing error.

Pineiro has made 24 spring appearances since his most recent loss in 2006 as a member of the Mariners.

"In my early years in Seattle, I wasn't so good," he said when asked about his spring success. "You learn to control yourself, not throw 95 [miles per hour] on every pitch. In the first inning, it was all sinkers. They got three fly balls, but the ball was moving enough. It's something to work off of moving forward."

A strained oblique suffered on July 28 cost Pineiro almost two months of his first season with the Angels in 2010. He finished 10-7 with a 3.84 ERA in 23 outings.

"I'm fine," he said. "I felt good. Sometimes you feel too good and want to throw harder than you should this early."

The A's managed a pair of singles in two innings, but Pineiro faced only one above the minimum, inducing a double play after Kevin Kouzmanoff's first of two singles in the second inning.

Free-agent reliever Scott Downs, in his first appearance for the Angels, followed Pineiro with a scoreless third inning.

Matt Palmer sailed through the fourth before the A's scored twice in the fifth on one-out singles by Michael Taylor and Steve Tolleson and consecutive two-out walks by Kurt Suzuki, Matsui and Conor Jackson. Southpaw Matt Meyer issued the passes to Matsui and Jackson before escaping.

Infielder Jean Segura, one of the Angels' premier prospects, was shaken up in a collision at first with Andy LaRoche during a three-run sixth inning. Known as "Mondy" to teammates for his resemblance to former slugger Raul Mondesi, Segura left the game, but was able to walk without needing assistance. Kevin Melillo's two-run double was the big blow of the inning.

The Angels added a pair of runs in the seventh. Kevin Romine doubled home a run after singles by Angel Castillo and Efrén Navarro started the inning.

Miller ended the scoring with an RBI single in the ninth inning for the A's.

## **Braden's first spring start cut short**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Dallas Braden was supposed to pitch two innings in his Cactus League debut on Monday, but a pair of defensive blunders had the A's lefty out after just one.

Braden, facing a 40-pitch limit, was forced to throw 32 pitches in the first frame, many of them a result of back-to-back errors by outfielder Chris Carter, who endured a shaky day in left field by way of a dropped fly ball and a bobbled ground ball that made for a long inning.

"It happens," said Braden, who finished his work in the bullpen. "It's Spring Training for a reason. Train in the spring, get it right in the summer."

Maybe so, but it's not the kind of defense manager Bob Geren likes to see.

"We wanted Dallas to go two, and the defense didn't allow him to go two," he said. "He was able to get his work in out there in the 'pen, but that's not ideal."

Braden said he tossed an additional 15 to 20 pitches following his brief outing, which resulted in two runs -- one earned -- on two hits, two walks and a strikeout. The A's southpaw relied heavily on his fastball, minus three or four changeups.

"I was jerking my slider," Braden said. "I didn't have command of the outside part of the plate. Because the sinker wasn't there, that's why I went to the changeup. I probably threw it one or two more times than I wanted to."

Entirely absent from Braden's repertoire on Monday was his cutter, which remained in the bag for precautionary reasons following a 2010 season that was interrupted by a disabled list stint because of elbow stiffness.

"There was no room trying to work on anything today," Braden said. "The biggest issue that I've had is with the elbow, so I have to be cognizant of what triggers that soreness in the elbow, and the cutter may have been something that triggered it. So I'd like to stay away from that early and make sure I get my arm stretched out before I start dabbling.

The cutter could potentially make its spring debut during Braden's next start. Monday, though, was just about easing into game mode again.

"It's all about getting the visualization of the batter and the umpire and the crowd," he said. "It's a little different format than a simulated game on the back field."

## **Sloppy defense costly in Cactus loss**

TEMPE, Ariz. -- A combined four errors during Monday's Cactus League contest against the host Angels had manager Bob Geren mentally reaching for his thesaurus when asked about his team's defensive performance.

"Not real good," Geren offered after a long pause. "We had some trouble in the sun and on the ground. It wasn't good. It was mostly the younger guys. They didn't play very well today."

Leading the way with two miscues was Chris Carter, who received a start in left field. The A's prospect, whom the A's would like to see progress in the outfield before handing him a starting spot in Oakland, committed consecutive errors in the first inning.



Carter first dropped a high fly ball off the bat of Vernon Wells and then bobbled a Howard Kendrick single, allowing an unearned run to score with lefty Dallas Braden on the mound. Carter also misplayed a ball hit by Peter Bourjos in the fourth that was ultimately ruled a double.

"He doesn't have a ton of experience out there," Geren said. "He's a good athlete, so the more he's out there, the better he'll be."

Carter, a natural first baseman, appeared in just 23 games in left field while in Triple-A Sacramento last year and tallied 22 combined starts in the same spot during two separate stints in Oakland. He's considered a significant part of Oakland's future, but he's currently blocked not only by a crunch of outfielders, but by first baseman Daric Barton.

Third baseman Wes Timmons (throwing) and outfielder Jai Miller (fielding) also made errors in Monday's 8-7 loss, which included three unearned runs.

### **Worth noting**

Michael Taylor collected his first home run of the spring with a three-run shot to left field off Angels righty Ryan Brasier in the eighth inning. Taylor had two hits in the game, as did Kevin Kouzmanoff. ... Fifth-starter candidate Brandon McCarthy tossed two innings, surrendering one run on two hits with a strikeout. "He looked real good," manager Bob Geren said. ... Guillermo Moscoso, also considered to be in the running for a rotation spot, gave up two runs (one earned) and struck out two in 1 2/3 innings. ... Jerry Blevins christened his spring season with a shaky relief outing, as the lefty surrendered two runs on three hits. ... Michael Wuertz (shoulder) is slated to throw a bullpen session off the mound on Thursday, and he'll continue to build up arm strength before taking part in a Cactus League game. ... Rich Harden (lat) will start throwing again toward the end of the week, Geren said. Friday is a possibility, but not a guarantee. "We don't want to make the mistake of rushing him," Geren said. ... The A's will continue to take it slow with Craig Breslow, who took on a large workload last season. The lefty experienced some tenderness last week, but nothing that is cause for concern. ... Andrew Bailey will also be held out of games for at least five to seven days, as he eases his way back into game action following an offseason spent rehabbing from minor elbow surgery.

### **A's vs. Angels: Pregame notes**

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 2/28/2011 9:06AM

It's Day 2 of Cactus League action. **Dallas Braden's** on the mound against **Joel Pineiro** and the Angels at Tempe Diablo Stadium, and **Hideki Matsui** is making his spring debut against his former team. Here's your A's lineup:

Ellis, 2B

Suzuki, C

Matsui, DH

Jackson, 1B

Kouzmanoff, 3B

Carson, RF

Carter, LF

Taylor, CF

Tolleson, SS

Also scheduled to pitch: Brandon McCarthy, Guillermo Moscoso, Joe Bateman, Gabe DeHoyos, Trystan Magnuson, Vinnie Chulk, Willie Eyre, Jerry Blevins

Notes: **David DeJesus** is feeling better and could potentially be in the lineup for tomorrow's home opener at Phoenix Muni.

He'll take part in light batting practice today but will stay away from running drills and take it easy. ... **Michael Wuertz** is slated to throw a bullpen session off the mound Thursday. Between now and then, he'll continue building up arm strength after missing a few days because of a sore shoulder. ... **Rich Harden** will start throwing again toward the end of the week, Geren said this morning. Friday is a possibility, but nothing is set in stone. "We don't want to make the mistake of rushing him," Geren said. ... The A's will continue to also take it slow with **Craig Breslow**, who took on a major workload last year. The lefty was a little tender last week, but not to the point of concern. ... **Andrew Bailey** will also be held out of games for at least five to seven days, as he eases his way back into live action. ... Geren said **Conor Jackson** would see some time at first this spring, and he's in there today. How much time he gets there during the season will depend on **Daric Barton's** status. Barton played in 159 games last year, so he'll be there on a daily basis unless injured or ill.

## **Braden, Matsui struggle in A's loss to Angels**

Associated Press

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Veteran right-hander Joel Pineiro gave up two hits in two scoreless innings and the Los Angeles Angels beat the Oakland Athletics 8-7 on Monday.

"I wasn't nervous, but I just wanted to get out there and throw that first pitch," said Pineiro, who was 10-7 with a 3.84 ERA in 23 starts for the Angels last season. "You could tell (the ball) was moving good. It was a matter of controlling the movement."

Kevin Mellilo had two RBIs, and Howie Kendrick and Bobby Abreu each drove in a run for Los Angeles. Vernon Wells was 1 for 3 in his first spring game with the Angels.

Oakland ace Dallas Braden gave up two runs, two hits and two walks in an inning in his spring debut, and Hideki Matsui was 0 for 2 with an RBI in his first game with the Athletics.

Matsui batted .274 with 21 home runs and 84 RBIs last season with the Angels after spending his first seven major league seasons with the New York Yankees.

Braden was victimized by two errors by left fielder Chris Carter in the first inning. Carter dropped Wells' routine fly ball and bobbled Kendrick's single allowing runners to advance a base.

"It happens," Braden said. "It's spring training for a reason."

Braden said he kept his repertoire guarded and simple, not wanting to injure his throwing elbow where tightness bothered him in the early part of 2010.

"Obviously, we're not throwing the kitchen sink at them," Braden said. "I have to be cognizant of what triggers the (elbow) problem."

Abreu doubled in Peter Bourjos in the fourth, Melillo had a two-run double in the sixth and Andrew Romine drove in another run in the seventh.

Angels' reliever Matt Meyer walked Matsui and Conor Jackson to force in two runs in the fifth. Michael Taylor hit his first spring homer off Angels' right-hander Ryan Brasier in Oakland's three-run eighth.

Wells played his first game in left field with Bourjos in center field and Torii Hunter in right.

"We all went to center field just to greet Peter," Wells said of the start of the game. "We (Hunter and Wells) told him we thought we were playing (center field)."

Abreu and Bourjos had two hits each for Los Angeles, and Taylor and Kevin Kouzmanoff had two apiece for Oakland

## **DeRosa impressing Giants; Matsui makes A's debut**

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mark DeRosa hit a tiebreaking homer to help the San Francisco Giants beat a Milwaukee Brewers split squad, 10-9, on Monday in Phoenix.

DeRosa is making a bid for starting time, even though manager Bruce Bochy plans to use him as a sub at all infield positions.

DeRosa played second base Monday while Freddy Sanchez finishes healing from shoulder surgery.

"He has been impressive. He is healthy now," said Bochy. "He is a lot more confident. He doesn't have to (start his swing early). He can handle any pitch."

Barry Zito struggled, giving up five walks along with two runs and three hits in 1» innings.

Bochy was encouraged by the effort of right-hander Jeff Suppan, making a bid to become the No. 5 starter or long reliever. Suppan pitched three hitless innings of relief, striking out two.

### GIANTS NOTES

The Giants trailed 5-4 before scoring six runs in the seventh. The big hit was a two-run double by first base prospect Brandon Belt, who had a second double and a single and four RBIs.

The Giants left Zito off their playoff roster in 2010, and Monday might have been an example of why. One of his five walks was to Prince Fielder with the bases loaded. Fielder and Zito barked at each other, apparently a holdover from last spring when Zito hit Fielder with the first pitch of the spring. Both players downplayed the latest spat.

Closer Brian Wilson (back) is nearly ready to pitch in a game, Bochy said.

Giants RHP Tim Lincecum will make his second spring start today against the Cubs in Scottsdale.

### MATSUI 0 FOR 2 IN DEBUT FOR A'S

At Tempe, Ariz., Dallas Braden gave up two runs, two hits and two walks in an inning in his spring debut, and Hideki Matsui was 0 for 2 with an RBI in his first game with the Athletics, an 8-7 loss to the Los Angeles Angels.

Matsui batted .274 with 21 home runs and 84 RBIs last season with the Angels after spending his first seven major league seasons with the New York Yankees.

Braden was victimized by two errors by left fielder Chris Carter in the first inning. Carter dropped Wells' routine fly ball and bobbled Kendrick's single allowing runners to advance a base.

"It happens," Braden said. "It's spring training for a reason."

Braden said he kept his repertoire guarded and simple, not wanting to injure his throwing elbow where tightness bothered him in the early part of 2010.

"Obviously, we're not throwing the kitchen sink at them," Braden said. " I have to be cognizant of what triggers the (elbow) problem."

Michael Taylor hit his first spring homer off Angels' right-hander Ryan Brasier in Oakland's three-run eighth.

Taylor and Kevin Kouzmanoff had two hits apiece for the A's.

## **Urban: DeRosa, Devine comebacks featured on 'Raising Arizona'**

[Mychael Urban](#), CSNBayArea.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Like a good comeback story? You're going to love the latest edition of "Raising Arizona," which airs Tuesday night at 6:30 p.m. (PT) on CSN Bay Area.

Every spring, every team in baseball has a few players looking to bounce back from some form of adversity, and the Giants and A's are no exceptions. Among the Giants in that boat are Pablo Sandoval (weight problems), Jeremy Affeldt (inconsistency), Freddy Sanchez (shoulder surgery) and Barry Zito (do you really need to ask?). Among the A's, you have Josh Outman (elbow surgery), Coco Crisp (injury riddled 2010), Andrew Bailey (elbow surgery) and Rich Harden (again: really?).

The two most compelling comeback stories in Bay Ball, however, are being written by Mark DeRosa of the Giants and Joey Devine of the A's, and they'll be our featured interviews on Tuesday's show, which will be hosted from San Francisco by Henry Wofford with special guest Ray Ratto of CSNBayArea.com, and includes a "talk-back segment" with me, from the scene here in the desert, to open the program.

Devine, a hard-throwing righty reliever who posted an Oakland-record 0.59 ERA over 42 appearances in 2008, his first full season in the bigs, hadn't stepped onto a mound since the end of that season until Sunday, when he took the biggest step yet in his recovery from the Tommy John (elbow ligament replacement) surgery that robbed him of two years of his prime.

Now 27 years old and looking forward to the birth of his first child, Devine has a new perspective on the game. He shares that with us, as well as his thoughts on the rehab process, his expectations for the upcoming season and where he might fit into what figures to be one of the best bullpens in baseball.

DeRosa, who turned 36 on Friday, arrived at Giants camp this season with a message for everyone in the clubhouse. "I've got an axe to grind this year, Timmy!" he yelled to Tim Lincecum, and he said it to virtually everyone he greeted that day.

What, exactly, does that mean? DeRosa, one of the best interviews in the Giants clubhouse, explains in my chat with him at Scottsdale Stadium, where he's looking to make up for lost time in his second spring with the Giants.

DeRosa missed most of last season with a wrist injury that required two major surgeries in less than a year, and while he earned high praise from his teammates for finding a way to make an impact without contributing on the field, he says he's driven to prove he can be the player the club was hoping to get when it signed him to a two-year, \$12 million deal before last season. He knows it won't be easy cracking the lineup of the defending world champs, but he's determined to force his way onto the field.

So far, so good. DeRosa is 6-for-8 in Cactus League play thus far, and he christened the new week Monday by belting his first home run.

Joey Devine and Mark DeRosa. They're the comeback kids -- only they're not quite kids anymore. Join them -- and us -- tonight on "Raising Arizona."

## **Pioneering sports psychologist Harvey Dorfman dies at the age of 75**

By The Associated Press 3/1/2011

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Harvey Dorfman, a pioneering sports psychologist known for his work with baseball players, has died. He was 75.

Dorfman died Monday at his home, according to agent Scott Boras, whose company employed Dorfman for the past decade.

Dorfman was hired by the Oakland Athletics in 1984 when farm director Karl Kuehl concluded young players needed help dealing with the mental pressure of adjusting to professional baseball.

After helping the A's reach three straight World Series, including a championship in 1989, Kuehl moved to the Florida Marlins in 1994. During his time in Florida, he helped the Marlins win the World Series.

Among the players who have credited Dorfman with assisting them are two-time Cy Young award winner Roy Halladay, formerly of the Toronto Blue Jays, and pitcher-turned-outfielder Rick Ankiel.