

A's News Clips, Friday, March 4, 2011

New Oakland A's have to produce more runs

By Joe Stiglich. Oakland Tribune

PHOENIX -- The consensus opinion is that the A's will have a better offense than a year ago.

How much better?

That should tell the story on whether Oakland is a true postseason contender, as its pitching staff is considered one of the tops in the American League.

With a revamped heart of the order thanks to newcomers Hideki Matsui, David DeJesus and Josh Willingham, the A's indeed look more potent on paper.

But many around the game still believe they lack a true power hitter. Will the A's look for another bat as the regular season unfolds? Chances are they'll see how their current squad performs for an extended period before pulling the trigger on anything.

"If you look around the league now, there's not a lot of teams that have a ton of power," veteran second baseman Mark Ellis said. "I know we're probably close to the bottom in home runs, but it's not like it used to be. It's not just 'slug ball' out there.

"You do what you can to find a way to score runs, and I think we've got guys here now who are going to have productive at-bats."

The A's attempted to sign free-agent third baseman Adrian Beltre, who had 49 doubles, 28 homers and drove in 102 runs last season for the Boston Red Sox. But he chose the Texas Rangers instead.

The A's wound up landing Matsui, who hit 21 homers with 84 RBIs last season. At age 36, he may not be the home run threat he once was, and his .274 average tied for the lowest of his eight-year, big-league career.

Willingham, who cranked a three-run homer in Thursday's 11-9 loss to the Milwaukee Brewers, has failed to reach 400 at-bats in two of the past three seasons, missing chunks of time with knee and back injuries.

DeJesus has a .289 career average but only 61 homers in seven big-league seasons. But he'll likely bat third out of necessity.

"I think Matsui provides that clutch (hitter presence)," said a major league scout who requested anonymity. "But you also need a guy that can go out of the yard at any time and with one swing of the bat can win a game. I'm not sure they have that guy. I think that's an issue."

The A's believe they've upgraded with hitters who can clear the bases in RBI situations even if they don't clear the fences. Their 109 homers in 2010 ranked second-to-last in the AL, but their .241 average with runners in scoring position was just as glaring.

The team issued a release that subtracted the 2010 statistics of players no longer with the team and replaced them with the stats of players they've added, showing where the A's would have ranked in several AL categories with those players.

They would have placed 10th in slugging percentage instead of 13th (.396 compared to .378), and their on-base percentage (.339 to .324) would have tied for third instead of ninth.

It's difficult to say how many wins such improvements might equate to.

Were the A's to shop for hitters, they have a surplus of relievers they could package in a trade. But general manager Billy Beane said he's not inclined to break up his bullpen depth, particularly after injuries decimated the roster in recent seasons.

"We know as well as anybody the attrition that comes with the season," Beane said. "The fact that we spent a lot of effort and capital (on relievers), we want to not get rid of it because we may need it."

Oakland A's notebook: Coco Crisp in the lineup a day after DUI arrest

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

PHOENIX -- Center fielder Coco Crisp addressed the media Thursday regarding his arrest on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol.

"A lot of people look up to me," said Crisp, speaking quietly at his locker. "This is obviously a decision that wasn't the right decision. One thing that I don't want to ever be, that I am right now, (is) a distraction. And the sooner that this can get out of the clubhouse, the better."

Crisp said he couldn't talk about details of his arrest and has not addressed the issue with his teammates, though he said he was willing to speak in front of the team if management wanted him to.

"I guarantee that this will never happen again," he said. "I've just got to make better decisions moving forward."

According to Sgt. Mark Clark of the Scottsdale Police Department, Crisp was pulled over at 2:15 a.m. Wednesday on East Indian School Road for failing to stay in one lane. He was taken to City of Scottsdale Jail but released in time to join the team that morning.

Test results hadn't been received yet regarding his blood-alcohol level, Clark said.

Crisp could be arraigned as early as next week, given the typical time frame for the paperwork to be processed in such a case. A's general manager Billy Beane did not return a phone call seeking comment on whether Crisp would face punishment from the team.

Crisp started in center field for Thursday's 11-9 loss to the Milwaukee Brewers and went 2 for 3 with a run and RBI.

Left fielder Josh Willingham hit a three-run homer and threw out a runner at home. But the A's, despite a seven-run second inning, lost on Anderson De La Rosa's walk-off three-run homer off Vinnie Chulk in the ninth.

Willingham, the A's likely cleanup man, is 4 for 9 through three games.

Trevor Cahill, a strong possibility to start opening night, gave up two runs on four hits in 2 1/3 innings but looked sharper than in his first outing Sunday.

Outfielder Ryan Sweeney (right knee) will play his first game Wednesday. Reliever Michael Wuertz (right shoulder) was scheduled to throw off the mound Thursday.

Chin Music: Rangers (at least some of them) face A's in first spring matchup

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 3/4/2011 10:00AM

The Texas Rangers roll into town today to play their first exhibition against the A's, but it won't be a real accurate representation of the squad the A's will see in the regular season. Josh Hamilton, Michael Young, Elvis Andrus and Adrian Beltre (who's hurt) are not making the trip. But ace C.J. Wilson is on the mound.

The lineups:

A's:

DeJesus RF
Suzuki C
Jackson 1B
Matsui DH
Kouzmanoff 3B
Carson CF
Carter LF
Tolleson SS
Weeks 2B

Braden LHP.

Rangers:

Borbon CF

German 2B
Moreland 1B
Barden DH
Davis 3B
Teagarden C
Deeds RF
Engel Beltre LF
Andres Blanco SS

Wilson LHP

–A’s manager Bob Geren said he sees David DeJesus as a good leadoff candidate when Coco Crisp doesn’t play. DeJesus has lots of experience atop the order from his time with the Royals. Mark Ellis and Cliff Pennington could also fill the role, according to Geren, but DeJesus is the most natural fit.

–Under-the-radar Athletic who is having a nice camp so far: Matt Carson. He homered yesterday and made a great catch slamming into the right field wall against the Brewers. He’s getting a start in center today.

–Outfielder Ryan Sweeney thinks about three weeks is needed for him to get his timing at the plate and be ready for the regular season. He’s scheduled to play in his first game Wednesday – he’s been brought along slowly while he recovers from knee surgery – and that would give him three weeks before the April 1 opener. “In batting practice, everything feels great. It’s just the timing in games,” he said. Sweeney was scheduled to face Andrew Bailey and Craig Breslow this morning in batting practice. He said he’s been shagging flies and his knee feels good.

–Reliever Joey Devine reached the 92-93 mph range in his last outing Wednesday, and Geren said his slider was sharp too. That’s a good sign for the A’s, obviously, and if Devine continues to round into form in Cactus League games, one of the seven bullpen spots surely is his. Speaking of relievers, Michael Wuertz threw 30 pitches yesterday off the mound and his shoulder came out of it fine. He’ll throw off the mound at least one more time before facing hitters. “He’s the kind of guy who doesn’t need 10 to 12 outings,” Geren said. “It could be five or six and he’ll be ready to go.”

–Rich Harden (side muscle injury) played catch at 80 feet today, but there’s no word on when he’ll get back on the mound.

Chin Music: Apologetic Crisp addresses reporters over DUI arrest

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 3/3/2011 9:24AM

Thought I’d provide you a full block of Coco Crisp’s quotes that pretty much sum up his feelings on his DUI arrest. I’ll leave my original post below in case you haven’t read that ...

“I can’t really go into too much details right now, I guess those will come out later. I guess I can just pretty much say how I feel about the whole situation. Obviously, embarrassment is one of the main feelings. My family has called me. A lot of people look up to me. This is obviously a decision that wasn’t the right decision. One thing that I don’t want to ever be that I am right now, I feel like I’m a distraction. And the sooner that this can get out of the clubhouse, the better. I’ll deal with it myself.

“To all my fans, obviously there’s two different types: Ones that love to razz me because of my name and those ones that love to cheer me on. I apologize to all of them — the team, Major League Baseball. I just want to get this behind me. I guarantee that this will never happen again. I’ve just got to make better decisions moving forward.”

A’s center fielder Coco Crisp addressed the media before the team took the field Thursday morning and apologized for his DUI arrest. He said he couldn’t share details about the incident, but I have to say his words came across sincere. “A lot of people look up to me,” he said, speaking quietly with reporters gathered around his locker. “This is obviously a decision that wasn’t the right decision. The sooner I can get this out of the clubhouse, the better.” What he’s most sorry for, he said, was that the story became a distraction in the clubhouse for his teammates. “I can guarantee you this will never happen again.”

Crisp hasn’t addressed his teammates about the situation. He said he would be willing to talk to everyone as a group if the front office asked him to, but it sounds as if he won’t take the initiative himself to do that. Manager Bob Geren penciled Crisp into today’s starting lineup against the Brewers but otherwise declined to address Crisp’s arrest. Crisp said he received some words of advice from team management. Perhaps that had to do with what to say to the media, or perhaps it had to

do with life choices and how to make sure the same mistake never happens again. All I know is this news shook up what was an otherwise tranquil and non-eventful A's camp to this point. Aside from a few minor injuries, things have proceeded according to the team's plan. I don't expect Crisp's arrest to have a lingering effect on the team as a whole. But the state of Arizona tends to be very tough on DUI infractions, so we don't know what's in store for Crisp from a legal standpoint ...

–Here's the lineup against Milwaukee:

Crisp CF
Barton 1B
Willingham LF
Jackson DH
LaRoche 3B
Carson RF
Timmons 2B
Donaldson C
Sogard SS

Cahill RHP

–In other AL West news, defending division champion Texas will be without third baseman Adrian Beltre for longer than expected due to his calf injury, according to an espn.com story. The Rangers expect him to still be OK for opening day, but that's an issue worth keeping an eye on.

A's Michael Taylor looks forward to having fun

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

At times last year, former Stanford outfielder Michael Taylor didn't want to come to the ballpark.

Baseball was hard for Taylor. He arrived at a new organization after a high-profile deal - he went from the Phillies to the Blue Jays in the Roy Halladay trade in December 2009, then came to the A's in exchange for Brett Wallace. He wanted to make a good impression, but he struggled much of the first half at Triple-A Sacramento, hitting under .240. He didn't get a call-up in September.

This spring, he'd like to turn in some nice numbers, and he hit a three-run homer earlier in the week, but he has a more basic goal.

"I want to enjoy every day," Taylor said. "Enjoy the time, enjoy the work."

You'd think that if anything, that might be more difficult this spring. After all, the A's acquired two starting outfielders during the offseason, David DeJesus and Josh Willingham, and barring injuries, the team is set with outfielders for the regular season. Taylor, at the age of 25, is looking at another full year at Triple-A.

"It's not frustrating," Taylor said. "I just know it will make the job of making the team more difficult, but it's a business. They're going to put the team in a position to win, and they should. Eventually, I should get an opportunity."

Taylor spent an enormous amount of time tinkering with his swing last year, trying to find answers. He's got a greater degree of difficulty than a player with a short, compact swing, because he is tall (6-foot-5) with long arms.

"It's a constant battle for a big guy to control leverage because the bat head is further away from the strike zone and it's harder to fine-tune everything," Taylor said. "I'm never going to have a swing like David Eckstein, but you can make a long swing work for you. It's about hitting the ball on the barrel."

That is the biggest thing Taylor took away from hitting sessions with new Dodgers manager Don Mattingly during the Arizona Fall League. Mattingly ran the league's Phoenix team, and he discovered, essentially, a little hitch in Taylor's swing.

"I'm trying to have everything be real fluid, and when attacking, not pause to take a good look," Taylor said. "You do all the work early, then you either swing or you don't swing. Less decision-making, one fluid movement instead of a pause."

The results were fairly obvious.

"I saw Michael hit a ball in Fall League, an opposite-field home run that looked like a left-handed pull hitter," A's director of player development Keith Lieppman said. "He's beginning to understand the mechanics of his swing better, he's taken it apart and put it back together, and he's learned to really pull his hands through the ball inside. You think about how Tiger Woods has reinvented his swing so many times. That work pays off."

The A's know what Taylor went through last year, and they liked how they responded.

"Just looking at the effort he put in, and the frustration and the failure - and he was still open-minded, willing to look at every idea," Lieppman said. "He never lost hope and he never stopped working."

"The biggest thing is how people respond when things aren't going the way they want. You learn a lot about players by how they deal with failure, and Michael never showed signs of quitting, even if he felt like it. He put on his game face and he played hard."

Crisp regrets DUI arrest

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Outfielder **Coco Crisp** expressed contrition Thursday, a day after his early morning arrest for suspicion of driving while impaired.

After arriving at Phoenix Municipal Stadium, Crisp addressed the media and said, "I can't go into too much detail ... but I can say how I feel about the whole situation, and I guess, obviously embarrassed is one of the main feelings. And sorry. ... That's genuine."

"A lot of people look up to me, and the decision was not the right decision."

Crisp was pulled over at 2:15 a.m. Wednesday morning in Scottsdale and cited for a blood alcohol reading of more than .08 percent. According to the police report, Crisp, who was driving a Rolls Royce Phantom, failed to stay in one lane, and he also was cited for failure to provide current registration or proof of insurance.

On Thursday, Crisp said that one of his main concerns was that he does not want to be a distraction to the team, and he feels that he is one right now. Manager **Bob Geren**, asked about Crisp during his morning media session, said little other than to say that he won't be a distraction. Crisp had two hits, drove in a run and scored a run in the A's 11-9 loss to the Brewers.

Crisp said in the morning that he wanted to apologize to all of his fans, "the ones who come to razz me because of my name, and the ones who come to cheer me. And to my team, and to Major League Baseball. I want to get this behind me. I guarantee this will never happen again."

Crisp has talked to team officials, and he said they provided him with advice. He confirmed that he had a root canal Tuesday morning.

Briefly: An A's trainer mistakenly went to the mound when Geren took starter **Trevor Cahill** out Thursday, but Cahill said he's fine and came out for pitch-count reasons. He said he's smoothed his delivery since his first outing, in which he retired only one batter. ... **Michael Wuertz** threw a bullpen session and is likely to appear in his first game next week. ... **Ryan Sweeney's** first spring start will be Wednesday. ... **Rich Harden** (lat stiffness) will play catch tomorrow.

Drumbeat: Apologetic Coco Crisp says he's embarrassed about arrest

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser in Phoenix 3/3/2011 8:45AM

Coco Crisp spoke to the media almost immediately upon arriving at Phoenix Municipal Stadium this morning, and while he said he could not discuss details of his arrest for suspected DUI, he did provide an apology that appeared to be quite heartfelt.

"I can say how I feel about the whole situation and I guess, obviously embarrassed is one of the main feelings. And sorry....that's genuine," he said. "A lot of people look up to me, and the decision was not the right decision."

Crisp said that one of his main concerns was that he does not want to be a distraction to the team, and he feels as if he is one right now. Manager Bob Geren, asked about Crisp during his morning media session, said little about Crisp other than to say that he won't be a distraction. Crisp is batting leadoff in today's game against the Brewers at Maryvale.

Crisp said that he wanted to apologize to all of his fans, "the ones who come to razz me because of my name, and the ones who come to cheer me. And to my team, and to Major league Baseball. I want to get this behind me. I guarantee this will never happen again."

Crisp has talked to team officials, and, he said, they provided him with some advice. Knowing how the A's feel about driving while impaired, I would imagine that this "advice" was fairly forceful and possibly not too pleasant to receive.

"Obviously, this is a big deal," Crisp said. "They're not my parents, but they're here for me."

Crisp is glad he's playing today, as previously scheduled.

"I want to come to the field because it's my sanctuary," he said. "And it's kind of not right now. But I want to focus on baseball."

Crisp confirmed he had a root canal on Tuesday morning. That's a pretty awful day - a root canal and a DUI arrest. There's no excuse for a DUI, of course, no matter what the circumstances, but it's a day he's really not going to want to remember.

Crisp said he's not sure if he'll address the team about his arrest; he said that's up to management to figure out and if they'd like him to, it sounds as if he would.

And there are a few A's tidbits today: Geren confirms that Ryan Sweeney's first spring start will be Wednesday, and pitching coach Ron Romanick tells me that Rich Harden will play catch tomorrow.

The A's got the OK for a DH today at Maryvale, so here's the lineup: CF Crisp, 1B Barton, LF Willingham, DH Jackson, 3B LaRoche, RF Carson, 2B Timmons, C Donaldson, SS Sogard. Trevor Cahill is the starter.

Willingham goes deep as A's lose slugfest

By Adam McCalvy / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Anderson De La Rosa's three-run homer with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning lifted the Brewers to an 11-9 victory over the A's after they earlier erased a seven-run deficit.

Coco Crisp had two hits and an RBI in his return to action and Andy LaRoche, Josh Willingham and Matt Carson homered for the A's.

LaRoche hit a solo home run and Willingham a three-run shot as part of Oakland's seven-run second inning, but the A's needed Carson's solo homer in the sixth inning to snap a 7-7 tie and win the annual charity game between the Cactus League's two Phoenix-based teams.

For the Brewers, Ryan Braun and Casey McGehee hit back-to-back home runs in the third inning and Erick Almonte added a two-run homer in the fifth to cap the comeback. McGehee's solo shot was his third home run in two days.

Crisp was back on the field after apologizing earlier in the day for his arrest this week on suspicion of driving under the influence, and singled in each of the first two innings. He drove in the second of Oakland's seven runs in a second-inning rally that included Willingham's three-run blast.

Five of those runs were charged to Brewers left-hander Randy Wolf, who allowed three hits, one walk and hit a batter in his Cactus League debut. He faced five batters in the second inning and did not retire any of them before exhausting his allotment of pitches.

"In Spring Training, if I would have gone out and thrown two perfect innings, I wouldn't have been too excited," Wolf said. "So if I have a bad inning, I'm not going to be pouting about it, especially when it's the first week in March. You always want to go out there and do well, keep the ball down and throw the ball where you want to. Today, I didn't do that obviously.

"Don't get me wrong, we care. You get taken out of the game -- you don't want that to happen. You're embarrassed. But you have to put things in perspective."

The Brewers got back five runs in the bottom of the third inning against A's starter Trevor Cahill and former Milwaukee farmhand Joe Bateman. Carlos Gomez hit an RBI double and Braun and McGehee followed with homers on consecutive pitches.

A's right fielder Carson provided the game's defensive gem, a catch at the right-field wall in the fourth inning that robbed Brewers catcher Wil Nieves of a hit. Carson made the catch just before he crashed into the padded wall.

Two innings later, he hit the go-ahead home run off Brewers reliever Brandon Kintzler.

Up next for A's: The A's are home at Phoenix Municipal Stadium against American League West rival Texas on Friday. Dallas Braden is slated to go against C.J. Wilson in a battle of left-handers. The date against the defending AL champs opens a five-game homestand for the A's at Muni with the Giants, Brewers, Mariner and Padres following the Rangers.

Up next for Brewers: Closer John Axford, set back early in camp by a bout of food poisoning, is penciled in for his Cactus League debut on Friday when the Brewers play the Giants in Scottsdale, Ariz. Axford got sick after a Valentine's Day sushi dinner with wife Nicole, and was brought back slowly by the Brewers while he regained strength. Right-hander Tim Lincecum is starting for Milwaukee against former Brewer Jeff Suppan in a game to be broadcast by Bob Uecker and Corey Prokus on the Brewers Radio Network.

Rickey brightens up A's camp as instructor

By Barry M. Bloom / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Rickey Henderson is back in A's camp this spring, working with outfielders and baserunners. At age 52, the irrepressible Hall of Famer still looks like he's in playing shape.

"I probably could still play, but can the body hold up and do what you want it to do?" Henderson said before the A's worked out on Thursday in preparation for their game against the Brewers in Maryvale. "I would take the chance because that's how much I love the game. I'll always have it in my heart.

"But we all know that it's time for me to teach so I can give back to the young players some of the things that I know."

Henderson came up with the A's, spent his first six seasons with them and ultimately had four tours with Oakland in his 25-year big league career that ended in 2003 with the Dodgers. He's the product of a bygone era when baserunners stole sacks with abandon. He has three seasons of stealing 100 bases or better, including a modern record 130 for the A's in 1982. His 1,406 overall is also the all-time record.

Henderson has his own theory why there hasn't been a 100-base stealer since Vince Coleman stole 109 for the Cardinals in 1987, ending a personal streak of three seasons in a row with better than 100 steals. Michael Bourn of the Astros led the National League last year with 52.

"It changed with the slide step and the fact that scouts started timing pitchers as they came to the plate," Henderson said. "Now they stop kids from doing what they're capable of doing. To me, if they told me that a guy was fast to the plate, I would take that as my challenge. Now, they tell the kids to shut it down."

Henderson was fortunate that he came up under the late Billy Martin, who managed the A's in the early 1980s. It's the 30th anniversary this year of "Billy Ball," those pitching-rich and running-rich A's who surprised the baseball world and ascended to the American League Championship Series after the strike-torn 1981 season, where they were swept by the Yankees.

Martin and Henderson were a perfect match. Martin was fearless as a manager and the young Henderson was fearless as a basestealer.

"He let me run when I felt like I had a jump," Henderson said. "If he found something off a pitcher, then he would give me a sign. He knew I could take that guy. He was special to me. He had the fire in him and he saw it in me. He let me be free."

Cahill improves on first spring appearance

PHOENIX -- Trevor Cahill needed a more credible second outing of the spring than his one-third of an inning starting performance on Feb. 27 in the A's 15-7 Cactus League-opening victory over the Cubs in Mesa. And the 2010 All-Star turned one in on Thursday against the Brewers at the Maryvale Ballpark.

Cahill allowed three singles, but worked out of the first inning when left fielder Josh Willingham threw out Rickie Weeks with a strike to the plate on a Mark Kotsay single. Cahill enjoyed a 1-2-3 inning in the second and was removed after allowing an RBI double to Carlos Gomez in the third. It was his pitch count more than the double that brought the hook from A's manager Bob Geren.

"I felt a lot better," the 23-year-old right-hander said. "After the first two guys got a hit, I settled down. I felt good after that. I got in a little bit of a rhythm. I was just trying to smooth out my whole delivery. I was getting a little long, so I just tried to tighten it up."

Cahill allowed two runs and four hits in his 2 1/3 innings, striking out four and walking one in the process. In his first outing? Seven batters faced, four runs, five hits and a walk. The difference?

"I was just trying to throw fastballs for strikes and work on my changeup, too," he said.

'Embarrassed' Crisp apologizes for DUI arrest

A's center fielder says he doesn't want to be distraction to team

By Barry M. Bloom / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- A's center fielder Coco Crisp apologized to the media, the ballclub, teammates, friends, fans and family members on Thursday for his arrest earlier this week for allegedly driving under the influence of alcohol.

Crisp, who arrived for stretching at Phoenix Municipal Stadium shortly after 9 a.m. MT, was in the lineup as scheduled and leading off in Oakland's Cactus League game against the Brewers.

"The main feeling is embarrassment," Crisp said in addressing the situation for the first time since he was arrested in the early-morning hours on Wednesday. "I'm sorry and that sorry is genuine. A lot of people look up to me and obviously this was not the right decision."

Crisp was reportedly stopped by police at 2:15 a.m. in nearby Scottsdale after failing to stay in one lane while driving his Rolls Royce Phantom. Following a series of field sobriety tests, he was arrested without further incident and cited for driving while impaired, failure to drive in a single lane, having an expired California registration and no proof of current insurance.

Arizona is a zero-tolerance state for driving under the influence. A first-time offense is usually accompanied by a 10-day jail sentence. Former NBA star and current TNT broadcaster Charles Barkley was arrested in Scottsdale for DUI two years ago and ultimately had to serve three days in jail in one of the tent cities that accommodate convicted drunk drivers. He also fulfilled 12 hours of work release.

Crisp said he was just learning about the toughness of the laws in the state and didn't know at this point what the ramifications would be.

"I can't really go into the details right now," he said. "I guess those will come out later."

The ballclub issued a short statement on Wednesday, saying it was aware of the situation and takes such matters seriously. Manager Bob Geren said he had spoken to Crisp. A decision on whether the 31-year-old veteran is asked to address the issue in front of his teammates will be left for a future date.

"The team has dealt with different instances," Crisp said. "They just gave me some advice. It was just like, 'We'll get through this.' It's obviously a big deal. They're not my parents, but if I need anything they're here to help. That was really nice."

Crisp was signed by the A's as a free agent on Dec. 23, 2009, and is in the second year of a two-year, \$10 million contract. He had three stints on the disabled list last season with a muscle strain and a broken left pinkie, but batted .279 with 32 steals in 75 games.

This spring has begun as a healthy one and he entered Thursday's game with two hits in six at-bats with a homer and four RBIs in two games. Crisp wasn't scheduled to play in Wednesday's home game against Cleveland, but did arrive at the ballpark after his arrest and took part in pregame stretches.

Crisp said he felt very nervous dealing with the media and discussing his arrest. He did so in front of his locker before changing into uniform from street clothes. The interview lasted about four minutes.

"The one thing I didn't ever want to be and feel like I am is a distraction," said Crisp, who has played nine seasons with the Indians, Red Sox, Royals and A's and has never been in this kind of trouble before. "The sooner this can get out of the clubhouse the better. I'll deal with this myself. I don't want to be a distraction for any of the other players. I just want to answer questions."

"To all my fans, and there are two types -- the ones that like to razz me because of my name and the ones who love to cheer me on -- I apologize to all of them. [I apologize] to the team, to Major League Baseball. I want to put this behind me. I guarantee this will never happen again. I'm very sorry to my family and people who look up to me. I just have to make better decisions moving forward."

Major Lee-ague: A's vs. Rangers: Pregame notes

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 3/4/2011 9:42AM

It's another 80-degree day here at Phoenix Muni, and the Rangers are in town. Here are your lineups:

OAKLAND

DeJesus RF

Suzuki C

Jackson 1B

Matsui DH

Kouzmanoff 3B

Carson CF
Carter LF
Tolleson SS
Weeks 2B
Braden P

Also scheduled to pitch: Brandon McCarthy, Brian Fuentes, Grant Balfour, Fernando Cabrera, Fautino De Los Santos, Willie Eyre

TEXAS

Borbon CF
German 2B
Moreland 1B
Barden DH
Davis 3B
Teagarden C
Deeds RF
E. Beltre LF
Blanco SS

This and that:

- **Rich Harden** (lat) threw from 80 feet this morning as part of a "test it out and see how it feels" day. He'll throw again tomorrow, harder and farther, and then take Sunday off. He'll remain on a two-on and one-off schedule for awhile.
- **Michael Wuertz** (shoulder) threw a 30-pitch bullpen session Thursday and felt great. The plan for him is to throw one or two more bullpens before facing hitters. As Geren noted, Wuertz -- like Andrew Bailey and Craig Breslow -- really only needs five or six exhibition outings to be ready for the season.
- **David DeJesus** is in the leadoff spot today with **Coco Crisp** out of the lineup as scheduled. Geren said DeJesus is a definite candidate for that role during the season should Crisp need a day of rest. **Mark Ellis** and **Cliff Pennington** are also options, and it will obviously depend on who's swinging a hot bat at the moment.

Cahill better for A's, but Brewers win HR derby

Associated Press

PHOENIX -- Trevor Cahill did a bit better in his return to the mound for the Oakland A's.

Hit hard in his first spring start, the All-Star righty stuck around for 2 1-3 innings Thursday in the Athletics' 11-9 loss to the Milwaukee Brewers.

The Brewers nicked Cahill for two earned runs and four hits. His previous outing was a poor one, when he allowed four earned runs and five hits against the Cubs while getting only one out.

"That first game, I kind of rushed things because it was the first game and the adrenalin was flowing," said Cahill, 18-8 with a 2.97 ERA in 30 starts last season. "Today, I was more under control. The pace of the game was better for me."

In between starts, he said he had "worked on a little bit of everything" in regard to his delivery.

"Now I need to start getting my pitch count up and start throwing strikes," he said.

What's his biggest immediate goal?

"Throwing from the windup instead of the stretch," he said with a laugh. "I've been throwing too much out of the stretch so far with all of those guys on base."

Anderson De La Rosa hit a three-run, game-ending homer for the Brewers. The non-roster catcher connected with two outs in the ninth off Vinnie Chulk.

Casey McGehee hit his third homer in two days and Ryan Braun also connected for Milwaukee.

"They look good right now, but I want to see it consistently over a long period," first-year Brewers manager Ron Roenicke said.

Josh Willingham, Andy LaRoche and Matt Carson homered for the A's. Oakland outfielder Coco Crisp, arrested early Wednesday on suspicion of drunk driving, had two hits and drove in a run.

NOTES: Crisp is now 4 for 9 this spring, including a double and a grand slam . . . Brewers LHP Manny Parra left the game after pitching to only one batter in the fourth inning. He had tightness in the middle of his back and he will be re-evaluated on Friday, the team said . . . The fractured right pinkie of Brewers C Jonathan Lucroy is healing properly, an X-ray on Thursday revealed. He will be fitted for a splint, do some light throwing and be re-evaluated in a week . . . Carson has been impressive so far in his bid to earn a roster spot for Oakland. Along with getting two hits, he held onto the ball while slamming into the fence in right field after catching a drive by Wil Nieves in the fourth inning.

Editorial

Two years is too long for A's park decision

Silicon Valley / San Jose Business Journal

It's been two years since [Major League Baseball](#) Commissioner Bud Selig appointed a panel to recommend where the Oakland A's should build a new stadium.

As A's owner Lew Wolff told Bloomberg in an interview this month, "They've had time enough to explore anything. We're getting close to the point Bud is going to make a decision."

That decision should clearly be that the A's can go ahead with their plans for a 32,000-seat ballpark next to Diridon station in downtown San Jose.

It is hard to believe that it could take two years to produce a report on where ...