

## A's News Clips, Thursday, March 10, 2011

### Oakland A's notebook: Dallas Braden OK with his performance after Texas Rangers enjoy 'hit parade'

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

SURPRISE, Ariz. -- One might think Dallas Braden would be angry and downcast after the Texas Rangers batted around with five first-inning runs against him Wednesday in a 9-2 spring training spanking.

Braden is 0-3 in three outings this spring with a 10.80 ERA, having surrendered 13 hits in 62/3 innings. He willingly confessed Wednesday's performance was "a hit parade."

But the left-hander isn't worried. Braden was even joking afterward that his rocky first inning might have been good for right fielder Ryan Sweeney, who was playing his first game in eight months after knee surgery. Sweeney had to chase down a couple of rockets in the first.

"There you go, get him running around, test that knee out, right?" Braden said. "If this was football and he could have called for a replacement, he might have."

Braden said he's working on some new things that pitching coach Ron Romanick has mapped out for him. He wouldn't say exactly what, but he threw primarily fastballs in the first inning and just one changeup.

"It wouldn't be a game plan if I just divulged everything, but the bottom line is to evolve," he said. "You've got to take a few steps backward and rebuild before you can start making strides forward."

Clearly, he didn't want to show his "A" material against what was mostly the Rangers' "A" lineup, either.

"I don't want to go out there and give them the same song-and-dance that they're going to get during the year," he said. "Honestly, I have no reservations of getting my (butt) kicked like that knowing that my approach is going to be a little different (during the season)."

Braden opened up his repertoire in the second and third innings and pitched two scoreless frames, giving up a single and a walk and striking out two.

Former Ranger Brandon McCarthy, who relieved Braden, made another strong case for himself in the fifth-starter competition with three solid innings, giving up four hits but just one run.

"Good, strong," manager Bob Geren said. "He faced all of their regulars in a good hitters' park, and it was just another good outing for him. He's stringing together solid performances every time out, and that's what we like to see."

Joe Torre, making the Arizona rounds in his new role as Major League Baseball vice president of operations, said the A's have made a strong acquisition in veteran DH Hideki Matsui.

"He's an out-and-out pro, and our guys (the Yankees) loved him right away," Torre said. "Oakland will, too."

Torre said Matsui was always willing to do anything the club asked of him.

"Knowing his history of hitting 50-something home runs every year (in Japan), I asked him in spring training the first year about hitting and running," Torre related. "He said, 'No problem.' And he was my best hit-and-run man that year. That told me a lot about him."

It was a strong debut for Sweeney in his first game since July 11. He had hits in his first two at-bats and got plenty of work in the outfield.

"I wasn't really nervous at all for the game," he said. "But once I got in the dugout, I had to figure out how to do some things. When I got on base, I went to reach for my hand guard and I didn't have it."

Sweeney will take two days off and play again Saturday.

Medical report: Reliever Craig Breslow is still nursing a hamstring strain and is day-to-day. Closer Andrew Bailey will pitch Thursday for the first time this spring, and setup man Michael Wuertz could be available by the weekend after a 20-pitch bullpen session Wednesday.

## **Chin Music: Surprise! It feels like a regular-season game**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 3/9/2011 12:32PM

The A's are in Surprise, AZ, today for their first of many meetings this year with the AL champion Texas Rangers, a team they'd like nothing more than to dethrone. Manager Bob Geren noticed that Ron Washington pretty much sent out his A lineup against Oakland — minus injured third baseman Adrian Beltre (right calf strain). Wash making an early statement of AL West supremacy, perhaps? Then the Rangers promptly scored five in the first, albeit with a help of a two-base, bases-loaded error in which starter Dallas Braden and shortstop Steve Tolleson both missed chances at a double play.

Yes, the Rangers lost out on Cliff Lee, but they still have a hell of a lineup, perhaps even better now that they've added Beltre. That more than makes up for the loss of DH Vlad Guerrero, where Michael Young appears to have finally accepted that role. The Angels also added Mike Napoli, who gives them a little flexibility. It should be a fascinating matchup all year, but the A's aren't awed by Texas. They finished 9-10 against them and would have won the season series against the Rangers if they hadn't been swept in the a 3-game home series late in the year. Trevor Cahill beat them three times, Gio Gonzalez twice.

Here's the lineup today, a bit late with some other stuff I'm working on getting in the way:

Oak: 2B Ellis, CF DeJesus, 1B Jackson, DH Matsui, 3B Kouzmanoff, RF Sweeney, LF Carter, C Powell, SS Tolleson. Braden on the mound to start.

Tex: 2B Kinsler, SS Andrus, CF Hamilton, RF Cruz, 1B Young, DH Napoli, LF Murphy, C Torrealba, 3B C. Davis. Derek Holland started for Rangers

I'm the kiss of good luck. Reporting Michael Taylor's poor at-bats on Monday, Taylor responded Tuesday with a nice game, a couple of hits including a two-run homer to right-center. The HR was crushed on a line, Canseco-like. Don't give up on him yet.

Medical report: Reliever Michael Wuertz had a 20-pitch bullpen session Wednesday and manager Bob Geren could be in a game by Saturday .... First baseman Daric Barton (calf contusion) was held out another day, but Geren said he'll play Thursday ... Ryan Sweeney made his spring debut in right Wednesday ... Closer Andrew Bailey will make his game debut Thursday ... Craig Breslow is day-to-day with a hamstring strain. He was supposed to pitch Thursday, but Geren said that won't happen and isn't sure when he'll be back on the mound.

## **A's Dallas Braden not bothered by Texas battering**

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Highly imperfect by most standards, **Dallas Braden's** performance Wednesday was perfectly fine with him.

His pitching line against Texas: 2 2/3 innings, six hits, five runs. Two runs were unearned, thanks to a comebacker that neither he nor shortstop **Steve Tolleson** stopped. But Braden chalked it up as part of the process of preparing for the season.

"I don't want to go out there and give them the same song and dance they're going to get during the year," Braden said of the Rangers, who beat the A's 9-2. "I mean, honestly, I have no reservations about getting my ass kicked like that, knowing that my approach is going to be a little different."

It wasn't about Braden hiding his best stuff from a division rival as much as his insistence to work on certain pitches. The Rangers repeatedly pelted his fastball, but he kept throwing it to work on location. In a four-run, nine-batter, 32-pitch first inning, he threw one changeup.

"The bottom line is to evolve," Braden said. "You've got to take a few steps backward and rebuild before making strides forward."

In three spring training outings, Braden faced the Rangers twice, giving up nine runs (six earned) and 11 hits in 5 2/3 innings.

**Briefly:** **Hideki Matsui** has been playing every other day, but manager **Bob Geren** is considering playing him three straight days. "If he hits four or five triples, maybe not," quipped Geren. Matsui is 1-for-14 with a bloop single. ... **Conor Jackson** had three more hitless at-bats and is 1-for-23, but a protective Geren said, "He's had some of the best at-bats on the team. That's why numbers can be deceiving." ... Closer **Andrew Bailey** will make his Cactus League debut today, but **Craig Breslow's** debut will be delayed because of a left hamstring strain. Another reliever, **Michael Wuertz**, could debut Saturday, Geren said. ... **Daric Barton** (calf) is expected back in the lineup today.

### **Cactus League recap**

**Score:** Rangers 9, A's 2

**Notable:** The A's runs came on homers by David DeJesus and Landon Powell. ... Kevin Kouzmanoff had two hits and is 8-for-15. ... Steve Tolleson started at shortstop and committed an error. Adam LaRoche backed up at short and made two routine plays. ... Two popups dropped in left field, one in front of Chris Carter, one in front of Michael Taylor. ... Fifth-starter candidate Brandon McCarthy gave up a run in three innings.

**Quotable:** "Absolutely, they're the defending champions. If the Cleveland Browns win the Super Bowl and release everybody, they're still the team to beat in the NFL. It doesn't matter. They won. That's who you want to knock off. Bottom line, they're the champs, and we want to be." - *Dallas Braden, asked if the Rangers are the team to beat.*

**Today's game:** Royals (Will Smith) at A's (Brett Anderson), 12:05 p.m.

## **Ryan Sweeney adjusting to new role with deeper A's**

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

When the A's signed Coco Crisp before last season, Ryan Sweeney knew he'd no longer spend much time in center field - which was fine with Sweeney, who's versatile and athletic enough to play anywhere in the outfield.

Then in November, the A's traded for David DeJesus. Ditto with Josh Willingham in December.

Suddenly, Sweeney had nowhere else to play. At least regularly.

"I've never been a backup player or anything like that," he said.

Welcome to 2011.

There's something new in Oakland this year - depth, a foreign concept to the A's in recent years, when they lacked the manpower to compensate for their laundry list of injuries. Sweeney is slated to be a reserve, as is another former everyday outfielder, Conor Jackson.

"Hopefully, everybody gets 400 to 500 at-bats and nobody has to worry about it," Sweeney said.

But do the math. A's outfield at-bats totaled 1,826 last year. Divided by five, that's 365. Of course, Crisp, DeJesus and Willingham figure to get much more than that, but manager Bob Geren said he plans to "mix and match and try to keep guys healthy."

That's the goal: avoiding sick bay. All five outfielders missed substantial time last year. Sweeney had season-ending right knee surgery in July and didn't play again until Wednesday, when he made his Cactus League debut, went 2-for-3 and made a bunch of plays in right field in a 9-2 loss to the Rangers.

Eight months later, Sweeney was thrilled to run around again.

"I forgot how to do some things," he said. "I got on base and went to reach for my hand guard and didn't have it."

Because the Rangers treated Dallas Braden like a pitching machine, Sweeney was tested all kinds of ways, fielding balls in front of him, down the line, in the gap. He also singled his first two at-bats and swung at ball four his final turn.

"It's good not to have pain in your knee," Sweeney said, "and have your legs under you in game situations."

The plan is for Sweeney to rest the next two days and then play every other day. Toward the end of spring training, if he's lacking at-bats, he'll take a bunch in minor-league camp.

Acquired with pitchers Gio Gonzalez and Fautino De Los Santos from the White Sox in the January 2008 Nick Swisher trade, Sweeney was supposed to be a fixture in the A's outfield based on above-average defense and high batting averages - .286 in 2008, .293 in 2009, .294 in 2010 - though his homer and RBI totals always lacked.

But iffy knees changed his course. He played with chronic knee pain most of his pro career, and his right knee worsened in Cleveland when he moved awkwardly on the bases trying to avoid a tag. Sweeney said that while rehabbing, he built much-needed strength in his left knee.

He hopes it was the cure-all.

"It's just a slow process, and you realize you can't push it," said Sweeney, who will get most of his swings against right-handers (off whom he hit .307 last year, compared with .246 vs. lefties). "The last couple of weeks, I've been doing an extra running program so I wouldn't be sore when I got in games. I hope I won't have any issues. Both knees feel great."

## **Hideki, Rickey connect over mutual respect**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Hideki Matsui's early childhood interest in the A's, whom he followed in the late 1980s thanks to international telecasts in Japan, largely stemmed from watching the speedy wonder that was Rickey Henderson.

Baseball's all-time steals leader reminded Matsui of Yutaka Fukumoto, who quietly helped set the standard of the way leadoff hitters were perceived long before Henderson came on stage.

Fukumoto, who led the Pacific League in steals every season from 1970-81, is Japan's all-time career stolen base leader with 1,065. Across the pond, Henderson finished his career with 1,406.

"When I watched Oakland, that was during the time when the A's were very strong and Rickey was hitting leadoff," Matsui said through translator, Roger Kahlon. "That was my first impression of him. What I really remember most was, at the time in Japan, Fukumoto was the steals leader and Rickey tied him. I was always watching him."

These days, Henderson is glued to the wonder that is Matsui, Oakland's newest designated hitter.

"When I went over to Japan years ago, I was able to see what a big guy he is over there," Henderson said. "It's just amazing the way the people take to him. Not too many people understand what he did over there and what it meant to everyone."

Fans of each other, Matsui and Henderson have formed a friendly connection in camp, where Henderson is acting as a special instructor for outfielders and baserunners. The 36-year-old Matsui has retreated from the outfield to DH duties in recent years because of bad knees, but Henderson is well aware of the speed he once displayed.

"He says he's not as fast as me, which is probably true, but I know he used to do some running," Henderson said, smiling. "I read one of his biographies, and that's how I found out he used to run track."

It was more like an annual relay in Japan, where Matsui took first place in his age division for more than five years running. Despite the strong longing to reach the ranks where Henderson was standing, a realistic Matsui didn't quite have stolen base records on his to-do list.

"I already knew that was impossible," Matsui said. "I never had that in my mind."

Rather, Matsui has put together a .290 mark with 161 home runs and 681 RBIs in more than 1,000 games over eight seasons in the Majors -- all following 10-plus seasons with Japan's Yomiuri Giants, for which he hit .304 with 332 long balls and 889 RBIs in 1,268 contests.

"I know he was a big fan of the A's and me, but I'm just as much impressed with what he's done," Henderson said. "We've talked about how I approached the game, and I told him I admire him for the way he's gone about his business.

"I just told him to keep enjoying this as long as you can."

Matsui would love to see Henderson back on the field, so long as there's no foot race involved.

"If you're talking about running," Matsui said, "there's no doubt he's faster than me."

## **Braden roughed up in A's Cactus League loss**

By T.R. Sullivan / MLB.com

SURPRISE, Ariz. -- Ian Kinsler's leadoff single in the first gave him a seven-game hitting streak and sparked a five-run rally that carried the Rangers to a 9-2 victory over the Athletics at Surprise Stadium on Wednesday.

The Rangers' first-inning outburst came off of Athletics pitcher Dallas Braden. The left-hander lasted just 2 2/3 innings, throwing 58 pitches, and has now allowed 11 runs on 13 hits over three starts this spring.

Three of the 11 runs are unearned, including two Wednesday. Braden started the afternoon by giving up singles to Kinsler, Elvis Andrus and Josh Hamilton. Nelson Cruz then hit a potential double-play grounder up the middle that shortstop Steve Tolleson let get through him for an error.

Two runs scored on the play and Michael Young drove home two more with a double to right. Yorvit Torrealba's two-out double to right made it 5-0.

Kinsler, after going 1-for-4 on Wednesday, is now 9-for-22 so far this spring. Young was 2-for-3 and is 10-for-19 in Cactus League play.

Rangers starter Derek Holland pitched three scoreless innings to get the victory. Holland, in his second start of the spring, allowed two hits and struck out four. He threw 37 pitches, and 30 were strikes.

David DeJesus put the Athletics on the scoreboard with a home run to lead off the fourth against reliever Darren O'Day. Landon Powell led off the fifth with a home run off of Arthur Rhodes. Ryan Sweeney, who is coming off six-plus month of knee rehabilitation, played in his first Cactus League game and had two hits.

**Up next for the A's:** Two-time All-Star Andrew Bailey is slated to make his Cactus League debut on Thursday, when the A's play host to the Royals at Phoenix Municipal Stadium beginning at 12:05 p.m. PT. Bailey has been brought along slowly this spring while making his way back from minor elbow surgery. The right-handed reliever, who will see one inning of work, will be joined on the mound by scheduled starter Brett Anderson.

**Up next for the Rangers:** C.J. Wilson and David Bush pitch for the Rangers at 2:05 p.m. CT against the White Sox in Surprise. Phil Humber pitches for the White Sox. Ian Kinsler takes a seven-game hitting streak into the game. Mitch Moreland should also be back in the lineup after getting a day off on Wednesday. Moreland is hitting .348 with two home runs and six RBIs in nine games this spring. A free live webcast of the game can be heard on [www.texasrangers.com](http://www.texasrangers.com).

## **Sweeney doesn't miss beat in return to lineup**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SURPRISE, Ariz. -- It wasn't until Ryan Sweeney stepped into the batter's box on Wednesday that he realized six-plus months of knee rehabilitation was finally over.

And when Texas lefty Derek Holland handed him a first-pitch slider, Sweeney *really* knew it was over.

The A's outfielder simply stared down the pitch -- the first one he had seen in a game since July 11. Then he fouled off a changeup and another slider. The fourth pitch, a fastball down the middle, was sent to left field for a single, bringing Sweeney to first for a meeting with Texas' Michael Young.

"I got on first base and Young said, 'Geez, you haven't played in eight months and he throws you a first-pitch slider,'" Sweeney said, smiling. "It was pretty surprising to me, too. I thought I'd get a first-pitch fastball."

Sweeney's welcome-back party included another hit in the fourth off Darren O'Day, before he grounded into a forceout off Neftali Feliz in the sixth to conclude a 2-for-3 day at the plate.

"My swing felt really good today," Sweeney said. "I faced three really tough pitchers, so I just tried to slow things down, look for good pitches to hit and put some good swings on the ball."

"I've really been working on my swing a lot the last couple weeks, and any time you can see how it's going to turn out in a game situation when you haven't been there in awhile is a good thing. It's definitely different. It was nice to get into game-speed action."

There was no shortage of action in the outfield, either, thanks to a five-run first inning by the Rangers off lefty Dallas Braden. Sweeney likened his return to riding a bike, as everything came rather naturally, aside from a small mishap when he got to the bases and realized he had forgotten his hand guard.

"I've been reading balls off the bat, but to actually get in there and have balls hit to me, and me having to throw balls to the bases and catching a few liners, it felt good to do all that," he said.

"He looked good out there," manager Bob Geren said. "He made some nice plays in the field and made good contact at the plate."

The plan is for Sweeney to take two days off before returning to action. He'll likely see one more of those every-third-day cycles before proceeding with an every-other-day schedule. It's all flexible, though, as the A's have plenty of outfielders to offset the days when Sweeney is unavailable.

If the team doesn't feel he has enough at-bats under his belt as camp comes to a close, Sweeney will be sent to the A's Minor League complex and lead off every inning in an effort to see six or seven plate appearances per day.

Geren has said that Sweeney will see time in each outfield spot. He played right field for most of last year before undergoing surgery, but his status as an everyday player has since changed with the arrival of David DeJesus and Josh Willingham.

Sweeney is now pegged as a fourth or fifth outfielder alongside Conor Jackson, and he's seen as the best left-handed option off the bench, given his career .298 average against righties. In comparison, he owns a .248 mark when facing left-handers.

The 26-year-old Sweeney isn't as concerned about regular-season playing time at the moment as he is about regaining the feel of live game action. Sitting back in a clubhouse chair with a granola bar in one hand and a Gatorade bottle in another, Sweeney wasn't afraid to admit that Wednesday's action left him tired.

"There's soreness in my legs, but not my knees," Sweeney said. "It's what you typically expect around this time of year. It's just good not to have any pain."

Sweeney said he believes his longstanding problems with chronic knee tendinitis are finally over. It has lent him a sense of relief when stepping on the field, where he previously played through pain on an everyday basis.

Now it's just about continuing to be one of the team's most consistent hitters. He hit .294 in a shortened 2010 season after batting a team-leading .293 in 134 games in 2009.

How much of an opportunity he'll get is unknown at the moment. But Wednesday represented the first step in the right direction.

"It's been a long time," Sweeney said. "I was excited to get out there."

## **Braden not concerned with spring statistics**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- That his opponents were wearing Rangers uniforms made no difference to Dallas Braden on Wednesday.

The A's lefty entered the contest wanting improved results just as much as outs, no matter the fact he was facing the defending American League champions. Braden ultimately sacrificed the latter for the former in the first, giving up five runs (three earned) on five hits and a walk.

He threw all of one changeup, instead feeding the Rangers fastball after fastball.

"My fastball caught more of the plate than you want at any point in the season," Braden said. "I don't want to go out there and give them the same song and dance they're going to get all year. I have no reservations with getting my [rear] kicked like that knowing that my approach is going to be a little different.

"The same song and dance, using the same approach, trying to get them out the same way now, isn't going to make me better. I need to develop and get better. I have no problem taking my lumps in an effort to do so. If it's that way in April, I'm going to have a problem."

The first frame was messy, no doubt. But Braden entered the day with a game plan -- details on which he uncharacteristically remained mum.

"The bottom line is to evolve," he said. "You have to take a few steps backward and rebuild before you can start making strides forward. ... I just don't feel like I can consciously say I'm trying to get better if I go out there and pitch the same way I would if I'm pitching in May or June."

In an effort to elongate his outing, Braden returned to his changeup in the second and, subsequently, got quick outs, including an inning-ending double play from Josh Hamilton. Overall, he lasted 2 2/3 innings, throwing a total of 58 pitches -- 32 of which came in the first.

"Why not just go through the whole lineup and face them a second time?" Braden jokingly questioned. "Relatively speaking, when you're working on something, let's get one through nine out of the way in the first, do it again in the second and start it again in the third inning. ... I've been caught in a limbo. As a competitor, you almost handicap yourself because you want to get better."

Braden's third spring outing marked his second Cactus League appearance against the Rangers, who tagged him for four runs in three innings during the last go-around. Come April, the southpaw doesn't expect himself to be as kind, especially considering last year's division results.

"The Cleveland Browns can win the Super Bowl and release everybody, and they're still the team to beat in the NFL," he said. "They won. That's who you want to knock off. Whether they want the target on their back or not, they've got it."

## Worth noting

Lefty Craig Breslow has been ruled out for Thursday, when he was initially expected to make his Cactus League debut. Rather, the A's reliever has been listed day-to-day with a left hamstring strain. ... Fellow reliever Andrew Bailey, on the comeback trail from minor elbow surgery, will make his debut on Thursday as scheduled. ... Right-hander Michael Wuertz (shoulder) threw 20 pitches in live batting practice on Wednesday. Manager Bob Geren said the best-case scenario would be to place Wuertz in his first spring game Saturday, though the skipper said he'll know more on the pitcher's next step on Thursday. ... Daric Barton, who received a couple of days off to nurse a calf contusion, will likely return to the lineup on Thursday.

## Major League: A's @ Rangers: Pregame notes

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 3/9/2011 8:57AM

A few quick updates before I hit the road for a lengthy drive to Surprise, where the A's meet the Rangers for the second time this spring:

- **Daric Barton** (calf contusion) was held out of the lineup again today but he should be ready to go tomorrow.
- **Craig Breslow** has officially been deemed day-to-day with a left hamstring strain. He definitely won't pitch in tomorrow's game, as the team had initially hoped, but the good news is that he's been able to keep up with his throwing program. It's simply best he stays out of game action in case he has to field a ball or cover first -- moves that would aggravate the hamstring.
- **Michael Wuertz** (shoulder) is throwing live batting practice (20 pitches) this morning. If all goes well, he could potentially make his Cactus League debut as early as Saturday. Geren calls that "best case scenario."
- **Rich Harden** (lat muscle) is off today, and he'll resume his throwing program tomorrow. Like I mentioned yesterday, Harden could potentially throw off the mound beginning Saturday (at the earliest) but, considering the days in camp are quickly dwindling, it's unlikely he'll be ready by April 1.
- **Andrew Bailey** is still scheduled to take to the mound for the first time this spring tomorrow against the Royals.
- **Conor Jackson** is tied with **Wes Timmons** for the fourth-most at-bats this spring with 20, but he's only collected just one hit. When I asked Geren about Jackson this morning, he said he actually considers Jackson to have compiled the most consistent ABs - he just has nothing to show for them. Geren likes his short, aggressive swing, as well as the versatility he offers the lineup, especially with Barton out at first right now.

**Ryan Sweeney** makes his spring debut today. He's playing right field and batting in the sixth spot. Here are the lineups:

**OAKLAND:** Ellis 2B, DeJesus CF, Jackson 1B, Matsui DH, Kouzmanoff 3B, Sweeney RF, Carter LF, Powell C, Tolleson SS, Braden P

Also scheduled to pitch: Blevins, DeHoyos, Farquhar, Magnuson, McCarthy

**TEXAS:** Kinsler 2B, Andrus SS, Hamilton CF, Cruz RF, Young 1B, Napoli DH, Murphy LF, Torrealba C, Davis 3B, Holland P



## **Rough outing for Braden in A's loss to Rangers**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SURPRISE, Ariz. — The Texas Rangers keep stretching out Neftali Feliz, just in case.

The AL Rookie of the Year struck out four in three scoreless innings Wednesday as the Rangers beat the Oakland Athletics 9-2.

Feliz posted 40 saves last year, then came to camp trying to win a spot in the Texas rotation. Earlier this week, he said he'd prefer to stay in his closer role.

"Your heart's got to be in what you're going to do," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "If your heart isn't in it, we'll have to make that decision down the line."

Feliz took over in the sixth inning and allowed one hit and walked two. He threw 53 pitches, 30 for strikes, and showed off a sharp slider to add to his curveball and 100-plus MPH fastball.

Feliz was a lifelong starter until his move to the bullpen as a late-season callup to the bullpen in 2009. No matter what his role, pitching coach Mike Maddux said the extended repertoire can only be of benefit.

"When you always have the almighty equalizer in your back pocket, you can use your other stuff and protect it," Maddux said.

Feliz started to tire in eighth, walking the first two hitters he faced. But he finished in impressive fashion, striking out Josh Horton and Jai Miller to close out his day.

"One of the things he showed last year," Maddux said, "is he may be a youngster but he's a man."

Maddux has asked somewhat rhetorically whether it's better to have such an effective pitcher for 70 innings or 200-plus. At the same time, he conceded Wednesday that "you're only as good as your bullpen."

"It all sounds great right now but come the regular season and we've got a lead after 8 1/2, then let's go win it. He doesn't have to be perfect. You don't have to be perfect as a closer. You just have to be pretty good and you'll have the advantage," he said.

As Feliz and the Rangers mull his ultimate fate, one of his would-be competitors for a spot in the rotation, Derek Holland, posted a stellar outing in his second start.

The left-hander gave up two hits and faced only one hitter over the minimum in his three-inning stint, striking out four.

"I need to show that I belong in that rotation," Holland said. "I don't want anything else. I'm trying to get that starting rotation spot. I need to make a couple of statements and today was one."

Oakland starter Dallas Braden allowed four runs and four hits before recording his first out, though he settled down in the final two innings to finish with five runs — three earned.

Braden, 11-14 with a 3.50 ERA in 30 starts last year, said his approach will certainly be different once the season begins.

"If it's that way in April, then we have a problem."

David DeJesus and Landon Powell each hit their first home runs of the spring for the Athletics.

NOTES: A's OF Ryan Sweeney made his spring debut and got two hits. ... Michael Young and Yorvit Torrealba each had RBI doubles in the Rangers' fix-run first. ... Rangers 2B Ian Kinsler singled to lead off the game and extend his hitting streak to seven games. ... Rangers RHP Brandon Webb threw 62 pitches in his first live batting practice session of the spring. ... Oakland 1B Daric Barton didn't make the trip with a bruised calf but is expected to play Thursday. ... Oakland RHP Craig Breslow is day-to-day with a strained left hamstring and will not pitch on Thursday as originally scheduled.

## **Cahill makes bid for opening-day start**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX — Oakland manager Bob Geren is looking for an opening-day starter, and Trevor Cahill is making quite the case for the job.

Cahill pitched four scoreless innings in the Athletics' 6-2 spring-training win over the San Diego Padres on Tuesday.

"I was able to get some kind of rhythm going," Cahill said. "I threw sinkers away from both right- and left-handed hitters and threw a few changeups in there. I'm also getting better command of my fastball."

The right-hander, who turned 23 on March 1, allowed one hit with no walks or strikeouts. He threw 49 pitches, then went to the bullpen for 15 more.

"He threw outstanding," Geren said. "He had a low pitch count. He is right where we want for him to be."

Cahill also showed his agility when he dodged the barrel of Jesus Guzman's broken bat in the fourth inning.

"That shrapnel ... I was hoping there weren't any other pieces that I didn't see," Cahill said.

Left-handers Gio Gonzalez, Dallas Braden and Brett Anderson also are in the mix to start April 1 against Seattle, but Cahill went 18-8 with a 2.97 ERA last season and made the All-Star team.

"Trevor has pitched well, Gio has been lights-out, Braden has pitched an opener before and Anderson has great stuff," Geren said. "It's good to have those kinds of options."

Infielder Andy LaRoche, in camp on a minor-league contract, hit his second homer in as many games and third of the spring. He also had an infield hit and made a few impressive defensive plays while playing all nine innings at first base.

"We knew that coming in that he had power potential," Geren said. "We are just trying him everywhere."

Tim Stauffer struck out five in four innings for San Diego, yielding two unearned runs and two hits.

"He changed speeds well, he had good sink on his pitches," Padres manager Bud Black said. "We had him go four today, probably a little longer next time out."

### A'S NOTES

Anthony Recker and Michael Taylor also homered.

RHP Brad Ziegler struck out three in the seventh to pick up the win.

Ryan Sweeney is scheduled to make his first start in right field today against Texas. He had season-ending surgery on his right knee on July 30.

## **Matsui Welcomes New Challenge With A's**

By TYLER KEPNER, New York Times, 3/9/2011

Dallas Braden was doing it again. Braden, the Oakland Athletics left-hander, had thrown a perfect game in his previous start and was working on a follow-up gem five days later against the Los Angeles Angels. But the Angels scratched out a run in the sixth inning, and with two out and two on, Hideki Matsui came to the plate.

"Breaking ball," Braden said ruefully, recalling the moment the other day in the A's clubhouse. "It was middle — but it was down — and he got it. I've thrown him changeups, sinkers in, I've thrown him front-door sinkers; if I had a knuckleball I'd throw that. I'm just glad I don't have to face the guy anymore."

Matsui launched a three-run homer, and though Braden finished the game, he lost, 4-0. Braden has not quite figured out Matsui, who is 6 for 14 off him, but now they are teammates. Matsui joined the A's for \$4 million, his second one-year deal since winning the Most Valuable Player award in the 2009 World Series, when he hit .615 for the Yankees.

"I was able to achieve my goals in New York: we became world champions," Matsui said through his interpreter, Roger Kahlon. "But this opportunity offers me a new challenge, to help a team that has a lot of potential but hasn't had a chance to win. If I didn't feel like I could contribute and help a team, perhaps that may be time to consider retirement. But I still feel like I can help, and that challenge still motivates me."

Matsui, who turns 37 in June, had roughly the same season for the Angels in 2010 as he had in his seventh and final season with the Yankees. He hit .274 both seasons, and, as usual, hit better with runners in scoring position. He exceeded 20 homers and 80 runs batted in, as he has in every healthy season in the majors.

Even so, Matsui said, Oakland was the only team to make him an offer in free agency. Other teams showed interest, but he said the Athletics made the most sense. Because the A's have such a young lineup, Matsui can keep the designated hitter spot to himself. Manager Bob Geren has no plans to play Matsui in the field, as the Angels did 18 times last season. He just needs him to support his dazzling pitching staff.

"He'll have a big impact in a lot of ways," Geren said. "Consistency is probably the biggest thing: day in and day out, he has the same swing, the same kind of at-bats, he likes to play a lot and he's very durable. He's going to help us quite a bit."

Playing their home games at the spacious Coliseum, the Athletics had the league's best earned run average last season, 3.58. But they ranked 11th of 14 teams in runs scored (4.09 per game) and won only half their games.

The A's tried to sign third baseman Adrian Beltre, but settled for more modest improvements to the offense; besides Matsui, they traded for outfielders David DeJesus and Josh Willingham. The hope is that those three will add punch, while the holdovers Kevin Kouzmanoff and Kurt Suzuki improve and center fielder Coco Crisp stays healthy.

Across the bay last fall, the San Francisco Giants showed that dominant pitching could carry an ordinary offense to a championship. The A's signed the veteran relievers Brian Fuentes and Grant Balfour to support a young rotation that includes Braden and three starters 25 or younger: Brett Anderson, Trevor Cahill and Gio Gonzalez.

Those pitchers combined to go 40-23 last season, each with an E.R.A. less than 3.25. Together with Braden (11-14, 3.50), the starters try to learn from one another.

"Dallas and I were talking about it," Gonzalez said. "Each one of us brings something to the table. It's like a spread of goodies. Just grab what you want and pick it off anyone else. I try to pick off as much as I can."

As usual, though, the Oakland clubhouse is more than a learning laboratory. The shelf above Braden's locker is a landing strip for several remote-control airplanes, including a few that take flight in the room, bystanders beware. That includes the coterie of Japanese reporters who have covered Matsui since he came to the majors in 2003.

For the A's — the less glamorous of the Bay Area teams — the attention is a novelty, Matsui the rare celebrity in their midst. For Matsui, who has played long enough to hit 493 career home runs between Japan and the majors, it is a part of life he has never considered a burden. Considering his international fame, he remains the game's most accommodating superstar.

"I don't think I really get tired of it," Matsui said. "It's part of my responsibility. It's been going on for more than 10 years, almost 20 years. It's important to make sure I give them my time, several minutes a day."

Braden provided a colorful story on Matsui's first day of camp, when he greeted his former nemesis with an inflatable Godzilla (\$150 on eBay) at his locker stall. The gesture acknowledged Matsui's fame while making him feel at home.

"We're excited for the marquee power and star power he brings, but also his ability," Braden said. "You're talking about a guy who changes the complexion of an entire lineup. Now, he's our Godzilla."

## **Beane's latest rebuilding effort makes A's trendy sleeper pick**

Ann Killion, Sports Illustrated, 3/9/2011

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- The movie *Moneyball* is scheduled for release next September, when ticket-buyers can see Brad Pitt portray Oakland A's general manager Billy Beane and his 2002 team shock the baseball world by overcoming a severely limited budget to reach the playoffs for the third straight year.

By the time it hits theaters, Beane hopes to have the 2011 version of his team causing similar shockwaves and contending for the AL West title with a decidedly non-Moneyball unit.

"Listen, my first choice is to have a bunch of guys who get on base, hit .400 and hit a bunch of home runs," Beane said. "But those guys are very expensive now. We're left with what's available. This is different -- no question."

Since the A's were last in the playoffs, in the ALCS in 2006, Oakland has been a baseball outpost, in part intentionally. Beane tore his team down to the bones and rebuilt it, focusing on pitching and backfilling the roster with affordable position players who can play defense, run the bases and manufacture runs.

With some capital freed up this offseason -- a rarity for the A's -- Beane went to work. He pursued Adrian Beltre and Lance Berkman. While they signed elsewhere, Beane landed David DeJesus, Josh Willingham and Hideki Matsui.

"We were very methodical," Beane said. "We had Plan A and Plan B but, for us, we usually have to go to Plan P because New York or Boston has the same idea."

When Beane stockpiled his already rich bullpen in January, signing Brian Fuentes and Grant Balfour, it was less Moneyball philosophy than an NFL draft mindset: best available player.

"I'd like to claim some market inefficiency, but they were the guys who were there," Beane said. "We had some money left and the bullpen guys available were a better value than the bats that were there."

The centerpiece of his team is the young pitching staff. The A's 20-something starting rotation -- anchored by Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson, Dallas Braden and Gio Gonzalez -- led the American League last year with an ERA of 3.58. With both the Rangers and the Angels potentially vulnerable, the A's have become a trendy pick to win the AL West.

"The players know that we're improved," manager Bob Geren said. "On paper, we should be better."

But, on the field, the pressure is now on Geren. That's one Moneyball philosophy Beane hasn't abandoned: He's not interested in having a dynamic, big-name manager. Geren, famously tied to Beane for having been his best man in his wedding, hasn't distinguished himself in his four seasons as A's manager. Last year's second place, .500 finish was the team's best under Geren

"He hasn't had great teams," Beane said in Geren's defense. "He inherited this club when it was going the other way."

But now the A's are trending upward, expected to win. That means that the public will truly find out what kind of manager Geren is. The pressure is on.

And the pressure is on the A's to regain relevancy. They've been an afterthought not only in baseball, but in their own market, second-from-the-bottom in the league attendance, making far more news by clamoring to get out of Oakland than by playing baseball. The A's second-tier status has only been exacerbated by the Giants winning the World Series last fall. Now would be perfect time to challenge the status quo by winning.

The A's and Giants are unfriendly neighbors, bickering at the backyard fence over territorial rights. But on at least one count, the A's admire what the Giants managed to do last year: win it all with great young pitching and a roster filled with decent players but no slugging superstars. A lot like the team the A's are projected to be this year.

"I don't think it's unfair to make the parallel there," Beane said.

It might not be traditional Moneyball. But if the A's are in the race when the movie comes out, Beane's latest adaptation should be a box-office hit.

## **A's Top Prospects: Beyond The Top-50, Part 2**

---

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Mar 9, 2011

Every year, our most difficult task is choosing only 50 prospects to include in our Oakland A's top prospect list. There are many more players than those 50 to keep an eye on, some of whom will develop into household names in a few years. In a two-part article, we look at 35 players that we considered for our list but didn't make the cut for one reason or another...

*Note: These names are in alphabetical order and not in rank order. Below are players M-Z. For players A-Z, click here.*

**Hiram Martinez:** Martinez was one of a handful of international amateurs signed by the A's before the 2010 season. The 6'1" shortstop fails from Hermosillo, Mexico, and he played in the Mexican rookie league before being signed by Oakland. Despite being only 17 during the regular season, Martinez played for the A's US Rookie League team in Arizona. A speedy player with a slick glove, Martinez didn't show much at the plate in his first foray into US professional baseball, but given that the A's initially planned to let Martinez spend last summer in Mexico before bringing him to the States in 2011, he held his own. Martinez will likely repeat in the Arizona League this year and the switch-hitter should show improvements at the plate.

**John Meloan:** Meloan opened a lot of eyes around the A's organization in 2009 when he threw 8.1 scoreless innings for the team with 11 strike-outs in a September call-up. Meloan came into spring training in 2010 with an outside chance of winning a spot in the A's bullpen, but an elbow injury ended those hopes. He underwent Tommy John surgery in late March and missed the entire season. The hard-throwing relief prospect was removed from the A's 40-man roster this off-season, but he remained with the organization. Nearly a year removed from surgery, Meloan should be able to pitch in regular season games at some point early in the 2011 season. The 2007 Double-A Relief Pitcher of the Year would give the A's even more depth in the bullpen if he is able to recapture his 2009 form this season.

**Guillermo Moscoso:** Moscoso was acquired by the A's for minor leaguer Ryan Kelly during the off-season. The Venezuelan right-hander had been with the Texas Rangers, who had acquired him from the Detroit Tigers' organization in the Gerald Laird trade before the 2009 season. Moscoso was a pretty good prospect at the time of the Laird deal and he pitched well for the Rangers' Double-A and Triple-A squads in 2009, posting a 3.12 ERA. He made his major league debut that season, putting up a 3.21 ERA but walking six in 14 relief innings. Moscoso spent virtually all of the 2010 season at Triple-A and he struggled to the tune of a 5.18 ERA and 142 hits in 123.1 innings. He also allowed two runs in two-thirds of an inning in his only major league appearance. Moscoso pitched much better this winter in the Venezuelan Winter League, putting up a 2.66 ERA and a 38:17 K:BB ratio in 40.2 innings. He is currently competing for the A's fifth starter spot in big league camp. Moscoso has a solid fastball that sits in the low-90s and gets a lot of movement. He struggled with his secondary pitches last season, but if he can regain the feel for his breaking ball and change-up, he could be a sleeper for the A's in 2011. He is 27 years old.

**Renato Nunez:** Nunez was the A's biggest international amateur signing in 2010. He signed a bonus worth a reported \$2.2 million. The Venezuelan third baseman was considered one of the top amateur talents available on the international market this year. The A's have been tracking his development since he was 14 and they beat out several other teams to sign him. The A's believe Nunez has the potential to be a .300 hitter with power in the pros. He will debut with the A's Dominican Summer League team this year and could reach the States in 2012. Like Vicmal De La Cruz, we didn't include Nunez in our top-50 because he hadn't yet played a professional inning. He is likely to join the list next year.

**Petey Paramore:** When the A's took Paramore in the third round in 2008, the feeling was the A's were selecting Landon Powell, but with good knees. At the time of the draft, Paramore, like Powell, was a good defensive catcher and a switch-hitter with power and patience at the plate. Thus far, Paramore hasn't progressed quite as expected. He has come as advertised defensively and he has shown the ability to take a walk, but his power has disappeared at the pro level. In 2010, he began the year with High-A Stockton and despite hitting .255, he reached base at a .391 clip and was promoted to Double-A. In 65 games with the Rockhounds, Paramore hit .263 with a .371 OBP. Unfortunately, his slugging percentage across both levels was only .353. Paramore's defense and on-base skills alone could lead him to a career as a third catcher who is signed by teams to Triple-A contracts and brought to the big leagues if there is an injury to one of the team's top two backstops. However, if he can recapture some of the power that he had in college, Paramore could have a more significant career than that in the big leagues. He is 24 years old.

**Rodolfo Penalo:** Penalo was signed by the A's out of the Dominican Republic in April and he debuted later in summer with the A's Dominican Summer League team. In 46 games, Penalo hit only .243, but he posted a .371 OBP thanks to 18 walks versus 18 strike-outs. Penalo has plus speed and he stole 12 bases, but his base-running is still a work-in-progress, as he was caught eight times. The 5'7" middle infielder doesn't have any power at the moment, but he only turned 18 in late August, so he is still growing. Penalo has mostly played second base and he has good hands and a strong arm for the

position. He is likely to make his US debut in 2011.

**Shane Peterson:** Peterson was acquired as part of the Matt Holliday deal from the St. Louis Cardinals during the 2009 season. The outfielder/first-baseman was sent to Double-A Midland after the trade and put up a .273/.333/.396 line before starring for the Rockhounds during the playoffs. In 2010, Peterson returned to Midland. He got off to a very slow start (.230/.311/.310 before the All-Star break) before a strong second half (.307/.403/.434) saved his season from disaster. Peterson is a good athlete who can play all three outfield positions, as well as first base. Since the draft, he has been viewed as somewhat of a tweener in that he doesn't have the power expected of a corner outfielder/first baseman, but he doesn't have the pure speed for centerfield. Nonetheless, the A's like his approach at the plate and his "in-game skills." Although he is likely headed for his third season at Double-A, Peterson is still only 23 years old.

**Ryan Pineda:** Pineda was the A's 28th round pick this past year. The second baseman had a monster junior season with Cal-State Northridge and was projected by some to be taken in the top 15 rounds. After playing summer baseball in Alaska, he elected to sign with Oakland rather than returning to Northridge for his senior season. Pineda put up mediocre numbers in his first taste of pro ball with Vancouver, batting only .221, but he posted a .336 OBP and had a 17:20 BB:K ratio. He played well during the A's fall Instructional League. Pineda has speed, a good eye and decent pop for a middle infielder. He should get a chance at a starting job with Low-A Burlington in 2011.

**Julio Ramos:** Ramos was one of our picks for a breakthrough season in 2010, but an elbow injury prevented him from throwing a single pitch during a regular season game. The left-hander had been making a steady climb through the lower levels of the A's system before the injury. In 2008, he had a 1.42 ERA in 57 innings for the A's DSL and AZL affiliates. Then in 2009, he posted a 2.57 ERA with 75 strike-outs in 84 innings for short-season Vancouver and High-A Stockton. The native of the Dominican Republic developed elbow soreness during spring training and eventually had to undergo Tommy John surgery. He may make it back on the field at some point in 2011, but he probably won't be at full strength until 2012. Ramos turned 23 in February.

**Anthony Recker:** In a number of other organizations, Recker would likely have received a chance to compete for the big league back-up catcher role by now. Unfortunately for Recker, he is stuck behind three solid catchers in Kurt Suzuki, Landon Powell and Josh Donaldson. Recker will be eligible for minor league free agency next year and could find himself in a better situation for reaching the majors in 2012 with a change of scenery. If he puts up another 800+ OPS, as he has in four of his last five seasons, and continues to improve defensively, he will draw no shortage of interest on the free market. Despite not playing in more than 117 games in any one season, Recker has reached double digits in homeruns in each of his five full minor league seasons. He is 27 years old.

**Myrio Richard:** Richard narrowly missed our top-50 list after putting together a solid first full professional season. In 98 games with Low-A Kane County, Richard hit .281 with a .359 OBP. He missed a number of games with nagging injuries and struggled during the final few weeks of the season, but at times showed the ability to hit for average, work a walk and play good defense. Richard isn't as fast as his older brother Michael, a former A's prospect, but Myrio should be able to put up better stolen base numbers than the 11 steals in 18 chances he achieved with the Cougars. The outfielder should also be able to hit for more power (.384 SLG) when he plays in the California League in 2011.

**Robin Rosario:** Rosario was signed as an international amateur free agent by the A's in February 2008. At the time, he was considered a power-hitting outfielder with a plus throwing arm. After failing to make progress at the plate in two minor league seasons, Rosario was moved to the mound for the 2010 season. His fastball was clocked in the mid-90s during the A's extended spring training, but a sore elbow prevented him from pitching in the Arizona Rookie League. The elbow did not require surgery and Rosario is expected to report to Arizona for extended spring training and, if all goes well, pitch in the AZL this season. He is a raw pitching prospect, but the 21-year-old's arm strength makes him worth keeping a close eye on.

**Jose Sayegh:** Sayegh was another highly touted international amateur free agent signing by the A's. Signed in late 2008, the Venezuelan outfielder has spent the last two seasons in the Dominican Summer League. He has struggled at the plate, but showed some signs of progress in 2010. Although he posted a meager .183 average, Sayegh walked 25 times in 54 games for a .324 OBP. He also hit .320/.433/.440 against left-handers. Sayegh turns 20 this season, so he still has plenty of time to develop as a prospect.

**Justin Souza:** Souza began the season on the A's 40-man roster after being acquired from the Seattle Mariners organization the year prior. Souza had a rough season, walking 26 in 49 innings with Sacramento and Midland before landing on the disabled list with an injured elbow. He had surgery to correct a stress fracture in his right elbow late in the 2010 season. Souza was dropped from the A's 40-man roster this off-season, but he cleared waivers and returned to the organization as a minor league player. He has excellent arm strength and could factor in the A's bullpen plans at some point during the 2011 season if he returns to full health.

**Mickey Storey:** Storey took the organization by storm in 2009 when he posted a 1.22 ERA and had a 71:8 K:BB ratio in 51.2 innings spread over all four of the A's full-season affiliates. He wasn't able to match those numbers in 2010, although he still put together a solid year. In 71 innings for Midland, Storey had a 3.30 ERA with a 63:22 K:BB ratio. He struggled in a brief stint with the River Cats, posting a 5.54 ERA with 14 strike-outs, five walks and three homeruns allowed in 13 innings.

Storey was left off of our top-50 prospect list in large part because at the time the list was compiled, he was experiencing elbow soreness after pitching in the Venezuelan Winter League. The soreness wound-up not being serious, but Storey has an extensive injury history, so it set off some alarm bells. If he is healthy in 2011 and puts up a season similar to his last two, he will return to the top-50 list in 2012.

**Daniel Straily:** Straily was the A's 24th round pick in 2009. Since turning pro, the right-handed starting pitcher has been a strike-out machine. In 2009, he struck-out 66 in 59 innings for Vancouver and in 2010, he had 149 strike-outs in 148 innings for Kane County. Straily's walk total jumped up in 2010, however, as he issued 61 free passes. He has an excellent fastball, but he struggled with inconsistency with his secondary pitches and with location at various points during the season. Straily has the stuff to move quickly up the list if he can gain more consistency from outing-to-outing. He will be 22 throughout the 2011 season.

**Matt Sulentic:** It was a strange year for Sulentic. In his second season with Midland, Sulentic got off to a horrible start at the plate, but a hot second half allowed him to raise his average from the low .200s to .275 by year-end. However, Sulentic had a complete loss of power, hitting only one homerun in 123 games after hitting seven in 113 games the year before. He also saw his stolen base total drop from 21 to 11, although his OBP rose from .345 to .348. Sulentic was the A's second pick in the 2006 draft out of a Dallas-area high school. He had a lot of initial success with Vancouver in 2006 (888 OPS in 38 games), but he has never managed to regain that level of play, although he had two decent seasons in 2008 and 2009. Over the years, Sulentic has turned himself into an excellent defensive outfielder and he has increased his footspeed considerably, but he still lacks the power of a traditional corner outfielder. Sulentic will be 23 throughout the 2011 season and it could be a make-or-break campaign for the left-handed hitter.

**Tony Thompson:** Thompson was the second collegiate player the A's selected in the 2010 draft. The third-baseman from the University of Kansas was a Triple Crown winner in the Big 12 in 2009, but an injury limited him during his 2010 collegiate season. Thompson put up a mediocre line with Vancouver in 2010, but he showed signs of being the powerful right-handed hitter the A's scouted in college. Thompson played well during the A's fall Instructional League season. In 2009, Stephen Parker struggled in his first pro season, but parlayed a strong fall Instructional League season into a standout 2010 season. Thompson has the talent to make a similar leap forward in 2011.

**Jordan Tripp:** Tripp was taken in the seventh round by the A's in the 2010 draft. An outfielder from Golden West Community College, Tripp was considered a raw talent with a lot of tools coming out of college. He struggled in his initial foray into professional baseball, hitting only .125 in 56 at-bats with Vancouver. He fared a little better with the A's Rookie League team, batting .261 with a 781 OPS. Tripp was only 20 last season, but he still should have produced better numbers at the Rookie ball level considering his junior college experience. Nonetheless, he could make a big turnaround in 2011.