

## **A's Daily News Clips; Saturday, March 12, 2011**

### **Oakland A's DH Hideki Matsui worries about his homeland of Japan after devastating earthquake**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 3/12/2011

PHOENIX -- Despite the devastating 8.9-magnitude earthquake that hit Japan on Friday afternoon (Japan time), the A's new Japanese designated hitter, Hideki Matsui, was in the lineup for Oakland's spring training game here against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

But Matsui was well aware of the catastrophe, first learning of the earthquake on the Internet on Thursday night and staying up until midnight to try to get more details of the extensive damage.

Speaking through interpreter Roger Kahlon, the 36-year-old DH expressed concern and sympathy for the people of his native country.

"I heard about it last night, actually, but I didn't have much information about it at first," Matsui said.

"As time went on, I started to understand the caliber of the situation. It is disturbing. I'm a bit worried, especially for the people who live in the area."

Matsui said he has yet to communicate with any family members or friends in Japan. Even though he resides in Tokyo, most of his family is in Ishikawa, which is located in the southwest part of Japan, a significant distance from the earthquake's offshore epicenter in the northeast part of the country.

"I haven't spoken to anybody," he said. "But they (his family) are not really close to the area, so I think they're OK."

He did admit that even though he believes the people he's closest to are safe, he is still concerned for their mental well-being, especially after seeing some of the footage of the devastation on television.

"It is a bit difficult to watch," he said. "Even though you're away, it's hard to see all that's going on and knowing that you have much family and people you know (in Japan)."

Matsui has long been concerned about earthquakes in Asia. He donated \$500,000 toward relief efforts for victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami.

The 30 or so Japanese media members covering Matsui's first spring with the A's were on hand Friday as well. Many said communication to Japan is virtually impossible since telephone lines are either overtaxed or out of service as a result of the quake.

The A's announced that the team will help raise funds to aid victims of the disaster. The A's open the season with a three-game series at the Coliseum against the Seattle Mariners, and plans are being made to add a fundraising component for Japanese Heritage Day, scheduled for the series' final game Sunday, April 3.

Details of the benefit game, which will feature Japan's two greatest modern-day players in Matsui and Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki, will be announced at a later date.

Matsui also issued an official statement through the organization: "I am deeply concerned and affected by what is happening in Japan. I pray for the safety of all the people that have been affected and continue to be affected by this disaster."

### **Oakland A's notebook: Coco Crisp healthy and off to hot start at the plate**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 3/12/2011

PHOENIX -- It's heating up quickly in Arizona. Temperatures are creeping into the mid-80s, and it's about 110 degrees in Coco Crisp's hitting zone right now.

The A's center fielder had three more hits, including his second home run, in Friday's 9-2 victory over the Los Angeles Dodgers and is now hitting .478 in his first eight spring training games (11 for 23).

"I think the main thing for all hitters in the spring is to see the ball, and I'm already seeing it really well," Crisp said.

Crisp demonstrated last season that when he's healthy, he can be an impact player in a lot of ways. Of course, he missed much of the first half with a broken thumb and finished the year by breaking his pinkie. He played in just 75 games.

"It's been a long time for me, basically 2005 since I've really been healthy," he said. "Hopefully, I can carry it through the season and do something special."

- On the flip side is Hideki Matsui, who went 0 for 4 and is now hitting .048 (1 for 21). He did rip a hot liner down the third-base line in the third inning, but the ball was snared by Dodgers third baseman Ivan DeJesus.

"He's going to be fine," manager Bob Geren said of Matsui. "He's three weeks away, he's been through so many spring trainings. He knows what it takes to get ready."

Gio Gonzalez didn't given up a hit or run in his first two outings (five innings), but in his third mound stint, finally surrendered a hit in the second and then a run in the fifth on Aaron Miles' solo homer. Gonzalez's outing was strong, though: 4 1/3 innings, four hits, one run, one walk and three strikeouts.

"As soon as I got out of the inning (after the homer), Brett (Anderson) goes, 'Welcome to the ERA club,' " Gonzalez said. "But my arm feels great. I just have to continue building strength and going out there and pounding the strike zone."

- Fifth-starter wars: In the split-squad game at Maryvale against Milwaukee, Tyson Ross started and pitched well: three innings, four hits, no runs. He got out of a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the first.

"I couldn't be happier," said the former Bishop O'Dowd High and Cal standout. "I've been getting my innings in and I'm feeling strong."

Josh Outman wasn't as successful. The left-hander did pitch three innings but was touched for seven hits and four earned runs.

- General manager Billy Beane confirmed that the A's have signed 17-year-old South Korean catching prospect Seong-Min Kim. Beane said A's director of international operations Dan Kantrovitz had been bird-dogging Kim for some time.

"We're really excited," said Beane of Kim, who reportedly has tremendous right-handed power.

- Medicals: Daric Barton (calf bruise) sat out again but is day-to-day. Infielder Eric Sogard (thumb) has missed the past two days. Pitcher Craig Breslow (hamstring) is working out and throwing off a mound but hasn't been cleared to pitch.

## **Chin Music: Matsui frets for his Japan homeland**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 3/11/2011 10:14 am

PHOENIX \_ Despite the devastating 8.9-magnitude earthquake that hit Japan early Friday morning, the A's new Japanese designated hitter, Hideki Matsui, was in the lineup for Oakland's spring training game here against the Los Angeles Dodgers.

But Matsui was well aware of the catastrophe, first learning of the earthquake on the Internet Thursday night and staying up until midnight to try and get more details of the extensive damage.

Speaking through interpreter Roger Kahlon, the 36-year-old DH expressed concerned and sympathy for the people of his native country.

"I heard about it last night, actually, but I didn't have much information about it at first," Matsui said. "As time went on, I started to understand the caliber of the situation. It is disturbing. I'm a bit worried, especially for the people who live in the area."

Matsui said he has yet to communicate with any family members or friends in Japan. Even though he resides in Tokyo, most of his family is in Ishikawa, which is located in the southwest part of Japan, a significant distance from the earthquake's offshore epicenter in the northeast part of the country.

"I haven't spoken to anybody," he said. "But they (his family) are not really close to the area, so I think they're OK."

He did admit that even though he believes the people he's closest to are safe, he is still concerned for their mental well-being, especially after seeing some of the footage of the devastation on television.

"It is a bit difficult to watch," he said. "Even though you're away, it's hard to see all that's going on and knowing that you have much family and people you know (in Japan)."

Matsui has long been concerned about earthquakes in Asia. He donated \$500,000 towards relief efforts for victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake.

The 30 or so Japanese media members covering Matsui's first spring with the A's were on hand Friday as well. Many said communication to Japan is virtually impossible at the moment since telephone lines are either overtaxed or out of service as a result of the quake.

The A's announced that the team will help raise funds to aid victims of the disaster. The A's open the 2011 season with a three-game series at the Oakland-Alameda Coliseum against the Seattle Mariners and plans are being made to add a fundraising component for Japanese Heritage Day, scheduled for the series' final game Sunday, April 3.

Details of the benefit game, which will feature Japan's two greatest modern-day players in Oakland's Hideki Matsui and Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki, will be announced at a later date.

Matsui also issued an official statement through the organization: "I am deeply concerned and affected by what is happening in Japan. I pray for the safety of all the people that have been affected and continue to be affected by this disaster."

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It'll be another day of rest for first baseman Daric Barton. Manager Bob Geren thought Barton would be ready to play the last two days, but the nagging calf injury suffered in a game collision Sunday is still troubling him. Geren said he was unsure when Barton might be able to play, but noted that if it were the regular season, he probably could play but there is no sense in pushing it with so much time left in spring training.

Elsewhere, fifth-starter candidate Rich Harden has been making good progress in his long-toss sessions and his next step will be to throw off the mound, although not in a game. There is still no word when reliever Craig Breslow (hamstring strain) might be available to pitch, but Breslow is still getting conditioning work in and throwing lightly on the side. Backup infielder candidate Eric Sogard has a thumb injury that has kept him out of games the past two days and limited his activity.

The A's play split-squad games today. Here are the lineups:

In Phoenix vs. the Dodgers: CF Crisp, 2B Ellis, DH Matsui, LF Willingham, 1B Carter, SS LaRoche, C Powell, RF Miller, 3B Tolleason. Gio Gonzalez starting on the mound.

And in Maryvale against the Brewers: CF DeJesus, 2B Weeks, RF Jackson, DH Carson, C Donaldson, 1B Timmons, Lf Taylor, SS Green, 3B Cardenas. Tyson Ross starts, with fifth-starter Josh Outman also slated to pitch.

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A's general manager Billy Beane confirmed the signing of 17-year-old South Korean catching prospect Seong-Min Kim, a 6-foot-1, 210-pound prep out of Yatap High in Seoul. Kim is noted for his right-handed power.

Beane said Dan Kantrovitz, the A's coordinator of international operations, had been closely monitoring Kim's potential availability and pounced when it became evident he wanted to turn pro. The A's reportedly signed him to a deal worth \$510,000.

"We're pretty excited," Beane said.

## **Hideki Matsui: Japan scenes 'difficult to watch'**

By Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, 3/12/2011

Hideki Matsui doesn't have family in the area of Japan devastated Friday by an earthquake and a tsunami, but the A's designated hitter fears for his countrymen, "especially the people in the area affected," Matsui said through his translator, Roger Kahlon.

"It's a bit difficult to watch," Matsui said. "It's difficult to see all that is going on."

Matsui hadn't spoken to family members yet when he held an interview session Friday morning, but he said he knows they're OK because they are on the western coast of Japan.

Being away from his home during a major crisis is difficult, though. Matsui first learned of the earthquake Thursday night on the Internet, and he has kept track since, his eyes glued to CNN while talking to reporters. "It's just the situation seems like it has really escalated," Matsui said.

All the TVs in Oakland's clubhouse were tuned to CNN on Friday, instead of ESPN and MLB Network, and manager Bob Geren opened his morning media session by asking the Japanese reporters about their families and friends; some of them have been unable to get through to loved ones because phone and Internet service has been disrupted.

"Obviously, it's a terrible situation," Geren said.

Kahlon said his father, Rajit, lives between Tokyo and Sendai, the town hit hardest by the earthquake. Rajit Kahlon was in a parking lot when the quake hit and told his son, "It was quite frightening."

Catcher Kurt Suzuki had checked with his family in Hawaii, which was touched by the tsunami. Everyone there was fine, but he said his mother was worried about relatives in Japan.

The A's are holding Japanese Heritage Day on April 3 at the Coliseum, where Matsui and Seattle's Japanese star, Ichiro Suzuki, will be in action. On Friday, the team announced that it will conduct fund-raising for the victims of the Japanese earthquake and tsunami on that day.

## **Coco Crisp hitting .478 after 3-hit game**

By Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer, 3/12/2011

**Coco Crisp** doesn't believe much in the theory that players shouldn't get too hot during the spring - that they should save it for the regular season.

Crisp had three hits, including his second homer of the spring, on Friday in the A's 9-2 win over the Dodgers, and he is batting .478 this spring.

"Maybe I should start making outs?" he said with a laugh when asked about saving his sizzling bat. "No, if I'm playing a little 12-year-old girl in pool, I want to win. I always want to do my best, no matter what happens."

Crisp was cited for suspected drunk driving last week, but his legal difficulties clearly haven't bothered him once the games start.

"Coming to the field clears your mind," he said. "I'm trying to deal with the off-field stuff, and when I'm here, I focus on baseball. As soon as I walk on the field, I forget about everything off the field."

Crisp said he believes that if he is healthy the entire season, he can be one of the best players in the league. He was injured three times last year, twice landing on the disabled list.

**Ziegler's new pitch:** **Brad Ziegler** is throwing a new pitch, one that he used back when he had a normal, over-the-top delivery, and he's liking the results.

It's just a simple two-seam fastball, but Ziegler never thought it suited his sidearm style. Wanting something with a little more movement than his straight four-seam fastball, though, Ziegler tried the two-seamer in warm-ups Tuesday "just to see - and the ball started sinking."

He took it into the game, got some outs with it, and now it might help Ziegler, who has options remaining, stay in the A's packed bullpen. He has allowed four hits, one walk and no runs in five innings, and he has struck out six.

"I can't take anything for granted," Ziegler said. "I don't want to have a job because it's been handed to me, anyway."

**Briefly: Daric Barton** remained out with soreness in his right leg, but he might play today against the Mariners. ... **Eric Sogard**, who is competing for the backup infield spot, is out with a sore left thumb and is expected to miss several more days.

### **Cactus League recap**

**Scores:** A's 9, Dodgers 2; Brewers 4, A's 3

**Notable:** Tyson Ross continued to be unscored upon this spring, going three innings against Milwaukee and allowing four hits and two walks, striking out one. ... Another fifth-starter candidate, Josh Outman, gave up seven hits, a walk and four runs in three innings. ... Hideki Matsui is hitting .048 after going 0-for-4 against the Dodgers, but manager Bob Geren said there is no concern about the designated hitter. ... Andy LaRoche had a hit, two RBIs and played shortstop, the position he must show he can handle in order to win the backup infielder spot.

**Quotable:** "It was pretty funny, because I got out of the game and Brett Anderson said, 'Welcome to the ERA club.' Thanks, Brett."

- Starter Gio Gonzalez, who allowed his first run of the spring, on a solo homer by Los Angeles' Aaron Miles in the fifth. Gonzalez's ERA is 0.96.

**Today's games:** A's (Guillermo Moscoso) at Mariners (Blake Beavan), 12:05 p.m. Radio: 860.

### **Drumbeat: Matsui's family OK; he's deeply concerned about Japan**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Phoenix Muni, 3/11/2011 9:28 AM

Hideki Matsui is from the western coast of Japan, and, through translator Roger Kahlon, he said his family is not in the area affected by the devastating earthquake and tsunami that have hit the country. Matsui is following the news closely and he is anxious about those in the damaged areas. It's tough to be away from home at such a time, he said, especially because "the situation seems like it has really escalated."

He first heard about the disaster while on the internet last night and, Matsui said, "It's a bit difficult to watch, to see all that is going on."

Matsui is continuing to monitor the news from Japan, and his eyes were glued to CNN throughout his morning interview session with English-speaking reporters. When he took the field later in the morning, he had a quick session with the Japanese media.

I've tried to check with as many of the Japanese reporters as possible to make sure everything is OK with their families; everyone with the A's and with the Bay Area media is concerned about them, too. They're here every day, they're all so nice and so professional, really great to have around, and it must be awful to be away from your home in a time of great crisis.

Many of them cannot get through to loved ones, because cell phone service is overloaded and the internet is down in many areas of Japan. And yet, everyone is here doing the job, which cannot be easy. I believe there are some worries for some of the group with family along the eastern coast, and we all are just hoping that things turn out OK.

Kurt Suzuki's family in Hawaii is all well, but he said they are concerned about family in Japan.

With all of this going on, spring training split-squad games seem even less important, but here are the lineups and the day's news:

\*Daric Barton will get one more day to rest his bruised right leg; the soreness has moved beyond the calf, leaving his knee stiff and even causing hip discomfort.

\*Rich Harden might throw off the mound as soon as tomorrow, but Sunday or Monday remain more likely.

\*There's still no date for Craig Breslow to pitch in a game, but he's still been throwing off the mound despite a sore hamstring, so he won't be behind in terms of arm strength.

A's at Brewers, with Tyson Ross starting: DeJesus cf, Weeks 2b, Jackson rf, Carson dh, Donaldson c, Timmons 1b, Taylor lf, Green ss, Cardenas 3b

A's vs. Dodgers at Phoenix Muni, with Gio Gonzalez starting: Crisp cf, Ellis 2b, Matsui dh, Willingham lf, Carter 1b, LaRoche ss, Powell c, Miller rf, Tolleson 3b

The start at shortstop is important for LaRoche, who must convince the A's that he can play well enough there to be able to fill in on occasion early in the season. LaRoche is batting .409, but considering Cliff Pennington still isn't hitting right-handed in games, the ability to play shortstop is going to be important for whichever player wins the backup infield spot. It's unlikely the A's want to run Pennington out there every day early in the season after left shoulder season during the winter.

Another candidate, the only one on the roster, Eric Sogard, is out with a sore thumb for a few days. Not the greatest timing for a roster hopeful, but the A's know what Sogard can do and they like his approach at the plate. He's not an ideal fit at shortstop, either.

### **3-Dot Lounge: Time for Hollywood treatment**

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle, 3/12/2011

Short takes from the 3-Dot Lounge, where our coastside branch survived the tsunami alert: As the production of "Moneyball" grinds on, let's hope the filmmakers take great liberties with the facts. **Michael Lewis'** book was superbly written, but there's nothing more boring than the A's search for no-speed, no-defense guys who could really work a 3-and-1 count on their way to a hopeless career. Let's watch **Billy Beane** as he rigs a set of explosives at the Angels' minor-league headquarters. Let's see **Art Howe** as a coke sniffing, late-night karaoke artist who worships **Otis Redding** and has memorized every song by the Sons of Champlin. Isolate a front-office executive quietly embezzling funds from the company. Make out the hero as a .438-hitting outfielder who swings at everything, literally, including Navy F-18s in the pregame fly-by. Cut to a scene where **Paul DePodesta** has a sawed-off shotgun in his office, and in private moments he lifts it out of a closet, fondles it, aims at things. One night he pretends to shoot, it goes off, and he takes out classic photos of **Joe Rudi** and **Blue Moon Odom**.

#### **A frustrated A's fan**

Reader **Ben Woods**, on our reference to Prague in a recent column: "I guarantee you that if the A's played in Prague, the ambiance would be better and the beer would be fabulous." ... If **Brandon Belt** fulfills the Giants' expectations down the line, **Pablo Sandoval** will be directly affected. It had been assumed that Sandoval could make a seamless transition to first base if his defense fell short at third, but that won't happen if Belt takes over the position. A good incentive for Sandoval to keep the weight off ... Still can't get over **Buster Posey's** 450-foot homer to dead center field in the recent exhibition against Colorado. Lots of guys hit monster shots with a dead-pull swing. When someone goes that deep straightaway, it calls to mind **Richie Allen** or **Frank Howard**. A rare breed of hitter ... The Giants seem quietly confident that **Cody Ross** — not **Aaron Rowand** — can take over center field if **Andres Torres** needs a replacement. Rowand, understandably a bit depressed of late, really needs a change of scene ... **Madison Bumgarner** took some good-natured ribbing over his claim that postseason baseball couldn't have brought more pressure than he felt pitching for the state title in high school. He's not that far off. High-school sports (football, especially) can make or break a kid, for life. Success or choke job? It can mean the difference between a successful career — say, breezing around town as a hotshot real estate agent — or getting too drunk in the bar every night, blaming it all on a coach or a teammate or an official ... Yahoo's **Jeff Passan** on Bumgarner: "Ringo" ... It won't be long before we get the first wave of nonsense from stat-crazed dunces claiming there's nothing to be learned from a batting average, won-loss record or RBI total. Listen, just go back to bed, OK? Strip down to those fourth-day undies, head downstairs (to "your mother's basement and your mother's computer," as **Chipper Jones** so aptly describes it) and churn out some more crap. For more than a century, .220 meant something. So did .278, .301, .350, an 18-4 record, or 118 RBIs. Now it all means nothing because a bunch of nonathletes are trying to reinvent the game?

#### **Funny headline**

"Warriors Playoff Hopes Take a Blow" after Wednesday's loss at New Jersey. On the real side, there were no hopes to damage. The Warriors' season ended with the losses at Minnesota and Indiana, launching a travesty of a road trip on which nothing good happened. No redeeming features. Season over ... The departure of **Brandon Wright** (no big loss, in truth) means that the Warriors have only a second round draft pick to show for the trade of **Jason Richardson**. But perhaps this is worse: Trading a No. 1 pick to New Jersey in July of 2008 for **Marcus Williams**. Does anyone even remember that guy? ... "SportsCenter" anchors **Neil Everett** and **Stan Verrett** have an annoying habit of isolating athletes as a "friend of the program." Really? If somebody sets a record for missed shots or gets arrested for assault, you

won't mention it? ... Ohio State sure will miss suspended coach **Jim Tressel** in those character building tests against Akron and Toledo. Good thing he'll be around for the third and fourth games on that brutal schedule: Intermediary Tech (the Fightin' Ombudsmen) and Dreadful A&M.

## **A's join Matsui, Suzuki in concern for Japan**

### **Players say they expect to hear that relatives, friends are safe**

By Rhett Bollinger, MLB.com, 3/11/2011

PHOENIX -- News of the 8.9-magnitude earthquake that rocked northeast Japan traveled quickly through the A's clubhouse Friday morning at Phoenix Municipal Stadium.

Players huddled together at tables watching video of the quake on CNN and many read aloud news updates gathered from their mobile devices.

It made for a somber morning, especially considering new addition Hideki Matsui hails from Japan and catcher Kurt Suzuki has relatives in the country.

But luckily for Matsui and Suzuki, they said their relatives were safe, as none of them live in the areas most affected by the earthquake.

"I haven't spoken to anybody yet in my family but they're not really close to the area," Matsui said through his translator, Roger Kahlon. "So I think they're OK."

Matsui, who is from Ishikawa prefecture located in southwest Japan, said he's had a difficult time watching the news coverage because Japan is so close to his heart. He said he heard the news late last night while using the Internet and had trouble sleeping.

"It is a bit disturbing to see this and I'm worried about the people in the area who have been affected by the earthquake," Matsui said. "It's a bit difficult to watch, especially because you're away. It's tough seeing all that's going on knowing you have family and people you know in the area."

Suzuki, meanwhile, said he spoke to his parents -- who live in Hawaii -- upon hearing the news, but that they're fine and so are his family members in Japan.

"They're in central Japan so they should be fine," Suzuki said. "I just talked to my mom this morning and she said they'll be OK."

A's manager Bob Geren went out of his way to make sure the large contingent of Japanese reporters who cover Matsui had a chance to reach out to their family and friends in Japan. But many of the media members explained it was difficult to reach out to loved ones because phone service has been affected throughout most of Japan.

Geren expressed sympathy to the Japanese reporters and made sure to remind everyone that baseball is just a game, especially compared to a tragedy like the one in Japan.

"Our news here is nothing compared to that," Geren said. "This is just baseball."

The A's announced that the team will help raise funds to aid victims of the disaster. The club is scheduled to open the regular season with a three-game series at Oakland-Alameda Coliseum against the Mariners and plans are being made to add a fund-raising component for Japanese Heritage Day, scheduled for the series' finale on April 3.

Details of the benefit game, which will feature Matsui and Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki, will be announced at a later date. The A's also said they will be working closely with Hiroshi Inomata, San Francisco's Japanese consul-general, and other community leaders in their efforts to support victims.

## **Gio continues impressive spring in A's win**

### **Lefty allows one run in 4 1/3 innings; Crisp records three hits**

By Rhett Bollinger, MLB.com, 3/11/2011

PHOENIX -- Left-hander Gio Gonzalez was impressive for 4 1/3 innings and the A's weathered a pair of home runs from the Dodgers in a 9-2 win on Friday at Phoenix Municipal Stadium.

Gonzalez was on his game, allowing just one run and four hits in his longest outing this spring. His lone blemish came on a home run from veteran Aaron Miles in the fifth inning, which was the first run he's allowed in Cactus League play.

"I thought he threw the ball well again like he has in every start," A's manager Bob Geren said. "It's like a broken record. He's right where we want him to be."

The A's struck first with a run in the opening frame coming on a single from Josh Willingham to score Coco Crisp, who led off the inning with a single against Dodgers right-hander Chad Billingsley.

And then Oakland added three more runs in the third inning, keyed by an error by third baseman Ivan DeJesus Jr. that allowed two runs to score. Former Dodger Andy LaRoche also added a run-scoring bloop single in the inning to give the A's a four-run lead.

Billingsley struggled with his control, allowing four runs on four hits and four walks over 3 1/3 innings to raise his Spring Training ERA to 4.50 ERA after entering the game with a 1.35 ERA.

But new addition Blake Hawksworth, who was acquired by the Dodgers in a trade that sent Ryan Theriot to St. Louis, looked sharp and tossed 1 2/3 perfect innings in relief of Billingsley.

Matt Kemp also added a homer for the Dodgers off left-hander Jerry Blevins in the sixth inning for his second home run of Spring Training.

Crisp homered in the seventh inning for the A's and collected three hits to raise his batting average to .478 in Cactus League play.

"He looked great," Geren said. "He played at a high level with us last year so we know what he can do."

**Dodgers up next:** It's split-squad Saturday. Ted Lilly takes the hill against the Royals in Surprise, Ariz. He's given up one run on three hits in 3 1/3 innings this spring. Jon Huber, Ron Mahay and Ramon Troncoso are also scheduled to pitch against Kansas City. Tim Redding will start against San Francisco's Jonathan Sanchez at Scottsdale Stadium. Roman Colon, Oscar Villarreal and Travis Schlichting are also on tap to pitch.

**A's up next:** The A's travel to Peoria, Ariz., to take on the Mariners at 12:05 p.m. PT with right-hander Guillermo Moscoso making his second start of the spring. Moscoso, acquired by the A's in a trade that sent fellow right-hander Ryan Kelly to Texas, has a 5.14 ERA in three Cactus League appearances. First baseman Daric Barton, who has been limited by a right calf contusion, also could make his return to the lineup after missing the previous five games.



## **Gio shrugs off end of shutout streak**

By Rhett Bollinger, MLB.com, 3/11/2011

PHOENIX -- Gio Gonzalez pitched the equivalent of a shutout -- nine scoreless innings in Cactus League play -- before finally serving up his first run this spring on a home run from Aaron Miles in the fifth inning of Oakland's 9-2 win over the Dodgers on Friday.

He recorded one more out after the homer when he got Ivan DeJesus Jr. to ground out before coming out after 4 1/3 innings, having allowed a run and four hits along with three strikeouts. But despite another solid performance, Gonzalez was still teased by fellow left-hander Brett Anderson upon entering the dugout after his outing.

"It's pretty funny because as soon as I got out of the inning, Brett said, 'Welcome to the ERA club,'" Gonzalez said with a smile. "But a couple of the guys said it was better to get it out of the way now instead of throwing zeros and then getting a reverse effect when the season starts."

Gonzalez has been dominant this spring, posting a 0.96 ERA in 9 1/3 innings and recording 13 strikeouts to lead the Cactus League. More important, Gonzalez said he feels healthy, just like he did last season, when he led the club with 33 starts and posted a 3.23 ERA.

"My arm feels great," Gonzalez said. "I just have to continue building strength and trying to pound the strike zone. You just can't fall behind guys. That's for sure."

## **Bailey reports no issues with elbow after debut**

PHOENIX -- A day after making his Cactus League debut, A's closer Andrew Bailey said his surgically repaired right elbow felt fine on Friday.

"It feels good for the most part," Bailey said. "I'm just getting through some things and getting through some other pitches. You have to break down barriers as you go."

Bailey, who had bone chips and spurs removed in a minor operation in September, said he threw only fastballs and cutters in his first outing on Thursday, when he struck out two of the three hitters he faced and needed just 12 pitches to record three outs.

But he said he'll start adding his curveball in game action soon and said he's been throwing it without any problems in bullpen sessions. He said he feels good but has just been extra cautious this spring because of the operation.

"Coming off the surgery you just want to give it some time," said Bailey, who posted a 1.47 ERA with 25 saves last year.

## **Barton on mend but remains out of lineup**

PHOENIX -- A's first baseman Daric Barton was held out of the lineup for the fifth straight day on Friday, as he's still bothered by a right calf contusion he sustained after colliding with San Diego's Logan Forsythe following a high throw from Kevin Kouzmanoff in the fourth inning of Sunday's split-squad game in Peoria, Ariz.

"It's gradually getting better," Barton said. "But my right leg is still feeling the aftermath of the calf, so it's taking its course. I was going to play yesterday, but it wasn't ready and I didn't want to risk it."

The injury is still not regarded as serious, but the A's just want to play it safe, according to manager Bob Geren, who said he's hopeful Barton can return on Saturday.

"It's one of things where if it were the season he'd play through it," Geren said. "But we're three weeks away from the season and it's not worth risking any more damage to it."

## **Ross keeps spring scoreless streak going**

By Adam McCalvy, MLB.com, 03/11/11

PHOENIX -- Yovani Gallardo was solid in his first start since being named Milwaukee's Opening Day starter, and bench hopefuls Brandon Boggs and Erick Almonte stayed hot in a 4-3 win over an Oakland split squad Friday at Maryvale Baseball Park.

Boggs' eighth-inning double hugged the left-field line and scored go-ahead runner Chris Dickerson, who led off the inning with a pinch-hit triple. Boggs finished 3-for-4, and is 8-for-15 in his last four games for the Brewers.

Almonte bolstered his own bid for a roster spot with two more hits, including an RBI triple in the fifth inning that put the Brewers on the board. He's 14-for-19 in his last six games.

For the A's, left fielder Michael Taylor led the way with two hits and an RBI.

Gallardo, named Thursday to start his second consecutive Brewers opener, allowed one run on four hits in 3 2/3 effective innings, with four strikeouts and one walk. He's scheduled for three more Spring Training starts before facing the Reds on March 31 in Cincinnati.

"I was falling behind hitters there in the first inning, but as the game was going on, I felt like the fastball was coming out the way it was [five days earlier against the Reds], which is good," Gallardo said. "I was able to throw some big pitches when I got in trouble."

Oakland fifth starter candidate Tyson Ross pitched three scoreless innings in his fourth Spring Training appearance and first start. He has yet to allow a run in 9 2/3 innings this spring, and his two walks Friday were the first he's issued.

Another fifth starter candidate, lefty Josh Outman, allowed four runs on seven hits in three innings.

**A's up next:** The A's travel to Peoria, Ariz., on Saturday to take on the Mariners at 12:05 p.m. PT with right-hander Guillermo Moscoso making his second start of the spring. Moscoso, acquired by the A's in a trade that sent fellow right-hander Ryan Kelly to Texas, has a 5.14 ERA in three Cactus League appearances. First baseman Daric Barton, who has been limited by a right calf contusion, also could make his return to the lineup after missing the previous five games.

**Brewers up next:** Shaun Marcum will be well-rested for his outing against the D-backs at 2:05 p.m. CT on Saturday at Maryvale Baseball Park. Marcum was originally slated to pitch Thursday against the Rockies, but was bumped back when the Brewers reorganized their rotation in the wake of Zack Greinke's cracked rib. Marcum, lined up to start Milwaukee's second game of the regular season, last pitched on March 5 against the Angels and was very good, allowing only two hits in three scoreless innings.

## **Matsui's mind drifts to his homeland of Japan**

By Lowell Cohn, Santa Rosa Press Democrat, 3/11/2011

PHOENIX - The scene was the same but different. As usual, 20 or more Japanese media — writers, photographers, TV cameramen — waited early in the morning for Hideki Matsui in the players' parking lot at Phoenix Municipal Stadium, waited for him to arrive in his black van and park and get out and walk toward the players' entrance.

But this time — Friday morning — something more was at stake than the arrival of their national superstar. Japan had suffered a horrendous earthquake and the media people were worried because they couldn't reach loved ones by phone or internet. Still, they did their jobs to do. They waited.

At 9:45 a.m., Matsui arrived. He walked toward the media but he didn't stop. He waved and kept going. This is his usual style, the polite wave without breaking stride. And no one in the media mob felt offended. Matsui never stops. He talks later and the Japanese journalists understand that. They waited in case he stopped and talked. Matsui talking is news. Matsui talking about the earthquake is enormous.

He changed at his locker, told some writers through his personal interpreter he's not from the region of Japan ravaged by the earthquake, doesn't know anyone there. Then he walked through the tunnel toward the field while the media horde waited, cameras pointing. Matsui climbed up the dugout steps and stood on the gravel in foul ground and spoke briefly in Japanese, his face somber, about the catastrophe. Then he was gone — a baseball player playing baseball.

A's play-by-play announcer Ken Korach has observed Matsui all spring. "He's gracious and accommodating," Korach said. "He understands his iconic status and the responsibility that goes with it. The writers find him a pleasing sort of personality. He takes it all in stride. He seemingly doesn't get bogged down by it all. He's patient. This guy's a mensch."

That's probably the first time anyone called Matsui a mensch. Does anyone know how to say mensch in Japanese?

Matsui playing for the A's has impact on the total size of media covering the team — the number just grew exponentially. The A's assigned 22 press-box seats down here for Japanese media intent on all things Matsui. That wasn't enough. The A's set aside two overflow press boxes for Japanese journalists. The seats in these areas are on a first-come-first-served basis and the A's hope that suffices. Just the other day when Seattle visited Phoenix, 60 Japanese journalists were there to cover Matsui and Ichiro.

In addition to his personal interpreter, Matsui has his own personal public-relations representative named Isao. Isao has a desk in the A's offices and he travels with the team. He coordinates all Japanese media and advises the A's on how many will need credentials in the regular season. So many have requested credentials that every spot in the A's press box will be taken — and there will be more Japanese media than anyone else

So here's a two-part quiz. 1) How many full-season media credentials will the A's issue for Japanese press? Answer: At least 50, but it could be more. 2) How many did the A's issue last season to Japanese media? Answer: Zero.

## **Oakland A's plan to raise funds for tsunami relief**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — The Oakland Athletics have announced plans to help raise funds to aid victims of the tsunami and earthquake disaster in Japan.

The A's said Friday they are adding a fundraising component for Japanese Heritage Day against the Seattle Mariners on April 3. Details of the game, which also features Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki, will come at a later date.

Oakland A's slugger and 2009 World Series MVP Hideki Matsui also expressed his condolences to victims in his native Japan after a magnitude-8.9 offshore quake triggered a massive tsunami. In a statement released through the team, Matsui says he is "deeply concerned and affected by what is happening in Japan. I pray for the safety of all the people that have been affected and continue to be affected by this disaster."

## **A's Gonzalez finally yields an earned run**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHOENIX — Gio Gonzalez finally gave up a run. Chad Billingsley gave up a whole bunch of them.

Gonzalez allowed a solo homer to Aaron Miles for his first earned run of the spring, but an Oakland A's split squad beat the Los Angeles Dodgers, 9-2, Friday.

"A couple of the guys were saying better to get it out of the way now instead of going out there and keep throwing up zeroes and when the season starts, hopefully you don't get that reverse effect," Gonzalez said. "I feel good. The arm feels great and just got to continue building strength and keep going out there and finding the strike zone."

Josh Willingham, Chris Carter and Andy LaRoche drove in runs off Billingsley, and Coco Crisp homered and had three hits. Crisp is 11 for 23 in the spring.

"Jeez, Coco, save it for the season," Gonzalez said.

Billingsley, who'd allowed one earned run in 6» previous innings, gave up four in his third spring training start.

Gonzalez pitched 4½ innings in his third spring training start and had a shutout until Miles homered in the fourth.

### **BREWERS 4, A'S (SS) 3**

Oakland starter Tyson Ross pitched three scoreless innings, allowing four hits while walking two and striking out one, but the Milwaukee Brewers defeated the split-squad Oakland A's, 4-3.

Brewers starter Yovani Gallardo gave up one run in 3» innings.

The A's scored twice in the top of the eighth to tie the game at 3-3. Josh Whitaker hit a run-scoring double for the first run and Matt Carson's single tied the game at 3.

## **BREAKING NEWS: A's Matsui reacts to tsunami -- 'difficult to watch'**

Ray Ratto, CSNBayArea.com, 3/11/2011

PHOENIX -- Each day, the phalanx of Japanese reporters holds a stakeout of sort in the A's parking awaiting the arrival of Hideki Matsui.

Friday, though, the urgency was geometrically larger for them all, given the horrific events in their shared homeland.

The 8.9 earthquake that hit northeast of Tokyo and sent a series of tsunamis across the Pacific to even the Bay Area consumed their thoughts, and the A's clubhouse televisions. Where normally there is sports on TV, there was news, and the footage of entire acres and city blocks consumer by a wall of water, and where there would normally be joking there was a wall of concerned faces.

None of the reporters in the A's camp, though, reported any fears for their immediate families, and Matsui also said that his own family was not near the most affected areas.

"I haven't gotten to speak to anybody, but they're not really close to the area," he said, "so I think they're OK."

He saw the news of the earthquake on the Internet, and watched the news until he finally fell asleep.

"It's been a bit difficult to watch, especially being away, to see all this," he said through his interpreter. "It's hard being away from your family and the people you know."

## **Ratto: Hot Coco makes A's a special team**

Ray Ratto, CSNBayArea.com, 3/11/2011

[Coco Crisp](#) started the spring slowly . . . well, pun intended.

And while his DUI is still being adjudicated, he is doing what he can to keep it compartmentalized, by owning spring training.

He homered as the high point of a three-hit day in the A's 9-2 win over the [Dodgers](#) at Phoenix Municipal, and is now 11-for-23 this March. And to the extent that one has something to do with the other, Crisp acknowledges that the ballpark serves as a nice way to shut out the outside world.

"I just find that when I'm here, it clears my mind," the A's starting center fielder said. "Just a little sanctuary to separate me from the outside world is an easy thing for me."

'The off-the-field stuff is what I'm trying to deal with now, but coming to the park is good for me.'

Crisp isn't trying to minimize the charge so much as to explain why he is hitting .478 and looking like the player the A's hoped would stay healthy all last year. He didn't, of course, breaking a finger and missing more than half the season, thereby becoming just one more Elephant who has to prove in this season of heightened expectations that he can meet his own.

And while he says he is typically a good spring hitter, he acknowledges that this is a bit better than the norm.

"I guess it's good," he said when asked facetiously if he liked the way he has begun the Cactus League. "I'm definitely seeing the ball better, that's the biggest thing. But I'm trying to keep everything simple and not do too much. I just figure if I do that, I can help this team be special this year."

And in doing so, he is doing plenty, at least so far. His workload is likely to be cut back a bit, as manager Bob Geren figures he'll be good with about 50 some-odd at-bats, but he already has nearly half that, and his on-base percentage of .565 would make Billy Beane speak in tongues.

Crisp was the highlight on a day of them -- Gio Gonzalez gave up his first earned run of the spring but threw another exemplary 4 1/3 innings and looks like he might very well be the 1A in the team's starting rotation.

Hideki Matsui, on the other hand, went 0-for-4, and his spring average of .048 would be a concern if he didn't have so many other more important things on his mind. He, too, will get a bit more time off, though Geren said he has not looked late or overwhelmed at the plate. "He's going to be fine," Geren said, chanting his usual mantra.

The A's lost their B-game in Maryvale to the Brewers, 4-3, with the noteworthy event being [Josh Outman](#)'s struggle, giving up seven hits and all four Milwaukee runs in his three innings of work. [Tyson Ross](#) looked sharp as the starter, but Outman may be slowly working himself out of the fifth starter argument. It's still early to make such judgments, but at some point judgments will have to be made.

And nobody knows that more than Coco Crisp, who needs nothing more than to make his good times at the park more directly reflect his off-field issue. Once that's done, he might just be able to be that special player for that special team he says he wants to be.