

## A's News Clips, Tuesday, April 12, 2011

### Kurt Suzuki hits game-winning home run in 10th inning as A's beat White Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

CHICAGO -- The opportunities were few for the A's on Monday, but Kurt Suzuki was ready when he got his.

His homer in the top of the 10th off Jesse Crain lifted the A's to a 2-1 victory over the Chicago White Sox in front of 20,057 fans at U.S. Cellular Field.

It marked the A's third straight victory, and it was another example of their ability to make a lot out of a little.

Left-hander Mark Buehrle bottled them up for eight innings and held them hitless through five. The A's managed just five hits total, yet claimed their fourth win in the past five games and evened their record at 5-5.

"We dropped too many of those last year, those 10-, 11-inning ballgames," A's starting pitcher Dallas Braden said. "We'd like to turn that ship around and be on the other end of that."

The A's went 4-7 in extra-inning affairs in 2010, the third-worst record in the American League. Good karma might be the only explanation for how they even extended Monday's game past the ninth.

The Sox led 1-0 when Matt Thornton relieved Buehrle to start the ninth. Andy LaRoche greeted Thornton with a double. After Coco Crisp lined out, Daric Barton lofted a deep fly to the left-field corner.

Juan Pierre drifted to his right and had a bead on the ball, but it nearly missed his glove completely and went for a two-base error. That allowed pinch runner Cliff Pennington to score from second and tie it.

In the 10th, Suzuki got a 1-2 fastball from Crain (0-1) and lined a ball that barely cleared the left-field wall.

"He hit it hard enough, but you didn't know if it was going to be high enough," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Suzuki was hitting just .185 (5 for 27) with one RBI entering the night. He broke up Buehrle's no-hitter with a leadoff single in the sixth, then picked the perfect time for his first homer.

"It's a big thrill, any time you can contribute and get a hit when it really counts," Suzuki said.

The A's are 4-1 in their past five games despite scoring just 11 runs over that span.

It figured runs might be tough to come by against Buehrle, who opposed Braden in the major leagues' 21st matchup of starting pitchers who had thrown perfect games.

Each lefty impressed.

Braden held the Sox to five hits over six innings. His only mistake came on Brent Lillibridge's two-out homer in the fifth.

Buehrle didn't allow a base runner until Barton walked with one out in the fourth. Buehrle received a nice ovation after allowing Suzuki's single in the sixth -- the ninth time in his career he's carried a no-hitter past the fifth.

"(It was) the same thing Buehrle always does," Suzuki said. "He changes speeds, he gets ahead. People say he throws a lot of junk, but he's an aggressive strike-thrower."

The A's unsung hero of the night: Tyson Ross. He hadn't made an appearance in five games since being called up from Triple-A Sacramento, but Ross delivered three shutout innings in relief of Braden and got the victory.

He struck out four, mixing a fastball that reached 95 mph with a slider that had hitters chasing.

"Nothing short of phenomenal," Braden said of Ross.

Brian Fuentes recorded a 1-2-3 10th for his third save in three days.

## **Oakland A's notebook: Trevor Cahill signed to five-year, \$30.5 million deal**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

CHICAGO -- The A's locked up another cornerstone piece Monday, signing right-hander Trevor Cahill to a five-year, \$30.5 million contract.

He becomes the third young A's player to receive a multiyear deal since the start of last season. Fellow starter Brett Anderson signed a four-year, \$12.5 million contract last April and catcher Kurt Suzuki received a four-year \$16.25 million deal in July.

Cahill, 23, came with a much steeper price tag after his 18-win season and All-Star appearance in 2010. He went 10-13 as a rookie in 2009 and began last season with Triple-A Sacramento.

"In all my years here, I don't know that I've seen somebody make such great strides in such a brief amount of time as Trevor," said A's general manager Billy Beane, who assumed his duties after the 1997 season.

Cahill will earn \$500,000 this season (replacing his previous contract worth \$440,000), \$3.5 million in 2012, \$5.5 million in 2013, \$7.7 million in 2014 and \$12 million in 2015. The A's hold club options for 2016 (\$13 million, with a \$300,000 buyout) and 2017 (\$13.5 million, \$500,000 buyout). Cahill also received a signing bonus of \$1 million.

The 2017 option escalates to \$14 million if Cahill finishes in the top two in Cy Young Award voting anytime from 2011-16.

That's quality compensation for a player who could be giving up his first three years of free agency. Cahill would have qualified for free agency after the 2014 season.

"I was joking around with Billy that if they'd have signed me when they were sending me down to Sacramento, I'd have signed for almost anything," Cahill said. "Having patience and confidence that I could turn my career around after not having a great first year, I think that definitely helped me out."

The five-year, \$30.1 million deal that Toronto gave in August to lefty Ricky Romero surely was a barometer for the Cahill negotiations.

Beane said the A's will look to sign other key players to long-term deals. Starting pitcher Gio Gonzalez is a logical candidate, and it's believed the A's are interested in a deal with first baseman Daric Barton.

Closer Andrew Bailey (forearm strain) threw off the mound for the first time since going on the disabled list and came out of it well. He'll throw again in a couple days.

Rich Harden, on the DL with a strained side muscle, was supposed to throw live batting practice, but he felt soreness in the same area while warming up and the session was scratched.

## **Cam Inman: After Oakland A's sign Trevor Cahill, are big paydays on deck soon for the San Francisco Giants' Tim Lincecum, Matt Cain?**

By Cam Inman, Oakland Tribune columnist

Baseball's economic world is a surreal one, indeed.

Cahill's five-year, \$30.5 million deal Monday is a win-win for him and the A's. It is also a reminder that the Giants haven't locked up their young studs to multiyear rewards.

"Generally we prefer lengths of contracts that match up with performance profiles," Giants managing partner Bill Neukom said before Monday night's series opener with the Los Angeles Dodgers. "There is no strict rule on long-term contracts. It depends on the player and circumstances."

Lincecum, fellow pitcher Matt Cain and catcher Buster Posey certainly played integral roles in last season's ultimate circumstance -- San Francisco's first world championship. That trio should be atop the order for long-term financial security.

"We'll have to pay fair value," Neukom allowed.

Is there a sense of urgency?

"We will do it timely," Neukom replied. "There is no sense of urgency. We will do it timely."

The timing of Cahill's deal makes sense, for him and the A's, who typically pay their players based on potential.

The Giants are a more intriguing story line. Potential? Ha. Look at Saturday's championship ring ceremony. Look at Sunday's acknowledgment of Posey's National League Rookie of the Year award.

Only Barry Zito has a guaranteed contract extending through 2013. Baseball's arbitration process preserves the Giants' rights to younger players, but at some point -- perhaps soon -- long-term commitments and fat checks must be made.

Lincecum is a reigning world champ, a two-time Cy Young winner, a three-time National League strikeout king. He's earned roughly \$25 million in the majors, most of that coming from a two-year, \$23 million contract he signed before last season.

Lincecum, Tuesday night's starting pitcher, isn't going to get cheaper. Yes, he has two arbitration years remaining, and the Giants can use that to help steer their pay structure. But he is the face of the franchise and of San Francisco's first championship (with apologies to Brian Wilson's beard, Aubrey Huff's red thong and so many other clutch performances).

The Giants aren't cheapskates. Their \$120 million payroll is a franchise record. And it will have to go up once they reward last year's heroes.

Don't you think it's strange that multiyear contracts didn't arrive in spring training? Sure, Huff came back on a two-year deal with a club option for 2013, and second baseman Freddy Sanchez received a \$6 million extension for 2012.

A conga line awaits their own paydays, starting with Lincecum, Cain and Posey. No. 2 starter Jonathan Sanchez, outfielders Cody Ross and Andres Torres and third baseman Pablo Sandoval would be wise to parlay last season into more magic.

Don't forget about Wilson, whose contract was extended last year through 2012. Even rookie first baseman Brandon Belt's future earnings must be weighed.

Doesn't it make you wonder if Neukom is following some Microsoft protocol of a motivation-based pay policy? If so, how do you argue that when his world-championship bow tie is staring you in the face.

Manager Bruce Bochy and general manager Brian Sabean surely should have been rewarded better than they were in February, when only their options were picked up for 2012. Um, hooray?

Look, baseball -- and most sports -- is too polluted with bloated salaries for players who fail to live up to their paychecks. In a way, short-term contracts are what the public wants from athletes: Make them continually prove their worth in this what-have-you-done-for-me-lately society. But that is not how sports work. The "business" alarm eventually rings in players' heads -- or their wives' or agents'.

Don't take this to mean Lincecum should grab any five-year, \$30.5 million parachute. He would command four times that amount on the open market. And so far, he's made no gripes about his salary, even parlaying his 2010 contract negotiations into his first championship.

But pay him off, and others, too, before there is any chance to get jaded -- either from news of other players such as Cahill striking it rich or from looking at teammates such as Zito or Aaron Rowand who define financial security.

For Cahill's sake, what a terrific way to commemorate the one-year anniversary of his demotion to Triple-A. For the A's, they just made a long commitment to a 23-year-old arm that rebounded to win 18 games last year (but couldn't make it out of the fifth inning in this season's opener against a lousy Seattle Mariners lineup).

These are the same A's who last season locked up pitcher Brett Anderson to a four-year, \$12.5 million contract. That's good business. That's also chump change for what the Giants will have to pay their championship crew.

For the Giants' sake, they better hope their young players are working under the guise that their earning potential is way greater than any \$30.5 million or \$12.5 million payday. It most definitely is.

According to Neukom, those jackpots eventually are coming -- in a "timely" fashion.

## Chin Music: A's lock up another starter: Trevor Cahill signs five-year extension

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/11/2011 4:44PM

Checking in from Chicago, where the A's begin a three-game series against the White Sox ...

Right-hander Trevor Cahill signed a five-year contract extension today worth a guaranteed \$30.5 million, meaning the A's have two of their top young starters locked up with long-term deals. They signed Brett Anderson to a four-year, \$12.5 million last April. Cahill's contract kicks in with this season and runs through 2015, with the A's holding a \$13 million club option for 2016 and a \$13.5 million option on 2017. Cahill could have been eligible for free agency following the 2014 season, so he's potentially giving up three seasons of free agency if the A's pick up his options. However, if that happens, Cahill will be collecting \$57 million over seven seasons, which is a large chunk of money.

The A's could have saved lots of money locking up Cahill around the same time they signed Anderson. Cahill went on to make the All-Star team last season and won 18 games, driving his price up. But I don't blame them for not acting that quickly. They had no idea what they had in Cahill at the time Anderson signed. "This is always sort of a guessing game for when the club makes a commitment or when the player makes a commitment," A's GM Billy Beane said. He added: "I would probably say in all my years here, I don't know that I've seen somebody make such great strides in such a brief amount of time as Trevor."

—Here's tonight's lineups, with Conor Jackson starting in right field and Andy LaRoche playing shortstop against lefty Mark Buehrle.

A's: Crisp CF, Barton 1B, Jackson RF, Willingham LF, Ellis 2B, Matsui DH, Suzuki C, Kouzmanoff 3B, LaRoche SS. Braden LHP

White Sox: Pierre LF, Beckham 2B, Rios CF, Konerko 1B, Quentin DH, Ramirez SS, Morel 3B, Castro C, Lillibridge RF; Buehrle LHP.

—Good news for the A's: Andrew Bailey threw from the mound for the first time since going on the DL, and his forearm felt good after his 20-pitch session. He'll throw again in 2-3 days. Bad news for the A's: Rich Harden felt soreness in his right side while warming up, and his live batting practice session was scratched. He won't get back on the mound for the time being. That lat muscle is the same problem area that landed him on the DL to begin with (though the A's list the injury as a shoulder strain) ...

That's all for now ...

## Kurt Suzuki's homer wins it in 10th for A's

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A back-and-forth affair between two pitchers who have perfect games on their resumes yielded few runs and wasn't decided until both men left the game.

Oakland's **Dallas Braden** went six innings and allowed five hits and one run, a homer by **Brent Lillibridge**, and **Mark Buehrle** of the White Sox went eight and allowed two hits. The A's scored an unearned run in the ninth, thanks to an error by **Juan Pierre** in left that allowed pinch-runner **Cliff Pennington** to come home.

With two outs in the 10th, catcher **Kurt Suzuki** lifted a homer to left that just cleared the fence in front of Chicago's bullpen. "I thought it was a double," Suzuki said with a laugh. "I was running."

The A's got super relief work from **Tyson Ross**, who worked three scoreless innings and allowed one hit and a walk, and **Brian Fuentes**, who earned his fourth save.

It was the third win in a row for Oakland, and fourth in five games, though the A's have scored only 11 runs in that span.

Braden, who struck out seven, was OK with coming out after 95 pitches; he said he'd had some quad tightness. As for the matchup, Braden said, "You do note the guy you're up against is pretty good, so you just try to keep your team around."

**Setback for Harden:** **Rich Harden** was scheduled to throw to hitters, but he felt discomfort in the lat area that has bothered him since mid-February, and he was shut down. Harden said he's not sure what the next step is, but he's frustrated that his return to the team will be delayed again.

**Good day for Bailey:** Closer **Andrew Bailey** worked off the mound for the first time since straining his right forearm last month, throwing 20 fastballs at 70 percent effort, he said. He expects that he will begin throwing regular bullpen sessions.

## **A's sign Trevor Cahill for 5 years, \$30.5 mil**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Trevor Cahill joked with A's general manager Billy Beane that if Beane had signed him a year ago, when Cahill was sent down to Triple-A Sacramento, he would have accepted any amount.

Over the course of last season, the price tag went way up, and on Monday afternoon before Oakland's 2-1 victory over the White Sox in 10 innings at U.S. Cellular Field, Cahill signed a five-year deal worth a guaranteed \$30.5 million. The team holds options worth \$13 million in 2016, with a buyout of \$300,000, and \$13.5 million in 2017, with a buyout of \$500,000.

The contract is a testament to Cahill's transformation last season, going from demoted in April to All-Star in July and 18-game winner by season's end.

"In all my years here, I've never seen someone make such great strides in such a short amount of time," Beane said of Cahill, who will start tonight's game against the White Sox.

The A's signed Cahill's fellow 23-year-old rotation mate, left-hander Brett Anderson, to a four-year deal worth \$12.5 million last April, but since then, Toronto signed starter Ricky Romero to a five-year, \$30.1 million deal, pushing up the market.

Cahill's deal is almost identical to the one starter Clay Buchholz signed with Boston on Sunday.

Anderson said he has no problem with his good friend getting a much richer deal, saying, "It's awesome. Knowing that Trevor and Kurt Suzuki and I are locked in for several years is great. That's a good core to build on."

Suzuki, the A's catcher, said he's starting to feel like former Oakland catcher Ramon Hernandez, who was behind the plate for much of the Big Three era.

"I think it's cool," Suzuki said. "I know trades can happen, but if everything goes as planned, we're going to be here together for a while."

Left-hander Gio Gonzalez is among those who could be next in line for a multiyear deal, along with first baseman Daric Barton, who will be arbitration-eligible after this season.

"It looks like everyone in the rotation is getting a deal," Gonzalez said with a grin. "I'm crossing my fingers."

Cahill's deal includes a \$1 million signing bonus, and he will make \$500,000 this year, \$3.5 million in 2012, \$5.5 million in 2013, \$7.7 million in 2014 and \$12 million in 2015. The second option year increases to \$14 million if Cahill finishes in the top two in Cy Young voting in any of the next six seasons.

With his newfound wealth, Cahill can buy a lot of toys. Actual toys.

"I think he has a chance of creating the world's largest Lego collection," A's reliever Craig Breslow joked. "Maybe he could build us a new stadium - out of Legos."

Described as a geek by most of his teammates for his undisguised love of Lego blocks and "Star Wars" movies and memorabilia, Cahill was getting some grief Monday. Gonzalez said that Cahill would shop in "the 'Star Wars' home department" and speculated that Cahill might fix up his car "so that it turns into a spaceship."

"He'll do something goofy, something not typical of a big-league baseball player," Anderson said.

That might be exactly the case: Asked what he might do with the money, Cahill said, "Save it."

## **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Who?** Reliever Craig Breslow hasn't worked since April 2. "It feels like I haven't pitched in a month," said Breslow, who appeared in 75 games last season. "I've been ready to pitch every day. ... I don't handle sitting well, but that's not my call."

## **Drumbeat: Kurt Suzuki homer in 10th sends A's to third win in row**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at U.S. Cellular Field 4/11/2011 8:46PM

Kurt Suzuki timed his first home run of 2011 well - the drive, which barely cleared the bullpen wall in left - came in the 10th inning on Monday night and was the game-winning blow, as Oakland beat the White Sox 2-1.

Suzuki said he thought it was a double, so he was running pretty hard with two outs in the 10th after whacking the fastball from Jesse Crain.

It's fitting that the man who'd caught such a good game was the offensive hero, too; with Suzuki behind the plate, Dallas Braden allowed five hits and one run in six innings, the run coming on Brent Lillibridge's homer with two outs in the fifth. Braden walked two and he struck out seven.

There was more good pitching to follow, with Tyson Ross making his first appearance of the season and throwing three scoreless, allowing only one hit and a walk while striking out four. Brian Fuentes worked a perfect 10th for his fourth save, striking out two. That's 13 Ks for A's pitchers on the night.

The A's starters' ERA is down to 2.38. The offense, however, remains minimal - though the team has won four of the past five games, they've scored only 11 runs in doing so.

Braden said he was "blowing hard" his final inning of work and he had no problem coming out after 95 pitches because he had some quad tightness. No need to try to be a hero, he said, when you have someone like Tyson Ross to take over for you.

Ross did look impressive, hitting in the mid-90s with his fastball and wielding a nasty slider. Remember, he only gave up one run during the spring.

It all might have gone for naught without Andy LaRoche, who got the A's going with a leadoff double in the ninth off Matt Thornton. With one out, pinch runner Cliff Pennington scored when Juan Pierre flubbed Daric Barton's flyball to left.

Then came Suzuki's drive.

Manager Bob Geren noted after the game that after Mark Buehrle left following his eight scoreless innings of work, almost anyone would have looked better to face. Buehrle allowed only two hits, and none until the seventh - when Suzuki singled to lead off the inning.

These are the kinds of games the A's were losing the first week of the season - and much of last year.

"We dropped too many of these one-run, 10-inning games last year," Braden said. "This year, we'd like to turn that ship around."

Braden's getting more of the same from last year, though. He's designated non-support guy. The A's put up zero while he was in the game Monday, and in his career, he's gotten two runs of support or less in 45 of 77 starts.

LaRoche is batting .417. Might he be back in tomorrow evening, or must he wait until the A's face another left-hander on Wednesday, when John Danks goes for Chicago? Geren said LaRoche is making the team look smart for keeping him after his fine spring. Maybe LaRoche could do the same thing with a start against a right-hander.

## **Drumbeat: A's sign Trevor Cahill to five-year, \$30.5 million deal**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at U.S. Cellular Field 4/11/2011 1:38PM

The Trevor Cahill deal is done, and it could take him through age 30 and pay him more than \$56 million.

The basics: It's five guaranteed years at \$30.5 million, with team options for two years at \$13 million and \$13.5 million. The first buyout is \$300,000, and the second \$500,000.

The A's signed their other 23-year-old star starter, Brett Anderson, to a four-year, \$12.5 million deal last year, and obviously this is one more year and Cahill was a year closer to arbitration.

And, since the A's started talking to Cahill last summer, he's been named to an All-Star team and won 18 games, and Toronto's Ricky Romero, with similar service time and number of starts signed a deal worth \$30-plus million. The Clay Buchholz deal isn't far off from this one, either.

I'll be probably tweeting (@susanslusser) Cahill's reactions before getting back here to add it in the Drumbeat. If you aren't on Twitter, there's the SFGate.com Twitter feed, though it runs a bit behind real time and sometimes is clogged up with other things.

## **Error, Suzuki homer rally A's over White Sox**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 4/12/2011 1:01 AM ET

CHICAGO -- Monday's anticipated matchup between Oakland's Dallas Braden and Chicago's Mark Buehrle marked the 21st time in Major League history that two pitchers with perfect games attached to their résumés started against each other.

Both delivered. By night's end, though, neither was a deciding factor.

That role was reserved for Kurt Suzuki, who broke up Buehrle's no-hitter in the sixth and then changed the game again in the top of the 10th with his first home run of the season off Chicago's Jesse Crain to guide the A's to a 2-1 victory.

"Any time you can contribute and do something when it really counts," Suzuki said, "it's a big thrill and exciting time. I'm just happy I could deliver."

"That was a huge home run," said A's manager Bob Geren, whose club reached the .500 mark (5-5) for the first time this season with the win. "He was facing a tough right-hander there and he got one pitch up. He got on top of it really well and

hit it hard. The whole dugout's yelling, 'Get up, get up,' cause it was hit hard enough; we just didn't know if it was long enough."

It was, and the A's catcher would have never been granted the game-winning opportunity had his team not experienced a dose of luck in the ninth, which the A's began trailing, 1-0.

With White Sox closer Matt Thornton on the mound, Andy LaRoche doubled and scored on a two-base fielding error by Juan Pierre, who dropped a long fly ball off the bat of Daric Barton in left field -- "I just flat-out missed it," he said -- to nullify Buehrle's magical start.

The White Sox ace compiled five innings of no-hit ball before Suzuki broke up the historic attempt with a leadoff line-drive to left field in the sixth. The A's mustered just one more hit off Buehrle through eight frames, a seventh-inning single from Josh Willingham, as the lefty walked just one and struck out one in the no-decision.

"It was one of those games where everything was working," Buehrle said. "In 33 starts, 11 of them you're going to have good stuff, 11 are going to be so-so and 11 are going to be bad. And today was one of the good ones."

"Same thing Buehrle always does -- changes speeds, gets ahead," Suzuki said. "Guys say he throws a lot of junk, but to me, he's an aggressive strike thrower. He throws the junk, but throws it for strikes. That's what makes him so tough."

Braden matched Buehrle's dominant showing from the get-go, tallying three of his own no-hit innings before offering up an infield single to Alex Rios with one out in the fourth. The A's lefty was well aware of the night's setup, but greatly downplayed the perfect comparisons.

"I don't really ever try to let what the other guy's doing affect my game plan," he said. "I was just basically trying to match momentum."

Braden did just that, until the fifth, when a two-out shot from Brent Lillibridge put Chicago (6-4) on the board with a 1-0 lead. Working up to 95 pitches and battling a mild case of quad tightness, Braden exited after six with one run, five hits, two walks and seven strikeouts attached to his name.

"You had two similar style pitchers going out there, and they were kind of just matching each other pitch for pitch," Geren said. "Dallas gave us everything he had."

Right-hander Tyson Ross, recently recalled to take the active roster place of an injured Michael Wuertz, made his season debut in relief of Braden and held the White Sox scoreless for three innings, showcasing no signs of nerves in a rather daunting situation while the A's made a comeback.

"Nothing short of phenomenal," Braden said of Ross. "You come in in that situation and throw three innings of dominant baseball ... For a guy who got the call up the day before his supposed start in Triple-A and just deal-fest and keep us in the game, you can't ask for more. If you do, you're greedy."

"He came to camp and he was all about throwing strikes," Suzuki said. "That's what he did tonight. Tyson's effort tonight was huge to give us the innings out of the bullpen he did and to shut them down and give us the chance to win."



That win, Oakland's fifth of the 2011 campaign, moved the club to 3-2 in one-run games following a 2010 season that saw the A's go 23-20 in such contests. Furthermore, they improved to 1-1 in extra-inning games this year. Last year, they were 4-7.

"We dropped too many of these ballgames too often last year -- these one-run ballgames, these 10- and 11-inning ballgames," Braden said. "This year, we'd like to turn that ship around a little. So far, so good."

The A's have now won four of their last five games despite scoring only 11 runs over that span, and Monday's victory marked the second time this season they've brushed aside defeat when scoring no more than two runs.

"Whenever we can get a win, even if we're not scoring too many runs," Suzuki said, "a win's a win."

The latest was secured by Brian Fuentes, who pitched a scoreless 10th for his fourth save of the season, officially shutting the books on a pitchers' duel Ross soon won't forget.

"Braden and Buehrle, those are two great pitchers," the youngster said. "They were really working hitters on both sides of the plate. This is a game people will go back and look at on film and think, 'This is how you pitch.'"

## **Cahill, A's agree to contract extension**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- It's been nearly 10 years since the A's embarked on a process of locking up a youthful starting staff in an effort to grab hold of long-term success at an affordable price.

Each of those pitchers -- Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito -- put their signature to four-year deals and, before being traded away, helped Oakland accomplish just that.

Now, a decade later, A's general manager Billy Beane is reverting to that very method, as evidenced by the club's third multiyear deal in less than a year, the most recent one being awarded to All-Star hurler Trevor Cahill, whom the A's officially locked up for five years on Monday.

The 23-year-old right-hander is set to earn a guaranteed \$30.5 million through those years. The agreement also includes club options for both the 2016 and 2017 seasons, valued at \$13 million and \$13.5 million, respectively, making for a potential seven-year deal that could take Cahill to age 30.

"I'm guaranteed to pitch here for a while, so I couldn't be happier," Cahill said. "There's no place I'd rather play."

The new deal voids Cahill's previously structured 2011 contract -- worth \$440,000 -- and carries him through at least his first year of free agency, possibly three. He becomes the fifth player whom the A's hold under contract beyond 2011 and the third whom Oakland will house through 2013.

The A's signed fellow starter Brett Anderson to a four-year, \$12.5 million deal last April, and locked up catcher Kurt Suzuki for four years and \$16.25 million in July. With Cahill's deal, the A's have assured themselves further continuity on the mound, where Oakland starters produced an American League-leading 3.56 ERA last season.

"Everybody out there knows that starting pitching is our strength," Suzuki said. "To know that Trevor's going to be around, along with Brett and I, it's cool thinking about how that's how Mulder, Hudson and Zito were, along with [catcher] Ramon [Hernandez]."

"I think it's a process for a catcher and a pitcher to build a relationship, and with time, it only gets better. I think that things are good right now, but everything can get better, and who knows how good they're going to be a few years down the road when we're all in the middle of these contracts."

Cahill, who was handed Opening Day starter duties this year, is coming off a breakout 2010 campaign, when he compiled an 18-8 record and 2.97 ERA in 30 starts. The righty wasn't even on the club's season-opening roster last year, as he began

the season on the disabled list and was then sent down to Triple-A Sacramento for two starts before being called up to fill in for the injured Anderson.

At that point, Cahill joked on Monday, "I would have signed for almost anything."

"I would probably say that, in all my years here, I don't know I've seen somebody make such great strides in such a short amount of time as Trevor," Beane said. "He went from being a guy that was probably a year ahead of his time in the big leagues to being one of the better pitchers in the league all in a span of about 12 months."

"The transition's been incredible," Anderson said. "His command's better, his pitches are better, and we've seen it in the success he's had."

Left-hander Gio Gonzalez appears a likely candidate to join Cahill, Anderson and Suzuki on the multiyear contract list, but Beane stayed mum on the topic, only admitting that long-term deals are "certainly the template for sustaining some success in a market like ours."

"I think it would stand to reason," he said, "that if you've got that kind of talent, that you'd look to do something aggressively to keep them around."

Beane's negotiations with Cahill's agent, John Boggs, began in the fall before season's end, he noted, and picked up again during Spring Training. In that time, Toronto's Ricky Romero -- who boasts similar service time and numbers -- reached a deal worth \$30-plus million. Hurler Clay Buchholz's new contract with Boston, reached Sunday, is similar in stature.

"Trevor's been guaranteed a significant amount of money," Beane said, "but the club has also been granted a significant amount of time for the use of his skills, his talents."

"I think it's great for everybody involved," manager Bob Geren said. "We're very happy with him and his performance. He's a guy who works hard, takes care of himself, is a good person off the field. We look forward to having him for a long time."

Cahill, a second-round selection by Oakland in 2006, has registered a 29-21 record and 3.69 ERA in 64 career games, all starts, since making his Major League debut in 2009. The Southern California native revels in a laidback atmosphere, along with one that provides his rather shy nature with a sense of comfort.

"I'm a guy that kind of feeds off being comfortable in the clubhouse, and it makes it a lot easier knowing other guys will be here for a while also," he said. "Hopefully, they think I'm good enough to live up to the contract, and hopefully, I exceed it. That's my goal -- to out-pitch it."

"You give guys guaranteed contracts, and they're not worried about individual performance. We're trying to go out and win. I think that's what the focus should be on, but when young guys come up, they are kinda worried about pitching good enough to not get sent down, and then when they're pitching good, arbitration is around the corner. We just want to win."

That objective appears in place, as Oakland's starters have combined for all of the team's four wins this season and entered Monday's contest against the White Sox with a Major League-best 2.47 ERA -- numbers, many believe, that could remain low for years to come.

"I think it's special," Anderson said. "It's not too often a group of young guys like this comes together and kind of works their way up the system and are given the chance to stay together."

## **Harden shut down with lat soreness**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- Rich Harden's journey back to a big league mound was stalled yet again on Monday, when the right-hander was shut down after warming up with the same lat soreness that has sidelined him for nearly two months.

Harden was scheduled to throw live batting practice in Chicago on Monday afternoon, but before he went out on the mound, "he just didn't feel he was ready to do that today," manager Bob Geren said.

The club hasn't discussed what the next step will be for Harden, who received a \$1.5 million deal this offseason for his second tour of duty with Oakland.

The 29-year-old righty was tentatively slated to take part in a simulated game if Monday's live batting practice went well and, from there, possibly begin a Minor League rehab assignment.

This marks an all-too-familiar storyline for Harden, whose career has been hampered by various injuries. He's made at least 20 starts in just two of the six seasons that have followed a 2004 campaign during which he pitched to an 11-7 record and 3.99 ERA.

Harden is currently in the midst of his 10th career disabled list stint, seven of which have come in Oakland.

### **Bailey completes first bullpen session**

CHICAGO -- A's closer Andrew Bailey, nursing a strained forearm back to health, completed his first successful bullpen session in Chicago on Monday.

The right-hander threw 20 pitches, all fastballs, at a 75 percent exertion level, manager Bob Geren said.

"The good news is it looked free and easy," the A's skipper said, "and it's coming out of his hand well."

Geren mentioned Bailey will likely take a day or two off before throwing another bullpen and working his way toward a Minor League rehab assignment.

The All-Star pitcher has said he hopes to be reinstated from the disabled list by the end of April. In the meantime, the A's will continue to turn to lefty Brian Fuentes for closing duties.

### **Rising stars Cahill, Jackson brace for duel**

By Doug Miller / MLB.com | 4/11/2011 11:50 PM ET

How good can Trevor Cahill and Edwin Jackson be? The A's and White Sox and their fans are excited to find out, and they'll get a good look Tuesday when the two starters face each other at U.S. Cellular Field.

The matchup pits two pitchers coming off significant events in their career.

For Cahill, a Cy Young Award contender last season, it was his first win of the year, a 2-1 victory over Toronto last Thursday in which he gave up one run in eight innings and struck out seven, and the Monday announcement that he signed a five-year, \$30.5 million contract extension with option years that could keep the 23-year-old in Oakland until he's 30.

"Hopefully, they think I'm good enough to live up to the contract, and hopefully, I exceed it," Cahill said. "That's my goal, to out-pitch it."

The sinkerballer went 18-8 with a 2.97 ERA in 30 starts last season and wowed his general manager, Billy Beane.

"In all my years here, I don't think I've seen somebody make such great strides in such a brief amount of time as Trevor," Beane said.

Meanwhile, Chicago has a pretty good pitcher going to the mound Tuesday, too. Jackson was electrifying in his last start in his team's home opener, striking out 13 Rays to set a club record for a home opener and the most by a White Sox pitcher since Javier Vazquez also punched out 13 on Sept. 17, 2007, in Kansas City.

"I never really count the strikeouts," Jackson said. "I really didn't know how many I had. I knew I had a lot. If you would have asked me an exact number, I probably wouldn't have been close. My main objective is to get outs any way I can, either putting the ball in play or strikeouts."

## **A's: Putting the D in Oakland**

The A's have not committed an error over their past five games despite committing a team-record nine errors over their first four games. The nine errors were tied for the most in the Majors before Chicago committed its 10th in the ninth inning Monday. Last season, the A's defense ranked fifth in the AL in fielding percentage (.984) and was charged with less than 100 errors (99) for the sixth time in the last seven years.

- A's starters combined for the team's first four wins this year and have posted a 2.31 ERA (19 earned runs in 74 innings pitched) this year. The ERA is the best in the Major Leagues, as are the innings pitched.
- Coco Crisp batted .333 (7-for-21) with two doubles and two triples during his season-opening five-game hitting streak, but he's 2-for-20 (.100) in four games since.

## **White Sox: Homer milestones abound**

Brent Lillibridge's homer off Dallas Braden on Monday night was the 10,000th homer in the 112-year history of the franchise. Paul Konerko, who has recorded an RBI in eight of the team's 10 games, needs one home run to tie Ralph Kiner for 69th all-time in Major League Baseball with 369, and Carlos Quentin's next homer will be his 100th.

- A.J. Pierzynski, who has never been on the disabled list during his Major League career, has caught at least 1,000 innings in nine consecutive seasons, joining Jason Kendall as the only catchers to accomplish that feat.
- White Sox batters have been hit by a pitch a Major League-high seven times, while their pitchers have yet to hit a batter. The White Sox were hit 79 times in 2010, most in the American League. By contrast, White Sox pitchers hit only 34 batters, fewest in the AL.

## **Worth noting**

The average age on the A's Opening Day roster was 28.96, nearly two years older than last year (27.16). The current A's roster features three players under the age of 25 -- Cahill, Brett Anderson and Tyson Ross, all of whom are 23. ... The White Sox led the Major Leagues with a .378 (37-for-98) average with runners in scoring position entering Monday's contest before going 0-for-3. They're 31-for-70 (.443) with RISP in their six wins and 6-for-31 (.194) in four losses.

## **Suzuki homers in 10th to lift A's over White Sox**

Associated Press

In a rare matchup between perfect starting pitchers, it was a young reliever and a catcher that made the difference for the [Oakland Athletics](#).

Catcher Kurt Suzuki homered on a 1-2 pitch from Jesse Crain with two outs in the 10th inning, giving Oakland a 2-1 win over the Chicago White Sox on Monday night.

"It's a big thrill," said Suzuki. "Any time you can get a hit when it really counts, it's an exciting time."

The pitching matchup between lefties Mark Buehrle and Dallas Braden marked the 21st time in major-league history opposing starting pitchers who have thrown a perfect game faced each other.

"I don't really ever let what the other guy is doing affect my game plan," said Braden. "I actually kind of like it, because you're back out there and back at your craft."

After managing just two singles and a walk in eight innings against Buehrle, the Athletics came alive when the lefty departed after throwing 99 pitches.

"Buehrle was so tough at that point that they could have brought in anybody and it would have been a little bit of a relief, just because he was so tough," said Athletics manager Bob Geren.

The White Sox wasted Buehrle's dominant performance with their second ninth-inning implosion of the season. Buehrle was lifted after eight scoreless innings and allowed only three baserunners — none past first base.

Matt Thornton, who already had two blown saves in two opportunities, came on and allowed a leadoff double to Andy LaRoche in the ninth.

One out later, Daric Barton hit a deep fly that Juan Pierre dropped in the left-field corner, allowing pinch-runner Cliff Pennington to easily score from second and tie the game 1-1. Pierre also had a dropped fly in Friday's loss to the Rays, which helped Tampa Bay rally from three runs down in the ninth to win.

"Juan Pierre is a great player. He's made two mistakes behind me, I will never say anything bad about that guy, I want every fly ball I get to go to him. He's dedicated to this game more than anyone in baseball, I'll never say anything behind him or any of my teammates, they're great players, they're gold gloves and All-Stars," said Thornton.

In a game with such a small margin for error, the Athletics wouldn't have been in position for the win if not for the work of reliever Tyson Ross, who was called up on April 7. Ross didn't mind coming into the middle of a pitcher's duel.

"It was nice that it went by quick," said Ross. "There was a good pace to the game. I was able to watch the hitters a little bit and have a good idea of what they were doing up there."

Suzuki's go-ahead shot off Crain (0-1) barely made it over the wall in left.

"That was huge," said Geren. "He got on top of it really well. He hit it hard. My first thought was that he was going to catch it. He hit it hard enough, I just didn't know if it was going to be high enough."

Ross (1-0) pitched three scoreless innings and Brian Fuentes pitched a perfect 10th for his fourth save. Pierre, who was greeted by loud boos, grounded out to end it.

In his second start, Braden allowed one run on five hits. He struck out seven and walked two. He didn't allow a hit until an infield single by Alex Rios in the fourth inning.

"It was awesome, a good game all around," said Ross. "Two great pitchers, working both sides of the plate. You go back and look at the film. That's how you pitch."

Buehrle, who pitched a perfect game on July 23, 2009, against the Rays and a no-hitter April 18, 2007, against Texas, appeared to have no-hit stuff again. He retired the first 10 batters before walking Barton in the fourth. Buehrle quickly made up for it by getting Josh Willingham to ground back to him to start an inning-ending double play.

"It was one of those games that everything was working," said Buehrle. "Like I said, 33 starts, 11 of them you're going to have good stuff, 11 you're going to be so-so and 11 of them are going to be bad and today was one of the good ones," said Buehrle.

Oakland didn't get its first hit until Suzuki led off the sixth with a single.

"It was the same thing Buehrle always does," said Suzuki. "Changes pitches, throwing strikes. A lot of guys say he throws junk, but he's an aggressive strike thrower. He throws junk, but he throws it for strikes. That's what makes him so tough, he can throw everything for strikes."

NOTES: Guillen still doesn't have a clear timetable when DH Adam Dunn is going to be back in the lineup. "When he tells me he's ready, I'm going to give him an extra day," said Guillen. Dunn has missed six straight games after undergoing emergency appendectomy surgery on Wednesday. ... RHP Jake Peavy is scheduled to throw 90 pitches in a rehab start on Wednesday. ... The last time two opposing perfect game winners faced was when Arizona's Randy Johnson faced San Diego's David Wells on April 24, 2007. Lillebridge's home run was the 10,000 in franchise history.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Las Vegas bats outlast Sacramento**

By Michael Morris / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento and Las Vegas bats seemed to cool off with the temperature as the night wore on at Raley Field. The problem for the River Cats was that as the sun went down they were trailing 4-3 en route to a 6-3 defeat Monday night. In the season's first four games, the River Cats scored 16 of their 20 runs in the first three innings. Those numbers were indicative of how Monday night would play out.

The 25-year-old Travis Banwart took the mound to start the series against Las Vegas. The Wichita State product pitched in 15 games for Sacramento last season and finished with a 4-2 record while striking out 71.

The River Cats right-hander was the victim of back-to-back home runs in the first inning, but only allowed three hits later, getting pulled after 4.1 innings.

Sacramento went back-and-forth with Las Vegas early, scoring two runs off a sac fly by Chris Carter and a fielder's choice grounder from Matt Carson, matching the 51s home runs with two runs of their own. After Las Vegas scored their third run in the second inning, Adrian Cardenas followed suit, hitting a triple to center while bringing in Steve Tolleson. That run would be the last for the River Cats on the evening.

The 51s got a triple of their own in the top of the third inning, putting them in position to take back the lead. In the ensuing at-bat, right fielder Adam Loewen brought in Eric Thames to put the Las Vegas up one.

Tolleson, who had two hits and a walk on Monday, has had a good start to his season but he doesn't want to lose sight of what matters most.

"One of our biggest goals is just trying to win games," said Tolleson. "It makes it a lot more fun. I feel that if the team plays well and we win some games you'll also play well."

## **Cards Deal Hounds First Loss**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Three big late-inning swings of the bat and a resilient starting pitcher were the difference as the Springfield Cardinals snapped the RockHounds' season-opening 4-game win streak. The Cardinals broke a 4-4 tie in the ninth and went on to a 6-4 win Monday night at Citibank Ballpark.

Tyler Henley sent a solo home run onto the grass berm beyond the right field bullpen with one out in the ninth ... Matt Adams drove in an insurance run for a 6-4 Springfield lead, and Casey Mulligan set the 'Hounds down in order, striking out two, to close the game and square the series at 1-1.

- He didn't figure in the decision, but Cardinals starter Michael Blazek played a critical role, rebounding from a slow start to retire the last 12 batters he faced, giving the Cardinals the opportunity to erase a 3-1 deficit. Blazek allowed two runs in the second and a lead-off home run in the fourth off the bat of Matt Sulentic. Blazek then set down a dozen consecutive batters, pitching through the seventh. Sulentic started the game 2-for-2, reaching base in seven consecutive trips to the plate over Sunday and Monday's games to that point.

- Each club had a blown save as the game went back-and-forth in the last three innings. Tommy Pham, who homered in the fifth, tied the game with a seventh-inning single, and Adams, again, came up big for Springfield. After delivering a game-tying, 2-run double Sunday, Adams gave the Cardinals a 4-3 lead with an eighth-inning single and drove in the insurance run with a single in the ninth.

- Doubles from Michael Spina (his second of the game and fourth of the season) and Jeremy Barfield brought the 'Hounds back into a tie at 4-4 in the eighth before Henley's blast.

- Monday's Texas League "highlight reel" came from Tulsa, where the Drillers and San Antonio combined to hit eleven home runs, eight of them from the Missions. Sawyer Carroll with two and pitcher Matt Buschmann were among the Missions who left the yard. When the official scorer finally put out the flames, the final tally read San Antonio 23, Tulsa 10.

- Arkansas posted its first win of the year, defeating the RoughRiders, 6-4, at Frisco ... and the defending TL champion NW Arkansas Naturals edged Corpus Christi, 4-3 at Springdale, AR.

## **Bats Quiet For Stockton In 5-1 Loss**

**VISALIA, Calif.** - After eeking out a 2-1 win on Sunday afternoon in Modesto, the Stockton Ports again found themselves locked in a low-scoring affair on Monday night in Visalia. On this night, however, Stockton's opposition found a way to land a big inning as the Rawhide used a four-run sixth to earn a win in their first head-to-head matchup with the Ports by a count of 5-1.

Early on, both starting pitchers took center stage. Stockton's Murphy Smith (0-1) and Visalia's Derek Eitel kept the contest scoreless through the first five innings. Stockton had a scoring chance taken away in the fifth on a highlight-reel play made by Visalia's left fielder Jon Mark Owings. With two on and two out, Dusty Coleman hit a ball high and deep toward the left field corner. Owings covered the necessary ground, made the catch as he crashed into the fence, and then fell to the ground and hung on to the baseball to preserve the scoreless tie.

Smith pitched around a one-out double from David Nick in the first, a leadoff single from Rossmel Perez in the third, and a one-out knock from Adam Eaton in the fourth to keep the Rawhide off the board. Smith had retired five straight entering the sixth inning.

The sixth, however, turned out to be the big-money inning for the Rawhide. With one out, Smith walked Chris Owings and yielded an infield single to Nick to put two on with one out. Eaton came up next and broke the ice with a single to right to score Owings and give Visalia a 1-0 lead. After Matt Davidson was hit by a pitch, Smith got Kyle Greene to pop to short with the bases loaded for the inning's second out. The next batter, Bobby Borchering, would be plunked with a 2-2 pitch, allowing another run to score and giving the Rawhide a 2-0 edge.

Smith was removed from the game in favor of Bo Schultz, who yielded a two-run single to Jon Mark Owings, putting Stockton in a 4-0 hole.

All four runs would be charged to Smith, who took the loss despite a strong effort, going 5.2 innings and allowing four runs on five hits while striking out four.

Schultz tossed 1.1 scoreless innings in relief for Stockton.

Eitel would receive a no-decision for Visalia as he tossed five innings and left when the game was scoreless. He allowed three hits while walking three and striking out two in his Cal-League debut.

The Ports squandered a scoring chance in the top of the seventh. Rawhide reliever Taylor Sinclair (1-0) hit two batters and walked one to load the bases with two out. Coleman came to the plate for Stockton and, on a 3-2 pitch, struck out swinging to end the inning.

Sinclair earned the win after throwing two scoreless innings for the Rawhide.

Visalia added an insurance run in the eighth on a Greene RBI double off AJ Huttenlocker, making it a 5-0 ballgame.

Stockton's final rally in the ninth produced a run, but ultimately fell short. With the bases loaded and one out, Connor Crumbliss hit a sac-fly to left to score Leonardo Gil from third. With the possible tying run in the on-deck circle, Coleman popped to second to end the game.

Rawhide reliever Yonata Ortega allowed the lone Ports run in his two innings of relief.

The Ports and Rawhide play the second game of their three-game set on Tuesday night at Recreation Park. Left-hander Fabian Williamson (0-1, 13.50 ERA) will make his second start of the season for Stockton, opposed by right-hander Trevor Harden (0-0, 0.00 ERA) for Visalia. First pitch is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

## **Bees Take Home Opener 4-2**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlingtonbees.com

BURLINGTON, IA -The Burlington Bees (4-1) scored four runs on six hits to earn a 4-2 victory over the Peoria Chiefs (2-3) before 1,031 fans at Community Field on Monday night.

The Chiefs scored a single run in the first inning against Bees LHP Jacob Brown (1-0). CF Matt Szczur (2-4), DH Rubi Silva (1-4) and 1B Greg Rohan (1-4) each singled to load the bases. RF Smailly Borges (0-3) hit a sacrifice fly to center field to score Szczur to make it 1-0.

The Bees scored a single run in the 2nd inning to tie the game. 1B Tony Thompson (1-2) singled and went to second base on a walk issued to DH Jose Rivero (1-2). SS Wade Kirkland (1-4) grounded into a double play to move Thompson to third base. After 2B Ryan Pineda (0-2) walked, RF Royce Consigli (1-2) hit a single to score Thompson.

Burlington scored two runs in the third inning. CF Tyreace House (0-3) walked and stole second base. 3B Nino Leyja (0-3) reached first base on an error and House scored all the way from first base to make it 2-1. Leyja ended up at second base, stole third base and scored on a sacrifice fly by Thompson to make it 3-1.

Peoria scored a single run in the 4th inning against Brown and the Bees pushed their fourth run of the game across home plate in the 6th inning. Rivero singled and moved to second base on a sacrifice bunt by Kirkland. Consigli hit an RBI single to score Rivero and make it 4-2.

Brown pitched six innings and allowed two runs on five hits to pick up his first victory of the season.

The Bees and Chiefs continue their four-game series on Tuesday night at 6:30. It's the KRAFT Singles Tuesday Night Tickets offer. Fans can buy one ticket; get one ticket free from KRAFT Singles by presenting your package wrapper to the Community Field Box Office. It's also Hawk Eye Two-for-Tuesday: Look for the coupon good for two-for-one general admission tickets in the Hawk Eye newspaper brought to you by 101.7 The Bull. RHP Hayden Simpson (0-0, 2.45) gets the start for Peoria against RHP Seth Frankoff (0-0, 12.00). Pre-game coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at gobees.com

2011 Bees tickets are on sale now! To purchase season tickets, bonus books or single game tickets, please give the Bees a call at (319) 754-5705 (319) 754-5705, go online to [www.gobees.com](http://www.gobees.com), or stop by the box office at Community Field during normal business hours.