

A's News Clips, Wednesday, April 13, 2011

Oakland A's update: Utility man Andy La Roche thriving as a starter

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

CHICAGO -- Andy LaRoche has been in the A's lineup more than he could have expected.

With Cliff Pennington sidelined by an infected sweat gland under his left arm, LaRoche drew his second straight start at shortstop in Tuesday's 6-5 loss to the Chicago White Sox.

A utility man who made the A's roster because of his hitting, LaRoche also has proved capable with the glove, though he committed his first error Tuesday. He's made five starts through the first 11 games -- three at shortstop, one at second base and one at third.

"I've gotten as many starts as I had the whole second half of last year," said LaRoche, who played his way out of the Pittsburgh Pirates' third base job in 2010.

LaRoche, who bats right-handed, is hitting .375 (6 for 16), and he'll get plenty of at-bats against left-handers. But that's contingent on him playing solid defensively.

He'd never played shortstop in the majors when he arrived at spring camp. So LaRoche spent extra time working with infield coach Mike Gallego.

"We're trying to create better angles (when fielding grounders) and getting a better hop," Gallego said.

LaRoche bounced a throw to first base for an error when he charged Alex Rios' grounder in the fifth and threw off-balance. But in the seventh, he backhanded Rios' grounder in the hole and made a strong throw to get him at first.

Pennington, hitting just .160 in 10 games, is listed as day-to-day.

With left fielder Josh Willingham out of the lineup, Ryan Sweeney made just his second start of the season. Sweeney is adjusting to a reserve role after spending most of the past three seasons starting when he's been healthy.

The offseason additions of Willingham and fellow outfielder David DeJesus pushed Sweeney to the bench.

"Once the fifth or sixth inning rolls around, you get loose, try to take some swings," Sweeney said. "You're on edge. You've gotta be ready all the time."

Sweeney walked twice before Conor Jackson pinch-hit for him in the fifth.

Former A's shortstop Eddie Joost -- who managed the A's in 1954, their final season in Philadelphia -- died Tuesday at age 94.

Thursday's 7:05 p.m. game against the Detroit Tigers has been moved from Comcast SportsNet California to CSN Plus to accommodate the Sharks' playoff broadcast.

Alexei Ramirez homers in 10th as White Sox put away A's

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

CHICAGO -- Reliever Bobby Cramer took the "L" in the box score, but the blame for the A's 6-5 loss Tuesday does not rest solely with the bullpen.

A shaky start by Trevor Cahill pressed Oakland's short-handed relief corps into early duty against the Chicago White Sox.

And though the A's swung the bats well, they failed to deliver a knockout blow in a key bases-loaded situation.

Alexei Ramirez's home run in the bottom of the 10th off Cramer -- his second homer of the game -- ended the A's three-game winning streak. But the A's can chalk up Tuesday's defeat as a team effort.

The loss at least had a different look for Oakland. Typically a low-scoring bunch that relies on superior pitching, the A's fought back from a three-run deficit and pounded out 12 hits. They just chose the wrong night to awaken offensively.

"Whenever they go out there and do their part, it makes it tough to swallow when you can't do yours," Cahill said of his teammates' hitting.

Fresh from signing a five-year, \$30.5 million contract, Cahill was not sharp. The White Sox scored four times off him in the second, and the right-hander was gone after 42/3 innings, the second time in three starts that he has failed to complete five innings.

That left a tall order for the bullpen, which was without closer Brian Fuentes (he had pitched in each of the previous three games) and Tyson Ross (who tossed three innings Monday).

Craig Breslow, Brad Ziegler and Jerry Blevins combined for 41/3 innings of one-run ball. But Ramirez turned on a 3-1 pitch from Cramer (0-1) and ripped it over the left-field wall.

The A's are 4-4 on this three-city trip with one game left, and finishing it with a winning record would be a nice psychological lift.

"I think the fact that we scored some runs bodes well for us in the future," Breslow said.

Cahill allowed a single and a walk in the first inning but no runs. In the second, he hung a curve to Ramirez, who crushed a three-run homer as part of a four-run rally that gave the Sox a 4-1 lead.

"It was not characteristic of him to not command his fastball," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Cahill said he struggled to find a good grip on the ball in the nippy weather. The first-pitch temperature was 51 degrees.

"The whole first two innings I was battling myself," Cahill said.

The A's benefited again from the Sox's defensive generosity. After left fielder Juan Pierre dropped a fly ball Monday that allowed the A's to tie the score, center fielder Alex Rios had a ball clank off his glove Tuesday, one of two errors Chicago committed.

But the A's had to hit their way back from their deficit.

Daric Barton tied a career high with four hits, and Hideki Matsui had three hits and two RBIs. Kevin Kouzmanoff's two-run homer in the sixth gave the A's a short-lived 5-4 lead.

But in the same inning, they had the bases loaded with one out and couldn't build on the lead. Matsui flied out to shallow right, and Kurt Suzuki struck out.

The A's finished an unsightly 1 for 16 with runners in scoring position.

Center fielder Coco Crisp left the game with back stiffness in the top of the 10th. Geren estimated the chances as 50-50 that Crisp would play Wednesday.

Chin Music: Willingham gets a day off (maybe), plus other A's pregame notes

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/12/2011 4:43PM

Another good pitching matchup is on tap tonight as Trevor Cahill opposes the Chicago White Sox's Edwin Jackson. Both sport sub-2.00 ERAs ...

A's left fielder Josh Willingham gets his first day off, or as manager Bob Geren called it, his first "non-start." "They've got three good lefties in the bullpen," Geren said of the Sox. "There may be a pinch-hitting opportunity." Ryan Sweeney draws the start in left. ...

Andy LaRoche makes his second straight start at shortstop, as Cliff Pennington is out of the lineup with an infected sweat gland under his left arm. Geren listed Pennington as day-to-day. You have to count LaRoche as a pleasant early-season surprise for the A's. He's held his own defensively all around the infield and he's hitting .417.

The White Sox get a major boost tonight with the return of DH Adam Dunn, who had been out since undergoing an emergency appendectomy Wednesday. The Chicago media quoted Sox manager Ozzie Guillen as saying he would be extra cautious with Dunn, giving the slugger an extra day once he said he was ready. Apparently that plan went out the window. Dunn, who signed a four-year, \$56 million deal with the Sox in the offseason, is hitting .286 with one homer and five RBIs.

Here's a story on [the injury to Texas left fielder Josh Hamilton](#), which has major implications for the rest of the AL West. The A's begin play tonight tied for second place with the Angels, four games back of Texas ...

The lineups:

A's – Crisp CF, Barton 1B, DeJesus RF, Matsui DH, Suzuki C, Sweeney LF, Ellis 2B, Kouzmanoff 3B, LaRoche SS; Cahill RHP.

White Sox – Pierre LF, Vizquel 2B, Dunn DH, Konerko 1B, Quentin RF, Rios CF, Pierzynski C, Ramirez SS, Teahen 3B; Jackson RHP.

A's lose 6-5 on off night for Trevor Cahill

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

- Oakland's operations these days are based on the notion that the starting pitching will be so stingy that the offense can get away with the bare minimum.

That counts double when it's All-Star Trevor Cahill on the mound. But on Tuesday, everything was upside down in the A's world: It was the team's hitters who took center stage and the pitching staff that came up short in a 6-5 loss to the White Sox. Bobby Cramer gave up a 10th-inning homer to Alexei Ramirez to end the A's three-game winning streak. Ramirez had cracked a three-run homer off Cahill earlier.

On the other side of the scorecard, A's third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff hit his first home run of the season, a two-run shot to left in the sixth inning that gave Oakland a brief lead, and Daric Barton had four hits, matching his career high, and Hideki Matsui had three.

"Whenever they go out and do their parts, it's a lot tougher to swallow the fact that you didn't do yours," Cahill said.

One day after signing a five-year, \$30.5 million contract extension, Cahill gave up four runs in the second inning - double the damage done in his previous two starts combined. The White Sox sent nine men to the plate in the inning, with Ramirez hitting his blast to left on what Cahill described as a hanging curveball. Cahill said he felt as if that pitch also gave Ramirez extra confidence for his game-winning homer.

The primary problem that inning, and the previous one, according to Cahill, was that he was yanking his fastball and leaving it over the middle of the plate.

It was the first time in six games that an Oakland starter had allowed more than two runs. The A's rotation entered the day with a 2.38 ERA, second best in the league.

Cahill regained his control from that point on, which manager Bob Geren said was important because he didn't have to go to the bullpen quite as early. But Cahill was apologetic about the extra work the relievers had to do after he left in the fifth, potentially leaving the bullpen thin today.

Craig Breslow, making his first appearance in 10 days, relieved Cahill with two on and two outs in the fifth and got A.J. Pierzynski to fly out, but the next inning, Breslow walked Ramirez to open the inning, and he eventually scored on a single by Juan Pierre.

"A leadoff walk is not the way you want to go after scoring two runs," said Breslow, who said his fastball command was off.

Pierre, whose ninth-inning error Monday cost the White Sox the victory in the series opener, had another tough evening in the field, with several adventuresome plays, including playing a hit by Barton off his face as he dived forward to try to get the sinking liner.

The A's offense stalled after the sixth; the team got only one hit in the final four innings.

Geren called the overall offensive output encouraging, and Breslow said, "The fact we were able to put runs on the board bodes a lot better for us than (the outcome) does as a sign of disappointment for the pitching staff."

Cliff Pennington out with infection

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

With his team batting .224 entering Tuesday, manager **Bob Geren** had planned to get hot-hitting **Andy LaRoche** into the lineup anyway. Then, shortstop **Cliff Pennington** was unavailable because of an infected sweat gland under his left arm.

Geren said the infection makes it painful to swing, a fact he mentioned when asked if Pennington had bunted in the 10th inning Monday because of the sweat-gland problem.

LaRoche was batting .417 going into the game, and none of the team's regulars was batting above .250.

That includes Pennington, who is hitting .160. He has struck out seven times and has not walked once. His on-base percentage is .154.

Geren said it's possible that reduced playing time during the spring while recovering from left shoulder surgery might have contributed to Pennington's slow start, but Geren pointed out that most of the rest of the team isn't hitting, either.

LaRoche made his first error of the season Tuesday, bouncing a throw to first base in the fifth, and went 1-for-4.

Crisp taken out: In the 10th inning, Geren used **Josh Willingham** to pinch hit for center fielder **Coco Crisp**, who had some lower back tightness that worsened with the cold. Geren said that Crisp's chances of playing today are 50-50.

Briefly: **Michael Wuertz** (hamstring strain) will throw a simulated game Thursday and might go on a rehab assignment by Saturday. ... **Andrew Bailey** will throw bullpen sessions every three days now that he has begun throwing off the mound again. ... The A's might hear as soon as today about their appeal of a scoring decision in Minnesota. **Mark Ellis** was denied a triple when **Denard Span** was charged with an error on Ellis' drive to deep center; Span got the ball in his glove briefly, over his shoulder on a dead run. ... The A's game against Detroit on Thursday will move to CSN Plus because of the Sharks' playoff game on CSN California.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

On a roll: Brian Fuentes wasn't available Tuesday after saves in three consecutive games, presumably a welcome development for the White Sox. He has converted all seven of his career save opportunities against them.

Drumbeat: Cliff Pennington not in A's lineup, has infected sweat gland

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at U.S. Cellular Field 4/12/2011 4:29PM

It's not clear if Cliff Pennington was going to be in the starting lineup today, anyway; manager Bob Geren emphasized that he's trying to find ways to get Andy LaRoche's bat in there regularly.

But it turns out that Pennington also is dealing with an infected sweat gland under his left arm and it makes swinging difficult; it's clear that we can presume that's the reason he bunted in the 10th inning last night.

Geren said that Pennington is considered day-to-day.

Josh Willingham is getting his first rest of the season, and Ryan Sweeney is playing right.

Here's the lineup behind new millionaire Trevor Cahill: Crisp cf, Barton 1b, DeJesus rf, Matsui dh, Suzuki c, Sweeney lf, Ellis 2b, Kouzmanoff 3b, LaRoche ss.

Geren said that Michael Wuertz, who is on the DL with a hamstring strain, will throw a simulated game on Thursday and might then go on a rehab assignment on Saturday.

Andrew Bailey played catch today, he will throw long-toss tomorrow and a bullpen session on Thursday.

Cramer surrenders walk-off blast in 10th

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 4/13/2011 1:49 AM ET

CHICAGO -- Oakland's pitching and offensive corps played a little game of role reversal on Tuesday.

A's starters entered the contest seemingly untouchable with a 2.38 ERA. Their hitters came in struggling, evidenced by a combined .196 average over their last six games.

But on a chilly night in Chicago, hurler Trevor Cahill fought to showcase any sense of command. His teammates, meanwhile, strung together 12 hits and five runs.

"Whenever they go out there and do their part," Cahill said, "it makes it a little tougher to swallow the fact that you didn't do yours."

That deviation, offering positives and negatives in obvious ways, ultimately resulted in a 6-5 extra-inning defeat to the White Sox, who received two home runs from Alexei Ramirez including a walk-off shot against lefty Bobby Cramer in the bottom of the 10th.

"I was really just concentrating on getting a hit, but once I made contact, I knew I had the home run," Ramirez said. "I was really happy about that."

The Chicago shortstop's efforts snapped Oakland's three-game winning streak and dropped the A's to 5-6 on the season and 2-2 in extra-inning affairs, which they've played the past two days.

Monday's contest, a 2-1 A's win in the 10th, brought about a pitchers' duel. Tuesday's, not so much.

Just one day after securing a five-year deal worth \$30.5 million, Cahill uncharacteristically struggled to find the strike zone his third start of the season, offering up three free passes and a pair of wild pitches while garnering just three first-pitch strikes against his first 14 batters faced.

"I felt good before that, which is kinda scary," Cahill said. "My bullpen before the game went better than expected. Usually, I'm pretty bad in the bullpen, but today was pretty good."

Cahill gave up four runs on six hits in just 4 2/3 innings, the first two of which quickly rung up his pitch count and subsequently contributed greatly to an early exit.

Cahill was able to escape a troubling situation in the first with runners on first and third, but he was forced to face the entire White Sox lineup in a four-run second, highlighted by a three-run homer by Ramirez.

"Even in the first, I didn't really ever know where the ball was going," he said. "The second really hurt me and then I slowly figured it out after that."

The A's right-hander settled down quickly after that, compiling two consecutive 1-2-3 innings. In the meantime, Mark Ellis brought home Oakland's first run in the second off White Sox starter Edwin Jackson on an RBI double that snapped his 0-for-11 streak, and Hideki Matsui was responsible for runs No. 2 and 3, as the designated hitter collected his first three-hit night in green and gold.

Still down, 4-3, Cahill made it to the fifth before leaving behind two runners for Craig Breslow with two outs, having already labored with 97 pitches, 55 of which were strikes.

"He obviously wasn't locating his fastball," manager Bob Geren said. "It was uncharacteristic of him to not have that, because he's had it for a long time now. Just one inning he didn't, and they capitalized on some runs there."

"He did a good job going as deep as he did. It looked like he might not find it after that inning, but he did get it back and gave us a chance to win. Command was much better, and he was pounding the strike zone right away. Something clicked in, and he figured it out."

Breslow proceeded to escape Cahill's jam, setting up an A's comeback in the sixth, when Kevin Kouzmanoff hit his first home run of the season, a two-run shot off right-hander Tony Pena to put the club up, 5-4.

That lead lasted all of a few minutes, though, as Chicago's Juan Pierre notched an RBI hit off Breslow in the sixth following a leadoff walk to Ramirez that knotted the game at 5. It marked Breslow's first appearance since April 2.

"I didn't command anything other than the fastball, really," the A's lefty said. "I don't know if that's rust or not. I could have thrown the last five days and the same thing could have happened. I felt good, but a leadoff walk isn't the way you want to start things off."

Breslow's inning, which left him with his second blown save of the season, was followed by 3 1/3 shutout frames from the duo of Jerry Blevins and Brad Ziegler. Cramer's stint, which lasted two-thirds of an inning before Ramirez's fateful long ball, marked the lefty's first outing in more than a week.

"Starters have been going so deep, and a couple of [the relievers] hadn't worked in a while, so they had the opportunity to be rusty, but they didn't show it," Geren said. "They threw the ball pretty decent."

Daric Barton tallied four hits for the second time in his career and the first since Sept. 26, 2009, against the Angels.

The productive offensive night -- though frustrating in a sense that the A's went 1-for-16 with runners in scoring position and failed to score in prime opportunities -- gave Geren and Co. reason to believe that, sooner rather than later, all facets of the club will join forces.

"It was encouraging to see the way they swung the bat," Geren said. "Matsui looked great, and Barton had a heckuva night. Just all around, it looks like the offense is kinda getting it going, waking up a bit. You gotta be happy about that. You never like to lose, but it feels like we're headed the right way."

LaRoche taking advantage of utility role

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

CHICAGO -- The A's received a surprise spark last year in the form of a utility infielder.

Adam Rosales has since been sidelined as he recovers from right foot surgery, but the new guy in town is picking up right where Rosales left off.

Andy LaRoche, signed by the A's to a Minor League contract in late January, received his fifth start of the season on Tuesday, making his third start at shortstop, and entered the contest batting .417 in 12 at-bats.

LaRoche was handed the start, in part, because Cliff Pennington is dealing with an infection in the sweat gland under his left arm. But manager Bob Geren noted that plugging LaRoche in the lineup these days has been an easy choice.

"When a guy is swinging the bat well," he said, "we'll find ways to get him in there."

LaRoche is relishing the opportunity, especially after a Spring Training during which he wasn't even guaranteed a big league job.

"Honestly, I didn't know what my chances were," he said. "No one really knew me or the type of player I was, and I wanted to show I could play multiple positions."

With his bat doing most of the talking and his glove steadily progressing, LaRoche ultimately beat out Eric Sogard for the utility spot and represented the lone non-roster guy to make the team.

The 27-year-old LaRoche hit .206 with four home runs and 16 RBIs in 102 games with Pittsburgh last year. Fifty-two of his 58 starts were at third base, where he feels most comfortable. But he was drafted by the Dodgers as a shortstop, and it's there where he's been able to show off an arm that has always been strong, thanks to endless rounds of long toss with brothers Adam and Jeff and father Dave while growing up.

"I've always had a fairly above-average arm," he said. "My brothers were always the pitchers and I was always the catcher. I wanted to throw it as hard as them, so it kind of came natural [since] they we were blessed with those arms."

Rosales' looming return, expected in May, leaves LaRoche's future in limbo. For now, though, he has too much to worry about on the field to even start thinking about next month's possibilities.

"Obviously, I'd much rather be playing every day, but the fact that there are four different positions out there that they can have me play, it's nice knowing there are opportunities for me to give guys days off," he said. "I still have a lot of work to do, a long way to go, but I feel like I can go out to any one position and hold my own. Hopefully, no one can tell it's a third baseman out there."

"He's been great," Pennington said. "He's playing with a lot of confidence right now."

Pennington limited by sweat gland infection

CHICAGO -- Cliff Pennington was held out of Tuesday's lineup against the White Sox for a second straight day with what A's manager Bob Geren described as an infection in the sweat gland under his left arm.

The Oakland shortstop has been deemed day-to-day but was doing "a lot better today," according to Geren. Pennington is experiencing soreness when swinging the bat, which explains his actions in Monday's contest, when he entered in the ninth to pinch-run for Andy LaRoche, who again received a start at shortstop on Tuesday.

In the 10th, with a runner on second base and two outs, Pennington bunted for the third out in an eventual 2-1 A's victory. Bunting, though odd in that situation, prevented him from experiencing too much discomfort.

The 26-year-old Pennington, who spent the majority of his offseason recovering from left shoulder surgery, is hitless in his last 10 at-bats and is 4-for-25 (.160) to start the season.

He's a career .223 hitter in April, though Geren's not too worried about his shortstop's offensive woes, especially considering the struggles up and down a lineup that entered Tuesday's contest with a combined .224 average.

"He's feeling good," the A's skipper said. "He's going to be fine."

Wuertz nearing start of Minor League rehab stint

CHICAGO -- A's right-hander Michael Wuertz, sidelined by a strained left hamstring, could potentially get back on the mound in a simulated game on Thursday and proceed with his rehab in a Minor League outing on Saturday, manager Bob Geren said.

Wuertz was placed on the disabled list on April 6, retroactive to April 2, after appearing in just one game -- an Opening Night stint that saw him toss one shutout inning with two strikeouts against Seattle.

It marks the second straight season in which the veteran reliever has experienced an early-season injury, as he missed the first month of 2010 because of a bout of shoulder tendinitis.

Upon Wuertz's return, the A's will likely option one of two long relievers to Triple-A Sacramento -- right-hander Tyson Ross or lefty Bobby Cramer. Ross, who was recalled when Wuertz was placed on the DL, made his season debut on Monday and pitched three scoreless innings while earning the win against the White Sox.

Cramer, meanwhile, has yet to appear in a game since April 1, when he walked one and struck out one in 1 2/3 shutout innings against the Mariners.

Worth noting

Coco Crisp experienced lower back tightness in Tuesday's game, forcing A's manager Bob Geren to use Josh Willingham as a pinch-hitter in the 10th inning. Geren said Crisp's chances of playing in Wednesday's finale are 50-50.

A's, White Sox hope to avoid extra frames in finale

By Spencer Fordin / MLB.com | 4/13/2011 2:00 AM ET

It's two weeks into the season, and the A's just don't seem comfortable unless the game is as close as possible. Oakland is playing through a stretch that has seen its last eight games decided by a combined total of 10 runs, and it will play a series finale against the White Sox on Wednesday after splitting two one-run, 10-inning games.

The A's have won four of their last six games despite scoring just 16 runs, and five of those came in Tuesday night's 10-inning loss. The White Sox, meanwhile, were on a tear before being tamed by the Oakland arms. Chicago is 4-2 on its homestand and has scored 29 runs in its last six games, seven of which have scored against the A's.

Oakland's last four losses have come by a combined total of five runs, but the A's have found a way to compensate for one of the American League's lowest-scoring lineups. The A's are batting just .211 (50-for-237) in their last seven games and just .230 (86-for-374) on the season, and their 36 runs scored are the second-lowest total of any AL team.

The A's have pitched extremely well, though, and they'll send one of their brightest young arms to the mound in the series finale in Brett Anderson. He'll be matched against fellow southpaw John Danks. Anderson, the second-youngest player on Oakland's roster, has notched a 1-1 record and a 4.88 career ERA against Chicago.

The A's left-hander took the loss in his last outing despite working through the second complete game of his brief career. Anderson, just 23 years old, shut down Minnesota, the league's lowest-scoring team, for eight innings in his last rotation turn. Anderson also pitched well in his season debut, spinning six innings and allowing one run in a no-decision against Seattle.

Danks, meanwhile, will be looking for his first win in his encore to his career-best season. Danks set career highs in victories (15), innings (213) and strikeouts (162) last season, and he's completed six innings in both of his starts this year. Danks is 4-1 with a 2.48 career ERA in six starts against Oakland, but he lost his lone start against the A's last season.

The White Sox have led in all 11 of their games this season, and two of their four losses have come in games that they led heading into the ninth inning. Chicago is 4-2 at home thus far and has posted a winning record at home in 19 of the 20 completed seasons at U.S. Cellular Field. The White Sox will play a stretch of 20 games in 20 days after an off-day on Thursday.

A's: Crisp, Suzuki not yet in stride

Coco Crisp started out the season on a five-game hitting streak, but his bat has gone cold over the last five games. Crisp, Oakland's leadoff man, is hitting just .136 (3-for-22) in his last five games, feeding into Oakland's offensive woes. Crisp has 10 hits and seven strikeouts this season, but more than half of his hits (four) have gone for extra bases.

Oakland catcher Kurt Suzuki has had only one multihit game this season, and he took an 0-for-5 performance on Tuesday night to bring his batting average down to .194. Suzuki -- a career .263 hitter -- has yet to push his average above .231 this season, and the A's have continued to split his starts between the sixth and seventh spot in the order.

White Sox: Ramirez panning for Silver

Shortstop Alexei Ramirez hit two home runs on Tuesday, the second a walk-off shot in the 10th inning. Ramirez, who went deep 18 times last season, gave Chicago a two-run lead with a three-run homer in the second inning. The 29-year-old came back eight innings later to pull a ball off rookie Bobby Cramer that landed in the left-field seats.

That power stroke is hardly a surprise for Ramirez, who won the AL's Silver Slugger Award last season after leading his positional peers in batting average, slugging and homers.

Chicago got designated hitter Adam Dunn back into the lineup on Tuesday night after a week-long absence due to an emergency appendectomy. Dunn went 1-for-4 in his return.

Worth noting

- The White Sox lead the Major Leagues with 710 quality starts since the start of the 2003 season.
- The A's made an error on Tuesday night to snap a six-game streak without a miscue.

- Oakland has 11 players on its active roster who are at least 30 years old and just three under 25 years old.
- Prior to Tuesday night, Chicago's starters had gone 20 innings without allowing an earned run.
- The White Sox have won the season series against Oakland just twice since 1988.

A's lose 6-5 in 10 innings

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHICAGO — Alexei Ramirez hit his second homer of the game with two outs in the 10th inning to lift the Chicago White Sox to a 6-5 win over the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday night.

Ramirez also hit a three-run shot in the second inning and scored a run after drawing a walk in the sixth.

Chicago reliever Chris Sale (2-0) picked up the win with two shutout innings.

Daric Barton had four hits and scored a run, and Kevin Kouzmanoff hit a two-run homer for Oakland. Hideki Matsui, who entered the game hitting .182, had three hits, including a double, and drove in two runs.

Bobby Cramer (0-1) took the loss for Oakland.

Adam Dunn made his return to the Chicago lineup after missing the last six games because of an emergency appendectomy April 6. He went 1 for 4 and drew a walk in five plate appearances.

The A's went ahead in the second inning when Mark Ellis lined a double to the wall in left-center, scoring Ryan Sweeney from first.

Oakland righty Trevor Cahill was making his first start since agreeing to a new five-year contract on Monday. If Cahill was still celebrating his new pact, the White Sox cut the party short. Cahill escaped the first inning without a run scoring despite allowing a single, a walk and throwing two wild pitches. He wasn't as fortunate in the second.

Ramirez hammered his second homer of the season on a hanging breaking pitch to put the White Sox up 3-1. Chicago added another run in the inning on Paul Konerko's grounder, but Cahill settled down after that, retiring six batters in a row.

He ran into more trouble in the fifth. Dunn hit a leadoff single before a two-out error by shortstop Andy LaRoche put two runners on with two outs.

Cahill's pitch count was up to 97 and the lefty-hitting Pierzynski was coming up, so Oakland manager Bob Geren summoned lefty Craig Breslow from the bullpen. Breslow got Pierzynski on a flyout to left to end the inning.

Cahill threw 4½ innings, allowing six hits, four runs, walking three and striking out three.

Oakland manufactured a run in the third, capitalizing on Barton's leadoff double when Matsui brought him home on a groundout.

Jackson was coming off a dominant performance in which he struck out a career-high 13 over eight innings in a win over Tampa Bay on April 7.

Jackson couldn't make it out of the fifth on Tuesday, costing him a chance at his third win in three starts even though he departed with the lead.

Matsui drove in the Athletics' third run, singling with two outs in the fifth to score Coco Crisp and cut the deficit to 4-3.

Kurt Suzuki reached on a error on a grounder bobbled by Ramirez. That came on Jackson's 100th pitch of the night, which turned out to be his last.

Chicago manager Ozzie Guillen brought in reliever Will Ohman, who got Sweeney on a fielder's choice to escape the threat with the lead intact.

Jackson went 4 2-3 innings and allowed seven hits and three runs while walking two and striking out four.

The Athletics took advantage of Chicago's wobbling bullpen in the sixth. Ellis started with a single off Tony Pena and scored when Kouzmanoff launched a homer into left field, putting Oakland ahead by a run.

The Athletics then loaded the bases against Pena, but the righty escaped the jam by striking out Suzuki.

The White Sox evened the score in the sixth, turning Ramirez's leadoff walk into a run on Juan Pierre's solid single to left off Breslow.

NOTES: SS Cliff Pennington was unavailable for the Athletics because of what Geren called "a little infection of his sweat gland." Geren said his availability is day-to-day. ... Geren said Athletics reliever Michael Wuertz (hamstring) will likely throw a simulated game on Thursday, followed by a start in a minor-league rehab game on Saturday. ... White Sox OF Lastings Milledge cleared waivers on Tuesday and accepted an assignment to the club's Triple-A affiliate in Charlotte. ... LaRoche's throwing error in the fifth snapped Oakland's streak of six-plus games without an error. The Athletics committed an Oakland-record nine errors in their first four games.

Eddie Joost, Philadelphia Athletics shortstop and manager, dies at 94

Daily News Staff

Eddie Joost, a two-time All-Star in an eight-year career with the Philadelphia Athletics and the team's player-manager in 1954, died Tuesday in Fair Oaks, Calif. He was 94.

Joost also had been the oldest living member of the 1940 World Series champion Cincinnati Reds.

In a 17-year playing career, at shortstop Joost had a career batting average of .239 with 134 home runs and 601 RBI. He also posted six consecutive seasons of more than 100 walks. He played for the Reds from 1936-42, the Boston Braves in 1943 and '45, the Athletics from 1947-1954 and finished his career with the Boston Red Sox in 1955.

With the Athletics, he was an All-Star in 1949 and 1952 and was a key part of the franchise's resurgence in the late 1940s. His best season was 1949 when he hit .263 with 23 home runs and 81 RBI. Joost and second baseman Pete Suder set the big-league record for double plays turned with 217 that season.

Joost replaced Jamie Dykes as manager of the Athletics for the 1954 season after the team fell to seventh the previous year. Dykes has been the manager for three seasons after replacing Connie Mack. Joost batted .362 in 47 at-bats, but the Athletics tumbled to 51-103 in the team's final season in Philadelphia before moving to Kansas City.

Joost was fired and finished his playing career as a utility infielder with the Red Sox.

He was a San Francisco native and had been living in Shingle Springs, Calif.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Wild pitch lifts Las Vegas past Sacramento

Sacramento River Cats

Manny Mayerson scored from third base on a wild pitch to give Las Vegas the lead en route to a 5-3 victory over Sacramento on Tuesday night at Raley Field.

The River Cats used four hits in a three-run second inning to tie the game, 3-3, with Josh Donaldson, Adam Heether and Jemile Weeks each collecting RBIs. Weeks went 2-for-5 on the night to improve his batting average to .391.

Sacramento reliever Trystan Magnuson allowed both runs in the ninth inning to take the loss.

Jason Lane opened the ninth inning with a single to center. Mayerson came in to run for Lane, and advanced to third on a Brian Jeroloman single to left field. Magnuson then threw a pitch in the dirt that got away from catcher Josh Donaldson. Mayerson took off from third and narrowly beat Donaldson's tag. Brett Lawrie's single added an insurance run.

RockHounds win 13-inning marathon

Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter Telegram

Even Midland RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone didn't think Tuesday afternoon's game against Springfield would ever end.

Strong pitching, missed opportunities and sustained wind gusts of 20 to 30 mph kept the RockHounds and Cardinals tied at 1 on this long day at Citibank Ballpark. But finally in the 13th inning Springfield reliever Brett Zawacki uncorked a wild pitch with two outs to allow Grant Green to score from third as the RockHounds capped off a successful homestand with a 2-1 victory in a game that lasted 3 hours, 49 minutes.

Luckily for both teams, today is an off day in the Texas League as both bullpens were spent, while the hitters were mentally drained and physically worn out.

"It was miserable out there," said RockHounds left fielder Shane Peterson, who was 3 for 5 on the day. "Not only was it a long game but the wind was blowing in our faces and it was hot out there. But you've got to take one at-bat at time and focus on what's going on in the moment. It was one of those days where I didn't care how we won as long we ended the game so we can get going (on the road)."

Springfield got on the board in the fourth when Aaron Luna scored on an infield groundout by Niko Vasquez.

But other than that run, Midland starter Justin Murray had a strong outing, although he was limited to just four innings of work because of a strict pitch count.

That's when the RockHounds' bullpen took over and gave the hitters a chance to get back in the game. Mickey Storey, Jonathan Ortiz, Fautino De Los Santos and Trey Barham (2-0) combined to hold the Cardinals (2-4) to just three hits combined over the next nine innings.

"I thought Ortiz again came in, took the ball and really made some hitters look a little bit off-balanced," Scarsone said. "He really had some big innings, as well as De Los Santos and Barham."

The RockHounds tied the game at 1 in the sixth when Jermaine Mitchell led off the inning with a double and later scored on a single by Shane Peterson.

From that point on, it was a battle to see which bullpen would fold and which team could cash in on its opportunities.

A hairy moment for the 'Hounds came in the top of the 10th when the Cardinals had the bases loaded with one out. But De Los Santos was brilliant in the clutch as both Steven Hill and Aaron Luna struck out swinging to end the threat.

"That's what he does," said Scarsone about his hard-throwing reliever. "He comes at them hard and then he throws that slider at them. There's an uncomfortable at-bat for the hitter."

The RockHounds also had opportunities but had three double plays turned on them. One of those double plays came in the 12th when the RockHounds had runners at first and second with one out. Tyler Ladendorf hits a fly ball to shallow center field, which was caught by Tommy Pham, who then threw the ball to second base to get Jeremy Barfield, who strayed too far away from the base.

"I was a little disappointed in our execution, some of the smaller parts of the game," Scarsone said. "But that's what we're here to do is develop and work on it, and we will."

Finally in the 13th, Green had a one-out single, moved to second on a balk by Ryan Kulick (0-1), advanced to third on a Jason Christian groundout and then scored on Zawacki's wild pitch with Stephen Parker at the plate.

With the victory, the RockHounds end the homestand with a 5-1 record and now go on the road for six games at Arkansas and Springfield.

"You're supposed to win your home games and at least split on the road, so for us to come out here and win five out of six gives us a huge advantage going on the road," Peterson said.

Early Runs Lift Ports To 9-3 Victory

Stockton Ports

VISALIA, Calif. - Looking to even the score in their three-game set with the Visalia Rawhide, the Stockton Ports wasted no time cranking up their offense Tuesday night at Recreation Park. The Boys of Banner Island plated three runs in the first and two in the second en route to a 9-3 win over the Rawhide to even their series at one game apiece.

The Ports jumped on Rawhide starter Trevor Harden early in the first. With two on and nobody out, Michael Choice launched his first home run in a Ports uniform-a three-run blast to left-center that gave the Ports a quick 3-0 lead. Hardin would then get into and out of further trouble. Max Stassi followed the home run with a single, followed by back-to-back walks drawn by Kent Walton and Rashun Dixon to load the bases with nobody out. Harden, though, would get back-to-back strikeouts of Anthony Aliotti and Juan Nunez, and then get Michael Gilmartin to fly to center to end the inning without further damage.

Visalia got two runs back in the bottom of the first. With one out, Ports starter Fabian Williamson (1-1) yielded back-to-back walks to Chris Owings and Adam Eaton. After a wild pitch advanced the runners, Matt Davidson drove in Visalia's first run with a groundout to second to make it 3-1. Kyle Green followed with an RBI single to right to cut Stockton's lead to 3-2.

Stockton got both runs back in the second on an RBI double from Stassi and RBI single from Walton to make it a three-run lead again at 5-2.

The Ports tagged Harden for an additional run in the second when Dixon drew a bases-loaded walk with two down to increase the lead to 6-2.

Harden would take the loss in his first start of the season, going 3.2 innings and allowing six runs on six hits while walking four and striking out seven.

Meanwhile, Williamson settled in after a rocky first inning. Williamson kept Visalia off the board in innings two through four. In the fifth, Visalia got a leadoff double from Jon Mark Owings who scored two batters later on a single from Justin Hilt to make it a 6-3 game.

Williamson would earn the win, going five innings and allowing three runs on four hits while walking three and striking out three.

Over the final four innings, the Ports would add three insurance runs. Stockton took advantage of a fielding error made by Davidson at third to plate a run in the sixth. The run came off Rawhide reliever Victor Capellan and was unearned.

Leading 7-3 in the ninth, the Ports drew three walks off reliever Kevin Munson and used an RBI single from Nunez and a sac fly from Gilliam to increase their lead to 9-3. The ninth was Munson's lone inning of relief.

Stockton's bullpen tandem of Maxwell Peterson and Connor Hoehn each tossed two scoreless innings to keep Visalia off the board down the stretch.

With their three-game set knotted at a game apiece, the Ports and Rawhide will play the rubber match on Wednesday afternoon at Recreation Park. Dan Straily (0-1, 2.25 ERA) will head to the bump for Stockton, opposed by Visalia left-hander Tyler Skaggs (0-1, 5.79 ERA). First pitch is set for 2 p.m. PDT.

Chiefs Win 8-5

By Jon Versteeg, BURLINGTONBEES.COM

BURLINGTON, IA (April 12, 2011) - The Peoria Chiefs (3-3) scored six unanswered runs to come back from a 5-1 deficit and earn an 8-5 win over the Burlington Bees (4-2) before 500 fans at Community Field on Tuesday night.

The Chiefs scored a run on four hits in the first inning against Burlington RHP Seth Frankoff. CF Rubi Silva (3-5) doubled and moved to third base on a single by 1B Greg Rohan (1-3). LF Smaily Borges (2-4) singled to score Silva and make it 1-0.

Burlington scored five runs over the third and fourth inning to earn a 5-1 lead. LF Douglas Landaeta (1-3) and 1B Tony Thompson (2-4) hit back-to-back RBI singles to score CF Tyreace House (1-5) and 3B Nino Leyja (0-3) respectively.

In the Burlington 4th inning DH Royce Consigli (2-4) tripped and scored when 2B Wade Kirkland (0-3) reached on an error. SS Yordy Cabrera (1-4) singled Kirkland across home plate and later scored when House grounded into a double play to make it 5-1.

Peoria scored four runs in the 5th inning to tie the game at 5-5 and pushed across two runs in the 7th inning to take the lead. In the 7th inning DH D.J. Fitzgerald (1-5) and C Micah Gibbs (2-5) provided back-to-back RBI singles to make it 7-5.

It's game three of four between the Chiefs and Bees on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. It's Kids Eat Free Wednesday at Community Field. All kids at the game on Wednesday will receive a voucher for a free hot dog and drink sponsored by Newsradio 1490 KBUR. The Chiefs will send LHP Austin Kirk (0-0, 0.00) to the mound against RHP Josh Bowman (0-0, 2.25) for the Bees. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at gobees.com