

## A's News Clips, Saturday, April 16, 2011

### Oakland A's blow 1-0 lead to Tigers, lose in 10

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

It was shaping up as a crisp, well-played victory.

Then again, have things always gone according to script for the A's this season?

The Detroit Tigers tied Friday's game on Miguel Cabrera's ninth-inning homer.

Then the bottom fell out for the A's in the top of the 10th, as the Tigers scored seven runs and dealt Oakland an 8-4 defeat in front of a disgruntled crowd of 21,853 at the Oakland Coliseum.

The A's committed three errors in the 10th as the Tigers batted around on the strength of just three hits.

That makes seven errors for the A's in the past four games. They've committed a major league-high 16 errors, hardly resembling the sure-handed defense that was supposed to be a characteristic of this team.

"In the 10th inning, it just totally got away from us," manager Bob Geren said.

The A's couldn't build on an early 1-0 lead to support starter Brandon McCarthy, who deserved a victory with 62/3 shutout innings.

Brian Fuentes (0-2) entered the ninth having converted five consecutive save opportunities. But he left a changeup up in the zone to Cabrera, who mashed a solo shot over the giant wall in right-center to make it a 1-1 game.

Then things turned ugly in the 10th.

Alex Avila led off with a bouncer to first that skipped past first baseman Daric Barton for an error. Avila advanced from second to third on Fuentes' errant pickoff throw to second.

Fuentes walked Jhonny Peralta intentionally, then lost the strike zone in a walk to Ryan Raburn that loaded the bases. Brennan Boesch followed with a two-run double that put Detroit ahead 3-1 and opened the floodgates.

"I don't know the reason for it. It just got away from me," Fuentes said. "I wasn't getting ahead of guys. I wasn't staying down in the zone -- all the things that make you successful."

Victor Martinez's run-scoring single made it 4-1. With the bases loaded and one out, third baseman Andy LaRoche charged Casper Wells' slow roller and made an errant throw home, allowing two more runs to score.

One more run came home on Brandon Inge's ground out, and Avila's RBI single made it 8-1.

The A's got a two-run single from David DeJesus during a three-run rally in the bottom of the 10th, but the deficit was too much to overcome.

"Our defense will be good when all is said and done," Geren said. "It wasn't a bad game, it was a bad inning."

The A's failed to build on their early lead, a developing trend early in the season.

McCarthy, who didn't even pitch in the majors last season, is cementing himself as a key man in the rotation. He scattered six hits, struck out seven, walked one and lowered his ERA to 2.45. He's walked just two batters in 22 innings this season, continuing the pinpoint control that won him the fifth starter's job in spring training.

Coco Crisp, minus the large Afro he sported Thursday, helped break a scoreless tie in the third. He singled with one out and notched his sixth stolen base to get in scoring position.

DeJesus drove him in with a single to center. DeJesus has been quiet this season, entering the night hitting .190. He went 3 for 5 with three RBIs on Friday.

The victory was the 1,500th for the Tigers' Jim Leyland, the 19th manager to reach that milestone.

## **Oakland A's update: Radio station switches from country to sports talk**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's flagship station, KBWF 95.7-FM, switched Friday to an all-sports format, which assures the team better radio exposure than in past seasons.

KBWF, previously 95.7 The Wolf, was a country music station that was basically shoehorning A's broadcasts into its music programming. On Friday, the station branded itself SportsRadio 95.7, and it should have the financial backing to bite into KNBR 680's domination of the Bay Area's sports radio market.

KBWF's parent company, Entercom, owns other FM-based sports stations around the country, including powerhouse WEEI in Boston.

KBWF also is the broadcast partner of the San Jose Sharks. Dwight Walker, Entercom's marketing director, said programming will include substantial A's and Sharks talk but also discussion of the Bay Area's other teams.

"We felt not all the teams are being appreciated perhaps as much as they could be," Walker said. "I think the A's and Sharks are two of those teams. We just think there's a tremendous opportunity to grow the sports audience in the Bay Area. You've got passion, an underserved audience and teams to support that."

The station hasn't hired on-air hosts yet or revealed its daily schedule. But the A's pregame show has been expanded from 45 minutes to an hour, and Chris Townsend's postgame call-in show will last one hour, running longer some days.

Linking with an all-sports station is a score for the A's after years of being on stations either with weak signals or shaky financial situations.

"I think it's going to be new and exciting for all sports fans in the Bay Area," said Ken Pries, the A's vice president of broadcasting and communications.

Andy LaRoche started at third base in place of Kevin Kouzmanoff for the second straight game, and A's manager Bob Geren said he might give LaRoche an extended look.

LaRoche entered Friday's game against the Detroit Tigers hitting .333. Kouzmanoff was batting .171 with four errors.

"I told (Kouzmanoff) that guys have ups and downs fielding and ups and downs hitting," Geren said. "Right now he's having a rough time with both of them, but I have confidence he'll break out offensively and defensively."

Michael Wuertz (strained left hamstring) is scheduled to throw an inning for Single-A Stockton on Saturday and again Sunday if he feels OK.

## **Chin Music: LaRoche might get more time at third base**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/15/2011 7:03PM

Are you still wondering what to make of this A's team? So am I ... After showing signs of life on the road, the offense was silenced last night. The A's try to even this four-game series against Detroit tonight, with Brandon McCarthy attempting to make it three straight strong starts to begin his 2011 season.

Andy LaRoche draws his second straight start at third base, and A's manager Bob Geren said he might give LaRoche an extended look there. Kevin Kouzmanoff is hitting just .171 in 13 games and he's made four errors. He just looks off defensively right now. "I told him guys have ups and downs fielding and have ups and downs hitting," Geren said. "Right now he's having a rough time with both of them. But I have confidence he'll break out offensively and defensively, because he's done it in the past."

That's not to say there won't be any defensive adventures with LaRoche. I asked him about that ugly sacrifice fly in the eighth inning last night, when left fielder Josh Willingham caught a fly ball in left-center, fired a throw to third and no one

was there covering, which allowed a second run to score on the play. LaRoche was positioned to be the cutoff man for a throw home (there were runners on second and third to start the play).

LaRoche said he wandered away from third to be cutoff man because the runner at second was not tagging up. At any rate, there was confusion on the play, and LaRoche said a game plan is in place to better handle the situation next time. With runners on second and third and less than two outs, if there's a fly ball to left-center, one possibility is to have first baseman Daric Barton be the cutoff man, allowing the third baseman to stay at third. As we've seen, the A's are likely to be in a lot of close games this season, and they can't afford to be giving away extra runs. ...

—Michael Wuertz (strained left hamstring) is scheduled to throw one inning for Single-A Stockton on Saturday. If that goes well, he might do so again Sunday. Geren said they would wait to see how Wuertz comes out of Saturday's outing before proceeding with his next step. The right-hander has been on the DL since April 6 ...

The lineups:

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

Tigers – Rhymes 2B, Raburn LF, Boesch RF, Cabrera 1B, Martinez DH, Kelly CF, Inge 3B, Avila C, Santiago SS; Porcello RHP.

## **Chin Music: A's flagship station, 95.7 FM, switches to all-sports format**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/15/2011 12:42pm

The A's flagship station, KBWF 95.7 FM, announced Friday that it's switching from a country music format to an all-sports station – SportsRadio 95.7. That's a big win for the A's and their fans because it will mean more A's programming throughout the day, though the station hasn't announced a daily lineup yet. If you turn the station on right now, you'll hear a loop of Bay Area sports highlights. But at 4 p.m., an extended A's pregame show will begin, hosted by Chris Townsend. I'm told the pregame show won't typically start this early, but Townsend will remain part of the daily package with his pre- and postgame show. Bottom line, the A's will be on longer — before and after games — than they were previously on 95.7, which had been trying to shoe-horn A's broadcasts in between the country music. The station is also the broadcast partner of the San Jose Sharks. And though Sharks games will continue airing on KFOX 98.5, the plan is to have substantial A's and Sharks talk throughout the day on 95.7, as well as talk about the other Bay Area teams.

"We just think there's a tremendous opportunity to grow the sports audience in the Bay Area," said Dwight Walker, vice president and market manager for 95.7's parent company, Entercom. "You've got passion, an underserved audience and teams to support that."

Aside from the A's buying their own station, which they tried to do with KTRB, this is the best situation for them. They're guaranteed a bigger presence on an all-sports station. People in the radio industry talk very highly of Entercom, which owns other FM all-sports stations around the country, including WEEL in Boston, a giant in the business. One person I spoke to expects 95.7 to receive the backing to form a serious challenge to KNBR's supremacy in the Bay Area sports radio landscape. Might 95.7 try to land the Raiders or other Bay Area teams? I could see the station making a run at it.

Certainly, the timing is right to launch a second Bay Area sports station. KTRB, the A's previous flagship station, has an all-sports format, but it isn't likely to stay that way considering the station is in receivership and up for sale.

I'll be reporting more on this story as 95.7 announces its on-air hosts and programming. For now, what are your thoughts on this development, A's fans?

## **A's Brian Fuentes blows save, then game to Tigers**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Brian Fuentes had picked up saves in each of the A's previous five wins before Friday. Because Fuentes failed to convert a save opportunity against the Tigers, those remain Oakland's past five wins.

Miguel Cabrera greeted Fuentes with an opposite-field homer leading off the ninth to make it a 1-1 game, then Detroit got to Fuentes and Brad Ziegler for seven runs in an ugly 10th for Oakland.

The Tigers extended their winning streak to four games with an 8-4 victory at the Coliseum.

Cabrera's fifth home run of the season came on a high changeup.

"I don't think it was the wrong pitch," Fuentes said. "I think it was the wrong location."

A lot went wrong for the A's in the 10th. The inning began with Daric Barton making an error on Alex Avila's bouncer. After Avila was sacrificed to second, Fuentes uncorked a pickoff throw to center field, enabling Avila to move to third.

Fuentes then issued an intentional walk to pinch-hitter Jhonny Peralta and an unintentional walk to Ryan Raburn, loading the bases for Cal alum Brennan Boesch.

On an 0-2 pitch, Boesch drove a two-run double to the base of the wall in right for his third hit of the evening. Make it 3-1, Detroit.

After an intentional walk to Cabrera, Ziegler replaced Fuentes. Victor Martinez delivered an RBI single to right. For Oakland, the inning devolved from there, with a throwing error by third baseman Andy LaRoche leading directly to two more runs.

The Tigers would score seven times in the 10th, with three hits, three walks and three errors.

The A's answered with three in the bottom of the 10th - two on David DeJesus' single - but it wasn't enough to prevent Detroit manager Jim Leyland from collecting career win No. 1,500. DeJesus had three hits and three RBIs.

Starter Brandon McCarthy, whom the A's signed as a free agent in December, worked 6 2/3 shutout innings.

The 6-foot-7 right-hander gave up six hits, walked one and struck out seven. In only one inning, the fourth, did he allow the Tigers to put runners in scoring position.

After Avila's two-out single in the seventh on McCarthy's 114th pitch of the night, manager Bob Geren brought in Craig Breslow. McCarthy departed to a loud ovation from the crowd of 21,853.

McCarthy gave himself an error for the way he acknowledged the fans.

"I was going to do a hat-tip," McCarthy said. "I was going to clap. Then I got stuck in the middle and I couldn't decide what to do, so I ended up touching my hat or something. I don't know what that was.

"I just want them to know that I appreciate it. It really meant a lot."

Defense is supposed to mean a lot to the A's this season, but it has hurt them in the opening two weeks. Oakland has committed 16 errors in 14 games.

The A's made 99 errors in 2010.

## A's leading off

Steve Kroner, San Francisco Chronicle

**Moore and Morris:** Thursday's 3-0 Detroit win was the Tigers' first shutout of the A's since Mike Moore tossed a one-hitter against his former team in a 9-0 decision at Detroit on Aug. 23, 1993. The Tigers' last shutout at the Coliseum? Jack Morris' four-hitter in a 6-0 win on Sept. 23, 1990.

## **Oakland A's news, April 15**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Saturday, April 16, 2011

**Dallas Braden** doesn't lack for confidence, but he's also a realist. When the A's left-hander faces the Tigers tonight, he won't try to take on **Justin Verlander**, Detroit's starter, in a contest of How Fast Can You Throw?

"I don't think I could match him at the radar gun if I was in charge of punching the numbers in the radar gun," Braden said.

Braden's fastball mph usually ranges in the high 80s. Verlander's is in the mid-90s, occasionally pushing close to triple digits.

"There aren't too many starters who maintain a 95 or higher for seven, eight, nine innings," A's manager **Bob Geren** said.

"That's pretty special."

Verlander has struck out 21 hitters in 23 innings.

"I think anybody's happy to put the ball in play off the guy, let alone square him up," Braden said.

In eight career starts against Detroit, Braden is 2-4 with a 6.75 ERA. He attributes his lack of success against the Tigers to sometimes failing to challenge their hitters, particularly in his first couple of years in the majors.

"I've got the confidence now - and I've had the confidence for a while - of just believing in what I'm going to do," Braden said.

**All-sports station:** On Friday, the A's flagship radio station, 95.7 FM, switched its format from country music to all sports and changed its name from the Wolf to SportsRadio 95.7 FM.

In addition to carrying the A's broadcasts, 95.7 will have the Sharks' broadcasts - but not until next season. San Jose's playoff broadcasts will remain on 98.5 and 102.1.

**Briefly:** **Andy LaRoche** (7-for-21 entering Friday) got the start at third base Friday night in place of **Kevin Kouzmanoff** (7-for-41). "We're not swinging the bats all that well," Geren said, "so if somebody's swinging it, I've got to get him in there." ... Reliever **Michael Wuertz** (hamstring) will throw an inning tonight for Class A Stockton.

## Drumbeat: A's new station goes from country to all-sports, FM style

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser 4/15/2011 11:05AM

Interesting news in A's - and Sharks' - land today. The A's new station, 95.7 FM, is switching from country music to an all-sports format, and the name changes from The Wolf to SportsRadio 95.7 FM.

There have been several attempts to wean some audience away from KNBR over the years, with little overall success. This is the first try on FM, and with a big company, Entercom, with lots of sports programming experience behind it.

The station promises A's and Sharks' programming, with on-air personalities and other programming to be announced at a later date. Sharks' playoff games will remain on KFOX for the playoffs, with simulcasts on 95.7 FM when possible (i.e., not during A's games) and Entercom is in discussions with the Sharks about moving their broadcasts to 95.7 FM next season.

Dwight Walker, Entercom's market manager and vice president, tells me that Entercom also will be having talks with Stanford (currently on the dying KTRB) and Cal today.

If this station picks up Stanford and if the A's ever get permission to move to San Jose, Entercom might have positioned itself well as a South Bay alternative to KNBR. In addition, the A's and Sharks have fan bases that feel particularly under-served by KNBR, so that gives 95.7 FM some hungry listeners from the get-go.

Walker tells me that listener studies show that 80 percent of those who listen to the radio stay on the FM side and never switch over to AM at all. He and Entercom believe there are plenty of sports fans in general who are listening to FM radio and who are currently under-served. SportsRadio 95.7 FM is calling itself the biggest large-market all-sports station in the country.

"We'll be talking A's and Sharks, two winning franchises that aren't getting as much attention as they could," he said. "But we'll also be talking Warriors, Giants, Earthquakes, SaberCats."

Here's hoping Chris Townsend's pre-game show goes back to its full expanded format, and if this truly is to be a station that does right by the A's, I'd love to see Townsend get an even more high-profile daily spot, too. Wouldn't drive time go nicely with merging right into the pre-game show? Maybe a regular morning hit with Ken Korach, the way KNBR provides extra formats for the Giants' broadcasters? Who else would you like to see - or, rather, hear?

Here's someone else I'd like to see with a regular outlet of some sort, or even a behind the scenes role: David Feldman, who knows more A's facts and stats than anyone around. He's the person I turn to for bits of info, facts about A's history, and he also knows the broadcasting industry well, having done lots of TV work (producing, stats, you name it) and some radio.

There are a host of worthy people out there, and quite a bit of air time to fill. I hope SportsRadio 95.7 FM finds a nice mix and something a little outside the norm here and there. I'd hope local broadcasters who know the Bay Area sports scene well are the primary talent pool, rather than either some nationally known types or personalities from some of Entercom's other stations around the country.

### 3-Dot Lounge

#### Bonds trial a federal joke

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle

**Barry Bonds** seemed reasonably content with the outcome of his trial, and why not?

A thousand truths outlined in the book "Game of Shadows" were deemed inconclusive, and he never had to face a public grilling.

We've heard **Alex Rodriguez**, **Jason Giambi** and many others interviewed on the subject. We've seen **Roger Clemens**, **Mark McGwire**, **Sammy Sosa** and **Rafael Palmeiro** in front of Congress. Bonds?

Nope. Congress couldn't interfere with the federal investigation in progress — you know, that seven-year joke of an exercise that dragged along into eternity.

Then came the trial, and I was reminded of **O.J. Simpson**, sitting there like a stooge in his murder trial as everyone talked but him. Don't take this the wrong way — the American justice system is a fine and noble thing — but when it comes to judgment day, you have to see the accused in testimony, look into his eyes, read his body language, see how he responds to a savage line of questioning. Everything else is just window dressing.

Oh, and we weren't allowed to hear from **Greg Anderson**, either, after a host of ex-players spoke his central role in steroid distribution. So other than the only two people who counted, that was one revealing trial.

Congratulations, Barry. You've skated once again.

### **At arm's length**

With the appeal process ongoing, the Giants don't have to make a comment on Bonds. The guess from here: He's welcome at the ballpark. He can sit in the executives' section and get cheers from the fans. But I can't see **Bill Neukom** allowing a convicted felon to appear on the field, work with the players in an official capacity or be involved in any Giants functions ... As for the Hall of Fame, I'm pleased to report that some of the best and most respected baseball writers in the country — **Buster Olney, Tim Kurkjian, Bob Nightengale, Joe Posnanski** and **Jon Heyman**, among others — share our belief that Bonds should be in the Hall of Fame. He won't make it, though, at least not immediately. Too many moralists harping on the "character" clause and ready to punish Bonds for being such a jerk over the years. Same goes for Clemens, A-Rod and the rest.

So enjoy that new, freshly scrubbed Hall of Fame, featuring Betty Crocker, the Osmond Brothers and a bunch of .220 hitters in charge of the Sunday clubhouse chapel services ... This column did nothing but gripe about "The Franchise," Showtime's intrusion into the Giants' affairs, but then came the half-hour preview show (Wednesday night), and it was excellent, something not to be missed by any Giants fan. It's not a reality show, rather a caring, thoughtful look into the players' lives. If you get Showtime, look for repeat airings through Tuesday ... Once I got an up-close look at the Giants' World Series ring — a real thing of beauty — I found it even more appalling that the team is raffling one off to the public. Why cheapen the significance? What's to prevent some guy trying to sell it outside Happy Donuts? ... Correction from last week: Although the A's offer no bobblehead promotions of active players this season, **Dallas Braden** (mentioned as a possibility) was immortalized last year ... Rave reviews all around for **Bob Myers**, the agent and former UCLA player who has joined the Warriors' front office as assistant general manager. With **Larry Riley** most likely being gradually phased out and Myers new to the executive field, does this mean owner **Joe Lacob** will be making the big personnel decisions? That's the question, and we can't question the setup until the first big call comes down ... Nice to see the WNBA draft granting big-city locations to two players who came up big against Stanford in the women's NCAA Tournament: Gonzaga's **Courtney Vandersloot** (drafted by Chicago) and Texas & M's **Sydney Colson** (traded to New York).

Great comment from the Houston Chronicle's **Richard Justice**, who has a popular radio show: "Some idiot said he could get four of his friends together and beat the A&M women. I told him to go get 'em, that I might be able to arrange it, and that he should be prepared to lose by 50." ... If you're familiar with **Branch Rickey**, the forward-thinking Brooklyn Dodgers executive who made it possible for **Jackie Robinson** to break baseball's color line in 1947, you know he was a crusty, overweight, cigar-smoking guy who was all about substance, not style. Now we hear that **Robert Redford**, who hatched the idea, will play Rickey. Unbelievable. Can't even imagine who will play Robinson. And starring as **Pee Wee Reese**, the fabulous David **Hasselhoff**.

### **McCarthy excels; A's lose in extra innings**

By Eric Gilmore / Special to MLB.com | 4/16/2011 1:45 AM ET

OAKLAND -- There were two outs and a runner on first base in the top of the seventh inning when A's starter Brandon McCarthy walked off the mound on Friday night to a standing ovation, with his team holding a 1-0 lead over the Detroit Tigers.

It was all good for the A's, but by the end of the night it had turned so very bad.

Reliever Brian Fuentes gave up a leadoff homer to Detroit first baseman Miguel Cabrera in the ninth, tying the game, 1-1, and in the top of the 10th the A's had an implosion they won't soon forget.

Detroit scored seven runs, taking advantage of three errors -- one each by first baseman Daric Barton, third baseman Andy LaRoche and Fuentes -- and held on for an 8-4 victory over the A's.

"Tough loss, obviously," A's manager Bob Geren said. "Brandon threw the ball extremely well. Going into the ninth with a one-run lead. Slipped away on a home run, obviously, to one of the better hitters in baseball. And in the 10th inning, just totally got away from us."

Fuentes walked three batters in the inning, one intentionally. He allowed a two-run double to Brennan Boesch and three earned runs. Plus, he had an errant pickoff play to second that added fuel to the Tigers' fire. Brad Ziegler came on to give up two hits and two earned runs.

Defense and relief pitching were supposed to be two of the A's strengths. But the A's have now committed 16 errors, the most in the Major Leagues, seven of those coming in the past four games. And their bullpen has faltered in back-to-back losses to Detroit.

"I'd be surprised if we didn't overcome it," McCarthy said. "Again, we're still dealing with such a small sample size here. We're only [14] games into the season. So to look and to panic about something that was supposed to be our strength -- and will be our strength -- is probably just getting a little bit ahead of ourselves. If everybody stays focused on what they're supposed to do and everybody keeps working hard, the bullpen is going to end up being a strength for us, and I think our defense will be back to where it's supposed to be."

Leading off the ninth, Cabrera sent Fuentes' 1-1 pitch over the right-center wall for his fifth home run of the season. Before Friday, Fuentes had been a perfect 5-for-5 in save opportunities. His five saves were tied for second most in the Major Leagues.

"We were able to get the big blow from our star," Tigers manager Jim Leyland said. "You have to win tough games on the road, and that's what we did."

Fuentes retired the next three batters in order. But in the 10th, everything that could go wrong for the A's did go wrong.

Alex Avila led off with a sharp grounder that went through Barton's legs at first for an error, then moved to second on a sacrifice bunt. With pinch hitter Jhonny Peralta at the plate, Fuentes tried to pick off Avila, but his throw went into center field, and Avila moved to third. Fuentes walked Peralta intentionally, then walked Ryan Raburn -- unintentionally -- loading the bases. Boesch then ripped a two-run double to right that hit the base of the wall.

"It kind of snowballed," Fuentes said. "Obviously, the home run was a big part of that. Just tried to get three outs after that in a fashionable manner, timely manner, and then went back the next inning. It seemed to get out of hand.

"Give up a hit, try to walk guys to put yourself in a better situation, as far as not giving in. And then intentionally walking guys, and it comes around to bite you. It's just the way it is."

As for the pickoff play?

"I had him picked off," Fuentes said. "I tried to thread the needle. I knew it was going to be a risky play, but I thought I could make the throw -- and I didn't make the throw."

The A's had three hits from David DeJesus and two from Barton. They had 12 hits as a team. But after taking a 1-0 lead in the third, they didn't score another run until it was too late.

On Thursday night, the A's squandered Gio Gonzalez's six innings of shutout ball. On Friday, they wasted McCarthy's gem.

He blanked the Tigers for 6 2/3 innings before exiting with the A's ahead 1-0. He struck out seven and walked only one, showing the pinpoint control and stellar command he's becoming known for with the A's. He threw 114 pitches, 71 of those strikes.



"I thought it was a pretty good outing on the whole," McCarthy said. "I battled my command for a little bit. I wasn't as sharp as I felt I had been my first two outings, but I felt like I did a pretty good job making some pitches to get out of some jams. Some good pitches to some good hitters. So I'm happy with it, in that regard."

One of McCarthy's few mistakes took place as he walked off the mound to a standing ovation.

"The standing ovation was just awesome coming off," he said. "I wanted to show the fans I appreciated it. I was going to do a hat tip, then I was going to clap -- and then I got stuck in the middle and I couldn't decide what I was going to do, so I ended up touching my hat or something. I don't know what that was. I just want them to know that I appreciated it. It really meant a lot."

## **A's feel the impact of Robinson's legacy**

By Eric Gilmore / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- During his days as a high school baseball player, A's center fielder Coco Crisp wore jersey No. 42, to honor Jackie Robinson.

On Friday night, Crisp, as well as players, coaches and managers throughout Major League Baseball, wore No. 42 on Jackie Robinson Day, honoring the man who broke baseball's color barrier in 1947.

"He definitely was a pioneer for us -- not just for African Americans, but for minorities in baseball," said Crisp. "It's Latin America to Japan to China, to wherever -- kind of bridging the gap slowly into baseball."

The A's had two Jackie Robinson Foundation "alumnus scholars" throw out the first pitch before Friday night's game against Detroit. There was also a pregame tribute to Jackie Robinson shown on the big video screens at the Coliseum.

about something that, in my opinion, transcends sports, transcends baseball without a doubt, but just all sports in general," A's pitcher Dallas Braden said. "It speaks to the progress of us as a nation, and where we were at that time and where we are now celebrating this man and his accomplishment.

"It's a huge deal especially for African American players because he's the beacon for those guys. He laid the groundwork for those guys, and they feel so strongly about him and what he endured to open the door of opportunity for them. But as a human being, the things he endured, and his philanthropic work also. It's transcending, just because this is a man who was not given any opportunity, who basically beat the door down and said, 'You've got to be ignorant to not let me play.'"

A's reliever Tyson Ross, an African American, said he learned about Robinson at an early age.

"I knew all about Jackie Robinson, actually wrote a couple [of] papers on him in college," said Ross, who attended Cal. "He's had a major impact on society, as well as the game. It's just a special thing.

"It's symbolic of how the game's come along and progressed, and the same with society. It's a special day, and it's a good tribute to Jackie Robinson."

A's outfielder Conor Jackson, another Cal product, talked of Robinson's continuing impact on baseball.

"He changed the game forever," Jackson said.

## **Verlander, Braden to duel at Coliseum**

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

The last time Dallas Braden pitched for the A's, he matched up against another pitcher who had thrown a perfect game in White Sox lefty Mark Buehrle.

When Braden toes the slab on Saturday, he'll face a top-flight pitcher who hasn't thrown a perfecto but does have a no-hitter on his resume.

That would be Tigers ace Justin Verlander, and when Detroit plays in the Oakland Coliseum at 6:05 p.m. PT on Saturday evening, both starting pitchers will be looking to repeat solid performances in their last outings -- while getting an elusive win.

For Verlander, the only thing that wasn't earned on April 11 against Texas was that victory. The righty uncorked one-hit stuff for the first six innings and went the distance for a complete game. The only problem was Texas starter Alexi Ogando, who dominated the Tigers in a 2-0 Rangers shutout.

"I don't think it's terribly disappointing for me. I think it's terribly disappointing for the team," Verlander said. "I think we tried to battle as much as we could. I think their guy threw the ball extremely well. Good pitching beats good hitting."

That was the case for Braden on the 11th, too. He matched Buehrle in Chicago, throwing three no-hit innings before giving up an infield single to Alex Rios with one out in the fourth. He said he was aware of the fact that he was participating in only the 21st game in big league history that matched two starters who had pitched perfect games, but he preferred to keep his focus on the catcher's mitt.

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

Braden did just that, throwing 95 pitches while battling a mild case of quad tightness, and exiting after six having given up one run, five hits, two walks and recording seven strikeouts. He got a no-decision in a game the A's would later win.

He says he's ready to take on the challenge of facing Detroit and its premier slugger, Miguel Cabrera.

"Obviously, they've got their big gun over there, Cabrera," Braden said. "You don't want to let him hurt you. You try to take the game plan I've worked on this week so far and apply it. I've always said I'm not a guy who's trying to miss bats, just trying to miss barrels. If I can keep them at bay long enough or I can keep them off balance long enough, then I'm OK, that's what I'm going to do."

### **Tigers: Miggy mashes the West**

Cabrera is hitting .349 (159-for-455) with 41 doubles, a triple, 28 home runs and 110 RBIs in 119 games against teams from the American League West. Among active players with at least 200 plate appearance against teams from the division, Cabrera is tops in batting average.

- Tigers pitchers have not allowed a home run in the last eight games. The eight-game streak is the longest by Tigers pitchers since not allowing a home run in eight consecutive games from June 3-11, 1981.
- Outfielder Magglio Ordonez (ankle) is expected back in the Detroit lineup either on Saturday or Sunday.

### **A's: No time for panic**

The A's aren't hitting the ball as well as they'd like to be early in the season, but outfielder Conor Jackson said there's nothing to be overly worried about right now.

"It's early," he said. "It's hard to push the panic button on our offense now. I think hitting's a pretty contagious thing. A lot of teams I played on, you go in spurts, and that's just how the game is. Sometimes you have good months and sometimes you have bad months, so it's nothing I think we're too concerned about."

- The A's have committed seven errors in their past four games after going six consecutive games without an error. They opened the season by committing an Oakland-record nine errors over their first four games. Last year, 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.
- Reliever Jerry Blevins has allowed one run or fewer in each of his six games this season, including four scoreless appearances (two earned runs in seven innings for a 2.57 ERA). But he has an 8.11 ERA in four career appearances against the Tigers.

### **Worth noting**

Leyland enters tonight's game at Oakland with 1,500 wins during his Major League managerial career. On Friday, he became the 19th manager in Major League history to reach 1,500 victories. He's second among all active Major League managers, behind only the 2,644 earned by former A's and current St. Louis skipper Tony La Russa. ... The A's are 4-1 in day games and 2-7 at night. Last year, they went 35-21 (.625) during day games and 46-60 (.434) at night. The day record was the third-best in the American League and the night record was fourth worst.

### **Gonzalez visits local school**

By Eric Gilmore / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- One day after pitching six shutout innings against the Tigers, A's left-hander Gio Gonzalez did some work in the community on Friday afternoon.

Gonzalez, along with team mascot Stomper, visited Manzanita SEED Elementary School in Oakland. Manzanita was one of two California public schools named a 2010 National Title I Distinguished School by the National Title I Association.

Gonzalez took part in an assembly at the English/Spanish immersion school. Students answered trivia questions -- those with correct answers received an A's hat that Gonzalez autographed -- and math questions. He also did a Q & A with the students at the assembly, which was a reward for their achievements.

### **A's flagship station adopts all-sports format**

OAKLAND -- The A's flagship radio station switched from a country music format to all sports, all the time on Friday.

Entercom Communications launched what it called the largest market FM sports station in the nation, SportsRadio 95.7.

"With eight professional sports teams, several outstanding college teams and some of the best fans in America, we believe that the Bay Area deserves a great FM-sports-talk station," Entercom market manager and vice president Dwight Walker said in a release.

"SportsRadio 95.7 will deliver live and local programming, exciting play-by-play sports, and the most entertaining and informative sports-radio experience for Bay Area fans. There is a lot to talk about, and a lot of people who want to talk sports."

Entercom owns several other sports-talk radio stations, including WEEI in Boston. It will compete for listeners with KNBR, which operates two all-sports AM stations in the Bay Area.

"Numerous cities in America, including Detroit and Philadelphia, have been able to support two successful sports stations, and San Francisco will do it as well," Walker said. "Launching SportsRadio 95.7 FM will provide this market with an outstanding alternative."

The station is already a broadcasting partner with the San Jose Sharks.

### **Harden has a setback in recovery**

OAKLAND -- Right-hander Rich Harden's time on the disabled list apparently won't end any time soon.

"The latest is I'll take a few days off from throwing," said Harden, who was examined by a doctor in the Bay Area earlier this week. "I guess you could call it a setback. We'll kind of go day to day."

Harden opened the season on the 15-day disabled list with what the A's are calling a right shoulder injury. But he stressed that the injury is to the teres major muscle, and has nothing to do with his "rotator cuff or labrum."

Harden said rest and rehab should solve this problem, and he admitted that he probably pushed too hard to get back.

"I was close before, feeling good, and kind of hit a point where I kind of got set back a little bit," Harden said. "It basically just needs a little more time. It's frustrating. You want to be out there. Really, it's just a little more time -- then building back up. It wasn't quite ready to get to that point of high-intensity work."

"I maybe just pushed it a little too much. ... It's hard not to. That's always been a problem for any athlete. That's just what you do. It's human nature. You want to be out there. Yeah, I may have done that. Ended up probably making this whole thing take a lot longer than it would have originally."

### **LaRoche gets another start at third**

OAKLAND -- Andy LaRoche was in the starting lineup at third base and regular starter Kevin Kouzmanoff was on the bench on Friday night for the second straight game.

A's manager Bob Geren said he might give the hot-hitting LaRoche an extended look at third base. Does he have a chance to win the starting job?

"Hey, we're trying to win games, and if a guy is contributing and helping us, I'll find a way to keep him in there, yeah," Geren said before Friday night's game against Detroit. "That's the same with anybody -- not just him, but in general. We're not swinging the bats all that well. So if somebody's swinging it, I've got to get him in there."

LaRoche is hitting .333 to Kouzmanoff's .171. Kouzmanoff has also committed four errors to just one for LaRoche, who was a non-roster invitee to Spring Training and made the Opening Day roster.

Geren said he expects Kouzmanoff to work his way out of his slumps at the plate and in the field.

"I even told him, 'Guys have ups and downs fielding, they have ups and downs hitting,'" Geren said. "Right now, he's having a rough time with both of them. But I have confidence he will break out both offensively and defensively, because he's done it in the past."

### **Fuentes blows save in ninth; A's implode in tenth inning to lose, 8-4**

Sam McPherson, examiner.com

(OAKLAND) -- Once again, the Oakland Athletics bullpen cost the team a win. And as usual, everyone else (except the starting pitching, of course) chipped in for good measure.

Just 14 games into the season, and the A's bullpen has already lost six games on the year. Considering the vast amounts of money invested in this relief corps in the offseason, the organization had to expect something better than this.

Including tonight's 8-4 loss to the Detroit Tigers, the Oakland bullpen is now 2-6 on the season, and the team overall is 6-8. The starting pitching has been a strength -- as it was again tonight, with Brandon McCarthy going 6 2/3 scoreless innings -- and while the offense has also been its usual pitiful self, it's still the bullpen's job to prevent runs from scoring.

And they just haven't done that well enough.

Tonight's game was decided in the late innings again, and it all started when Brian Fuentes -- who is making \$5M this season -- allowed a leadoff home run to start the ninth inning.

That erased the A's 1-0 lead and created the problems the team faced in the tenth inning, although the defense also made several errors in the tenth (surprise) that contributed to the seven-run disaster in the final inning.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record, though, this Oakland team is wasting tremendous pitching talent by shortchanging its offense capabilities, underestimating its defensive problems and lying to itself that this is the way to win games in the American League.

This team is not good, despite the random and occasional displays of semi-brilliance, and the organization needs to make some changes very soon before this season starts turning into 2010 all over again.

The A's starters have a 2.37 ERA this season, and yet the team has only won six of the 14 games it's played. That is absolutely unacceptable, but the organization seems to just delude themselves into thinking they have a competitive team.

The defense has now made 16 errors, the most in the AL.

The offense has scored one run when it mattered -- not including the tenth inning tonight when the team was down seven runs already -- in two games against mediocre Tigers' pitching with a team ERA of 4.86 coming into the game.

And the bullpen continues to blow ballgames the team could be winning as they've posted an AL-worst six losses.

All in all, it's a trainwreck that any sane fan doesn't want to continue watching.

The question is if the organizational management is watching.

## **A's implode in 10th inning**

### **Detroit ties it in ninth, wins in extra innings with help from three Oakland errors**

By JANIE McCAULEY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Brennan Boesch hit a go-ahead two-run double with the bases loaded in the 10th inning and the Detroit Tigers rallied to beat the A's, 8-4, on Friday night for manager Jim Leyland's 1,500th career win.

Miguel Cabrera hit a tying solo homer leading off the ninth against fill-in closer Brian Fuentes (0-2), who blew his first save in six chances and then loaded the bases with one out in the 10th.

The A's defense didn't help his cause, committing three errors in Detroit's seven-run 10th to raise their majors-leading total to 16. That includes seven in the last four games.

Leyland became the 19th major league manager to reach 1,500 wins, doing so on his first attempt.

Boesch finished with three hits for Detroit, which won its fourth straight.

Brayan Villarreal (1-0) recorded two outs in the ninth for the win.

Victor Martinez added an insurance run in the 10th with an RBI single, then two more runs came in on third baseman Andy LaRoche's wild throw home.

Fuentes, who has been Oakland's ninth-inning option in place of injured 2009 Rookie of the Year closer Andrew Bailey, was tagged for six runs, four earned.

The Tigers turned double plays in each of the first two innings and again in the ninth on the way to winning their fourth straight at the Coliseum.

A's starter Brandon McCarthy struck out seven in 6» shutout innings and walked only his second batter in three starts, but David DeJesus' RBI single wasn't enough to hold up for the A's a night after being shut out for the first time on a three-hitter by Phil Coke and three relievers in a 3-0 Detroit win.

McCarthy showed again his value at the back end of a talented young rotation. He struck out seven or more for the seventh time in his career and first since May 13, 2009, for Texas against Seattle.

But the defense was awful.

A night after three of Oakland's four pitchers combined to allow a season-high 11 walks, six of those by Gio Gonzalez, McCarthy found the plate. Five of the six hits he allowed came with two outs, and he was able to keep the Tigers off balance before the bullpen fizzled. The A's are 1-4 at home so far.

McCarthy, who earned the A's No. 5 job in the rotation out of spring training after a tough competition, was in position to win back-to-back starts in the majors for the first time since September 2009.

Righty reliever Al Alburquerque made his major league debut for the Tigers in the seventh a day after being called up from Triple-A Toledo. He struck out three and allowed a single to Kurt Suzuki in his first two innings, then allowed Willingham's leadoff walk in the ninth.

Daniel Schlereth relieved and retired Hideki Matsui on a popup before Villarreal entered.

Matsui stranded five baserunners in his 0-for-4 night.

Don Kelly doubled with two outs in the fourth, the Tigers' 14th straight game with at least one double and their longest such streak to begin a season since also doing so in 14 in a row in 1970.

Detroit pitchers haven't allowed a home run in their last eight games, matching the club's longest such streak since an eight-game run June 3-11, 1981.

## **NOTES**

\* Bailey (strained right forearm) is set to throw long toss Saturday followed by a side session Sunday.

\* Oakland RHP Michael Wuertz (hamstring) will pitch one inning for Class-A Stockton on Saturday.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Carter's first homer of season carries Sacramento**

By Mark Ling / Sacramento River Cats

Chris Carter drove in five runs and hit his first home run of the season as Sacramento opened an eight-game road trip with a thrilling 6-5 victory in Tacoma.

After salvaging a home game against Las Vegas, the River Cats looked to establish some momentum in the Northwest.

Things looked bad in the beginning as Rainiers outfielder Carlos Peguero launched a two-run home run off River Cat starter Yadel Marti in the second inning. Fortunately for Sacramento, Marti would settle down, ultimately pitching 5.0 innings allowing two runs and three hits with four walks and two strikeouts.

After the two-run blast from Peguero, both teams struggled to score until the River Cats made things interesting in the top of the sixth inning. After a leadoff single from Weeks, followed by a Johan Limonta error in left field that put Eric Sogard on base, Chris Carter came to the plate. Down by two, with a chance to give Sacramento the lead, the first baseman launched a home run over the left field wall for a 3-2 lead.

Sacramento wouldn't hold the lead for long as, in the seventh inning, Limonta scored on a Sean Kazmar fielder's choice, tying the game 4-4. However, the Cats would not hesitate to respond.

In the bottom of the frame, Sacramento connected on four consecutive singles, including RBI hits from Carter and Matt Carson.

The River Cats brought in reliever Fernando Cabrera in hopes of preventing a Rainier comeback. The right-hander struggled, allowing two runs to tie the game heading into the ninth.

In the game's final inning, Carter showed a glimpse of his bright future. With two runners on base and two out, he delivered a double, scoring Weeks and putting the Cats ahead.

Relief pitcher Gabe DeHoyos delivered with a perfect inning, striking out two. The Cats look to add to their two-game win streak Saturday night in Tacoma. Right-hander Travis Banwart will take the hill for Sacramento, opposing Tacoma left-hander Fabio Castro.

## **Travelers rough up RockHounds**

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. -- Arkansas Travelers pitcher Orangel Arenas remained locked in on the mound Friday against the Midland RockHounds.

Arenas shut the 'Hounds out over his six innings of work in a 6-1 Travelers victory at Dickey-Stephens Park. Arenas allowed just three hits and a walk while striking out six, lowering his ERA on the season to 0.82. The loss evened the RockHounds' three-game series with the Travelers.

As effective as Arenas (1-0) was, RockHounds starter Anthony Capra was equally ineffective. Capra (0-1) allowed five runs on three hits and five walks over his 3 2/3 innings while striking out four. An error by RockHounds first baseman Michael Spina led to three unearned runs off Capra.

The Travelers got to Capra in the fourth, rallying for five runs to take a 6-0 lead. Darwin Perez had a big day at the plate for the Travelers, going 2 for 4 with a run and three RBI. Seven of the Travelers starting nine players recorded hits in the game.

The RockHounds offense sputtered, though.

Jermaine Mitchell led the game off with a walk, Arenas' only of the game, but that was wiped away when Grant Green grounded into a double play. The 'Hounds had two hits in the second inning, including a two-out double from Matt Sulentic with a man on, but Midland failed to push across a run.

Arenas then retired the last 12 batters he faced, including striking out the side in the fourth inning.

The two teams conclude their series at 6 p.m. today at Dickey-Stephens Park.

## **Bees and River Bandits Postponed on Friday**

By Jon Versteeg, BURLINGTONBEES.COM

DAVENPORT, IA-The Burlington Bees and Quad Cities River Bandits game was canceled because of wet field conditions at Modern Woodman Park. The game will be made up as part of a doubleheader on Saturday night at 5:00 p.m.

In game one RHP Blake Hassebrock (0-0, 0.00) starts on the mound for Burlington against RHP Seth Blair (0-0, 2.25) for Quad Cities. In game two LHP Jacob Brown (1-0, 3.00) gets the start for Burlington against LHP Anthony Ferrara (0-0, 3.00). Pre-game coverage begins at 4:40 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at gobees.com