

A's News Clips, Friday, April 15, 2011

Cahill goes long

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

With a weary bullpen on his hands, A's manager Bob Geren needed a long outing from Trevor Cahill on Sunday.

"I was joking with him, 'You've got to be the starter, middle guy, setup guy and closer,' " Geren said.

Cahill proved to be up to the task, shackling the Detroit Tigers over eight innings in a 5-1 A's victory before 16,460 fans at the Oakland Coliseum.

The right-hander failed to make it out of the fifth inning in two of his first three starts, but he was dialed in Sunday. He allowed four hits, struck out a season-high nine and walked none.

Cahill's only blemish was Casper Wells' leadoff homer in the sixth. Wells was the only Tigers runner who advanced past first base.

"He was throwing all three pitches for strikes. It's tough to hit a guy when he's doing that," said Detroit's Ryan Raburn, who struck out three times.

Cahill went just 42/3 innings Tuesday against the Chicago White Sox, a 10-inning defeat that was taxing on the A's bullpen.

With relievers Grant Balfour and Brian Fuentes unavailable Sunday because of heavy use, Cahill (2-0) knew his challenge.

"After Chicago, I wanted to go deeper in the game," Cahill said. "That was tough on the bullpen. They got worn out, so I tried to help them today."

Despite losing the first two to Detroit, the A's managed a split of the four-game series and evened their record at 8-8. They have Monday off before hosting the Boston Red Sox for two games.

Cahill benefited from the breathing room provided by his teammates. Josh Willingham's two-run single off Brad Penny (0-2) highlighted a three-run fifth as the A's opened a 4-0 lead.

After being held to four runs combined Thursday and Friday, the A's scored 11 in their two victories -- welcome support for a rotation that has excelled.

In four games against Detroit, Oakland's starters allowed just one earned run in 252/3 innings. A's starters lead the majors with a 2.16 ERA and 104 innings pitched.

"They're going deep in the game and putting us in position to win the ballgame," A's third baseman Andy LaRoche said. "We're trying to score as many as we can but knowing it may only take a run or two."

Cahill signed a five-year, \$30.5 million contract the day before his start in Chicago, then watched his fastball command desert him against the White Sox.

On Sunday, he spotted his fastball better and got the Tigers to chase his hard-breaking curve.

"I was a little bit off" against Chicago, Cahill said. "It might have been more adrenaline, just trying to prove myself. I was more relaxed (Sunday), just trying to throw strikes."

The A's got on the board in the fourth. With runners on the corners and one out, Hideki Matsui hit a dribbler down the first-base line headed for foul territory.

Penny did the A's a favor, picking the ball up off the chalk and throwing to first for the out as Daric Barton scored.

Penny hurt himself again in the fifth after getting two outs. With a man on second, he hit David DeJesus with a pitch and walked Barton and Conor Jackson, forcing in a run.

Willingham jumped on the first pitch and lined a two-run single to left for a 4-0 lead.

Wells' homer, on an 0-2 curve, made it 4-1. But the A's answered in the bottom of the sixth, as Mark Ellis doubled and eventually scored on Cliff Pennington's sacrifice fly.

Oakland A's notebook: Dallas Braden's shoulder hurting; left-hander pessimistic about making his next start

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

A's manager Bob Geren held off judgment Sunday on Dallas Braden's shoulder injury.

But Braden's demeanor before a 5-1 win over Detroit suggested the left-hander might miss some time.

Braden sat in front of his locker as a conga line of reporters made its way through to ask him questions. Normally a chatty sort regardless of topic, Braden had very little to offer.

He was pulled from Saturday's start after five innings with what was deemed shoulder stiffness.

"Still sore, stiff, hurts," Braden said Sunday morning. "I'm not going to throw."

He didn't say how long he would refrain from throwing. But when asked if he expected to make his next start, which would come Friday at Seattle, Braden shook his head no.

Braden was examined by a team orthopedist Sunday, but the team did not provide details.

Geren pointed out that Monday's day off allows the A's to push back Braden's start if they choose and give him more time to recover.

In the event he does miss a start, right-hander Tyson Ross is likely to take his spot.

Ross pitched the ninth inning Sunday in relief of Trevor Cahill.

"He probably needed the work in case we need him next week as a starter," Geren said of Ross.

Coco Crisp got the day off, with David DeJesus handling center field and Conor Jackson playing right.

Crisp has been bothered by tightness in his back, and Geren was hopeful that with no game Monday, two days off would benefit him.

Geren said he might have given Ryan Sweeney a start, but Sweeney tweaked a hamstring while legging out a triple Saturday. Both Crisp and Sweeney were available if needed.

Geren said reliever Michael Wuertz (strained left hamstring) will make another rehab appearance for Single-A Stockton on Monday.

Closer Andrew Bailey (right forearm strain) threw a 35-pitch bullpen session and said he probably would do the same Wednesday before facing hitters.

Tuesday's 7:05 p.m. game against Boston and Thursday's 7:10 p.m. game vs. Seattle have been switched from Comcast SportsNet California to CSN Plus because of a conflict with Sharks playoff broadcasts.

The A's flagship station, 95.7-FM, has tapped Chris Townsend to host a show Monday-Friday from 1-4 p.m., beginning Monday. Townsend also hosts the A's postgame call-in show.

Chin Music: Dallas Braden joins 15-day DL; A's trade for lefty reliever David Purcey

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/18/2011 11:02PM

There's some A's news for your Monday morning ...

Dallas Braden was placed on the 15-day disabled list with left shoulder stiffness. The team acquired left-handed reliever David Purcey from Toronto in exchange for reliever Danny Farquhar, and Rich Harden was transferred from the 15-day to 60-day DL to make room on the 40-man roster for Purcey.

Purcey will join the big league bullpen, according to A's assistant GM David Forst. So either Tyson Ross or Bobby Cramer remain the front-runners to take Braden's spot in the rotation for now (Bob Geren mentioned Ross as a candidate yesterday). The A's had been trying to work a trade for Purcey since Toronto designated the lefty for assignment Tuesday, Forst said. So going after him was not directly related to Braden's injury in Saturday's game. But it does provide depth, as the A's likely will take Ross or Cramer from the bullpen and insert him into the rotation. Braden's DL stint is retroactive to Sunday, meaning he would be eligible to return May 2.

Forst said the A's didn't know the severity of Braden's injury based on his exam Sunday. Braden hasn't undergone an MRI or any other tests yet. "We're still hopeful that it's not serious. We don't have anything definitive as of yet," Forst said.

Purcey, who turns 29 on Thursday, was 0-0 with an 11.57 ERA in five relief appearances with the Blue Jays this season. He made 12 starts as a rookie in 2008 and went 3-6 with a 5.54 ERA. He was Toronto's first-round draft pick in 2004. Forst said A's scouts clocked Purcey's fastball in the 93-94 mph range. He's got size — the A's press release lists him at 6-4, 242 pounds. Farquhar had been acquired over the winter from the Jays as part of the Rajai Davis trade, so he's going back to a familiar organization. He'd been pitching for Triple-A Sacramento thus far.

Chin Music: Reminiscing on Little League day; Dallas Braden to see doctor

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/17/2011 12:50PM

It's Little League day at the Coliseum, so there was a trail of kids making their way past the A's dugout high-fiving Gio Gonzalez and Bobby Cramer this morning. ... I have vivid memories of attending Little League day as an 8-year-old, wearing my uniform and making a lap around the field before the game. Rickey Henderson was playing left field. This was Rickey's first stint in Oakland, when he wore No. 35. My earliest memories of going to A's games are seeing Henderson in left field, Dwayne Murphy in center and Tony Armas in right. In Toronto recently, I got to interview Murphy, who's now the Blue Jays hitting coach, about Rajai Davis. That was cool ... Friends ask me if I get star-struck interviewing major league players. For me, it's more the current crop of coaches around the majors that I get a thrill out of talking to. Because the guys coaching now were the ones I idolized as players when I was growing up. ... Anyway, everybody's gotta take the trip down memory lane now and then, right?

—Dallas Braden is not a happy camper right now regarding his stiff shoulder. He had very little to offer on the injury this morning. "Still sore, stiff, hurts. I'm not gonna throw." Asked if he was holding out hope of making his next start, Braden just shook his head no. A's manager Bob Geren said Braden would get checked by a team doctor later today, so maybe we'll get more information after the game. Geren isn't speculating yet on whether Braden will miss any time. And with Monday's day off, the A's can push Braden's start back several days if they wish. But on first impression, it sure doesn't seem like good news for Braden based on his demeanor. Might Tyson Ross or Bobby Cramer be in line for a stint in the rotation?

—Coco Crisp is not in the lineup. With no game Monday, the A's want to try to give him two straight days off to rest his back. But Geren said Crisp is available if needed off the bench. David DeJesus is playing center field with Conor Jackson in right. Geren said he was considering giving Ryan Sweeney a start, but Sweeney's hamstring tightened up as he legged out a triple last night. He's also available if needed, but Geren didn't want him starting.

—Somewhat lost in the shuffle with the A's terrific starting pitching so far: The fact that Trevor Cahill has not been very sharp. He's failed to complete five innings in two of his first three starts, so we'll see how he fares this afternoon. Tigers starter Brad Penny is facing the A's for just the third time in his career. He's allowed 15 earned runs in 16 1/3 innings this season.

The lineups:

A's — DeJesus CF, Barton 1B, Jackson RF, Willingham LF, Matsui DH, Ellis 2B, Powell C, LaRoche 3B, Pennington SS; Cahill RHP.

Tigers — Rhymes 2B, Jackson CF, Boesch DH, Cabrera 1B, Raburn LF, Kelly 3B, Peralta SS, Avila C, Wells RF; Penny RHP.

Trevor Cahill shuts down Tigers as A's win 5-1

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland's mix of splendid starting pitching and a modicum of hitting just might work, after all.

On Sunday at the Coliseum, Trevor Cahill was at his best in a 5-1 victory over the Tigers, and the A's not-so-fearsome offense backed him with, among other things, a run-scoring swinging bunt that should have been allowed to go foul and a

bases-loaded walk. The A's only hit with men in scoring position was Josh Willingham's two-run single with two outs in the fifth.

No matter. Cahill went eight innings and allowed one run, a homer by Casper Wells in the sixth. Otherwise, the Tigers didn't get a man past first base against him. Cahill didn't walk a batter and he struck out nine.

"He was obviously lights out today, dominant," A's infielder Andy LaRoche said. "It did seem like none of them were putting good swings on the ball. He made one mistake today, a curveball, and other than that, they were looking pretty foolish on a lot of the pitches.

"That's nothing against them; they have a terrific lineup. It's just showing how outstanding Trevor was today."

In Cahill's previous outing, at Chicago last week, he allowed six hits, three walks and four runs, and his fastball command was not as sharp as he wanted. That was his first start after signing a five-year, \$30.5 million contract extension, and Cahill said that perhaps the deal did affect him a bit.

"I was a little bit off," Cahill said of the game against the White Sox. "There might have been a little more adrenaline, trying to prove myself, and today I was a little more relaxed."

Wells' homer came on an 0-2 pitch, a curveball that Cahill (2-0) said was similar to one Alexei Ramirez took deep in Chicago. "I tried to be too fine with it, and it came up and backed up into his bat," Cahill said.

Though the A's got just five hits, they drew six walks, the basis for much of their scoring. Brad Penny walked Daric Barton to open the fourth, and after a single by Conor Jackson sent him to third, Barton came home on Hideki Matsui's tapper up the first-base line - a ball that was heading foul when Penny grabbed it and threw to first.

Landon Powell opened the next inning with a double, and with two outs, David DeJesus and Barton walked, then Jackson did, too, to push in Powell. Willingham followed with his two RBIs.

Finally, Mark Ellis doubled to open the sixth, went to third on a flyball by Powell and sprinted home on a sacrifice fly by Pennington.

That snapped an 0-for-13 streak for Ellis, who said, "Obviously, we're not swinging the bats the way we want to, but a lot of guys are not doing what we're capable of. When we do, the way these guys are throwing, we're going to have a very successful season."

A's starters have a 2.16 ERA, tops in the league. The team is batting .236.

Dallas Braden's shoulder pain worrisome

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A day after leaving a start with shoulder stiffness, **Dallas Braden** remained downcast about what he clearly believes might be a significant injury.

The usually chatty and upbeat left-hander came out of Saturday night's game after the fifth inning, and on Sunday, he said that his shoulder is still stiff and hurts. Stiffness is common for pitchers, but, Braden said, "Not like this."

Manager **Bob Geren** said Braden was scheduled to see a team orthopedist later in the day, and he mentioned the possibility of Braden's next start getting pushed back because the team is off today. The A's had no further information about Braden's status after the game.

Braden was not optimistic about making his next start. If he cannot, it's likely that **Tyson Ross** would.

Very errant pickoff, cont.: A day later, there was still talk about **Justin Verlander's** astonishingly weird pickoff attempt in the fifth inning Saturday, when he stepped off the rubber and, instead of throwing the ball to first, winged it toward the plate, where it nearly hit batter **David DeJesus**.

"I was still doing my routine, getting ready to hit - and the ball is coming at me," DeJesus said. "I had no clue what had happened. It was just a random play. I'm happy no one got hurt. You'll never see that again, so I guess I'm happy to be a part of it."

Briefly: Ryan Sweeney had hamstring tightness after a pinch-hit triple Saturday and might miss another game or two, according to Geren. ... **Michael Wuertz** (hamstring) will make another rehab appearance at Class A Stockton tonight and probably will rejoin the A's on Tuesday. If the A's were to place Braden on the disabled list, that would clear a roster spot for Wuertz. ... Pitching coach **Ron Romanick** said he tore his right calf muscle during the pregame Little League clinic. ... A's pregame and postgame radio host **Chris Townsend** will begin a 1-4 p.m. daily show on SportsRadio 95.7 FM today.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Sunday Day Live: Andy Samberg of "Saturday Night Live" and his Lonely Island collaborators, Jorma Taccone and Akiva Schaffer, all Berkeley natives, attended the game, and one A's player wished he'd spotted them. "No way!" reliever Jerry Blevins said. "I'm a huge fan."

Drumbeat: A's put Dallas Braden on DL, acquire Toronto pitcher David Purcey

John Shea on a day of pitching moves . . . 4/18/2011 11:29AM

Two days after exiting his start with a sore shoulder, Dallas Braden was placed on the disabled list. He hinted both Saturday and Sunday this was no ordinary pain, and the DL assignment confirmed it.

For now, the A's are calling the injury a "stiff left shoulder." He was 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts.

Also today, the A's traded for 6-foot-4 lefty David Purcey from Toronto and put him on their 25-man roster. He had an 11.57 ERA in five relief outings with the Blue Jays. He turns 29 Thursday.

As part of the trade, minor-league pitcher Danny Farquhar, 24, goes back to Toronto. He had been acquired with pitcher Trystan Magnuson for Rajai Davis in November.

Farquhar and Magnuson have been close friends and roommates in the Blue Jays' organization. As it turns out, the A's kept the Canadian (Magnuson) and sent the American (Farquhar) back to Toronto.

Also today, the A's moved Rich Harden from the 15-day to the 60-day DL to create room on the 40-man roster for Purcey.

Purcey was the Jays' first-round pick (16th overall) in 2004. He started as a rookie in 2008 and again in 2009, going 4-9 in 23 starts. He began relieving in 2010, when he went 1-1 with a 3.71 ERA in 33 appearances. He had a 1.206 WHIP.

Tyson Ross is a candidate to replace Braden and start Friday.

Stiff shoulder sends Braden to disabled list

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's on Monday confirmed what Dallas Braden's gloomy face read just one day earlier.

The Oakland southpaw will not be making his next start in Seattle on Friday, as the club officially placed him on the 15-day disabled list with a stiff left shoulder.

Lefty David Purcey, acquired by the A's in a flurry of transactions on Monday, took Braden's place on the 25-man roster and will be housed in the bullpen. In a subsequent move, righty Rich Harden (shoulder) was transferred to the 60-day DL.

Braden exited Saturday's outing after five frames because of the shoulder stiffness, and he paid a visit to the team orthopedist on Sunday, results of which were not definitive, according to A's assistant general manager David Forst.

"We're still hopeful that it's nothing serious," Forst said, "but we don't have any answers yet."

Braden, 27, was 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts this season, yielding 18 hits while racking up 15 strikeouts and five walks. It marks the third career DL stint for the lefty, who said on Sunday that he had never experienced shoulder problems in his big league career.

Forst noted that a decision on who will fulfill Braden's role in the rotation has not been made, but he acknowledged that Tyson Ross and Bobby Cramer -- who are currently stationed in the bullpen -- are likely candidates.

Both have appeared in three games this season, with Ross pitching to a 3.60 ERA and a 1.60 WHIP with six strikeouts through five innings, while Cramer has compiled a 2.45 ERA and an 0.55 WHIP in 3 2/3 innings.

Cramer turned heads as a September callup last year, with a 2-1 record and a 3.04 ERA in his first four Major League starts. But Ross, a 2008 second-round Draft pick, is thought to be an integral part of Oakland's future rotation and has showcased improved fastball location since last year, when he made 26 big league appearances and garnered two spot starts, during which he was 0-2 with a 7.04 ERA.

With Monday's off-day, the A's could also realistically choose to skip Braden's spot until April 27 and keep Sunday starter Trevor Cahill on his normal fifth day by pitching him Friday in Seattle.

"This is disappointing for Dallas," Forst said, "but we're hopeful that it's not long-term. We're confident we have the depth to compensate for the time that he's out."

Wuertz to make rehab appearance on Monday

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Righty Michael Wuertz, rehabbing from a strained left hamstring, is scheduled to make his second Minor League rehab appearance with Class A Stockton on Monday, manager Bob Geren said.

The reliever is slated to again throw one inning on Monday, but there is no timetable on his return.

"He needs to get sharp," Geren said. "When he's sharp and ready to help us, he'll be back."

Wuertz, coming off a 2010 campaign in which he posted a 4.31 ERA and 1.41 WHIP, had appeared in just one game this season before suffering the injury. He tossed one shutout inning with two strikeouts against the Mariners on Opening Night.

Braden not optimistic about making next start

OAKLAND -- A's lefty Dallas Braden, who exited Saturday's outing after five frames because of shoulder stiffness, was scheduled to see the team orthopedist on Sunday to determine the severity of his injury and whether he'll be able to make his next start.

Following Sunday's game, an A's official said the results of Braden's visit with the doctor were unavailable.

Braden, uncharacteristically sporting a rather glum face on Sunday morning, did not appear optimistic about being ready for that start, which is slated for Friday in Seattle. He was a man of few words, simply saying his shoulder feels "tight and it hurts."

A's manager Bob Geren acknowledged Braden's gloomy nature but relayed a sense of understanding.

"He didn't look happy last night," Geren said. "Anytime he's pitching as well as he is and has to come out of the game, there's no way I'd expect him to be anything but disappointed. He's such a competitor."

Before exiting Saturday's contest against Detroit, Braden had allowed just three hits and one unearned run with five strikeouts and two walks. Carrying a 3-1 lead, he was replaced by Brad Ziegler to start the sixth in an eventual 6-2 victory.

"If there was any way he could have continued," Geren said, "he would have."

The A's have an off-day Monday, meaning Braden would be given an extra day of rest if cleared for Friday's outing. Geren noted that day could be "beneficial to us" and did not speculate who would start in Braden's place if he's unable to go.

Right-hander Tyson Ross and lefty Bobby Cramer, currently stationed as long-relief options in the bullpen, represent likely candidates.

The 27-year-old Braden, who said he has never experienced shoulder problems in his big league career, has been on the disabled list twice in four previous seasons. He is 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts this year.

Rosales likely won't return until June

OAKLAND -- A May return seems unlikely for utility player Adam Rosales, who confirmed on Sunday afternoon that he still hasn't been cleared for full baseball activities and likely won't be for at least another four weeks.

That's when Rosales is next scheduled to see his doctor, who told the infielder last week that his right foot has recovered 90 percent. Rosales was hoping he'd be at 100 percent by then, but bones around his surgically-repaired navicular bone are still gaining strength.

"It's frustrating," Rosales said, "because I really want to be out there."

The 27-year-old underwent surgery on Dec. 8, and he was initially expecting to face a recovery time of three-to-four months. Now, June seems the likely goal.

Before the onset of his injury, which initially crept up in August, Rosales was batting .271 with seven home runs and 31 RBIs in 80 games, and was the first A's player since 1995 to start at least one game at six positions.

In his stead, Andy LaRoche has fulfilled the utility role, making starts in 10 games at four different positions, including four at third base, where manager Bob Geren noted he wants to give LaRoche an "extended look" while regular Kevin Kouzmanoff continues to find an offensive and defensive groove.

Worth noting

Andrew Bailey (forearm) threw a bullpen on Sunday and said all went well. The right-handed reliever continues to make progress toward a Minor League rehab stint, but there is still no timetable for his return. ... Ryan Sweeney experienced hamstring tightness after tripling in Saturday night's contest, but was available to pinch-hit on Sunday, Geren said.

A's land Purcey in trade with Blue Jays

Oakland parts with Minor Leaguer Farquhar for ex-first-round pick

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's engaged in a trade with the Blue Jays on Monday by returning Minor League hurler Danny Farquhar to Toronto in exchange for former first-round Draft pick David Purcey.

Purcey, four days shy of his 29th birthday, was designated for assignment by Toronto last week after struggling with command out of the bullpen, tallying four walks in just 2 1/3 innings.

He made five total appearances, including two against the A's in the first week of the season. Against Oakland, he fanned three in a combined 1 1/3 scoreless innings. Purcey had yet to allow a run this year until his most recent outing against Seattle, when he surrendered three in just one-third of an inning.

"He had one bad outing the other night, but he pitched well against us, and we feel like he has a chance to contribute in the 'pen," A's assistant general manager David Forst said.

The left-hander, who is out of options, takes the active roster spot of Dallas Braden, who was placed on the disabled list with a stiff left shoulder on Monday. In turn, the A's transferred right-hander Rich Harden (shoulder) to the 60-day DL.

Purcey, whom the A's will need to keep on the 25-man roster or risk losing him on the waiver wire, came up through the Blue Jays' system as a starter, but was converted to a reliever last season. The transition proved successful, as he posted a 3.71 ERA with 32 strikeouts and 15 walks in 34 frames.

"He had a really good year in his first season as a full-time reliever," Forst said. "He's always had a good arm. His velocity was good this spring and this season."

The southpaw owns an overall 5-10 with a 5.42 ERA in 59 career games with Toronto, and he boasts a fastball that often finds the 94-95-mph zone. The A's called for his services as soon as he was made available by the Blue Jays, Forst noted.

Purcey's presence means the A's now have five left-handed options in the bullpen. Right-handers Grant Balfour and Brad Ziegler are awaiting the return of fellow righty Michael Wuertz, who is rehabbing a strained hamstring in the Minors. Upon Wuertz's reinstatement from the DL, which currently has no timetable, the A's are then likely to option a southpaw.

Farquhar, 24, heads back across the border just five months after Oakland acquired him alongside pitcher Trystan Magnuson for outfielder Rajai Davis. The righty had thrown eight scoreless innings with nine strikeouts in four relief appearances for Triple-A Sacramento this year.

The A's have been involved in 13 trades with the Blue Jays since Billy Beane assumed duties as Oakland's general manager following the 1997 season.

Lackey hopes to match past success vs. A's

By Jason Mastrodonato / MLB.com | 4/18/2011 3:04 PM ET

The homecoming for pitching coaches continues on Tuesday, when former A's coach Curt Young and the Red Sox travel to Oakland to open a two-game series. John Farrell, the long-time Red Sox pitching coach and new manager of the Toronto Blue Jays, spent the weekend facing his former team in Boston.

A's manager Bob Geren is looking forward to the reunion with Young.

"It will be good to see him," Geren said. "I spoke to him a bit during Spring Training, but once the season starts, it's hard to stay in touch."

Young coached the A's pitching staff to an American League-best 3.56 ERA last season. After Sunday's games, Oakland was again leading the league with a 2.59 ERA.

Boston, meanwhile, had a Major League-worst 5.58 ERA after its game Monday, but the Red Sox have gotten three consecutive quality starts from Josh Beckett, Jon Lester and Daisuke Matsuzaka.

Young is hoping John Lackey can continue the streak, after getting skipped in the rotation following a rainout and an off-day.

"He just had one good side [session] that he threw, and for him, not pitching 10 days feels like a couple weeks," Young said. "But you know he's a guy that has great command, great aptitude for pitching, and like I said, he knows Tuesday will be here in a hurry. Ten days feels like a long time when you're a starting pitcher like that, but he's a guy that has such great command. I don't think there should be any issues."

Lackey has struggled mightily in his first two starts of the 2011 season, allowing 15 earned runs in 8 2/3 innings for a 15.58 ERA. Opponents are batting .395 off the 32-year-old right-hander, who's had plenty of success against Oakland in his career. Lackey is 17-5 with a 2.90 ERA in 202 innings vs. the A's.

Oakland will send left-hander Brett Anderson to the mound, as the Red Sox continue to search for offensive production against southpaws. Boston is hitting just .230 against lefties this season.

Anderson has yet to pick up a win this year, despite making three solid starts while striking out 13 in 19 2/3 innings with a 2.29 ERA. The 23-year-old is 3-1 with a 2.61 ERA in five career starts against the Red Sox.

Red Sox: Okajima back with Boston

The Red Sox recalled left-handed reliever Hideki Okajima from Triple-A Pawtucket prior to Monday's game against the Blue Jays after optioning lefty Felix Doubront to Pawtucket following Sunday's game. After not making the big league club out of Spring Training, the 35-year-old Okajima tossed 5 2/3 scoreless innings of relief in five appearances for Pawtucket this season, allowing just two hits while striking out five batters. Manager Terry Francona said he was impressed with how Okajima handled his time in Triple-A.

"I saw the reports, and he got people out," Francona said. "He gave up a hit the other night, but he's been coming in and throwing his pitches for strikes. Now again, I know it's Triple-A, but that's what we asked him to do. We know when Okie is going well, he can be a solid reliable Major League pitcher."

- Jed Lowrie made his third consecutive start at shortstop Monday, one day after starting back-to-back games for the first time this season. The 27-year-old played in all four games of the four-game series (starting three) against Toronto, hitting 9-for-15 with seven runs scored, eight RBIs and two home runs.

A's: Pitchers still not healthy

Right-handed reliever Michael Wuertz is scheduled to make his second rehab appearance with Class A Stockton on Monday and is slated to throw one inning. Wuertz is recovering from a strained left hamstring, and there is no timetable for his return.

"He needs to get sharp," Geren said. "When he's sharp and ready to help us, he'll be back."

Dallas Braden, who exited Saturday's start after five innings due to shoulder stiffness, was placed on the disabled list Monday. Lefty David Purcey, acquired by the A's in a flurry of transactions on Monday, took Braden's place on the 25-man roster. In a subsequent move, righty Rich Harden (shoulder) was transferred to the 60-day DL.

Worth noting

Marco Scutaro has just one hit in nine at-bats against left-handers this season, but he's the only player on the Red Sox's roster with a home run against Anderson. ... Boston newcomers Adrian Gonzalez and Carl Crawford are a combined 1-for-9 with three strikeouts against Anderson. ... The A's haven't stolen a base in two straight games, but the Red Sox have had trouble defending baserunners, having allowed nine steals in the last four games.

Major Lee-ague: A's still hopeful Braden's injury is "nothing serious"

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 4/18/2011

The A's on Monday confirmed what Dallas Braden's gloomy face read just one day earlier.

The Oakland southpaw will not be making his next start in Seattle on Friday, as the club officially placed him on the 15-day disabled list with a stiff left shoulder.

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Braden exited Saturday's outing after five frames because of the shoulder stiffness and paid a visit to the team orthopedist on Sunday, results of which A's assistant general manager David Forst said were not definitive.

"We're still hopeful that it's nothing serious," Forst said, "but we don't have any answers yet."

Braden, 27, was 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts this season, yielding 18 hits while racking up 15 strikeouts and five walks. It marks the third career DL stint for the lefty, who said on Sunday that he had never previously experienced shoulder problems in his big league career.

Forst noted that a decision on who will fulfill Braden's role in the rotation has not been made but acknowledged that Tyson Ross and Bobby Cramer — who are currently stationed in the bullpen — are likely candidates.

Both have appeared in three games this season, with Ross pitching to a 3.60 ERA and 1.60 WHIP with six strikeouts through five innings, while Cramer has compiled a 2.45 ERA and 0.55 WHIP in 3 2/3 innings pitched.

Cramer turned heads as a September callup last year with a 2-1 record and 3.04 ERA in his first four Major League starts. But Ross, a 2008 second-round pick, is thought to be an integral part of Oakland's future rotation and has showcased improved fastball location since last year, when he made 26 big league appearances and garnered two spot starts, during which he was 0-2 with a 7.04 ERA.

With Monday's off day, the A's could also realistically choose to skip Braden's spot until April 26 and keep Sunday starter Trevor Cahill on his normal fifth-day cycle by pitching him Friday in Seattle.

"This is disappointing for Dallas," Forst said, "but we're hopeful that it's not long-term. We're confident we have the depth to compensate for the time that he's out."

Major Lee-ague: A's acquire Purcey from Toronto, place Braden on DL

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 4/18/2011

The A's engaged in a trade with the Blue Jays on Monday by returning Minor League hurler Danny Farquhar to Toronto in exchange for former first-round Draft pick David Purcey.

Purcey, four days shy of his 29th birthday, was designated for assignment by Toronto last week after struggling with command out of the bullpen, tallying four walks in just 2 2/3 innings.

The left-hander, who is out of options, takes the active roster place of Dallas Braden, who was placed on the disabled list with a stiff left shoulder on Monday. In turn, the A's transferred right-hander Rich Harden to the 60-day DL.

Purcey came up through the Blue Jays' system as a starter but was converted to a reliever last season. Overall, he was 5-10 with a 5.42 ERA in 59 career games with Toronto.

Farquhar, 24, heads back across the border just five months after Oakland acquired him alongside pitcher Trystan Magnuson for outfielder Rajai Davis. The righty had thrown eight scoreless innings with nine strikeouts in four relief appearances for Triple-A Sacramento this year.

Major Lee-ague: Rosales still awaiting green light for baseball activity

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 4/18/2011

A May return seems unlikely for utility player Adam Rosales, who confirmed on Sunday afternoon that he still hasn't been cleared for full baseball activity and likely won't be for at least another four weeks.

That's when Rosales is next scheduled to see his doctor, who told the infielder last week that his right foot has recovered at 90 percent. Rosales was hoping he'd be at 100 percent by then but bones around his surgically-repaired navicular bone are still gaining strength.

"It's frustrating," Rosales said, "because I really want to be out there."

The 27-year-old Rosales underwent surgery on Dec. 8, and he was initially expecting to face a recovery time of three to four months. Now, June seems the likely goal.

Before the onset of his injury, which initially crept up in August, Rosales was batting .271 with seven home runs and 31 RBIs in 80 games and was the first A's player since 1995 to start at least one game at six positions.

In his stead, Andy LaRoche has fulfilled the utility role, making starts in nine games at four different positions, including three at third base, where manager Bob Geren noted he wants to give LaRoche an "extended look" while regular Kevin Kouzmanoff continues to find an offensive and defensive groove.

Braden update: Unfortunately, there really isn't one. Braden was scheduled to see the team orthopedist on Sunday for shoulder stiffness, but an A's official said after Sunday's game that results would not be available today.

Postgame quick hits: Trevor Cahill has now struck out seven or more in three of his four starts this season. ... Andy LaRoche committed Oakland's 18th error of the season in Sunday's game, which is the most in the Majors. ... The A's are 5-1 in day games and 3-7 at night. Last year, they were 35-21 under the sun and 46-60 at night.

A's put Braden on DL, move Harden to 60-day DL

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — The Oakland Athletics have put lefty Dallas Braden on the 15-day disabled list and transferred right-hander pitcher Rich Harden to the 60-day disabled list.

Braden left Saturday's game after five innings with shoulder stiffness. He is 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts this season, a year after pitching a perfect game against the Tampa Bay Rays.

Harden has been out with a strained right shoulder since spring training. He was originally put on the 15-day DL retroactive to March 22.

The A's also announced Monday they acquired left-hander David Purcey from Toronto for minor league right-hander Danny Farquhar.

Farquhar was traded from Toronto to Oakland in November.

Cahill baffles Tigers

Starter gives up four hits over eight innings, striking out nine

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Trevor Cahill was the perfect remedy for Oakland's weary bullpen, answering a challenge laid out before the game by manager Bob Geren.

Then again, the Athletics' starters have been that way most of the season — a pattern that has to continue if this pesky team is going to make a run in the AL West.

Cahill had a season-high nine strikeouts while scattering four hits in eight innings, and the A's beat the Detroit Tigers 5-1 on Sunday.

"We joked with him before the game that he had to be the starter, the middle guy, the setup guy and the closer," Geren said. "He definitely answered the challenge."

"I knew yesterday the bullpen was used pretty well and today I was going to have to help it out and go deeper in the game," Cahill said. "I got ahead a lot, throwing the first pitch for strikes, and as the game went along (the Tigers) started getting more aggressive."

Oakland's All-Star right-hander had at least one strikeout in each of the first four innings and baffled the Tigers hitters with a steady stream of off-speed pitches and a sinker that had Detroit off-balance all afternoon.

It's the third time in four starts this year that Cahill has had at least seven strikeouts. He did not walk a batter for the second time this season.

Josh Willingham broke out of a slump with a two-run single in the fifth, Mark Ellis doubled twice and Daric Barton walked twice and scored both times to help the A's salvage a split of the four-game series. Oakland also won its second straight at home after losing four of its first five at the Coliseum this year.

Brad Penny gave up five runs in five-plus innings and took the loss for Detroit. The Tigers had 25 hits in the series, 10 in one game.

"Once again it was a lack of offense," Detroit manager Jim Leyland said. "We didn't do much offensively. We have to upgrade the concentration level a little."

Cahill (2-0) looked nothing like the pitcher who struggled against the Chicago White Sox last Tuesday, a day after signing a new \$30.5 million, five-year extension with the A's.

"He was lights out today, dominant," Oakland infielder Andy LaRoche said. "He made one mistake all game, a curveball. Other than that they were looking pretty foolish on a lot of the pitches. That's nothing against them, they have a terrific lineup. It's just showing how outstanding Cahill was today."

Cahill gave up a solo home run on a hanging curve to Casper Wells leading off the sixth but was dominant the rest of the way while throwing a season-high 112 pitches.

That prevented the Tigers from notching their first four-game series win in Oakland since 1997. Cahill's effort followed similar outings from fellow starters Gio Gonzalez, Brandon McCarthy and Dallas Braden. The four A's starters allowed just one unearned run and two overall in 25½ innings.

"Just look at the numbers. There aren't words to describe it," Tigers catcher Alex Avila said. "They have a lot of good arms. We struggled a bit at the plate obviously because they have a good staff. Maybe if we could have put together a few more runs these last couple days, it might have been a different story."

Tyson Ross gave up a single in the ninth but retired the next three Detroit batters to complete the five-hitter for Oakland.

Penny matched Cahill early but gave up a run in the fourth on a ball that appeared to be going foul.

Barton walked and took third on Conor Jackson's single. After a strikeout, Hideki Matsui hit a dribbler that Penny grabbed just as the ball rolled onto the chalk along the first base line. He threw to first for the out but Barton scored to make it 1-0.

Penny (0-2) hurt himself again in the fifth after giving up a leadoff double to backup catcher Landon Powell. Penny retired the next two hitters but hit David DeJesus and walked Barton. Manager Jim Leyland came out to calm Penny but the burly right-hander walked Jackson to force in one run then gave up a two-run single to Willingham.

That continued a troubling trend for Penny, who left after Ellis' leadoff double in the sixth. Penny allowed only four hits in his first-ever appearance in Oakland but was charged with five runs and now has an 8.44 ERA.

Cahill continued to cruise and was especially tough on Tigers left fielder Ryan Raburn, who struck out three times on his 30th birthday.

Detroit scored its only run on Wells' first home run of the season. The solo shot came on an 0-2 pitch and is only the second allowed by Cahill this year.

Trio of Bees combines on one-hitter

By Andrew Pentis / Special to MLB.com

Mother Nature delayed Jake Brown's start Saturday. But when the Burlington Bees left-hander finally got to the mound Sunday, he made it count.

The A's prospect delivered five no-hit innings as Class A Burlington one-hit Quad Cities, 4-0, in Sunday's doubleheader nightcap before 2,688 fans at Community Field.

Brown (2-0) faced just one over the minimum 15 batters -- he plunked Patrick Elkins in the second frame. He struck out six.

"I had all of my pitches working for me, and guys were making plays in the outfield and in the infield," Brown said. "I was able to keep the other team down."

His pair of relievers followed suit. Right-hander Chris Mederos, despite hitting a batter and issuing a walk, escaped the sixth with the no-hit bid still intact. But Quad Cities' cleanup man Jonathan Rodriguez led off the final frame with a line-drive single into left field off of Burlington's third hurler, righty Daniel Tenholder.

What was the reaction in the dugout?

"People sighing," Brown said. "I got full confidence in the bullpen and the guys out there. When I came into the dugout, [manager Aaron Nieckula] said 'You're done.' It was his call."

Brown, who threw just 60 pitches, said he is scheduled to pitch next on just three days' rest since Saturday's rainout delayed his usual start.

"That's why he pulled me short," Brown added. "They're trying to build me up."

In his season debut Monday, the 24-year-old yielded two runs on five hits over six innings, his longest professional outing. Brown pitched out of the bullpen for the short-season Vancouver Canadians last year. He fashioned a 1.82 ERA in 19 games and never threw for more than 2 1/3 innings in any appearance.

That was by design. Brown had thrown 102 innings in 17 games -- including 14 starts -- for Georgia Southern University before Oakland plucked him in the 2010 Draft's 26th round. The organization told Brown before his first taste of professional ball that he would throw only 30 innings, and he finished his Canadians' stint at 29 2/3 frames.

Of course, that didn't figure into Brown's favor Sunday. Since he is experiencing the toll of taking a regular turn in a five-man rotation for the first time, his coaches are treating him accordingly.

"It would have been awesome to just stay out there to see if I could do it," Brown said of potentially pitching the complete game. "(But) it was a total team effort."

Burlington's No. 9 hitter Ryan Pineda went 2-for-3 and drove in three runs. Pineda had started the season 2-for-18 at the plate.