

Oakland A's go over .500 mark in 5-0 win over Boston Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Brett Anderson was in top form Tuesday night, which is becoming a redundant statement regarding A's starting pitchers.

Anderson blanked the Boston Red Sox for eight innings and allowed just one runner as far as second base in the A's 5-0 victory before a bipartisan crowd of 25,230 at the Oakland Coliseum.

The A's won their third straight and climbed above .500 for the first time this season at 9-8. They've done it behind a string of dominant starting pitching performances.

Over the past five games, Oakland's starters have allowed just one earned run in 33 2/3 innings, an ERA of 0.27. For the season, the A's rotation leads the major leagues with a 2.01 ERA.

"What can you say, man?" first baseman Daric Barton said. "Our pitching is unbelievable."

Anderson's dominance was reminiscent of a previous start against Boston, which happened to be his best game in the majors. He spun a two-hit shutout at Fenway Park as a rookie on July 6, 2009.

He's 4-1 with a 2.08 ERA in six career starts against the Red Sox.

Anderson (1-1) said he enjoyed playing before the bigger-than-usual Coliseum crowd, though he noted "it was almost like playing in Boston or a visiting yard" due to the noisy contingent of Boston fans.

He's also drawing motivation trying to match his rotation mates. The only earned run allowed by A's starters over the past five games came on Casper Wells' homer Sunday off Trevor Cahill.

"When I came out after the eighth, Trevor just shook his head and said 'Damn Casper Wells,' " Anderson said.

The only hit Anderson allowed through the first seven innings came in the first, when Adrian Gonzalez ripped a single off the right-field wall.

Anderson didn't face a real threat until the top of the eighth, with the score still 1-0. With two out, Carl Crawford had Jarrod Saltalamacchia back-to-back singles. But Anderson got Darnell McDonald swinging on a slider.

Anderson smacked his glove and jogged briskly to the dugout afterward.

"I'm not a real emotional guy," Anderson said. "But to keep them scoreless through eight and keep us in the lead going into the last inning, I was happy to show some emotion."

A's manager Bob Geren noted the difference between Anderson now and the raw pitcher who dazzled in his Fenway shutout.

"He's developed a better changeup, he has two different speeds on his breaking ball and he (spots his) fastball on both sides of the plate now," Geren said.

The A's had nearly as much trouble breaking through against John Lackey (1-2).

He limited the A's to four hits and one run over six innings. But the A's scored four in the eighth off Boston's bullpen

No. 9 hitter Cliff Pennington doubled off the wall in right-center, then stole third. Barton singled up the middle for a 2-0 lead.

Josh Willingham's two-out walk put two runners on, and Hideki Matsui ripped a two-run double to make it a 4-0. Kurt Suzuki's RBI single added more cushion.

Anderson's biggest trouble came from a familiar nemesis -- his own footwork. He knocked down a comebacker from Gonzalez in the seventh but his spike caught in the dirt and he threw low to first for an error. No matter -- Gonzalez was erased on Kevin Youkilis' 6-4-3 double play.

Oakland A's notebook: Tyson Ross to make Friday's start in place of injured Dallas Braden

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Tyson Ross will make Friday's start against the Seattle Mariners in place of Dallas Braden, A's manager Bob Geren confirmed.

Braden, placed on the 15-day disabled list Monday with what was announced as shoulder stiffness, will be examined Wednesday by Dr. Lewis Yocum in Southern California.

Braden is eligible to come off the D.L. on May 2, meaning he'll miss at least two starts.

Ross made two spot starts as a rookie in 2010 but pitched mainly in the bullpen. He's pitched in relief since being called up April 6, but the A's see him as a future starter.

"He has a good fastball with movement and a swing-and-miss breaking ball," Geren said before Tuesday's game against Boston. "He has a real deceptive delivery. If he pounds that zone, he'll be tough."

Ross watched the 2010 playoffs and paid particular attention to a couple Cy Young winners -- the Philadelphia Phillies' Roy Halladay and the Giants' Tim Lincecum.

"Lincecum has got that changeup that's unhittable," Ross said. "I don't have off-speed stuff like that. It's almost not fair if you watch him. He's blowing guys away, and then he's got that changeup."

With Ross joining the rotation, and the A's adding left-handed reliever David Purcey through Monday's trade from Toronto, Oakland has five lefties in its seven-man bullpen.

Once right-handed reliever Michael Wuertz comes off the DL, the A's likely will send a lefty down. Wuertz said he feels ready, but the A's will have him pitch for Triple-A Sacramento on Wednesday at Reno.

"I guess that's their plan," Wuertz said. "They just told me to go down, make another appearance and we'll go from there. To me, I'd like to be out there right now."

Former A's pitching coach Curt Young returned to the Coliseum as Boston's new pitching coach.

The Boston job hadn't yet opened when Young resigned from the A's job in October. Young acknowledged the A's offered him a pay raise. He took a multiyear offer from the Red Sox.

"It was just time for a change," Young said. "Not really that I wanted to leave, I enjoyed every moment of it. I enjoyed the city, the players, the front office, coaches. It was just a chance to "... a chance to move on."

Gary Peterson: Boston Red Sox not panicking over their slow start

By Gary Peterson, Bay Area News Group

The Boston Red Sox curse may be dead, but the Boston Red Sox purse is alive, well and spending like a Lottery winner with six months to live.

The Sawks, a perennially popular choice to win the World Series, hit Oakland on Tuesday night for a two-game layover -- a night/day doubleheader, if you will. They were both on a roll and trying to pick themselves up off the cellar floor.

The team with an estimated \$163 million opening day payroll was 5-10 and last in the American League East, having arrived there by losing its first six games, losing four of six after that, and winning three straight after that.

The two prized offseason recruits, first baseman Adrian Gonzalez and outfielder Carl Crawford, were hitting 21 and 163 points, respectively, below the career batting averages they brought to the Olde Towne Team. The starting pitchers had a combined 5.31 ERA.

"We've won three in a row," manager Terry Francona said before Tuesday night's game against the A's. "But before that we really lost a lot in a row. Our record kind of is what our record is."

They're not overly concerned. You wouldn't be either, if your locker room was populated by 15 All-Stars, a former MVP, six Gold Glove winners, a guy with a four-homer game and a pitcher who won Game 7 of the World Series.

Take the edge off your garden variety losing streak, does it?

"Yeah, definitely," said Gonzalez, who signed a seven-year, \$154 million contract extension last week. "You know the talent is there. All you have to do as a team is keep working and you're going to come out of it. It definitely makes it a lot easier."

"Well, I don't know. We walk into this room, and it's our room," said Francona before pausing -- perhaps to reflect upon his four less-than-satisfying years managing the late-20th century Phillies.

"Yeah, I guess (so)," he finally conceded. "We did that in Philadelphia a few times. It was like, more reality, or this is what we're dealing with. This team, I think we believe we're going to be good."

The Red Sox have been so good for so long you forget that their fans once portrayed themselves as the most tragically afflicted in all of sports. In the 16 seasons since the 1994 strike, the Red Sox have averaged 90 wins, made nine postseason appearances, won their first World Series since 1918, then won another World Series three years after that.

Now their fans show up in droves wherever they play. A quick survey of the Coliseum stands during batting practice turned up fans wearing Red Sox jerseys bearing Nos. 8 (Yastrzemski), 14 (Rice), 35 (Martinez), 34 (Ortiz), 24 (Ramirez), 15 (Pedroia), 58 (Papelbon) and 27 (Fisk; or Monbouquette, depending on your persuasion).

"It's always good to have the fans on your side," said Gonzalez, who probably didn't see an abundance of Padres jerseys while on the road during his five seasons in San Diego.

Last year was a dud by modern Red Sox standards. The team fell to third in the unforgiving A.L. East on July 5, and remained mired there the rest of the season. Their reaction was as over-the-top as the bleachers perched atop the Green Monster.

They traded four players for Gonzalez. Five days later, they signed Crawford, one of the plums of the free-agent class, to a seven-year, \$142 million contract.

"Big pickups this winter by a big market team," A's manager Bob Geren noted wryly.

Boston's slow start has caused consternation in New England. During the team's recently concluded homestand, both Crawford (a .133 hitter at the start of play Tuesday) and pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka were booed by the Fenway Park faithful.

No one expects the lean times to last. But because he's paid to worry, Francona has to pretend they might.

"We had a horrendous first 10 days," he said. "It might take some time to dig out. That's the biggest thing we have to fight right now, because our record is not going to be what we want it to be for a while."

Geren is a little more pragmatic.

"Their pitching started off really bad, but now they're stringing some pretty good starts together," he said. "So they're definitely turning the corner. We'd like to see that corner end after (they leave) here."

And head for Anaheim in two planes -- one carrying the team, the other carrying petty cash.

Chin Music: Tyson Ross gets Friday start vs. Seattle; Dallas Braden visiting Dr. Yocum in Los Angeles

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/19/2011 6:38PM

A's manager Bob Geren confirmed what had seemed likely: Tyson Ross will start Friday vs. Seattle in Dallas Braden's place. How long will he remain in the rotation? That depends on the severity of Braden's shoulder injury. Braden is flying to Southern California on Wednesday to be examined by Dr. Lewis Yocum. The A's have sent several pitchers to Yocum to be examined over the years. Sometimes a long-term injury is revealed, sometimes it turns out to be minor. Braden wasn't available in the clubhouse before batting practice, though he is at the ballpark.

Ross made the team last season as a reliever, got a couple of spot starts in place of Justin Duchscherer, and then struggled after he was put back in the bullpen, eventually getting sent down to Triple-A Sacramento. I'd like to see this guy get an extended stretch as a starter, whether that's in the majors or with Sacramento. If the A's see his long-term potential being

in the rotation, then I think that's where he needs to pitch. He's not so dominant out of the 'pen that you absolutely have to pitch him there.

Ross is excited to be getting his shot to start. Michael Wuertz? Not quite so enthusiastic right now. Wuertz (strained left hamstring) says he's ready to be activated from the DL, but the A's are having him make a third rehab appearance Wednesday. He'll travel to Reno to pitch for Sacramento. Wuertz had a shaky first outing for Single-A Stockton, giving up three runs, but fared better Monday. He allowed a run in one inning but struck out three. "They just told me to go down, make another appearance and go from there," Wuertz said. "To me, I'd like to be out there right now. It's just the way it is." Manager Bob Geren said he wants to see how Wuertz fares pitching an inning-plus, and the A's will decide his next step afterward.

—Got a chance to meet David Purcey, the new addition to the A's bullpen. Nice guy ... After being designated for assignment by Toronto last Tuesday, he went home to Dallas when he got word that the A's traded for him Monday. Purcey didn't mind the down time — his wife Kate is expecting twins, the couple's first children ...

Tonight's lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Barton 1B, DeJesus RF, Willingham LF, Matsui DH, Suzuki C, Ellis 2B, Kouzmanoff 3B, Pennington SS; Anderson LHP.

Red Sox — Lowrie SS, Pedroia 2B, Gonzalez 1B, Youkilis 3B, Ortiz DH, Cameron RF, Crawford LF, Saltalamacchia C, McDonald CF; Lackey RHP.

Brett Anderson sharp as A's top Red Sox 5-0

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Brett Anderson would have made Curt Young proud.

In the opener of a two-game series that likely will start and end within 24 hours, the A's beat the Red Sox 5-0 in front of Anderson's old pitching coach and a Coliseum crowd of 25,230.

Anderson pitched eight memorable innings with nothing more than a 1-0 lead until the A's broke it open with four eighth-inning runs, two supplied by Hideki Matsui's double off countryman Hideki Okajima.

The big-bully Red Sox arrived in Oakland in an unfamiliar spot: last place in the American League East. They opened the season 0-6 and 2-10 but came to town with a three-game win streak. But with Tuesday's loss, the Red Sox have started 0-7 on the road for the first time in their history.

Afterward, Anderson gave credit to the larger-than-normal gathering, saying, "Pretty good crowd. It was almost like pitching in Boston or a visiting yard."

A's starters, dating to the start of the Detroit series, have yielded one earned run in 33 2/3 innings (0.27 ERA) in five games, and Anderson said, "Trevor (Cahill) shook his head and said, 'Damn Casper Wells.' "

Wells, a Tigers outfielder, homered off Cahill on Sunday, the starters' only earned run in that stretch.

Across the field, Young, Boston's new pitching coach, wasn't surprised with Oakland's pitching, which leads the league with a 2.44 ERA. After all, Young oversaw a 2010 A's staff that posted the league's top ERA.

"You get so locked into your team," Young said, "but I know they're pitching well, and you expect nothing else."

What is surprising is Boston's league-worst ERA of 5.58.

Until the long eighth inning, the only run was Coco Crisp's in the first. The former Red Sox who received a 2007 World Series ring lined a single over shortstop, stole second, advanced on Daric Barton's grounder to the right side and scored on David DeJesus' groundout to short.

It was one of only four hits surrendered by A's killer and former Angel John Lackey, who's 17-6 with a 2.86 ERA in 32 career starts against Oakland. No other active pitcher has beaten the A's more.

For as good as Lackey was over six innings, Anderson was better over eight, striking out eight and walking one - he's 4-1 with a 2.08 ERA against Boston. After tossing one-hit ball for seven innings, Anderson gave up three hits in the eighth and wasn't going to pitch the ninth after throwing 109 pitches.

Brian Fuentes was warming up for the save opportunity in the eighth, but once the score got to 5-0, he took a seat. He finished the game anyway after two of three Red Sox reached against Craig Breslow.

The Red Sox disputed two calls that went Oakland's way. In the fourth inning, Dustin Pedroia was caught stealing on a pickoff move and argued that Anderson balked. Manager Terry Francona was ejected for arguing the call further.

In the eighth, on a play in which Jacoby Ellsbury was out stealing, the initial ruling by the official scorer was interference on Mike Cameron, who seemed to get in the way of catcher Kurt Suzuki. The umpires later said there was no interference, that Ellsbury was thrown out at second.

The A's have a winning record for the first time in 2011. For Boston, .500 is a dream.

A's Tyson Ross to start in place of Dallas Braden

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Pitcher **Tyson Ross**, who'll take **Dallas Braden's** rotation spot and start Friday in Seattle, spends a lot of time watching proven big-league pitchers. Part of the learning process.

"Last year, I kind of learned I could pitch here at this level as far as what I needed to do and can't do out there," Ross said. "Toward the end of the year, I looked back at my experiences and learned a lot watching the playoff games and how pitchers attack hitters. I need to put all that into practice."

What playoff games?

"I'm a local guy," said Ross, who was born and raised in the East Bay and attended Cal, "so I saw most of those Giants games and the playoffs in general. It's the best baseball played all year."

Ross mentioned Philadelphia's **Roy Halladay** and the Giants' **Tim Lincecum**, calling Lincecum "a different kind of character. He's got that changeup that's just unhittable. I don't have an off-speed pitch like that, so it's not even fair to watch his games."

Nobody else pitches quite like Ross, making it hard to find others to learn from. The 6-foot-6 right-hander has a shorter stride and follow-through than most.

"Unfortunately, I haven't been able to find that person because of my unique motion," Ross said. "I need to find someone who throws with similar stuff at least so I can watch their games against the teams I'll be facing and get an idea what works and doesn't work."

Ross has had three relief outings this season and seems more comfortable than a year ago, when he was 1-4 with a 5.49 ERA in 26 appearances, including two starts.

One other note about Friday's game: It'll be the 24th birthday for Ross, a Berkeley native.

Briefly: Braden, on the DL with a stiff shoulder, will be further examined today by Dr. **Lewis Yocum** in Southern California. ... **Michael Wuertz** (left hamstring strain) is to pitch more than one inning for Triple-A Sacramento in Reno today. The reliever said he believes he's ready to join the A's.

A's leading off

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Southside heavy: With David Purcey, the A's have five left-handed relievers. Manager Bob Geren said it's not an issue because Brian Fuentes is the closer, Bobby Cramer is the long man and others have succeeded against both sides.

Comcast to provide sports content for KNTV

Chronicle Staff Report

Starting in June, Comcast SportsNet Bay Area will provide daily sports coverage on the Bay Area's NBC affiliate, KNTV, the stations announced Tuesday.

The segments will appear on the network's 6 and 11 p.m. newscasts and will be hosted by Comcast's existing sports anchors and analysts.

NBC Bay Area President and General Manager Richard Cerussi told The Chronicle that no jobs would be lost in the process, with KNTV's staff of sports reporters and producers moving to the news operation.

Former sports anchor Raj Mathai is now the weeknight news anchor.

"The good news is we'll no longer be dependent on the hard work of a small team," Cerussi said. "Our belief is it takes an organization like CSN, with its resources, to fully cover an area that has eight pro teams and six Division I colleges."

The agreement extends a partnership that began in 2008 to use Comcast SportsNet production resources for live Giants telecasts on KNTV. That partnership grew closer this year when the FCC approved Comcast's acquisition of a majority stake in NBC Universal.

Comcast SportsNet Bay Area Vice President and General Manager Ted Griggs said the move was not influenced by the merger.

"This is not an efficiency move. It's a quality move," Griggs said. "What made it make sense here more than anything else is that we had a pre-existing relationship with Rich and KNTV because of the Giants' telecasts."

Drumbeat: Tyson Ross to start Friday night -- learns by watching . . . Giants?

John Shea at the Coliseum for the opener of a series that could last 20 hours . . . 4/19/2011 5:57PM

While Dallas Braden awaits an examination with Dr. Lewis Yocum in Southern California tomorrow morning, Tyson Ross is preparing for his first start of the season (Friday) and David Purcey is making himself ready as a new A's reliever.

Ross has had three scoreless relief outings after a solid spring training (1-0, 0.59 ERA in five outings), and he seems more comfortable than a year ago, when he was 1-4 with a 5.49 ERA in 26 appearances, including two starts.

"Last year, I kind of learned I could pitch here at this level as far as what I needed to do and can't do out there," Ross said. "Toward the end of the year, I looked back at my experiences and learned a lot watching the playoff games and things like that and watching how pitchers attack hitters. I need to put all that into practice."

What playoff games?

"I'm a local guy, so I saw most of those Giants games and watching the playoffs in general," said Ross, also mentioning Roy Halladay by name. "It's the best baseball played all year."

In other news, Michael Wuertz will pitch more than an inning for Triple-A Sacramento tomorrow. He said he's ready to join the A's now, by the way.

Manager Bob Geren said it's not a concern with another lefty (Purcey) in the bullpen (five relievers now) because one is the closer (Brian Fuentes), another is the long man (Bobby Cramer) and others have succeeded against both lefties and righties.

Curt Young is in the house as Boston's pitching coach. He left the A's last winter without a job, then took the Red Sox's offer.

"It was just time for a change," Young said. "I was just looking to make a move, and it wasn't really that I wanted to leave. I enjoyed every moment of it. I enjoyed the city, the players, the front office, the coaches. Just a chance to move on."

Anderson shuts down Red Sox as A's roll

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 4/20/2011 3:00 AM ET

OAKLAND -- In early July 2009, Brett Anderson was merely a 21-year-old rookie with 14 Major League starts to his name when he silenced a rowdy Fenway crowd by way of a shutout over a Red Sox team that ultimately won 95 games.

Two years and 38 starts later, Anderson is no rookie. But he's still a 20-something with a flair for shutting down Boston.

On Tuesday, facing the Red Sox for the sixth time in his career and entering the contest having held them to a .205 batting average, Anderson stifled their starting nine, limiting them to four hits in eight innings while halting their season-high three-game winning streak in a 5-0 Oakland victory.

The A's southpaw is now 4-1 with a 2.08 ERA against Boston, and he insists that, aside from the usually vibrant atmosphere surrounding Red Sox matchups, there's really no rhyme or reason to those numbers.

"Pretty good crowd tonight, I think that had to factor into it," he said. "It's kinda different, kinda like pitching in Boston almost, pitching in a big environment. Their lineup's pretty potent one through nine, and I've just happened to have success."

Boston moved to a 0-7 road mark for the first time in franchise history. The A's, meanwhile, jumped above the .500 mark for the first time this season and have now watched their starters surrender just one earned run over the past 33 2/3 innings.

"What can you say, man?" said Daric Barton. "The pitching's unbelievable. I think we're in it every game. There hasn't been a game where our pitching staff hasn't kept us in it, and our offense is coming around and we're playing well as a team. Obviously our staff is our strength right now."

"It's fun when we're going good like that because you want to feed off each other," Anderson said. "You want to go out there and put up as many zeros as the next guy and do your part in the rotation."

The A's hurler appeared geared for yet another shutout -- it would have marked just the second of his career -- when he entered the eighth with just 82 pitches under his belt. But a 27-pitch frame, which included two baserunners, put an end to that conquest, as he ultimately tallied 109 pitches.

Still, the preceding innings in that journey were enough to elicit loud remarks -- not from the bats of his opponents but rather their mouths.

"That kid's got good stuff," said Boston starter John Lackey, who battled Anderson for six innings. "Even when I was over here [in the American League West with the Angels] facing him a few times, you could tell early on when he came up, he's got a nice arm, a real good feel for pitching. He pitched well tonight."

"He gets to two strikes and he finishes off with breaking balls that are really good. So many times you watch the game on TV, it looks easy. There was just so much finish to it, they were in and out of the zone. Guys just couldn't lay off."

That put-away pitch has undergone a makeover since Anderson blanked the Red Sox in their home park two years ago and, as a result, has become twice as devastating.

"When you talk about the biggest differences from two years ago, he developed a better changeup and he has two different speeds on his breaking ball now and has more control of his fastball," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He's so tough now with those two speeds on that ball. As well as he pitched a couple years ago, he's better now than he was then."

"That's his pitch," catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "Seems like it's untouchable."

Anderson's strong showing culminated in his first win of the season, as he lowered not only his own ERA to 1.63 but the A's starters' mark to 2.01. He struck out eight, walked just one and has now offered up just three free passes through his first four starts.

His mastery over Boston's compelling, albeit struggling, lineup was on display from the get-go, as he surrendered a two-out single to Adrian Gonzalez in the first before retiring six straight and facing just three over the minimum through eight frames.

Lackey, owner of a 17-5 record and 2.90 ERA in 31 starts against the A's before Tuesday, quickly surrendered a run in the first via a groundout from David DeJesus that scored Coco Crisp, who led off with a base hit, stole second and advanced to third on a grounder.

From that point on, though, Lackey proceeded to engage Anderson in a pitchers' duel for the next five innings. Overall, the Red Sox's righty gave up just three hits and fanned three over six frames while dropping to 1-2 on the season.

"A lot of curveballs, a lot of offspeed stuff," Barton said. "He threw a great game, too. He settled down after the first."

Barton's RBI single, Hideki Matsui's two-run double and Ryan Sweeney's run-scoring base hit -- all with two outs in the eighth -- showcased a welcoming offensive outburst and more than enough cushion for Oakland's eighth win in its last 12 games, sealed courtesy of a scoreless ninth from the left-handed duo of Craig Breslow and Brian Fuentes.

"It seemed like the first seven innings took an hour and a half, and the eighth inning was an hour itself," Anderson said. "It'd be nice to take the pressure off a little earlier, but any runs we can get, the more the merrier."

Red Sox, A's match up breakout stars

By Doug Miller / MLB.com | 4/20/2011 1:50 AM ET

Boston's Clay Buchholz and Oakland's Gio Gonzalez were two of the breakout pitching stars of the American League last year, and a lot is expected of them this season.

Buchholz has started off slowly, while Gonzalez has been almost unhittable. The next chapter in their stories of 2011 will be written on Wednesday, when they square off at 12:35 p.m. PT at the Oakland Coliseum.

Both starters are coming off efforts in which they issued career-high-tying walk totals.

Buchholz did not factor in the decision in Boston's 7-6 loss to Toronto on April 15 at a frigid Fenway Park, and he did keep his team in the game, allowing three runs in five innings. But he walked five batters for the sixth time.

That's why the right-hander said he felt responsible for the loss.

"I felt like I should have been pinned with this loss today the way that went," Buchholz said. "If I just eliminate two walks, maybe that's two runs they don't score and we win the game. It's hard to look at it that way, but that's how I look at it."

Buchholz threw only 46 of his 99 pitches for strikes, possibly affected by the cold.

"That was one of the most uncomfortable outings I've ever been a part of," said Buchholz. "I'd throw a pitch for a strike and then try to throw the same pitch, and it would go in the complete opposite direction than I'm trying to go with it."

Meanwhile, Gonzalez steamed ahead in his last start. Even though he walked six, he wasn't scored upon, taking a no-decision in a 3-0 loss to the Tigers on Thursday. He has not allowed a run over his past 17 innings, which is the longest active scoreless streak in the Major Leagues.

Gonzalez's streak is the second-longest in the Majors this season, and the young left-hander has a 0.47 ERA after giving up only one earned run in 19 innings over three starts this season -- the best ERA in the Majors among starting pitchers.

"I'm just trying to pound the zone and attack hitters," Gonzalez said. "If I can get ahead of hitters, I know I can be successful."

Red Sox: Getting Lowrie in the lineup

Boston manager Terry Francona said hot-hitting shortstop Jed Lowrie will start in Wednesday's game, but probably not at shortstop or designated hitter.

"On days when Jed plays a different position, it would be a day like tomorrow, where we can use it to our advantage," Francona said Tuesday. "We've got a long flight out, we've got a quick turnaround. That's what I would try to do. We don't have guys that really like to DH, though. They like to play, which I appreciate."

- Outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury has 139 career steals, two shy of tying Heinie Wagner (141) for fourth on the Red Sox's all-time list.
- Designated hitter David Ortiz has hit in 10 of 16 games this year and reached base safely in all but two. He reached safely in each of his first seven games for the first time to start a season since he began 2005 with a seven-game on-base streak.
- Third baseman Kevin Youkilis was hit by a pitch on Sunday for the 70th time in his career. Youkilis is now one HBP shy of tying Mo Vaughn for the most in Red Sox history.

A's: Team of extremes

A's pitchers have a 2.44 ERA (42 earned runs in 154 2/3 innings), which is the best ERA in the Major Leagues. The club is also batting .236 (135-for-571) this season for the fifth-lowest average in the AL. Oakland is hitting .217 (33-for-152) with runners in scoring position, and its seven home runs are the second-fewest in the AL, but its 39 doubles are the most in the league.

- The A's are 5-1 in day games and 4-7 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 AL and the night record was fourth-worst.
- Dallas Braden, on the 15-day disabled list for a stiff left shoulder, is scheduled to see Dr. Lewis Yocum in Los Angeles on Wednesday. Tyson Ross will take his rotation spot on Friday.

Worth noting

- Buchholz has a 2.65 ERA (in 16 road starts since the start of 2010, second in the AL to Seattle's Felix Hernandez (2.48). Buchholz is 10-4 in 16 starts away from home in that time, tied for third in the AL for road wins with two others behind only teammate Jon Lester (11) and Tampa Bay's David Price (11). He's also 15-6 (.714) with a 2.96 ERA in 24 road starts since 2009.
- Gonzalez is 1-0 with a 5.51 ERA in three career starts against the Red Sox. He's given up 10 earned runs on 19 hits and 10 walks with 16 strikeouts in 16 1/3 innings.

Ross assumes Braden's spot in rotation

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Young A's righty Tyson Ross, who lost out on the lengthy fifth-starter battle out of spring, has found his way back in the rotation sooner than expected, as it was announced on Tuesday that he'll take the rotation spot of the injured Dallas Braden on Friday.

"I'm excited," Ross said. "I'm looking forward to the opportunity to start again."

Ross, whose first start of the 2011 campaign will coincide with his 24th birthday, began the year on Triple-A Sacramento's roster but was called upon by Oakland before he made an appearance for the River Cats to join a bullpen void of Michael Wuertz (hamstring).

Ross has not allowed a run in two of his three relief appearances after going 1-0 with a 0.59 ERA and 10 strikeouts through 15 1/3 innings spanning five Spring Training outings, all of which saw improved fastball command, along with an extra dosage of confidence.

"He threw the ball great all spring, was pretty close to making rotation out of spring, and we think the world of him," A's manager Bob Geren said. "You look at the rotation, and you'd like to get a guy that has good fastball movement and a swing-and-miss breaking ball.

"You look at velocity, he has well-above-average velocity with a little deceptive delivery and pretty good movement. If he pounds the zone, he'll be tough. That's what he did so well this spring."

Ross was a surprise roster pick out of camp last year and made 26 appearances -- two starts -- with the A's before being sent to Sacramento at the beginning of July to get stretched out as a starter. The hard-throwing right-hander was shut down in August because of a strained right elbow, but his regained health has allowed him to resume starting duties again.

That role is what the A's envision for their 2008 second-round Draft pick, and it's what Ross admittedly prefers, though he noted he simply wants "to pitch in the big leagues."

"I'd like to hold down a role as a starter," he said. "I'd like to do that long-term."

But he's still learning. Ross said he closely watched pitching performances in the 2011 playoffs -- particularly Roy Halladay - - because "that's the best baseball that's played all year."

"Last year, I learned I can pitch here at this level," he said. "I've watched a lot of guys and how they attack hitters, and I'm hoping to put that into practice."

The A's will have a better idea of how many more starts they expect out of Ross following Braden's visit with Dr. Lewis Yocum in Los Angeles on Wednesday, when he'll be evaluated for a stiff left shoulder that sent him to the disabled list on Monday.

Injured Braden visiting specialist in LA

OAKLAND -- A's left-hander Dallas Braden, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list with left shoulder stiffness on Monday, will be evaluated by noted orthopedic surgeon Lewis Yocum in Los Angeles on Wednesday.

Until the results of that visit are revealed, the A's won't know the extent of Braden's injury, which marks the first time he's experienced shoulder problems in his big league career.

The 27-year-old exited Saturday's start after five frames and paid a visit to the team orthopedist on Sunday but walked away without any definitive answers, leaving the A's still hopeful that it's nothing of the long-term sort.

Braden, now enduring the fourth DL stint of his career, was 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts this season, yielding 18 hits while racking up 15 strikeouts and five walks.

Right-hander Tyson Ross, who has made three appearances out of the bullpen this season, will take Braden's place in the rotation beginning Friday in Seattle.

Purcey's addition gives A's 'pen five lefties

OAKLAND -- With Monday's addition of reliever David Purcey, the A's bullpen is now operating with five lefties -- a rarity for any team.

But manager Bob Geren has no qualms about his staff, simply stating on Tuesday, "It is what it is."

"We have our best seven guys out there," he said, "and I'm happy with it."

Purcey, who was traded to the A's by the Blue Jays for Minor Leaguer Danny Farquhar, was designated for assignment by Toronto last week after making five appearances, including two against the A's in the first week of the season, fanning 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 one-third of an inning.

"I like what I saw in Toronto a lot, and when I heard his name mentioned I was all for it," Geren said.

Purcey will be used "just like any other reliever," the A's skipper noted. The 2010 campaign marked his first out of the bullpen following a successful transition from starting duties, as he posted a 3.71 ERA with 32 strikeouts and 15 walks in 34 frames.

"My best year was out of the bullpen," he said. "That's the first year I've felt real comfortable."

In three big league seasons, Purcey has yielded a .275 opponents' batting average against right-handers, compared to a .226 mark when facing lefties.

On Tuesday, Purcey expressed excitement in landing an opportunity with another team, not to mention gratefulness for the awarded days off in his hometown of Dallas following his designation. His wife, Kate, is due to give birth to the couple's first children -- twins -- in July.

"It was nice getting a little time with family to regroup and gather," he said. "Now I can go on from here."

"They have a lot of good players here. I've heard good things, and I'm excited to come over and try to contribute."

Wuertz set for one more rehab outing

OAKLAND -- Right-hander Michael Wuertz, fresh off a one-inning stint with Class A Stockton on Monday, when he struck out the side, came into the A's clubhouse on Tuesday feeling "incredible."

Wuertz, nursing a strained left hamstring, is eligible to be reinstated from the disabled list, but the A's want him to garner another rehab appearance. So he'll do just that on Wednesday in Reno, where he'll undergo an extended outing -- four or five outs but no more than 40 pitches -- with Triple-A Sacramento.

"That's the plan for now," A's manager Bob Geren said, "and then we'll go from there."

"I'm going by what they say," Wuertz said, "but if it was up to me, I'd like to be activated right now."

The 32-year-old reliever had endured one other outing with the Ports before Monday's three-strikeout performance, struggling in one inning of work by way of three runs on four hits, including a home run.

"I feel way better," Wuertz said. "I hadn't thrown off the mound in two weeks at that point, but I feel like I'm back to where I need to be now."

The veteran hurler, coming off a 2010 campaign in which he posted a 4.31 ERA, 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.

Major League: Postgame quick hits

Jane Lee, mlb.com, April 20, 2011

A small handful of notes following Tuesday's 5-0 victory over the Red Sox:

- The A's have won eight of their last 12 games since starting the season 1-4 and are over the .500 mark for the first time all year.
- They are now 26-22 (.542) against the Red Sox since 2006, which is the best record by any American League team over that span. They have also won 17 of their last 23 games against Boston when playing in Oakland.
- A's starting pitchers have a remarkable 0.27 ERA (one earned run in 32 2/3 innings) over their past five games and now boast a 2.01 ERA on the season.
- Hideki Matsui, who got off to a slow start, had a two-run double in the eighth and now has eight RBIs in his past nine games.

Anderson outduels Lackey as A's win third straight

By JANIE McCAULEY AP Baseball Writer

OAKLAND, Calif.—Brett Anderson struck out eight and outdueled usual Oakland nemesis John Lackey for his first victory of the season, and the Athletics beat Boston 5-0 on Tuesday night to snap the Red Sox's three-game winning streak.

David DeJesus got Oakland on the board with a first-inning RBI groundout, then Hideki Matsui added a two-run double and Daric Barton and Kurt Suzuki each hit RBI singles in a four-run eighth. Anderson (1-1) allowed four hits and walked one in eight innings, helping the A's (9-8) move over .500 for first time this year.

The Red Sox were coming off a 9-1 win over the Blue Jays, highlighted by 13 hits and three home runs. Boston remains winless away from Fenway Park—the 0-7 road start is the worst in franchise history—and was blanked for the second time this season after losing 1-0 at Cleveland on April 7.

Red Sox manager Terry Francona was ejected for the first time this year for arguing a play on the basepaths in the fourth.

Anderson looked sharp all night and improved to 4-1 with a 2.08 ERA in six career starts against the Red Sox. A's starters have allowed just one earned run over their last five games—spanning 33 2-3 innings—for a 0.29 ERA.

Boston had a chance against Anderson in the eighth after David Ortiz led off with a single and was lifted for pinch-runner Jacoby Ellsbury. But Mike Cameron struck out and Ellsbury was caught stealing for a double play.

Anderson then allowed back-to-back singles to Carl Crawford and Jarrod Saltalamacchia before striking out Darnell McDonald.

Craig Breslow and Brian Fuentes combined to finish the five-hitter.

In the seventh, Anderson tripped on the front of the mound and committed Oakland's majors-leading 19th error while making a throw to first after fielding Adrian Gonzalez's comebacker. But Anderson got Kevin Youkilis to ground into an inning-ending double play.

After Gonzalez's two-out single in the first, Anderson didn't allow another hit until Ortiz's single. The burly left-hander retired 16 of 17 Boston batters during one stretch with only a leadoff walk to Dustin Pedroia in the fourth.

Pedroia was caught stealing moments later and Francona was ejected by plate umpire Jim Reynolds for arguing.

Lackey (1-2) allowed four hits in six innings, struck out three and walked one in his best start so far. The right-hander threw two side sessions under the guidance of first-year Red Sox pitching coach Curt Young during a long layoff between starts. He was supposed to pitch last Wednesday but the game against Tampa Bay was rained out.

Lackey—17-6 with a 2.86 ERA against the A's in 32 career starts, most of those coming during his days with the AL West rival Angels—lowered his ERA from 15.58 ERA to 9.82 after struggling through his first two outings of 2011.

But Boston couldn't generate much offense in the opener of a quick, two-game visit to the Coliseum—one of only two West Coast trips for the Red Sox this season. They came to Oakland twice in 2010 and also played in San Francisco for interleague. The A's go to Fenway Park for a pair of three-game series.

After this stop, the Red Sox head to Southern California to play four games with the Los Angeles Angels before three games at Baltimore. They don't come back West until August at Seattle.

Francona stuck with the hot hand of shortstop Jed Lowrie, who entered batting .516 with two home runs and nine RBIs. Lowrie went 0 for 4 with two strikeouts and had his seven-game hitting streak snapped. Francona said he is communicating with Marco Scutaro and is writing the lineup based on performance.

NOTES: Francona was ejected for the 30th time as a manager. ... A's LHP Dallas Braden, placed on the 15-day disabled list Monday with a shoulder injury that forced him out of his Saturday start early, is scheduled to be examined by renowned orthopedist Dr. Lewis Yocum on Wednesday in Los Angeles. RHP Tyson Ross will start in Braden's spot Friday at Seattle. ... Oakland RHP reliever Michael Wuertz (strained left hamstring) is set to pitch in a rehab outing for Triple-A Sacramento at Reno on Wednesday—going four or five outs. ... Young returned to Oakland for the first time since spending the past seven seasons coaching the A's pitchers.

Ten years ago, A's drew up a blueprint for recovering from an awful start

By TIM BRITTON, Providence Journal

OAKLAND, Calif. — Ten years ago, a highly touted American League team began its season 2-10. Picked by some to win the pennant, they were considered out of the race by mid-April.

By the end of the season, they had won 102 baseball games.

The Red Sox aren't playing the 2001 Athletics this weekend, but you can be sure that what Oakland team was able to accomplish following a woeful open to the season is on Boston's mind.

The A's entered the 2001 campaign as hyped as they had been in more than a decade. Fresh off a division title the year before, and with the addition of Johnny Damon in the offseason, Oakland was considered the stoutest contender to knock the Yankees off their American League perch.

And then the A's went out and lost 10 of their first 12 games.

Notice any parallels?

The Red Sox have started their trek back from 2-10, taking three of four from the Blue Jays over the weekend. But if ever there was a blueprint for how to recover from a disastrous start, it was sketched by the 2001 Oakland A's.

Oakland didn't exactly fire back from its 2-10 open to the season. After their first game in May, the A's were 8-18, in last place, a whopping 12 games out of first already. They were hitting .247 as a team, with new outfielder Damon batting only .211. The pitching, considered the strength of the team, wasn't much better, posting a 5.38 team ERA through the season's first month.

Not playing in Boston, many Athletics felt more pressure from within the organization than from the city and the press corps.

"I think the heat and the pressure came more from the front office," said Eric Chavez, the starting third baseman on that team and now a member of the Yankees. "They felt like they had assembled a team to do some really good things."

"The one thing about getting off to a bad start in April is that you have the rest of the season. If you go through a losing streak like that in August, you can't recover," Chavez said. "They have plenty of time to recover, and that's what we thought. We knew we had a good team. We played bad, but when you're so early in the season, there's no point in looking down the road. There's so much baseball left to be played."

Boston manager Terry Francona feels the same way. While Francona and his players have repeated a "We'll be fine" refrain throughout this rocky fortnight to start the season, he admitted it might be different were the track records in the clubhouse a little different.

"We [started poorly] in Philadelphia a few times, and it was like more reality. This is what we're dealing with," Francona said. "With this team, we believe that we're going to be good."

The A's finally got back on track, but it was a slow process. They didn't return to .500 until May 25, and even then they quickly fell back below the tide. Oakland was only a game over the break-even point at the All-Star break. Once the second half of the season started, however, the A's never looked back. They won 58 of their 75 games after the break, their last 17 at home and had five different winning streaks of at least six games.

What keyed Oakland's run was its pitching staff, which compiled a 3.10 ERA during the season's second half. Barry Zito and Cory Lidle went 11-2 after the break; Mark Mulder was 12-2. The pitchers gave the team a chance to win each day.

It didn't hurt that Jason Giambi and Chavez each had their OPS (on-base plus slugging percentage) in excess of 1.000 in the second half of the season. Damon's average improved, but he never did get it back to his career mark.

Of course, the A's are the exception to the rule; their run after the All-Star break was practically unprecedented. The flip side of the coin is a team like the 2008 Detroit Tigers, which started 0-7 following World Series expectations and fell to 74-88 and a last-place finish. The Tigers initially recovered from their opening losing streak; they were within a game of .500 on May 1. What crushed Detroit was an even worse month of May, when it went 10-17.

But the history in Oakland suggests the Sox are far from buried. The poor start to the season removes the margin for error for Boston; they can't afford another losing skid like the one that started the season. But the talent in the Red Sox clubhouse hasn't changed.

"We had a horrendous first 10 days, and it might take some time to dig out from it. That's the biggest thing we have to fight right now is not continually looking because our record is going to be not where we want it for a while," Francona said. "It's like a batting average. You walk up to the plate and you see .150, you kind of sag. We're going to have to fight that for a while. ... We have to be willing to chip away and believe in what we're doing."

Phoenix, Oakland A's likely will extend spring-training deal

by Michael Clancy, The Arizona Republic

The Oakland A's and Phoenix are likely to extend their spring-training arrangements for another 10 years, starting in 2015, in a deal remarkable for its lack of demands by the American League team.

The Phoenix City Council is likely to approve the deal at its meeting today.

The A's have been using Phoenix Municipal Stadium, south of Papago Park, since 1982, and have been the only occupants of the Papago Park Baseball Facility, which opened in 1994 on the north end of Papago Park. The training facility includes four full-size fields and two infields.

Rob Harman, deputy director for special operations for the Phoenix Parks Department, said the A's contacted the city asking for improvements at the training facility, while expressing an understanding of the city's difficult financial straits.

A's owner Lew Wolff directed front-office officials to suggest the interim lease, giving both sides time to work out improvement plans. Ted Polakowski, the A's director of minor-league operations, who is based at the facility, said the A's have been "very happy" with the facilities and their relationships with Phoenix officials.

"We may have complex envy," he said, referring to the new stadiums erected around the Valley, "but we like our quaintness."

Phoenix Municipal Stadium is the oldest stadium used for spring training in the Valley. It opened in 1964 and seats about 8,000 people.

Polakowski said the improvements are needed not so much at the stadium, which will require ongoing maintenance, but at the training facility. The team is outgrowing the current indoor space, he said, and the parking lot is getting tight. The A's would like additional clubhouse space for its minor-league operations.

Harman estimates the improvements will cost \$8 million to \$10 million. That is far less than in Glendale, Goodyear and near Scottsdale, where new stadiums were built recently, or in Mesa, where a new stadium will be built soon.

Once the improvements are pinned down, a new lease agreement will be worked out.

The partnership between the A's and Phoenix is a far cry from prior battles between teams and the cities where their facilities are located. But Cactus League President Brad Curtis said teams generally have begun to recognize the financial constraints cities face.

He said the situation of the Chicago Cubs in Mesa helped cement that realization.

As the team got new ownership in 2009, Mesa faced serious competition from Florida business interests that offered to build a stadium near Naples on a site with enough room for the Cubs to develop a "Wrigleyville" entertainment complex.

Mesa's Hohokam Stadium is landlocked and has no room for additional development, so Mesa said it would build a stadium on the present site of Riverview Golf Course. The Cubs, citing their longstanding relationship with the East Valley city, accepted Mesa's offer to spend up to \$84 million on baseball facilities and \$15 million for associated infrastructure.

The A's deal allows the team to conduct yearlong minor-league operations at Papago and spring-training games at Phoenix Muni. The operating agreement, which expires in 2014, grants the A's full spring-training revenues.

The team pays about \$425,000 a year for use of the facilities, pays for utilities at Papago, and contributes \$50,000 a year into a capital-improvement account, which now stands at \$325,000.

Phoenix maintains and operates the facilities, except for games at the stadium.

Robert Johnson, a political consultant who helped in the campaign for the Cubs facility, said Phoenix should jump on the A's offer.

"It makes a lot of sense," he said.

The interim agreement contains language allowing either party to pull out of the agreement with two years' notice, but Harman does not anticipate that becoming an issue.

"The A's have been a great partner for us," he said, "and they are committed to staying in Phoenix."

Young enjoys homecoming

Pitching coach gets reacquainted

Peter Abraham, Boston Globe

OAKLAND, Calif. — Most days, the Red Sox coaching staff arrives at the ballpark around lunchtime to start preparing for the game that night. For pitching coach **Curt Young**, yesterday was a particularly busy day.

Young spent 23 years in the Oakland organization — 12 as a player, four as a minor league coach, then seven as the pitching coach under two managers.

He was part of two playoff teams as a pitcher and another as a coach. He helped develop a number of All-Stars, including Oakland's latest ace, **Trevor Cahill**.

"I have a lot of people to see," Young said before last night's 5-0 loss to the Athletics. "It's nice to be back."

His first stop was the office of Oakland manager **Bob Geren**.

"Good guy, good friend," said Geren. "He seems to be enjoying his East Coast experience. He did a great job for us. It was great to see him again."

Hiring the 51-year-old Young was considered a coup for the Red Sox. When former pitching coach **John Farrell** left the organization to manage the Blue Jays, general manager **Theo Epstein** and manager **Terry Francona** agreed that Young was their top candidate.

"The question was whether it was realistic to get him," Francona said.

Young rejected a one-year contract offer from Oakland in October and jumped to the Sox for a better deal a few days later.

Young had a rocky start with the Sox. His new pitching staff had a 7.18 ERA through the first 10 games this season. Opponents were hitting .277 and had 21 home runs. Pitching wasn't the only reason the team was 2-8, but it was a significant part of the problem.

Francona could see how much of a strain that put on Young.

"It's hard on everybody," said Francona. "That's the way we make our living. But he's a really good pitching coach and an even better person."

"I think it's human nature. We care about it a lot. It's the way we make our living, but it's a heck of a lot more than a job. It's our passion."

Said Young, "You take it personal as a pitching coach. When your group of guys aren't doing what you expect on a consistent basis, you're always looking for ways to help each individual and the entire staff."

The five games that followed were a marked improvement. The Sox had a 2.60 ERA, gave up one home run, and opponents hit .194. The team arrived here yesterday having allowed three earned runs in the last 27 innings thanks to shut-down efforts by **Josh Beckett**, **Jon Lester**, and **Daisuke Matsuzaka**.

"Now we're getting to a point where we want to be as an entire staff," Young said. "This is a group of guys who can get on a roll. You can see that. When they're all throwing the ball, we can go through a couple of cycles where everybody dominates."

Young never lost faith. During his seven years as Oakland's pitching coach, the Athletics led the American League with a 4.03 ERA and held opponents to a .257 batting average. They also allowed the fewest home runs.

The A's had a 3.56 ERA last season with 17 shutouts. Their starters had a 3.47 ERA, the lowest in the AL since the Sox starters had a 3.32 in 1990.

"He came here with a great reputation," said **Clay Buchholz**. "We all knew what kind of staff Oakland had, and those guys always said great things about Curt."

On the way back Righthander **Matt Albers**, who has been on the disabled list since April 8 with a strained lat muscle, is scheduled to join the team in Anaheim tomorrow. He made a rehab appearance for Triple A Pawtucket last night, going two innings and allowing one hit with one strikeout against Syracuse.

Walk the line As of yesterday, **Kevin Youkilis** was tied with **Bobby Abreu** (Angels) and **Jonny Gomes** (Reds) for the most walks in baseball with 15. The Sox were third as a team with 67 walks. They had two last night (Youkilis did not walk) . . . Through 15 games, the Sox had one home run with a runner in scoring position in 143 chances. Overall, they were hitting .203 with runners in scoring position . . . **David Ortiz** had 13 hits, 11 walks, and 9 RBIs through 49 at-bats. He had 8 hits, 7 walks, and 4 RBIs in 56 at-bats last April . . . **Dan Butler**, a catcher with Single A Salem, was 3 for 4 with two doubles, a home run, and seven RBIs in a game against Lynchburg Monday night. He also walked and scored two runs. Butler was signed as a nondrafted free agent in 2009 . . . **Darnell McDonald** met with **Sam Butler Callahan** and his family before the game. Butler Callahan is a Bay area teen battling Ewing's sarcoma, and when the Sox played the Giants last year, McDonald hit a home run off **Madison Bumgarner** while wearing a "Sam's Team" bracelet. Sam's grandfather is from Hingham and his grandmother is from Worcester.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

River Cats' bats can't keep up in Reno

By Cassie Koliass / Sacramento River Cats

Two big innings for the Reno Aces sealed Sacramento's fate Tuesday night in Reno, where the River Cats dropped their first road game of the season, 13-6.

Each team stole three bases and the Interstate-80 rivals combined for three home runs, with Matt Carson and Jai Miller going deep for the River Cats.

Aces Ballpark in Reno, Nev., lived up to its title as a hitter's park. The River Cats had 13 hits, while the Aces had 16.

Local product Gary Daley Jr., a Grass Valley native, allowed six runs (five earned) over 4.0 innings to take the loss. Daley was first called up from Single-A Stockton on April 10, and earned his first win that night in an explosive 11-3 River Cats win over the Tacoma Rainiers.

On Tuesday, the River Cats got things started in the third inning. Second baseman Jemile Weeks walked. Left fielder Steve Tolleson doubled on a line drive to center field with one out. First baseman Chris Carter then singled on a line drive to score Tolleson and Weeks.

The Aces answered with a four-run third inning and a five-run fifth for a 9-3 lead.

The third-inning rally began with a walk by catcher Konrad Schmidt. Daley then hit shortstop Josh Wilson with a pitch, and David Winfree singled on a line drive to left to score Schmidt and Abreu. Winfree scored on a single by first baseman Brandon Allen, along with center fielder Collin Cowgill.

Cowgill hit a solo home run in the fifth to start the inning. Winfree, designated hitter Wily Mo Pena, Schmidt and right fielder Cole Gillespie all singled and Allen doubled to bring the score 9-3.

The River Cats had a two-run sixth inning thanks to Jai Miller's second home run of the season. Matt Carson got in on the action with his third home run of the season in the top of the seventh to bring it to a three-run game, 9-6.

The Aces didn't let the River Cats have the home run glory for too long when third baseman Andy Tracy had a two-run homer of his own in the bottom of the seventh.

Reno cemented their win in the bottom of the eighth with a pair of runs by Abreu and Cowgill.

The action continues Wednesday in Reno at 1:05 p.m.

'Hounds Break Out the Bats in Series Finale

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Hammons Field, Springfield, MO - - -

The RockHounds entered Tuesday afternoon's game with the Springfield Cardinals in a collective slump, hitting under .200 as a team over the last half-dozen games. Jermaine Mitchell led the game off with a 1-2 double to left, and the 'hounds jumped on the board with a 3-0 lead in the first inning.

In the second, with 'Hounds runners at second and third, the Cardinals elected to intentionally walk "Mitch" to face Grant Green. Like most of his teammates, Oakland's # 1 prospect has been struggling at the plate. He came to the "dish" with just three hits in his last 35 at bats. On the first pitch he saw, Green ripped a line drive over the wall in left-center for a Grand Slam home run, and the 'Hounds were up, 7-0

Springfield had chances, stranding five base-runners, each in scoring position, in the first three innings, and the Cardinals drew within 7-4 in the fifth. From there, the 'Hounds scored seven more unanswered runs, and the game was no longer in doubt.

- Every RockHounds batter scored a run, drove in a run or both
- Green finished the game with five RBI and scored four runs
- Jeremy Barfield, one of the few 'Hounds who had been relatively hot entering the game, went 2-for-5 with three RBI
- Michael Spina had three "ribbies" and Shane Peterson had two ... Mitchell scored three times
- Carlos Hernandez saw his ERA bump up a little (to3.24), but won his third straight decision in 2011 ... Carlos is now 18-4 in his RockHounds career
- The 'Hounds finished the 6-game road trip 3-3, and are 8-4 on the season
- The league has Wednesday off for travel, with the RockHounds beginning South Division play, hosting San Antonio and Corpus Christi in an 8-hame home stand opening Thursday

Next Game: RockHounds vs. San Antonio Missions

Thursday, April 21 - 7 p.m. at Citibank Ballpark

San Antonio Probable Starter

Jorge Reyes - (RH 1-0, 5.40 in two starts)

RockHounds Probable Starter

Anthony Capra (LH 0-1, 6.75 in two starts)

Ports Can't Deal With Rawhide Hitting

Stockton Ports

The Ports took an early lead in the game against Visalia on Tuesday evening, but could not hold off the Rawhide who surged ahead in the middle innings to beat the Boys of Banner Island 6-3.

The Ports put the first run of the evening on the board in the second, with timely hits from Max Stassi and Leonardo Gil. Stassi started the inning off with a solid single to center field, and advanced to second on a Rashun Dixon groundout. Leonardo Gil then stepped into the batter's box and lined a single up the middle. The ball took a fortuitous bounce off the pitcher's mound and over the glove of shortstop Brent Greer to bring Stassi home. Ports starter Robert Gilliam looked strong through the first 3.0 innings, but Rawhide hitters slowly began to chip away at the righty's composure, tying up the game on a similar play to the Ports run. With a man on second, Justin Hilt singled to deep shortstop, before Gilliam finished out the inning in 1-2-3 fashion.

The Rawhide took a commanding lead in the fifth inning, and despite a late rally from the Ports, Stockton could not overcome the runs recorded in the top of the fifth. The carnage began with a Greer single, and was punctuated by a Rossmel Perez two-run bomb over the right-center field. Things would only get worse before the end of the inning, as the Perez home run was followed up by a Chris Owings triple to the deepest part of the right field line. Owings came home on an Adam Eaton single. Matt Davidson struck out swinging to end the inning.

After Gilliam recorded two outs in the sixth, the Ports brought in reliever Scott Deal. Deal, who is currently 0.0 with a 0.00 ERA, avoided taking a loss or even earning any runs, allowing the two inherited runners to score, walking two and giving up a hit.

The Ports attempted to mount a comeback in the seventh, grinding out two hard earned runs, but could not keep up the momentum to secure the win. The inning started with the second single of the evening for Gil. Mitch Levier then stepped up and drilled a ground rule double over the left-center field wall. The Ports loaded the bases, as Conner Crumbliss, who was celebrating his birthday today, walked. Dusty Coleman brought Gil home on a single, and Michael Gilmartin grounded out to bring Levier home. One quick pitching change and Kent Walton strikeout later, and the Ports scoring would be done for the evening.

The Ports look to earn the series split tomorrow as Gary Daley Jr. (0-0, 1.80) takes the mound for Stockton. Tomorrow marks the first Ports game to be broadcast on Comcast Hometown Network, channel 104, with first pitch set for 7:05 p.m.

Bees Rained Out

By Jon Versteeg, burlingtonbees.com

GENEVA, IL- The Burlington Bees game with the Kane County Cougars was postponed on Tuesday afternoon because of rain and wet field conditions. The game will be made up as part of a doubleheader on Wednesday afternoon beginning at noon.

In game one of the twin bill RHP Josh Bowman (1-0, 4.00) takes the mound for Burlington against RHP Leondry Perez (0-1, 0.00) for Kane County. RHP A.J. Griffin (1-0, 1.32) gets the start for Burlington in game two against RHP Nick Wooley (0-0, 3.86) for Kane County. Pre-game coverage begins at 11:40 a.m. over gobees.com. There will be no broadcast of the game AM 1490 KBUR.

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