

Brandon McCarthy, Oakland A's offense struggle in loss to Los Angeles Angels

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

ANAHEIM -- A's starter Brandon McCarthy was left in long enough to allow 14 hits Tuesday night against the Los Angeles Angels.

Some were dinks. Some were well-struck.

They all hurt, and the Angels handed the A's an 8-3 defeat in front of 37,228 fans at Angel Stadium.

That clinched the three-game series for Los Angeles and assured the A's a losing record on their seven-game road trip against American League West foes.

After Jered Weaver shut them out Monday, it appeared the A's were getting their easiest assignment of the series against rookie right-hander Tyler Chatwood.

The A's scraped together just six hits. After taking the lead on Conor Jackson's two-run homer in the third, the A's didn't notch another hit until Kevin Kouzmanoff's double with two outs in the ninth.

"It's just one of those things we've got to put behind us and try to salvage the series," Jackson said.

The A's will try to avoid a three-game sweep Wednesday against former Athletic Dan Haren, who brings a 4-1 record and 1.46 ERA into the game.

McCarthy came in with a 2.10 ERA. He gave up 14 hits in 51/3 innings and left with the A's trailing 7-3. It was the most hits allowed by an A's starter since Barry Zito surrendered 15 in a July 8, 2003, game against Tampa Bay.

McCarthy (1-2) was victimized by some well-placed singles throughout the game, but the Angels also got good wood on him.

"A lot of it was with two outs and two strikes. That's unacceptable," McCarthy said. "With two strikes, you can't let them drive balls. There was a lack of sharpness for the most part."

McCarthy couldn't get a shutdown inning in the bottom of the third, after the A's had taken a 3-2 lead. The Angels came back with three runs of their own.

Bobby Abreu led off with a single and Torii Hunter's double put runners on second and third. McCarthy uncorked a wild pitch to score Abreu and move Hunter to third.

McCarthy tried a bare-hand grab on Vernon Wells' comebacker, but the ball deflected off his hand and went for an RBI single. After Wells was thrown out by Kurt Suzuki trying to steal, Howie Kendrick doubled and scored on Hank Conger's two-out bloop single for a 5-3 Angels lead.

McCarthy got two quick outs in the fifth before finding trouble again.

Kendrick reached on an infield single. Conger followed with a run-scoring double to right, and Peter Bourjos drove Conger home with a triple to make it 7-3. The speedy Bourjos tied an Angels record with two triples.

Geren didn't give McCarthy the hook until the sixth, with McCarthy's pitch count at 104.

"Soft, medium, hard contact, it all seemed to fall in for hits," Geren said. "(McCarthy) was around the plate, maybe too much around the plate."

After their three-run rally, the A's couldn't add more against Chatwood, 21, making just his fourth career start. He allowed five hits over 51/3 innings.

"We got three runs in 51/3 innings," Geren said. "It felt like we could have had more."

Jackson came in just 3 for 17 against right-handers but connected off Chatwood for his first homer of the season. He started at first in place of the slumping Daric Barton, but Jackson moved to the outfield after Coco Crisp left with a left quadriceps injury.

Oakland A's update: Coco Crisp doubtful for Wednesday with tight quad

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

ANAHEIM -- Coco Crisp left Tuesday's game against the Angels in the third inning with tightness in his left quadriceps, robbing the A's of their hottest hitter.

Crisp beat out a fielder's choice grounder but pulled up lame as he crossed first base. He was replaced by pinch runner Daric Barton.

"He's day to day, but I'd say he's doubtful for (Wednesday)," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Losing the center fielder for any time would be a blow to the A's. Counting his two at-bats Tuesday, Crisp is 10 for 16 in the past four games and hitting .286 overall.

He entered the day tied for fourth in the American League in runs (16), tied for second in stolen bases (eight) and tied for the lead in triples (three).

"No doubt, when Coco gets on base we're a different team," left fielder Josh Willingham said after Sunday's win against the Seattle Mariners.

Barton was pressed into action after manager Bob Geren planned to give his struggling first baseman a day off.

Barton was 2 for 30 over his past nine games entering Tuesday, dropping his average to .205. As a comparison, he hit .299 last April.

"Barty is struggling a little bit," Geren said before the game. "We had him come out early and take a bunch of swings." Conor Jackson started at first. After Crisp's injury, Barton took over at first and Jackson went to left

field.

"I'm not hitting, so I know where (Geren) is coming from," Barton said. "I just don't feel comfortable. I'm seeing the ball OK. My swing is just not feeling right."

Willingham, who tweaked a muscle in his upper back in Monday's game, did not play Tuesday. Geren said Willingham still felt tightness but that his condition hadn't worsened. His availability Wednesday wasn't known.

Closer Andrew Bailey (strained right forearm) had another strong bullpen session. He's still throwing fastballs only from the mound, but he'll start throwing breaking balls off flat ground. Still no word on when he would begin a minor league rehab assignment.

The A's are expected to call up a catcher Wednesday in place of Kurt Suzuki, who will go on paternity leave. Josh Donaldson, with Triple-A Sacramento, is the likely candidate.

Chin Music: Struggling Barton gets a day off

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/26/2011 6:18pm

Daric Barton is out of the lineup tonight, which manager Bob Geren is calling a mental and physical day off. I talked to Barton this afternoon, and he wishes he was in there. He likes hitting in Anaheim. He's a Southern California guy and would prefer to play when the A's are here. But he also said he understands why Geren sat him considering his hitting struggles. Barton is 2 for 30 (.067) over his past nine games. If you watched the game last night, you saw him blow his top when he was called out on that close 6-3 putout, a play that landed Angels shortstop Erick Aybar on the ESPN highlights. That wasn't the only play that had Barton steamed. He thought a ball he hit down the left-field line in his second at-bat landed fair, but it was called foul. "If I go 2 for 4, I'm probably in the lineup tonight," he said.

It's a long season, and the bad calls probably even out with the favorable calls over 162 games, so there's only so much stock to be put in that. The A's had Barton out taking extra swings before batting practice today. Conor Jackson draws the start at first in his place.

—Josh Willingham is not playing. He's still got some stiffness after tweaking a back muscle last night and leaving the game. Sounds like he won't be available in any capacity, but the injury is considered minor.

-Without coming out and directly saying it, Geren gave indication the A's would call up a catcher to fill Kurt Suzuki's roster spot when Suzuki leaves Wednesday on paternity leave. Willingham's injury would seem to assure a catcher is called up since Willingham would normally be the A's emergency catcher. Consider Josh Donaldson the likely choice to be promoted, as I wrote a couple days ago. ...

The lineups:

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

Angels – Aybar SS, Abreu DH, Hunter RF, Wells LF, Callaspo 3B, Kendrick 1B, Conger C, Bourjos CF, Amarista 2B; Chatwood RHP.

Oakland Coliseum set to be renamed Overstock.com Coliseum

By Paul T. Rosynsky, Oakland Tribune

Welcome to The O.

The Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum will be renamed Overstock.com Coliseum under a deal that could earn the government about \$1.2 million a year for the next six years.

The Oakland-Alameda Coliseum Authority that runs Oakland's professional sports complex is expected to approve the naming rights deal Wednesday morning, giving the 47-year-old stadium its fourth name.

The authority has been looking for a new corporate sponsor for the stadium since 2008, when the MacAfee Inc., a maker of computer virus software, declined to extend its yearly \$1.3 million naming rights deal.

The agreement with Overstock.com was made despite an uncertain future for the Coliseum, whose two professional sports franchise tenants -- the A's and Raiders -- have indicated desires to leave what next year will become the only stadium in the country housing a professional baseball and football team.

Leases to play at the coliseum expire for both franchises in 2013.

Overstock.com appears to have anticipated a possible departure of the teams with a provision in its naming rights deal allowing the company to opt out of the deal should either team no longer call the Coliseum home.

Not only will Overstock.com have the right to change signs throughout the Coliseum; the company's moniker will be displayed on the Coliseum's website, in its official stationary, and on the jackets or name tags of guest service staff employees.

The Coliseum Authority also agreed to work with BART and Caltrans to ensure signage indicating the location of the Coliseum be marked with the Overstock.com name. Overstock.com agreed to pay any costs associated with changing signs.

But don't get used to the Overstock.com label. The Salt Lake City-based firm is in the process of re-branding itself as O.co in an effort to gain customers throughout the world and the company has the right to change the Coliseum's name to the O.co Coliseum at any time.

Rookies lead Angels past A's, 8-3

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

With Josh Willingham already on the bench with a tweaked back muscle, the A's lost another outfielder - their top offensive player - to an injury during Tuesday night's game at Angel Stadium.

Coco Crisp left in the third inning with tightness in his left quadriceps, and A's starter Brandon McCarthy, who had been so impressive after making the rotation out of the spring, had an off night in an 8-3 loss to a youth-driven Angels team. The A's have dropped five of their past seven games.

McCarthy allowed seven runs, a season high by an Oakland starter, and 14 hits, the most by an A's starter since Barry Zito gave up 15 on July 8, 2003.

"Just a lot of ... I wouldn't know how to classify it. Too many hits, too many runs," said McCarthy, who entered the game with a 2.10 ERA. Five of the Angels' runs came with two outs, including the first two, on a double by No. 9 hitter Alexi Amarista - the second baseman's first big-league at-bat. Another rookie, Hank Conger, had a two-out RBI single in the third, and second-year outfielder Peter Bourjos hit a two-out, RBI triple in the fifth. Bourjos also tripled off Jerry Blevins in the eighth, to tie an Angels' record for triples in one game, done several times previously.

"A lot of it was with two outs, a lot with two strikes," McCarthy said. "A lack of sharpness today, for the most part.

"I didn't know what the hell to do. If it was a good pitch, they fouled it off, and a bad pitch, they capitalized."

Crisp had recorded 10 hits in his previous 16 at-bats until leaving Tuesday's game. He pulled up gingerly after preventing the Angels from completing a double play by sprinting to first base. On the same play, shortstop Cliff Pennington had his left wrist stepped on, but he remained in the game.

Crisp's .286 average is tops among A's regulars, and his 16 runs put him among the league leaders. Manager Bob Geren said that Crisp is day-to-day but he doesn't believe Crisp will be available today.

Oakland's runs off Tyler Chatwood - still another rookie - came in the third inning. David DeJesus sent in Kevin Kouzmanoff with a fielder's choice, and Conor Jackson, making just his third start against a right-handed pitcher, drilled a two-run homer to left. It was his first home run of the season.

Hideki Matsui followed that with a broken-bat bloop single - the A's last hit until, with two outs in the ninth, Kouzmanoff doubled. Pennington lined out to right field to end the game.

For the second night in a row, Crisp was thrown out attempting to steal second after appearing to come off the bag. On Monday night, he slid past second, but in the first inning Tuesday, he just barely lost contact with the bag, and shortstop Erick Aybar might have contributed a bit to that, as Geren argued unsuccessfully.

A's Mark Ellis slumping on road trip

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Mark Ellis ended Tuesday night's game at Angel Stadium stuck in a 16 at-bat hitless streak, and he is 2-for-25 on the road trip.

"I've been swinging at bad pitches," Ellis said before the game. "Terrible selection, especially with runners in scoring position. I'm swinging at balls I shouldn't, chasing out of the zone."

After getting his average up to .246 on the last homestand, it has slipped to .198. He struck out five times combined in the previous two games before Tuesday.

"Early in the year, I felt good," the second baseman said. "Now I'm not seeing it well, so I've started chasing it. I know better."

Ellis is typically a slow starter - he's a career .248 hitter in April, .234 in May.

Willingham out: **Josh Willingham** is considered day-to-day with back stiffness, but he was unavailable Tuesday and he's unlikely to play today.

The outfielder said he tweaked a muscle in his back on a swing Monday. **Ryan Sweeney** played Tuesday in Willingham's place.

Barton sits briefly: **Daric Barton** was out for early batting practice, and manager **Bob Geren** left him out of the starting lineup.

"He'll watch the game tonight," Geren said. "Sometimes that's a good thing to get a guy going."

Barton entered the game as a pinch runner when **Coco Crisp** left in the third inning with tightness in his left quadriceps.

Bailey's bullpen: Closer **Andrew Bailey** said he threw 35-40 pitches, all fastballs, in a bullpen session Tuesday and he'll next start throwing breaking pitches during flat-ground work this week.

Donaldson expected: With **Kurt Suzuki** returning to the Bay Area today for the birth of his first child, the A's are likely to call up **Josh Donaldson** from Triple-A Sacramento for the day and place Suzuki on the paternity list. Suzuki is expected to miss one game.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Late starter: Josh Willingham is batting .167 through the first six innings of games, .391 thereafter. "My first at-bats haven't been good for some reason," Willingham said. He's struck out eight times in 19 first at-bats.

Drumbeat: Josh Willingham out of A's lineup with back stiffness; Daric Barton not in

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Angel Stadium 4/26/2011 6:02PM

Josh Willingham said he did tweak a back muscle last night on a swing and his back is still tight today, so he's not available tonight. Considering the A's play a day game tomorrow (4 p.m.) and they're off on Thursday, it's likely he'd get those days to rest up, too.

Daric Barton is getting the start off tonight as he tries to get his stroke together, although it sounds to me as if he should have had two hits last night - I was at the Sharks' game and didn't see the play on which he was ruled out last night, but several A's players said Barton was safe. I wonder if a two-hit night gets him into tonight's lineup?

He was out on the field for early hitting when I got here today at 2:30 p.m., so Barton is definitely working hard. He'd told me the other day that he might be thinking too much, and he said that the prospect of a multi-year contract also might be in the back of his mind. He's a good bet to pinch hit tonight, especially with Willingham out of action.

Andrew Bailey threw a 35-40 pitch bullpen session, and Bailey told me he'll start working on his breaking stuff during flat-ground work the next few days. He's getting closer to throwing to hitters, which puts his return at early to mid-May.

Kurt Suzuki goes on paternity leave tomorrow and he's expected to miss only tomorrow's game. It sounds as if the A's will call up Josh Donaldson from Triple-A Sacramento for the game.

Here's the lineup behind Brandon McCarthy: Crisp cf, DeJesus rf, Jackson 1b, Matsui dh, Suzuki c, Sweeney lf, Ellis 2b, Kouzmanoff 3b, Pennington ss

New name in Oakland sports: Overstock.com Coliseum

Phillip Matier, Andrew Ross

The home of the Oakland A's and Raiders is about to get a new name: Overstock.com Coliseum.

It's a fitting moniker, perhaps, considering how many unsold tickets the two teams have on many game days.

Utah-based Overstock.com pioneered the Internet sale of surplus goods from manufacturers and from companies going out of businesses. They now sell top-of-the-line goods as well.

The six-year deal states that the company will pay \$1.2 million the first year. That cost increases by 3 percent in each subsequent year, according to the plan that the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum Authority will vote on today.

"What can I say? It's a good deal and I'm happy," said Oakland City Councilman **Ignacio De La Fuente**, who is also president of the authority, which oversees the stadium and neighboring Oracle Arena. He said he expected the deal to be approved.

"The Bay Area is one of our strongest customer bases," said Overstock President **Jonathan Johnson**, who added that the name will bring the company national exposure as well.

"Think of it as the three O's: Oakland, Oracle Arena and now Overstock.com Coliseum," Johnson said.

The agreement comes with a couple of caveats: If there is either a football or baseball strike, Overstock will get a pro-rata reduction in its payments.

And if either the A's or the Raiders leaves the stadium, the company's payment will get cut by 35 percent.

The Coliseum authority has been looking for a stadium sponsor since 2008 when McAfee, an antivirus software company, declined to renew a similarly priced deal.

In the can?: The 104- year-old Cannery at Fisherman's Wharf could soon become the latest addition to the Academy of Art University's ever-growing real estate portfolio.

Sources tell us the for-profit university, which has gobbled up more than three dozen properties around town in recent years, is hoping to enter exclusive negotiations to buy the iconic red brick building at the foot of Columbus Avenue.

The university may also have its eye on the old California AAA headquarters near Civic Center, which is owned by the same investment group as the Cannery.

Once a groundbreaking tourist attraction, the converted Cannery has fallen on hard times and is expected to sell for between \$15 million and \$20 million - far below the \$33 million that Vornado Realty Trust and its partners paid for the building at the height of the market in 2007.

When asked about the university's interest in acquiring the Cannery, an academy representative e-mailed us an elusive statement Tuesday from project manager **Paul Correa**. It said no decision had been made but that they were talking to the city Planning Department about the school's master plan "based on meeting the needs of its students, and on the adaptive re-use and preservation of historic and significant buildings."

Get me to the ...: It's wedding bells for San Francisco Assemblywoman **Fiona Ma**.

Ma plans to marry **Jason Hodge**, a second-generation Oxnard firefighter and avid surfer who she met during last year's state Democratic Party Convention in Los Angeles. The big day is Nov. 12 in Half Moon Bay.

Ma tells us that Hodge, who was elected last fall to the Oxnard Harbor Commission, proposed to her with a \$10 ring when he accompanied her during a state legislative delegation trip to Shanghai in November.

So where do the newlyweds intend to live?

"He has a house in Oxnard, and I live in San Francisco and Sacramento," Ma said. "We will figure it out."

And just in case anyone didn't get the message, consider this a formal engagement announcement.

"I'm just going to link it, and send it to all my friends," she said.

McCarthy hit hard and Crisp goes down

By David Ely / Special to MLB.com | 4/27/2011 2:31 AM ET

ANAHEIM -- For the second straight game against the Angels, the A's lost a player to injury and a starter suffered through a sub-par night on the mound.

After beating out a double-play ball in the top of the third, center fielder Coco Crisp was pulled from the game because of tightness in his left quad, and Brandon McCarthy gave up seven runs on 14 hits in 5 1/3 innings as the A's fell, 8-3, Tuesday night at Angel Stadium.

The eight runs and 16 total hits for the Angels were the most given up by the A's in a game this season.

Oakland manager Bob Geren said after the loss that Crisp's situation was similar to that of Josh Willingham, who left Monday's game with tightness in his upper back. Geren said Crisp is day to day but doubtful for Wednesday's series finale.

After a quiet first inning, McCarthy began to show signs of a possible rough outing in the second. Howard Kendrick reached second when Kevin Kouzmanoff fumbled a grounder into a two-base error. Then with runners on the corners and two outs, Alexi Amarista hit an opposite-field double in his first career at-bat to give the Halos an early 2-0 lead.

Two-out hitting would be a theme for the Angels. Five of the seven runs against McCarthy came when he was just one pitch away from slithering out of a jam -- a fact not lost on him after the game. "The whole thing is [frustrating]," McCarthy said. "A lot of it with two outs. A lot of it with two strikes. ... Those are just kind of things that are unacceptable, especially the two-strike ones. Those gotta be better pitches there. They can't be driven, at least." Los Angeles pounded out five hits and scored three runs to jump ahead, 5-3, in the bottom half of the third.

It was the second consecutive night that Angels batters made early work of a young A's starter.

On Monday, they touched up Gio Gonzalez for five runs on eight hits in five innings in the southpaw's shortest outing of the season. While Gonzalez blamed some of his struggles on a couple of well-placed balls that found gaps in the Oakland defense, McCarthy was unable to chalk up his performance to just bad luck.

Sure, the Angels had a couple of infield singles and broken-bat hits. But the majority of the time they made solid contact, wearing out Oakland outfielders with six extra-base hits off McCarthy.

"They just got a lot of hits," Geren said. "They made contact very consistently, and hard, medium and soft contacts all seemed to fall for hits." A lot of the damage was done by the younger Angels hitters at the bottom of the lineup, as Hank Conger, Peter Bourjos and Amarista combined to go 5-for-9 with two doubles and a triple against McCarthy. Bourjos hit his second triple of the game in the ninth inning off Jeremy Blevins. "Just one of those days," McCarthy said, adding that he and catcher Kurt Suzuki "were just talking about it. We didn't know what the [heck] to do at that point. It seemed like if I made good pitches, they fouled it off. And the second I made a bad pitch, they capitalized on it."

Conor Jackson briefly put the A's in front, 3-2, with a two-run homer off Angels starter Tyler Chatwood in the top of the third.

The home run was Jackson's first of the season, and was a rare example of successful hitting against a right-hander. Jackson entered Tuesday's game 3-for-17 with four strikeouts this season against righties.

"Obviously a righty prefers a lefty out there, but throughout my career I've never had an issue with one or the other," Jackson said. "I feel comfortable with both." But the A's were unable to enjoy their lead for long. The Angels went on to treat McCarthy with the kind of courtesy normally reserved for batting-practice pitchers, while the Oakland batters fell silent.

The A's have scored three runs in two games against the Angels after scoring 14 runs in the final two games of their four-game series in Seattle last weekend, and they went 0-for-3 with runners in scoring position Tuesday night.

"Seems like right when we were putting it on them and they came back and scored a couple of runs and it was kind of deflating," Jackson said. "But we couldn't match them tonight."

Crisp atop A's list of first-time All-Star hopefuls

Fans can vote for Midsummer Classic participants until June 30

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Veteran outfielder Coco Crisp, whose 2010 season was interrupted by injury three times before emerging from camp this spring with full health, headlines a list of nine A's players on the 2011 All-Star ballot.

"It's an honor," Crisp said prior to the A's Tuesday game against the Angels. "It shows that you've been playing well individually. ... It's an honor to make an All-Star team."

The speedster, who has yet to get a ticket to the Midsummer Classic in nine Major League seasons, joins a handful of A's hitters on the list who are attempting to break out of an early-season offensive slump and garner their first trip to baseball's storied summer game.

"I don't know," said Crisp when asked if it would mean more to make the American League squad after close to a decade in the Majors. "I can't tell you if it'd mean more then or now because I didn't go to an All-Star Game. But I assume that it would be the same. It'd just be an honor to go."

Outfielders David DeJesus and Josh Willingham and catcher Kurt Suzuki are candidates, as is designated hitter Hideki Matsui, an All-Star during the 2003 and '04 seasons with the Yankees.

Matsui, who recently collected career hit No. 2,500 (between the U.S. and Japan) and is nearing the 500-homer mark, struggled during his first handful of games in green and gold but has since displayed the dose of power Oakland needs in the middle of its lineup.

Crisp, DeJesus, Willingham, Suzuki and Matsui, along with Oakland's other four nominees, will need a strong showing of votes from fans to be considered serious choices around the country.

Fans can cast their votes for starters up to 25 times at MLB.com and all 30 club sites -- online or via their mobile device -- using the **2011 All-Star Game MLB.com Ballot Sponsored by Sprint** until June 30 at 8:59 p.m. PT.

Fans can also place their vote at Oakland Coliseum, beginning Friday and lasting through June 16.

Starting rosters will be announced during the 2011 All-Star Game Selection Show on TBS on July 3. Baseball fans around the world will then be able to select the final player on each team via the 2011 All-Star Game Final Vote Sponsored by Sprint.

And the voting doesn't end there. Fans will have the opportunity to participate in the official voting for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player Award presented by Chevrolet at the Midsummer Classic via the 2011 All-Star Game MVP Vote Sponsored by Sprint.

The All-Star Game, to be played at Chase Field in Phoenix on July 12, will be televised nationally by FOX and around the world by Major League Baseball International. ESPN Radio will provide exclusive national radio play-by-play, and MLB.com will offer extensive online coverage.

Surging Crisp slowed by quad injury

A's leadoff hitter day to day and doubtful for Wednesday

By David Ely / Special to MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- After Coco Crisp got his third three-hit game in a row on Monday night -- and against Jered Weaver, to boot -- it appeared no one could slow him down. But Crisp was in fact slowed on Tuesday night, when he left the game against the Angels with what the A's called tightness in his left quad.

Crisp singled sharply to lead off the game. With a man on first in his second at-bat in the third inning, he grounded to shortstop for a force at second but beat the relay throw to first to stay out of the double play. He was immediately pulled from the game.

Manager Bob Geren said after the 8-3 loss to the Angels that Crisp's situation was similar to that of Josh Willingham, who left Monday's game with tightness in his upper back. Geren said Crisp is currently day to day but doubtful for Wednesday's series finale.

Crisp was pinch-run for by Daric Barton and his departure set off a chain of defensive switches. David DeJesus moved from right field to center to replace Crisp, Ryan Sweeney moved from left to right, Conor Jackson moved from first base to left and Barton stayed in the game to play first.

On Monday night, Crisp went 3-for-4 against the hottest pitcher in baseball, Weaver, accounting for nearly half of his club's total hits. That left him nine for his previous 14.

"Coco's had nine hits in the last three games," Geren said. "That was a good month when I used to play. That's amazing."

Crisp had said before the game that nothing felt different for him at the plate, downplaying the notion that he suddenly became locked in.

"The ball is just falling, just hitting the ball," said Crisp. "Early, they weren't falling. I was hitting them right at people, and now they're just not going to people. Simple."

Crisp added: "The balls just weren't falling for me. Just missing changeups, seeing it, missing them. Now throw me a changeup first pitch, I hit and it falls in center, where before it would dribble to first base. It's just the way it goes sometimes."

Geren said the key for Crisp of late has been his approach at the plate.

"He's been very aggressive," Geren said. "If they just try to lay something in to get ahead of him, he's been on it. And yet if he gets deeper into counts, he's been battling, too, hitting balls the other way. And he's been fantastic on the bases and in the field, too."

Willingham idled, but Barton's time off short-lived

ANAHEIM -- Josh Willingham was out of the lineup for Tuesday's game against the Angels, still feeling the effects of the tightness in his upper back that caused him to be removed from Monday's game in the bottom of the sixth.

"He's stiff," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He's about the same as yesterday when we took him out."

Geren said Willingham is day to day, and Willingham said that he hopes to be able to play Wednesday afternoon. Ryan Sweeney replaced Willingham in left field.

Struggling first baseman Daric Barton also didn't start as Conor Jackson got the start in the infield. Barton was hitting .205 on the season and was 2-for-30 in his last nine games.

"He's struggling a little bit," Geren said. "You're getting Conor's bat in there, number one. And number two, you've got Barton coming out early and taking a bunch of swings. ... Have him watch the game tonight. ... Sometimes that's a good thing to get a guy going."

Barton's time on the bench was short-lived as he had to pinch-run for Coco Crisp in the top of the third after Crisp was hurt beating out a double-play ball. The A's said that Crisp exited the game because of tightness in his left quad.

Barton remained in the game at first base, while Jackson moved to left field, Ryan Sweeney moved from left to right and David DeJesus shifted from right to Crisp's center-field spot.

Geren wouldn't go into detail on what exactly is ailing Barton at the plate, but he pointed out a couple of pitches out of the zone that Barton chased against Jered Weaver on Monday night as examples of his struggles.

"Just doesn't feel right up there right now," Geren said.

Bailey ready for next step: Breaking pitches

ANAHEIM -- After another successful bullpen session, A's closer Andrew Bailey is steadily making progress toward a return to the club.

Bailey, who's out with a right forearm strain, threw 35 pitches before the A's Tuesday game against the Angels, and manager Bob Geren said both Bailey and pitching coach Ron Romanick were pleased with what they saw.

"He had a side day that went really well," Geren said. "He's going to take it to the next step now and start spinning breaking balls. Being that it's the first time that he's going to actually throw something other than a fastball means we're moving in the right direction."

Geren added that it shouldn't be long until Bailey is ready to face live hitters.

Ross, Haren seek reversal at each other's expense

By Doug Miller / MLB.com | 4/27/2011 1:16 AM ET

Tyson Ross just turned 24 and has a lot to learn about pitching in the big leagues. Dan Haren is older and more experienced and still in the midst of a fantastic April.

Ross, the A's starter, and Haren, the former Oakland right-hander who now plies his trade for the Angels, will match up against each other Wednesday at Angel Stadium, and they'll both be looking for a better showing than in their last outing.

Ross took a 4-0 loss in Seattle in his first start of the season, filling in for injured Dallas Braden. He lasted only 4 1/3 innings and couldn't keep the ball in the strike zone. It was a lesson, to be sure.

"I fell behind a bunch of hitters and put them in good hitters' counts," Ross said. "It was just one of those off-days. I couldn't find a rhythm. I had good movement, but it was movement out of the zone. That's why I really need to find the right adjustment to keep it in there."

Ross had not allowed a run in two of his three relief appearances after a great spring, but last Friday, he threw only 31 of his 76 pitches for strikes.

"His fastball command wasn't close to where it was in the spring -- or anywhere remotely close to where it needs to be," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He was good this spring and he was good in his other outings, so we look toward his next outing, and I'm sure he'll be better."

Haren, meanwhile, has been one of the best pitchers in all of baseball so far this year, although in his last outing, also Friday, he had a hiccup at the hands of the Boston Red Sox.

Haren had an eight-game personal winning streak snapped by Boston on a night in which errors were made and strange things were afoot in Anaheim.

"I felt pretty good," Haren said. "A two-out walk hurt me. I made good pitches when I needed to. It wasn't like balls were flying everywhere. It was kind of a weird game."

Haren will be facing his former team for the fourth time. He's 2-0 with a 3.60 ERA in 20 innings against the A's, with 20 strikeouts. He was 43-34 (3.64 ERA) with the A's from 2005-07, starting the '07 All-Star Game for the American League in San Francisco. Last Friday was his first loss of the season.

"I don't want to lose," Haren said, "but chances are I wasn't going to go 34-0. It's easy when things are going well. Character shows when they aren't. I'm looking forward to my next start."

A's: Defensive roller coaster

- The A's did not make an error Tuesday night, but they have committed at least one error in 10 of their last 14 games and have a total of 14 over that span. Their 23 errors are tied for the most in the Majors. Oakland opened the season by committing a club-record nine errors over their first four games. Last season, the A's were charged with less than 100 errors (99) for the sixth time in the last seven years.
- First baseman Daric Barton is 2-for-32 (.063) over his last 10 games after batting .292 (14-for-48) in his first 14 games. He's batting .200 (16-for-80) with 17 walks and 20 strikeouts to start the season after hitting .299 in April last year.
- The A's are 6-2 in day games and 5-11 at night. The day record is tied for third best in the Majors and the night record is tied for third worst.

Angels: Bourjos not just a defensive threat

- Center fielder Peter Bourjos is riding a nine-game hitting streak, batting .444 (16-for-36) with seven runs, six extra-base hits (two doubles, three triples, one home run) and four RBIs. The streak is the longest by an Angel this season. Bourjos also leads Major League Baseball with four bunt singles and leads the American League with four triples.
- Catcher Hank Conger has hit safely in eight of 11 games. He has eight RBIs in his last six starts, and Angels pitchers own a 2.50 ERA (45 earned runs in 162 innings pitched) while working with Conger in his career.

- Designated hitter Bobby Abreu is in a 5-for-40 (.125) skid in his last 13 games after batting .378 (14-for-37) in his first 10 games of 2011, although he went 1-for-3 with a run and two walks Tuesday night.

Worth noting

- The A's are 3-4 in one-run games this year and have had 10 of their 23 games this season decided by two runs or less. They are 4-6 in those games. Oakland also is 2-3 in extra-inning games this year.
- The Angels haven't lost a season series to the A's since 2003 (12-8, A's). After Tuesday's win, the Angels have taken nine in a row at home vs. the A's. The Angels were 7-2 at home vs. the A's last year and 11-8 overall.
- Angels manager Mike Scioscia is now six wins shy of 1,000 for his career.

A's lose to Angels, 8-3

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANAHEIM — Alexi Amarista hit a two-run double on the third pitch he ever saw in the major leagues and added a sacrifice fly, and Howie Kendrick had three hits and scored three runs for the Los Angeles Angels in an 8-3 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Tuesday night.

Tyler Chatwood (2-1) pitched 5½ innings and allowed three runs on five hits, including Conor Jackson's first homer of the season with a man on in the third. The Angels' rookie right-hander walked four and struck out one in a matchup of pitchers who were not on major league rosters at any time last season.

Brandon McCarthy (1-2) surrendered seven runs and 14 hits over 5½ innings in his fifth start, raising his ERA from 2.10 to 3.57. The right-hander spent parts of five seasons in the majors with the Chicago White Sox and Texas Rangers before spending last season with Triple-A Oklahoma City, and was on the disabled list three separate times because of shoulder problems.

McCarthy signed with the A's as a free agent in December after making four starts in the Dominican Winter League.

For the second straight night, Oakland's Coco Crisp was tagged out by shortstop Erick Aybar after oversliding second base on what would have been a successful headfirst steal attempt. This time, it was after the Los Angeles native led off the game with his fourth straight hit and 10th in four games.

His next time up, Crisp hit a fielder's choice grounder and had to be lifted for a pinch-runner after feeling some tightness in his left quad. In Monday night's 5-0 loss, the A's had to pull left fielder Josh Willingham from the game in the sixth inning because of tightness in the left side of his upper back. Willingham remains day to day.

With one out in the Angels' second, Kendrick hit a grounder in the hole off the glove of third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff and legged out a double as shortstop Cliff Pennington chased the ball down in short left field. Peter Bourjos chopped a single off the plate that Kouzmanoff had no play on, putting runners at the corners, and Amarista slapped a 1-1 pitch the other way into the left field corner to drive in both.

After Oakland pulled ahead 3-2 with a run-scoring groundout by David DeJesus and Jackson's homer, the Angels matched that three-spot in their half of the third to regain the lead for good.

Bobby Abreu scored on a wild pitch after leading off with a single. Wells' single off McCarthy's pitching hand drove in Torii Hunter, who doubled. Wells was thrown out trying to steal, but Kendrick followed with a more conventional double than his first one, and Hank Conger made it 5-3 with an RBI single.

The Angels tacked on two more in the fifth when Bourjos followed Conger's RBI double with a triple. He hit another one in the eighth, his fourth three-bagger of the season, and scored on Amarista's sacrifice fly.

Amarista started at second base one day after his contract was selected from Triple-A Salt Lake. He was the Angels' minor league player of the year in 2009, and was hitting .455 with 16 RBIs in 14 games this month before his promotion. Mark Trumbo, the organization's minor league player of the year last season, got the night off to contemplate his 1-for-22 slump while Kendrick shifted from second base to first.

Notes: The A's were held to one hit over the final 6½ innings — Kouzmanoff's two-out double in the ninth.

NOTE

The A's will place C Kurt Zuzuki on the paternity leave list before today's game. He is returning to the Bay Area, to be with his wife Renee for the labor-induced birth of their first child, a daughter.

... Jackson made his second start at 1B this season in place of Daric Barton, who is in a 2-for-30 slump and didn't start after taking early batting practice. Barton entered the game as a pinch-runner for Crisp and stayed in defensively. ... A's closer Andrew Bailey, who has yet to pitch this season because of a forearm strain that occurred during an exhibition game on March 14, had a 35-pitch side session in which he threw just fastballs. He will progress to breaking balls on flat ground in his next one.

Gutierrez: Not even Crisp can outrun A's injury bug

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

ANAHEIM - You think Coco Crisp is quick on the basepaths? Fast out of the batter's box? In a hurry in center field?

Try catching the A's lead-off hitter the clubhouse after he's exited a game with an injury.

To paraphrase Flavor Flav, Crisp is quick, fast in a hurry; no worry. Coco's vision ain't blurry.

But not even Crisp can outrun the New York City cockroach-sized injury bug that continues to bite this franchise with aplomb. Or the palpable wave of disappointment washing over the team following Tuesday night's deflating 8-3 loss to the Angels.

Especially not with Crisp, white-hot at the plate, limping off the field with tightness in his left quadriceps muscle beating out a double-play grounder at first base in the third inning. He's doubtful to play in the series finale Wednesday.

Before that fielder's choice, Crisp had singled to lead off the game. Giving him 10 hits in three-plus games.

He was doing everything you could want from a green-and-gold outfitted lead-off man not named Rickey Henderson. But he wasn't getting much support from his teammates.

In the series opener Monday night, Crisp had three of the A's five hits against Jered Weaver at one point.

So when was the last time Crisp, who has raised his average from .213 on Friday to .286, felt this locked in at the plate?

"The whole season," he said, before the game. "The balls just weren't falling for me. I was missing change-ups. I was seeing it, but missing them. Whatever. Now, throw me a change-up, first pitch, I hit it and it falls into center. Before it would dribble to first base. It's just the way it goes sometimes."

Coco Crisp is hotter than Koko B. Ware ever was as a late 1980's WWF wrestler with Morris Day and the Time's "The Bird" serving as his entrance music. And the ballplayer doesn't even need a parrot to get over with the fans.

But you had to wonder if his run, before the quad tightened on him, would end before the rest of the A's bats woke up.

As A's historian David Feldman told me, Crisp is on an Ichiro Suzuki-like streak of star-crossed luck.

Last season, Suzuki led the American League in hits, but scored fewer runs than Arizona's Mark Reynolds, who had the fewest number of hits of any qualifying National League batter.

Simply put, unless you're hitting leadoff home runs and referring yourself in the third person, ala Rickey, you're talents are being wasted by an impotent offense that has already been shut out four times.

"He's swinging the bat very impressively," A's manager Bob Geren said of Crisp. "I like what he's doing because he's being very aggressive, where if they try to lay something in to get ahead of him, he's on it. And yet, if he gets deeper into counts, he's been battling and hitting balls the other way."

I asked Crisp if he was superstitious, if he was the kind of guy to not mess up a streak by talking about a streak.

He said he was not.

Then I said he was a streaky player, both at the plate and in the field. He cut me off.

"I'm not streaky defensively; I'm solid defensively," he said. "I made an error (Monday) but other than that, I'm vicious."

Having made his big league debut in 2002 and played in the media and fan fishbowl that is Boston, Crisp knows a season is a marathon, not a sprint, and can keep an even keel about things.

"It's a rollercoaster ride," he said. "Those first 100 at-bats don't matter as far as mentally."

Crisp is at 91 at-bats, has scored a team-high 16 runs, has 40 total bases, seven more than Hideki Matsui, and is slugging an A's-best .440.

"You know there's going to be a volatile response, whether it's going 0-fer or getting three hits," Crisp said. "It's going to go up and down. It's going to vary, either way. So you get past those first 100 at-bats, you kind of settle in a little bit, try not to worry about them that much. Doesn't really matter."

Seems all cyclical, right?

"What?" he said. "How long we gonna be with these questions? Kinda ambushed me."

Actually, it was that injury bug, waiting in the weeds.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Horton's game-winning single lifts Sacramento

By Cassie Kolas, rivercats.com

Shortstop Josh Horton hit a game-winning single in the ninth inning to lift Sacramento to a 3-2 victory over Tucson on Tuesday night at Raley Field.

The win improves Sacramento to 11-9, and keeps them in first place in the Pacific Coast League South Division.

First baseman Shane Peterson, called up from Double-A Midland on Saturday, went 3-for-4 with a run after entering the night 1-for-10 (.100 average) on the season.

"It takes a lot of the nerves off, that's for sure," Peterson said. "Just glad I can finally prove myself. I knew that I belonged here. I think it was good to just finally come out here and finally get the hits and prove to myself and everybody."

The Padres got on the board in the fourth inning with a two-run home run by former River Cat Aaron Cunningham.

Sacramento's bats got loud in the fifth, but the noise wasn't enough to score. Anthony Recker singled on a line drive to left field, Peterson singled to left field and Jemile Weeks walked to load the bases. On a full count, Eric Sogard popped out to strand all three runners.

After seven scoreless innings, the River Cats rallied. Adrian Cardenas walked and Peterson singled. Horton knocked in Cardenas with a double, and Eric Sogard singled to bring Peterson home and tie the game 2-2.

Sacramento came back in the ninth to break the tie and secure the win over the Padres. Recker walked, Peterson singled on a ground ball to right field that moved Recker to third. Horton then hit the winning single to center field to score Recker.

"We put together quality at-bats," Peterson said. "You know late in the game all you need is one run."

Sacramento's bullpen pitched 3.2 shutout innings, with Joey Devine throwing 2.0 innings for the win. The River Cats, who next head to Las Vegas for a four-game road trip, are 9-4 over their last 13 games.

Hounds Walk Off In Dramatic Fashion

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Citibank Ballpark - - -

For eight-and-two-thirds innings Tuesday night, the RockHounds just couldn't get much going against Corpus Christi. All that changed on five swings.

In the last of the ninth, Jermaine Mitchell was facing closer David Carpenter (perfect in four save opportunities), with the bases empty, two out and a 1-2 count. Jermaine sent a drive to left, his second home run in as many nights, and the 'Hounds were down, 4-2. RockHounds manager Steve Scarsons called the swing the "play of the game," as it ignited the 'Hounds dugout. It also ignited a huge comeback.

Grant Green followed with a single and Stephen Parker, down in the count, 1-2, fouled off a pair of two-strike pitches. He then sent a shot to left-center, a two-run home run, tying the game at 4-4.

After Mickey Storey kept the Hooks off the board in the tenth, the 'Hounds ended the game on two swings.

Jeremy Barfield led off the home half of the 10th with a first-pitch double to deep right center. "The Book" probably says a sacrifice bunt would be the play, but the 'Hounds had a different strategy in mind. Matt Sulentic was swinging away, driving the very next pitch out, over the wall in deep left-center ... a two-run, walk-off home run.

From two out, bases empty, down 4-1 in the last of the ninth ... the 'Hounds scored five runs on five swings.

- The win keeps the RockHounds one game behind San Antonio in the South ... the Missions made it two-in-a-row over visiting Frisco with a 6-5 win Tuesday afternoon. Corpus is five games behind the Missions and Frisco is six games back just 18 games into the first half pennant race.

- Mitchell homered Monday, a mammoth shot high on the grass berm in right-center, and went 3-for-4 Tuesday. The native Texan is now the RockHounds' top hitter at .338. Jermaine has a seven-game hit streak, and is 11-for-his-last-17, with four home runs and TEN runs batted in.

- Parker has now hit in six consecutive games (10-25, .400) and has nine RBI in that stretch.

- Sulentic's walk-off extended his hit streak to seven games ... Green went 2-for-5 Tuesday and is now 5-for-his-last-10.

- Storey and Jared Lansford tossed 4.0 shutout innings, allowing three hits.

- Corpus Christi's Brandon Wikoff got his second straight start for injured shortstop Wladimir Sutil. Wikoff is 6-for-10 in the two games, and is now hitting .409 ... Jon Gaston went 3-for-4 with a pair of triples for the Hooks.

- Former RockHound (and 2005 Texas League Player of the Year) Andre Ethier made Major League Baseball history Tuesday, becoming the first player to record a 23-game hit streak in April. Last week, he also became just the 24th player to hit 100 or more home runs in a Dodgers uniform (the franchise has existed for more than a century).

Choice Blasts Ports Past Storm 4-2

04/26/2011 10:00 PM ET

STOCKTON, Calif. - Timely hitting and solid pitching are always keys to success, and the Stockton Ports received both on Tuesday night at Banner Island Ballpark. Fresh off a loss on Monday that snapped their four-game winning streak, the Boys of Banner Island got back on the winning track on Tuesday, using a three-run sixth inning to get past the Lake Elsinore Storm by a final of 4-2.

It was Stockton grabbing the early lead in the bottom of the first. Storm starter Mike Watt (0-3) got off to a shaky start by yielding back-to-back walks to Michael Gilmartin and Dusty Coleman. With two on and one out, Leonardo Gil drove in the game's first run with a single to left to put Stockton up 1-0. Watt, though, would settle down and retire the next seven batters.

Stockton committed an error in the second that resulted in Lake Elsinore's first run. With one out, Nate Freiman hit a grounder to third that was mishandled by Gilmartin. The next batter, Edinson Rincon, tripled to left-center to tie the score at 1-1.

Ports starter Gary Daley, Jr. (1-0) would retire seven in a row after allowing the triple to Rincon. The string was broken up by Freiman with two outs in the fourth as he hit a solo home run to left to put the Storm on top 2-1.

Daley would retire the next seven batters in a row to finish his outing. Daley would go on to earn the win, going six innings and allowing two runs (one earned) on four hits while striking out three.

Meanwhile, Watt settled into a groove after the first. Michael Choice hit a two-out double in the third, but Watt would bear down after that and retire the next seven hitters in a row, striking out six of those seven hitters to take him through the fifth.

Stockton's big inning came in the sixth. With Watt on the hill, Dusty Coleman started a rally with an infield single. Choice followed with an opposite-field two-run blast to right-center to put the Ports up 3-2. Gil followed with a ground-rule double to left and scored later in the inning on a groundout from Mitch LeVier.

All three runs in the inning and all four Ports runs on the night were charged to Watt, who took the loss despite a season-high nine strikeouts. He went 5.1 innings and allowed six hits while walking two.

The Ports handed the ball over to Ryan Doolittle (SV, 1) in the seventh. Doolittle tossed three scoreless innings to close the game, earning his first save of the season. Doolittle recorded four strikeouts and didn't walk a batter on the night while lowering his league-leading ERA to 0.50.

With their series knotted at a game apiece, the Ports and Storm play the third game of their four-game set on Wednesday night at Banner Island Ballpark. Murphy Smith (0-1, 5.74 ERA) will toe the rubber for Stockton, opposed by Storm right-hander Jerry Sullivan (2-1, 3.46 ERA). First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

Snappers Fight Back For 6-4 Win

By Jon Versteeg, BURLINGTONBEES.COM

BELOIT, WI- The Beloit Snappers (9-7) scored four runs in the sixth inning to power their way to a 6-4 win over the Burlington Bees (13-4) at Pohlman Field on Tuesday night. The loss snaps the Bees' five-game winning streak.

The Snappers took the lead on a solo home run in the second inning when DH Oswaldo Arcia (4-4) hit a solo home run over the right field wall against Burlington starter Josh Bowman for a 1-0 advantage.

The Bees offense got started in the fourth inning. LF Jose Rivero (1-4) led off the inning with a walk and scored on a two-run home run pulled over the right field wall by RF Royce Consigli (2-5). SS Yordy Cabrera (1-2) sent his first home run of the season over the left field wall for a 3-1 Burlington advantage.

In the Beloit sixth inning Arcia hit an RBI single and RF Daniel Ortiz (1-4) added an RBI double.

Arcia hit a solo home run in the eighth inning to make it 6-3.

The Bees scored a single run in the ninth inning on an RBI single by DH Nino Leyja (2-5) to make 6-4.

The Bees and Snappers finish their series on Wednesday morning at 11:00 a.m. The pitching match-up is as follows: RHP Seth Frankoff (0-0, 7.15) starts for Burlington against RHP B.J. Hermsen (1-2, 3.38) for Beloit. Pre-game coverage begins at 10:40 a.m. on gobees.com. There will be no broadcast of the game on AM 1490 KBUR.