

## A's News Clips, Thursday, April 28, 2011

### Oakland A's edge Angels in 10 innings

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

ANAHEIM -- The A's took their victory and headed for home Wednesday, not particularly interested in dissecting the day's activities.

Good thing.

The blueprint they used for a 2-1 win in 10 innings over the Los Angeles Angels won't work often, though the A's were savoring it nonetheless.

It's not often a team can collect just six hits, go 0 for 11 with runners in scoring position, let a ninth-inning lead slip away and still come away pleased with the outcome.

The A's managed that before a crowd of 37,247 at Angel Stadium and avoided a three-game sweep. They finished 3-4 on a seven-game trip against division rivals Seattle and Los Angeles.

"That was a must-win for us," catcher Landon Powell said. "I think everybody thought that. We would have liked to win more games on the road. But I think we're going to go home, enjoy the off-day and get some more wins at home."

They're 3½ games behind first-place Texas, with the Rangers arriving in Oakland for the start of a four-game series Friday.

The A's took a 1-0 lead into the bottom of the ninth, with former Angel Brian Fuentes looking to secure a well-deserved victory for starter Tyson Ross.

Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff misplayed pinch hitter Maicer Izturis' sharp grounder for his sixth error of the season to put the leadoff runner on. After Erick Aybar's sacrifice bunt, Bobby Abreu shot a game-tying double down the left-field line.

Fuentes (1-2) got an earful from Angels fans last season when he was the team's closer until being traded to Minnesota in August. The chorus of boos that greeted him Wednesday didn't catch him off guard.

"It felt like I was still pitching for the Halos sort of," Fuentes said with a smile.

He blew the save but wound up with the victory.

Cliff Pennington led off the top of the 10th with a fly to left-center. Angels left fielder Vernon Wells went into a slide, but the ball deflected off his glove and Pennington wound up with a triple.

After David DeJesus' comebacker to the mound, a walk to Daric Barton put runners on the corners, and Conor Jackson's high chopper to short was enough to score Pennington.

Brad Ziegler was called upon in the bottom of the 10th and recorded his first save since Sept. 18, 2009.

The win snapped the A's eight-game losing streak at Angel Stadium, Oakland's longest skid ever in Anaheim.

Ross, making his second start in place of the injured Dallas Braden, enjoyed his finest game as a major leaguer. He tossed seven shutout innings, induced three ground-ball double plays and didn't allow an Angel to advance past second base.

After walking four and lasting just 4 1/3 innings Friday against Seattle, Ross worked on slowing down the tempo of his delivery.

"I got early contact with my sinker and was just using my defense," Ross said.

"He was going after hitters," A's manager Bob Geren said. "That's what we saw all spring, and that's why we have such great expectations for him."

For the A's to take care of business against Texas -- and have any hopes in the division -- they have to get their offense cranking. They went 0 for 20 with runners in scoring position during the Angels series.

"I think it's frustrating for everybody right now with the problems we're having scoring runs," A's hitting coach Gerald Perry said. "But we battled and got one more run than they did."

### **A's update: A's go with depleted lineup against Angels**

By Joe Stiglich, Contra Costa Times

ANAHEIM -- Coco Crisp and Josh Willingham were both out of the A's lineup Wednesday against the Los Angeles Angels, but manager Bob Geren is hopeful that neither outfielder will miss much time.

Willingham, who left Monday's game with tightness in his back, took some swings before Wednesday's game. He said he could have played if absolutely necessary, but with the A's off Thursday, Willingham could benefit from two full days off before Friday's homestand opener against the Texas Rangers.

"I still felt it, but it's a lot better," Willingham said. "Hopefully I'll play Friday."

He said the pain is located in the middle of his back on the left side, and that swinging is the only thing that causes it.

"Unfortunately we have to rotate in this sport," Willingham said.

Crisp, who left Tuesday's game with tightness in his left quadriceps, also was not available. But Geren said the disabled list was not a consideration for the center fielder.

"I guess he feels a little better than he thought he would," Geren said.

Catcher Josh Donaldson was called up from Triple-A Sacramento to take the roster spot of Kurt Suzuki, who went on paternity leave Wednesday to be with his wife, Renee, as she was set to deliver their first child.

Donaldson's stay with the big club might be short. With the A's off Thursday, it's possible that Suzuki could rejoin the team for Friday's game.

After hearing of the naming-rights deal that will re-christen the Oakland Coliseum as Overstock.com Coliseum, Geren hopped on the Internet and visited the overstock.com site.

"I checked it out and realized I've actually been on that website before," Geren said. "I think my wife picked up an area rug or two there."

Backup infielder Andy LaRoche hasn't played much lately, but he's doing his part to help get the A's on the winning track.

LaRoche shaved his full beard during the just-completed seven-game road trip.

"When you lose a game or two, you change something up," LaRoche said. "It's obviously not the fact that we're either not pitching or hitting. It's all about the facial hair."

### **Oakland Coliseum set to be renamed Overstock.com Coliseum**

By Paul T. Rosynsky and Angela Woodall, Oakland Tribune

OAKLAND -- Welcome to The O.

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

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

The Oracle Arena name will not be affected by the deal, which includes a 3 percent increase each year, records show. That would bring the total value of the contract to \$7.5 million. Oakland and Alameda County will receive half of the proceeds from the contract and the Raiders will get the other half.

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

The agreement with [Overstock.com](http://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. Leases to play at the Coliseum expire for both franchises in 2013.

[Overstock.com](http://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](http://Overstock.com) have the right to change signs throughout the Coliseum, the company's moniker will be displayed on the Coliseum's website, on its official stationary, and on the jackets or name tags of employees.

Five members of the eight-person Coliseum Authority Board of Commissioners approved the deal with a 5-0 vote. The three commissioners who did not vote -- Nate Miley, Chris Dobbins and Yui Hay Lee -- were absent, according to Chairman and Oakland Councilmember Ignacio De La Fuente. "It was a straight-up deal," said De La Fuente, whose council district borders the Coliseum complex. He said the agreement is effective immediately.

The Coliseum Authority also agreed to work with BART and Caltrans to ensure signs indicating the location of the Coliseum be marked with the [Overstock.com](http://Overstock.com) name. [Overstock.com](http://Overstock.com) agreed to pay any costs associated with changing signs.

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

### **Chin Music: It's baseball in the shadows today at Angel Stadium**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 4/27/2011 3:37PM

We've got a wacky 4:05 start time as the A's try to avoid the sweep in Anaheim. As if A's hitters needed anything else going against them. Now they get to face Dan Haren as the shadows are moving over Angel Stadium. The twilight hours are always tough on hitters. "It's not going to be good out here today," A's second baseman Mark Ellis said. Not that he was looking to use the shadows as an excuse. Ellis has been struggling as much as any Athletic -- he's hitless in his last 16 at-bats -- and he acknowledged that he and his teammates have to turn things around quickly.

Coco Crisp (left quad) and Josh Willingham (back) are both out of the lineup, though Willingham took some swings today and said he could have played if absolutely necessary. With a day off Thursday, the A's want to maximize his rest so he comes back ready to go against Texas on Friday. "I still felt it but it's a lot better," Willingham said. "Hopefully I'll play Friday."

Crisp made himself scarce around the clubhouse before batting practice. Chatting with reporters about his injuries is not among Crisp's favorite activities. So we'll go with what manager Bob Geren told us: Crisp remains day-to-day and is unavailable in any capacity Wednesday. But Geren said the disabled list is not being considered.

Catcher Josh Donaldson was called up to take Kurt Suzuki's roster spot. Donaldson was happy to get the promotion from Triple-A Sacramento but knows it will be short-lived. Suzuki's wife had induced labor this morning so Suzuki is on paternity leave. But it seems possible that he could return Friday (no word yet on the birth of his baby). I'm not sure I've mentioned it before, but Donaldson is a dead-on Bill Clinton sound-alike. Close your eyes and you'd swear you were talking to the former President. Donaldson just needs to get that hand gesture down that Clinton used to do during his speeches. If Donaldson dyes his hair gray, he could have a second career, like Kevin Kline in "Dave."

The lineups:

A's -- DeJesus RF, Barton 1B, Jackson LF, Matsui DH, Ellis 2B, Sweeney CF, Powell C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Pennington SS; Ross RHP.

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

### **A's finally get a win in Anaheim, 2-1**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's took a short detour en route to snapping their lengthy losing streak at Angel Stadium. Yet another error by third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff, this time in the ninth inning, sent the game into extra innings and cost Tyson Ross a win despite a very nice outing.

Shortstop Cliff Pennington opened the 10th with a triple, however, and a one-out chopper by Conor Jackson sent him in to give Oakland an eventual 2-1 victory, ending the A's string of losses at Angel Stadium at eight, an Oakland record.

"That was a must-win for us," catcher Landon Powell said. "All of us felt like that. You don't want to lose all three to a division rival."

The A's are 7-1 in the final game of series this season.

Kouzmanoff, who made just three errors in 2009, has six errors in the first 23 games he's played this year. He couldn't come up with pinch-hitter Maicer Izturis' chopper to open the ninth against former Angels closer Brian Fuentes. After pinch-runner Mark Trumbo went to second on a sacrifice bunt, Bobby Abreu whipped a double past Kouzmanoff down the third-base line.

In his first start of the season, Ross was a little erratic, perhaps to be expected after coming out of the A's bullpen to fill in for Dallas Braden. On Wednesday, the right-hander fit right in with the rest of the A's reliable rotation.

He coaxed three double-play balls out of the Angels, and out of some of their top hitters: Howie Kendrick, Torii Hunter and Erick Aybar. Ross walked only one, allowed four hits and struck out three.

"Very similar to spring training: going after hitters, making them swing the bat," Geren said of Ross. "He did a fantastic job."

In his previous outing, Ross had walked four men and allowed four hits in 4 1/3 innings, and he said his fastball command was off because he didn't have his hand on top of the ball. He planned to spend his work days between starts fixing that.

As usual, Oakland didn't have an overabundance of offense, particularly with sparkplug Coco Crisp out of the lineup. And the team's early run came in somewhat meek fashion.

Powell walked to open the third inning, Kouzmanoff reached and Powell went to second on an error by Kendrick, playing first base. With one out, David DeJesus was hit by a pitch, loading the bases, before Daric Barton drove a sacrifice fly to left.

The A's only other real note on the offensive front: Mark Ellis ended his hitless streak at 17 at-bats, one shy of his career high, with a base hit in the fourth.

Angels starter Dan Haren left after seven innings, having allowed only three hits and two walks, and the one run - which was not earned. His ERA shrank to 1.23, second best in the league behind teammate Jered Weaver's 0.99.

### **Willingham, Crisp injuries crimp A's in outfield**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's were down to three outfielders Wednesday at Angel Stadium, with **Josh Willingham** and **Coco Crisp** out of action.

Willingham tweaked a muscle in the middle left side of his back, and though he took some swings Wednesday, he said he could feel it a bit. With a day off today, the team thought it was better to give Willingham two days in hopes of being rid of the problem entirely.

Manager **Bob Geren** said that Willingham is "pretty close," and he hopes that Willingham will play Friday night against the Rangers.

Crisp, like Willingham, is day to day, but Geren didn't indicate that the center fielder might play Friday. He did say that Crisp is not a candidate for the disabled list.

Crisp is out with tightness in his left quadriceps, incurred Tuesday when he ran hard to first to prevent a double play. Crisp is 10 for his past 16.

**Donaldson up:** **Josh Donaldson** joined the A's presumably for one day while **Kurt Suzuki** was on the paternity list for the birth of his first child. The team expects Suzuki to be back Friday.

Donaldson is hitting .158 at Triple-A Sacramento, and he's pressing after a slow start.

"I kind of haven't had the quality at-bats I'm used to having," Donaldson said. "Everyone wants to start off on a good foot, and when you don't, it's kind of like you're trying to swing at everything because you want to get a hit so bad. I need to do a better job of not swinging at bad pitches."

Many River Cats believe the lack of a hitter's eye at Raley Field hurts averages in Sacramento, and Donaldson might be a prime example; he's batting .086 versus .273 on the road.

**Channel changing:** Two games on the coming homestand will move from CSNCA to CSN+ because of CSNCA's telecasts of the Sharks-Detroit series. Friday night's game against Texas and Wednesday night's against Cleveland switch to CSN+.

#### **A's leading off**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**What's in a name?** Manager Bob Geren went online to look up Overstock.com, which bought the naming rights to the Coliseum, and realized he'd been on the site before. "My wife bought an area rug or two," he said.

#### **Drumbeat: Coco Crisp won't play for A's today, neither will Josh Willingham**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Angel Stadium 3:13Pm 4/27/2011

Coco Crisp is unavailable today with tightness in his left quad, and Josh Willingham will miss his second game with back tightness. Willingham took some swings, and he said he'd play if he'd had to, but with the A's off tomorrow, the wiser course of action is to give him today off along with the off day and make sure he's back at full health. He felt improved today, but could still feel the back when he swung the bat.

Manager Bob Geren said he's hopeful that Willingham will play Friday night against Texas. He described both Willingham and Crisp as day-to-day, and he said that Crisp reported he felt better today than he thought he would. I'm not sure Crisp is quite as close to returning to action as Willingham, but he's not a DL candidate.

So the A's once crowded outfield is now down to just three, David DeJesus, Ryan Sweeney and Conor Jackson.

The A's recalled Josh Donaldson, as expected, from Triple-A Sacramento. Donaldson is hitting .158 at Sacramento and he said that after getting off to a slow start, he's been pressing some lately and swinging at everything, an easy trap for a young player to fall into. Actually, for anyone - Mark Ellis said he's been doing basically the same thing. Donaldson is aware of the problem and trying to have better at-bats. It's unlikely we'll see him in today's game; he's here as an emergency option, really, and Kurt Suzuki will be back for Friday's game.

Here's the lineup behind Tyson Ross: DeJesus rf, Barton 1b, Jackson lf, Matsui dh, Ellis 2b, Sweeney cf, Powell c, Kouzmanoff 3b, Pennington ss

No word yet on the Suzuki baby, but I'm sure I'll tweet it when we hear over at @susanslusser.

## **Delicious double plays**

### **We find perfect beers, wines to go with best foods at local ballparks**

By Janny Hu, CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

We admit it. The Chronicle can get a bit geeky about food and wine pairings.

Give us a burger, and we'll see you a Burgundy. Show us a bouillabaisse, and we'll raise you a rosé.

Potential pairings are everywhere, so when baseball season rolled around, we took a field trip. We nibbled and sipped our way through the Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum during an A's game, then AT&T Park when the Giants played the Dodgers.

Joining us was Rich Wood, who owns Wood Tavern and Southie in Oakland. A longtime baseball fan, Wood also knows all about Bay Bridge allegiances — he and his wife, Rebekah, ran Frascati in San Francisco prior to opening their Rockridge duo.

With Wood's help, we found Hall of Fame matches for classics like popcorn and garlic fries, as well as fun favorites like Monster Chicken Nachos and the Cha Cha Bowl.

So the next time you're at the ballpark, by all means, buy some peanuts and Cracker Jack. Just save room for a Crazy Crab sandwich with sparkling Saint-Hilaire. It's a killer combo even the Beard would fear.

#### **The Coliseum**

It doesn't take standing in Craft Beer Alley to realize that this is beer territory. Kevin Haggerty, who oversees concessions for Aramark, has put everything from Guinness to Smithwick's to several Kona Brewing Co. selections on tap.

So as we waited for a plate of Monster Chicken Nachos, we grabbed some adult beverages from nearby concessions, including a Longboard Island Lager, a Shocktop Belgian White, and just for kicks, a glass of BV Coastal Chardonnay.

The Shocktop was the winner, hands down.

"I love it — there's just a little more bite, and a cleaner, hoppier edge," said Wood, who found the lager was a tad too sweet for the savory nachos.

The Chardonnay, meanwhile, was a safe pairing with the selection of salads available — Caesar and fruit, especially. But the biggest surprise?

"Chardonnay and a big tub of popcorn," Wood said. "That's the best combo."

From the general concessions, we squeezed our way to the West Side Club, which is open to every ticket holder during baseball games.

Deli 215 has superb sandwiches to go, but if you have time to wine and dine, grab a seat.

The halibut fish tacos and Schramsberg Blanc de Blanc are first-rate together, as are the prime rib French dip sandwich and Ramey Pinot Noir. Just ask for the Captain's List to see the full wine selection.

#### **AT&T Park**

About a week later, we reconvened across the bay for a Giants game. Not surprisingly, it was chilly and wickedly windy, but that didn't stop fans from lining up 10 deep for margaritas and mojitos on tap. Sandie Filipiak of Centerplate, the ballpark's concessionaire, offers everything from brats and beer to the gluten-free triple play: gluten-free hot dogs on gluten-free buns with gluten-free beer.

Unlike the Coliseum, signage here reflects Bay Area specialities, from Ghirardelli to Gordon Biersch to Gilroy garlic fries. The fries were an absolute home run with Gordon Biersch Märzen. "The Märzen just cuts through the immensity of garlic," Wood said.

"It's got a richer, rounder profile that just sets everything off."

In the North Beach section, we loved the Original U.S. Restaurant's meatball sandwich with Umani Ronchi Sangiovese.

Another winner was the luscious Crazy Crab Sandwich and Saint-Hilaire sparkling wine out at Scoreboard Plaza. The bubbly was a reunion of sorts for Wood — the Saint-Hilaire was one of his favorite bytheglass offerings at Frascati.

We were stumped by what to pair with another Giants special, the Cha Cha Bowl. With black beans, seasoned rice and jerk chicken topped with pineapple salsa and spicy sauces, a lot was brewing in the bowl. "You almost need a Syrah or something to cut through all that spice and smoke," Wood said.

With no Syrah in sight, runner-up went to a Red Stripe lager. The Sheboygan, a Wisconsin import, was also baffling, though perhaps for a different reason. Nibbling bratwurst and sipping through more Red Stripe and Blue Moon and Anchor Steam, Wood's stomach might have finally reached its limit. As he later recalled with a laugh, "I think my body was shot. I needed to walk all those nitrates off."

### **A's get one back in 10th to dust Angels**

#### **Pennington's triple sets stage for Jackson's winning RBI**

By David Ely / Special to MLB.com | 4/27/2011 11:18 PM ET

ANAHEIM -- Right when it seemed a defensive blunder was going to cost the A's dearly, another one let them off the hook.

Cliff Pennington tripled leading off the 10th inning when Vernon Wells misplayed the fly ball off his glove, and Conor Jackson drove him home with a high-chopper to short as the A's escaped with a 2-1 victory on Wednesday at Angel Stadium.

"They got a break to tie the game, we got a break to win the game," A's manager Bob Geren said. "I thought really it was our game the whole way."

Brad Ziegler tossed a 1-2-3 10th for his first save. Brian Fuentes got the win after a blown save in the ninth. The Angels' rally off Fuentes started when Kevin Kouzmanoff botched a groundball that allowed pinch-hitter Maicer Izturis to reach first with none out.

Erick Aybar moved pinch-runner Mark Trumbo to second, and Bobby Abreu ripped an opposite-field double down the left-field line on a 3-2 count to tie the game at 1.

But Fuentes avoided surrendering the walk-off hit, giving the A's another opportunity to avoid squandering Tyson Ross' stellar day.

After struggling in his first start of the season, allowing three runs on four hits and four walks in 4 1/3 choppy innings, Ross spent the ensuing days working with Oakland pitching coach Ron Romanick, who emphasized that Ross needed to slow his motion.

"Ron was trying to slow his hands down, keep his tempo a little quieter," Geren said prior to Wednesday's game. "He gets fast at times and has to slow down. It centers everything. Keeps him over the rubber. Keeps him in the zone better, which he did really, really well in spring training."

The changes Ross made paid off against the Angels, as he remained aggressive throughout the game, only needing 76 pitches to get through seven scoreless innings.

The seven innings marked the longest outing of his career by nearly three frames, further evidence that Ross made the right adjustments to his delivery.

"I was getting too fast in Seattle and I was pretty wild out there," Ross said. "So, I was trying to slow things down and get ahead of hitters and attack the zone."

On only two occasions did the Angels advance a runner as far as second base against Ross. And Ross induced double-play balls in the second, fourth and sixth innings to squash any potential rallies.

"He slings it, two-seamer, cutter, slider," Angels outfielder Torii Hunter said. "Coming out of the shadows at that time of day, a guy like that is hard to pick up. The ball would be on you. He pitched well, and so did [Halos starter] Dan Haren. We just couldn't get enough going."

Geren said Ross' outing was reminiscent of the success he had during Spring Training when he gave up just one earned run in 15 1/3 innings.

"Very similar [performance] to Spring Training where he was pounding the zone, he was going after hitters," Geren said. "That's why we had such great expectations for him and what he can do when he's around that zone. And that was the game plan ... to pound the zone. Use your movement; use your breaking ball. Play into the aggressiveness of the team."

The A's first run came in the third inning. Oakland put runners on first and second with none out and then had the bases loaded with one out. Daric Barton drove in Landon Powell with a sacrifice fly and Jackson flew out to center to end the inning with the A's up, 1-0.

Howard Kendrick's error contributed to the early lead and the A's didn't record their first hit until the fourth when Mark Ellis sent a ball into the left-center-field gap for a one-out single. The hit snapped an 0-for-17 stretch for Ellis.

Geren said the shadows caused by the afternoon sun could have contributed to some of the problems hitters were having for both teams.

"I think it had a little effect on the hitters," he said. "We were having trouble picking up some of Haren's offspeed pitches and I'm sure they had a little trouble picking up the movement of Tyson's pitches also."

In the fifth the A's tried just about everything to ignite their offense and give Ross a little more support. Kouzmanoff started things off with a single up the middle, and then the small ball experiment began.

First the A's tried to execute a hit-and-run to move Kouzmanoff into scoring position, but Pennington softly flew out to left as Kouzmanoff scampered back to first. A bunt single gave the A's runners at first and second with just one out, but the A's were unable to produce the key hit, as was the case during the entire series.

The A's went 0-for-11 with runners in scoring position on Wednesday and 0-for-20 in the three-game set.

### **A's offense could be perfect tonic for Rangers**

By Jon Star / MLB.com | 4/28/2011 12:41 AM ET

The Rangers sprinted to a hot start in 2011, going 9-1 in their first 10 games and slugging opponents into submission. However, Texas has cooled in recent weeks -- coinciding with Josh Hamilton's injury -- and will turn to ace C.J. Wilson as it embarks on a seven-game road trip.

The Rangers are just 5-8 since their hot start and that downturn puts more of an onus on Wilson to get the road trip started on the right foot. Wilson earned the victory in each of his last two starts, surrendering five runs in 14 innings with 19 strikeouts and two walks. He should have at least a favorable edge when facing an Oakland lineup that has been shut out three times in the last seven games and is hitting .236 as a club.

To get back to their early-season success, perhaps the Rangers should look behind the plate. When manager Ron Washington pegs Mike Napoli in the catcher's spot, the Rangers are 4-1. Napoli is expected to make his sixth start behind the plate on Friday, which should serve Wilson well. Rangers pitchers boast a 2.64 ERA when throwing to Napoli.



"He's done a great job," Washington said. "He calls a good game and works well with the pitchers. I always thought he did a good job with the Angels when he was over there."

For Oakland, Trevor Cahill will take the ball with the responsibility of keeping Texas' bats silent. The 23-year-old right-hander's stat sheet remains clean for the season. Cahill enters Friday's matchup with a 3-0 record and a 2.30 ERA, having limited the opposition to just two earned runs and 11 hits over his last 14 innings.

Cahill is unlikely to shy away from the Rangers' potent lineup. In 2010, the right-hander went 3-1 in five starts against Texas with a 2.65 ERA, while limiting the Rangers to a .248 average. His efforts are a significant reason why Oakland leads all of baseball with a 2.70 team ERA and ranks among leaders in lowest batting average, on-base percentage and slugging percentage allowed.

### **Rangers: Age and experience**

Manager Ron Washington entered the season feeling confident in 22-year-old Neftali Feliz assuming the closer's role. However, with Feliz on the disabled list, Washington has turned to the two most senior members of his bullpen to finish games. In the past four days, 40-year-old Darren Oliver has closed two games and 41-year-old Arthur Rhodes notched a save. Closing games is no routine task for either. Prior to April 24, Rhodes had not closed a game since 2008, while Oliver has recorded two saves in a season for the first time since 1994.

### **Athletics: Close calls**

The A's do not score often, but thanks to their stellar pitching, they have plenty of opportunities to scrape out wins. Wednesday's 2-1 victory in 10 innings over the Angels evened the A's ledger in one-run games to 4-4. Oakland has played in 11 games decided by two runs or less and is 5-6 in such contests.

The matchup with Texas features the two teams plagued most by injuries over the past four-plus seasons. Since the start of 2007, Oakland has sent a player to the disabled 92 times, including five occasions this season. Meanwhile, the Rangers have placed players on the disabled list 106 times in that span.

### **Worth Noting:**

David DeJesus has not made an error in 262 games, dating back to September 15, 2008. It is the longest active streak among all Major League outfielders.

### **Crisp isn't likely to land on disabled list**

By David Ely / Special to MLB.com

ANAHEIM -- Oakland fans can breathe a sigh of relief. For the time being it does not appear likely that Coco Crisp is headed toward a stint on the disabled list.

Crisp was pulled from Tuesday's game in the third inning with what the A's called tightness in his left quad. Crisp sustained the injury while sprinting to first base on a potential double-play ball, and he exited the game shortly thereafter.

Following the game, manager Bob Geren described Crisp's status as day-to-day, and that remained the case on Wednesday as Crisp was unavailable to play in the series finale.

"He feels a little better than he thought he would today," said Geren, who added that he doesn't foresee a need to put Crisp on the DL.

Crisp could be seen walking around the visitors' clubhouse before batting practice slightly favoring his left leg. When asked how he felt, Crisp simply responded "good."

The A's should hope for a speedy recovery, as the loss of Crisp for an extended period would be another setback for an already scuffling offense.

Crisp had three consecutive three-hit games leading up to Tuesday's game and was 1-for-1 with a first-inning single when he left the game. Crisp also leads the A's in hits (26) and batting average (.286), and is second in the majors in triples (three) and fourth in steals (eight).

"He's an exciting player," Geren said. "He's a guy that does a little of everything. He's the only player on our team that has the combination of the home run and the steals and everything. He's really a total package player and means a lot to the team."

### **Willingham nearing return to A's lineup**

ANAHEIM -- Josh Willingham, who's missed the past two games because of tightness in his back, appears close to returning to the A's lineup.

Willingham tested his back before Wednesday's game with a short hitting session, and he said that while the tightness lingers, he's feeling better.

"I still felt it, but it's a lot better," Willingham said. "Hopefully I can play [Friday]."

Willingham said that he could have played on Wednesday if he had to, but with Thursday's off-day it made sense to give his back the extra rest.

"My swing felt fine, just felt the back a little bit," he said. "Unfortunately we have to rotate in this sport."

Willingham described the problem area as his "middle-middle-left back."

### **Suzuki takes paternity leave from A's**

By Evan Drellich / MLB.com

As expected, the A's placed catcher Kurt Suzuki on paternity leave on Wednesday so that the first-time father could join his wife, Renee, in the Bay Area.

Catcher Josh Donaldson was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento for the club's series finale against the Angels in Anaheim. Suzuki can remain on the paternity leave list for up to three days, but he's expected back for Friday's series opener against the Rangers in Oakland.

Suzuki has struggled at the plate like many of the A's, but he's done well handling the club's pitchers. Oakland's staff has a 2.87 ERA with him behind the plate, the fourth-best catcher's ERA in the Majors.

Donaldson, one of the A's final cuts in Spring Training, was hitting .158 with one homer in 15 games for the River Cats. He hit .156 in 14 big league games with Oakland last season.

Donaldson arrived in Anaheim late Tuesday night, and said that he wasn't sure how long he would be with the team.

Prior to Wednesday's series finale against the Angels, Oakland manager Bob Geren said Donaldson's role was to back up Landon Powell, and he did not indicate if he planned to give Donaldson any at-bats while he was with the club.

Donaldson said he's confident he could step in as catcher, if something were to happen to Powell and he was thrust into the lineup.

"I have a good feel for just about everyone in here except for (David) Purcey," Donaldson said. "Obviously if I was needed I feel like I could handle it."

### **Gutierrez: Ross deserved better...duh**

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

ANAHEIM - And now, the latest from the desk of Captain Obvious:

Tyson Ross deserved better. Much better.

The A's right-hander was dealing, keeping a rejuvenated Angels offense on its heels all day long.

Ross could have won the game. He *should* have won the game.

But then poor defense, a blown save and a sickly hitting attack did him in. Mostly, the sickly hitting attack.

"We won," said A's closer Brian Fuentes, who was also victimized by Kevin Kouzmanoff's team-high sixth error of the season. "Let's not forget that."

Fine, but let's not celebrate it too much either.

The A's, with their offense as stagnant as the media coverage of the Royal Wedding is overblown, were lucky to win. Their 2-1 victory in 10 innings came despite Oakland's many flaws, which were exposed time and again by the Angels in this series.

Oh no? Then consider: Oakland was a combined 0-for-20 in the series with runners in scoring position after going 0-11 in the series finale.

Neither Ross nor Angels starter Dan Haren allowed an earned run and, were it not for some generous scorekeeping on Cliff Pennington's triple to lead off the 10th, Oakland's game-winning run would have also been unearned.

Yes, it's only April. But this is not what Billy Beane had in mind when he remolded this roster and completely overhauled the middle of the A's lineup.

David DeJesus has been on some bad Kansas City Royals teams. He's also always been seen as a sparkplug.

So I asked him before the game about the A's early-season offensive woes.

DeJesus was flabbergasted but keeping his chin up.

"It's one of those things that, right now, it's a mystery," he said. "We're putting in our time in the cage, watching video, but we're not getting the results in the field. We're trying. We're not giving up at-bats.

"We can get out of it. It's a matter of time."

But in the meantime, the starting pitching suffers. And it puts added stress on the relievers.

Big deal, you say? That's what they're paid to do? True, but with the Swingin' (and Missin') A's flailing away so much, the pitching staff should put in for hazard pay.

All Ross has to show for the best start of his young career is a fabulous line - seven shutout innings, four hits, three strikeouts, one walk, one wild pitch. He got out of a few jams by inducing three double-plays.

And he showed the verve of a veteran when I asked him if a scuffling offense would actually make him focus more, as each pitch has an added premium.

"No," he said, mindful that the wrong answer could be perceived as throwing his hitters under a bus%u2026driven by Stomper.

"The offense will come around. You just go out here and pitch, and that's all you can do."

His manager also took a matter-of-fact approach to Ross' outing and results.

"It was very similar to spring training, where he was pounding the zone, being aggressive to hitters," said Bob Geren. "That's what we saw in the spring and why we have high expectations of him."

Ross tweaked his somewhat awkward delivery - it's all arms - by slowing down the moving parts in his second start in the injured Dallas Braden's spot in the rotation.

He also had to exhibit brains and guts.

"He threw awesome," said catcher Landon Powell, pressed into service with Kurt Suzuki by his wife's side for the delivery of their first child.

"He's already shown flashes of brilliance in his career, his short career. I like how he pounded the zone. That showed a little of what we can expect from him as a starter."

You could say that the A's hitters have simply run into quality pitching in their first 25 games. You could also say they've made the pitching they've faced look that much better.

Whatever the case, they have to get something jumpstarted, before the weight of so much early-season expectations begin to wear down the pitching.

Another message, then, from Captain Obvious: the baseball season is a marathon, not a sprint. But the A's need to break out hitting-wise, lest all of these frustrations turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy of unfulfilled promise.

"It's hard to remember sometimes, but understanding it's a process is what it's about," DeJesus said. "It's still only April. We still have five months to go.

"We have to finish strong. Starting strong is nice, but we have to finish."

Starting strong at the plate, would be a nice start. After all, Ross deserved better.

### **A's beat Angels 2-1 in 10**

#### ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANAHEIM — Cliff Pennington opened the 10th inning with a triple off the glove of left fielder Vernon Wells and the Oakland Athletics went on to beat the Los Angeles Angels 2-1 Wednesday, avoiding a three-game sweep.

Former Angels closer Brian Fuentes returned to Anaheim and gave up the tying run in the bottom of the ninth after an error by third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff.

In the 10th, the switch-hitting Pennington sliced a pitch from right-hander Jordan Walden (0-1) toward left-center. Wells tried a sliding catch and ball went off his glove as he nearly collided with center fielder Peter Bourjos.

Daric Barton was intentionally walked with one out, and Conor Jackson delivered the run with a groundout, hitting a high shopper to shortstop.

### **Leading Off: Oakland Coliseum naming rights sold again**

Joe Davidson, Sacramento Bee, 4/27/2011

#### **Oakland Coliseum name sold again**

The Oakland Coliseum, the East Bay relic that's home to the Raiders and A's and their title teams of yesteryear, bears another new name.

It now goes by ... hold your breath ... Overstock.com Coliseum.

That's current-day advertising and financial survival for you, and my, wouldn't Bill King have choked and offered extra commentary on all of this in his broadcasting day?

Quick, name a park/arena with a classic name. Wrigley Field. Fenway Park. Dodger Stadium. There certainly aren't many left.

For the Kings, it was Arco Arena for a generation. Now it's Power Balance Pavilion – and raise your hand if you still call it Arco. New names don't erase old images.

Overstock.com, an online retailer, announced Wednesday it will pay \$1.2 million a year for six years for the naming rights. Previously, software company Network Associates, which later changed its name back to McAfee, held those rights.

And you just know if the Raiders sag out of the gates, the punch lines will follow.

How about "Over-rated Raiders in Overstock.com" or "Over the hill in Overstock.com?"

#### **Today's poll**

**If you could re-name the Oakland Coliseum, would you go with:**

- Jim Otto Coliseum
- Charlie Finley Flashback Palace
- Mount Al Davis
- Sea of Hands Park
- Overdue for Success Stadium

To vote, go to [www.sacbee.com/sports](http://www.sacbee.com/sports)

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Hooks' big 3<sup>rd</sup> inning proves too much for 'Hounds**

Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter Telegram

Corpus Christi first baseman Jimmy Van Ostrand seems to love playing at Citibank Ballpark and always has success at the plate. He credits a certain pregame ritual as to why he's had very good offensive production during his trips to Midland over the last three seasons.

"It's probably the onion rings at Clear Springs Café. I go there every day and get onion rings, so I think it's worked out," Van Ostrand said.

Van Ostrand not only had another good day at the plate against the Midland RockHounds on Wednesday, but his teammates did, as well, pounding out 14 hits in an 8-2 victory.

Van Ostrand was 3 for 5 and was a triple away from hitting for the cycle. He also scored two runs and drove in two runs for the Hooks, who bounced back from a heartbreaking 6-4 loss in 10 innings to the 'Hounds the previous night.

"It was a tough loss last night, but we just had to put it behind us and be ready to compete today," Van Ostrand said.

"When you play 140 games in a season you're going to have some tough losses. I thought we turned the page really well, and I thought (starting pitcher Dallas Keuchel) came out here and did a real good job. We also got some offense and played a complete game."

Van Ostrand wasn't the only Hook to have a big night. J.D. Martinez was 4 for 5 with two doubles, and Brandon Wikoff was 4 for 5 with a home run.

After Van Ostrand scored a run in the second inning on a wild pitch, the Hooks took command of the game with a four-run third against Midland starter Shawn Havilland (0-2) for a 5-1 advantage. The inning was keyed by a two-run homer to left by Van Ostrand.

"It felt good when I hit it," said Van Ostrand about his second home run of the season. "(The inning) was good. It just gave us a little breathing room and helped us relax a bit. It's always nice to get a lead. Especially after last night, it put us in a positive frame of mind to get through this game."

Havilland had his third consecutive tough start as the righthander went just 4 1/3 innings and allowed six runs on 10 hits.

"He doesn't seem to be able to put guys away," Midland manager Steve Scarsone said. "He's battling, he just can't seem to get that out pitch. Obviously, I've seen him in the past couple of years and he's looked sharper and much more in control. It's like he's fighting instead of being the aggressor. It's not a question of ability or work habit or anything like that. He's got to get his legs going and get solid in the league and he'll end up being one of our best pitchers, that's for sure."

Van Ostrand wasn't done producing as he doubled in the fifth inning and later scored on a sacrifice bunt by Andrew Simunic to give Corpus Christi a 6-2 lead.

While the Hooks offense was clicking on all cylinders, Keuchel (2-1) was just as good on the mound as he worked into the seventh inning and allowed the two runs on six hits. He also struck out six and walked two.

The RockHounds' only runs came on a Stephen Parker solo home run in the first and a Matt Sulentic RBI single in the fourth.

"To be able to go into the seventh inning in this league, it tells you (Keuchel) is doing the right things on the mound," Scarsons said. "He kept us off balance and he used his offspeed pitches. I don't know if we weren't as aggressive or we just weren't able to pick him up but he did that up and down the lineup."

There would be no RockHounds' dramatic comeback on this night but the Hooks also had a lot to do with that with the way they played.

"We didn't play really sharp tonight," Scarsons said. "We had some opportunities but we weren't as sharp as we have been in the past. It was an off night."

'HOUND BITES: With the loss, the RockHounds (11-8) have a 2-1 series lead against the Hooks (8-11). ... Midland also fell two games back of Texas League South Division leader San Antonio, which defeated Frisco 2-1 on Wednesday night. ... Hooks SS Clint Barmes is on rehab assignment from the Houston Astros. Barmes is coming back from a broken left hand suffered during Spring Training. ... Brandon Wikoff's solo home run in the 7th was his first homer in 657 at-bats over three professional seasons. ... Former RockHound and 2005 Texas League MVP Andre Ethier extended his hitting streak to 24 games to lead the Los Angeles Dodgers to a 5-4 victory against Florida. He had a single and the game-winning home run in the 10th inning.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: The RockHounds host Corpus Christi in the final game of a four-game series at 7 p.m. today as Midland is expected to send RHP Ethan Hollingsworth (1-1, 4.11 ERA) to the mound against Hooks RHP Kyle Greenwalt (1-1, 4.15).

### **In the Eye of the Storm**

Stockton Ports

While the Ports came out looking strong on Wednesday night, the Lake Elsinore Storm proved to be the stronger team, beating Stockton 8-4 to take a two-to-one lead in the series.

Several key members for the Ports provided many of the key plays which kept the Ports in the game early. Shortstop Dusty Coleman (2-for-4, two runs, RBI), right fielder Rashun Dixon (2-for-4, 1 run, RBI, home run) and first baseman Anthony Aliotti (4-for-4, two RBI) led the charge for the Ports all night, but ultimately could not get the job done.

Coleman started his night with an RBI double in the bottom of the first. After battling at the plate and falling behind in the count, Coleman made solid contact with a fastball in the zone and sent it sailing towards the mini monster wall. The ball ricocheted off the wall and past Storm left field Rico Noel who had given chase to the fly ball, allowing Coleman to easily reach second and send leadoff hitter Michael Gilmartin home. Coleman would score his first run of the evening off of Aliotti's first hit of the game to give the Ports their only lead of the game.

Aliotti put on a performance every at-bat in the game, ending the evening with a pretty 1.000 batting average. While all of his hits were singles, Aliotti was the only Ports player to end the evening with a multi-RBI night.

Dixon also had a strong night, including hitting a home run worthy any highlight reel. After getting ahead in the count against Storm pitcher Stiven Osuna, Dixon smashed the next pitch over the Storm bullpen, into the Ports Terrace, where it one-hopped into the Scoreboard, leaving no doubt as to how hard the ball was hit.

While the Ports batters had success against Storm pitchers, the same could be said about Storm hitters. Ports starter, RHP Murphy Smith, suffered the brunt of the Storm's batters, going 4.1 innings, giving up eight hits, six runs (five earned), and recorded four strikeouts. Smith gave up his first run early in the game, his only unearned run of the game. Lake Elsinore's

leadoff hitter Reymond Fuentes started the game with a single that came straight back to Smith, who turned and made a throw to first to record the out. Smith's throw sailed high over Aliotti's head, and into the first row of fans, however, to advance Fuentes to second. A sac fly and a sacrifice groundout later and Fuentes had returned to home for the first run of the game.

Smith would surrender two more runs in the fourth, as newcomer Dan Meeley hit a two-run single to put the Storm back on top. However it was the fifth inning and a three-run home run from Jedd Gyorko that ultimately did in the Ports. That would end the evening for Smith, who fell to 0-2 with 6.75 ERA at the end of the game. The game remained close until the 9th when the Storm would tack on two more runs and bringing the final score to 8-4.

The Ports look to salvage the series with a win tomorrow as LHP Fabian Williamson gets the start for the Ports on Thirsty Thursday presented by O'Ryleigh's Tavern Stockton at Banner Island Ballpark.

### **Snappers Win 10-2, Take Series**

By Jon Versteeg, [burlingtonbees.com](http://burlingtonbees.com)

BELOIT, WI-The Beloit Snappers (10-7) scored six runs in the first inning to beat the Burlington Bees 10-2 on Wednesday afternoon at Pohlman Field.

In the first inning SS Daniel Santana (2-4) led off the inning with a triple and scored on a sacrifice fly by 3B Andrew Leer (0-3). 1B Lance Ray (0-4) walked and went to second base on a single by RF Daniel Ortiz. LF Derek McCallum (2-4) and CF Wang-Wei Lin (2-4) followed with RBI doubles.

The Snappers scored two runs in the second inning to make it 8-0. Burlington (13-5) scored its first run in the third inning. 2B Wade Kirkland (1-4) led off the inning with a double, moved to third base on a groundout by 1B Josh Whitaker (1-3) and scored on a throwing error from Beloit 1B Lance Ray to make it 8-1.

Lin and Arcia added solo home runs in the fifth and sixth innings respectively to make it 10-1.

CF Tyreace House (1-3) hit a two-out single for the Bees in the eighth inning and scored on a double by 2B Nino Leyja (2-4) to make it 10-2.

The Bees return home to start a three-game series with the Kane County Cougars on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. It's a Thirsty Thursday with two for \$4.50 12 ounce beers and 2 for \$3.00 specials on pop. The pitching match-up is as follows: LHP Jacob Brown (3-0, 1.06) starts for Burlington against RHP Greg Billo (0-0, 1.69) for Kane County. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at [gobees.com](http://gobees.com).

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 (319) 754-5705, go online to [www.gobees.com](http://www.gobees.com), or stop by the box office at Community Field during normal business hours.