

Cleveland Indians continue torrid ways, beat Oakland A's 4-1

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Everybody wants to know if the Cleveland Indians are for real. OK, maybe not everybody, judging by the spotty Oakland crowd of 10,135 on Tuesday night.

But with the best record in the game through early May, the Indians have at least piqued the curiosity of the baseball world. And in this venture to the West, they took an important first step toward conquering a long-standing demon with a 4-1 victory over the A's.

Cleveland survived a strong outing by Oakland starter Tyson Ross and broke a 1-1 tie with a three-run, ninth-inning rally against veteran reliever Brian Fuentes to log their 20th win of the year against just eight losses.

To be sure, there may be no better litmus test to the Indians' legitimacy than a trip to Oakland, which has been one of Cleveland's chief chambers of horrors the past several years. The Indians have lost nine of their past 10 series here and came into Tuesday's opener of a three-game set just 8-23 at the Coliseum dating to 2003. They lost 10-0 and 11-0 in their only stop last year.

But the Indians looked like the real deal on this night. Starter and winner Fausto Carmona (3-3) pitched eight innings of five-hit ball, allowing the A's a mere scratch run in the fourth inning. Cleveland finally tied the score against Ross in the seventh, then broke through against Fuentes in the ninth.

Fuentes (1-3), pitching in his third consecutive game, clearly didn't have much to give. Although he picked off Michael Brantley after walking him to lead off the ninth, he gave up successive hits to Matt LaPorta, Jack Hannahan and Orlando Cabrera that scored the go-ahead run. He hit Grady Sizemore with a pitch to load the bases and then served up a two-run single to Asdrubal Cabrera to break the game open.

"I was a little tired, but that's the way the game goes," said Fuentes. "I felt I made some good pitches, some close pitches that could have gone either way. They put the ball in play. It's not like I walked everybody around."

Manager Bob Geren said he consulted with Fuentes before the game and the 35-year-old veteran assured him he could pitch. Geren conceded that he pushed Fuentes by sending him out for a third straight day but thought he was set up well for the ninth, facing the bottom of the order with two of the first three hitters being left-handed.

"You have to trust him when he tells you he's fine to go," Geren said. "He very easily could have had a 1-2-3 inning, but it just didn't happen tonight."

Fuentes' rough night spoiled sparkling ones by starter Ross as well as reliever Michael Wuertz, who kept the score tied 1-1 in the seventh after the Indians finally broke through against Ross, striking out Sizemore with the bases loaded to end the inning and then pitching a scoreless eighth.

It might not have mattered, though, because the A's offense did very little against Carmona. Except for their one fourth-inning breakthrough, when they scored on a couple of weak singles and Kurt Suzuki's groundout, they didn't get a runner into scoring position in any other inning.

For awhile, it looked as if Ross might make that lone run stand up. He pitched beautifully over the first six innings. But Ross was the victim of some tough luck in the seventh. Carlos Santana hit a sharp comebacker off the pitcher's glove for a single, and after an out, Brantley hit a bouncer up the middle that got through for a hit. LaPorta followed with one of the few hard-hit balls of the night for Cleveland, a liner to center that scored the tying run and ended Ross' night.

Oakland A's update: Dallas Braden to have more tests on injured left shoulder

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Pitcher Dallas Braden will make a return visit to Los Angeles orthopedist Dr. Lewis Yocum on Wednesday for more extensive tests on his left shoulder.

Braden, who has been on the disabled list since April 18 after being removed from a game two days earlier with shoulder issues, was examined by Yocum on April 20 and told he had inflammation and no structural damage.

With that diagnosis, it was thought that rest would alleviate the issues. But when Braden's throwing session to test the shoulder Monday did not go well, the A's determined he should be examined again.

"I'm not positive what tests they're going to do," manager Bob Geren said. "But to get re-examined, I'm sure they'll look further into secondary things."

Braden was not at the park Tuesday night to comment. He's 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts.

Closer Andrew Bailey, out since spring training with a right forearm strain, will face hitters before tonight's game.

"He'll probably throw just fastballs," Geren said. "He's been throwing his off-speed pitches on flat ground, but as far as I know he hasn't taken that onto the mound yet. He's close to full velocity pretty much."

Asked if he thought Bailey might make it back in May if he didn't have any setbacks, the manager said, "It's possible. It depends on how everything goes and when he actually gets into a (rehab) game. Once he gets into a game, we'll have a better idea of when he'll be back."

Utility man Andy LaRoche made his fourth consecutive start, his third straight at third base. But Geren stopped short of saying LaRoche was the starter at third base for the time being in place of Kevin Kouzmanoff, who's hitting just .208 after a strong spring.

"I'm just playing (LaRoche) right now because he's swinging the bat really well," Geren said. "I'm giving Kouz time to keep working. He'll get back in there, too. Everybody will get their opportunities."

LaRoche entered the game with the best average of any A's hitter at .341 (14 for 41), with three straight games in which he collected two hits.

The A's have named Mike Henriques as interim strength and conditioning coach, replacing Bob Alejo, who accepted a strength and conditioning position at North Carolina State.

Henriques was hired in November as the A's minor league strength and conditioning coordinator after five years in the San Diego Padres organization.

Chin Music: Uh-oh, Braden headed for more shoulder tests

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 5/3/2011 6:53pm

In for Joe Stiglich tonight ...

Not good news for pitcher Dallas Braden, who will make a return visit to Los Angeles orthopedist Dr. Lewis Yocum Wednesday for more extensive tests on his troubled left shoulder.

Braden, who has on the disabled list since April 18 after being removed from a game two days earlier with shoulder issues, was examined by Yocum on April 20 and told he simply had inflammation and no structural damage.

With that diagnosis, it was thought that rest would alleviate the issues. But when Braden's throwing session to test the shoulder Monday did not go well, the A's determined he should be examined again.

"I'm not positive what tests they're going to do," said manager Bob Geren "But to get re-examined, I'm sure they'll look further into secondary things."

Braden was not at the park Tuesday night to comment on his situation. Suffice it to say he's probably very worried.

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Closer Andrew Bailey, out since spring training with right forearm strain, will face live hitters for the first time prior to tonight's game.

"He'll probably throw just fastballs," Geren said. "He's been throwing his offspeed pitches on flat ground, but as far as I know he hasn't taken that onto the mound yet. He's close to full velocity pretty much."

Asked if he thought Bailey might make it back in May if he didn't have any setbacks, the manager said, "It's possible. It depends on how everything goes and when he actually gets into a (rehab) game. Once he gets into a game, we'll have a better idea of when he'll be back."

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"I'm just playing (LaRoche) right now because he's swinging the bat really well," Geren said. "I'm giving Kouz time to keep working. He'll get back in there, too. Everybody will get their opportunities."

LaRoche entered the game with the best average of any A's hitter at .341 (14-for-41) with three straight games in which he collected a pair of hits.

Coco Crisp is also back in the lineup tonight, while Mike Sweeney spells Josh Willingham, whom the A's don't want playing too many games in a row after a recent minor back issue.

The A's have named Mike Henriques as interim strength and conditioning coach replacing Bob Alejo, who accepted a strength and conditioning position at North Carolina State.

Henriques was hired in November as the A's minor league strength and conditioning coordinator after five years in the San Diego Padres organization.

Why are the Indians the best team in baseball at the moment at 19-8? A few reasons. They're hitting .272 to their opponents' .239. They've clubbed 34 homers, opponents just 18. Over the last 25 games, Indians starters are 13-3 with a 2.92 ERA. The lineup is hitting .319 with runners in scoring position.

Suffice it to say this will be a telltale trip for Cleveland, which in recent years hasn't fared well on the West Coast. In fact, they've lost nine of their last 10 series in Oakland and are 8-23 here dating back to 2003.

The lineups:

OAK—CF Crisp, 1B Barton, RF DeJesus, DH Matsui, C Suzuki, LF Sweeney, 2B Ellis, 3B LaRoche, SS Pennington. P Ross

CLE—CF Sizemore, SS A. Cabrera, RF Choo, C Santana, DH Duncan, 1B LaPorta, LF Brantley, 3B Hannahan, 2B Everett. P Carmona.

Indians score 3 in 9th to beat A's, 4-1

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland slowed the Indians' high-scoring ways Tuesday night at the Coliseum but couldn't bring the league's hottest team to a halt.

Brian Fuentes, who has been the A's closer while Andrew Bailey is out with a forearm strain, allowed six consecutive runners to start the ninth, and Cleveland scored three runs in the inning to beat Oakland 4-1. The Indians have won seven in a row and at 20-8, they have the majors' best record.

Fuentes was working in his third game in a row and his fourth in five days.

"I was a little tired, but that's just the way the game goes," Fuentes said. "If the phone rings, I'm going to get up."

A's manager Bob Geren said, "Fuentes tonight wasn't sharp. Three days in a row, we pushed it a little bit."

Geren said he had checked with Fuentes about his availability before the game, and Geren said that Fuentes is a veteran who knows his body well and who knows when he can go and when he can't.

"He very easily could have had a 1-2-3 inning. It just didn't happen tonight," Geren said.

The game was tied 1-1 going into the ninth, and Fuentes walked Michael Brantley, whom Fuentes then caught stealing before giving up consecutive singles to Matt LaPorta and two former A's infielders, Jack Hannahan and Orlando Cabrera. Cabrera's base hit to center sent in LaPorta, and, after Fuentes hit Grady Sizemore, Asdrubal Cabrera knocked a two-run single to center.

"I was around the strike zone. I made some good pitches, some close pitches," Fuentes said. "They put the ball in play. It's not like I walked everyone around. I guess that's a positive, but I wish the end result could have been better."

Fuentes is 1-3, and though he has not allowed a run in 11 of 15 appearances, in the four games in which he has allowed a run, he has given up 14, nine earned.

Up to the ninth Tuesday, Oakland's pitching had put in a good evening's work. Tyson Ross made his third start in place of Dallas Braden, and he was slick through six, allowing five hits and walking none.

Carlos Santana opened the seventh against Ross with an infield single, and with one out, Brantley singled to center, and LaPorta followed suit, bouncing a hit up the middle to send in Santana and tie the game.

"Physically, I was feeling fine," said Ross, who threw 97 pitches, 21 more than his previous high this season. "I just didn't make the kind of quality pitches I wanted to."

Then came a tricky bit of work by the Oakland bullpen. Left-hander Craig Breslow got Hannahan to ground out, and right-hander Michael Wuertz followed Breslow. Pinch-hitter Travis Hafner walked, but Wuertz finished the inning by striking out Sizemore. Wuertz also worked a scoreless eighth.

Oakland's run off Fausto Carmona came in the fourth, when Daric Barton singled to left and David DeJesus reached on a soft infield single. A groundout by Hideki Matsui moved up the runners, and Barton scored on Kurt Suzuki's bouncer to third.

The A's have not fared well in series openers this season, going 3-7.

Josh Willingham out of A's lineup

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Josh Willingham homered Monday and was hitting .333 over his past nine games, which qualifies him as red-hot for the A's.

He wasn't in the Oakland lineup for Tuesday's series opener, however. Manager **Bob Geren** said he wanted to get **Ryan Sweeney** into a game, so Sweeney was in left field, rather than Willingham.

In addition, Geren said, he didn't want Willingham to play too many games in a row after missing two games last week with a twinge in his back. Willingham started all four games of the series against Texas.

Andy LaRoche made his third start in a row at third base. **Kevin Kouzmanoff**, who is off to a poor start at the plate and in the field, has been on the bench.

LaRoche was 7 for his past 12 entering the game. He went 0-for-3, dropping his average to .318. Kouzmanoff is batting .208 and made six errors the first month of the season.

Braden update: Dallas Braden, still experiencing discomfort in his left shoulder, will pay a return visit to Dr. **Lewis Yocum** in Southern California today.

Braden has been out more than two weeks with what Yocum diagnosed as inflammation. It's unclear if Braden might need additional tests or what the next step might be after his throwing session Monday went poorly.

No ball-four jokes: It's unusual for a reliever who walks the bases loaded to get lots of praise from the manager, but Geren said Tuesday that he'd told **Grant Balfour** on Monday how proud he was that Balfour got out of just such a situation in the 10th inning.

"He has such a big heart and desire to succeed," Geren said. "I always felt he'd get out of the inning. I really did."

After the walks, two with two outs, Balfour struck out pinch-hitter **Yorvit Torrealba** to end the inning.

"I got a little carried away," Balfour said about the three walks. "I haven't done that in a long time. But I got the guy I needed. It made things interesting - it made it all the better to win."

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Alejo departs: Strength and conditioning coach Bob Alejo accepted a job as assistant athletic director for strength and conditioning at North Carolina State. Minor-league coordinator Mike Henriques will be interim strength coach.

Drumbeat: Coco Crisp in, Josh Willingham out as A's face Indians, plus Braden news

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum, 5/3/2011 5:33PM

Coco Crisp is back in the lineup tonight, as manager Bob Geren said he would be, but Josh Willingham - who homered yesterday and who is batting .333 with two homers in the past nine games - is off. Geren said that since Willingham missed a couple of games last week with a little back thing, he didn't want him to play too many games in a row, plus he's wanted to get Ryan Sweeney a game, so it's Sweeney in left tonight. It's definitely not a matchup thing - Sweeney is 1-for-10 lifetime against Cleveland starter Fausto Carmona. Willingham never has faced him.

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

Dallas Braden is back off to see Dr. Lewis Yocum in Southern California tomorrow. Yesterday was the first day he'd tried throwing a baseball after more than two weeks of rest with left shoulder inflammation, but it's been clear from the start that Braden has suspected that there is something more significant going on than inflammation.

When Braden visited Yocum last month, Yocum said that there was no structural damage, and I am unsure what sorts of additional tests Braden might have, or what was or wasn't done the first time around. Considering how worried Braden has been about his shoulder, I hope that he gets some clarification about any other possibilities - or some concrete reassurances about why he's feeling so very off. He's usually a life-of-the-party kind of guy, but this shoulder problem has him very down.

Ross, who took Braden's spot in the rotation, was terrific last time out, his second start. He's got an interesting task tonight - an Indians team little was expected of but that has jumped out to a great start, with the league's best record. Onetime Oakland backup Jack Hannahan is flourishing there, and has become a regular on the baseball highlights for his great fielding - something the A's have lacked at third so far this season.

Another former A's infielder, Orlando Cabrera, is doing well with Cleveland, but he's not in the lineup tonight. He's a second baseman now, with another Cabrera, Asdrubal, at shortstop.

Fuentes, 'pen stumble late against Tribe

Fill-in Ross gets no-decision in another solid start

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 5/4/2011 2:50 AM ET

OAKLAND -- Lefty Brian Fuentes has pitched in 10-plus Major League seasons, but in that time has faced few situations that call for his relief services three straight days.

Asked about just how many after he tallied his third consecutive appearance while claiming the loss in a 4-1 A's defeat to the Indians on Tuesday, Fuentes replied, "I couldn't tell you. Not a lot."

The answer, according to Baseball-Reference.com, is 26, but it's a rare occurrence for any relief pitcher. A's manager Bob Geren, however, felt confident enough in the veteran to give him a go at it in a 1-1 game.

"He's been around so much, he knows his body and knows when he can go and can't," Geren said. "I listen to him, and I still have my way of monitoring how often I'll let a guy go three in a row. He's not a young kid who doesn't know the league or know himself, so you have to trust when he tells you he's fine to go."

The result: a ninth-inning breakdown in the form of RBI hits to Orlando Cabrera and Asdrubal Cabrera, a walk and a hit batter, all of which led to three runs -- in just one-third of an inning.

"Fuentes wasn't sharp," Geren said. "Third day in a row, we pushed him a bit. It would have been a perfect scenario if he had pitched the way he had been, and it didn't work out that way tonight."

Fuentes, though, offered no excuses.

"I was a little tired, but that's just the way the game goes," he said. "Sometimes I might sit for a while, but if the phone rings, I'm going to get up.

"I felt like I threw some good pitches, some close pitches that could have went either way. They put the ball in play. It's not like I walked everyone around. I guess that's something positive. But I wish the end result could have been better."

Instead, the A's handed the surprisingly red-hot Indians their Major League-best 20th win of the season, the last four of which have come in their final at-bat.

"They're playing well," Fuentes said. "Their record reflects that. They have a good lineup. They're just clicking on all cylinders."

Much of that success stems from the Tribe's starting pitching staff, which has compiled a 14-3 record and 2.83 ERA. The A's became the latest victim of those numbers, as Tuesday starter Fausto Carmona tossed eight innings of one-run ball, giving up just five hits -- three of which didn't even leave the infield -- while walking one and fanning five along the way.

"This is the first time we've seen them all year, but if you pitch like that, that's how you get to 20 wins," Cliff Pennington said. "They kinda have the same recipe we have."

That recipe, at least the one being created in Oakland at the moment, could use an increased dosage of offensive support for a starting pitching staff that leads the Majors with a 2.68 ERA.

Oakland's starting nine has intermittently showcased spurts of life and, at other times, not so much. The latter scenario was present on Tuesday, when Tyson Ross compiled another solid outing but was again left with a no-decision.

Ross, much like he did six days ago, showcased continued improvement in his third start since replacing the injured Dallas Braden in the rotation, shutting down the Indians for six innings before surrendering an RBI single to Matt LaPorta in the seventh.

The A's righty, coming off a seven-inning scoreless performance against the Angels following a shaky debut, was lifted after 6 1/3 frames, having surrendered eight hits while striking out three and walking none despite tallying seven 3-1 counts.

"I was falling behind hitters a little bit too much early," said Ross, who deemed himself his toughest critic. "Luckily, I made some decent pitches on 3-1 counts."

"I thought Tyson had good velocity and movement," Geren said. "He did work from behind the count early, but he got the pitches where he needed to when he had to."

More than anything, the A's skipper was encouraged by Ross' ability to pitch into the seventh with a career-high 97 pitches attached to his name.

"His command was a little off in the seventh, but he didn't look tired," Geren said. "I asked him after I had taken him out. He said, 'Honestly, I wasn't tired, I just wasn't making my pitches. That's good news to hear for the future.'"

"My arm's getting stronger and stronger each time out," Ross said. "It was feeling pretty strong in the seventh and, with the exception of not making those quality pitches there, my body's feeling great, and my arm's right where it should be."

Meanwhile, Oakland's lone run came in the fourth, when Daric Barton notched a base hit and scored via an RBI groundout off the bat of Kurt Suzuki against Carmona.

"It was a well-pitched game by both guys," Geren said. "Both starters threw the ball really well. Carmona had exceptional movement and location today. He changed speeds, and we didn't have a lot of opportunities. He was pretty good tonight."

Tribe trying to get rolling on road against A's

By Jon Star / MLB.com | 5/4/2011 1:47 AM ET

The Indians are owners of the American League's best record. Yet, while they have been nearly unstoppable at Progressive Field (13-2), Cleveland is still learning what it takes to win on the road.

The Tribe got things started the right way with Tuesday's 4-1 victory over the A's. On Wednesday, Cleveland will turn to Josh Tomlin for the series win in Oakland. Tomlin will toe the slab riding a 4-0 record and 2.45 ERA, looking to get the Indians their 21st victory of the season and their eighth straight overall. In 2010, the Indians did not win their 21st game until June 5.

Despite Cleveland's hot start, manager Manny Acta acknowledged his team's current six-game road trip to Oakland and Anaheim will come with its challenges.

"This is a road trip that is going to be tough, because we're facing the two teams with the best pitching staffs in the American League. That's why we put so much emphasis on trying to win those two series at home and we not only won them, we swept them. That kind of helps [make up for] anything that happens on this road trip," Acta explained.

"It's kind of normal that just about every team plays better at home, other than the big-time ballclubs that usually win over 95 or 100 games a season that also go on the road and mash the other clubs. We feel comfortable at home, but it doesn't mean that we don't give the best effort or anything on the road. For some reason, we've just been unbelievably good at home."

Tomlin has so far shown he is ready for the road. In two starts away from Progressive Field, Tomlin is 1-0 with a 2.57 ERA (14 innings) and a .170 opponent's average.

But Tomlin's task will not be easy as he squares off against fellow undefeated right-hander Trevor Cahill. The A's starter, like Tomlin, is tied for the third-longest winning streak in baseball. Cahill has limited the opposition to just eight earned runs in 38 1/3 innings, good for a 1.88 ERA which is the third-lowest ERA in the American League and fifth lowest in all of baseball.

Cahill has won three consecutive starts for the first time since May 21-31, 2010. During that stretch, Cahill allowed three earned runs over 19 innings. This time around, Cahill has limited the opposition to two earned runs over 21 innings.

Indians: Cabrera rolls into May

Orlando Cabrera was signed as a low-risk player just weeks before Spring Training. However, the 15-year veteran is making the Indians' front office look very smart. Cabrera enters Wednesday's game with 18 RBIs -- good for second on the team -- and three multi-hit games in his last four starts. Additionally, eight of his 18 RBIs have either tied the game or given the Indians the lead, including Tuesday's go-ahead, ninth inning RBI single.

Athletics: Injury updates

Josh Willingham received the day off on Tuesday after missing the previous two games due to tightness in his back last week. Manager Bob Geren kept Willingham out of the lineup as a precaution to keep his left fielder healthy. Willingham is one of the A's hottest hitters as of late, having hit safely in seven of his last nine games with two home runs and six RBIs. He has been especially productive in run-scoring opportunities by going 10-for-33, including a 5-for-16 mark with two out.

Dallas Braden will again see Dr. Lewis Yocum in Los Angeles on Wednesday to undergo further examination of his stiff left shoulder. Braden visited Yocum on April 20, when the original diagnosis identified inflammation in the shoulder and no signs of structural damage. However, Braden felt further discomfort when attempting to play catch on Monday, motivating the team to seek a second look.

Worth noting

The A's have used 23 different lineups in 30 games this season, having used their Opening Day lineup just seven times to date.

Braden's shoulder slated for second exam

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- As expected, A's starter Dallas Braden will venture to Los Angeles on Wednesday to pay a second visit to noted orthopedic surgeon Lewis Yocum. The left-hander hopes to receive a better understanding about his stiff pitching shoulder.

Braden first visited Yocum on April 20, when he was told to rest and rehab in an effort to calm inflammation. But when the left-hander took to the field on Monday to play catch for the first time, he experienced discomfort again.

"His throwing session didn't go as well as he liked," A's manager Bob Geren said on Tuesday afternoon.

The 27-year-old Braden, who has not spoken to media about the injury recently, was 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts before the onset of his shoulder issue, having fanned 15 in addition to five walks.

He's in the midst of his third career disabled list stint, and his spot in the rotation has been filled by right-hander Tyson Ross, who was slated to make his third start against the Indians on Tuesday night.

Sweeney gets start in left against Indians

OAKLAND -- In an ongoing effort to keep his squad healthy and sharp, A's manager Bob Geren handed Ryan Sweeney a start in left field for Tuesday's series opener against the visiting Indians.

With Sweeney in the mix, Geren was able to rest Josh Willingham, who missed two games last week because of back tightness.

"He's coming off a little back thing, and we don't want to play him too many days in a row," Geren said. "Ryan needs to get in there also."

Sweeney, making his seventh start of the year, entered the contest 1-for-10 against Tribe starter Fausto Carmona. He's 6-for-26 against right-handers this season and struck out in his only at-bat against a lefty. Overall, Sweeney owns a .296 mark when facing righties, compared to a .244 average against southpaws.

Willingham, meanwhile, was coming off a two-hit day that included his team-leading fifth homer of the season, making the decision to sit him slightly difficult, according to Geren. The outfielder has hit safely in seven of his past nine games and is batting .333 over that span.

A's strength coach leaves for job at N.C. State

OAKLAND -- The A's on Tuesday learned of the departure of strength and conditioning coach Bob Alejo, who has accepted a position at North Carolina State University.

Alejo, who will serve as the assistant athletic director for strength and conditioning for all 23 Wolfpack varsity teams, will temporarily be replaced by Mike Henriques, Oakland's Minor League strength and conditioning coordinator.

Henriques has held that position since November and previously spent five seasons in the Padres' Minor League system, including two as their assistant coordinator. He has also worked in the NBA, playing the role of assistant strength and conditioning coach for the Portland Trail Blazers for four years.

It marks the second departure from Oakland for Alejo, a player favorite who assumed his role as director of strength and conditioning from 1993 to 2001 before returning in '09.

Worth noting

- Right-hander Andrew Bailey (forearm) is still scheduled to throw to batters for the first time on Wednesday, keeping him on track to take part in a Minor League rehab assignment soon.
- Rehabbing hurler Rich Harden (shoulder) has been undergoing long-toss sessions, but there is still no timeline when the A's righty will begin throwing off the mound.

Major League: Sweeney starts, Willingham sits

Jane Lee, mlb.com

A handful of pregame notes:

- Ryan Sweeney is making his seventh start of the season tonight, as Bob Geren wants to keep him fresh while also easing Josh Willingham back since he missed a couple of games last week because of back tightness. Sweeney is 1-for-10 lifetime against Tribe starter Fausto Carmona, while Willingham — hitting .333 with two home runs and six RBIs over his past nine games — is 0-for-5 in his career against the righty.

- Dallas Braden is scheduled to make another trip to Dr. Lewis Yocum in Los Angeles tomorrow. Geren wasn't too sure which tests were done the first time around on April 20 or which ones are to be done on Wednesday, but it's safe to say that, at this point, they'll do anything they can in an effort to get clearer answers on Braden's mystery shoulder. Braden's been rather down since the injury and hasn't spoken with media since its onset, so I'm sure he'd like a better understanding of what's going on more than anyone else, and it'd be nice to see him get it so he can move on with the proper rehab.
- Andy LaRoche was back at third base again, and Geren again said he'll keep him in the lineup so long as he keeps swinging the bat well. "I'm giving Kouz time to keep working," he said. "He'll get back in there, too. Everybody will get their opportunities."

A's lineup: Crisp CF, Barton 1B, DeJesus RF, Matsui DH, Suzuki C, Sweeney LF, Ellis 2B, LaRoche 3B, Pennington SS

Indians lineup: Sizemore CF, Cabrera SS, Choo RF, Santana C, Duncan DH, Brantley 1B, LaPorta LF, Hannahan 3B, Everett 2B

A's self-destruct again, blow another winnable game in late innings at home

By Sam McPherson, Oakland A's Examiner

Sometimes you have to wonder if Billy Beane even watches the Oakland Athletics play baseball any more.

The teams he has put together in the last four-plus seasons never seem to be able to put together any momentum, consistency or credible challenge to the American League West division title.

And it's nights like tonight that just make most fans want to stay home.

Beane signed free-agent reliever Brian Fuentes, who is costing the team \$5M this year, and the lefty put six runners on base while getting only one out -- on a caught stealing, no less, meaning he retired no one at the plate -- enabling the Cleveland Indians to score three runs in the top of the ninth on their way to a 4-1 win tonight in Oakland.

As is so often the case, the A's couldn't score enough runs to support yet another great start by their pitching staff, and the bullpen blew the game.

Why would any sane person want to spend money to watch this?

Considering only 10,135 tickets were sold for this game at Overstock.com Coliseum, that's a rhetorical question -- especially since significantly fewer people used their tickets to show up and watch the team actually play the game.

Oakland plays so many painful contests like this, lets so many winnable games get away from them, simply because they can't make the right move at the right time.

Or any move at any time.

So add this one to the long list of self-destructive losses the A's have already endured in 2011.

Fuentes himself has a 5.28 ERA this year now, to go with three losses -- and it's only May 3. Overall, the bullpen leads the AL in losses with seven. Somehow, the group led the league in ERA coming into tonight's game, but considering the losses, it's an inconsistent bunch at best that everyone knows is overrated.

And a sign of a bad team is one that can't win the close ones late. This team is now 2-10 when entering the seventh inning tied this year -- losing these winnable games now only makes August and September more painful when Oakland is imagining it has a shot at the playoffs.

Emphasis on the word *imagining*. We all want to believe it, but ... then the team drops another game like this, and we know better than to dream.

As for the offense, don't even get started on the same old futility -- Indians pitcher Fausto Carmona came into the game with a 5.15 ERA, but he held the A's to one run on only five hits. After all, everyone is an All-Star when they pitch against Oakland.

Coming off three big wins against Texas, Oakland had a great chance tonight to keep the momentum going. Instead, they fumbled it away again in classic A's style.

So if Beane is watching these games, you have to wonder what he's thinking -- or drinking.

Pass the Kool-Aid around, Billy. Ignorance is bliss.

Indians rally to beat A's for seventh straight win

By JANIE McCauley AP Baseball Writer

OAKLAND, Calif.—Orlando Cabrera hit a tiebreaking RBI single in the ninth in his lone at-bat, Fausto Carmona won for the third time in four starts and the Cleveland Indians beat the Oakland Athletics 4-1 on Tuesday night for their seventh straight victory.

Matt LaPorta and Jack Hannahan hit back-to-back one-out singles off Brian Fuentes (1-3) in the ninth before Cabrera delivered against his former club. Asdrubal Cabrera then provided a two-run single as insurance.

LaPorta hit a tying RBI single in the seventh and the majors-best Indians produced another impressive win on a day that provided plenty of potential distraction for the AL Central leaders.

Before the game, outfielder Shin-Soo Choo apologized to each of his teammates individually in the clubhouse for his Monday arrest on suspicion of drunken driving and any embarrassment it caused.

After that, Choo pulled the Indians into a tight huddle near the dugout before pregame warmups and batting practice. He started in right field and batted third, going 0 for 4 with a walk. Choo was booed by the small announced crowd of 10,135.

Carmona (3-3), a 13-game winner and first-time All-Star last year, gave up only Kurt Suzuki's RBI groundout in the fourth. He allowed five hits and one run, struck out five and walked one in eight strong innings—an efficient 96-pitch performance.

Chris Perez pitched a perfect ninth for his eighth save in nine tries and second in two games. The Indians kicked off a six-game California road trip against the AL West by continuing the momentum they gained during a 6-0 homestand that gave them a 13-game winning streak at Progressive Field.

Cleveland is just 7-6 away from home and has lost nine of its last 10 series at the Coliseum. Winning the opener of this series is a good start considering the Indians dropped two of three in Oakland last year and were outscored 22-6—with shutouts of 10-0 and 11-0.

Tyson Ross is still looking for his first win since joining the A's rotation as a fill-in for the injured Dallas Braden.

Ross was rolling until allowing three singles in the seventh, including LaPorta's tying base hit. Still, Ross has a 0.68 ERA in his last two starts, lowering him to 2.38 over six overall outings.

The right-hander pitched with runners on base in five of his six-plus innings but escaped trouble with some help from Oakland's defense that went into the night tied with Houston for the major league lead in errors at 27.

The A's turned a double play in the fourth following Carlos Santana's leadoff single, then Suzuki made another stellar play in the fifth after Ross' pitch to Grady Sizemore hit the dirt and bounced several feet away from the Oakland catcher. Suzuki quickly retrieved the ball then threw out Adam Everett trying to steal second.

But Oakland couldn't produce enough offense after taking just three of four from the Rangers.

Veteran Cleveland designated hitter Travis Hafner, nursing a strained tendon in the bottom of his right foot, ran in the outfield to test his injury. He drew a pinch-hit walk in the seventh before being lifted for pinch-runner Orlando Cabrera.

Manager Manny Acta wanted to give Hafner one more day to heal, with the plan of starting Hafner in the middle game of the series Wednesday night. Hafner got hurt sliding into home plate to score against Kansas City last Wednesday night.

NOTES: The Indians are 16-2 when scoring four or more runs. ... Cabrera had the night off before entering to pinch run and then staying in at 2B. ... Cleveland RHP Mitch Talbot, on the disabled list with a strained elbow, threw all his pitches in a bullpen session. He is slated to throw another side this weekend in Anaheim before heading to Arizona to pitch in a rehab outing at extended spring training. ... The Indians are 5-2 vs. the AL West.

Alameda Eddie: A's bring in 50 year old, 5 foot 8 lefty as new batting practice pitcher

Janie McCauley, AP, 5/3/2011

OAKLAND, Calif. — Eddie Delzer is 50 years old, a generous 5-foot-8 with a fastball that tops out around 78 mph — or, on a good day, 80 mph when he's pitching in the dry Arizona air and the "adrenalin is going."

Might not seem like much, but this former minor leaguer and college standout suddenly has a sweet part-time job with the Oakland Athletics. Delzer is their lefty batting practice specialist. He shows up at the Coliseum when called upon, suits up in his green and gold No. 86 A's uniform and throws for all of 24 minutes. Two 12-minute sessions. Then, his day is done.

Delzer received a call from a buddy last month that the A's were looking for a left-hander to toss BP. He delivered a resume to general manager Billy Beane and Co., threw a tryout for hitting coach Gerald Perry and landed the job.

With Oakland facing three lefty starters during its recent four-game series against the AL West rival Texas Rangers — the A's won three of four — Delzer spent three days with the club. He's not sure how regular he will be, but he's thrilled for any chance he gets. He lives only 10 minutes away in nearby Alameda.

"The A's call me 'Alameda Eddie,'" he said with a grin.

Longtime equipment manager Steve Vucinich, the guy who hands out the jerseys and other gear, didn't even know Eddie's last name the other day.

On Monday, Delzer arrived at the ballpark and checked in with Perry before getting to his "mental stuff" to gear up, basically a detailed routine of stretches and warmups.

"You're nervous and excited," Delzer said. "You hope you throw strikes. If they can get six or eight hits off lefties, I've done my part. I'm on call whenever they need me."

Across the bay, John Yandle has been doing the same thing with the reigning World Series champion Giants going on three decades. A former Triple-A pitcher, Yandle was home run king Barry Bonds' regular batting-practice pitcher for the slugger's 15 seasons with San Francisco.

Many other clubs also employ batting practice pitchers.

Delzer has a strong baseball background, having spent two of his four years in the minor leagues at the Double-A level in the Angels organization. He was managed in A-ball by current Tampa Bay skipper Joe Maddon. Delzer pitched for renowned junior college program Sacramento City College and won the College World Series with Cal State Fullerton in 1984 when he weighed all of 133 pounds. His 18 strikeouts still stand as a single-game school record.

A's catcher Kurt Suzuki, a fellow former Fullerton star, came up to Delzer from behind the other day and gave him a big bear hug.

"It's great for Eddie," Perry said of this opportunity.

These days, Delzer does more umpiring of high school games and works as a private consultant focused on baseball issues and the mental part of the game. He is active in a men's senior league and his Bay Area team has won two of the last three World Series at its level.

Delzer figures he will get paid on a per-game basis by the A's. Not that the extra money is his focus or motivation for this gig.

"It doesn't really matter," he said. "It's just the prestige of it. It's just fun to come out here and be part of it. It's for the love of the game ... I love the smell of the grass. I'm here for an hour or two and throw for 24 minutes, two 12-minute sessions. Green and yellow have been my favorite colors since I was a kid."

Delzer, a native of Southern California, was a better wrestler than anything else during high school. He also ran cross country because he was too small for football or basketball. But baseball was his first love. He joined the Air Force at age 17 and was stationed in Sacramento. There, he was out running one day when he saw a team practicing — he wound up trying out and made it. That's when his baseball career took off.

Now, his own 21-year-old son, Matthew, is a firefighter in the Coast Guard in Seattle. Delzer knows his boy will get a kick out of the stories from this experience.

"If I'd been right-handed, my career would have been over when I was 9 or 10," Delzer said.

Gutierrez: A's serve notice to Texas, themselves

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

OAKLAND -- Welcome to the start of the 2011 season.

And isn't it nice of the A's bats to show up? Finally.

This is not to disparage Oakland as the calendar has flipped to May. Rather, in a cheeky kind of way, it's to celebrate the A's offense coming out of an April slumber that threatened to short-circuit a season filled with so much spring training promise.

How fitting, then, that the A's went above .500 Monday for only the second time this season on the back of small ball -- bunts galore, including a beautiful safety-squeeze by Cliff Pennington, a perfectly-executed hit-and-run by Andy LaRoche -- *and* long ball - three solo home runs, by Kurt Suzuki, Josh Willingham and, of course, the 10th-inning walk-off shot by Hideki Matsui.

With the 5-4 victory, the A's took three of four from the defending American League champions and moved within a game of the Texas Rangers in the process.

"It let's them know," said A's manager Bob Geren, "what we can do."

It also lets the A's know what they're capable of doing after a month of so much swinging and missing.

"We've got to score five, six, seven runs to win," Geren added. "The bats will come around. It's a big boost in a lot of ways."

Specifically, it helps in the standings as well as psychologically. As in the A's heads.

Because for as much as the players publicly say they've never had a doubt about the offense coming around, doubt surely had to be creeping in. Even the effervescent David DeJesus told me in Anaheim last week that the reason for the A's woeful hitting was a "mystery."

Consider: entering Monday's series finale against Texas, nine of the A's 13 position players were batting lower than their career averages before the season. Significantly lower.

Mark Ellis was hitting 84 points under his career average. Ryan Sweeney, 64. Kevin Kouzmanoff, 50. Daric Barton, 49. Matsui, 45 points. Willingham, 29. Pennington, 27. And so on and so on.

Were it not for the starting pitching in April, guys having epically bad starts at the plate could have signaled an early death knell for the A's chances.

With such strong pitching, the A's offense was not constructed so the hitters *had* to have career years to be competitive; they just needed to have their average *career* year to be competitive.

Look, the A's may only be 15-14, but taking three of four from Texas shows improvement and momentum going forward. Seven times already the A's have entered a game sitting on .500. And until Monday's 5-4 victory over the Rangers, they were just 1-5 in those previous six games.

We're not talking about getting so high you're in nosebleed territory, but the only other time Oakland has been above .500 this season was on April 19, when the A's were 9-8 after beating Boston.

"We've learned," Suzuki said with a smile, "that the hitting will come."

Now is the time for the A's to make their move. Crazy talk? Maybe. Then again, the A's were the sexy preseason pick to win the AL West. Plus, they've now served notice to the Rangers, who will be getting healthy in June with the return of Josh Hamilton. That's when they took off last season.

"When you start playing division games, the more series you win, the better off you are," Willingham observed. "Hopefully, it starts paying dividends in September."

But if the A's are still middling about .500 on June 1 with a spotty offense weighing down pitching, and the Rangers and Los Angeles Angels have separated from the pack, those dividends will be nothing more than junk bonds.

Drop in Number of Fans Taken Out to the Ballgame

By KEN BELSON, New York Times, 5/3/2011

The Cleveland Indians are baseball's biggest surprise, and to some degree, its biggest secret.

On Sunday, the Indians won their 13th consecutive home game — a 5-4 victory over the Tigers in their last at-bat — giving them the best record in major leagues. Unfortunately, more than two-thirds of the seats at Cleveland's Progressive Field were empty, underscoring the difficulty that some baseball teams, and in particular, the Indians, have had over the first month of the season in getting people to come to the ballpark.

Despite their resurgence after two seasons in which they failed to win even 70 games, the Indians have the lowest average attendance in baseball in 2011, with a figure of 14,275 people a game. The weather provides something of an excuse — at most of Cleveland's home games in April, temperatures have been below 50 degrees. But season-ticket sales are at their lowest since the Indians moved into their current stadium in 1994, which speaks of other problems not so easily remedied.

"We've dealt with some extreme weather and a very low season-ticket base, and that creates challenges because there isn't a sense of urgency to come to the ballpark," said Mark Shapiro, the general manager of the Indians.

He said the club had started to have an uptick in advance ticket sales for some games and that local television ratings were very strong. Still, with a local economy that has not recovered and with skepticism that the team is for real and worth spending money on, it may be awhile before there is a real surge of ticket-buyers.

The Kansas City Royals face a similar challenge. They have the second-lowest attendance this season — 16,985 a game — even though they are right behind the Indians in second place in the American League Central and almost as much of a surprise as Cleveland is.

Over all, baseball attendance is 1.3 percent lower than at the same period last season, according to Baseball-Reference.com, and 20 of the sport's 30 teams have drawn fewer fans.

One reason is the weather. It has affected more areas than just Cleveland, with 17 games rained out through Sunday compared to two a year ago.

Then there are the Mets and the Los Angeles Dodgers, each embroiled in ownership problems that may be affecting their images. The Dodgers have drawn 14.5 percent fewer fans this season, and the Mets have had a decline of 15 percent. (The Yankees are also down, by 7.6 percent, but they have played more home games than anyone else, 18, and have been affected by the rainy weather.)

Attendance traditionally picks up in the summer when school is out and pennant races start to take shape. Teams also add more promotions when the weather improves. Whether that will help Major League Baseball reverse a three-year decline in attendance is unclear.

Still, several teams have had significant increases in attendance to offset some of the gloomier news elsewhere. Not surprisingly, the San Francisco Giants and the Texas Rangers, who faced off in the World Series in 2010, have had double-digit increases in ticket sales. And the Colorado Rockies, who are in first place, have sold 19.8 percent more tickets so far.

Doing even better are the Cincinnati Reds, who made it back to the postseason last year for the first time in 15 years. They have had a 21.3 percent increase in ticket sales and a 55 percent jump in ratings for its games televised on Fox Sports Ohio.

"What happened last year with Jay Bruce's walk-off home run that clinched the division, then starting this season with Ramon Hernandez's walk-off home run, has kept the momentum going for both our players and our fans," said Michael Anderson, a team spokesman.

On the map, Cincinnati and Cleveland are 240 miles apart. At the turnstile, the gap seems to be a lot bigger, at least for now.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Red-hot Recker lifts River Cats past Bees

By Cassie Kolas / Sacramento River Cats

An eighth-inning rally was the deciding factor in a 2-0 River Cats victory over the Salt Lake Bees on Tuesday night at Raley Field.

Both teams were scoreless until the eighth inning. Adrian Cardenas started the inning with a double on a line drive to left field. Catcher Anthony Recker singled to bring Cardenas home for the first run of the night. The inning continued with a Shane Peterson bunt single to third. Adam Heether brought home Recker on a sacrifice bunt.

Recker finished 2-for-2 with a double and two walks to extend his hitting streak to seven games.

The River Cats loaded the bases with no outs in the first and second innings, but produced no runs. In total, Sacramento stranded 12 runners in the 3-hour, 13-minute pitchers' duel.

Sacramento left-hander Bobby Cramer had a strong outing, dealing six strikeouts in 3.2 innings. Cramer started against Salt Lake once before in his career on Aug. 21, 2010. In that outing he tossed 8.0 shutout innings, dealt seven strikeouts and only surrendered two hits.

He made three relief appearances in Oakland this season before coming back to Sacramento.

It was a game of pitchers, and each team's bullpen was in full force. Sacramento faced Bees pitchers Jeremy Berg, Barret Browning and Kevin Jepsen. Salt Lake faced Fernando Cabrera, Vinnie Chulk, Joey Devine and Trystan Magnuson.

The River Cats improve their record to 16-10, as Devine earned his third win and Magnuson notched his third save of the season.

The series against Salt Lake will continue Wednesday at 12:05 p.m. with righty Travis Banwart (0-1, 4.03) facing righty Brian Lawrence (0-1, 9.00).

RockHounds' losing streak continues in Corpus

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

CORPUS CHRISTI -- A change of venue didn't help the Midland RockHounds break out of a recent losing streak.

Corpus Christi took the lead through the middle innings Tuesday and rolled to a 7-1 victory against the RockHounds at Whataburger Field, extending Midland's losing streak to five games.

The Hooks scored a single run in third inning, added two more in the fourth and then three in the fifth as the chased RockHounds starter Ethan Hollingsworth from the game. Hollingsworth fell to 2-2 on the season after giving up six runs on 10 hits with three strikeouts and one walk.

During the three-run fifth, the Hooks sent nine batters to the plate as Brandon Wikoff and J.D. Martinez each recorded RBI.

The RockHounds lone run came in the seventh when Michael Spina hit a solo home run, his eighth of the season.

Overall the RockHounds offense produced only six hits on Tuesday.

The Hooks (11-14) and RockHounds (12-13) will play the second game of a four-game series, beginning at 7:05 p.m. today. Midland remained in second place in the Texas League South Division

Ports Deep-66'ed In 11-2 Loss

05/03/2011 10:30 PM ET

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. - After the Inland Empire 66ers bats were kept quiet in the series opener, the Empire struck back with a vengeance on Tuesday night at Arrowhead Credit Union Park. The 66ers exploded for 11 runs on 15 hits in an 11-2 rout of the Stockton Ports, evening their four game series up at a game apiece.

Stockton brought across the game's first run in the 2nd. With runners at second and third and one out, Rashun Dixon grounded out to short to score Anthony Aliotti and put the Ports up 1-0.

Inland Empire came back strong in the bottom half of the inning-one that would be the worst for Ports starter Fabian Williamson (2-3). Williamson allowed a leadoff single to Casey Haerther and a double to PJ Phillips to put runners at second and third with nobody out. After a strikeout of Justin Bass, Williamson walked Jon Karcich to load the bases and then allowed a sac-fly to Steven Irvine that tied the game at 1-1. Ikko Sumi came up next and broke the tie with a two-run double to center to give the 66ers a 3-1 lead. Sumi would score on an ensuing single from Jean Segura to make it a 4-1 lead.

In the 4th, Williamson walked Karcich to start the inning. Two batters later, Sumi singled to put runners at the corners. Segura came up next and hit a bouncing ball to the middle of the infield. Ports second baseman Conner Crumbliss appeared to field the ball at the same time he stepped on the second base bag and then throw to first for what would've been an inning-ending double-play. Base umpire Brett Terry, however, ruled that Crumbliss hadn't yet received the ball when he was on the bag and ruled that Sumi was safe at second, prolonging the inning. On the very next pitch, Rian Kiniry hit a two-run homer over the right-field fence to give the 66ers a commanding 7-1 lead.

Williamson would be tagged with the loss, going four innings and allowing seven runs on seven hits while striking out two.

Inland Empire starter Ariel Pena, after allowing the run in the second, settled down and did not allow a run the remainder of his outing. Pena picked up the win, going six innings and allowing three hits while striking out six and walking four.

Ryan Doolittle took over for Williamson to start the 5th and struck out the side in his first inning of work. Doolittle, however, would allow a run in the 6th on a two-out single from Matt Long. In the 7th, with two on and one out, Irvine hit a two-out triple to center to make it 10-1. Sumi, who went 3-for-4, came up next and drove in his third run of the night with a single to left to make it an 11-1 game.

Doolittle went 2.1 innings and allowed four runs on six hits while striking out three and walking two.

Josh Lansford threw the final 1.2 innings for Stockton and did not allow a run.

The Ports added a run in the 9th on another ground-out from Dixon after Mitch LeVier started the inning with a triple. The run came off Jose Perez who tossed the final two innings for Inland Empire. Former Stockton Ports Dan Sattler pitched a scoreless 7th for the 66ers.

Stockton and Inland Empire will play the third game of their four-game set on Wednesday night at Arrowhead Credit Union Park. In what could be an outstanding pitching matchup, Dan Straily (3-1, 0.96 ERA) will head to the mound for the Ports, opposed by left-hander Manuel Flores (3-0, 2.70 ERA) for the 66ers. First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

Bees Complete Sweep With 3-2 Win

By Jon Versteeg, burlingtonbees.com

BURLINGTON, IA- LF Douglas Landaeta (1-3) lined a single to right field to complete the comeback for the Burlington Bees (18-6), who scored two runs in the 10th inning to earn a 3-2 walk-off win over the Peoria Chiefs (12-13) before 2,554 fans at Community Field Tuesday afternoon.

The Bees opened the scoring with a single run in the fifth inning. SS Wade Kirkland (1-3) doubled and moved to third base on a groundout by CF Tyreece House (1-4). He scored on a bloop single to center field by RF Royce Consigli (1-5) for a 1-0 lead.

In the ninth inning Peoria tied the game with a solo home run over the right field wall by 1B Richard Jones (2-4__).

In the 10th inning the Chiefs scored a single run when CF Matt Szczur (1-5) lined a single that brought in LF D.J. Fitzgerald (1-4) from second base for a 2-1 Peoria lead.

The Bees came back to score two runs in the 10th inning. House and moved to second base on a throwing error by Peoria RHP Marcus Hatley (2-1). He scored on a double by 2B Nino Leyja (1-1) to tie the game at 2-2.

Landaeta's single allowed House to score from second base for a 3-2 win.

The Bees travel to Cedar Rapids to start a three-game series with the Cedar Rapids Kernels on Wednesday at 6:35 p.m. The pitching match-up is as follows: RHP Blake Hassebrock (1-0, 0.00) for Burlington against RHP Heath Nichols (1-2, 8.10) for Cedar Rapids. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:15 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at 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, or stop by the box office at Community Field during normal business hours.