

A's News Clips, Thursday, May 12, 2011

Oakland A's Dallas Braden to undergo shoulder surgery

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

ARLINGTON, Texas -- Left-hander Dallas Braden will undergo surgery Monday to repair a torn capsule in his left shoulder.

While team officials aren't speculating on how long he will be sidelined, the typical recovery time from such a procedure suggests Braden could very well miss the rest of the season.

"We've obviously discussed that as a possibility," A's assistant general manager David Forst said, "but we won't know until they go in and find what they think is there."

The bleak news came on a gloomy Wednesday afternoon. Heavy rain forced the postponement of the A's game against the Texas Rangers after 3 1/2 innings, though it did wipe out a 7-0 A's deficit. The game will be played in its entirety later in the season when the A's return to Rangers Ballpark.

Gio Gonzalez would have been charged with all seven runs scored by the Rangers in a rare misstep by the A's rotation. A's starters have been the best in baseball, bringing a major-league-best 2.69 ERA into Wednesday's play.

While the A's bullpen has felt the effects of missing closer Andrew Bailey, who has been sidelined all season with a forearm strain, the rotation is one area the A's might be able to withstand a long-term loss.

Tyson Ross, who stepped in for Braden, has allowed just three earned runs over his past three starts.

"Luckily for us, Tyson has stepped in and done a good job," Forst said.

Braden, 27, exited an April 16 game against Detroit with shoulder pain and hasn't pitched since. He was diagnosed with inflammation during an April 20 exam with orthopedist Lewis Yocum, which appeared to be relatively good news.

But after feeling discomfort while trying to play catch last week, Braden (1-1, 3.00 ERA) sought a second opinion Monday from Dr. James Andrews in Florida and a third opinion from Dr. David Altchek in New York on Tuesday.

Those visits confirmed a tear in his shoulder. Braden wasn't available for comment Wednesday.

"It's a tough day because he's such a competitor and good kid," A's manager Bob Geren said. "You hate to see him miss time. We hope for the best for him in the procedure and his recovery, and we'll miss him."

An A's news release that announced Braden's injury was short on specifics other than saying the pitcher was having a torn capsule repaired. A follow-up release said Braden's injury is similar to ones suffered by New York Mets pitchers Johan Santana and Chris Young.

Santana's tear was to the anterior capsule, which is located in the front and bottom part of the shoulder, near the pectoral muscle. He had surgery Sept. 14 and still was throwing long toss as recently as May 1 -- 7 1/2 months after his surgery.

Young has suffered the same injury two years in a row. He missed all but four starts last season and is sidelined with the same thing again.

The A's can only hope the outlook is better for their pitcher.

"My heart goes out to him," Gonzalez said of Braden. "I hope he's healthy and rejoins us as soon as possible."

A's update: Gio Gonzalez sees woeful start, Mitch Moreland's grand slam erased

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

ARLINGTON, Texas -- The skies opened and gave Gio Gonzalez a nice reprieve Wednesday afternoon.

Heavy rain forced cancellation of the A's-Rangers series finale at Rangers Ballpark, a game that was shaping up as one of Gonzalez's worst as a major leaguer.

The A's left-hander was tagged for seven runs in the third inning, when the Rangers sent 13 men to the plate. That inning included four walks by Gonzalez and the first career grand slam by Texas first baseman Mitch Moreland.

With the Rangers leading 7-0 after 31/2 innings, a heavy downpour hit and the game was delayed 2 hours, 14 minutes before umpires canceled it.

Stats from the game are wiped out, and the contest will be replayed in its entirety during one of the A's two remaining trips to Arlington later in the season.

Gonzalez had a message for Moreland.

"One apology I want to make is to Mitch," Gonzalez said with a smile. "Sorry buddy, I'll definitely send you over a check."

Gonzalez was clearly relieved at his disastrous start being wiped off the books.

"It's just a blessing in disguise," he said. "I got away with one, and I admit it. I can't give up so many runs."

One of the runs charged to him came after he left the game, as reliever David Purcey walked in a run.

Walks have been Gonzalez's Achilles' heel, just like last year. He entered Wednesday allowing 4.12 walks per nine innings, sixth most in the American League.

With the cancellation, the A's finished 3-2 on their road trip through Kansas City and Texas.

Lefty reliever Jerry Blevins was sent to Triple-A Sacramento, and right-hander Trystan Magnuson was called up.

Blevins carried a 4.61 ERA in 14 appearances and walked 12 in 132/3 innings.

It's the first big league call-up for Magnuson, 25, who was acquired along with reliever Danny Farquhar from Toronto for outfielder Rajai Davis in November. He had a 1.56 ERA in 12 appearances with the River Cats.

The A's now have four right-handers and three left-handers in the bullpen.

Closer Andrew Bailey is scheduled to pitch one inning in an extended spring training game in Phoenix on Saturday.

Chin Music: Rain delay couldn't come soon enough for A's

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/11/2011 12:42pm

We're in our second rain delay in as many days in Arlington. The A's will welcome this one. They're down 7-0 in the bottom of the fourth, after Gio Gonzalez was tagged for seven earned runs in a nightmarish third inning. He walked four in the inning, including one with the bases loaded, and served up Mitch Moreland's first career grand slam.

His final line: 2 2/3 IP, 6 hits, 7 earned runs, 5 walks, 1 strikeout. Gonzalez's troubles finding the strike zone aren't new — he entered the day averaging 4.12 walks per nine innings, sixth most in the AL. But no one saw this meltdown coming.

The rain is pouring down — way harder than in last night's delay. The A's have to be hoping this one just gets canceled. The umpires have the final say, and if the game doesn't continue today, it will be replayed entirely at a later date. Both teams are off tomorrow, but because the A's come back to Texas two more times, it's very unlikely both teams would burn the day off and play tomorrow.

If the game resumes today, it's shaping up as one extremely flat ending to the A's six-game road trip.

Here's a story about [Dallas Braden's upcoming shoulder surgery](#).

Could the the A's news be any cheerier today???

Chin Music: More morning notes — Bailey to pitch in extended spring game Saturday

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/11/2011 10:52am

Here's some follow-up from pregame ...

—Bob Geren said the bullpen move didn't have to do with the high number of lefty relievers. "It wasn't a righty/lefty thing, it was strictly a performance thing." But sending down Jerry Blevins and promoting Trystan Magnuson does give the A's a more conventional four righty/three lefty split in the relief corps.

The 6-foot-7 Magnuson throws a fastball, slider and cutter, according to Geren. He's got good velocity and improved his slider with Triple-A Sacramento. He had three saves with the Rivercats to go with a 1.56 ERA in 12 appearances. He struck out 19 and walked nine in 17 1/3 innings, holding opponents to a .138 average. Geren said he'll try easing Magnuson into some low-pressure situations.

The bigger question here is how long before Joey Devine gets called up. He's been lights out for Sacramento. In eight games, he's allowed zero earned runs or walks and struck out 13. "He just needs to keep pitching, keep performing," Geren said. "When he's ready, we'll make that decision."

More 'pen news: Andrew Bailey will go to Phoenix and pitch in an extended spring training game Saturday. No word on what the next step would be.

And still no word on Dallas Braden. He was traveling yesterday and Geren said no one from the A's had spoken to him yet. Geren said head trainer Nick Paparesta had spoken to at least one of the doctors who examined Braden this week, but Geren was waiting for the team to have contact with Braden before releasing any information.

Here's hoping we get this game in. Forecasts were calling for a 50 percent chance of rain by about 3 p.m. local time ...

The lineups:

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

Rangers — Borbon CF, Blanco SS, Kinsler 2B, Young DH, Moreland 1B, Beltre 3B, Murphy LF, Napoli C, Gentry RF; Harrison LHP.

Chin Music: Jerry Blevins sent down, reliever Trystan Magnuson promoted

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/11/2011 9:06am

A morning update for you ...

The A's made a bullpen move, optioning lefty Jerry Blevins to Triple-A Sacramento and calling up right-hander Trystan Magnuson for his major league debut. Magnuson, 25, was acquired along with reliever Danny Farquhar from Toronto for Rajai Davis in November.

This move doesn't come as a big surprise. Blevins walked 12 in 13 2/3 innings and carried a 4.61 ERA. The move now gives the A's four right-handed relievers and three lefties. A bit more to come later ...

Herhold: Complications in the drive to bring a ballpark to San Jose

By Scott Herhold, Mercury News Columnist

In a famous song written for his son, John Lennon once wrote, "Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans." It's a sentiment that could apply to San Jose's quest for major league baseball.

Bringing the Oakland A's to San Jose was never going to be easy. It requires all the planets to be perfectly aligned -- a deal with the San Francisco Giants, an approval by the voters, enough money to complete the job, and careful attention to neighborhood objections.

But several developments in the past few months have complicated the task. While baseball commissioner Bud Selig has dithered, Rome has burned around the edges.

Consider these events:

THE THROES OF REDEVELOPMENT: The move by Gov. Jerry Brown to kill redevelopment zones in California may or may not succeed. But it certainly has had an impact on San Jose's redevelopment agency, which has the feel of the Alamo surrounded by Santa Anna's army.

City officials have said they don't expect this to affect plans for baseball, because they've stuffed ballpark land into a special land authority. But streets, parking and amenities inevitably cost more than the city expects.

Without redevelopment, San Jose has far less flexibility and staff. You cannot send \$75 million to the state, as the city has over the past two years, without feeling the loss.

DODGERS AND METS: As much as he sympathizes with the hopes of his old fraternity brother Lew Wolff to bring the A's to San Jose, Selig has more pressing problems on his plate -- the fate of two of baseball's marquee franchises, the Los Angeles Dodgers and the New York Mets.

Major League Baseball has appointed a trustee to oversee the operations of the Dodgers, whose owner, Frank McCourt, is embroiled in a nasty divorce. Meanwhile, Mets' owner Fred Wilpon, who was enmeshed in the fallout from the Bernie Madoff scandal, has borrowed \$25 million from baseball and faces huge long-term debt.

Selig, a famous dawdler, will probably have to deal with these problems before he can focus on the Bay Area's ballpark squabble.

CISCO'S PROBLEMS: John Chambers, Cisco's CEO, is one of the best salesmen in Silicon Valley, maybe in America. But as Cisco's growth has faltered in recent months, he has had to apologize to investors and redirect the company toward its core mission, dropping things like the Flip camera division.

Why does this matter to a ballpark? The backers of an A's park in San Jose have counted on Cisco as a major corporate sponsor, a company that could buy naming rights and use whiz-bang technology to bring video to the seats.

Now, with Cisco redefining itself, the question is whether Chambers can afford to be as involved as Wolff hoped -- and whether Cisco's technology will be the drawing card.

None of these are reasons to desert the effort to bring baseball to San Jose. It's a worthy cause. And maybe these problems are all transitory. But the news is a reminder that things change -- life happens -- while San Jose is making other plans.

When Mayor Chuck Reed said last year that it was "now or never" for a ballpark vote, events quickly seemed to prove him wrong: He postponed an election after a fragile promise from Selig to fund a campaign in the spring.

But Reed might have been closer to the truth than I had imagined.

Dallas Braden of A's to have shoulder surgery

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Texas - One year and two days after Dallas Braden's perfect game, the A's delivered imperfect news. The longest-standing member of Oakland's gifted rotation needs shoulder surgery and appears lost for the season.

Braden, 27, made just three starts in a rotation that leads the majors with a 2.69 ERA, which would have jumped to 2.92 if Wednesday's game had counted. But it was called off in the fourth inning because of rain, so the Rangers' seven third-inning runs off Gio Gonzalez won't count.

Braden has a torn anterior capsule, and the A's likened his surgery, scheduled for Monday in New York, to Johan Santana's in September. The Mets' lefty had his shoulder repaired by Dr. David Altchek, the Mets' team doctor, who will perform Braden's surgery.

The Mets had hoped Santana would be available by Opening Day, yet he might not appear until July. If Braden has a similar timetable, he's done for 2011, and the only question is whether he'll be ready for the start of next season.

"It doesn't make a lot of sense to speculate until they go in. MRIs show only so much," A's assistant general manager David Forst said. "Obviously, if it's like Santana's, the prognosis is not good for the season, but until we hear from Dr. Altchek on Monday, I don't think we'll speculate."

Altchek is the only one among three doctors who recommended surgery, Forst said. The others were Lewis Yocum and James Andrews. Last month, Yocum's diagnosis was inflammation, but the shoulder still was swollen. Once the swelling subsided, a new MRI, taken in recent days and provided to all three doctors, showed the damage.

Gonzalez, who considers Braden a mentor, didn't hear the news until a reporter told him after the game was called following a 2-hour, 14-minute delay.

"Oh, that sucks," Gonzalez said. "My heart's out to him. I hope he recovers and is healthy and joins us as soon as possible. It's always fun having Dallas around even on the days I don't pitch. He brings a little light to this team, and he's exciting to watch and listen to."

Braden's pregame pep talks to Gonzalez are well-chronicled, and Gonzalez has pitched better with his pal around and playfully blamed his two-game losing streak on Braden's absence. Last Friday in Kansas City, for the first time in 2011, Gonzalez finally won a game without Braden present.

Braden, who has been replaced in the rotation by Tyson Ross, was missing Wednesday, and Gonzalez struggled again. The Rangers sent 13 batters to the plate in the third, highlighted by Mitch Moreland's grand slam. But all stats were wiped out.

"One apology I want to make is to Mitch. Sorry, buddy," Gonzalez said. "I'll definitely sign you over a check or something, whatever you want. It's a blessing in disguise. I got away with one."

After the top of the fourth inning, play was halted. It would have been an official game if five innings were completed, or 4 1/2 with the home team leading. It was 7-0, Rangers, but the makeup game will start from scratch during a future A's trip here, perhaps in early July.

Trystan Magnuson called up by A's

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

One of the interviewers at **Trystan Magnuson's** locker Wednesday was wearing an A's uniform and holding up a tape recorder when asking a question.

"Considering it was your first big-league camp with the organization, do you think there was anything there that helped you prepare yourself for this experience you're about to go through?"

Magnuson didn't hesitate, even though the question came from teammate **Brian Fuentes**.

"Absolutely," Magnuson said. "Getting to know the other guys on the team and coaches, I think it's a huge advantage. I'm already in the system."

Acquired from Toronto in the **Rajai Davis** trade, the 6-foot-7 Magnuson was called up from Triple-A Sacramento to replace **Jerry Blevins**, who was optioned after walking 12 batters and surrendering 12 hits in 13 2/3 innings. Tuesday night, **Michael Young** tagged Blevins for a two-run triple.

Magnuson, 25, had a 1.56 ERA with three saves in 12 games. He's awaiting his big-league debut after warming up Wednesday with the Rangers leading by a bunch.

"I'm not as happy with the way things turned out numbers-wise. I'm OK about the performance," Blevins said. "I always try to be better. But I'm a big-leaguer. I belong in the big leagues. So of course I'm going to be upset with not being able to do my job."

The bullpen is down to three lefties.

Briefly: In his next rehab step, closer **Andrew Bailey**, shelved with a forearm strain, will pitch one inning in an extended spring training game in Arizona on Saturday. ... Two years removed from Tommy John surgery, **Joey Devine** is dominating Triple-A hitters (0.00 ERA in 9 1/3 innings, 13 strikeouts, no walks) but hasn't played on consecutive days. "He just needs to keep pitching, keep performing," manager **Bob Geren** said. "We'll make that decision when everyone feels he's ready. He's going in the right direction."

A's leading off

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

That's just wrong: Mitch Moreland finally hit a ball out of the park against a left-hander (Gio Gonzalez), but it didn't count because the game was rained out. So Moreland still has 47 career homerless at-bats off lefties.

Drumbeat: NEW UPDATE Dallas Braden surgery UPDATE Jerry Blevins optioned, say hello to Trystan Magnuson

John Shea, 5/11/2011 12:01pm

Another update on Dallas Braden shoulder surgery. The A's medical staff says his injury is similar to Johan Santana's, and Santana had his surgery in September and still hasn't returned to the mound. He might not pitch until July.

I asked David Forst, A's assistant GM, about a season-ending scenario following the surgery, which will be performed by Dr. David Altchek, and he said, "It doesn't make a lot of sense to speculate until they go in. MRIs show only so much. Obviously, if it's like Santana's, the prognosis is not good for the season, but until we hear from Dr. Altchek on Monday, I don't think we'll speculate."

Altchek is the only one among three doctors who recommended surgery, Forst said. The others were Lewis Yocum and James Andrews. Last month, Yocum's diagnosis was inflammation, but the shoulder was still swollen. Once the swelling subsided, a new MRI (which all three doctors studied), taken in recent days, showed the damage.

NEW POST

The A's just announced Dallas Braden will undergo shoulder surgery on Monday.

Braden, 27, had two extra opinions this week, one from David Altchek, who'll perform the surgery, which is to "repair a torn capsule," according to the team. Altchek is the Mets' medical director.

Recovery time will be determined later.

Braden was shelved April 16 after exiting his third start of the season with a stiff shoulder. The announcement of the surgery comes one year and two days after Braden's Mother's Day perfect game. The A's medical staff noted that Johan Santana had a similar procedure (also performed by Altchek).

HERE'S THE ORIGINAL POST

John Shea reporting from Texas, where the A's will finish their trip today either 4-2 or 3-3 . . .

One day after Jerry Blevins surrendered a two-run triple to Michael Young, he was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento. The A's called up Trystan Magnuson, who was acquired from Toronto in the Rajai Davis trade and looks taller than his listed 6-foot-7.

Manager Bob Geren said the decision was based on "strictly performance on both ends." Blevins issued 12 walks and surrendered 12 hits in 13 2/3 innings and sported a staff-high 4.61 ERA. Magnuson had a 1.56 ERA with three saves in 12 outings.

"I'm not as happy with the way things turned out numbers-wise. I'm OK about the performance," Blevins said. "I always try to be better. But I'm a big-leaguer. I belong in the big leagues. So of course I'm going to be upset with not being able to do my job."

Magnuson's next big-league appearance will be his first. Geren said he'll give Magnuson low-pressure situations at first. The bullpen is down to three lefties with Blevins reporting to Memphis for the start of an eight-game trip with Sacramento.

"I was talking to Joey Devine," Magnuson said, "and he said the biggest thing is being aggressive, and that's what I'm trying to do, throw strikes."

Asked about possibly calling up Devine, who has pitched well for Sacramento, Geren said, "He just needs to keep pitching, keep performing. We'll make that decision when everyone feels he's ready. He's going in the right direction."

In his next rehab step, closer Andrew Bailey, shelved with a forearm strain, will pitch one inning in an extended spring training game in Arizona Saturday.

The Sweeney-less, Kouzmanoff-less lineup: CF Crisp, 1B Barton, RF Jackson, LF Willingham, C Suzuki, DH Matsui, 3B LaRoche, 2B Ellis, SS Pennington. Gonzalez on the hill.

Gio spared rough outing with finale postponed

Rangers, A's to make up rainout on later date to be determined

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- The rain parade in Arlington not only wiped away Wednesday's series finale between the A's and Rangers, but also took seven earned runs away from Gio Gonzalez's season line -- not to mention Rangers first baseman Mitch Moreland's first career grand slam.

"There's an apology I want to make to Mitch," Gonzalez said, smiling after the game was officially called following a 2 hour, 14 minute delay. "Sorry, buddy. I'll definitely send you over a check."

The skies were surely kind to the A's lefty, who struggled with command early and often in his eighth start. Gonzalez boarded two in the second without any damage before Texas essentially took batting practice against him in a seven-run third, compiling four walks and five hits, including Moreland's blast to right field.

Gonzalez lasted just 2 2/3 innings, with all seven Rangers runs, along with six hits five walks and one strikeout attached to his name.

Those numbers are no more, though, as rain forced the tarp on the field in the middle of the fourth inning with the A's trailing, 7-0. It would have marked the highest number of runs allowed in a single inning in Gonzalez's career.

"It's safe to say I can play the lottery today," he said. "It's just a blessing in disguise. I got away with one. I really can't take it too seriously, because you can only smile at this point. But they never should have scored so many runs in the first place."

Had the two clubs completed the top half of the fifth inning, the game could have been deemed official. Instead, the A's and Rangers will play from scratch at a date to be determined.

"Today didn't go as well as we'd like," said manager Bob Geren, "but with the rules of baseball, one team gets a break. I'm sure [Gio] will throw better the next time out."

The A's skipper said the cancellation will have no effect on any of the club's immediate plans as it prepares to begin a seven-game homestand following Thursday's scheduled off-day.

Braden to undergo surgery on left shoulder

Recovery time to be determined following Monday's procedure

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- A's starter Dallas Braden will undergo surgery on Monday to repair a torn capsule in his left shoulder, the club announced Wednesday.

The recovery time will be determined following the procedure, which is to be performed in New York by Mets medical director David Altchek, but the A's realize Braden's season is now in jeopardy.

"We're aware that it's a possibility he could be out for an extended period of time," said assistant general manager David Forst. "At the same time, it doesn't do anyone any good to say anything until we know for sure. Plenty of times, you get in there and it's not as bad as the MRI may have showed."

As a frame of reference, Altchek performed the same shoulder surgery on Mets lefty Johan Santana in September, and he has yet to return to action. Every case is different, though, so the A's are hoping their hurler faces a shorter rehab process.

Braden met with Altchek on Tuesday, marking his fourth doctor's appointment and third professional opinion since landing on the 15-day disabled list on April 18 with a stiff shoulder.

The A's southpaw had pitched two days prior, when he exited his third start of the season after five frames because of the discomfort. In those starts, he posted a 1-1 record and a 3.00 ERA, yielding 18 hits with 15 strikeouts and five walks in 18 innings of work.

Braden first met with Dr. Lewis Yocum on April 20, when he was told to simply rest and rehab to calm inflammation in his shoulder. But when the left-hander took to the field last week to play catch for the first time, he experienced discomfort again, leading to another visit with Yocum and a new MRI that revealed the damage.

Seeking another opinion based on the results, Braden flew to Florida on Monday to meet with renowned surgeon James Andrews before heading north for his appointment with Altchek, who was the only doctor out of the three who recommended surgery.

In Braden's stead, right-hander Tyson Ross is expected to continue filling the fifth spot in Oakland's rotation, where he's quietly posted a 2.51 ERA on the season while allowing just three earned runs in his past three starts combined. Those efforts have helped the A's starting staff to a Major League-leading 2.69 ERA through its first 37 games.

"This is disappointing for Dallas because we know he was hoping to avoid surgery," Forst said, "but from our standpoint, we have Tyson and we're very happy with the way he's performed. It cuts into our depth a little bit, but at this point, we're comfortable with the starters we have."

Braden, 27, has been the victim of numerous injuries throughout his eight-year professional career. This marks the third straight year during which he's spent time on the disabled list. He's also no stranger to shoulder surgery, having missed much of the 2006 campaign following a procedure to repair a humoral defect.

The news came just two days following the anniversary of Braden's perfect game against the Rays on Mother's Day.

"It's a tough day because he's such a competitor," said manager Bob Geren. "He's a good kid, and I hope the best for him, because he means a lot to the team and we'll miss him."

Bailey to pitch inning in extended spring game

A's will determine next step after closer hurls 20 pitches Saturday

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- Before rain dampened an already bleak day for the A's -- who learned Dallas Braden will undergo shoulder surgery on Monday -- good news came from Andrew Bailey, who will take a big step forward in his rehab process by pitching in an extended Spring Training game on Saturday.

Bailey, nursing a strained right forearm, is expected to throw one inning -- around 20 pitches -- in Arizona, manager Bob Geren said.

The two-time All-Star closer, who has been sidelined by the injury since mid-March, is coming off a 25-pitch simulated game on Tuesday when he made use of all of his pitches while throwing at full exertion in an encouraging session.

If all goes well Saturday, Bailey could potentially begin a Minor League rehab assignment shortly after, though Geren noted a decision will be made on the matter when the time comes.

Barring any setbacks, the righty could make his return to the A's bullpen by month's end.

A's option lefty Blevins, add righty Magnuson

Tall right-hander excited to make Major League debut for Oakland

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- The A's shook up the look of their bullpen on Wednesday morning by bringing aboard young righty Trystan Magnuson and optioning left-hander Jerry Blevins to Triple-A Sacramento.

The decision, manager Bob Geren said, was strictly based on performance. Blevins allowed 24 base runners in just 13 2/3 innings of work for the A's this year, while Magnuson surrendered just eight hits next to 18 strikeouts with nine walks over 17 1/3 frames in Sacramento.

"Magnuson was throwing the ball extremely well down there," Geren said. "We got great reports about him, and he's replacing a guy that struggled."

The 25-year-old Magnuson, acquired this offseason in the Rajai Davis trade, is embarking on his first Major League stint. Owner of a fastball, cutter and slider, he left big league camp with the A's this year and entered Triple-A with work to be done, particularly on his breaking ball and command.

"He's eager to learn," Geren said. "Week to week, we kept getting reports on how well he was throwing, and we're happy with his progress."

"The ball was coming out good," Magnuson said. "I just gotta attack. I was talking to Joey Devine. He said the biggest thing is to be aggressive, so that's what I'm going to try to do -- throw strikes."

Magnuson, the 56th overall Draft pick in 2007, will fill the middle-relief role held by Blevins, though Geren noted he'll stay away from placing the rookie in a high-pressure situation for a few days. He last pitched Monday, when he logged two scoreless innings against Colorado Springs.

The wide-eyed hurler first received news of his promotion on Tuesday night in Memphis, where the River Cats just began an eight-game road trip. He was called into manager Darren Bush's office and was ragged for his unavailability.

"I was flustered because I had been down in the bullpen the whole time," Magnuson said. "He said, 'That sort of stuff doesn't fly here, or in the big leagues tomorrow.'"

Magnuson, a Vancouver native, immediately woke his parents with the news. Unfortunately, it was too late for them to get to Texas for Oakland's series finale because of the afternoon start time, but he mentioned they "were really excited for me."

The 6-foot-7 hurler reveled in his first-class flight experience, noting his ability to stretch out was the only reason why he was able to rest his nerves and get some sleep -- though not much.

Blevins was rightfully disappointed but understanding of the move, particularly after posting a 4.61 ERA in 14 relief appearances. He had walked 12 batters and surrendered 12 hits -- including two home runs -- while striking out 13.

"I'm not as happy with the way things turned out numbers-wise," Blevins said. "I'm OK with my performance. I know I always strive to be better, but I'm a big leaguer. I belong in the big leagues, so of course I'm going to be upset not being able to do my job."

The southpaw hopes to find consistent work in Sacramento, which he wasn't always afforded on an A's team that sees its starters go deep into games on a near daily basis.

"Do I want to pitch more often? Of course I do," Blevins said. "Do I understand why I'm not? Absolutely. Our starters go so deep into games, and guys in the back of the bullpen make a lot of money for a reason. So the opportunities are few and far between, but as a competitor, of course I want to pitch more often."

Geren, who hopes to see Blevins improve his command, understands the notion of inconsistent work but said, "That's the way the bullpen is. That's the life of a reliever."

Humber doing best to hold spot in White Sox rotation

By Cash Kruth / MLB.com

In early April, Phil Humber was just supposed to be a spot starter keeping Jake Peavy's place in the rotation warm. Then, Humber won his first start of the season, threw seven shutout innings against the Yankees and went toe to toe with the reigning American League Cy Young Award winner.

Now, all things considered, Humber -- who starts Friday's series opener against the A's -- is the White Sox best pitcher and the reason Chicago shifted to a six-man rotation after Peavy was reinstated from the disabled list Wednesday.

In his last start on May 6 against Seattle, Humber (2-3, 2.97 ERA) allowed two runs in seven innings, taking a no-decision while Felix Hernandez earned the complete-game win. It was the latest impressive outing for Humber, who has allowed only seven hits in his past three starts (21 innings).

"I've kind of been under the weather the last couple of days, and I didn't have a whole lot to begin with," Humber said after his duel with Hernandez. "But I felt like I kind of got in a groove in the middle innings here and made some pitches when I needed to."

Opposing Humber is former White Sox hurler Brandon McCarthy (1-3, 3.26 ERA). McCarthy hasn't won since April 10, most recently suffering a loss to the Royals on Saturday. The 27-year-old right-hander has thrown six or more innings in six of his seven starts this year.

Against Kansas City, McCarthy went 8 1/3 innings, giving up four runs on seven hits, while walking two and striking out three for the loss.

McCarthy, a 17th-round pick by Chicago in the 2002 First-Year Player Draft, won his only career start against the White Sox on May 2, 2009, while pitching for the Rangers.

White Sox: Floyd ready for Saturday start

- Throwing a bullpen session prior to Wednesday's game against the Angels at Angel Stadium, Gavin Floyd gave the all-clear for his start Saturday in Oakland. Bothered earlier in the week by the after-effects of a ground ball off his right foot last Saturday in Seattle, Floyd said he had no setbacks.

- "There were no problems," Floyd said. "Nothing was bothering me out there at all. I'm on. I thought I had a chance after getting the X-rays back. They were negative. I was only expecting nothing but making the next start. That was my goal. I continued to make progress, and it seems like that's the case."

- With the return of Jake Peavy to the starting rotation Wednesday, Jeff Gray was designated for assignment earlier in the day. Gray posted a 2.70 ERA over six relief appearances and has 10 days to be traded, waived or released. If he clears waivers, he could stay within the White Sox system.

- Chicago has traditionally struggled at The Coliseum, going 9-21 there under Ozzie Guillen and 10-32 since 2001. Things might be starting to look up, however, as the White Sox are 6-6 in Oakland since '08.

- Carlos Quentin has been one of the best road hitters in the American League, entering Wednesday leading the Junior Circuit in slugging percentage (.806), doubles (11), RBIs (22) and total bases (58) away from home.

A's: Braden to undergo surgery

- The A's announced Wednesday that starter Dallas Braden will undergo surgery on Monday to repair a torn capsule in his left shoulder. The recovering time will be determined after the procedure, but there is a real possibility the left-hander might not pitch again in 2011.
- Outfielder David DeJesus needs three hits to reach 1,000 for his career.
- Andrew Bailey will pitch in an extended spring game Saturday in Arizona. Bailey, nursing a strained right forearm, is expected to throw one inning and around 20 pitches.
- Shaking up the bullpen, the A's optioned left-hander Jerry Blevins to Triple-A Sacramento and called up righty Trystan Magnuson. Blevins allowed 24 baserunners in just 13 2/3 innings of work for the A's this year, while Magnuson surrendered just eight hits while striking out 18 and walking nine over 17 1/3 frames in Sacramento.

Worth noting

- A's catcher Kurt Suzuki has gone 17 consecutive games without a strikeout, the longest streak by an Oakland hitter since Marco Scutaro in 2004.
- The White Sox Adam Dunn had four hits and an RBI in Wednesday's game against the Angels, including a home run, double and two singles, a new season high.
- With Wednesday's win against the Angels, the White Sox have now won back-to-back series for the first time this season.

Major Lee-ague: Braden to undergo shoulder surgery

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 5/11/2011 6:52pm

The A's just announced that Dallas Braden will undergo surgery Monday to repair a torn capsule in his left shoulder. Recovery time will be determined following the procedure, to be performed by Dr. David Altchek (medical director of the Mets) in New York City.

Major Lee-ague: Magnuson recalled, Blevins optioned

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 5/11/2011 4:03pm

The A's just announced they've called up righty Trystan Magnuson from Triple-A Sacramento and optioned left-hander Jerry Blevins. Magnuson, part of the Rajai Davis trade this winter, had a 1.56 ERA with three saves in 12 relief appearances for the River Cats, allowing just eight hits while striking out 19 over 17 1/3 innings. He also walked nine but limited opponents to a .138 average. This marks his first stay in the big leagues.

Blevins, meanwhile, had posted a team-high 4.61 ERA in 14 relief appearances, walking 12 and fanning 13 in 13 2/3 innings. Many of you are wondering why Magnuson and not Joey Devine, who's been throwing extremely well for Sacramento. I'm sure the A's want to make sure that when they bring up Devine he's up for good, and at this point the righty is probably still building up arm strength, given the fact he's only been pitching for a couple of weeks.

More to come on this news later at the A's site.

Major Lee-ague: Cahill's numbers, plus more on Willingham

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 5/10/2011 3:21pm

In the midst of Oakland's 7-2 victory over the Rangers last night, righty Trevor Cahill improved to 6-0 and lowered his ERA to 1.72. Elias had this to say about those numbers, courtesy of the A's PR department:

- Cahill is the first A's starting pitcher to start a season by winning his first six decisions since Dave Stewart did it in each of three straight seasons from 1988 to 1990.
- Cahill is also the first A's pitcher to go 6-0 or better coupled with a sub-2.00 ERA in his first eight starts of a season since Sam Grey went 8-0 with a 1.43 ERA in his first eight starts for Connie Mack's Philadelphia A's in 1925.

Also thanks to the A's PR staff, here is Major League Baseball's official explanation on the procedure for Willingham's appeal:

If a player is going to be in New York within 30 calendar days he has the right to ask for an in-person appeal. Otherwise, any position player with a suspension of three games or less will have to appeal heard via video conference. The video conferencing system is set up at all 30 ballparks. Every attempt will be made to schedule the hearing within the next 10 days.

The A's are not in New York until June 21 for the start of a three-game set against the Mets, so I'd imagine Willingham will have to take part in the video conference.

Gonzalez's career-worst inning washed away

By STEPHEN HAWKINS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

ARLINGTON, Texas — A's starter Gio Gonzalez was glad the rain didn't go away. It washed away the worst inning of his career.

Gonzalez gave up a grand slam to Mitch Moreland in a seven-run third inning by the Texas Rangers before heavy rains led to Wednesday's game being postponed before it became official, thus wiping out all the stats.

"I just want everybody to know I'm buying lottery tickets. Seven lottery tickets," Gonzalez said. "It's safe to say I can play the lottery today. Was there even a game today? I guess it was a live session of BP."

Skies were already threatening and a few raindrops started to fall while the Rangers sent 13 players to the plate in the third. All the runs were charged to Gio Gonzalez, who left with two outs and the bases loaded.

After Hideki Matsui popped out to first base to end the Oakland fourth, and the rain starting to fall harder, the game was stopped and the field covered. The game was called after a delay of 2 hours, 14 minutes, when it was still raining with a forecast of more for at least two or three hours.

"With the rules of baseball, one team gets a break," Oakland manager Bob Geren said. "The rule's been around for a long time. That's the way it goes."

Both teams have today off, but the game — which will be replayed in its entirety — won't be made up until Oakland returns to Texas later this season. It could be made up when they play the final series before the All-Star break in July.

The postponement was the 21st this season, matching the total of all last year.

Gonzalez limited Texas to two runs and five hits over 6½ innings in a win at home against Texas on May 1. This time, he couldn't get out of the third, giving up seven runs on six hits and five walks.

Had the stats counted, Gonzalez's season ERA would have jumped from 2.68 to 3.88.

Mike Napoli flew out to start the Texas third before consecutive singles by Craig Gentry and Julio Borbon and an RBI double by Andres Blanco. After consecutive walks, the latter with the bases loaded, Moreland hit a drive over the Rangers' bullpen in right-center field for a 6-0 lead.

"One apology I want to make is to Mitch. Sorry, buddy. I'll definitely sign you over a check or something, whatever you want," Gonzalez said. "I got away with one and I admit it."

After a 1-2-3 first against the Rangers' lineup, Gonzalez benefited from a double play in a scoreless second after giving up a walk and then a single to Moreland.

"I'm sure he'll throw better next time," Geren said. "He was missing his spots by quite a bit. (Catcher Kurt) Suzuki tried moving around, set up different spots and try to help him out, but it wasn't happening. Even before that, he wasn't real sharp."

BASEBALL: Bobby Shantz on hand for Pottstown-Upper Perk game

By Jeff Stover, Pottstown Mercury

POTTSTOWN — A local baseball legend made his annual visit to his alma mater, and the ballpark that bears his name.

The presence of Bobby Shantz at Wednesday's game between Pottstown and Upper Perkiomen left its accustomed impact on the players, coaches and spectators in attendance at Pottstown High's Shantz Field. It also afforded both teams a bit of inspiration for their Pioneer Athletic Conference contest, which the Indians held on to win by a 12-10 count.

"I collect memorabilia, and I asked the Pottstown AD (athletic director) if he could get me one of the baseballs he autographed," UP manager Frank Mercon recalled. "The guys all enjoyed shaking his hand before the game. I enjoyed it as much as they did."

Mercon also enjoyed seeing his ballclub — less than 24 hours removed from a no-hit loss at the hands of Spring-Ford — bounce back from that debacle in a big way. It teed off with a four-spot in its first at-bat, then added three more in the second and fourth before closing out with a two-run sixth.

The Indians (5-12) augmented their 11-hit offense by waiting out a similar number of walks off two of the Trojans' three pitchers. They ended up needing every one, Pottstown (3-15) staying close and bringing the winning run to the plate in the bottom of the seventh in a bid to close out its season on an up note.

"The kids didn't quit," Pottstown skipper Terry Bechtel noted. "Early in the season, if we had been down four to nothing, we'd have gotten 10-runned. We certainly battled back today."

Like his UP counterpart, Bechtel noted the rush his players got from meeting the octogenarian Shantz — a star major-league pitcher for teams like the Philadelphia Athletics and New York Yankees in the 1950s, the American League's Most Valuable Player in 1952 — in a pre-game "meet and greet." He thought, however, the Trojans may have gotten up too much from the encounter with their program's famous alumnus.

"Our seniors and juniors have had several opportunities to meet him," Bechtel said. "They came out fired up at the start."

So too did Upper Perk, which touched up Pottstown starting pitcher Mike Epps four times in a the first-inning bataround that featured J.D. Ricapito's bases-clearing double. It tagged Epps for two more in the second, chasing him in favor of Nick Zipay.

But Epps redeemed himself at the plate, part of the Pottstown lineup's productive 4-5-6 spots in the order. He, along with Jeff Endy and Zipay, combined to score seven of the Trojans' runs and drive in all 10 on 11-for-12 hitting.

That trio offered hope for Pottstown to score a comeback victory with two out in the bottom of the seventh, after Kyle Dentler drew a walk and stole second. Epps (3-for-3) singled off UP reliever Justin Minder to put runners at the corners for Endy (4-for-5, triple), but Minder got out of the spot by inducing Endy to ground out to short.

"I thought we were in good position then," Bechtel said. "Our guys were putting the ball in play. But their pitcher beat us in the sixth and seventh."

And in what amounted to a game of survival, the Indians held on when it mattered most.

"That's what it was. Survival," Mercon said. "The pitchers were struggling to throw strikes, and the hitters were putting the ball in play."

"We couldn't put them (Pottstown) away. That's what made it nail-biting. But when Justin needed to put the hitters away, he did."

Minder nailed down the save with 1-1/3 innings' relief in place of Ricapito, who took over for starter Dave Hoffman in the fourth. The threesome combined for eight strikeouts, but they yielded a similar number of walks alongside 13 hits.

Zipay swung the hottest bat for the home team, driving in six runs on 4-for-4 hitting that included a double. He also worked 4.1 innings on the mound, fanning four prior to Richy Masciarelli coming on with two out in the sixth.

"All year we improved on our batting statistics," Bechtel noted. "Our strikeouts have gone down, and we've had more hits."

"I was proud of the way we played ... focused," he added. "This was the seniors' last game, and I know they were looking for a positive way to end the season."

Upper Perk's offense featured a number of multiple-hit showings from the likes of Kyle Saylor (3-for-5), Chad Force (2-for-3) and Mike Paul and Alex Moll (both 2-for-4). Paul also doubled while Moll had a two-RBI day.

"It was a good rebound for us," Mercon said. "Spring-Ford is a phenomenal team. I think they're going to go far in the postseason."

NOTES

Along with throwing out the game's first pitch, Shantz signed various items of memorabilia and conversed with fans who turned out for the game. He also received a screen print of the ballpark from school officials. ... Shantz revealed he was approached by the Philadelphia Phillies about throwing out the first pitch of their June 26 inter-league game with the Oakland Athletics at Citizens Bank Park. "I said, 'How come you picked me? I can't even reach the plate.' They said 'You're the only one alive'," he said, drawing laughs from a number of fans with whom he was conversing. ... Pottstown seniors playing in their final game were Will Sweeney, Kyle Dentler, Matt Zahora, Jake Kulp, Epps, Endy and Devon Kirlin.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Outman dominant in another Cats shutout

By Mark Ling / Sacramento River Cats

The River Cats can breathe a sigh of relief.

Their ace is on his way back.

Starter Josh Outman, who entered with a 6.57 ERA, stymied the Memphis lineup to the tune of 6.0 shutout innings with three hits, five walks and six strikeouts, lowering his ERA to 5.28 and leading the Cats to a 7-0 shutout victory.

The shutout was Sacramento's fourth in nine games.

The strong performance on the mound was the third in a row for Outman and was his best of 2011. The lefty prospect had won his last two contests having allowed two runs over 5.0 innings in each.

Luckily for Outman, his teammates had his back Wednesday as they roughed up the Memphis pitching staff for the second night in a row. After scoring eight times in a high-scoring loss Tuesday, the River Cat lineup continued to deliver, contributing seven runs on nine hits.

The scoring started early for Sacramento as Shane Peterson tripled home Anthony Recker and Wes Timmons in the second inning to give the Cats an early 2-0 lead. Two innings later, Josh Horton drove in Peterson and Timmons on a two-out bases-loaded single, extending his team's lead to four.

Neither team managed to score until the seventh when Sacramento scored twice more.

Weeks led off the inning with a walk, then promptly stole second. Shortstop Eric Sogard then singled to left field, advancing Weeks to third. After Weeks was tagged out at home on a Steve Tolleson fielder's choice, Sogard and Tolleson converted a successful double-steal with Sogard scoring on a throwing error by Memphis catcher Tony Cruz. Later in the inning, Recker would drive in Tolleson on a force out at second.

The seventh and final run of the game came in the eighth inning when Josh Horton drilled an RBI sacrifice fly to center, scoring Peterson from third.

Peterson finished the contest going 3-for-3 with two runs, two RBIs and a walk. He was a homer away from the cycle. Six other Cats had one hit, including Timmons who went 1-for-3 with two runs and a walk, moving his team-leading batting average to .371.

The River Cats take the field Thursday night at 5:05 in Memphis. RHP Guillermo Moscoso (2-2, 3.73) will face LHP Raul Valdes (2-1, 6.44).

Nuts Grind Out Win Over Ports

05/11/2011 6:08 PM ET

The Modesto Nuts exacted their revenge for the slugfest the Ports opened up against them the night before, grinding out a 4-3 victory on the special Wednesday day game.

The Ports struck early, putting two runs on the board in the second. Max Stassi made a return to the lineup as the designated hitter, only to begin his afternoon with a walk. Stassi advanced to second on a wild pitch with Myrio Richard at the plate. Richard, who had a grand slam the night before, kept his hot hitting going, knocking an RBI double to left-center field. Richard would come home on a Leonardo Gil single.

The Nuts would take the lead in the sixth, notching three runs against Ports starter, Rob Gilliam. The Nuts got the inning started when Josh Rutledge reached first on a bobbled catch by Michael Choice in center field. Rutledge didn't have to wait long to come home, as Mike Zuanich stepped up and drilled a triple down the left-field line. Gilliam then walked Kiel Roling and Dallas Tarleton. Angelys Nina knocked in a two-RBI double to put the Nuts on top. The Nuts added an insurance run, which they would need, in the seventh. Zuanich was hot all afternoon, going 3-for-5, including the solo home run he hit to give the Nuts the run they needed to maintain their lead.

The Ports responded with a home run in kind that same inning. Michael Gilmartin, who had been struggling in the series, hit his second home run of the season, a solo shot to bring the Ports within one.

The Rally Rat could not help coax a win out of the Ports and the Nuts managed to hang on and earn the victory. The Ports look to get back on the winning track tomorrow as Gary Daley Jr. takes the mound for the Ports. Gates open at 5:05 for a special Challenger Little League Game before the game, and Thirsty Thursday drinks go on sale at 6 p.m. as usual.

Bees Score Five in the Ninth to Win 6-1

By Jon Versteeg, burlingtonbees.com

PEORIA, IL (May 11, 2011)- The Burlington Bees (24-8) scored five runs in the ninth inning to snap a 1-1 tied score and earn a 6-1 win over the Peoria Chiefs (18-15) at O'Brien Field on Wednesday night. DH Josh Whitaker (3-4) hit a bases-clearing triple to snap the tie. He finished with four RBI.

The Chiefs scored a single run in the first inning against Burlington RHP Josh Bowman. 2B Pierre LePage (0-3) walked, and stole both second and third bases. DH Greg Rohan (0-3) grounded out to score LePage and make it 1-0.

The Bees tied the game in the sixth inning. RF Royce Consigli (1-4) singled and went to second base on a wild pitch. Whitaker lined a double to left field to score Consigli and tie the game at 1-1.

2B Nino Leyja (1-4) led off the ninth inning with a single and moved to third base on a bunt by 2B Ryan Pineda (0-3). C John Nester (0-4) hit into a fielder's choice. Leyja was caught in a "rundown" off third base and scored on a throwing error by 3B Arismendy Alcantara. Consigli and SS Yordy Cabrera (0-3) each walked to load the bases.

Whitaker smacked a line drive to right field to drive in three runs and scored on a throwing error by 2B Pierre LePage to make it 6-1.

The Bees and Chiefs finish their series on Thursday night at 6:30 p.m. RHP Tyler Vail (0-0, 2.08) gets the start for the Burlington Bees against RHP Robinson Lopez (2-0, 4.03) for Peoria. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at gobees.com.