

Young right-hander Tyson Ross helps Oakland overcome loss of Dallas Braden, stymies Chicago White Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Tyson Ross says he feels more and more comfortable in the A's starting rotation, which is good because he looks to have himself a long-term gig.

The young right-hander offered further proof Saturday of why Oakland's staff can withstand a major shoulder injury to Dallas Braden and keep on ticking.

Ross went 71/3 innings and rang up eight strikeouts, both career highs, as the A's beat the Chicago White Sox 6-2 in front of 17,291 fans at Overstock.com Coliseum.

"He's got unbelievable stuff," White Sox third baseman Brent Morel said of Ross. "He's one of those guys where you've just gotta hope he throws it over the plate. But when he has control like he did today, he's pretty tough."

On Wednesday the A's announced Braden will undergo shoulder surgery, which might be season-ending. But Ross (3-2) has a 2.32 ERA in five starts since Braden's injury. He has pitched at least six innings over the last four outings and hasn't surrendered more than two runs.

The only damage off him Saturday came on Paul Konerko's two-run homer in the sixth. That snapped a streak of 341/3 innings Ross had gone without allowing a home run to start the season, the longest streak in the major leagues.

He scattered six hits and walked one.

"I'm starting to find my own routine," Ross said. "But it's a battle every five days. You've got to figure out what you have and go with it."

His teammates gave him plenty of run support, and the contributions came from up and down the lineup.

No. 2 hitter Daric Barton had a sacrifice fly, and his leadoff single in the fifth started a three-run rally that opened up a 5-0 lead.

David DeJesus, hitting fifth, drove in two with a triple in the fifth. It was DeJesus' 1,000th major league hit.

No. 9 hitter Cliff Pennington chipped in a run-scoring single in the second.

Chicago starter Gavin Floyd (4-3) was gone by the fifth. He came in having allowed just five earned runs in 34 career innings against the A's, but he surrendered a season-high nine hits in 41/3 innings Saturday.

Absent from the A's offensive party: Designated hitter Hideki Matsui. He is hitting .236 and has started just three of the past six games. It's a mark of his struggles that manager Bob Geren sat him against a right-hander Saturday.

Geren wanted to keep hot-hitting Ryan Sweeney in the lineup, so he played Sweeney in left field and used Josh Willingham at DH.

"We'll look at what happens today," Geren said before the game. "But more than likely, (Matsui) will be back in there (Sunday)."

Sweeney went 0 for 5 to snap a seven-game hitting streak.

Geren said after the game that he was undecided on his Sunday lineup against White Sox lefty Mark Buehrle. Matsui is just 3 for 16 lifetime against Buehrle.

A key moment Saturday came in the fourth, when Ross escaped a no-out jam with runners on second and third. Konerko hit a liner right at first baseman Barton, who threw across the diamond to double up Alexei Ramirez at third base.

Ross got Carlos Quentin swinging to end the threat.

He had the White Sox flailing at his slider all afternoon.

"He had a couple punchouts on 3-2 counts with the slider," A's catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "When you can do that 3-2, hitters don't know what to sit on."

A's update: David DeJesus gets 1,000th major league hit, bottle of champagne

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

When David DeJesus finished his postgame workout Saturday, he had something waiting for him at his locker.

A bottle of Gatorade?

Try a bottle of Champagne, courtesy of ACES, the agency that represents the A's right fielder. The gift was to commemorate DeJesus' 1,000th major league hit, which came in the fifth inning of the A's 6-2 victory over the Chicago White Sox.

DeJesus drove a two-run triple to the gap in right-center that gave Oakland a 4-0 lead and provided starting pitcher Tyson Ross some breathing room.

"That was probably the biggest hit of the game," said A's catcher Kurt Suzuki, who followed with a single to score DeJesus.

DeJesus, 31, said he was unaware of being on the verge of a career milestone.

"It's crazy," he said. "Getting up here is tough, and staying up here is even tougher. It's an awesome honor, and I'm proud of it."

Infielder Adam Rosales (fractured right foot) is hopeful of playing in extended spring training games as soon as Friday. The only baseball activity he has yet to do is run the bases full speed.

He will see a doctor Wednesday, and if he gets cleared, he said he will fly to Phoenix to start playing in games.

"It wouldn't be full-go in Arizona," Rosales said. "I'll probably get a couple of at-bats, have a pinch runner, play in the field. I'm just excited to play some ball."

Rosales is eyeing a return sometime in June.

The A's and Texas Rangers will make up Wednesday's rainout on July 7 in Arlington, with a 5:05 p.m. start. That was supposed to be a day off for Oakland leading into a three-game series at Rangers Ballpark.

Closer Andrew Bailey threw 11/3 innings in an extended spring game in Phoenix, giving up two hits and one run in an 18-pitch outing. Bailey will be evaluated in Oakland on Sunday, and if he checks out OK, it's likely he'll begin a rehab assignment with one of the A's minor league affiliates.

Saturday was Mark Ellis Bat Day, ironic considering the slump the A's second baseman is mired in. He went 0 for 3 to drop his batting average to .177. Ellis has not drawn a walk in his past 20 games, a career-long streak. The game was Ellis' 1,000th at second base. He is third all-time in that category for the franchise.

Chin Music: A's-Rangers makeup date set; Sweeney starts again, Matsui sits

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/14/2011 12:52pm

It's a gloomy afternoon at the Coliseum, as the A's try to even the series with a White Sox team that's suddenly playing very good ball. On to the news ...

—The A's and Texas Rangers will make up Wednesday's rainout on July 7 in Arlington. That was scheduled to be an off-day leading into an Oakland-Texas series, but now the teams will just play a four-game series.

—Ryan Sweeney is swinging a hot bat, and it's earning him some playing time. He's back in left field for the A's for a second straight day, hitting third. Josh Willingham is serving as DH, which pushes Hideki Matsui to the bench. It's an encouraging sign for the A's that Sweeney is forcing his way into the lineup, and it reflects well on the outfield depth that Bob Geren talked up during spring training. But it's also a statement on Matsui's struggles. He's started just three of the A's past six games and is hitting .236. Today is just the third time he hasn't started against a right-handed pitcher. "It's just kind of a thing where I wanted to get Sweeney in there because he's swinging so well," Geren said. "We'll look at what happens today, but more than likely, (Matsui) will be back in there tomorrow."

—Andrew Bailey threw 18 pitches in an extended spring game in Arizona. Geren said he recorded four outs and allowed one bloop hit. More importantly, Bailey was in the 92-94 mph range with his fastball and used all of his pitches. He'll be re-evaluated in Oakland on Sunday, and if all goes well, he might begin a true rehab assignment.

The lineups:

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

White Sox — Pierre LF, Ramirez SS, Dunn DH, Konerko 1B, Quentin RF, Rios CF, Castro C, Beckham 2B, Morel 3B; Floyd RHP.

Milestones for A's David DeJesus, Tyson Ross

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

David DeJesus put some extra flair into his 1,000th career hit.

The A's outfielder, showing signs of emerging from an early-season funk, smacked a two-run triple to right-center in the fifth inning of Oakland's 6-2 victory over the White Sox on Saturday at the Coliseum.

"It's kind of funny - I didn't know I was one away," DeJesus said. "We were up 2-0, and we needed a little more cushion. It's great to get No. 1,000 that way."

A's starter Tyson Ross turned in another strong effort, allowing two runs over 7 1/3 innings and striking out a career-high eight.

"He's really good," White Sox designated hitter Adam Dunn said. "I didn't realize how good his stuff was until I actually stepped in the box. He had one of those sliders you really don't see every day. He changes speeds on it so good. He's got a live arm. ... He shut us down, for sure."

The only runs Ross allowed came after the long bottom of the fifth, when Oakland sent nine men to the plate. In the sixth, Alexei Ramirez singled and with two outs, Paul Konerko homered to left. It was the first homer allowed by Ross this year; he went 34 1/3 innings without giving one up.

Ross (3-2) hasn't allowed more than two runs in any of his past four starts, and he's only made five starts total after taking injured left-hander Dallas Braden's spot.

Ross' consistency is the result of slowing things down, according to catcher Kurt Suzuki, who said, "Now he really controls himself on the mound. He's not going so fast. We've been preaching quality with him - you don't have to be 100 mph as long as it's quality."

Grant Balfour took over from Ross in the eighth with one on and one out and threw two sliders to Ramirez, who grounded the second one to third to start an inning-ending double play. Balfour also pitched the ninth, saving the rest of the bullpen. He has not allowed a run in his past 11 appearances.

DeJesus' triple was his second in as many games and his third overall. He pointed to the fact that he has some familiarity with Chicago starter Gavin Floyd, who usually has good results against Oakland, with a lifetime 3-0 mark and a 1.32 ERA against the A's entering the day.

DeJesus walked in the seventh, and after a single by Kurt Suzuki and a sacrifice bunt by Mark Ellis got him to third, DeJesus showed some alertness. Kevin Kouzmanoff lofted a flyball to right and DeJesus charged partway down the line and stopped, trying to draw a bad throw. Former Stanford player Carlos Quentin overthrew the entire infield and DeJesus sprinted back toward home and came in with ease.

"Very heads-up baserunning," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Oakland first baseman Daric Barton started an important first-to-third double play in the fourth inning on a lineout by Konerko, helping to thwart the White Sox's threat with two men in scoring position and nobody out. Ross called the play "huge."

Barton also provided a sacrifice fly in the second inning, and he singled and scored in the fifth. Cliff Pennington drove in Oakland's first run. He squibbed a single past second baseman Gordon Beckham, and when the ball trickled into right field, third-base coach Mike Gallego waved Kouzmanoff around third to score.

A's Andrew Bailey has good throwing session

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Andrew Bailey pitched in an extended spring game in Arizona on Saturday morning, and the session was a good one.

Bailey threw all his pitches, registered 92 to 94 mph with his fastball and threw 18 pitches and recorded four outs. He allowed two hits, one a bloop single, and a run.

Bailey, the A's closer, will return to Oakland today to be reevaluated before a possible rehab assignment. Considering how careful the team has been with the two-time All-Star since he incurred a forearm strain in mid-March, it's likely his rehab assignment would span several appearances and maybe more should the team want him to work in back-to-back outings before he comes off the disabled list.

Cahill tries to stay unbeaten: Today's starter, **Trevor Cahill**, will attempt to become the first A's pitcher to start the season 7-0 since 1992, when reliever **Jeff Parrett** did it. The last Oakland starter to win his first seven decisions was **Dave Stewart**, who was 8-0 to start 1988.

"He definitely doesn't have any cheap wins," manager **Bob Geren** said of Cahill. "He's earned every one of them."

Since May 1, 2010, Cahill is 24-7 with a 2.55 ERA and a .215 opponents average. The wins are the most in the majors in that stretch.

Cahill has allowed more than one run in only one start this year - at Chicago on April 12, when he gave up four.

Briefly: Mark Ellis is 10-for-73 with zero walks in his past 20 games, the longest stretch of his career without a walk. Geren said that with the team as a whole not hitting, opponents are throwing a lot of strikes. "They're coming right after us - and they should," Geren said. ... The A's are two games into a stretch of playing 20 games without a day off - with all 20 to be played in California.

A's leading off

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

It's a date: The A's and Rangers will make up the game postponed by rain earlier this week at 5 p.m. July 7 in Arlington, Texas. That originally was an open date for both teams before the last series before the All-Star break.

Drumbeat: Andrew Bailey throws in Arizona; A's lineup tidbits

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 5/14/2011, 11:43am

Andrew Bailey threw 18 pitches in an extended spring training game in Arizona this morning and he used all his pitches and averaged 92-94 mph on his fastball. He recorded four outs, and gave up a bloop single; he also had one ball hit hard off him but I'm not sure if it was recorded a hit or if it was an out.

Update: That's been clarified - Bailey gave up two hits, and also one run, in his 1 1/3 innings, according to the A's.

He'll come back here tomorrow to be reevaluated for a rehab assignment. I'd imagine he's looking at a minimum of three rehab appearances, but the A's have been cautious with Bailey, so it could be several more than that, especially if they want him to go back-to-back outings before he comes off the DL. Bailey has been out since the middle of March with a right forearm strain.

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

Manager Bob Geren said that he's DHing Josh Willingham, who had last night off while serving a one-game suspension for bumping umpire Bill Miller, so Geren can keep Ryan Sweeney's hot bat in the lineup. Geren expects to have Hideki Matsui back in at DH tomorrow.

I asked about Mark Ellis, and the fact that, along with batting .181, he's also not drawing walks - he's gone 19 games without one. Geren said that because the A's as a whole aren't hitting much, other teams are going right after them - "and they should," he said. He thinks Ellis looked better last night, the best he has in a while, according to Geren.

There seems to be a lot of chatter among fans about the possibility of bringing up Jemile Weeks to replace Ellis. I'd be a little surprised if that happened at this point; Weeks is playing at Triple-A for the first time, and while he's had a great start there, it would be asking an awful lot of a young player to come up in circumstances like that - supplanting the team's longest-serving player. I just don't see it. The A's aren't a club that do something like that on a short-term basis, unless there's an injury, and I don't think they'd flat give up on Ellis, who is a notoriously slow starter - and who still provides outstanding defense.

As I've mentioned before, to me, the biggest question marks for this team are the corner infield spots, and there is no obvious fix at the Triple-A level for either. You'd have to think that the A's will explore the trade market for a third baseman at some point, if they haven't already - and they probably have, especially after a winter of trying to upgrade at the spot. As always, though, any potential deal would hinge on what the A's would have to give back, and they're not going to trade one of their young starters, especially for a rental player or someone on the back end of their career. And good young, big-league ready corner infielders don't get traded much.

As I tweeted earlier (@susanslusser), the A's and Rangers will make up this week's postponed game on July 7 at Texas.

SHEA HEY

Dodgers probe may push back decision on A's

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle, 5/15/2011

I've asked **Bud Selig** many times over the past two years when his three-man committee would reach a conclusion on the A's ballpark situation.

"Johnny, take it easy," he'd say. "We're working on it."

So I turn on the radio and hear **Lew Wolff** saying he asked Selig at last week's owners meetings in New York when the committee will finish its work.

"Lewie, take it easy. We're working on it."

That's what Wolff relayed to 95.7 FM, the A's new broadcast home. Nice to know the managing general partner gets as much info from the commish as I do.

Now we discover — buried in the 12th paragraph of an Associated Press story — that committee chairman **Bob Starkey** was moved to the Dodger beat. The man who's supposed to be on top of the A's ballpark pursuit joined the team led by **Bob Schieffer**, the ex-Rangers president who was appointed by Selig to investigate the Dodgers' finances.

Is that a conflict of interest? A sign the committee is done with its work? Simply gave up?

No, no and no, an MLB official told me, nothing that Starkey's committee position isn't "all-encompassing." He's an accountant who played a big role in getting a ballpark built for the Twins. He appraised the Mets when **Nelson Doubleday** sold his share to the Wilpons. The man gets around.

Not that it's any relief for Wolff, who would love an answer, whether it's relocating to San Jose, moving to another Oakland site or staying at the Coliseum. Wolff reiterated to the radio station he heard nothing from MLB about any Oakland alternative.

"No decision is worse for us than a decision one way or another," Wolff said.

THE BULL PEN

By John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle.

Josh Willingham was suspended after bumping umpire **Bill Miller**, but Boston manager

Terry Francona wasn't penalized for bumping ump **Joe West**. Could umpires' body types make a difference? Francona said he wasn't worried about being suspended: "If anything, I think Joe should have fouled out after I took the charge."

Mets third baseman **David Wright**,

about whom A's fans can dream, will be heavily pursued by the Tigers, according to the Detroit News.

In an ALCS Game 3, shown the other day on ESPN Classic, an outfielder caught a ball that umps ruled a trap, and they were proved wrong from three camera angles. The broadcaster said, "The NFL is exploring instant replay. Maybe Major League Baseball should, too." The outfielder was **Mickey Rivers**. The announcer was **Howard Cosell**. It was back in 1978.

Also on ESPN, **Nate Schierholtz**

got lots of pub for his throw that nailed **Gerardo Parra**, and it was up for topplay consideration. But it's tough to compete with behindthe- back flips by both White Sox first baseman **Paul Konerko** (whose toss to pitcher

Matt Thornton retired **Torii Hunter**, a game-ending play) and Brewers shortstop **Yuniesky Betancourt** (whose flip with his glove hand to **Rickie Weeks** started a double play).

When the A's were in Kansas City, a fan was spotted wearing a black and orange Giants No. 55 jersey. **Tim Lincecum**

fan? No. He turned around to show " **MATSUI** " across the back and a shoulder patch of the Yomiuri Giants.

Bruce Bochy's All-Star coaches: **Kirk Gibson** of the host Diamondbacks and Washington's **Jim Riggleman**, who managed the Padres when Bochy was their third-base coach in 1993 and 1994. Riggleman was fired, and Bochy took over in 1995.

Ross continues to impress in A's victory

By Rick Eymer / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Athletics right-hander Tyson Ross, UC-Berkeley educated, must feel like he's still in school at times. That is, he's still learning his craft.

"He's learning how to pitch," Oakland catcher Kurt Suzuki said after watching Ross throw an impressive game in a 6-2 victory over the White Sox on Saturday. "We all knew he had great stuff and now he's not trying to go too fast. He's slowing himself down. Quality location, making quality pitches and good things happen."

Ross wished he could have made the A's rotation some other way. It took an injury to Dallas Braden to get him here. Still, the 24-year-old right-hander is making the most of the opportunity.

Ross pitched a career-high 7 1/3 innings, allowing two runs on six hits. He also struck out a career-best eight, and the A's bounced back from Friday night's loss to improve to 11-4 in day games.

"I felt pretty strong the entire way," Ross said. "I was taking my time and trying not to overthrow. I'm learning it's not how hard you throw, it's about executing a pitch. I had a great feel for my slider today and that helped everything."

Ross (3-2) was thrust into the rotation on April 22. He's 2-1 as a starter and helped the A's (20-19) climb back above .500.

"He did a nice job of throwing the sinker down in the strike zone," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He's been pitching well game after game."

The A's gave Ross an early lead, which helped settle him down. Cliff Pennington's infield single allowed Kevin Kouzmanoff to score from second and Daric Barton's sacrifice fly drove in another run to make it 2-0 in the second.

Ross found a groove early, retiring nine of the first 10 White Sox batters he faced. He ran into a bit of trouble in the fourth, walking leadoff hitter Alexei Ramirez and giving up a double to Adam Dunn.

Paul Konerko lined out to Barton at first and alertly snapped the ball to third to turn the 3-5 double play. Ross then struck out the dangerous Carlos Quentin to end the threat.

"He's really good," Dunn said of Ross. "I didn't realize how good of stuff he had until I actually stepped in the box. He had kind of one of those sliders that you don't really see every day. He changes speeds on it so good. He's just got a live arm. He's a good one."

Ross said Barton's double play helped him relax.

Konerko came back to hit a two-run home run against Ross in the sixth, the only runs Chicago (16-24) produced. It also snapped Ross' streak of 34 1/3 innings without giving up a home run this season.

David DeJesus also had a big day. He recorded his 1,000th career hit, a triple that drove in two runs, helping chase White Sox starter Gavin Floyd (4-3) from the game.

"It's crazy, you know. It's longevity," DeJesus said. "This game is tough. Getting up here is tough and staying up here is tougher, and it shows that I'm able to put my years in and put my time in and actually do the job to keep getting the chance to play every day. It's an awesome honor and I'm proud of it."

Suzuki lauds Cahill's mound presence

By Rick Eymer and Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's right-hander Trevor Cahill continues to build on the impressive All-Star resume he began last season.

Oakland catcher Kurt Suzuki says that's not surprising.

"The biggest thing is, when he doesn't have his best stuff, he's still able to compete and get through it," Suzuki said before Saturday's game against the White Sox. "He's picked up right where he left off and is more comfortable. You can see it in his performance."

Cahill, who will start Sunday's series finale against the White Sox, missed the first month of last season with an injury and has been outstanding since returning to the rotation. Since last May 1, he's 24-7 with a 2.55 ERA and a .215 opponents' batting average.

"He doesn't have any cheap wins," A's manager Bob Geren said. "He's earned every one of them. He has pitched extremely well every time out. He's fun to watch and has gained the respect of his peers around the league."

Cahill, unbeaten in seven starts this season, has allowed more than one earned run once in a start this season, an extra-inning loss in Chicago against the White Sox.

"Once he gets into a groove, he's pretty much lights-out," Suzuki said. "Sometimes, he tells me he's not feeling great, and the next thing you know, he's gone seven innings, allowing one run or no runs. You could see how talented he was when he first came up and now he's mentally tougher. It's cool to watch."

Ellis struggling to get on base

OAKLAND -- Mark Ellis has struggled before, but he usually finds ways to get on base. That's not been the case this year.

He entered play Saturday 8-for-66 over his last 19 games and had not drawn a walk during that stretch. Even more complicated is that Ellis has one hit in 12 career at-bats against Saturday's White Sox starter, Gavin Floyd.

"In general, the pitching we've seen so far, they've all had good command," A's manager Bob Geren said. "The team as a whole has not done as much offensively as they can. Other teams see that and just throw strikes, as they should."

Ellis began the day with the lowest on-base percentage in the Majors (.211), the third-lowest slugging percentage (.260) and the fourth-lowest batting average (.181).

"Ellis swung the bat pretty good [on Friday]," Geren said. "Other guys are also starting to come around. Hopefully, they can all catch fire at the same time. We certainly need that."

In the A's 6-2 victory on Saturday, Ellis went 0-for-3 to drop his average to .177. He was 0-for-2 against Floyd.

Bailey nears start of rehab assignment

OAKLAND -- A's closer Andrew Bailey threw in an extended spring training game in Arizona on Saturday, allowing one hit and recording four outs.

Bailey (strained right forearm) will rejoin the team in Oakland on Sunday for re-evaluation and, possibly, a rehab assignment.

The former American League Rookie of the Year has not pitched at the Major League level yet this season.

Bailey used all his pitches on Saturday, and threw between 92 and 94 mph.

Elsewhere, A's infielder Adam Rosales (fractured right foot) is eligible to return to action on Sunday. He hit in the cage on Saturday.

Youth helping A's under the sun

OAKLAND -- The A's have been a different club this season when the sun is out. Despite sitting second (tied with Texas) in the American League West with a record of 20-19, Oakland has enjoyed much success during day games.

The A's are 11-4 in day games -- the second-best day record in the American League -- but are tied for the second-worst mark at night with a 9-15 record. With four of the team's next eight games being day games, the success is a trend manager Bob Geren hopes will continue.

Geren can't pinpoint exactly why the A's have been so successful during the day, but the skipper offered his theory to explain it: the team's youth. Oakland is the 12th-youngest team in the Majors.

"We're, overall, a pretty young team and bounce back pretty well with a short night's sleep," Geren said before Saturday's 6-2 daytime victory. "We get up and guys get it going in the morning."

Oakland's manager also suggested the day atmosphere is more conducive to hitters and that the ball flies a little better during the day, something the team's hitting numbers seem to back up. The A's were hitting .261 with 11 home runs in day games, but that average dips to .217 at night, the second lowest in the AL.

"It's a good feeling knowing that the guys are awake and ready to go in the morning," Geren said. "It's a good thing as a manager, knowing you don't have to do anything extra to get them going -- that they've come to play."

A's-Rangers makeup date scheduled for July 7

OAKLAND -- The Oakland Athletics and Texas Rangers will make up Wednesday's rainout against the Rangers on July 7, which was an off-day for both teams.

The game will be added to a series at Rangers Ballpark in Arlington just before the All-Star break, making it a four-game set.

The A's were fortunate to have the game washed out. Texas was leading, 7-0, in the fourth inning against left-hander Gio Gonzalez, who gave up a grand slam to Mitch Moreland.

The game did not go the required 4 1/2 innings to become official, so the stats will be wiped out and the game played in its entirety.

Pierzynski gives Crisp credit for bold move

By Eric Gilmore / Special to MLB.com

OAKLAND -- After further review, A's center fielder Coco Crisp came much closer to stealing home in the eighth inning on Friday night than White Sox catcher A.J. Pierzynski thought when he made his diving tag in front of the plate.

"I saw the replay," Pierzynski said before Saturday's game against the A's. "It was a lot closer than I thought it was. I thought he was easily out, but it was a couple inches. It was exciting. Safe or out, that's like the most exciting thing I've ever seen on one single play, just because of all that was involved."

There were two outs in the eighth with the White Sox leading, 4-3, when A's pinch-hitter Conor Jackson came to the plate to face lefty Matt Thornton. After Jackson fell behind 0-1, Crisp took off for home as Thornton went into his windup.

"As a catcher, you always peek at the runner to see what he's doing," Pierzynski said. "A lot of guys deke all the time like they're coming, but he didn't stop. I was just like, 'Oh my gosh, hurry up and get me the ball as fast as you can because he's going to make this.' This was the first time I ever had somebody try to do that. Thornton got me the ball, threw it in a good spot where I could handle it.

"The only thing I was thinking is just lay on top of the plate, so if he's going to get there, he's going to basically have to go through me. He had to go so far around. I think he might have actually touched the plate, but after I had already gotten to him."

Pierzynski gave Crisp credit for making such a bold attempt.

"He's a good player. He takes chances like that with his legs, and he has the ability to pull them off a lot of times," Pierzynski said. "It's fun. It's fun to see guys do that and dare to do stuff that's a little bit outside the box."

Teahen to resume activity on Monday

OAKLAND -- The clock is ticking for Mark Teahen to recover from a strained right oblique and avoid a trip to the disabled list.

Teahen, who was forced to leave Wednesday's game against the Angels after the top of the seventh, missed his second straight game Saturday and won't play Sunday in the series finale against the Oakland A's.

"We're going to wait till Monday," White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen said Saturday. "When we get to Chicago, he's going to do some baseball activities, see how he is. He feels a little bit better today, obviously, because he's not doing anything right now.

"As soon as he does some baseball activities, then we're going to make the decision to see what we're going to do. ... But right now, the thing we're going to do today and tomorrow is make sure he stays off the field."

Teahen is spending plenty of time in the trainers' room getting treatment and is taking anti-inflammatory medicine, trying to reduce the swelling. He said he won't truly know if he's making progress until he returns to the field on Monday.

"I've never had an issue with it, so I have no idea how it will respond, but I like to think I heal fairly quickly," said Teahen, who has made appearances at third base, first base, left field and right this season, as well as DH. "So hopefully it responds well."

"I think by the homestand we need to know what way we're going to go with it. I'm spending as much time as I can on the training room table."

Worth noting

- With the White Sox playing a day game after a night game, manager Ozzie Guillen gave catcher A.J. Pierzynski the day off Saturday. "That's the way we're going to do it," Guillen said. "I think he needs more rest. This guy plays so long and so much, sometimes we forget we have to take care of him. That's the reason we did it."
- Infielder Omar Vizquel had two hits Friday night, giving him 2,812 for his career. Entering Saturday's game, he was one hit shy of tying George Sisler for 46th on baseball's all-time hits list. Vizquel wasn't in the starting lineup.
- Entering Saturday's game, Pierzynski had thrown out just three of 29 basestealers, while backup catcher Ramon Castro was 1-for-10. "We have to get better," Guillen said. "How? I always say when you have a guy behind the plate who can throw, it helps. But I think everything comes with the pitchers. If a pitcher holds a guy [close], he gives the catcher a better chance. But there's no doubt we've got to get better."

DeJesus' 1,000th hit is a big one

Outfielder drives in two with fifth-inning triple as Ross throws 7-plus stellar innings

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — David DeJesus put in a tough workout in the weight room after a good day at the plate. He's not going to rest now that he has 1,000 career hits on his record.

DeJesus lined a two-run triple for No. 1,000, Tyson Ross took a shutout into the sixth inning and the Athletics beat the Chicago White Sox 6-2 on Saturday.

"It's crazy, you know? This game is tough," DeJesus said. "Getting up here is tough and staying up here is tougher, and it shows that I'm able to put my time in and actually do the job to keep getting the chance to play every day. I'm proud of it."

Cliff Pennington, Daric Barton and Kurt Suzuki also drove in runs for the A's. Josh Willingham, who served a one-game suspension Friday night, added two hits.

Ross (3-2) gave up two runs on six hits over 7 1/3 innings. The 24-year-old righty struck out a career-high eight and walked one. He put together back-to-back victories for the first time in the majors.

"I'm learning it's not about how hard you throw, but how you execute a pitch," Ross said. "I felt pretty strong the whole way. I had a good feel for my slider and that helped everything."

Paul Konerko homered and Adam Dunn doubled twice for the White Sox, who lost for the second time in seven games.

"Ross threw the ball well," White Sox manager Ozzie Guillen said. "We've only seen him out of the bullpen once, but today he was good. I don't know how they do it; they find pitchers everywhere. Every time you come to this town, it's just one after another after another. It's always been like that. Every time you come to Oakland, you're going to face good pitching."

Gavin Floyd (4-3) allowed five runs and nine hits in 4½ innings, his shortest start since last Sept. 24 when he hurt his shoulder before throwing a pitch against the A's.

Kevin Kouzmanoff doubled in the second and scored on Pennington's single. Barton's sacrifice fly made it 2-0.

In the fifth, DeJesus hit his second triple in as many days, and his third of the season, for a 4-0 lead. Suzuki followed with a single, ending Floyd's afternoon.

"I was struggling right out of the gate," Floyd said. "The ball was up and I tried everything I could to bring the ball down in the strike zone."

Floyd allowed as many runs in this game as he had in 34 previous innings against the A's. He fell to 3-1 in seven starts against Oakland.

"Gavin was struggling the whole game," Guillen said. "He was driving the wrong way almost the whole game, against traffic. He had a tough time finding the plate and being consistent."

Konerko's home run ended Ross' streak of 34 1/3 innings without giving up a long ball. Konerko surpassed Rocky Colavito for 67th on the career homers list with 375.

Dunn, who also struck out twice against Ross, was impressed with the young pitcher.

"He's really good," Dunn said. "I didn't realize how good of stuff he had until I actually stepped in the box. He had one of those sliders that you don't really see every day. He changes speeds on it so good. He's just got a live arm."

Meanwhile, A's closer Andrew Bailey threw 1 1/3 innings in an extended spring training game, allowing a run on two hits. He'll be in Oakland on Sunday and could possibly be sent on a rehab assignment.

The West Coast offense

By Jim Caple, ESPN.com

Shhhh. Silence your cell phone. Turn off your MP3 player and remove your earbuds. Hold your breath, sit absolutely still and be as quiet as a broadcaster before a putt at The Masters. And now listen very, very carefully.

There! Did you hear it? That ever-so-slight "thwap" sound, like a newspaper hitting your doorstep? It's hard to say for sure, but that just might have been a sacrifice fly slapped to medium-center. Which is what baseball teams here on the West Coast now refer to as a big rally.

As you may have heard by now, scoring is down throughout baseball. And nowhere is this more true than out here in the West, where bats are as quiet as footsteps on a sandy beach. Four of the bottom six teams in the majors in scoring (San Francisco and Oakland T-28th, San Diego 27th, Seattle 25th) are on the West Coast. Throw in the Dodgers and five of the six teams in California or Washington are in the bottom eight. Missouri teams are averaging about a run and half more per game than California teams.

RUNS SCORED (MAJORS)

Team	Runs (rank)	RPG
Angels	160 (T-16th)	4.10
Dodgers	144 (23rd)	3.69
Mariners	138 (25th)	3.54
Padres	134 (27th)	3.53
Athletics	132 (T-28th)	3.47
Giants	132 (T-28th)	3.47

Credit great pitching ([Felix Hernandez](#), [Tim Lincecum](#), [Trevor Cahill](#), [Clayton Kershaw](#)). Attribute it to pitcher-friendly ballparks (Seattle, San Diego, San Francisco, Los Angeles). Blame it on anemic hitters ([Jack Cust](#)). Chalk it up to all of the above. However you want to explain it, runs are as precious as water rights in the Pacific time zone.

"I just know that the games that we play against our division foes, because of our pitching and our ballpark, the runs are at a premium," Padres manager Bud Black said. "Here, San Francisco, Dodger Stadium -- these ballparks slant slightly toward the pitcher. Combine that with the pitching staffs and runs are likely going to be hard to score."

Black knows this full well. [Adrian Gonzalez](#) hit 31 home runs with 101 RBIs last season, the only Padre with more than 13 home runs or 58 RBIs. With Gonzalez in Boston, the Padres have been shut out eight times this season. They are on pace to be shut out 34 times, which would break the all-time record.

Padres starter [Dustin Moseley](#) is the leading candidate for the uncoveted Felix Hernandez Award, given annually to the best pitcher with the worst run support in the majors. In Moseley's first seven starts, he went at least six innings in each, allowed no more than three runs, had a 2.47 ERA and won exactly one game. That's because the Padres were shut out in four of the

games and failed to score a run when Moseley was still pitching in five of them. Teammate Tim Stauffer, meanwhile, has a 3.47 ERA and no victories.

The Padres host the Mariners when interleague play starts next week, and it may be the first three-game series in baseball history in which no team scores a run. Last year the Mariners scored fewer runs than they did in 1994, when they didn't play the final two months of the season. While they're scoring a few more runs this season (3.5 per game compared to 3.2 last year), they've scored three runs or less in more games (24) than they had at this point last season (22). Designated hitter Cust has no home runs, nor does any other DH on the team.

"

The days of playing sloppy baseball and knowing you might be OK because you'll hit three home runs in the last three innings are gone.

" -- *Mariners manager Eric Wedge*

Remember the Giants' reputation as a low-scoring team that tortured fans with their ever-so-close wins? Well, they're averaging nearly a run less per game this season. Lincecum, who won the Cy Young with just 15 victories due to poor support in 2009, has a 2.11 ERA but just three wins for the defending world champs, who have scored two or fewer runs in half his starts.

Even the Angels, who are tied for ninth in the American League in runs, have hit just seven home runs at home compared to 26 in one more road game. If that pace doesn't change, Charlie Sheen surely would get skunked again if he bought out another entire outfield section hoping for a home run.

"We're seeing great young pitching coming into the league, and we're seeing established stars continue their performances," Black said. "The way the game has become, everyone realizes how important pitching is. And the defensive part of the games is being talked about more and stressed more. Good defenders are being taken when it comes down to a decision over an offensive player who might be a liability in the field. You're not seeing the offensive player who is limited defensively getting the playing time he might have gotten a decade ago or five years ago."

"It's a throwback," Seattle manager Eric Wedge said. "The team that makes that one play or gets that one hit, a lot of times they'll be the team that wins. The days of playing sloppy baseball and knowing you might be OK because you'll hit three home runs in the last three innings are gone. It's a purer brand of baseball, and I like it."

(Wedge might like it even better if his team actually played good defense.)

Make no mistake. While low-scoring games are a nationwide trend -- the Twins, without Joe Mauer and with Justin Morneau struggling to regain his form, are last in scoring (19 fewer than the Giants and the A's) -- it's just that, as usual, California and the West are leading the trend. There is one benefit to this drop in scoring, though. With so many teams pitching so well and hitting so little, game times are bound to drop as well.

"If that's the case, the commissioner's office will like it," Black said.

Of course, that's assuming games don't go into extra innings. *And we'll head to the 17th with the score still 0-0 ...*

Stemming disaster? 2001 A's showed Howe

By Scott Lauber, Boston Herald, 5/15/2011

Ten years ago, the Oakland Athletics broke spring training with a power-packed offense, a deep and talented pitching staff and grand expectations of winning their division and contending for the World Series.

Then they lost 10 of their first 12 games.

Sound familiar?

Indeed, as the **Red Sox** purported juggernaut stumbled to six straight losses en route to a 2-10 start from which it has yet to fully rebound, struggling to reach the elusive .500 mark, **Art Howe** often has been reminded of his 2001 A's.

"Gloom and doom," the former manager told the Herald from his Texas home, "I'm sure is what (the Red Sox) are faced with every day up there."

Howe recalled plenty of days early in the 2001 season when the sky seemed to be falling in Oakland. With **Johnny Damon**, **Jason Giambi** and **Miguel Tejada** leading the offense, and with **Tim Hudson**, **Barry Zito** and **Mark Mulder** anchoring the rotation, that team was built to win.

Ultimately, the A's did. But the path to a 102-60 record and a playoff berth was pocked with potholes. There were seven one-run heartbreakers in April, an 8-18 mark as of May 1 and only one day with a winning record until July 8. That was when the A's began a 58-17 surge and became only the third team in history to make the playoffs after starting 2-10.

The Red Sox are trying to become the fourth.

"The thing they have is they've been winners," Howe said of the Sox. "It was all new to us. We were a young team still trying to figure out how to win. They already know what it takes to get there."

Looking back, Howe attributes the A's turnaround primarily to three people: Hudson, Zito and Mulder. Between them, the three aces finished 56-25 with a 3.43 ERA. They stayed healthy, combined for 6782/3 innings and gave the A's a chance to win almost every time they pitched.

Otherwise, Howe pointed to the decision to shift Damon to center field (he initially began the season in left before flip-flopping with **Terrence Long**) as a turning point because it helped to stabilize the defense.

"I knew we had a quality team," Howe said. "The most important thing to me was the pitching staff. With the pitching we had, I knew we had the capability of putting a winning streak together. But if I told you I thought we would win 102 games, especially after the way we started, I'd be a liar."

Yet Howe never made his doubts public. He couldn't even recall taking the common approach of holding a team meeting to help reassure his struggling players. Although the Seattle Mariners, who won 116 games in 2001, had a commanding 21-game lead in the AL West on July 3, Howe said he always believed the A's could rally to claim the wild card.

That's precisely what happened. They went 19-8 in July, 22-7 in August and finished with 23 wins in their final 27 games. The A's posted a better record than both the AL East champion New York **Yankees** and Central-winning Cleveland Indians and won the wild card in a landslide, defying the critics who wrote them off in April.

"If I did (call a meeting), it was short and sweet, just enough to say, 'We're going to be fine.' But I couldn't say if I did or not," Howe said. "As a manager, you're the rudder of the ship. You have to be calm. I know (Red Sox manager) **Terry (Francona)** is one of the best at showing that calm. You've got to fight all that negative stuff and concentrate on the team you're playing each day. You've got to block out all the peripherals."

Monday night, when the Red Sox improved to 17-18 on **Carl Crawford**'s walkoff double in the 11th inning against the Minnesota Twins, several players said finally reaching .500 would be the impetus they need to go on a prolonged run. But the Red Sox still haven't crossed that barrier, and they have won more than three straight games only once.

Not since 1996 have the Red Sox gone this far into a season without reaching .500. Only twice, in 1967 and 1988, have they been under .500 this late in a season and still made the playoffs.

Take heart, Howe said. The 2001 A's didn't get over .500 until May 26, their 47th game, but they weren't as many as two games over until they completed their 88th game one day after the All-Star break on July 12.

"That was a milestone for us," Howe said. "If you don't play .500, you're not going to go to the postseason. Once we got to that point, we were off and running."

The 2001 A's joined the 1951 New York Giants and the 1974 Pittsburgh Pirates as the only teams to make the playoffs after starting 2-10. Howe isn't betting against the Red Sox joining the club.

It helps that the Yankees haven't run away with the AL East. Despite their start, the Red Sox remain well within striking distance of their top rival. They also have gotten a strong run of starting pitching, especially from ace lefty **Jon Lester** and right-hander **Josh Beckett**.

And while the offense hasn't been consistent in its production, Howe noted that any lineup that includes so many proven players is certain to break out sooner or later.

"They've got a great offense. It's just a matter of time," Howe said. "We were trying to find the right fits for our lineup. The Red Sox have got things in pretty good order. That's what gives you hope."

Crawford takes it slow

Last month, Crawford's longtime hitting guru told the Herald that the badly slumping left fielder was pressing just enough that he was doing everything too quickly, from striding to the ball to starting his swing.

"He's not allowing the game to come to him," **Sid Holland** told the Herald from Houston. "He's trying to push the issue. And he's let his mind creep in there to mess things up."

And now?

Crawford took an 11-game hitting streak into this weekend's three-game series at Yankee Stadium. During the stretch, he was batting .356 (16-for-45) with two walkoff hits. The difference, according to Francona, is Crawford's timing.

"It looks like things are starting to slow down a little bit," Francona said. "He has that big, open stance, and when he would get back to square, I think it was taking him a little longer than he realized, so he'd get that foot down and the ball was already coming across the plate."

Holland, who has tutored Crawford since the left fielder was 18 years old, planned to call his protege late last month. If he did, he didn't get through. Crawford said he turned off his phone because he was being inundated with advice and encouragement from friends and family.

Finally catching on

It isn't a secret that Red Sox starter **Clay Buchholz** has been most successful with **Victor Martinez** behind the plate. But Martinez signed as a free agent with the Detroit Tigers last winter, and the right-hander is still trying to develop the same synergy with **Jason Varitek** and **Jarrod Saltalamacchia**.

Unlike the Red Sox' other starters, who have been paired with one catcher or the other, Buchholz has worked with both. He has thrown to Saltalamacchia in his last two starts, and by all accounts, the relationship is improving.

"Buch's a guy who's going to shake (off pitches)," Saltalamacchia said. "He does it with me, he does it with Tek, he does it with everybody. But I'm getting to know what his stuff does and what he likes to throw in different situations."

Said Buchholz, "It's still a work in progress, but it's been a lot better. The more you throw to a particular catcher, the more comfortable you're going to get with them."

Last season, Buchholz had a 2.13 ERA with Martinez behind the plate. Without him, Buchholz' ERA was 6.00.

The next to 3,000

Derek Jeter is closing in on becoming the 28th player in the exclusive 3,000-hit club. Barring injury, the Yankees' iconic shortstop likely will reach the milestone next month, and there's even a slim chance it could happen when the Red Sox visit the Bronx on June 7-9.

But with Jeter on the verge of history, it's worth wondering who may be next.

Washington Nationals catcher **Ivan Rodriguez** ranks second among active players with 2,830 hits through Thursday. He would be the first catcher to reach 3,000 hits, but he also will turn 40 in November and is in the final season of a two-year, \$6 million contract.

Next up is Chicago White Sox infielder **Omar Vizquel**, who had 2,809 hits through Thursday. But the 44-year-old has assumed a utility role, and although he has no plans of retirement, he hasn't had a 100-hit season since 2007.

Perhaps the best chance belongs to Yankees third baseman **Alex Rodriguez**, who had 2,701 hits through Thursday. Based on his average of 141 hits over the past three seasons, he could conceivably reach 3,000 early in the 2013 season.

Of the players in the 3,000-hit club, only **Pete Rose**, **Craig Biggio** and **Rafael Palmeiro** aren't in the Hall of Fame. Biggio likely will be a first-ballot selection once he's eligible in 2013. ...

The Seattle Mariners' decision last week to part ways with outfielder **Milton Bradley** hardly came as a surprise. Bradley, 33, always has been temperamental, and his recent behavior was no exception. While standing on second base in an April 29 game in **Fenway Park**, he got ejected for arguing that teammate **Miguel Olivo** was safe on a close play at first.

Asked after the game for his view of what got Bradley booted, Red Sox starter **John Lackey** said: "The same thing that's gone on for him a lot, I think."

By designating Bradley for assignment, the Mariners have 10 days to trade him, release him or send him to the minors. Bradley is making \$12 million this season. ...

A reminder: Former Red Sox general manager **Dan Duquette** will be among the guests at Harvard on Friday and Saturday for a seminar entitled, "Sabermetrics, Scouting and the Science of Baseball."

The event will be limited to 150 of "baseball's best and brainiest fans," according to the organizers. Other guests will include Red Sox assistant director of pro scouting **Jared Porter**; **Mitchel Lichtman**, creator of the UZR defensive metric; Red Sox director of baseball information services **Tom Tippett**; and author **Jonah Keri**, whose book, "The Extra 2 Percent," details the role of Wall Street analytics in the Tampa Bay Rays' recent success.

Crisp's gutsy move not enough for A's loss

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post, 5/14/2011

Oakland, CA – Veteran players know when to take risks and when they do many find success. For Coco Crisp one big play would've made a huge difference in the game yet it ended with the wrong results.

Bottom of the eighth Crisp made a dash for home plate while Conor Jackson was at bat, reliever Matt Thornton caught off guard reacted quickly not trying to get the balk. He dove in front of the plate to prevent Coco from making the tying run. The White Sox took game one of the series beating the A's 4-3.

"He caught me off guard a little bit," said Thornton. "Everyone thought he was going to deke a little bit, fake in and come back out but he kept going."

Leading the team with 10 stolen bases this season and had a career-high 32 stolen bases from 2010. Crisp's tenacity was applauded by few who know the "gutsy" center-fielder would've normally been safe on a play like that. The last time Oakland attempted a steal at home (with no one on base) was May 3, 1980, Wayne Gross vs Detroit in the 2nd inning.

"He's one of a few players I've managed, that has the green light to make a play like that," manager Bob Geren said. "That's the kind of play that if he makes it great, if not he's up there with a pretty good hitter with two outs." "

Brandon McCarthy who earned a starting spot in the rotation this year lost his way early on the mound. Top of the second didn't end soon enough, eight players at bat while putting up a four-spot. The damage was so severe that playing catch up seemed far out of reach.

The opportunity for a come back came for the A's when four players hit back-to-back singles bottom of the seventh. Ryan Sweeney leadoff the inning with a single down the middle, both Hideki Matsui and Kurt Suzuki followed with hits to center field. A wild pitch over home plate brought in the Oakland's first run.

David DeJesus added the second run of the inning with his single RBI to end Phil Humber's night. Reliever Jesse Crain struck out Mark Ellis, Kevin Kouzmanoff hit a sacrifice fly to center field giving the A's their third and final run. While Cliff Pennington was at bat, Crain picked off DeJesus at first for the final out.

Chicago has won five of their last six games, the tides have turned for this team who had a slow start to the season. Still nine games behind first-place Cleveland in the American League Central, but the outlook has definitely changed and it showed tonight.

"It was a nice rally to get back in the game," said Geren. "We just couldn't cover the early 4-0 deficit." "He had an inning where he gave up a couple of walks, it was very uncharacteristic of him." "But he got better as he went on and the bullpen held them."

McCarthy gave up five hits (four earned), walked two and struck out six. He allowed 24 earned runs with 7 walks and 16 strikeouts in four outings. Brandon had a remarkable spring campaign where he struck out 20 and walked one in just 26 innings. His performance earned him a starting spot but tonight it got away from him.

"I lost a feel for my mechanics and my arm slot," he explained. "Just searching more so than anything, it took me a minute to get back make the adjustment and stop the bleeding." "That one inning was too much to save the whole outing and that just can't happen."

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Donaldson double keeps Sacramento hot on road

By Cassie Kolias / Sacramento River Cats

Josh Donaldson doubled on a line drive to center field in the ninth inning to score outfielder Jai Miller for the go-ahead run in a 3-2 victory over Nashville on Saturday night.

First-place Sacramento (25-12) is on a four-game winning streak. Saturday night pit the team with the best record in the Pacific Coast League against the team with the worst record (Nashville: 12-22).

The Sounds were first to score in a hitless third inning. River Cats starting pitcher Travis Banwart walked three consecutive batters (Taylor Green, Caleb Gindl and Jeremy Reed) to load the bases. Mat Gamel was hit-by-pitch to score Green and bring the score 1-0.

Nashville's starter Amaury Rivas shut down Sacramento batters for the first six innings as he dealt his season-high eight strikeouts.

Rivas hit outfielder Adrian Cardenas in the second inning with a pitch, and Cardenas would exit the game in the fifth inning with Jai Miller replacing him in the lineup.

Second baseman Jemile Weeks and shortstop Eric Sogard had a close call in the fifth inning as the two players collided on an Eric Farris line out. Weeks held on to the ball to get the out.

The River Cats finally caught their break in the seventh inning. Third baseman Steven Tolleson led off the inning with a single on a ground ball to left field. Outfielder Matt Carson reached first base on a force attempt throwing error by third baseman Taylor Green. Outfielder Michael Taylor walked to load the bases with no outs.

Catcher Josh Donaldson reached on a fielding error by Green, his second of the seventh inning, to bring home Tolleson and Carson to bring the Cats over the Sounds 2-1.

The Sounds tied the game in the seventh inning. Green reached second base with two out on a fielding error by Taylor, and Gindl doubled on a fly ball to left field to bring him home.

Miller opened the ninth inning with a walk. Donaldson doubled on a line drive to center field to bring home Miller, and bring the River Cats over the Sounds once more to secure the win.

Despite a rough third inning, Banwart was stellar in his first outing against Nashville. He allowed just three hits with three walks in 6.2 innings, while striking out six. He left in the seventh inning, and was charged with the tying run and received a no-decision.

Sacramento's bullpen was lights out as Willie Eyre recorded the win and Joey Devine got his second save of the season.

The series against Nashville continues Sunday at 12:05 p.m. with right-hander Yadel Marti (1-0, 5.46) against right-hander Mark Rogers (0-2, 9.45) at Herschel Greer Stadium in Nashville, Tennessee.

Ladendorf leads RockHounds over Missions

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

Tyler Ladendorf had his best game in a Midland RockHounds uniform as he had three hits to lead the Midland RockHounds to a 6-2 victory over the San Antonio Missions on Saturday night at Citibank Ballpark.

An announced attendance of 7,395 was on hand to see the RockHounds post their second consecutive victory over the rival Missions. The RockHounds used eight hits, a pair of two-run innings and some solid pitching to get their third victory in 11 tries over San Antonio this season.

The RockHounds got another solid start out of Ethan Hollingsworth. He went five innings and gave up two runs on three hits. He also struck out four and walked one.

However, Hollingsworth got off a somewhat shaky start as he walked leadoff batter Blake Tekotte, who later advanced to third on a wild pitch, and then scored on a soft grounder by Kyle Blanks to give the Missions a 1-0 lead in the top of the first inning.

But the RockHounds struck back in the bottom of the inning. The RockHounds took advantage of the wildness from San Antonio starter Casey Kelly (3-1), the top rated prospect in the San Diego Padres organization. Jermaine Mitchell led off the inning with a walk and later scored on a wild pitch by Kelly. Jeremy Barfield later added an RBI single to give the RockHounds a 2-1 lead.

San Antonio tied the game at 2 in the fourth on a James Darnell home run.

But the RockHounds grabbed the lead for good in the sixth when Matt Sulentic tripled and then scored on a throwing error by third baseman Darnell off an Adam Heether grounder.

Midland plated two more runs in the seventh as Ladendorf -- the former Howard College standout -- hit one of his two doubles and then scored when Stephen Parker hit a home run over the right field wall.

Ladendorf added an RBI double in the eighth and raised his batting average to .204 after going 3 for 4 on the night hitting in the No. 9 spot.

Jared Lansford (2-1) got the win in relief, while Mickey Storey pitched the last 1 2/3 innings for his third save of the season.

The RockHounds and Missions meet in the final game of a four-game series at 2 p.m. today at Citibank Ballpark.

NOTES: RockHounds infielder Jason Christian has been played on the disabled list. Taking his place on the active roster is outfielder Adam Heether from Triple-A Sacramento. Heether was batting .153 with one home run and eight RBI in 20 games and part of a crowded outfield with the Rivercats.

Six-Run 6th Leads Ports To 9-4 Win

SAN JOSE, Calif. - Coming into Saturday night's contest, the San Jose Giants hadn't allowed more than eight runs in a game. That changed when the Stockton Ports rolled into town. Using a six-run sixth inning, the Ports took the first meeting of the season with their North Division rivals by a final of 9-4. With the win, the Ports find themselves back in a tie with the Giants for first place in the North.

Stockton got a leadoff double from Conner Crumbliss to open the ballgame, but couldn't take advantage in the 1st inning. Instead, it was San Jose that opened the scoring in the 3rd. Ports starter Fabian Williamson (3-4) found himself in a bases-loaded, no-out jam. Williamson, though, would get Ryan Cavan to hit into a 5-3 double-play to minimize the damage in the inning. On the double-play, Wendell Fairley scored from third to give the Giants a 1-0 lead. Williamson got Hector Sanchez to ground to short to end the inning.

The Ports struck back with three runs of their own in the 4th. Dusty Coleman led off the inning with a solo home run to left off Giants starter Kelvin Marte (3-2) to tie the game at 1-1. Michael Choice followed with an infield single, but was erased on a fielder's choice hit into by Max Stassi, who subsequently stole second--his first stolen base of the season. Two batters later, with two down in the inning, Leonardo Gil put the Ports in front with a triple to center. Gil scored on an ensuing single from Michael Gilmartin to give the Ports a 3-1 advantage.

San Jose tied the game in the bottom of the 5th. Williamson again found himself in a bases-loaded jam, this time with one out. Sanchez came to the plate and singled to left, scoring two runs and knotting the game at 3-3. Williamson, though, with

runners at the corners and one out, would end any further threat by getting Tommy Joseph to hit into an inning-ending 4-6-3 double-play.

Stockton's offense rewarded Williamson with a huge top of the 6th. The Ports loaded the bases with two walks and an infield single to start the inning, and Marte walked Gilmartin with the bases loaded to give the Ports the lead back at 4-3. Marte would then be lifted in favor of Jose Valdez, who was greeted by Rashun Dixon with a two-run double to left. Ryan Lipkin followed with a single to left to make it 7-3. After Crumbliss walked to reload the bases, Dusty Coleman hit a two-run double to left to make it a 9-3 Ports lead. The Ports scored six runs and sent nine men to the plate before the first out was recorded. In all, 12 men came to the plate in what was the Ports' biggest inning of the night.

Marte, who came into the game leading the league in ERA (1.51), took the loss after going five-plus innings and allowing seven runs on six hits while walking a season-high four and striking out five.

Valdez allowed two runs and pitched two innings in relief for the Giants while striking out four.

Williamson would pick up the win for Stockton, going five innings and allowing three runs on seven hits while walking three and striking out three.

Ben Hornbeck pitched a scoreless 6th and 7th while striking out four. Josh Lansford pitched the final two innings, allowing a solo home run to Sanchez in the 8th to make it 9-4. Lansford pitched a perfect 9th, including back-to-back strikeouts of Gary Brown and Brandon Crawford to end the game.

Ari Ronick pitched the final two innings for the Giants and did not allow a run.

Stockton and San Jose will play the second game of their three-game set on Sunday afternoon at San Jose Municipal Stadium. Dan Straily (3-1, 4.17 ERA) takes the hill for the Ports, opposed by Giants right-hander Chris Heston (3-1, 3.31 ERA). First pitch is set for 2 p.m. PDT.

Bees and Kernels Postponed Saturday

By Jon Versteeg, burlingtonbees.com

BURLINGTON, IA (May 14, 2011)-The Burlington Bees and Cedar Rapids Kernels game has been postponed because of wet weather in Burlington. The game will be made up as part of a doubleheader on Sunday afternoon at 2:00. The "Armed Forces Night" event for Saturday has been cancelled and will not be made up.