

A's News Clips, Wednesday, May 18, 2011

Oakland A's pound Los Angeles Angels 14-0

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Mark Ellis has endured a season-long struggle with the bat.

Then how to explain a night such as Tuesday?

It all came so easily for Ellis and his A's teammates in a 14-0 stomping of the Los Angeles Angels.

The run total was a season high, as was their 15 hits.

The A's swept the two-game series and moved into a first-place tie with the Texas Rangers in the American League West. It's the first time the A's have occupied first since June 3 last season, when they also were deadlocked with Texas.

Leading the hit parade was Ellis, the second baseman who has shined defensively but has been the invisible man in the batter's box.

Sure, he collected three hits Sunday against the Chicago White Sox, but one was a bloop job and another was an infield single. And he did bring home Monday's winning run against the Angels with a fielder's-choice grounder.

But he hit the ball with authority Tuesday, finishing 3 for 4 with a season-high four RBIs. That lifted his average from .194 to .210.

Ellis was happiest to deliver with runners on base.

"I really pride myself on doing good in that situation, and I haven't done that this year," he said. "It's nice to get a couple hits with guys in scoring position."

Ellis smoked a run-scoring double off the left-field wall in the A's three-run second. He drove home two more runs with a single to left in the third, when Oakland scored four to push its lead to 7-0.

After grounding out to short in the fourth, his shallow fly to right in the sixth dropped safely to bring home another run. The A's sent 11 men to the plate during that six-run rally.

The 14-0 margin was two runs off the Oakland record for the team's most lopsided shutout victory. The A's blanked the Giants 16-0 on June 26, 2005.

The offensive barrage pushed Gio Gonzalez's excellent outing to a secondary story line, albeit an impressive one. He allowed just one hit in seven innings, striking out seven and walking one.

In his previous outing, Gonzalez allowed seven earned runs in 22/3 innings against Texas, although that game was called because of rain in the fourth inning and his stats were wiped out.

Mother Nature was on Gonzalez's side again Tuesday.

It rained leading up to the game, and the first pitch was delayed 42 minutes.

But once the A's started their conga line around the basepaths, the rain let up enough for the game to be completed.

"I was saying, 'Just let me get through five (to make the game complete),' that would be fine with me," Gonzalez said.

Angels right-hander Tyler Chatwood beat the A's in Anaheim on April 26, but the A's wasted no time jumping on him Tuesday.

Coco Crisp had three hits and two RBIs and Josh Willingham added two hits, two runs and two RBIs.

The A's entered the night with 146 runs, third fewest in the American League. But they have racked up 31 runs through the first five games of this seven-game homestand.

Craig Breslow threw a scoreless eighth inning, and Trystan Magnuson, called up from Triple-A Sacramento on Wednesday, made his major league debut and threw a scoreless ninth.

Oakland A's: Braden has shoulder surgery; expected to miss season

Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Dallas Braden's shoulder surgery Tuesday was deemed successful, but the A's announced news that seemed inevitable:

The left-hander will be sidelined for the rest of the season.

Now the question is whether the A's get back Braden, their longest tenured starting pitcher, for the start of the 2012 season.

Braden had a tear in his anterior capsule repaired. New York Mets pitcher Johan Santana underwent the same procedure in September, and the Mets don't expect him back until shortly before the All-Star break -- a span of roughly nine months.

Tyson Ross has filled in more than capably for Braden, and A's starters entered Tuesday leading the majors with a 2.75 ERA.

"I think (Braden's) absence will be felt off the field as much as on," reliever Craig Breslow said. "He's a vocal leader."

Whom might the A's turn to if another starter goes down?

Josh Outman is 4-1 with a 4.78 ERA for Triple-A Sacramento and has been slow to round into form after a 11/2-year layoff from elbow surgery.

Bobby Cramer is currently on Sacramento's disabled list with an oblique strain.

Travis Banwart, Graham Godfrey and Guillermo Moscoso all have pitched well for the River Cats, but only Moscoso has big league experience among the three.

Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew, who died Tuesday, was one of the best players in Minnesota Twins history.

He also had an A's connection, serving as one of the team's television broadcasters from 1979-82.

"He was such a sweet, gentle person," longtime A's traveling secretary Mickey Morabito said. "He was approachable to anybody. It's sad to lose a guy like that, and not even talking about him as a player."

Closer Andrew Bailey, who threw a 19-pitch inning in an extended spring game Tuesday, hopes to begin a minor league rehab assignment in the next few days. That depends on how his arm feels after playing catch Wednesday.

Chin Music: First pitch at 7:45 p.m. for A's-Angels, Game 2

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/17/2011 7:06pm

The rain hasn't been nearly as bad as Monday night, but first pitch at the Coliseum has been pushed back to 7:45 p.m. It's not raining at the moment, and the tarp has been pulled from the infield. Stay tuned ...

Chin Music: A's update: Dallas Braden, Andrew Bailey, and of course, the rainy weather

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/17/2011 5:50pm

It's déjà vu at the Coliseum, where the rain has been falling, the tarp is on the infield and the A's and Angels are hoping to start tonight's game on time. Weather.com calls for a 25 percent chance of rain at 6 p.m., but then it appears we could get a break until about 10 p.m.

–Big A's news of the day so far: Dallas Braden's shoulder surgery in New York was successful, but the A's announced that he will definitely be sidelined for the rest of the season. Will he recover in time to be ready for the start of the 2012 campaign? There's no indication one way or another. Johan Santana had the same surgery (to repair a torn capsule in his shoulder) in September and it's estimated he may be out until mid-season. The recovery appears to be anywhere from the 7-10 month range.

Braden will be missed on the mound. He's an innings-eater and an intense competitor. But Tyson Ross has filled in more than capably. From talking to players around the clubhouse, the feeling is that Braden's leadership and clubhouse presence will be missed the most. However, I'd expect that Braden will be around the team a lot, much like Ben Sheets was last season after he got hurt. We know that tonight's starter, Gio Gonzalez, would welcome Braden's presence. Can Gonzalez bounce back after Wednesday's disastrous outing in Texas? He's 3-2 with a 3.90 ERA against the Angels in six career starts.

–Andrew Bailey said he feels good after yesterday's one-inning outing at extended spring training. He'll play catch tomorrow and be re-evaluated, and he's hopeful of starting a rehab assignment Thursday, Friday or Saturday. How many outings will he require before coming off the DL? Bailey estimates he'll need at least four, but emphasized that it's just a guess.

–Infielder Adam Rosales (fractured right foot) has a doctor's appointment in Los Angeles tomorrow, and if he gets cleared, he hopes to start playing in extended spring games by the end of the week.

The lineups:

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

Angels: Aybar SS, Abreu DH, Izturis 2B, Hunter RF, Kendrick LF, Callaspo 3B, Trumbo 1B, Mathis C, Bourjos CF; Chatwood RHP.

That's all for now ...

A's trounce Angels 14-0; Gonzalez reigns in rain

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Look up "rain god" in the Baseball Encyclopedia, and you'll see Gio Gonzalez's smiling mug.

Gonzalez's last two starts were in downpours, and he came out looking good both times in altogether different circumstances. Last Wednesday in Arlington, he pitched terribly, but it didn't matter because the game and all stats were wiped out by a Texas-sized storm.

The A's trailed 7-0 at the time, the same score they led by in the third inning Tuesday at the Coliseum, which featured its own rainfall that drenched the few fans. This time, the game lasted all nine innings and the A's waterlogged the Angels 14-0 to sweep a two-game series.

It's the first time since June 3, 2010, the A's have had a share of first place, and the outcome was two runs shy of the most lopsided shutout in Oakland history, a 16-0 win over Brett Tomko and the Giants in 2005.

"The weather is like a hit or miss," said Gonzalez, who admitted his goal was simply to get through five innings (minimum for an official game) for fear of another rainout. "Both times, it's been a good hit for me. It worked in my favor again."

Gonzalez pitched one-hit ball over seven innings and was supported by a rare offensive outburst as the A's reached a season high in runs and hits (15). In one stretch, 10 of 12 batters reached base off Angels starter Tyler Chatwood, 21, the second-youngest big-leaguer, three months older than Cubs shortstop Starlin Castro.

One night after the start of the A's-Angels opener was delayed 1 hour and 25 minutes, Tuesday's game got off 42 minutes late. It was worth the wait for .194-hitting Mark Ellis, who had three hits - pushing his average all the way to .210 - and four RBIs. His first 40 games, he drove in just seven runs.

"It was good. For everybody," Ellis said. "It's no fun not doing what you're capable of doing. You've got to know you can't go 5-for-4. When you don't hit well, you search for things, but the more you do that, the deeper hole you dig yourself in."

Coco Crisp also had three hits and exited in the sixth inning, when the game got ugly. The A's scored six runs in the inning, two on Rich Thompson's bases-loaded walks to Ryan Sweeney and Daric Barton. Josh Willingham's two-run single made it a two-touchdown difference.

Ninety-three pitches got Gonzalez, the modern-day Zeus, through seven innings, and he wishes he could have just one back, the 2-1 fastball to Howie Kendrick to open the fifth inning. Kendrick singled but was doubled off on Alberto Callaspo's liner to Ellis at second.

Gonzalez issued one walk and struck out seven, and his ERA dipped to 2.31. A far cry from the horror he faced last week in Texas, when his ERA would have skyrocketed if his outing had counted.

Having fun with numbers, the team announced a crowd of 12,190, though a tiny fraction of those fans actually attended the game. Fans who stayed late cheered the arrival of relievers Craig Breslow (it was Jewish Heritage Night, after all) and Trystan Magnuson (making his big-league debut).

Dallas Braden injury a 'big blow' to A's starters

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Dallas Braden is lost for the season, but the remaining pitchers in Oakland's rotation will feel his presence.

"He brought us up. He's our mentor. He's the oldest guy," **Trevor Cahill** said. "It's definitely a big blow, but hopefully we learn from him and become the next collective old guys (as leaders). I feel bad for him, but we know Dallas. He'll be back."

Braden, 27, underwent shoulder surgery Tuesday to repair a torn anterior capsule, and manager **Bob Geren** confirmed the left-hander is out for the season. **Tyson Ross** will continue in Braden's rotation spot, and Triple-A pitchers **Bobby Cramer**, **Josh Outman** and **Guillermo Moscoso** are next on the depth chart.

The A's said Braden's surgery was to be similar to **Johan Santana's** in September, and the Mets lefty remains on the disabled list and might not pitch again until July. Do the A's fear Braden might be shelved when the 2012 season opens? Geren wasn't speculating.

The procedure was performed in New York by Dr. **David Altchek**, the Mets' team physician who did Santana's surgery.

Another Bailey update: After **Andrew Bailey** threw a 19-pitch, two-walk inning in his latest outing in Arizona, he arrived in the A's clubhouse and declared he's ready for a minor-league rehab assignment.

"That's what we're hoping for," said Bailey, adding that he expects to make four appearances in the minors before debuting with Oakland. A decision on his next assignment will be made after Bailey plays long toss today.

Tough luck: Former A's pitcher **Vin Mazzaro** had one of the worst lines in history (14 earned runs, 2 1/3 innings, 77 pitches) for the Royals, whose manager, **Ned Yost**, needed the pitcher to save his bullpen.

"The starter came out early, so he probably wasn't as mentally ready as he could've been," Cahill said. "He gave up some hits, and things unraveled. He took one for the team and ate up as many innings as he could."

A's leading off

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

In the booth: Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew, who died Tuesday, was an A's broadcaster in the early 1980s, when Billy Martin managed. They were close friends, but complete opposites, clubhouse manager Steve Vucinich said. "By comparison, Harmon was a teetotaler."

Drumbeat: Dallas Braden 'expected' to miss rest of season

By John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle 5/17/2011 1:18PM

Dallas Braden can't be counted on anymore in 2011. The A's said he's "expected" to miss the rest of the season following shoulder surgery today.

The A's have been vague about what was wrong with Braden, 27, and stated he had surgery to "repair a torn capsule." On the other hand, their medical people suggested the surgery was to be similar to Johan Santana's, and the Mets lefty had a torn anterior capsule.

In any event, without Braden, Tyson Ross will be given a long-term chance in the rotation. The next question on Braden will be whether he'll be ready when the 2012 season begins.

After all, Santana had his surgery in September and hasn't pitched since. He might not get that opportunity until July.

Braden's surgery was performed in New York by David Altchek, the Mets' team doctor who did Santana's surgery. The A's said the surgery was successful and that the recovery time is undetermined. But the key statement in the news release is that Braden "is expected" to "miss the remainder of the 2011 season."

He's 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts.

Braden had been examined by three doctors outside of the organization, and only Altchek recommended surgery. The others were Lewis Yocum and James Andrews.

Gio, A's roll to share of first place in AL West

Backed by early outburst, Gonzalez delivers seven one-hit innings

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 5/18/2011 3:16 AM ET

OAKLAND -- Gio Gonzalez's likeable persona has earned him many friends over the years. Count Mother Nature among them.

The A's lefty, who was spared seven runs from his season line thanks to a rainout in Texas five days ago, nearly faced justice against the Angels on Tuesday, when he was handed a seven-run lead after three frames as a downpour hovered over the Oakland Coliseum.

The weather gods stood by, about ready to laugh in his face and wash it away. Instead, they quieted -- enough, at least -- to keep the game in motion. And Gonzalez, backed by an offensive onslaught, followed suit, silencing the Angels for seven innings in a lopsided 14-0 victory to hand the A's a share of first place in the American League West for the first time since June 3.

"With me, with the weather, it's either hit or miss," Gonzalez said. "Both times, it's been a good hit for me."

Setting up camp in uncharted territory, the A's (22-20) tallied 15 hits of their own, including seven against Angels starter Tyler Chatwood in just 2 1/3 innings. The 14 runs, which followed a 42-minute rain delay leading up to first pitch, marked a season high.

"A real big night for the offense," said manager Bob Geren. "It was nice to see. We've talked so many times before about how so many guys on this team have had good career numbers and they're good hitters, and tonight it looked like they all stepped up and linked a lot of hits together."

The Angels, meanwhile, got just one through seven innings against Gonzalez, who no-hit his opponents through four frames before surrendering a leadoff single to Howard Kendrick in the fifth.

"Howie, oh man," Gonzalez said, smiling. "I'm going to get you back, Howie. I tried to go in on him and you could see the power coming out of him. He got that up the middle and did what a hitter was supposed to do."

The A's southpaw would have no more of it thereafter, throwing 62 of his 93 pitches for strikes -- many of which caught the Angels' nine off-guard.

"He challenged us with the fastball," said Los Angeles outfielder Torii Hunter. "I don't know why he doesn't use that as much. He should use it more. We just couldn't do nothing."

"They weren't as aggressive as before," Gonzalez said. "I would just throw to them. They gave me a chance to go out there and try to get a groove."

Overall, he walked just one and struck out seven in his best statistical start of the season, improving to 5-2 with a 2.31 ERA.

"He was good -- and we weren't," said Angels first baseman Mark Trumbo. "He has a good fastball, 93 to 95 [mph], that he moves around, and a hard curveball, 80, 81. He was putting everything where he wanted it. We just couldn't get anything going."

The A's can surely sympathize. After all, they entered the game having scored just 146 runs -- the third-lowest total in the AL -- in their previous 41 contests. But on Tuesday, that same club was firing from all cylinders, getting hits and RBIs from seven of their starting nine players. Even more, six recorded multiple hits.

Among that crowd was Mark Ellis, who went 3-for-4 with a season-high four RBIs and three runs scored. The longest-tenured member of the team walked into the contest batting .194 but exited well above the Mendoza line.

"It's good for everybody to score as many runs as we did," Ellis said. "We just had good at-bats, especially with runners in scoring position, something we haven't done a very good job of this year. Personally, I usually pride myself on doing good in those situations, and I haven't been very good at it this year, so it was nice to get a couple of hits with runners in scoring position tonight."

The A's were hitting .218 in such situations, yet they went 10-for-18 and plated at least three runs in three separate innings, including four in the third and six in the sixth.

"Gio didn't need 14 runs, obviously, because he was pitching well, but to give him a comfortable lead and let him keep rolling with that kind of offense, that was outstanding," Geren said.

The A's skipper knows it's only mid-May, but he also admitted that standing atop the division leaderboard with the Rangers, above the Angels and Mariners, is rather comforting.

"It's a little bit of a psychological boost," Geren said. "It's early in the year. But from the start of the season, we've had good pitching. That needs to remain, and defense has been a lot better and we're showing signs of life with the bat. That's the team we envisioned coming out of Spring Training.

"Looking forward, getting these guys swinging the bats better like they did tonight, there are better days ahead. I'm encouraged by the way we swung the bats. It's a good feeling that we're in first place. It's a small factor, but I feel positive going forward."

The quick two-game sweep over the Angels (22-21) precedes a four-game set in Los Angeles that awaits on Monday. Needless to say, the A's are hoping Tuesday's outburst carries over into their next game, and the one after that -- and every one that follows that one.

"Hitting is contagious," Geren said. "A game like this could definitely catapult guys into feeling good about themselves and driving up their numbers, and ultimately scoring more runs and winning more games."

Braden out for season after successful surgery

Tear in southpaw's left shoulder leaves void in Oakland rotation

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's starter Dallas Braden underwent what the team deemed "successful" surgery to repair a torn anterior capsule in his pitching shoulder on Tuesday morning and, as expected, will sit out the remainder of the season -- leaving not just a void on the field, but off it as well.

"You never want to see this happen to anyone," said A's manager Bob Geren. "It's a tough part of our business. It's unfortunate for him he'll miss the rest of the season. We're going to miss him for sure."

Braden's surgery was performed in New York by Mets medical director David Altchek, who orchestrated the same operation on left-hander Johan Santana in September. The Mets hurler has yet to return to action and isn't due back until midseason at the earliest.

Given that time frame, the next question for Braden surrounds his ability to be ready by the start of the 2012 campaign. The A's, who saw him go 1-1 with a 3.00 ERA in three starts before his injury, aren't ready to put a time stamp on a return. However, they're hopeful Braden's gritty nature equates to a quick recovery.

"His attitude, the way he's determined," Geren said, "that definitely always helps in rehab."

So does experience with the process. Braden, 27, has been the victim of numerous injuries throughout his eight-year professional career, including a shoulder problem that led to surgery and forced him to miss much of the 2006 Minor League campaign.

Never before, though, has he faced a break from the Majors for an extended period of time. As a result, the A's will rely on 24-year-old Tyson Ross to fill Braden's rotation spot through season's end. The young righty, who makes his next start Thursday against the Twins, is 3-2 with a 2.50 ERA in eight games -- five starts -- this season.

The A's also have a good amount of readily available depth in Sacramento, including Josh Outman, who has compiled a 4-1 record and a 4.78 ERA in eight starts for the River Cats.

Outman, who spent all of last season rehabbing from Tommy John surgery after he was a rotation mainstay for much of 2008, was a lead contender for Oakland's fifth starter spot out of Spring Training before experiencing a setback with his mechanics. But reports on his progress have delivered nothing but good news, Geren said.

"He's been throwing the ball well down there," Geren said. "He was obviously a little rusty, but he's getting back to where he was now."

"[Sacramento] has some guys down there that could help us if needed."

Bailey declares himself ready for rehab stint

A's closer hurls 19 pitches in second extended spring outing

By Jane Lee and Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Right-hander Andrew Bailey, fresh off his second extended spring training appearance, declared himself ready for a Minor League rehab stint upon his return to the A's clubhouse on Tuesday afternoon.

Bailey will first have to be cleared for an assignment on Wednesday, when he's expected to throw long toss and determine how his arm has responded to his Tuesday outing in Arizona. If all goes well, he'll embark on what he figures to be at least four Minor League appearances before rejoining the A's.

Oakland's closer pitched one inning Tuesday, giving up no hits while walking two and striking out one. He threw 19 pitches - utilizing all in his arsenal -- and noted that, from this point forward, he's "just trying to work on sharpness."

"I felt great," Bailey said. "I think it's definitely more of a baseball thing now, and hopefully it responds the way we want it to tomorrow."

The A's bullpen, which is hoping to have its two-time All-Star back before the end of the month, has allowed just one earned run or fewer in 22 of the team's past 25 games. Overall, it has an American League-best 2.73 ERA.

Geren believes Barton turning things around

OAKLAND -- Daric Barton may be hitting just .185 over his past 25 games, but A's manager Bob Geren thinks his first baseman has finally found a groove.

Barton's struggles come following a 2010 campaign in which he led the American League with 110 walks and boasted a .393 on-base percentage, which was the second-best mark on the club.

"He was a huge part of our offense and he's had a little bit of a slow start, but I think he's turned it around," Geren said.

Despite the rough stretch, Barton has recorded multiple hits in back-to-back games (going 4-for-9), including the game-tying RBI to force extra innings in Monday's win over the Angels.

"He looks a lot better," Geren said. "He just needed to relax and focus on short-term goals, and not look too far ahead into the future. I talked to him about not just taking it one at-bat at a time, but one pitch at a time."

Barton did just that when he drove in Coco Crisp with two down in the ninth. The Vermont native was down to his last strike against Angels righty Jordan Walden, but he slapped a line-drive single to center that gave the A's added life and an opportunity to win it in extras.

"That was a big hit last night, for the team obviously, but for [Barton], personally," Geren said. "To come up in that situation, where you make an out and the game's over, he got a hit and we had a chance to win the game."

Balfour visits kids at local elementary school

OAKLAND -- Grant Balfour is relatively new to Oakland, so he relished the opportunity he had Tuesday afternoon when he visited Edison Elementary School in Alameda, Calif.

"I just wanted to get out and get in the community a little bit, being a new player here, too," Balfour said. "It was nice to see the younger kids. They were super excited and super enthusiastic."

Balfour's trip to the school was a part of the A's "Step Up to the Plate for Education" fundraising program, which allows schools to sell tickets to select A's games, and in turn, the A's donate up to 50 percent of the ticket sales directly back to the participating schools. So far this year, more than \$40,000 has been given to schools in the area.

As part of his visit, Balfour took part in an assembly to thank more than 300 students for raising \$5,213, the most raised by a school since the program began in 2004. The money raised will go to the Edison PTA, which funds all the school's field trips, assemblies, computer lab and various other things.

"Obviously they're raising it for their school, for their education, and just to help them along the way ... and it also helps the A's," Balfour said. "I just thanked them for that, and for helping the A's. It looked like a lot of A's fans there. It was cool to go out there, show your face, get some one-on-one with them and maybe inspire them a little bit."

Twins hit Oakland going for second win in a row

By Arden Zwelling / MLB.com | 5/18/2011

A bad season got worse for the Twins with Tuesday's passing of Hall of Famer and Minnesota legend Harmon Killebrew at the age of 74.

Killebrew played 14 seasons in a Twins uniform -- after seven with the Washington Senators, who moved to Minnesota in 1961 -- stroking 573 home runs and collecting 1,574 RBIs in those 21 years, both franchise records.

"Baseball, as bad as we're playing, is kind of secondary to all this stuff," said Twins first baseman Justin Morneau. "We'll see if we can get him a win. That would be nice."

That's exactly what the Twins did, as they hung on for a 2-1 victory over Felix Hernandez and the Mariners. Morneau and company will have a chance to make it two in a row Wednesday against the A's.

Many of the team's veteran players addressed the team in the clubhouse after Monday's 5-2 loss, which extended the team's losing streak to nine -- the Twins' longest since 1998.

"The thing is, if you're scuffling yourself, it's hard to call people out," said manager Ron Gardenhire. "But there comes a point where it has to be done. Last night there were some veterans who stepped up, and it was good, it was really good, because like I said, [coaches] can say so much, I can only say so much. I think we're at the point where players have to police themselves, too."

Whatever was said obviously worked, as the Twins bounced back with just their fourth win of the month. Right-hander Carl Pavano -- who is 2-4 with a 5.89 ERA -- will be tasked with containing the A's and helping the Twins continue to get back on track.

Oakland will counter with Brandon McCarthy, who is looking to bounce back from a rough outing Friday against the White Sox. The right-hander faced one over the minimum through six innings but suffered through a rough seventh, when he allowed three hits, two walks and committed a throwing error as the White Sox tagged him for four runs.

But the Twins present a good matchup for McCarthy to right the ship, as the 27-year-old has a 1.63 ERA in his seven career appearances against Minnesota.

In fact, McCarthy's only win of the season came against the Twins on April 10, when he allowed nine hits and two earned runs over 7 1/3 innings while striking out five.

"Hopefully I can throw well against them. It's not an easy lineup to face -- there's a lot of good hitters in that lineup, there's smart hitters in that lineup," McCarthy said. "They're like any other team, where if you make your pitches, you'll probably come out on top."

Twins: Killebrew honored

The Twins will wear a commemorative No. 3 patch on the right sleeve of their uniforms for the rest of the season to honor Killebrew.

The Twins retired the legend's number in 1975. The club will also hang Killebrew's No. 3 jersey in the dugout for the rest of the season and print Killebrew's signature on the outfield wall at Target Field.

"It's fitting," said Twins infielder Michael Cuddyer. "If we could all wear the number 3 that would be fitting too, but obviously that can't happen. But wearing the patch to remember him is really the least we could do."

A's: Bailey nears return

Injured closer Andrew Bailey is inching closer to rejoining the team after declaring himself ready for a Minor League rehab stint Tuesday.

The 26-year-old right-hander has yet to pitch this season as he nurses a strained right forearm. He has made two extended spring training appearances and will throw long toss on Wednesday to determine how his arm has responded to the work.

If Bailey feels good Wednesday, he will begin a Minor League rehab assignment for at least four games before rejoining the team.

"I felt great," Bailey said. "I think it's definitely more of a baseball thing now and hopefully it responds the way we want it to tomorrow."

Worth noting

The A's went off on the Angels for 14 runs on Tuesday, their first double-digit run total this season and the most they have scored since July 10, 2010, when they put up 15 -- also against the Angels. ... Cuddyer extended his hitting streak to four games Tuesday, going 2-for-3 with two RBIs. ... Wednesday's game will be the Twins' 26th on the road this season -- the second-highest total in the Majors. Minnesota is 9-16 on the road, batting .212 with a team ERA of 4.51.

A's rout Angels, 14-0, move into first-place tie

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Gio Gonzalez pitched seven innings of one-hit ball, and the Athletics emerged from a rain-soaked start to hammer the Los Angeles Angels 14-0 Tuesday night to move into a tie with Texas for first place in the AL West.

Gonzalez (5-2) struck out seven and allowed only a line-drive single to Howie Kendrick leading off the fifth. He also walked one and cruised the rest of the way behind a dominant breaking ball and an offense that had its best game of the season.

Mark Ellis had three hits and four RBIs and Coco Crisp finished with three hits and two RBIs to chase starter Tyler Chatwood (2-2) in the third, handing the rookie the worst loss of his career. Oakland's 14 runs and 15 hits were season highs.

The only other hit for the Angels came on Jeff Mathis' single leading off the ninth against Trystan Magnuson, who was making his major-league debut. Craig Breslow also pitched a perfect eighth to send the Angels tumbling to its third straight loss.

Gonzalez has been on the right side of consecutive weather-impacted starts.

He allowed seven runs in just 2½ innings at Texas in his previous appearance. But with the Rangers leading 7-0 in the middle of the fourth, the game was called for rain and didn't count.

The start of the Angels game was delayed 42 minutes because of a rare May rainstorm in the Bay Area.

With the clouds passing through in patches, the roughest of it never seemed to come with Gonzalez on the mound.

Instead, A's hitters came through the rain first four innings to give Gonzalez all the cover he would need.

Ellis and Kevin Kouzmanoff had back-to-back RBI doubles, and Coco Crisp had a run-scoring single in the second inning to give Oakland a 3-0 lead. The rain subsided briefly for Gonzalez to work a perfect inning before a huge down pour.

One from the skies.

Another from Oakland's bats.

Ellis added a two-run single and Crisp had another RBI single to highlight a four-run third that opened a 7-0 lead.

Kurt Suzuki also hit an RBI double off reliever Trevor Bell to score Hideki Matsui in the fourth.

By the end of the fourth inning, every Oakland batter had reached base except for Daric Barton.

Chatwood's final line: seven runs allowed on seven hits and two walks in 2« innings, by far the worst start of the rookie's career.

Chatwood had given up seven runs in his last three starts combined, a total of 18« innings of solid baseball. He also had pitched five innings or more in six of his seven major league starts.

His counterpart was on the opposite side of the spectrum.

Gonzalez retired the first 11 batters with relative ease until walking Maicer Izturis. That spoiled the chance of matching the perfect game that teammate and friend Dallas Braden — who coincidentally had season-ending shoulder surgery Tuesday — threw last May against Tampa Bay.

Kendrick took away the no-hitter with his single up the middle in the fifth. Gonzalez got him to ground into a double play, retiring the final seven batters he faced.

Josh Willingham hit a two-run single off reliever Kevin Jesper, and the A's drew a pair of bases-loaded walks to cap a six-run sixth that put them ahead 14-0. The A's hadn't had a share of the division lead since June 3 last year, when they were tied with Texas.

NOTES: A moment of silence was held before the game for Minnesota Twins slugger and Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew, who died Tuesday at 74 after battling esophageal cancer. Killebrew was part of Oakland's TV broadcast in 1982, according to the team's media guide. ... Oakland closer Andrew Bailey allowed no hits in one inning of work in an extended spring training game in Arizona. The A's two-time All-Star could begin a rehab assignment in the minors next week. ... Angels manager Mike Scoscia said he will not have his pitchers take batting practice until early June. Interleague play begins next week, but Los Angeles doesn't play away from home against a National League team until June 17 against the New York Mets, where there is no designated hitter. ... The A's previous season high in hits was 13 against Toronto on April 5, and their previous high in runs scored was nine on April 23 against Seattle.

Gutierrez: Barton starting to scratch surface at plate

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

OAKLAND - How frustrating have the first 40-some games of the season been for one-time wunderkind Daric Barton?

Not even *he* was sure how he came through in the clutch Monday night with two out in the ninth inning and the tying run at second base.

"The way I've been playing," Barton shrugged in the A's clubhouse the following afternoon, "I don't know how I hit that ball."

His two-out, two-strike single to center field off Jordan Walden scored Coco Crisp and the A's rallied to win in the 10th.

"That was a big hit for him (Monday) night," said A's manager Bob Geren. "A huge moment for him."

So how did the first baseman follow up his second consecutive multi-hit game on Tuesday night? By going 0-for-4, and, until drawing a bases-loaded walk in the sixth inning, Barton had been the lone A's batter to not reach base in Oakland's eventual record 14-0 blowout of the Los Angeles Angels.

Such has been the roller coaster of Barton's season and, to some degree, his career in Oakland.

Consider: prior to Tuesday night's rain-delayed, the one-time "phenom" was batting .321 (9 for 28), with a double and four RBI and a .394 on-base percentage in his previous seven games.

But in his first 32 games, he was batting a sickly .196 with six runs batted in.

"The last four or five games, I've really been feeling comfortable in the box, squaring it up," he said. "I'm not trying to over-swing.

"It's just trial and error."

And a glimpse into his past.

Barton pulled out tapes from September of 2007, when he was a late-season call-up, for study and inspiration. He batted a sick .347 in 18 games, with four home runs, eight RBI and a ridiculous .639 slugging percentage. He set an Oakland record by reaching base in his first 20 big league games.

He was living up to his billing after coming to Oakland with Dan Haren and Kiko Calero in the Mark Mulder trade with St. Louis. And none other than Frank Thomas called the converted catcher "The Phenom" in spring training of 2006.

"That was the best I've ever felt," Barton said of his first foray into the Show. "I was keeping it simple. I wasn't worrying about my legs, worrying about my hands. Just swinging.

"I had fun, and I was living the dream."

Barton, 25, fits the A's trite Moneyball philosophy, having led the American League with 110 walks last season and was fifth in on-base percentage (.393).

But many critics point to his relative lack of power for a corner infielder. He is riding a career-long 42-game homer-less streak, obviously dating to last season, and he has gone deep but 26 times in his 411 major league games.

"I've never really been a home run-kind of guy," he said. "I know people talk. People always talk.

"I can crush a ball here (at the vast Oakland Coliseum) and it's not going to go out. It's just the way this park plays. As long as I'm in the lineup, they can say what they want."

An oh-fer would be a serious downer for Barton earlier this season. Now? He says he's trying to make every at-bat a new at-bat, by not carrying his frustrations and worries over.

"I can't think, 'I can't go 0-for-4' when I'm just 0 for 1, you know?" he said.

Geren thinks he knows. How else to explain keeping the scuffling Barton at the No. 2 hole.

And how to explain the left-handed batting Barton hitting lefties better than righties, by a significant margin (.295 to .188, entering Tuesday)?

"A lot of things can lead to a low batting average for a short period of time," Geren said. "There's physical and mental things."

After grounding out three times and flying out to left, Barton was able to stay focused enough to grind out a bases-loaded walk with two out in the sixth-inning Tuesday.

"He looks a lot better," Geren said. "He just needed to relax and focus on short-term goals. Take it one pitch at a time. Relax, and be aggressive.

"We don't realize how young he is."

Nor how much potential he seemingly still has to meet.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Ruiz Homers To Push Frisco Over Hounds in Ninth

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

Dr Pepper Ballpark ... Frisco, TX - - -

The combined margin of victory in the first five games between the RockHounds and Frisco in the 2011 season was seven runs, or an average of 1.4 runs per game. Tuesday afternoon's game was even closer.

In Monday night's series opener, the clubs were scoreless through seven innings, with the RockHounds taking a 2-0 lead in the eighth only to see Frisco score three times in the eighth, the winning runs coming on a 2-run home run from Tommy Mendonca.

Tuesday, the clubs were in a scoreless tie in the last of the ninth ... with two out ... no one on ... and an 0-2 count on Jose Ruiz.

The RoughRiders first baseman sent the next pitch high over the right field wall; a walk-off home run that gave Frisco a 1-0 win.

- The series between the RockHounds and RoughRiders has been remarkably tight. The first four games were played at Citibank Ballpark (May 7-10), with the third game of the set decided by three runs (Frisco, 8-5). Each of the five other games has been a one-run contest, including one going to extra innings and Tuesday's 1-0 walk-off.

- Jermaine Mitchell went 1-for-2 with a double, a hit by pitch and a walk. Mitchell has now hit in 24-of-his-last-26 games (41-98, .418). He is second in the league in batting (.352) and on-base percentage (.477) and leads the Texas League in hits (50), runs (41), walks (33) and triples (10). His 10 triples rank second in all of Minor League Baseball.

- The Oakland A's have made two personnel moves affecting the RockHounds: Pitcher Justin Murray has been released ... and pitcher Polin Trinidad has been signed as a free agent.

Polin, who was originally with the Houston Astros organization, joined the RockHounds Monday in Frisco. The lefty pitched for the Astros' Double-A club in Corpus Christi in parts of three seasons (2008-10) and spent time at the Triple-A level for the Astros in Round Rock in each of the last two seasons. He was a member of the Astros' 40-man roster as recently as 2010, before signing as a minor league free agent with the Chicago Cubs in December. He opened the year with the (AAA) Iowa Cubs, but was released May 5.

- The RockHounds continue their eight-game road trip with games against the RoughRiders Wednesday and Thursday evenings (7:00), then travel to Corpus Christi for a four-game set with the Hooks.

- American League MVP (2010) Josh Hamilton is likely to begin his re-hab assignment in Frisco Wednesday. He would join All-Star outfielder (and former RockHound) Nelson Cruz in the RoughRiders line-up. In addition, the Rangers' Scott Feldman is the probable starter for Frisco in Thursday's series finale.

Ports Lackluster In 4-3 Loss To Blaze

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. - Less than 24 hours after playing an emotionally draining and physically exhausting 18-inning game at San Jose, the Stockton Ports looked to be a tired bunch in the first game of a four-game set in Bakersfield on Tuesday night. The Ports struck out 17 times and committed four errors, including two in one play in the eighth inning that ultimately cost them the ballgame in a 4-3 loss to the Bakersfield Blaze.

Bakersfield came out in the bottom of the 1st and scored the game's first run off Ports starter Gary Daley, Jr. With two on and two out, Henry Rodriguez put the Blaze on the board with an RBI single to left to put the Blaze up 1-0.

Blaze starter J.C. Sulbaran was overpowering for Ports batters. Sulbaran struck out the side in each of the first three innings. In the 3rd, however, the Ports were able to scratch together some hits and come up with a pair of runs. With two on and two out, Michael Choice doubled down the right-field line to put Stockton in front 2-1.

The Blaze tied it in the third. Daley yielded back-to-back walks to start the inning. Brodie Green had the first of those walks and proceeded to steal second base, going to third on a throwing error made by Ports catcher Juan Nunez. Green would eventually score on a wild pitch, an unearned run for Daley that tied the game at 2-2.

The Ports took the lead back in the 4th. After Myrio Richard walked to start the frame, Anthony Aliotti doubled to put runners at second and third with nobody out. Max Stassi came up next and grounded to short to bring in Richard and put the Ports back in front 3-2. Stassi's groundout was the first out recorded by Sulbaran that wasn't a strikeout.

Sulbaran received a no-decision, going five innings and allowing three runs on four hits while striking out a season-high 13. Bakersfield would even the score in the 5th when ninth-place hitter Chris Richburg led off the inning with his first home run of the season.

Daley would retire five of his last six hitters following the home run. He received a no-decision, going 5.2 innings and allowing three runs (two earned) on six hits while striking out six and walking three.

The game remained knotted at 3-3 until the last of the 8th. Eric Campbell led off the inning with a ground ball to short that got through the legs of Dusty Coleman and into left field. As Campbell went for second base, the throw in from Mitch LeVier sailed wide and ultimately went out of play and Campbell was awarded home plate to put the Blaze in front 4-3.

The run was unearned and the only one allowed by Ports reliever Josh Lansford (1-1), who took the tough-luck loss after going 2.1 innings in relief.

The Ports wasted a prime scoring opportunity in the top of the 9th. With one out, Stassi doubled to straight-away center field and then advanced to third on a wild pitch. Stockton would strand the possible-tying run, however, as Blaze reliever Tim Crabbe (1-0) would strike out Leonardo Gil and get pinch-hitter Michael Gilmartin to foul out to third to end the ballgame.

Crabbe earned the win after going four innings in long-relief. He didn't allow a run and gave up just two hits while striking out four.

The Ports, having lost three straight, will try and get back on the winning track as they square off with the Blaze in a matinee contest on Wednesday afternoon at Sam Lynn Ballpark. Right-hander Murphy Smith (1-3, 5.59 ERA) will toe the slab for Stockton, opposed by Bakersfield righty Lance Janke (3-1, 6.16 ERA). First pitch is set for 12 p.m. PDT.

Bees Sneak Past 'Kings 8-6

By Jon Versteeg, burlingtonbees.com

BURLINGTON, IA- The Burlington Bees (28-9) scored four runs in the first inning on a grand slam by 1B Josh Whitaker (2-5) to earn an 8-6 win over the Clinton LumberKings (10-29) at Community Field on Tuesday night.

The LumberKings scored a single run in the first inning against Burlington RHP Josh Bowman. 1B Tim Morris (1-5) and LF Mickey Wiswall (2-5) hit back-to-back doubles for a 1-0 lead.

Burlington responded by loading the bases in the first inning against Clinton RHP George Mieses (1-4). RF Royce Consigli (0-3) walked, 2B Nino Leyja (3-4) singled and 3B Tony Thompson (0-2) walked to load the bases before Whitaker sent his third home run of the season.

After Clinton scored a run in the fourth inning, the Bees pushed across three runs in the bottom of the fourth inning. 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (1-3) singled and moved to second base when CF Tyreece House (0-3) reached on an error. C John Nester (1-3) singled and moved to second on a throwing error by RF Jabari Blash. Kirby-Jones scored for a 5-2 Burlington lead.

Consigli reached on a fielder's choice and Leyja singled to make it 7-2.

SS Yordy Cabrera (1-4) homered to right field in the fifth inning to give the Bees an 8-2 lead.

RF Jabari Blash (1-2) hit a solo home run in the Clinton sixth inning to make it 8-3.