

A's News Clips, Friday, May 20, 2011

Oakland A's pitcher Tyson Ross injured in 11-1 loss to Minnesota Twins

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The scoreboard told an ugly story for the A's on Thursday, but they had bigger concerns than a blowout loss to the American League's worst team.

Starter Tyson Ross lasted just seven pitches before leaving the game with a left oblique strain, which figures to land the right-hander on the disabled list.

That set an ominous tone for an 11-1 defeat to the Minnesota Twins, who rapped out 16 hits and showed no mercy on Oakland's bullpen.

So much for that momentum the A's generated from a two-game sweep of the Los Angeles Angels.

They woke up Wednesday tied for first place in the American League West. By Thursday afternoon, the A's (22-22) had dropped two to the lowly Twins (15-27) and faced the prospect of losing another starting pitcher to a significant injury.

Ross was filling in for Dallas Braden, who underwent season-ending shoulder surgery Tuesday.

A's assistant general manager David Forst was asked how he felt about his team's pitching depth in light of the injury to Ross, who is scheduled for an MRI exam Friday.

"Not as good as I did five days ago," Forst said. "We'll know more (Friday). From there, we'll all get together and figure what we can do. I don't know a lot of teams that will give up any starting pitchers this time of year."

After allowing Denard Span's leadoff single in the first inning, Ross said he felt something grab on a fastball to No. 2 hitter Trevor Plouffe. He threw one more pitch and called catcher Kurt Suzuki to the mound, motioning to the left side of his body.

A's manager Bob Geren and head trainer Nick Paparesta also visited. After a few minutes, Ross walked to the dugout, and Geren summoned reliever David Purcey.

"I felt like I had a muscle spasm, like a cramp almost," said Ross, who also suffered the loss to drop to 3-3. "I didn't think anything of it. After the third pitch to the second hitter, it was like, 'I can't pitch with this.' "

"I thought he wanted to go over signs or something," Suzuki said. "I looked at his face. I knew something was wrong, and I said, 'Oh geez.' "

Ross wouldn't speculate on how much time he'll miss. He was particularly disappointed to force the bullpen into early action.

According to the A's, Ross' seven-pitch stint was the shortest start by an Oakland pitcher dating to 1987.

"It's just terrible timing," Ross said. "The staff is going good, and I know we have a lot of games in a row before we have another off-day."

The A's are in the midst of a 20-game stretch and aren't off until June 2.

Purcey held the Twins to one run over 3 2/3 innings. Craig Breslow allowed Justin Morneau's two-run home run in the fifth that made it 4-0.

Trystan Magnuson gave up six runs in two innings.

With the bullpen spent, fresh arms will be needed for the Giants beginning Friday.

No moves were announced, but Magnuson was packing his belongings and confirmed he was being sent to Triple-A Sacramento.

If the A's place Ross on the D.L., they could call up two relievers for the short term, then decide on a starter for Ross' next turn Tuesday against the Angels.

Joey Devine, who hasn't allowed an earned run in 11 relief appearances with Sacramento, could get the call.

As for potential rotation options, left-hander Josh Outman is one possibility from Sacramento along with right-handers Guillermo Moscoso, Travis Banwart and Graham Godfrey.

Bobby Cramer is on Sacramento's D.L. with a lower-back strain.

A's update: Trevor Cahill is heavy hitter among starting rotation

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Trevor Cahill is the envy of his teammates in the A's rotation, and it's not for his All-Star selection or 18-win season a year ago.

In 2009, Cahill notched a single in interleague play against Los Angeles Dodgers right-hander Hiroki Kuroda. To date, that's the only hit for Cahill's major league career. But it also makes him the only starting pitcher on the A's active roster with a big league hit.

Left-hander Brett Anderson is well aware of that as the A's begin interleague play Friday night at AT&T Park against the Giants. The weekend series marks the A's first games at a National League park this season, where no designated hitter is used and pitchers step into the batter's box.

"It's a friendly competition among the pitchers," Anderson said.

Cahill, who starts Friday, said the pitchers haven't gotten much batting practice yet. He expects they'll get more before a six-game stretch on the road against the New York Mets and Philadelphia Phillies from June 21-26.

"Hopefully I can put it in play and put some pressure on the defense," said Cahill, who has struck out just once in seven plate appearances.

Anderson gives Cahill only so much credit for his 2009 single.

"He hit a seeing-eye single through the (second base) hole," Anderson said. "It's weird because he's got the ugliest swing. But he got a hit, so whatever works."

With no DH available this weekend, A's manager Bob Geren reiterated Hideki Matsui probably won't draw any starts.

Matsui's only defensive position is left field, where Josh Willingham -- who leads the A's with six homers and 25 RBIs -- gets the majority of innings.

Chin Music: Tyson Ross leaves in first inning with oblique strain

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/19/2011 1:07pm

The A's afternoon has gotten off to a very bad start ... Starting pitcher Tyson Ross left today's game against the Twins after just seven pitches with a left oblique strain. He called out catcher Kurt Suzuki after a 2-1 pitch to Trevor Plouffe, and Bob Geren came out with head trainer Nick Paparesta. Shortly after, Ross walked off the field and David Purcey was brought in to relieve.

It's way early to speculate how much time Ross will miss, if any. But it's not a promising development for the A's given Ross is filling in for another injured starter, Dallas Braden, who's out for the season. If Ross misses any starts, we may see the major league return of Josh Outman. After missing the past 1 1/2 seasons following elbow surgery, Outman has been working regularly in Triple-A Sacramento's rotation, and word is that his command has been sharper over his past two starts. Bobby Cramer, another potential replacement, is sidelined with an oblique injury of his own. The A's could also look to Guillermo Moscoso, who is starting for Sacramento and has prior big league experience.

Purcey just gave up a homer to Rene Rivera. The Twins are up 2-0 in the top of the second.

Chin Music: Interleague dilemma: Josh Willingham or Hideki Matsui in left field?

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 5/19/2011 12:11pm

There's not a whole lot to report this morning, though A's manager Bob Geren reiterated that Hideki Matsui is unlikely to draw any outfield starts against the Giants this weekend. The A's are in a bind when they play in a National League park with no DH available, because their two best power hitters – Matsui and Josh Willingham – only play left field. Willingham enters today's game against Minnesota hitting .176 (3 for 17) with 10 strikeouts over his last four games. He's out of the lineup this afternoon. Matsui hasn't been on fire either, hitting .206 (7 for 34) over his past 10 games. But he did get two hits Wednesday and notched his first RBI in 10 games.

If Matsui has a big game today, I'd be tempted to get back in there for at least one game this weekend. Playing left field at AT&T Park isn't nearly as tricky as playing right would be, so I don't think he'd be much of a liability with the glove ...

Let's throw it out there: Who would you rather have in the lineup right now, Matsui or Willingham?

Here's today's lineups, with Coco Crisp back in the leadoff spot for the A's after missing Wednesday's game due to a personal matter:

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

Twins – Span CF, Plouffe SS, Kubel RF, Morneau DH, Cuddyer 1B, Valencia 3B, Young LF, Rivera C, Casilla 2B; Blackburn RHP.

Another injury leaves A's looking for healthy arms

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

And on the seventh pitch, Tyson Ross pulled an oblique and rested.

The man who flourished as an A's fill-in starter probably needs a fill-in himself. Ross strained his left oblique in the first inning Thursday and today will have an MRI exam, after which management will determine whether to put him on the disabled list.

The A's never overcame Ross' downer and got thumped 11-1 by the Twins, who swept the two-game series but still own the American League's worst record.

"Coming up with this injury, it's just terrible timing," Ross said. "The staff is going good, and we have a lot of games in a row before another off day. It's definitely going to hurt the whole team to have someone go down. Hopefully, it's not a long time. But any day you've got to use four or five relievers, it's not a good day."

Ross surrendered a single to Denard Span and threw three pitches to Trevor Plouffe before walking off the mound holding his left side. Four relievers were used, including Trystan Magnuson, who gave up six runs in the eighth inning and packed his bags for Sacramento.

The A's will announce today that Magnuson is being optioned to Triple-A because more troops are needed in the bullpen, which worked nine innings Thursday. If Ross is placed on the DL, the A's could call up two relievers, one of whom could be replaced when Ross' rotation turn comes up Tuesday in Anaheim.

Rotation options include Josh Outman, who surrendered two runs in 13 innings in his last two starts for Sacramento, and Guillermo Moscoso, who got rocked in his last start (five runs, three innings) but pitched scoreless ball his previous two outings. Bobby Cramer is shelved with a strained lower back.

"We have to figure something out. There's no other way to put it," assistant general manager David Forst said. "We'll see how long Tyson's out, and the rest of the guys will have to step up."

Going outside the organization isn't feasible, according to Forst, who said, "I don't know a lot of teams that'll give away starting pitchers this time of year."

Ross was solid subbing for Dallas Braden, who's out for the season following shoulder surgery. Entering Thursday, Ross was 2-1 with a 2.32 ERA in five starts and coming off victories over the Royals and White Sox. But he said he felt a muscle spasm on his sixth pitch and threw one more before summoning catcher Kurt Suzuki.

"That kind of takes the focus away," Suzuki said. "We obviously didn't do what we wanted to do today, but the big thing is how Tyson feels. ... You don't want to lose an arm like Tyson's, especially because he's been filling in for Dallas."

Ross has unusual mechanics, lacking a typical follow-through, but wasn't connecting it to the injury, saying, "It's the same thing I've been doing the last couple of weeks. Just one of those things that happened in the game."

Ross was charged with a run and took the loss. Span scored when reliever David Purcey surrendered Jason Kubel's single. Purcey also gave up Rene Rivera's first home run since 2006, and Justin Morneau and Plouffe homered off Craig Breslow and Magnuson, respectively.

The best to play on both sides of the Bay

Lewis Abraham Leader, Special to the Chronicle

Alphabetically, the list begins with Mike Aldrete and ends with Barry Zito.

Among its members are Hall of Famers Orlando Cepeda, Goose Gossage, Willie McCovey and Joe Morgan.

The link? Each played with both the San Francisco Giants and Oakland A's. The franchises are not only connected by BART, interleague action and the 1989 World Series, but also by 71 players who have performed with the Giants since they moved from Manhattan in 1958 and the A's after they relocated from Kansas City in 1968.

Now, a highly subjective link.

What is the best line-up - eight position players, two starting pitchers and a closer - from those nearly six dozen?

We tried to choose only those who did something meaningful with both clubs. For example, Giants greats Cepeda and McCovey fail to qualify, as the Baby Bull had just three at bats with Oakland and Stretch only 24 with the A's. They combined for 695 San Francisco homers, but none for Oakland.

Here it is:

Starting pitcher - Vida Blue, 124-86 with the A's (1969-1977) and 72-58 with the Giants (1978-1981, '85-86), is the ace. Blue, MVP and Cy Young Award winner with Oakland in 1971 at 24-8, was a 20-game winner three times in the East Bay. After being traded for a chunk of San Francisco's roster in March 1978, he won 46 in his first three seasons. The second spot goes to Zito, whom many Giants fans love to hate. He's gone only 40-58 as a Giant (2007-2011) with a 4.48 ERA after

going 102-63 with a 3.55 ERA for the A's (2000-2006). He won the Cy Young Award when he went 23-5 (2.75 ERA) in 2002. Zito is one of only three pitchers with career double-figure wins with each club. (The third is Kelly Downs.)

Catcher - In a tiny field, Brent Mayne wins. With the Giants (1998-1999), he batted .288 in 211 games, including one season as the regular. As an A (1997), he hit .289 in 85 games and was the primary backstop. Bill Bathe, Gary Alexander? No.

First base - Aldrete was solid, batting .285 with the Giants (1986-88) and .260 with the A's (1993-95). But the nod goes to Dave Kingman, with 77 homers with the Giants at the start of his career (1971-1974) and 100 with the A's (1984-1986) at its end. Thus, it's easy to overlook his batting averages - .224 with the Giants, .239 with the A's.

Second base -The pick is Morgan, the starter at second for both his seasons with the Giants (1981-82), batting .270, and in his one year for the A's (1984), hitting .244. With the Giants (2003-2008), Ray Durham hit .276. He batted .274 in 54 games with the A's (2002), mostly as a designated hitter.

Third base - It would be great to put Kevin Mitchell and his big bat here (143 homers, 411 RBIs as a Giant, 1987-91), but he played sparingly at third after 1988 and not at all with the A's (1998). The spot goes to Ernie Riles, the regular in one of three seasons with San Francisco (1988-90) and his lone year with the A's (1991). He hit .264 with the Giants, only .214 with Oakland.

Shortstop - Johnnie LeMaster anchored short for most of his time with the Giants (1975-85) but hit just .225. His A's career was 20 games (1987). Miguel Tejada, MVP in 2002, hit .270 with 156 homers for Oakland (1997-2003). He's mostly played short this season, his first with San Francisco, though his average has hovered around .200.

Outfield - Jesus Alou (Giants 1963-68, A's 1973-74) and Dusty Baker (Giants 1984, A's 1985-86) merit consideration, but three others outdistance them. Stan Javier hit .282 in 460 games with San Francisco (1996-99) and .255 in 635 with Oakland (1986-90, 94-95). He made only 13 errors in 589 games as an A's outfielder. Billy North played center for the Giants (1979-81), batting .250, and the A's (1973-78), hitting .271, and stole 261 bases for the two clubs. Felipe Alou batted .286 with 85 homers for the Giants (1958-63) and hit .271 with 55 RBI with the A's in 1970 before being traded to the Yankees after he played two games in 1971.

Closer - Elias Sosa led the Giants (1972-74) in saves with 18 in 1973, his first full season in the majors, and with 14 in his only Oakland year (1978). He is the lone pitcher with at least 10 saves for each. Of note: Gossage's closer days were behind him when he pitched here.

Manager - Alvin Dark is the only person to have managed both clubs (Giants 1961-64, A's 1974-75), losing a World Series to the Yankees in '62 and winning one from the Dodgers in '74. Dark's San Francisco teams went 366-277, and his Oakland teams were 188-136. He also managed the A's during their last two seasons in Kansas City, all of 1966 and most of 1967.

Let the arguments begin.

Starting lineup

SP - **Vida Blue**: Swapped by A's to Giants in March '78 for Gary Alexander, Mario Guerrero, Dave Heaverlo, Phil Huffman, John Henry Johnson, Gary Thomasson, Alan Wirth and \$300,000.

SP - **Barry Zito**: Don't blame him for taking all that money.

C - **Brett Mayne**: With inning of scoreless relief for Rockies in August 2000, became first position player to be winning pitcher since 1968.

1B - **Dave Kingman**: Made major-league debut pinch-running for Willie McCovey.

2B - **Joe Morgan**: Homer at Candlestick Park in last Giants AB ended Dodgers' '82 pennant shot.

3B - **Ernie Riles**: Native of Cairo, Ga., same hometown as Jackie Robinson.

SS - **Miguel Tejada**: Played in 1,152 consecutive games, 2000-2007, fifth longest streak in big-league history.

LF - **Stan Javier**: Hit the first homer in interleague play, June 12, 1997, against Texas.

CF - **Billy North**: For A's, twice led or tied for AL lead in steals, three times led or tied in being caught.

RF - **Felipe Alou**: On April 7, 1970, he became the first to wear uniforms of teams on both sides of the bay.

CL - **Elias Sosa**: As Dodger, gave up second of Reggie Jackson's three HRs in 1977 World Series Game 6.

- *Lewis Abraham Leader*

Giants vs. A's

-- The A's and the Giants have met once in the postseason, the earthquake-interrupted 1989 World Series, which the A's swept.

-- The two clubs have met 80 times since interleague play began in 1997. The A's lead the series 42-38.

-- The home team swept both series last year.

Interleague

A's record: 136-112

Giants record: 115-109

AL wins: 1,806

NL wins: 1,652

Oakland A's pitchers ready to take their cuts

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

Which A's pitcher is the best hitter? Let's rephrase that. Which A's pitcher will least likely embarrass himself in interleague play, which begins tonight in San Francisco?

Trevor Cahill, probably. He pitches the opener, and **Brett Anderson** and **Gio Gonzalez** will start Saturday and Sunday, respectively. Cahill, a former high school shortstop, has one hit in five at-bats in the majors, a single in 2009 that preceded a **Jack Cust** homer in a 5-4 A's win at Dodger Stadium.

That puts him well ahead of anyone else on the staff. Anderson is 0-for-3 with two strikeouts, Gonzalez 0-for-4 with three strikeouts. Other than Cahill, A's pitchers are a collective 0-for-27 at the plate, led by **Brandon McCarthy** (0-for-9) and **Michael Wuertz** (0-for-6).

No wonder manager **Bob Geren**, when asked who's his best-hitting pitcher, said, "That's one you don't really know until you see them against (**Ryan Vogelsong**, (**Tim Lincecum** and (**Jonathan Sanchez**."

With no designated hitter in NL parks, Hideki Matsui - the cleanup hitter the past four games - is destined for the bench, though Geren wasn't ruling out an outfield cameo. Matsui played 18 games in left field last year for the Angels, none this year.

He hasn't worked much with coaches but has tracked flies in batting practice and said, "To me, that's the best practice."

Briefly: Tyson Ross became the first A's starter to last as few as seven pitches since at least 1987, when Elias began tracking pitch counts. In 2000, starter **Omar Olivares** lasted 10 pitches before exiting with a shoulder injury. Who replaced Olivares in the rotation? Kid named **Barry Zito**. ... Ross is the first starter in A's franchise history to face one batter and take a loss, says Elias. ... Before yielding three homers, the A's bullpen compiled 65 straight homerless innings. ... After missing a game with what Geren called a family matter, **Coco Crisp** returned and singled to open the first inning but was caught stealing. ... **Mark Ellis** has 999 career hits.

A's leading off

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Ice talk: Excuse Trystan Magnuson for rooting for the Canucks over the Sharks in the NHL playoffs. The reliever was born in Vancouver, British Columbia, and played hockey. His No. 1 team is the Blackhawks, for whom his late uncle (Keith Magnuson) played and had his number (3) retired.

Drumbeat: UPDATE Tyson Ross hurt after seven pitches UPDATETHree-day rest for Hideki Matsui

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle, 5/19/2011, 11:56am

NEW POST

Tyson Ross was a nice addition to the A's rotation as the replacement for injured Dallas Braden, but now Ross is hurt, too. He lasted just seven pitches today and walked off the mound favoring his left side.

The A's announced he has a strained left oblique, which means the team probably needs to go further down the depth chart. But Bobby Cramer is on Triple-A Sacramento's disabled list with -- yes, an oblique strain.

That leaves lefty Josh Outman and righty Guillermo Moscoso as possible fill-ins.

Entering today's start, Ross was 3-2 with a 2.50 ERA and won his last two assignments. He gave up a single to the first batter, Denard Span, and threw a 1-1 pitch to Trevor Plouffe that crossed catcher Kurt Suzuki, who was charged with a passed ball. Then he summoned Suzuki to the mound, indicating he was hurt.

It was the shortest stint by an A's starter since Omar Olivares lasted seven pitches on July 16, 2000. Olivares was replaced in the rotation by a kid out of the minors named Barry Zito.

David Purcey replaced Ross, and Span scored on Jason Kubel's single to right.

ORIGINAL POST

John Shea from the Coliseum . . .

With struggling Josh Willingham not in the lineup, Hideki Matsui is the cleanup hitter today for the fourth straight game. After all, he has the most RBIs in the lineup -- with 16, 21 behind league leaders Adrian Gonzalez and Adrian Beltre.

The A's begin interleague play in San Francisco tomorrow, so Matsui will be on the bench. Bob Geren said this morning there's a chance Matsui could get into a game, perhaps in a double switch, and even added it wouldn't necessarily be in an emergency situation.

Matsui hasn't played an inning of defense this year. And the fact is, Matsui hasn't done much pregame outfield work, either. The A's have plenty of outfielders and realize it would be silly for their \$4.25 million investment to get hurt pursuing fly balls in the gap during batting practice.

So we'll see less of Matsui at the plate and more of Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson and Gio Gonzalez, the scheduled starters against the Giants.

Today's lineup: CF Crisp (returning after missing Wednesday with a personal issue), 1B Barton, LF Sweeney, DH Matsui, C Suzuki, RF DeJesus, 2B Ellis, 3B Kouzmanoff, SS Pennington.

Ross exits as A's succumb to Twins

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Oakland's Tyson Ross and Minnesota's Nick Blackburn each experienced a reversal of fortune on Thursday afternoon, but only Blackburn would enjoy his, as the A's fell to the Twins, 11-1, to drop their second game in a row.

Coming off a career-best start in which he pitched 7 1/3 innings and fanned eight batters, Ross lasted just seven pitches on Thursday before leaving the game with a left oblique strain.

"I didn't know what was going on when he called me out; I thought he wanted to go over signs or something," catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "But when I looked at his face. I could tell something was wrong, so I thought 'Oh, jeez.'"

While Ross, who will see a doctor on Friday to determine the extent of the injury, saw his day come to a premature end, Blackburn pitched seven solid innings for the Twins. The righty was 0-5 with a 5.76 ERA against the A's (22-22) in eight career starts, but finally conquered those demons, leading the Twins (15-27) to their third straight win.

Blackburn (3-4, 3.40 ERA) recorded a career-high eight strikeouts in his most recent start while holding the Blue Jays to five hits. Though he fanned only two on Thursday, Blackburn again scattered just five hits and held the A's to one run while inducing 12 groundball outs to earn his first career win against the club.

"I've always struggled against these guys, and pitching here has always been tough, for some reason," Blackburn said. "I can't remember having a good solid outing in Oakland since coming up. So it was good."

"He was keeping us off balance, and he was tough to square up today," Suzuki said. "He wasn't leaving a lot of balls down the middle. His objective is to get you to hit the ball weakly, and he did a good job today."

Ross (3-3, 2.75 ERA) notched a loss for just the second time in six starts since joining the rotation when Dallas Braden went on the disabled list on April 22. He gave up a leadoff single to Denard Span in the first before exiting the game three pitches into Trevor Plouffe's at-bat.

Ross' short outing, which marked the first time in A's history a starting pitcher faced just one batter and suffered the loss, signaled what would prove to be a long one for the A's bullpen.

"Any day you got to use four or five relievers, it isn't a good day," Ross said.

"To try to get through 27 outs with the bullpen -- that was a rough day," A's manager Bob Geren added.

Lefty David Purcey was called upon on short notice to relieve Ross and promptly retired Plouffe, but allowed the inherited runner to score from second one batter later on a Jason Kubel single. The early entry was something Purcey had never experienced since becoming a reliever.

"It's a little bit different," Purcey said. "When the phone rings in the bullpen, you expect it to be later in the game, not as early. It's not as nice going out to the game when the other team sees everything you're throwing and is watching you warm up."

Purcey, who gave up a run of his own in the second, was the first of four A's relievers used on the afternoon. The quartet combined to allow 10 runs on 15 hits. Among the pitchers used was Trystan Magnuson, who made his second career appearance just two days after his Major League debut. Magnuson gave up six runs in an eighth inning that saw the Twins hit around the order. He also surrendered his first home run, a three-run shot to left by Plouffe.

Though the A's normally stout bullpen allowed 10 runs on the day, it got little help from an offense that was limited to six hits. The only run the A's mustered came in the eighth when Mark Ellis reached on a fielder's choice that scored Hideki Matsui. The Twins' bullpen, led by Phil Dumatrait, shut the door on the A's over the final two innings to drop Oakland back to .500.

"We hit the ball pretty hard, a whole heck of a lot better than one run would show," Geren said. "But obviously, 10 runs is always difficult to overcome."

Well-armed Bay Bridge rivals to do battle

By John Schlegel / MLB.com

Baseball's pitching resurgence has a Major League mecca on the shores of the San Francisco Bay with two -- yes, two -- of the very best pitching staffs in the game residing there. As Interleague Play begins this weekend, those two well-armed neighbors will square off.

Having taken pitching prowess all the way to a World Series title a year ago, Tim Lincecum, Brian Wilson and their Giants brethren have company among the elite pitching staffs, and they're close enough to borrow a cup of sugar. The cross-bay Athletics' arms were right up there with the Giants for a full season a year ago, and they rank among the Majors' leaders in ERA this year as well.

When the Bay Bridge Series begins Friday night, the confab of top-notch pitching will shine a spotlight on a big hurler who has quickly emerged as one of the top young starters in the Majors: Trevor Cahill, who will be wearing the green and gold of the A's at orange-wrapped AT&T Park.

Matched with comeback story Ryan Vogelsong in a battle of right-handers to kick off one of baseball's geographic Interleague rivalries, Cahill enters the game with a 6-1 record and 1.82 ERA, results that are building upon a stellar sophomore season in 2010 for the 23-year-old California native.

For Cahill, the chance to pitch at AT&T Park for the first time comes with the requisite challenge for an American League pitcher: hitting.

"It should be fun, facing an NL team. It's a different kind of ballgame, getting to hit and everything," said Cahill, 1-for-5 in his limited batting experience thus far. "Hitting doesn't change preparation too much. We're not putting a lot of emphasis on it; it's more going out there and pitching first, but if we can put the bat on the ball, it's a big plus."

A first-time All-Star last season who's working on a second appearance this year, Cahill is the standout on a deep A's staff. After becoming the first A's starter to begin a season 6-0 since Dave Stewart in 1990, Cahill suffered his first loss in a 4-3 defeat at Chicago last weekend. He's 2-0 with a 1.32 ERA in two career starts versus the Giants, both coming in Oakland.

Vogelsong, meanwhile, has been more than impressive in his return to the Majors after a four-year hiatus, including three in Japan. Elevated to take the place of injured Barry Zito, Vogelsong ran his record to 3-0 with a rain-shortened win at Wrigley Field, striking out seven while walking one in six shutout innings.

The Giants rode a two-game sweep of the rival Dodgers to a half-game lead over the Rockies in the early National League West standings, while the A's dropped back to the .500 mark with two losses to the Twins, putting them one game off the Rangers' lead in the tight AL West.

Athletics: Matsui into NL mode

With Interleague Play approaching, A's manager Bob Geren said Thursday that designated hitter Hideki Matsui most likely would not see much time in the outfield this weekend. He would primarily come off the bench to pinch-hit, but Matsui could see time in the outfield with double-switches, Geren said.

- With Tyson Ross' departure from Thursday's start after just one batter, the A's bullpen took a significant innings hit, with David Purcey throwing 66 pitches in 3 2/3 innings before Craig Breslow threw 32 in 2 1/3 and Trystan Magnuson threw 50 in allowing six runs in two frames. Brad Ziegler got out of the ninth in 13 pitches, all strikes, allowing his first run of the season on three hits.

"To try to get through 27 outs with the bullpen -- that was a rough day," Geren said.

Giants: DeRosa hits DL again

The day after Mark DeRosa grabbed his problematic left wrist after checking a swing, the veteran utility player was placed on the disabled list, with Emmanuel Burriss coming up from Triple-A Fresno to provide some depth in the infield.

DeRosa, who has had two operations on the wrist since October 2009, was diagnosed with a wrist strain. In his absence, Miguel Tejada is expected to get the majority of the time at third base, with Mike Fontenot taking time at short.

"I feel awful for him," Giants manager Bruce Bochy said of DeRosa. "He was going to get some playing time and now this happens."

Worth noting

- Following Friday's Cahill-Vogelsong matchup, it will be Lincecum vs. lefty Brett Anderson on Saturday and then Jonathan Sanchez vs. Gio Gonzalez in an intriguing battle of left-handers Sunday.

- The A's hold a 42-38 advantage in the all-time Interleague series with the Giants, but Oakland hasn't won at San Francisco in its past six tries, having been swept there in both 2009 and 2010. At AT&T Park, the Giants hold an 18-15 edge.

- The A's are now 3-4 in their 20-game, 20-day stay in their home state. Having completed a seven-game homestand, the A's play at the Giants and then at the Angels before a six-game homestand wraps up their all-California stretch.

Campaneris to serve as A's Draft rep

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Bert Campaneris, a prominent member of the A's 1971 and 1975 championship teams, will represent the club when it makes the 18th overall pick at the First-Year Player Draft next month.

Drafted by the Kansas City A's as an amateur free agent in 1961, Campaneris spent the first 13 seasons of his Major League career with the franchise, all the while compiling multiple team records, including games played (1,795), hits (1,882) and at-bats (7,180).

Campaneris, affectionately known as "Campy," also led the American league in stolen bases for six straight seasons from 1965 to 1972 and retired with the seventh most steals in the history of the game (649).

Live coverage of the 2011 First-Year Player Draft begins with a one-hour preview show on Monday, June 6, at 6 p.m. ET on MLB.com and MLB Network, followed by the first round and supplemental compensation round. MLB.com will provide exclusive coverage of Days 2 and 3, featuring a live pick-by-pick stream, expert commentary and Draft Tracker, a live interactive application that includes a searchable database of every Draft-eligible player. You can also keep up to date at **Draft Central** and by following **@MLBDraft** on Twitter. And get into the Draft conversation by tagging your tweets with **#mlbdraft**.

In his role, the 69-year-old Campaneris will be sitting at the A's Draft table and will phone in each of the organization's picks. The former shortstop will be among many baseball luminaries present in Secaucus, N.J., as each team has tabbed at least one significant player from its past to sit at its Draft table.

Crisp back in action for A's

OAKLAND -- The A's got their leadoff hitter back for Thursday's series finale against the Twins, as Coco Crisp returned to the team after missing Wednesday night's contest because of a family matter.

No further information was provided for Crisp's surprising absence, but his attendance was very much welcomed, following Wednesday's 4-3 extra-inning loss.

The veteran outfielder entered Thursday hitting .279 in 35 games this season and leading the team with 22 runs scored. He also held a share of the American League lead in stolen bases with 13, including three in his last three games.

Major League: Update on Cramer

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 5/19/2011, 10pm

It doesn't look like Bobby Cramer is an ideal callup option for the A's in the event they place Tyson Ross on the disabled list. Cramer is also on the DL with a lower back strain and is eligible to be reinstated Sunday, I'm told. He could potentially still be ready for Tuesday's start in Anaheim, but I'm not sure the A's are going to want their fifth rotation spot filled by someone who's just coming off an injury. That means they're likely to take a closer look at Josh Outman, Guillermo Moscoso or possibly Travis Banwart, who is 1-2 with a 2.93 ERA in seven games — six starts — for the River Cats.

The day hasn't exactly gotten any better for the A's, who are down 10-1 in the eighth inning. David Purcey, who relieved Ross in the first, went 3 2/3 innings, using 66 pitches along the way. The most he had thrown in a single outing this season prior to today was 22. Rookie Trystan Magnuson just threw 50, meaning both those guys won't be available tomorrow. Even if Ross isn't DL'd right away, I'd imagine the A's would need to call up a pitcher for tomorrow's game in San Francisco in the event Trevor Cahill endures a short outing.

Major League: Ross out with left oblique strain; who takes his spot?

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 5/19/2011, 8:17pm

Righty Tyson Ross exited his seventh start today after making just seven pitches with what the A's deemed a left oblique strain. Should Ross hit the disabled list, the A's are likely to bring up one of the following guys:

- **Bobby Cramer:** 0-0, 4.60 ERA – He started the season on the A's roster as a long-relief option in the bullpen but was rarely used. He's made four starts with Triple-A Sacramento since his demotion, allowing 14 hits (including three home runs) and eight runs with six walks and 18 strikeouts in 15 2/3 innings. He's scheduled to start for the River Cats tonight, so he'd be on turn if called up.
- **Josh Outman:** 4-1, 4.78 ERA – Outman was considered the leading candidate for the fifth rotation spot at the start of Spring Training and he appeared well on his way to returning to '09 form following more than a year of Tommy John rehab. But he lost all feel for mechanics and command and was sent down to work on those things. I've heard he's coming along nicely, especially with his breaking ball and velocity, but the command is still a little rusty.
- **Guillermo Moscoso:** 3-2, 4.02 ERA – Acquired via trade with the Rangers, he spent most of last season at Triple-A Oklahoma City, where he was 7-7 with a 5.18 ERA in 23 games, 22 starts. He struggled in big league camp but has since posted 43 strikeouts next to just 13 walks in 40 1/3 innings in Sacramento.

Bay Area sports limping along

Art Spander, San Francisco Examiner

The Bay Area blues: The Warriors can't catch a break. The A's can't catch on. The Giants can't catch a ground ball — or if they do, can't throw it properly to first base.

Dare we mention the Sharks, who until proven differently, remain the only major league franchise in the region yet to win their sport's championship?

And isn't that interesting about the Raiders, according to USA Today, telling nonshoulder-padded employees that in lieu of cutbacks or furloughs — you have heard about the dire condition of the NFL, haven't you? — they could sell season tickets equaling 10 percent of their salaries.

Who's that at the door, the Avon lady? No, the Raider man.

"It was like Christmas," defensive coordinator Chuck Bresnahan told Jarrett Bell of USA Today when Amy Trask, the Raiders' chief executive, explained the plan.

During the lockout, some teams are sending workers out the door, if temporarily, on a forced vacation. In effect, the Raiders are doing the same thing, telling employees, "Get out of here," but adding, when you're out, do something useful. Help us end the local TV blackouts.

The Niners never have a home game blacked out, even though it's acknowledged they never sell out, until purchasing the up-to-10,000 leftovers themselves. Maybe they ought to try the Raiders' idea.

The idea Alex Smith once more will be the Niners' quarterback when the lockout ends (with \$9 billion at stake, it will end and there will be a season) seems legitimate.

Smith, the No. 1 pick in the 2005 draft — time flies when you're having fun — told reporters from The Sacramento Bee and Comcast SportsNet Bay Area they could figure he'll return for a seventh season, despite the booing.

New coach Jim Harbaugh already said Smith will be the favorite to win the QB job, if he re-signs. The longer the labor dispute lasts, the greater the chance Smith, and others, will stay with their current teams.

For the Warriors, the hope, unrealistic as it might have been, was in Tuesday night's lottery they would move up in the draft from the No. 11 position where they were slotted at the end of the regular season. Nice thought. When the festivities were done, so, in a manner of speaking were the Warriors, still picking 11th.

The sour pinot noir group might point out this is a lousy draft, so climbing to the first three wouldn't be as critical as the seasons when a LeBron James or Kevin Durant was available. Still, the Warriors need a big man.

The A's need people in the seats. Tuesday night in another downpour (what happened to spring?) the A's scored 14 times and drew 14 fans. Or so it seemed. For the fan count. The runs were actual.

The A's went in to Wednesday's game tied for first in the AL West and next to last in all of baseball in attendance, ahead of Cleveland.

The A's face the Giants this weekend at AT&T Park, a matchup of teams which have pitching, and in the case of San Francisco, occasionally fielding.

Tim Lincecum on Monday night and Jonathan Sanchez on Tuesday each made a throwing error that contributed to a big inning for the Rockies. When you have no offense, you'd better have a defense.

Marcos Breton: Nondescript A's stuck in limbo in Oakland

Marcos Breton, Sacramento Bee

Perhaps more than any other team in baseball, the Oakland Athletics are in a state of limbo.

They don't want to be in Oakland, where they were pounded 11-1 by the Minnesota Twins on Thursday. But the A's are blocked from going where they really want to be – San Jose.

The A's have a good enough team to win the American League West. They dominated their division rivals from Anaheim this week but drew crowds more akin to a minor league contest in the sticks.

A's general manager Billy Beane will be the protagonist of a major motion picture this summer – "Moneyball" – with Brad Pitt playing Beane no less, but the A's real-life story is more of a horror flick.

The A's are near the bottom of league attendance and probably had only a few hundred fans on hand Monday night at the end of a rain-delayed victory over the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.

But paltry attendance alone doesn't describe the A's state of limbo, which is curious to the point of weird.

Die-hard fans who love the A's, and the small number of media who cover the team, seem desensitized to the world of Rust Belt baseball they now inhabit.

Their 45-year-old stadium – with its faded green tarps, water stains and chipped concrete – is just a physical manifestation of how woefully the franchise is past its prime.

It's reminiscent of the scene in the "Blues Brothers" movie when John Belushi asks Dan Aykroyd how often the subway roars past his open window. "So often, you don't even notice it," Aykroyd says.

Eight years ago, Beane's use of computer models and statistical formulas to compile a star-studded roster inspired Michael Lewis to write "Moneyball," the book.

Now, the team that used to feature players known by a single name – Giambi, Zito, Tejada – is devoid of any personalities known by both names.

Beane hasn't put any big hitters on the field in years. While he has stocked the A's with great young arms, many of whom passed through Sacramento as River Cats aces on their way to Oakland, it's tough for Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez or Brett Anderson to win as big as they might when the A's struggle to score runs.

How many home runs does Daric Barton, the current A's first baseman, have in 44 games into this season?

Zero.

Meanwhile, the A's have nothing to show for two powerful sluggers they traded away: Carlos Gonzalez, the reigning National League batting champion now with the Colorado Rockies; and Andre Ethier, who compiled a 30-game hitting streak with the Los Angeles Dodgers this season.

Why hasn't the gleaming image of Beane in "Moneyball" taken hits over these missteps and others?

I would argue because very few care.

The crux of all that ails the A's is their blocked path to San Jose.

They gave up on Oakland a long time ago and suffer from insufficient local sponsors because potential business partners are waiting to see what the A's are going to do.

It's not like the A's don't market the team, but they don't market it as well as they could.

To get to San Jose, the A's would have to persuade a super-majority of baseball team owners to approve the move.

Bud Selig, MLB commissioner, formed a committee to study the issue more than two years ago.

The influential owners of the world champion Giants own the territorial rights to the San Jose fan base.

The A's owners – Lew Wolff and John Fisher – are not influential. Wolff and Fisher are more like absentee landlords.

They form a lucrative partnership doing the minimum in Oakland while waiting for Selig to decide their fate.

But the commissioner has other priorities. Selig is preoccupied with taking over the Los Angeles Dodgers. The New York Mets are struggling.

In the meantime, the A's and Oakland are like a divorced couple stuck in the same house.

Beane is a good baseball man. So is Mike Crowley, the team president, who remains upbeat in an impossible situation.

"We're waiting like everyone else (for Selig's decision,)" Crowley said Thursday. "We're optimistic that (Selig's) committee will provide us some direction."

When will that direction come? Nobody knows.

WHERE ARE THE FANS?

The average attendance for the top five and bottom five major league baseball teams (through Wednesday's games):

TOP FIVE

Rk. / Team / Avg.

1. / Phillies / 45,417
2. / Yankees / 42,265
3. / Giants / 41,785
4. / Twins / 38,649
5. / Angels / 38,587

BOTTOM FIVE

Rk. / Team / Avg.

26. / Royals / 17,864
27. / A's / 17,648
28. / Marlins / 17,044
29. / Pirates / 16,985
30. / Indians / 15,647

A's lose to Twins, 11-1

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Oakland starter Tyson Ross tried to ignore it on the first pitch, and then tried to fight through it with his second pitch. The third pitch let him know something was wrong.

Ross strained his left oblique and was removed after throwing only seven pitches on Thursday.

"The first pitch to the second hitter felt like a muscle spasm or a cramp," Ross said. "The next pitch I really felt it and the third pitch I said 'I can't throw with this.'"

Justin Morneau homered and had three hits and Rene Rivera hit his first home run in nearly five years, and the suddenly resurgent Minnesota Twins beat the Athletics, 11-1.

The lanky right-hander gave up a single to Twins' leadoff hitter Denard Span. Ross' 1-1 pitch to Trevor Plouffe got by A's catcher Kurt Suzuki, who was charged with a passed ball.

Ross (3-3) will be evaluated before tonight's interleague game in San Francisco.

"Obviously it was a rough start with Tyson being injured with no outs," A's manager Bob Geren said. "You just try to get through 27 outs with your bullpen. It was a rough day, but we'll bounce back."

Ross wandered around the mound for a few moments before A's trainers were called to the mound. Ross walked off under his own power.

David Purcey rushed in from the bullpen and assumed the count on Plouffe, who grounded out. Span later scored on an RBI single by Jason Kubel.

"We were concerned because we did see him grab his side a little bit," Purcey said. "It's no big deal when the phone rings, but you never expect it that early. I just wanted to go as deep as I could and help save the bullpen."

Nick Blackburn pitched seven solid innings for Minnesota, which has won three straight — all on the road — following a season-high nine-game losing streak.

Plouffe also homered as part of a six-run eighth for the Twins, and Michael Cuddyer had three hits.

Hideki Matsui walked and scored for the A's.

Blackburn (3-4) gave up five hits and allowed only one runner past second base to end a three-start winless skid. He struck out two and walked one.

Phil Dumatra pitched the eighth and Anthony Swarzak worked the ninth to complete the six-hitter.

Blackburn didn't need much support from the offense.

The Twins' right-hander has not surrendered more than two earned runs in his past four starts and has won 10 consecutive decisions in May dating to 2009.

Blackburn only allowed two Oakland runners to reach second base through the first six innings — both with the help of errors. He also got some help from Rivera, who threw out A's leadoff hitter Coco Crisp trying to steal second after Crisp singled in the first.

The A's broke through for a run in the seventh but got little else.

Matsui walked, took third on David DeJesus' single then scored on Mark Ellis' fielder's choice grounder.

The Twins head to Arizona for a three-game interleague series with the Diamondbacks.

Before that, however, Minnesota's players and coaches will attend a funeral for Hall of Famer Harmon Killebrew in Peoria, Ariz. Killebrew will be buried in a private service Monday in his hometown of Payette, Idaho.

NOTES

Ross is the first A's pitcher to leave after throwing seven pitches or fewer since Omar Olivares did it on June 16, 2000.

A's RHP Brad Ziegler allowed his first run in 17 appearances (13» innings).

Twins' David Valencia went 2 for 5 to snap an 0-for-19 streak.

Morneau went 3 for 5 and is 19 for 38 (.500) with six home runs and 15 RBIs in his past 11 games in Oakland.

Gutierrez: Who replaces Ross for A's?

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

Ready for a friendly game of who takes the place of the injured Tyson Ross -- who, by the way, took the place of the injured Dallas Braden -- in the A's rotation?

This is all, of course, contingent upon Ross being shelved for at least one start with what was initially diagnosed as a strained left oblique after Ross left Thursday's start following a mere seven pitches. The A's, though, backtracked a bit following the 11-1 blowout loss to Minnesota, saying they weren't exactly sure what Ross was dealing with in the wake of his becoming the first starter in franchise history to endure a defeat after facing just one batter.

In any event, it didn't look good. Then again, what injury for the injury-prone A's ever does look good? We're talking about a week in which not only Braden went under the knife to repair a tear in his left shoulder capsule, but general manager Billy Beane also underwent a shoulder procedure.

Oblique issues are a notoriously cranky lot. They could heal quickly, or drag on and on. For a pitcher, they are at the core of their craft. Ross, with his essentially all-upper body delivery, needs to feel especially comfortable in the oblique area.

Which is a shame considering he had found a niche in the A's rotation. The right-hander was 2-0 with a 1.69 ERA and 18 strikeouts in his previous four starts, so Oakland was not missing Braden and his 1-1 record with a 3.00 ERA as dearly as it might have.

So, saying Ross can't go Tuesday in Anaheim, who are the likely candidates to replace him?

The obvious choice is left-hander Bobby Cramer, who made the A's roster out of spring training but was sent down to triple-A Sacramento on April 25 to, among other reasons, get stretched out as a starter. Thing is, Cramer was placed on the River Cats' disabled list Thursday, purportedly retroactive to Saturday, with a reportedly balky back.

Cramer, who does not have a decision in four starts but a 4.60 ERA, last pitched on Friday. And with disabled list stays in the minors a seven-day minimum, he could conceivably be activated Sunday by the River Cats and promoted by the A's in time to start Tuesday against the Angels.

But would the A's be willing to take a risk on another pitcher coming off injury?

If not, the other name being bandied about is a familiar one to A's fans - lefty Josh Outman, who is 4-1 with a 4.78 ERA in eight starts for Sacramento. Outman, coming back from Tommy John surgery in 2009, is scheduled to start Sunday for the River Cats.

Then there's Guillermo Moscoso, who was in contention for the A's fifth starter spot in spring training. In eight appearances, seven starts, the right-hander is 3-2 with a 4.02 ERA. He is scheduled to start Monday for Sacramento.

Of course, the whole process could be moot if Ross wakes up Friday feeling right as rain and ready to re-take his place in the rotation.

Yeah, like injuries have ever cooperated with the A's.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Cats can't find groove on Thirsty Thursday

By Kyle Tucker / Sacramento River Cats

If there is one thing Tony DeFrancesco has proven, it's that he can win at Raley Field.

The former River Cats manager led his new ballclub, the Oklahoma City Redhawks, to a 6-3 victory over the River Cats on Thursday night at Raley Field.

DeFrancesco managed Sacramento seven of the previous eight seasons and led them to three PCL championships and six division titles, compiling a 578-429 record.

"It felt good to come back here and see all these familiar faces," said DeFrancesco, sitting in the visiting manager's office, down the hall from his old work space. "We had a lot of good times here."

Sacramento trailed all night but had a chance to come back in the ninth inning. The River Cats loaded the bases with no out before Steve Tolleson struck out looking, Matt Carson struck out for the fourth time and Anthony Recker grounded to third to end the game.

Michael Taylor made his 2011 Raley Field debut Thursday night, going 1-for-4. Since joining the team May 13 from Extended Spring Training, Taylor has made an immediate impact, hitting .375 in six games with nine RBIs and a stolen base.

Right-hander Graham Godfrey, who entered with a 4-0 record and 2.43 ERA, made his first start since returning from the disabled list for Sacramento. Oklahoma City jumped on Godfrey early on a Brian Dopirak single that scored Max Ramirez in the second inning. Godfrey pitched out of a bases-loaded jam, escaping with one run allowed.

Godfrey's night was cut short after giving up solo home runs in the third and fourth innings. Godfrey went 3.2 innings, giving up four hits, three runs (two earned), walking two and striking out three.

Catcher Josh Donaldson got Sacramento on the board in the fifth inning with a towering home run to left field, his fourth of the year. Sacramento kept the momentum going with a Jai Miller walk and a Shane Peterson single to right field, putting runners at the corners with no out. Jemile Weeks then grounded into a double play, scoring Miller and pulling the River Cats within one.

Oklahoma City added two runs in the sixth inning with a single, triple and double off reliever Joe Bateman. Sacramento left fielder Shane Peterson made the play of the game with a diving catch and throw to second base to double up Anderson Hernandez and end the inning. This sent DeFrancesco charging out to give the umpire a piece of his mind, a familiar sight for River Cats fans.

Peterson helped Sacramento claw back in the seventh with a solo shot into Sacramento's bullpen. However, that's all Sacramento could muster. Peterson went 3-for-4 on the night, raising his average to .333.

Sacramento looks to rebound Friday night when they send Pacific Coast League Pitcher of the Week Travis Banwart (1-2, 2.93) to the mound against right-hander Jordan Lyles (1-3, 3.97).

RockHounds lose 8-7 in back-and-forth game to Frisco

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

FRISCO -- For a second consecutive night, Frisco RoughRiders first baseman Jose Ruiz flashed some timely power and lifted his team to a victory.

Ruiz belted a two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth, which proved to be the difference in an 8-7 victory against the Midland RockHounds at Dr Pepper Ballpark on Wednesday.

Ruiz's blast broke a 6-6 tie, and the RockHounds came up one run shy of a game-tying rally in the top of the ninth. Ruiz also hit a two-out game-winning home run in the bottom of the ninth on Tuesday.

Frisco has won the first three games of the four-game series with the RockHounds. The series concludes at 7 p.m. today.

Wednesday's game was a back-and-forth affair, featuring four lead changes. The RockHounds took the initial lead when center fielder Jermaine Mitchell led off the game with a solo homer to right.

But two innings later, reigning AL MVP Josh Hamilton, who was playing the first game of a rehab stint with Frisco, lifted a pitch by Midland's Shawn Haviland over the wall in left for a two-run homer.

Midland retook the lead in the top of the fourth, scoring three runs in the frame. Right fielder Jeremy Barfield had the big hit of the inning with a two-run RBI single that scored Stephen Parker and Michael Spina.

The RockHounds were up 5-3 heading into the bottom of the sixth, when Frisco catcher Jose Felix hit a two-RBI single to center to tie the game. Texas Rangers top prospect Leonys Martin singled to plate Felix and put the RoughRiders up 6-5.

Mitchell, who was a single shy of hitting for the cycle, led off the top of the seventh with a double, moved to third on a sacrifice bunt by second baseman Tyler Ladendorf and scored on a sacrifice fly by Adam Heether, tying the game at 6-6.

That simply set the stage for Ruiz's pivotal two-run homer in the bottom of the eighth. The RockHounds made a bid at tying the game with Mitchell belting a two-out triple to right and scoring courtesy of a single by Ladendorf.

But Frisco reliever Justin Miller struck out Heether to end the game. Miller picked up the win, improving to 4-1 on the season. Jared Lansford (2-2) took the loss for Midland.

Hamilton was 2 for 4 with a homer and two RBI in his first live action since going on the DL with a small fracture in the humerus bone in the his upper arm on April 12. Also playing for the RoughRiders was Nelson Cruz, who lined up in right, but went 0 for 4 on the night.

Blaze Bats Too Much For Ports

05/19/2011 11:00 PM ET

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. - On Wednesday afternoon, the Stockton Ports beat the Bakersfield Blaze 7-0 despite stranding a total of 13 baserunners. On Thursday night at Sam Lynn Ballpark, the Ports stranded 11 runners and lost by a final of 6-3 to the Blaze. The Ports, despite reaching 10 hits in the ballgame, fell short for the second time in the first three games of their series with the Blaze.

Ports starter Fabian Williamson (3-5) had to labor in the 1st inning despite recording back-to-back strikeouts to start his outing. Williamson, after recording the strikeouts, threw 11 straight balls, yielding back-to-back walks to Yasmani Grandal and Eric Campbell, then an RBI double to Henry Rodriguez to give the Blaze a 1-0 lead. The double was one of three on the night for Rodriguez.

Bakersfield plated two runs in the 2nd on a two-out, two-run single from Grandal to take a 3-0 lead. Of the six total runs the Blaze would score on the night, five of them scored with two outs in an inning.

Stockton got their first run across in the 3rd. Conner Crumbliss led off the inning with a double and scored two batters later on a single from Michael Choice to make it a 3-1 contest.

The Blaze got the run right back in the bottom of the inning as the teams continued to trade punches. Rodriguez started the inning with a double, went to third on a wild pitch and scored on a sac-fly from Alex Buchholz. Williamson would record a strikeout of Carlos Martinez before being lifted. He received the loss after going 2.2 innings and allowing four runs on five hits while walking three and striking out three.

Stockton made it 4-2 with a two-out RBI single from Crumbliss in the 4th; scoring Michael Gilmartin who'd reached on a fielder's choice.

Blaze starter Josh Ravin would receive a no-decision as he went just four innings and allowed two runs on five hits while striking out six and walking two.

In the bottom of the 4th, Bakersfield scored another run on yet another double from Rodriguez-his third of the night-to put their lead at 5-2. It was the only run allowed by Scott Deal who pitched 2.1 innings in relief for the Ports.

Stockton got the run back in the 5th. Blaze reliever Clayton Schunick (2-1) gave up a two-out double to Myrio Richard followed by an RBI single to Anthony Aliotti to make it a 5-3 contest. As it turned out, it was the only run allowed by Schunick and the final run the Ports scored on the night. Schunick earned the win after going three innings and allowing a run on five hits while striking out two.

The Blaze scored their final run in the last of the 6th. A.J. Huttenlocker gave up an infield single to Brodie Greene to start the frame. With Green at third base and two out, Campbell delivered an RBI double to left to make it a 6-3 lead for the Blaze. It was the only run allowed by Huttenlocker in two innings of relief.

Stockton's offense was shut down over the final two frames by Tyree Hayes (SV, 1), who earned the save by tossing two scoreless innings to close out the game while recording three strikeouts.

Conner Hohen pitched a perfect 8th inning for the Ports. Huttenlocker and Hoehn combined to retire the final seven blaze batters of the game.

Burlington Walks Off With a 7-5 Win in 11 Innings

By Jon Versteeg, burlingtonbees.com

BURLINGTON, IA-LF Douglas Landaeta (3-4) hit two home runs and added five RBI to lead the Burlington Bees (29-10) from a 5-1 deficit to a 7-5 win in 11 innings over the Clinton LumberKings (11-30) before 2,068 fans at Community Field on Thursday night.

The Bees scored a run in the first inning against Clinton LHP James Paxton. 1B Josh Whitaker (1-2) doubled and scored on a double by Landaeta for a 1-0 Burlington lead.

The LumberKings took the lead in the third inning. RF Kalian Sams (1-5) and SS Jake Schlander (1-3) hit back-to-back singles. C Steven Baron (1-4) hit a sacrifice bunt to move both runners into scoring position. 2B Shaver Hansen (2-5) hit a single to score both runners for a 2-1 lead.

Clinton scored an insurance run in the sixth inning. Hansen singled and went to second base on a sacrifice bunt by 3B Carlos Ramirez (0-4). 1B Mickey Wiswall (1-5) hit a double to score Hansen and a 3-1 score.

The LumberKings scored two runs in the eighth inning on a two-run home run by DH Matt Browning (1-5).

The Bees added a run in the eighth inning on a solo home run by Landaeta to make it 5-2.

The Bees tied the game in the ninth inning. 2B Nino Leya (1-5) walked and moved to second base on a single by CF Tyreace House (1-4). Landaeta reached base on an error and Leyja scored.

After 1B Jose Rivero (0-2) sacrificed both runners into scoring position, SS Wade Kirkland (3-5) ripped a two-run single to tie the game at 5-5.

In the 11th inning Leyja singled and went to second base on a sacrifice bunt by House. Landaeta smacked a solo home run over the left field wall to give Burlington the win.

BEES BUZZINGS: The Community Basket package of over \$20,000.00 went to Lisa O'Hara of Burlington. Mary Lincoln of Burlington won the trip to Disney World sponsored by Iowa State Bank.

The Bees begin a eight-game road trip in Wisconsin on Friday night. RHP Blake Hassebrock (3-0, 0.90) gets the start for Burlington against LHP Charly Bashara (2-2, 4.43) for Wisconsin. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:15 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at www.gobees.com.