

**New York Yankees Clips
Wednesday, June 1, 2011**



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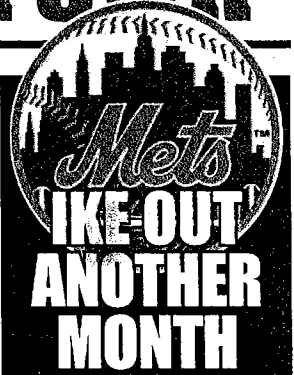
MARC BERMAN
PAGES 64-65

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011

NEW YORK POST

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MARTIN / PAGE 71

**PIRATES
SAIL PAST
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MARTIN / PAGE 70



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INOPERABLE**

VACCARO, MARTIN / PAGE 68

KICKIN' A'S

GEORGE A. KING III / PAGES 66, 62

Yankees cut down Oakland

Alex Rodriguez gives Robinson Cano a pat on the helmet after Cano blasted a 2-run HR in the fifth inning of the Yankees' 10-3 victory over the A's last night in Oakland. Curtis Granderson also homered as the Bombers won their third straight.

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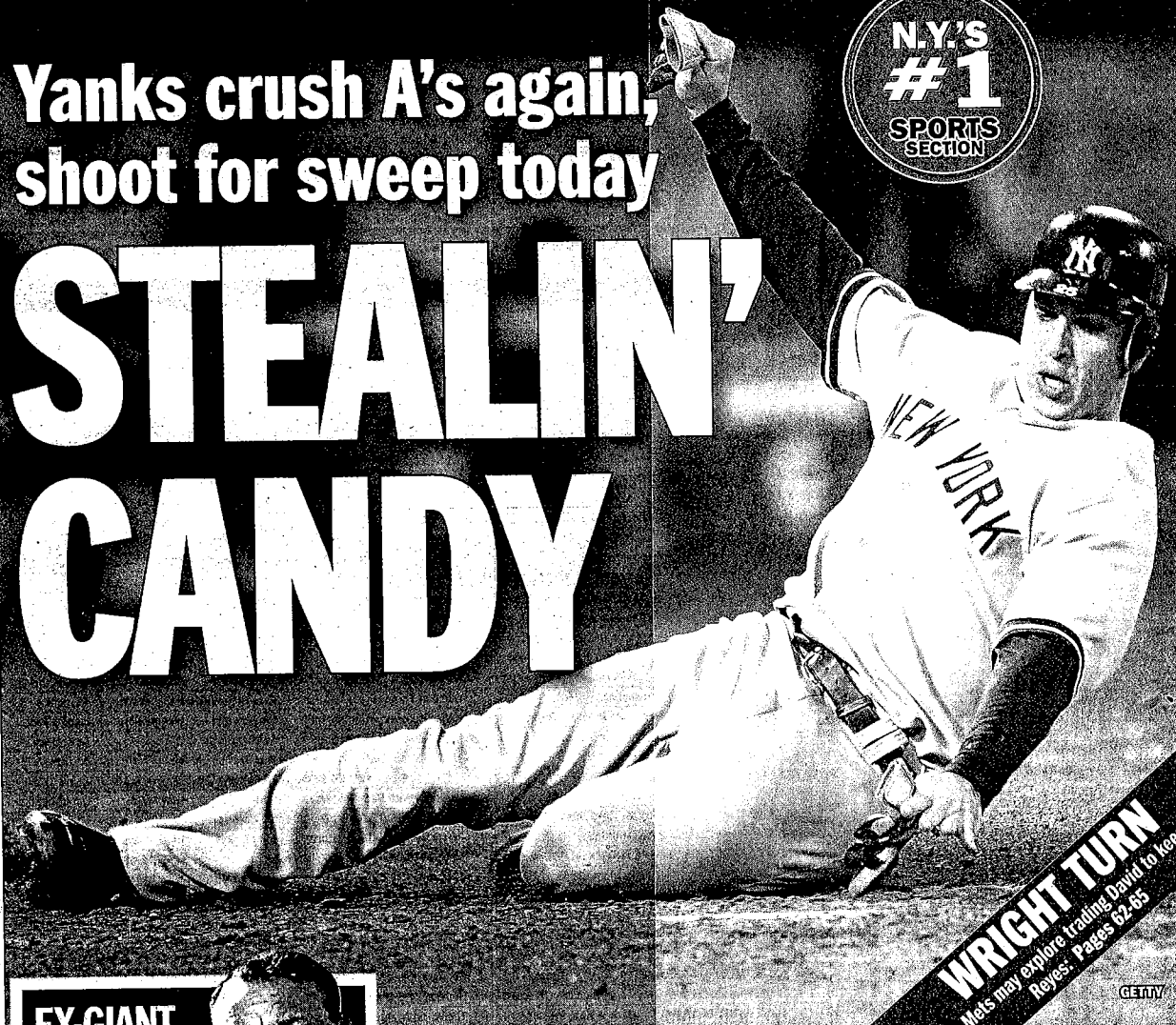
SPORTS
FINAL

DAILY NEWS

Yanks crush A's again, shoot for sweep today



STEALIN' CANDY



WRIGHT TURN
Mets may explore trading David to keep Reyes. Pages 82-85

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**EX-GIANT
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DEAD
AT 85**

Page 70



Mark Teixeira swipes home as part of a double steal as Yanks drub A's, 10-3, last night. Pages 66-67

HEAT WAVE!

Miami smacks Mavs, for openers! P. 68-69



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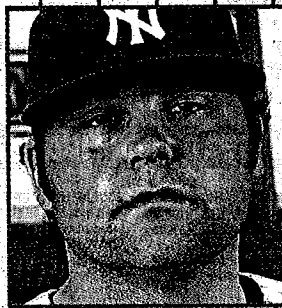
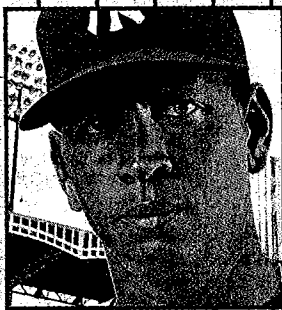
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SPORTS FINAL Partly cloudy, chance of T-storms, 88/65. Wednesday, June 1, 2011

DAILY NEWS

NEW YORK'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER

IS YOUR CELL PHONE KILLING YOU? SEE PAGE 3



BRONX JEERS!

Jealous nitwits rip Yankees stars in player poll SEE PAGE 5

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CURTIS

Four RBI back Freddy as Yankees blast A's

BY MARK FEINSAND
DAILY NEWS SPORTS WRITER

OAKLAND — There was a time last year when Joe Girardi wouldn't think of starting Curtis Granderson against a tough lefty. These days, he wouldn't dream of sitting him.

Granderson continued his assault on lefthanded pitching last night, becoming the first lefty hitter to take Brett Anderson deep in more than two years.

The center fielder drove in four runs overall, pacing a Yankees lineup that broke out for a 10-3 win over the A's, setting up a potential series sweep today at the Coliseum.

Robinson Cano also homered against Anderson, who was bashed for 10 runs on 11 hits, both career-highs for the talented 23-year-old. Alex Rodriguez had the other two RBI for the Yankees.

"You don't see a lot of home runs in this ballpark," Joe Girardi said. "It seems like we've gotten to them early. We've been able to jump on their starters. That's important."

Freddy Garcia (4-4) threw seven innings of three-run ball, winning his second straight start. He allowed nine hits and walked two, striking out five.

Granderson went 3-for-5 with a homer, four RBI, two runs scored and a stolen base. He leads the Yankees with 17 homers and 41 RBI, continuing his emergence into the discussion of the top all-around hitters in the game this season.

"Anderson is as good as it gets (against lefties)," Girardi said. "It's hard to believe. The ad-

justment (Granderson) has made is remarkable."

Anderson's reputation for being tough on lefties was on Girardi's mind before the game, as the manager stressed the need to manufacture runs against the A's southpaw.

"Lefties don't hit him for power; they definitely don't," Girardi said before the game. "And righties, I think, have only hit four homers off him this year, so it's not a guy that gives up a lot of homers."

Derek Jeter singled to open the game, setting up Granderson's two-run blast to right field. It was the first extra-base hit by a lefthanded hitter against Anderson in 15 starts dating back to last September, and even more impressively, the first homer by a lefty against Anderson since Aug. 25, 2009.

Granderson leads the majors with nine home runs against lefthanded pitchers this season, including six of his last nine homers. He's hitting .323 (20-for-62) against lefties this season.

The Yankees added an unearned run in the third after Jeter reached on a two-base error, as A-Rod singled him in to make it a 3-0 game. Jeter finished the night 2-for-4 with three runs scored, leaving him 17 hits shy of the 3,000 milestone.

Anderson's tough night continued in the fourth, as he gave up two singles to start the inning and another Yankees rally. Even after getting a break on a botched squeeze play that saw Brett Gardner miss a bunt attempt to get Nick Swisher thrown out at third, Anderson hit

YANKEES	10
A'S	3

Betances & Banuelos

OAKLAND — A decade ago, the Oakland A's were the greatest challenge to the Yankees' dynasty.

With a homegrown trio of Barry Zito, Mark Mulder and Tim Lincecum leading the rotation, general manager Billy Beane's club took the Yankees to the brink of elimination in both 2000 and 2001 before ultimately losing Game 5 of the AL division series both times.

Still, to produce a group of arms that impressive is no easy task. Just ask Brian Cashman, whose attempt at developing his own terrific trio a few years back came up short.

"It's hard," the Yankee GM said. "You've got to be willing to take your lumps while you're doing it."

Mark Feinsand



The Yankees tried to have the best of both worlds in 2008, handing rotation spots to Phil Hughes and Ian Kennedy out of spring training, then transitioning Joba Chamberlain from the bullpen to a starting role in June.

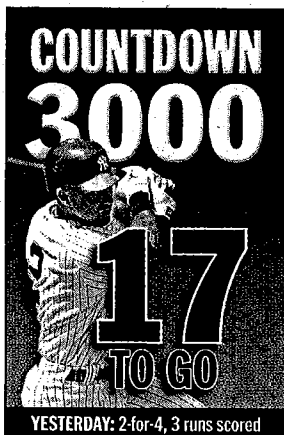
We all know how that turned out.

Chamberlain pitched well as a starter before hurting his shoulder, while Hughes pitched to a 9.00 ERA in April before landing on the DL with a mysterious rib injury, then didn't return to the big leagues until September.

Kennedy was a disaster, posting a 7.41 ERA in 10 games before being banished to the minors for good in August.

So what if the Yankees had stuck with the three youngsters? There's a good chance they would have looked like the A's, which is to say

POWERS ROUT



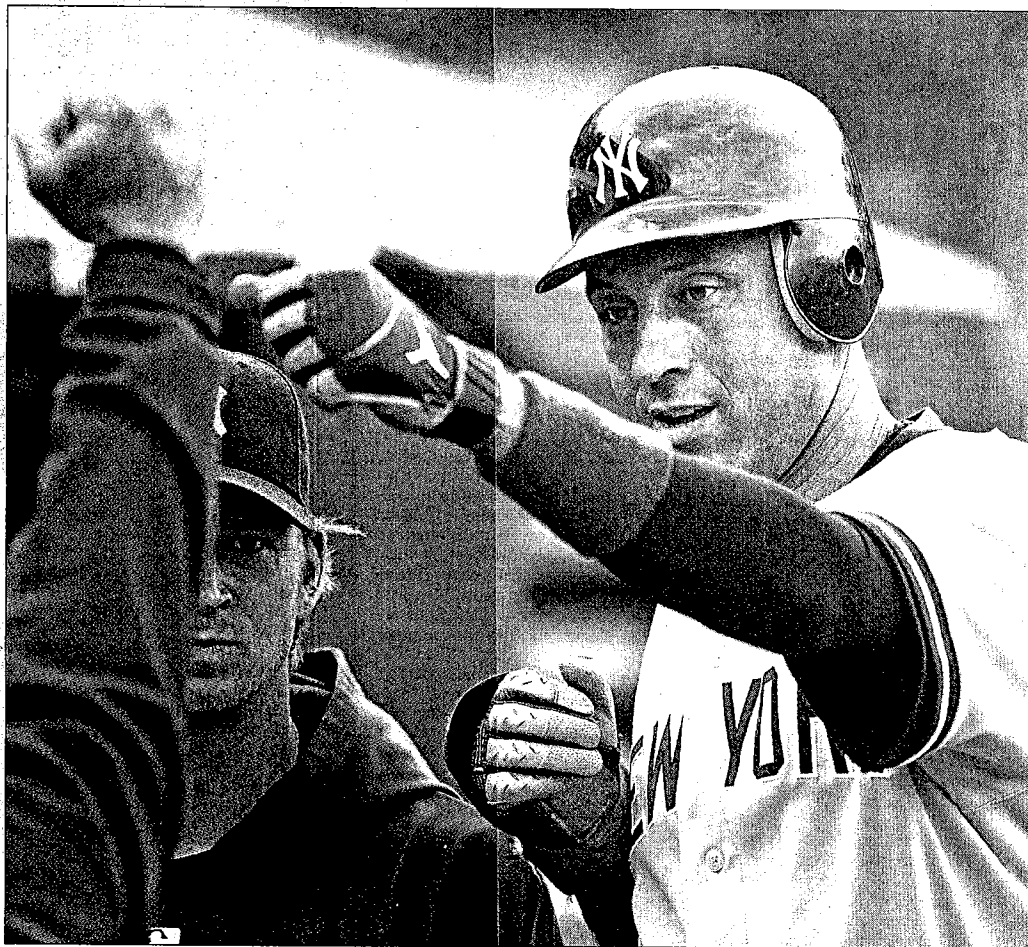
Gardner and allowed an infield single by Jeter, loading the bases. Granderson delivered a two-run single, pushing the lead to 5-1.

Garcia had runners on base every inning, but he found a way to work out of jams all night. Oakland scratched out a run in the third, but Garcia escaped a bases-loaded situation in the fourth to hold the lead at four runs.

"Freddy just does what he does," Girardi said. "He mixes all his pitches, he did it again tonight."

Cano added a two-run blast against Anderson in the fifth, giving the Yankees a 7-1 edge with his 11th home run of the season.

Coco Crisp tripled to start the bottom of the fifth, then David DeJesus drilled a two-run homer to right field, cutting the lead to 7-3. Garcia was unfazed, working through the seventh with ease while the Yankees added three more runs to increase the lead to seven runs, the last run coming as part of a three-run sixth when Mark Teixeira stole home as part of a double steal.



Derek Jeter adds punch at top of lineup as he scores first run of laughter on Curt's Granderson's two-run home run. Photo by AP

deliver grade-A hope to future arms race

out of the playoffs for a few years.

Oakland lost 84 games in 1996, 97 games in 1997 and 88 games in 1998, resulting in high draft picks and low expectations. They drafted Hudson in the sixth round of the 1997 draft, took Mulder with the second overall pick in 1998 and grabbed Zito with the ninth pick in the 1999 draft.

In 1999, they improved to 87 wins, then took the next step in 2000, winning 91 games en route to the AL West title. Oakland went on to eight straight winning seasons, but as their star players approached free agency, the A's were forced to dish them off for prospects, losing the heart and soul of their team one piece at a time.

So Beane went out and did it again.

He spent the next few years adding arms such as Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson and

Gio Gonzalez, the three young pitchers the Yankees are facing this week.

Beane's formula wasn't revolutionary. He drafted Cahill in the second round in 2006 (after the Yankees had taken Kennedy and Chamberlain), added Anderson in a swap with the Diamondbacks in December of 2007 and traded for Gonzalez a month later — coincidentally in a deal with the White Sox for Nick Swisher.

Oakland posted losing records from 2007-09, and finished at .500 last season. Along the way, the A's brought up their highly touted young pitchers, letting them gain experience — both positive and negative with the bigger picture in mind.

"They were in a rebuilding mode and could tolerate some of the growing pains while doing it," Cashman said. "It's not easy. It's almost impossible. It's very im-

pressive to get a collection of arms and be allowed to turn them loose and watch them sink or swim."

The A's have that luxury. The Yankees do not.

Ask any fan what they want to see the Yankees do (aside from winning the World Series, of course) and the answer is invariably to develop a young, homegrown pitching staff. The promise of Manny Banuelos, Dellin Betances and others has the organization and its fans dreaming of what might be.

But what if Banuelos posts a 6.24 ERA in his first two seasons like Gonzalez did? What if Betances has a 4.76 ERA and nearly as many walks as strikeouts the way Cahill did during his rookie season in 2009? Will the Yankees — and their fans have the patience to deal with those scenarios?

The guess here is no.

"There's no doubt we're on a week-to-week basis," Cashman said. "The win-now mode that causes you to have difficulties at times dealing with growing pains. If you're in a position to wait it out, let it develop and stay with it, if the win column isn't what's vital for a particular season, you can do that. We're trying to win now, which causes some difficulties."

Perhaps Banuelos and Betances will fulfill their promise and give the Yankees what the A's have now had twice in the past 10 years. But if they struggle — as most young pitchers tend to during their first year or two in the majors — the Yankees will have to ask themselves if they're willing to sacrifice the immediate future for the long-term.

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June 1, 2011

Granderson Powers Yankees Past A's

By **BEN SHPIGEL**

OAKLAND, Calif. — Every time Curtis Granderson faces a left-hander, the odds are against him. They just are. Seven out of 10 times, he will make an out. But for some reason, it seems that he never does. Skeptical? Ask Brett Anderson, a pillar of the Oakland Athletics' young rotation and one of the stingier left-handers in baseball.

Heading into Tuesday night, when the Yankees coasted to a 10-3 victory, Anderson had not given up an extra-base hit to a left-handed hitter in 91 at-bats this season. His last home run allowed? Forget about it. Not since August 2009. One misplaced fastball later and both streaks were done, vanishing in a pocket of green-and-gold far beyond the right-field fence at Overstock.com Coliseum. After that two-run homer, Granderson in the fourth settled for a two-out, two-run single with the bases loaded. His next time up, he lashed a single to right, keying a three-run outburst in the sixth.

Plenty of right-handed hitters are known for their ability to mash lefty pitchers — Jose Bautista, Troy Tulowitzki, David Wright — but no one has hit more home runs (nine) against them than Granderson. His .823 slugging percentage ranks third in baseball, behind another talented left-handed hitter, Jay Bruce, and the right-handed hitting Chris Iannetta. Granderson's .323 average is best on the team.

A year ago at this time, left-handers confounded Granderson. Now he confounds them. A year ago at this time, Granderson was often held out of the lineup against left-handers. Now he never gets a day off.

"I knew it was there," Granderson said. "It was just a matter of getting it back."

With Freddy Garcia, who allowed three runs over seven innings, that confidence never left. The Yankees shudder to think how this season would have progressed if not for Garcia and Bartolo Colon. Signed to minor league deals in January, they both are rotation stalwarts in May, combining to go 7-6 with a 3.17 earned run average in 17 starts.

"I'm not really surprised," Garcia said. "I've been in this game a long time. I know how to go out there and do my business and get people out."

Added Granderson: "It's amazing to watch them go out there and try to prove everybody wrong."

For all the praise the Yankees lavished on Oakland's gifted staff, which began Tuesday with the lowest E.R.A. in baseball (2.88), they have spent the last two days pounding it into submission. Their first victim, Trevor Cahill, fell to 0-3 with a 9.72 E.R.A. against them after giving up four runs in a loss Monday. It was Anderson's turn Tuesday, and what followed was the worst beating of his nascent career.

Coming off eight scoreless innings against the Angels, Anderson's E.R.A. soared from 2.84 to 3.68 after giving up 10 runs and 11 hits (both career highs), including another homer to a left-handed batter, Robinson Cano, who hit a two-run shot in the fifth.

The damage began on the game's first pitch, which Derek Jeter ripped a ball at the second baseman Mark Ellis, who deflected it into shallow center. It was ruled a hit — the first of two for Jeter, running his career total to 2,983 — and extended his season-long trend of production from the leadoff spot: Jeter has reached base in 21 of the 42 games in which he batted first. Granderson followed by crushing a 1-1 pitch over the right-field wall for his team-leading 17th homer, the first Anderson surrendered to a left-handed hitter since Russell Branyan on Aug. 25, 2009. The Yankees led, 2-0, but the rout was only beginning.

A two-out single in the third by Alex Rodriguez scored Jeter, and when the Athletics countered with a run in the bottom of the inning, the Yankees responded immediately. They loaded the bases with two outs for Granderson, who had struck out his previous at-bat against Anderson, staring at a slider on the outside corner. With a 2-2 count, Anderson sought a strikeout, and he turned to that slider again.

Granderson has had practice in such situations. Two weeks ago, he struck out twice against Chris Capuano of the Mets, both times on sliders. His next time up, he clubbed a slider for a home run. On Tuesday, Anderson failed to command his pitch, leaving it over the plate, and Granderson lined it into right, scoring Andruw Jones and Brett Gardner as the Yankees went ahead, 5-1.

"It is hard to believe," Manager Joe Girardi said. "The adjustment that this guy has made is remarkable."

INSIDE PITCH

Every Yankee position player reached base but catcher Russell Martin, who rejoined the lineup after missing two games with a bruise on his left big toe. Martin said he initially hurt it when a ball struck him during batting practice a few weeks ago, and he reinjured it Saturday night in Seattle, when he fouled a ball off the same spot. He said he expects to play Wednesday afternoon. ... Joe Girardi acknowledged what had become apparent for two weeks, that Jorge Posada (0 for 27) is unlikely to serve as the Yankees' designated hitter against left-handed pitching. "Yeah, I mean you could look at it that way," Girardi said. Alex Rodriguez is slated to D.H. on Wednesday against Gio Gonzalez.



<http://www.newsday.com/sports/baseball/yankees/garcia-breezes-with-big-run-support-1.2918168>

Garcia breezes with big run support

June 1, 2011 by ERIK BOLAND / erik.boland@newsday.com



really don't," Yankees manager [Joe Girardi](#) said of the pair of veteran righthanders. "They've both given us a chance to win almost every game that they've pitched. Their numbers are outstanding and they just continue to do what they've done. They've pitched at a very high level."

Garcia (4-4, 3.34) allowed three runs, nine hits and two walks in seven innings. He struck out five. Colon is 3-3 with a 3.36 ERA after his complete-game four-hitter the night before.

The Yankees (30-23), after dropping the first two games of this nine-game trip -- games in which they blew leads -- have won three straight. They've won nine straight against the A's and go for the sweep Wednesday afternoon when [A.J. Burnett](#) (5-3, 3.99) goes against lefthander [Gio Gonzalez](#) (5-2, 2.17).

For the second time in three games, the offense erupted, Tuesday night against another standout A's lefty, [Brett Anderson](#) (3-5), who came in with a 2.84 ERA. The Yankees battered Anderson over 5 1/3 innings, pounding out 11 of their 12 hits and scoring 10 runs, nine earned.

Derek Jeter had two hits, bringing him 17 shy of 3,000 for his career. Alex Rodriguez, who came in 3-for-17 with one RBI on this trip, went 3-for-4 with three RBIs Tuesday. Hours

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Sure, you predicted this out of spring training.

Two of the Yankees' most consistent starters two months into the season would be [Freddie Garcia](#) and [Bartolo Colon](#).

One day after Colon threw his first shutout in five years, Garcia turned in another solid effort Tuesday night in the Yankees' 10-3 victory over the Athletics in front of 22,581 at [Overstock.com Coliseum](#).

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beforehand, he spent time in the clubhouse talking, mostly with a smile, about the results of a [Sports Illustrated](#) poll of major-leaguers who ranked as the sport's most "overrated" player.

Anderson hadn't given up a home run to a lefthanded batter in 15 starts dating to last season -- he gave up two Tuesday night, to Curtis Granderson, who had three hits, and [Robinson Cano](#).

Nine of Granderson's team-high 17 homers have come off lefthanders.

"It is hard to believe," [Girardi](#) said of Granderson, who often found himself on the bench in 2010 against lefties. "The adjustment that this guy has made is remarkable."

The Yankees, as they did Monday, struck early, needing four pitches to get on the board.

Jeter swung at Anderson's first pitch and sent a hard bouncer up the middle, where second baseman [Mark Ellis](#) booted the ball. The play was scored a hit, giving Jeter 2,982 for his career. Granderson followed and crushed Anderson's 1-and-1 pitch, a 91-mph fastball, to right-center for a 2-0 lead.

Rodriguez made it 3-0 in the top of the third, his two-out bloop single to center bringing in Jeter, who reached on an error to lead off.

In the bottom half, the A's got on the board, though some lazy baserunning cost them a run. Kevin Kouzmanoff led off with a double down the leftfield line. The third baseman slowed as he approached first and didn't speed up appreciably as he rounded the bag. Andy LaRoche then tripled, scoring later on David DeJesus' two-out single.

The Yankees increased their lead to 5-1 in an eventful fourth inning. Nick Swisher singled with one out and went to third on Andruw Jones' blooper down the rightfield line. With Brett Gardner at the plate, the Yankees attempted a safety squeeze. Gardner missed the buntable pitch and Swisher strayed too far off third. The botched play went as a caught stealing, 2-5-6. Gardner was then hit by a pitch -- though at first, plate umpire Derryl Cousins ruled it a foul ball -- and Jeter followed with an infield single to load the bases. Granderson's single to right brought in Jones and Gardner.

In the bottom half, the A's had a chance to dent that lead but Garcia left the bases loaded.

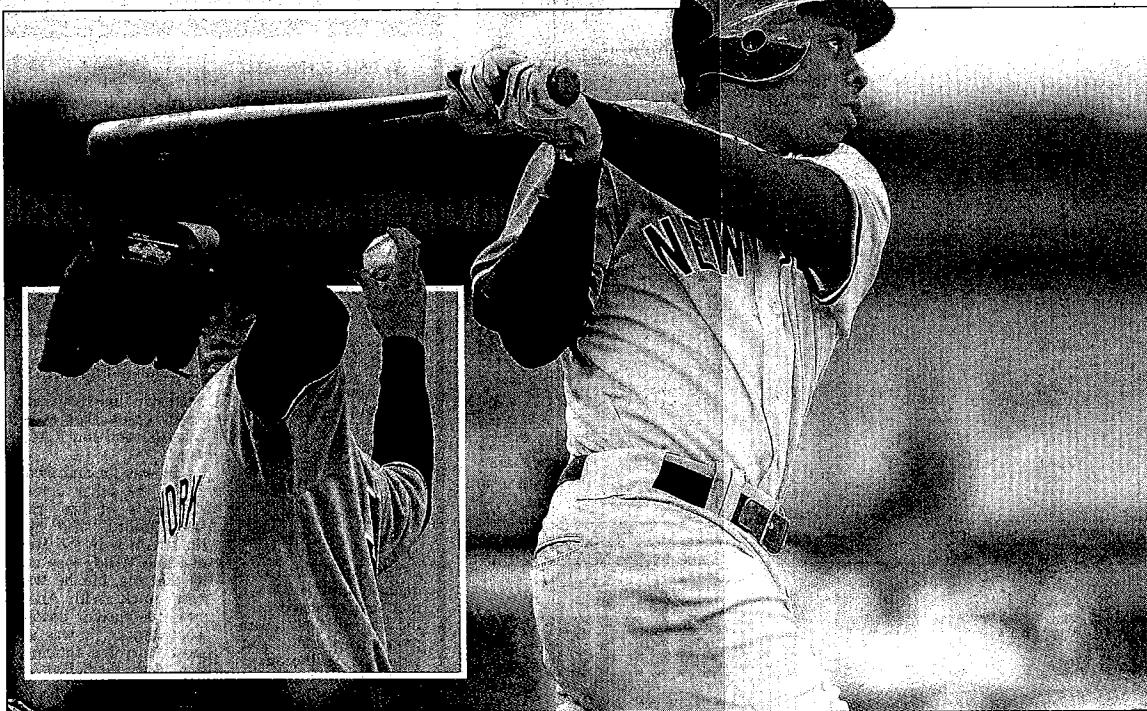
"I'm not really surprised," Garcia said of his season to this point. "I've been in this game for a long time and I know how to go out there and do my business and get people out."

The Yankees made it 7-1 in the fifth, getting [Cano's](#) 11th homer of the season, a two-run shot to right on a 1-and-0 pitch.

The A's cut their deficit to 7-3 in the bottom of the fifth but the Yankees responded by blowing the game open, and knocking out Anderson, in the sixth. The inning featured a two-run single by A-Rod and a steal of home by [Mark Teixeira](#), which made it 10-3.

[< back to article](#)

BOMBERS A HIT



PERFECT NIGHT: Curtis Granderson, who had four RBIs, blasts a two-run homer in the first inning of the Yankees' 10-3 victory over the Athletics last night, giving Freddy Garcia (inset) his fourth victory. Getty Images; AP (inset)

Yankees crush A's with balanced offense

By GEORGE A. KING III

OAKLAND — Their thick muscles have produced homers by the truck load and have easily become the Yankees' calling card.

Yet, there were more dimensions in play last night when the Yankees punished the A's, 10-3, in front of announced crowd of 22,587 at The Coliseum for their third straight victory.

Yes, Curtis Granderson and Robinson Cano homered, but the Yankees swiped four bases and watched Alex Rodriguez drive in three runs on two of his three singles.

Things went so well for the Yankees that they overcame Brett Gardner failing to get down a

safety squeeze bunt in the third inning and still scored a run. Derek Jeter went 2-for-4 and is 17 hits shy of 3,000. In 51 games, Jeter has 57 hits. That's an average of 1.12 hits per game. At that rate look for him to reach the coveted mark in Chicago, where the Yankees play the Cubs from June 17-19.

Freddy Garcia was the benefactor of the offensive orgy and improved to 4-4 with his second straight victory. In seven innings, which tied a season-high for the veteran right-hander, Garcia allowed three runs and nine hits. He walked two and fanned five. One of the hits was a two-run homer by Rutgers product David DeJesus.

During the three-game

BOXSCORE / PAGE 60

Yankees 10
Athletics 3

win streak the Yankees have scored seven, five and 10 runs. And their starters have worked eight (CC Sabathia), nine (Bartolo Colon) and seven.

Three runs in the sixth when the Yankees chased Brett Anderson blew the game open. Anderson was spanked for 10 runs (nine earned) and 11 hits in 5½ innings and is 3-5.

Staked to a 7-1 cushion to start the home fifth, Garcia gave up a triple to Coco Crisp and a two-run homer to David DeJesus before getting an out.

Anderson started the

game not having given up a home run to a left-handed batter in 91 at-bats, but Curtis Granderson got him in the first inning and Robinson Cano in the fifth.

Granderson's 17th presented Garcia with a 2-0 lead and Cano's 11th pushed the advantage to 7-1.

Anderson was in a 2-0 hole after throwing four pitches.

With an assist from the official scorer Jeter's success leading off innings continued. Jeter hit Anderson's first pitch hard at second baseman Mark Ellis who failed to catch the ball despite it being in front of him. With the count, 1-1, Granderson made it 2-0.

When Mark Teixeira

followed Granderson's homer with a sharp single to left it appeared Anderson was facing more trouble but he retired the next three to keep the deficit at 2-0.

Alex Rodriguez's two-out soft single to center in the third scored Jeter with an unearned run and hiked the Yankees' lead to 3-0. Jeter reached second on Ellis' throwing error on a grounder up the middle. After Granderson struck out looking and Teixeira popped up, Rodriguez dunked a 1-2 pitch into center to score Jeter.

The A's used Andy LaRoche's one-out triple to right and David DeJesus' single to center to score a run in the third and cut the Yankees' lead to 3-1.

george.king@nypost.com



Today — 3:35 p.m.
RHP A.J. Burnett (5-3, 3.99) vs. LHP Gio Gonzalez (5-2, 2.17)

Game on YES.
WCBS (880 AM)
Three-game series
at Angels starts Friday.

INSIDE THE MATCHUPS

YANKEES: Despite recently demonstrating his reputation as an erratic pitcher, Burnett has been more consistent than in the past. Pitching at least five innings in every start this season, he received a no-decision in his last outing, allowing two runs and four hits over five innings against the Mariners. He is 4-3 with a 3.88 ERA in nine career starts.

ATHLETICS: Gonzalez has not gotten a loss in five straight starts. He has averaged seven strikeouts and has not allowed more than two runs since April. In his last start, Gonzalez received a no-decision, allowing two runs (one earned) over five innings against the Orioles. He is 1-2 with a 6.60 ERA in three starts against the Yankees.

WHO'S HOT

Joba Chamberlain, who didn't pitch last night, has a 0.96 WHIP and has not allowed a run in six straight appearances.

WHO'S NOT

Brett Gardner, who went 0-for-3 last night, has one hit in his past 17 at-bats (.059).

STAT SO?

Robinson Cano homered for the first time in 24 career games at Oakland Coliseum. It was the only stadium where he had played more than three games but hadn't homered.

[\[PRINT\]](#) **ESPN.com:** New York Yankees [\[Print without images\]](#)

Wednesday, June 1, 2011

Rapid Reaction: Yankees 10, Athletics 3

[Recap](#) | [Box score](#) | [Photos](#)

What it means: That the Yankees can win despite carrying three of the six most overrated players in baseball, as determined by a poll of 185 major-leaguers, in their starting lineup on a nightly basis.

What's good: **Curtis Granderson**, well on his way to making the overrated list, had a two-run homer (No. 17), a two-run single to push his RBI total to a team-leading 41. **Alex Rodriguez**, everybody's No. 1, had three hits and three RBI. **Derek Jeter**, Overrated No. 3, had two infield hits and a walk, got on base four times, scored three times. **Robinson Cano**, neither overrated nor underrated, just very, very good, hit a home run that is still in orbit. And **Freddy Garcia** may not be **Bartolo Colon**, but who is? Freddy's

What's not so good: Well, **Nick Swisher**, Overrated No. 6 in your program, kicked one around in right that was scored a triple for **Andy LaRoche**, also got caught in a rundown between third and home in the fourth, although it wasn't entirely his fault. That was courtesy of **Brett Gardner**, who failed to get a squeeze bunt down and left Swisher hanging. And Russell Martin, in his return to the lineup after missing a game with a bruised left foot, took an 0-for-4 with two strikeouts. That's about it.

What's next: Yankees ask **A.J. Burnett** (5-3, 3.99) to close out sweep of the A's Wednesday afternoon vs. LHP **Gio Gonzales** (5-2, 2.17).

Curtis Granderson HR helps Yankees beat A's again



OAKLAND, Calif. -- Instead of being benched against southpaws, [Curtis Granderson](#) is thriving against them this season.

Granderson became the first left-handed hitter to homer off [Brett Anderson](#) in nearly two years and [Derek Jeter](#) had two hits to reach 2,983 for his career and scored three runs to help the [New York Yankees](#) beat the [Oakland Athletics](#) for the ninth straight time, 10-3 on Tuesday night.

Granderson struggled to get into the lineup against lefties a year ago, but has hit a major league-leading nine of his 17 homers against southpaws this season

"I knew it was there, it was just a matter of getting it back," he said. "I had to do it to get to the big leagues. I did it early on and just ran into a couple bumps in the road and am trying to constantly fight the long haul of getting back. I'm still fighting it. It's good pitch, good at-bat, followed by bad pitch, bad at-bat against them."

The good are much more common than the bad so far this season for Granderson, who had three hits and four RBIs against one of the toughest. Anderson (3-5) hadn't allowed an extra-base hit to a left-handed hitter all season and a homer to a lefty since [Russell Branyan](#) hit one for Seattle on Aug. 25, 2009.

"Anderson is as good as they get," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "It's hard to believe the adjustment that this guy has made. It's remarkable."

[Robinson Cano](#) also homered, [Alex Rodriguez](#) had three hits and three RBIs and [Mark Teixeira](#) took advantage of shoddy Oakland fielding to steal home for the Yankees, who have their longest winning streak against the A's since 1964-65, when the team was based in Kansas City.

Anderson allowed a career-worst 10 runs for the A's, who have lost 22 of 25 meetings against the Yankees. With back-to-back wins to open this three-game set, New York has become the first team to win nine straight series against the A's since the team moved to Oakland in 1968.

[Freddy Garcia](#) (4-4) allowed three runs and nine hits in seven innings of his 300th career start. He allowed only a two-run homer and an RBI single to [David DeJesus](#) to beat the A's for just the second time in his last 10 starts against Oakland.

His best moment might have come with his glove, when he made a self-defense stab of a line drive by [Kevin Kouzmanoff](#) to start an inning-ending double play in the sixth.

"That was lucky," he said. "It almost hit my face. I don't even know how I caught that ball, but I did it and made a double play."

That performance proved to be more than enough on a night the Yankees hammered Anderson, who allowed nine earned runs and a career-worst 11 hits in 5 1/3 innings. That dropped Anderson's record to 0-4 with a 6.53 ERA in five career starts against New York.

"Seems you face one guy and then another guy that's an All-Star, a potential Hall of Famer comes up and it's tough," Anderson said. "But it's another big league lineup you have to go through and battle and I just didn't do a good job of it tonight."

Even when the Yankees made mistakes, they were able to turn them into runs. Rodriguez got caught too far off first after Cano struck out for the second out in the sixth inning. With Rodriguez in a rundown, Teixeira broke from third to home and scored on a stolen base when first baseman Conor Jackson's throw was off line.

For the second straight game, the Yankees got a two-run homer in the first inning to jump out to the early lead before the A's even came to the plate. A day after Teixeira hit his 16th homer in the opening inning off Trevor Cahill, Granderson hit his 17th after Jeter led off the game with a single off second baseman Mark Ellis' glove.

"Career-wise he's been bad left-on-left but it seems like he's turned the corner this year," Anderson said. "I just fed him fastballs trying to go in and left it out over the plate. He's just covering all sides of the plate right now. A tough out."

The Yankees added an unearned run in the third when Jeter reached on Ellis' two-base throwing error and scored on Rodriguez's bloop hit.

After DeJesus' RBI single got Oakland on the board for the first time this series in the bottom of the third, Granderson extended the lead to 5-1 with a two-out, bases-loaded single in the fourth.

Cano's 11th homer and Rodriguez's two-run single helped the Yankees break the game open.

Game notes

Jeter has reached safely to open the game in 21 of the 42 games he has been leadoff hitter. ... The last Yankees player to steal home was Brett Gardner on April 4, 2010, against Boston. ... Anderson's outing snapped a streak of 28 straight games that Oakland's starter had allowed four runs or fewer. ... The A's are giving slumping 1B Daric Barton (.206 average, 0 HRs) a few days off to work on his batting stroke.



Everything Jersey

Curtis Granderson leads Yankees to 10-3 win over Oakland

Published: Wednesday, June 01, 2011, 12:59 AM Updated: Wednesday, June 01, 2011, 1:27 AM



By **Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger**

OAKLAND, Calif. — Curtis Granderson, for all of his production this season, remains difficult to categorize.

"You don't necessarily think of power hitters hitting second in the lineup," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said tonight. "Maybe if time evolves here and if something leads us to hit him down a couple of slots here, or in the middle, you might think of him more as a power hitter. But right now, I just think of him as a complete player."

That definition seems to work.

In a 10-3 thrashing of the Athletics Tuesday night, Granderson showed his power with a two-run shot, but added a few singles into the mix as well. Following the theme for the year, all of his production came off left-handed hitters. By the end, Granderson had knocked in four runs to lead the Yankees.

He had plenty of help from teammates who earlier in the day **had been tabbed as "overrated."** When Sports Illustrated released a players' poll, Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter had been voted as the most overrated players in the game.

Both answered those charges. Rodriguez collected three hits and knocked in three runs. Jeter picked up two hits and scored three runs. Meanwhile, starter Freddy Garcia allowed three runs in seven innings to pick up the victory.

But it all started with Granderson, who jump-started the Yankees by going 3-for-5 with a stolen base.



Jason O. Watson-US PRESSWIRE

Yankees center fielder Curtis Granderson hits a 2 RBI single against the Oakland Athletics.

Regardless of how he is categorized, what remains indisputable is Granderson's standing this season, when he has arguably been the Yankees' most valuable player.

"He's a guy who has speed, he can beat you with the way he runs, he can beat you in the outfield, he can beat you stealing bases, we've seen him sacrifice bunt, we've seen him do a lot of things, so I don't just think power hitter," Girardi said. "But he has a lot of power."

Granderson's resurgence has been powered by his drastic improvement against left-handed pitching, perhaps best represented by his .836 slugging percentage against them this season.

A's lefty Brett Anderson found that out first-hand.

Few pitchers in the American League handles lefties as well as Anderson. He had not allowed a home run to a left-hander since 2009, and entering his start against the Yankees, he hadn't surrendered so much as an extra base hit to one this season.

That all changed quickly.

After Jeter led off the game with an infield single, Granderson followed with his homer off Anderson, a shot to right field that put the Yankees ahead 2-0. It was Granderson's 17th homer of the season, putting him ahead of Mark Teixeira for the team lead.

Not that the Yankees were finished. Rodriguez singled home Jeter, who reached on an error in the third, to make it 3-0. Then Granderson asserted himself once more.

In the fourth, Granderson lined a two-run single to right, upping the Yankees' cushion to 5-1. Anderson's troubles against lefties continued when Robinson Cano smashed a two-run homer in the fifth that made it 7-1, sending the Yankees on the way to a rout.

The Yankees tagged Anderson for three more runs in the sixth inning, with the big blow coming on a two-run single by Rodriguez.

Anderson departed after allowing nine runs on 11 hits — both career highs — and the Yankees were well on their way to their third straight victory.

For more Yankees coverage, follow Marc Carig on Twitter at

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Yankees clobber A's, 10-3, for third straight win

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011 LAST UPDATED: WEDNESDAY JUNE 1, 2011, 2:21 AM

BY PETE CALDERA

OAKLAND, Calif. – Curtis Granderson says he still checks the clubhouse door each day to see if he's in the lineup against a lefty starter. "Especially with this team," Granderson said of a Yankee club that is back in first place alone.

By drilling his ninth homer off a lefty this year during a four-RBI night, Granderson jump-started the Yankees' 10-3 victory against the Athletics on Tuesday night at [Oakland Coliseum](#).

The Red Sox lost their third straight game as the Yanks won their third in a row, putting Joe Girardi's club a game ahead in the AL East on June 1.

Following a Derek Jeter infield single to start the game, Granderson smashed his team-leading 17th homer of the year. It was the first extra-base hit yielded to a left-handed hitter by A's lefty starter Brett Anderson in 15 starts, dating to last season.

Before it was over, Robinson Cano added a long two-run homer off Anderson, who endured his roughest big-league start.

Anderson was charged with each of the Yanks' 10 runs before 22,581 fans. Freddy Garcia (4-4) earned the victory, putting A.J. Burnett in line to complete the sweep this afternoon. The Yankees are 13-3 in day games.

Entering Tuesday, Anderson had a 2.84 ERA. But he gave up 11 hits and three walks on a night when his defense played shoddy at times behind him.

Jeter scored three times and added another infield hit in the fourth inning, leaving him 17 hits shy of 3,000. Granderson (3-for-5) also had a two-run single in the fourth, completing his first four-RBI game this season.

During that inning, Brett Gardner bunted through a pitch on a squeeze play with runners at the corners. After Nick Swisher was trapped off third base, Gardner was hit by a pitch, Jeter reached on an error, and Granderson delivered a sharp two-out hit to right.

"It is hard to believe the adjustment this guy has made off left-handed pitchers," Girardi said of Granderson, whose struggles against southpaws had reached the breakpoint by mid-August last season.

That's when Granderson and hitting coach Kevin Long went about shortening up his swing.

"I knew it was there," Granderson said of his stroke. "It was just a matter of getting it back, and I'm still fighting it."

Not long ago, it was a struggle for the Yanks (30-23) to keep their bullpen fresh. But consecutive solid starts by CC Sabathia, Bartolo Colon and Garcia (4-4) have provided Girardi with a well-rested bullpen and a 3-2 record on this trip.

Garcia lasted seven innings and gave up three runs. Between standing the bases loaded in the fourth, Garcia gave up a third-inning RBI single to David DeJesus and a fifth-inning two-run homer by DeJesus.

In the sixth, Garcia turned a sudden inning-ending double play when he snared Kevin Kouzmanoff's head-high liner in self defense, then whirled to nail the runner off second base.

"I was lucky," Garcia said. "I almost got hit in the face. I don't know how I caught that ball."

Cano's 11th homer of the year made it 7-1 in the fifth, and things turned a bit bizarre in the sixth.

With the bases loaded following an intentional walk to Teixeira, Alex Rodriguez (3-for-4, 3 RBI) greeted reliever Brad Ziegler with a two-run single.

Teixeira was at third and A-Rod at first when Cano struck out. A-Rod strayed too far off the bag and was briefly trapped in a rundown as Mark Teixeira bolted for home. First baseman Connor Jackson's throw home went wide, and the Yanks were credited with their second double steal of the inning.

With all the bloop, walks and blasts, "That's as close to a complete game as we can get," Granderson said of the 12-hit attack.

NOTES: Before the game, Jeter spoke about nearing 3,000 hits. "It wasn't a goal of mine. I didn't set out for that. You set out to play, you set out to get here, and then you try to stay as long as you can and try to be consistent," Jeter said. "If you do that for a long time, then you get close."

Catcher Russell Martin went 0-for-4 in his return to the lineup. Martin hadn't played since fouling a ball off his left big toe on Saturday night. "It's a bruise. Just playing on it is fine, swinging doesn't really bother me. It's just nagging," said Martin, who was lifted after seven innings since he's due to catch again today.

Martin's foul ball slammed off the same toe that he injured three weeks ago, when he took a liner off the foot while running the bases during batting practice. Since there was blood under the nail, Martin had to have it drilled to relieve the pressure.

Granderson leads way in Yankees' barrage

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com | 6/1/2011 2:40 AM ET

OAKLAND -- Out of habit, Curtis Granderson still checks the lineup card every day when he walks in to the Yankees clubhouse, but the days when his name disappears due to a left-handed starter are long gone.

His struggles against southpaws a thing of the past, Granderson homered and drove in four runs to lead the Yankees' charge as they pounded the Athletics, 10-3, on Tuesday at Oakland Coliseum.

"I knew it was there, it was just a matter of getting it back," said Granderson, who has hit nine of his team-leading 17 homers off lefties. "I had to do it to get to the big leagues, I just ran into a couple bumps in the road."

Granderson got the Yankees started right out of the gate with a two-run blast in the first inning off Brett Anderson, who would leave rocked for career highs in runs allowed (10) and hits (11) by the sixth inning.

Alex Rodriguez had three hits and collected another three RBIs, while Robinson Cano also slugged a two-run homer, providing more than enough support for New York starter Freddy Garcia.

"We have a good lineup," manager Joe Girardi said. "We have a deep lineup and we have patient hitters that know how to work the count and foul pitches off. When guys make some mistakes, they get to them."

The Yankees' third consecutive victory was credited to Garcia, who held the Athletics to three runs over seven innings, posting a win for the second straight start.

David DeJesus drove in all three of Oakland's runs with a third-inning single and a two-run homer in the fifth, his fifth.

Other than that, the soft-tossing Garcia showcased a knack for getting out of trouble, including stranding the bases loaded in the fourth by getting Andy LaRoche to bounce into a fielder's choice.

"I'm not really surprised," Garcia said. "I've been in this game for a long time. I know how to go out there and do my business and get people out."

Not to say that Garcia didn't have his close calls. In the sixth, Kevin Kouzmanoff blasted a rocket back to the mound that Garcia barely saw.

It somehow landed in his glove, and Garcia nonchalantly tossed the ball to second base to double off Mark Ellis and end the inning.

"I was lucky. I almost got hit in my face," Garcia said. "I don't know how I caught that ball. But I did. It scared me."

After Granderson's first-inning homer, Rodriguez drove in his first run with a third-inning bloop single. Granderson added a two-run single off Anderson in the fifth, knocking in Andruw Jones and Brett Gardner.

"The big thing is just trying to use what we've been working on, [hitting coach] Kevin Long and myself," Granderson said. "It's just being in there ready to hit, being down and consistently in position to attack the baseball."

Granderson's nine homers off lefties are the most of any big leaguer, and Girardi has marveled that he'd ever been tempted to bench his bat against southpaws.

"It's hard to believe," Girardi said. "The adjustment that this guy has made is remarkable."

Cano clubbed his 11th homer, a two-run shot, in the fifth, and the Yankees pulled away in a three-run sixth that featured a rarity: Mark Teixeira's first stolen base of the year was a steal of home.

"It seems you face one guy, then another guy that's an All-Star, a potential Hall of Famer comes up," Anderson said. "It's tough."

Anderson's last duty in the game was to walk Teixeira intentionally to set up a bases-loaded spot for Rodriguez, and the gamble didn't work for Brad Ziegler, as Rodriguez laced a two-run single.

Oakland then exacerbated the issue as catcher Kurt Suzuki threw down to first base, hanging up Rodriguez between the bases. Conor Jackson flung wildly as Teixeira charged home with what would be scored a double steal.

"When things are going right, they're going right," Girardi said.

The Yankees had plenty of bullpen help at the ready, having enjoyed long efforts from CC Sabathia on Sunday in Seattle and Bartolo Colon on Monday against the A's.

They'd barely need it, as Garcia scattered nine hits, walking two and striking out five. Luis Ayala and Lance Pendleton finished up with a pair of scoreless innings.

Approaching Oakland, the Yankees had some reservations about the solid starting pitching they'd be facing, but thus far it has proved to be no match for their big bats.

Consider that the tag team of Granderson and Teixeira has already hit 33 homers, outslugging the entire A's roster, which owns 31 round-trippers this season.

Yet as they showed on Tuesday, the Yankees have more than one weapon to make sure the job gets done.

"We're trying to do it any way we can," Granderson said. "The fact that we're getting it from more than just one source is always a good thing."

BASEBALL

Yankees insider

BY MARK FEINSAND

Posada left out vs. lefties

OAKLAND — Jorge Posada's days as a full-time designated hitter appear to be over.

The veteran was out of the lineup again last night, as Joe Girardi started Andruw Jones at DH against lefthander Brett Anderson.

Posada won't start again today against southpaw Gio Gonzalez, as Girardi hinted that Alex Rodriguez would get a turn as the DH.

Girardi stopped short of calling his DH situation a platoon, although he acknowledged that "you could look at it that way" given Posada's 0-for-26 skid against lefties this season. Posada's last start against a lefty came on May 7 in Texas against Derek Holland.

"Jorge hasn't had success right-handed this year, but he's had success in the past," Girardi said.

"It's just kind of worked out that way. (Brett Gardner) has hit lefthanders as well and Andruw Jones has hit them lately. I guess you could look at it that way, but when a lefty was in there, I let Jorge face the lefthander (Monday) night. It's not that I'm going to completely take every at-bat against Jorge against lefthanders."

Girardi hasn't sat Posada down to tell him he won't see any action against lefties, although the manager isn't committing to giving him any such at-bats, either.

"I can't say that I won't, but I can't say that I necessarily will," Girardi said. "I don't want to get boxed in here."

Asked how long the Yankees can wait for struggling hitters such as Posada (.169) and Nick Swisher (.213) to turn things around, Brian Cashman said it's a "feel" thing.

Swisher went 1-for-4 with a walk against the A's last night.

"You have to give it some time, get a feel and make some decisions when we feel they're appropriate — if we think they need to be made," Cashman said.

"We're worried about anybody who is struggling. When we get those guys going, we'll focus on whoever else is struggling. Swish had a good series in Seattle, so hopefully that's a sign that he's on the come for us."

LEADING MAN

For all the talk about Derek Jeter's

EXTRA INNINGS

STAT OF THE DAY

2 Francisco Cervelli stole two bases Monday against the A's, making him the first Yankee catcher since Joe Girardi in 1996 to accomplish that feat.

TEST YOUR YANKEE IQ

Lou Gehrig's streak of 2,130 consecutive games played started 86 years ago today. Who did Gehrig pinch-hit for to begin the streak?

NEXT GAME

Today, 3:35 p.m.,
at Athletics,
A.J. Burnett
(5-3, 3.99)
vs. Gio
Gonzalez
(5-2, 2.17); TV: YES



ANSWER: Pee-Wee Wanninger.

.259 batting average this season, the captain has been getting the job done as a leadoff hitter. Jeter has gotten on to lead off the first inning 21 times in 42 games this season, including a single to start last night's contest. Jeter entered last night hitting .375 with a .430 on-base percentage when leading off any inning.

"That's pretty good," Girardi said before Jeter went 2-for-4 with three runs scored last night. "That's giving your team an opportunity to score in the first inning. I think he's playing pretty well."

WELCOME BACK

Russell Martin returned to the lineup last night and went 0-for-4 after missing the past two games with a sore left big toe. . . . The Yankees and A's will finish up their three-game series with a matinee at the Coliseum today. The Yankees are 13-3 in day games this season, the best record in the majors.

PITCHING IN

CC Sabathia will throw out the ceremonial first pitch as part of the North Vallejo Little League Spring Classic today. Sabathia underwrote the rebuilding of the league's field, which he played on as a youth.

By GEORGE A. KING III
OAKLAND, Calif. — It happens as routinely as June following May: Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter are judged harshly by their peers in a Sports Illustrated poll.

Now the fans are jumping on board.

According to SI, 185 major league players were asked anonymously "Who is the most overrated player in

YANKEES NOTES

baseball?"

For all the time put into the poll, the results are predictable. Of the top five, the Yankees have three.

Rodriguez led the poll with 18 percent. Joba Chamberlain, got 12 percent and Jeter bagged seven percent. Nationals outfielder Jason Werth, who signed a staggering seven-year, \$126 million contract in the winter, and Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon were named on four percent of the ballots.

Rodriguez and Chamberlain had fun with the results. Jeter wanted nothing to do with it.

"I have no comment on anonymous quotes," Jeter said. "I never understood the anonymous quote. It's the same thing they do every year. I am more focused on positive things."

Before Rodriguez vowed to avoid controversial statements he might have railed against being judged as the most overrated player in the game. He laughed about it yesterday before the Yankees' 10-3 triumph over the A's.

HARSH MARKS



NUMBERS CRUNCH: According to a Sports Illustrated poll of 185 major league players, Derek Jeter (above), Alex Rodriguez and Joba Chamberlain were in the top five as the most overrated players in baseball. Getty Images

SI poll: A-Rod, Jeter among most overrated

"I have been on that list many, many times, it will be the same next summer," said Rodriguez, who didn't remember if he participated in the survey. "If this is the only thing we're talking about, we're doing good. My focus is on the team."

"I'm in good company right there," Chamberlain said. "I've still got a job so

I'm doing something right. I don't care."

For years Rodriguez and Jeter have been high on the SI poll, and no doubt money plays a part.

Nevertheless, neither Rodriguez nor Jeter has played consistently in the first two months this season when they are being paid \$32 million and \$15 million,

respectively.

Jeter, 17 hits away from 3,000 after going 2-for-4 last night, batted a career-low .270 last year. He's at .264 so far this season. Rodriguez also hit .270 last year and is now at .287 after going 3-for-4 last night. More importantly, he has nine homers and has gone 39 at-bats without reaching the seats.

Chamberlain seems to be an odd choice because after an off-year last season, he has regained the eighth-inning spot with Rafael Soriano on the disabled list and has pitched effectively. Chamberlain hasn't allowed a run in six appearances (seven innings). Opposing hitters are batting .209 against him, and he has 22 strikeouts and six

walks in 26 innings.

Jeter did worse in SI's Facebook poll, where 45 percent said he was the most overrated player. Boston DH David Ortiz was second with 17 percent and Rodriguez finished third at 15 percent.

In the poll taken two weeks ago, the fans voted Jeter as the second-nicest player in the game.

➤ Following Monday's 5-0 win over the A's, **Russell Martin** said his bruised left toe would be well enough for him to return to the lineup last night to catch **Freddy Garcia** after sitting out the previous two games. He was right and batted sixth, going 0-for-4.

Francisco Cervelli started the previous two games and went 2-for-6 with an RBI and two stolen bases.

➤ **Adam Warren**, a candidate to replace **Ivan Nova** if the right-hander struggles Friday night against the Angels, started for Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Monday. In six innings the right-hander allowed four runs and nine hits and didn't figure in the decision, an 8-5 loss to Indianapolis. In 10 starts for SWB, Warren is 3-1 with a 3.81 ERA.

Nova gave up 3-1 lead inside of four innings last Saturday in Seattle. He surrendered four runs, five hits, three and hit a batter in 3¹/₃ innings against the worst-hitting team in the AL. He is 4-3 with a 4.67 ERA in 11 games (10) starts.



GEORGE A. KING III'S PINSTRIPE PLUS

**A LOOK BACK AT
THE YANKEES
FROM MAY 1-31**
george.king@nypost.com

5 KEY STATS

AFTER a 15-9 April, the Yankees slipped to 14-14 in May going into last night's game against in Oakland, but considering the amount of dead wood in Joe Girardi's lineup, they did well to break even in those 28 games.

On the bright side, the Yankees have stolen two months in or near first place with a rotation that houses Bartolo Colon, Freddy Garcia and Ivan Nova.

Colon is 3-3 with a 3.26 ERA in 11 games (eight starts). Garcia was 3-4 with a 3.26 ERA in nine games (eight starts) and Nova, who could be pitching for his rotation spot Friday night against the Angels, is 4-3 with a 4.67 ERA in 11 games (10 starts).

If you had told the Yankees on Opening Day that Colon, who had not yet replaced Phil Hughes, and Garcia would stay healthy and be successful across the first two months but not able to continue past that point, they gladly would have taken it.

Now, with Hughes on the DL at least until July, the Yankees are committed to Colon and Garcia for far more than they ever expected. While the veteran right-handers have been effective, landing a starter via trade should remain the Yankees' No. 1 goal.

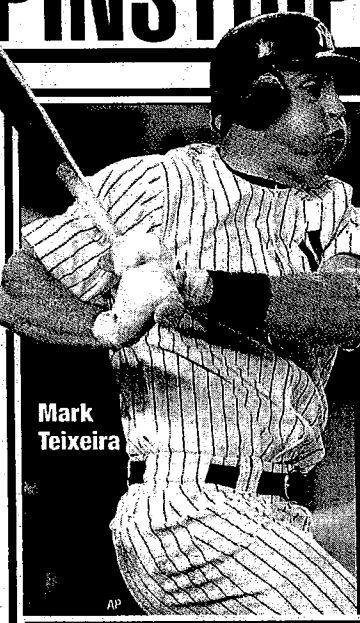
Here's a look back at May:

MVP: Curtis Granderson, Mark Teixeira (tie)

Robinson Cano looked like the best player in the AL during April, but he tailed off in May. The best player in the second month of the season? It's a tie between Curtis Granderson and Mark Teixeira.

Granderson was hitting .281 (32-for-147) with nine homers and 22 RBIs in the month. Teixeira was at .259 (29-for-112) with 10 homers and 22 RBIs. Entering last night's action, Teixeira had homered in four of five games and seven of 11.

They carried a lineup that was waiting for Alex Rodriguez to start hitting something other than singles and for Cano to get back to the form he showed in April.



Mark Teixeira

**GAME OF THE MONTH:
YANKEES 5, BLUE JAYS 4,
May 24**

Mark Teixeira's two-out, game-winning single beat the Blue Jays, 5-4, in the bottom of the ninth, and for the first time across the opening two months the win gave the Yankees a slice of momentum and Yankee Stadium housed a buzz. CC Sabathia went nine innings, and Curtis Granderson set up Teixeira's game-winning hit with an RBI single that tied the score.

The runner-up was a 4-1 victory over the Orioles in Baltimore on May 18 that required 15 innings to complete and had the added handicap of forcing the Yankees to bounce

Inning	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	R	H	E
TOR	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	0
NYY	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	5	13	1

W: Sabathia (5-3) L: Francisco (1-2)

back from a Mariano Rivera blown save.

Also in the discussion was setup man David Robertson. He had an 0.75 ERA and 23 strikeouts in 12 innings going into last night, allowing an earned run just once in 13 appearances.

LVP: Nick Swisher

Considering he was batting .169 (23-for-136) and had not homered since April 23, Jorge Posada was a strong candidate to be named here for the second straight month. However, the switch-hitting Posada essentially has become a part-time DH, sitting against

lefties in the previous eight games against southpaws.

So, Nick Swisher, another switch-hitter, lands here. It's not for a lack of effort because Swisher constantly is working with hitting coach Kevin Long, but the numbers are to the point where Swisher needs to forget them and focus on the final four months of the season.

Entering last night's game, Swisher was hitting .198 (16-for-81) in May with two homers and eight RBIs. Those kind of numbers don't cut it as a corner outfielder in the AL.

LOOKING AHEAD

Derek Jeter will soon reach 3,000 hits.

Figure it will happen during the road trip that starts in Chicago with three games against the Cubs (June 17-19) and ends with three in Cincinnati (June 20-22). If it's against the Reds, Jeter will have been named Yankees captain (2003) and notched his 3,000th hit in a city the Yankees rarely visit.

A three-game series this weekend in Anaheim ends a nine-game, three-

city trip and sends the Yankees home to face the Red Sox for three games (June 7-9). The Yankees are 1-5 against their blood rivals and dropped three straight in their set in The Bronx in mid-May.

The Indians are in next (June 10-12), followed by the Rangers (June 14-16). Nobody expects the Indians to stay atop the AL Central all summer, but through the first two months they dominated that division. The Rangers recently got AL MVP Josh Hamilton back from the DL.

Interleague opponents Rockies (June 24-26) and Brewers (28-30) finish the month at Yankee Stadium.

WOULD YOU BE SURPRISED?

If the Yankees engage other teams in a search for help via trade a little earlier than usual? General manager Brian Cashman said this week that his phone has not chirped, but the longer Nova struggles and Posada and Swisher don't hit, other teams are going to sense Yankees blood in the water.

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE JOE GIRARDI IF:

He feels Jeter needs a rest on the verge of getting the 3,000th hit. And what happens if Jeter requires one more hit after June 21? The next day is a day game in Cincinnati with an off-day to follow before returning home. Sitting Jeter in that game presents Jeter the chance to get 3,000 at Yankee Stadium on June 24 against the Rockies.

.170 The combined numbers for Nick Swisher, Jorge Posada, Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter with runners in scoring position in May pending last night's action. They hit a combined 29-for-170, and the group's only two homers were hit by Rodriguez.

+38 The Yankees' home-run margin (80 HR, 42 allowed), by far the best in baseball. The second-place Braves were at +19 going into last night.

30 More RBIs by Curtis Granderson through the opening two months this season (37) compared to last, when he picked up seven in April and had none in an injury-ruined May.

6 of 23

Inherited runners who have scored against David Robertson, good for a 74 percent strand rate. The 23 runners inherited were the most in the AL going into last night.

4.13 Strikeout-to-walk ratio for 38-year-old Bartolo Colon, fourth-best in the AL and the highest number of his 14-season career. The right-hander had 62 walks and 15 walks in 66 1/3 innings.

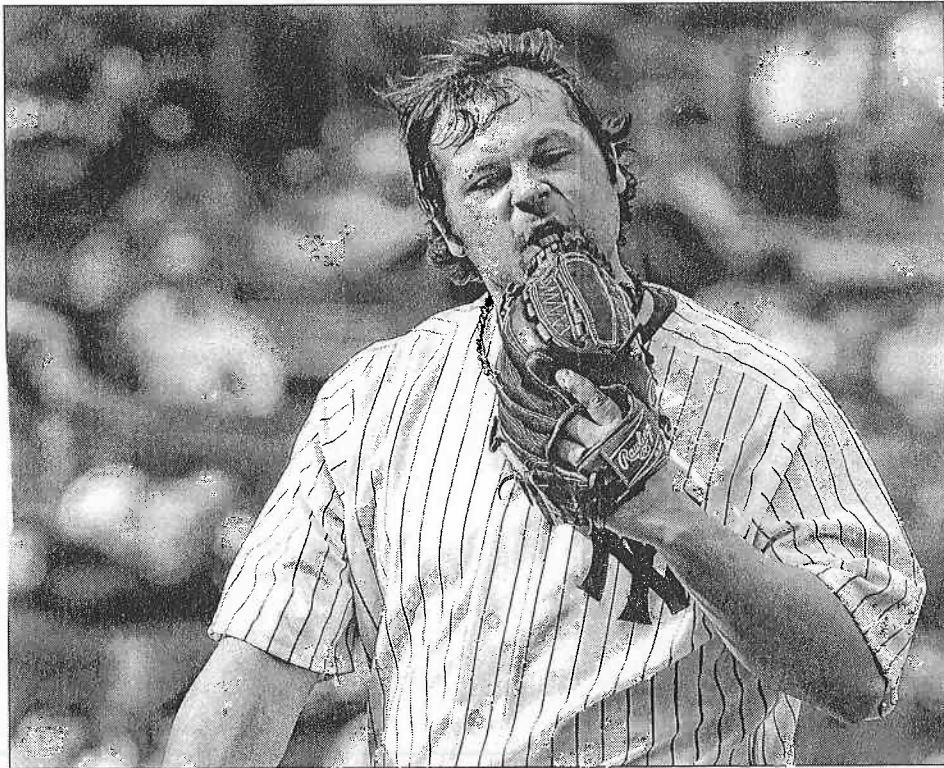


Bartolo Colon

May breakdown (14-14)

S	M	T	W	TH	F	S
Blue Jays 1 W, 5-2	@ Tigers 2 W, 5-3	@ Tigers 3 L, 4-2	@ Tigers 4 L, 4-0	@ Tigers 5 L, 6-3	@ Rangers 6 W, 4-1	@ Rangers 7 L, 7-5
@ Rangers 8 W, 12-5		Royals 10 W, 3-1	Royals 11 L, 4-3	Royals 12 L, 11-5	Red Sox 13 L, 5-4	Red Sox 14 L, 6-0
Red Sox 15 L, 7-5	@ Rays 16 L, 6-5	@ Rays 17 W, 6-2	@ Orioles 18 W, 4-1 (15)	@ Orioles 19 W, 13-2	Mets 20 L, 2-1	Mets 21 W, 7-3
Mets 22 W, 9-3	Blue Jays 23 L, 7-3	Blue Jays 24 W, 5-4	Blue Jays 25 W, 7-3		@ Mariners 27 L, 4-3	@ Mariners 27 L, 5-4
@ Mariners 29 W, 7-1	@ Athletics 30 W, 5-0	@ Athletics 31 TBD				

WIN LOSS



Yankee reliever Joba Chamberlain, above, doesn't mind being on Sports Illustrated's 'overrated list' because he said he's in good company with teammates Alex Rodriguez and Derek Jeter. FILE PHOTO BY KATHY WILLENS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Label doesn't faze trio

Rodriguez, Joba, Jeter make SI's 'overrated' list

By Chad Jennings
cjennings@lohud.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Alex Rodriguez shrugged, Joba Chamberlain laughed and Derek Jeter didn't want to talk about it. A Sports Illustrated poll released on Tuesday ranked three Yankees as the most overrated players in baseball, as selected by an anonymous vote of nearly 200 major-league players. Rodriguez finished first, Chamberlain second and Jeter third.

"That's good company right there," Chamberlain said. Those three Yankees have been at the top of the list for three years in a row now. Chamberlain was voted most overrated last season, and Jeter was voted most

YANKEES NOTEBOOK

overrated in 2009, the year he went on to finish third in MVP voting.

"We doing this again?" Jeter said. "I've got no comment on anonymous polls. There you have it."

Nationals outfielder Jayson Werth finished fourth and Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon was fifth in the poll. Yankees right fielder Nick Swisher was noted for having just missed the top five. He received 4 percent of the vote. Rodriguez received 18 percent and Chamberlain 12 percent.

"I think it will be like that for the rest of my career," Rodriguez said. "It's been like that for a long time. I think it's pretty amusing."

Players are polled during spring training, asked a series of questions, with the results revealed periodically throughout the season. It's

hard to say whether players consider overrated to mean overly famous, overpaid or overhyped. "I guess I'm disappointed that I'm not No. 1," Chamberlain said. "I've still got a job, so I'm doing something right."

Gardner starts vs. lefty: Against left-handed starter Brett Anderson, the Yankees kept left-handed hitter Brett Gardner in the lineup and chose to start Andruw Jones at designated hitter. Recently, Gardner has been out of the lineup against lefties, but manager Joe Girardi said he wanted to take advantage of Gardner's defense in the spacious Oakland Coliseum.

Girardi hinted that third baseman Alex Rodriguez will start at designated hitter for today's series finale, leaving him a choice between Jones and Gardner in left field.

Journal News

6/1/11

YANKEES NOTEBOOK

Jeter a bit closer to getting close

BY ERIK BOLAND

erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Derek Jeter has said since spring training that he planned to enjoy his pursuit of 3,000 hits, but he's not sure exactly how he'll do that.

"For a while, we weren't even talking about baseball around here, so you can't enjoy anything when you're not talking about baseball," Jeter said, a reference to the Jorge Posada saga from a couple of weeks ago. "Hopefully, we can stick to everything that's going on on the field.

That's a beginning. But I don't know how to answer that."

Jeter entered last night with 2,981 hits, having collected at least one hit in his last five games.

Two weeks ago, Jeter said he wasn't thinking about 3,000 because he wasn't "close," defining it, smiling, as one or two hits away. After repeating that yesterday, he relented.

"Probably whenever you get maybe under 10, somewhere around there, I'd say it's close," he said. "Now I don't really look at it as being close. We're around the corner, the next block, but still not close."

Jeter said he might feel pressure if he gets close during the Yankees' upcoming 10-game homestand June 7-16.

"That would probably be the only pressure thing, to try and do it at home," he said.

He's not yet ready to contemplate joining the ranks of the greats that have reached 3,000.

"Let me get there first," Jeter said. "Weirder things have happened, so let me get there first."

■ DH doings

With Jorge Posada 0-for-27 against lefthanders this season, Joe Girardi acknowl-

edged what has been apparent for a couple of weeks.

Asked if the DH spot officially could be seen as a platoon position, the manager said, "You could look at it that way."

Last night, Andruw Jones was the DH against lefthander Brett Anderson and Girardi said Alex Rodriguez was likely to be the DH today against LHP Gio Gonzalez.

■ Martin returns

C Russell Martin, a late scratch Monday night because of a sore left toe, was in the original lineup posted by Girardi yesterday and stayed there.

Newsday

6/1/11

Yanks notes:DH dilemma

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011

DH dilemma

Jorge Posada's season-long trouble against left-handed pitchers essentially has turned the designated hitter role into a platoon situation. "I mean, you could look at it that way," said manager Joe Girardi. "Jorgie hasn't had success hitting right-handed this year ... it just kind of worked out that way."

Girardi used Andruw Jones as the DH on Tuesday against Athletics' lefty starter Brett Anderson. Plus, the manager suggested Alex Rodriguez would be his DH in today's series finale versus [Oakland](#) lefty Gio Gonzalez. Posada entered Tuesday's game without a hit in 26 at-bats this year against lefties.

"It's not that I'm going to completely take Jorgie away from every at-bat against left-handers," Girardi said. Posada hasn't started against a lefty since May 7, at Texas, against Derek Holland. "I can't say that I won't, but I can't say I necessarily will," Girardi said of starting Posada against a lefty.

Teix's time

After his Memorial Day home run, Mark Teixeira entered Tuesday with four homers in his previous five games and seven over 11. "Right now, I'm just on one of those streaks where the ball's going out of the park a lot," Teixeira said. "Hopefully, it keeps up. I feel pretty good."

Teixeira's 10 homers in May were the third-most in the majors behind Jay Bruce (12) and Jose Bautista (11), and he'd delivered at least one RBI in his previous six straight games – one game shy of his personal best.

With 16 homers apiece, Teixeira and Curtis Granderson became the first Yankee teammates to hit at least 15 homers in the team's first 50 games since Roger Maris and Mickey Mantle in 1961, according to Elias Sports Bureau.

Russ returns

Russell Martin returned to the lineup, playing for the first time since fouling a ball off his left big toe Saturday.

— Pete Caldera



Everything Jersey

Derek Jeter hoping to have fun as 3,000-hit milestone approaches

Published: Wednesday, June 01, 2011, 3:48 AM Updated: Wednesday, June 01, 2011, 3:54 AM



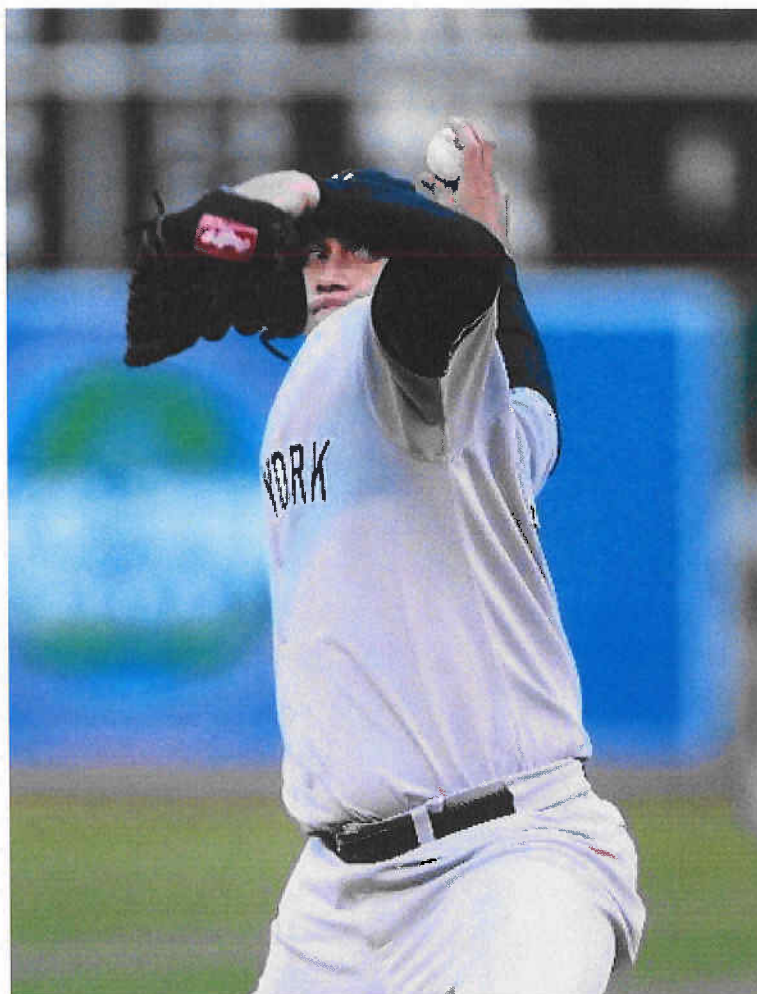
By **Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger**

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Earlier in the year, Yankees captain Derek Jeter said he'd try to enjoy his climb toward 3,000 hits. With just 17 hits to go until reaching the milestone, Jeter hopes that he can still achieve that goal.

"For awhile, we weren't even talking about baseball around here, so you can't enjoy anything when you're not talking about baseball," Jeter said, before going 2-for-4 in the Yankees' 10-3 win against the A's. "So hopefully, we can stick to everything that's going on on the field. That's a beginning."

Off the field questions have swirled around the Yankees at various points this year, including Jeter's dust-up with management following the lineup controversy triggered by close friend and teammate Jorge Posada. Even yesterday, Jeter himself fielding questions about a Sports Illustrated players' poll that ranked him among the game's most overrated.

But lately, Jeter has been swinging the bat well. During the Yankees' West Coast road swing, Jeter is 7-for-20 (.350). He scored three runs last night.



Ezra Shaw/Getty Images

Freddy Garcia nearly took a line drive off his face on Tuesday against the A's.

"It's hard to enjoy something when everything's negative," Jeter said. "As of late, things have been pretty positive around here, so I'm enjoying it."

The Yankees have won three straight -- and 10 of their last 14 games -- since a season-high six game losing streak that coincided with the height of the team's off -field strife.

" I think we've all seen him swing the bat better," Jeter said. "He's getting on base."

-- The scorebook may say that Freddy Garcia started a 1-4 double play in the sixth inning last night. But it should be scored as " self defense". Had Garcia not caught Kevin Kouzmanoff's hard liner it may have rearranged his face.

"That was lucky," Garcia said. "I almost got hit in my face. I don't know how I caught the ball."

Still, Garcia said it wasn't the hardest ball he's had hit right back at him. That distinction goes to Chili Davis, who while playing for the Yankees, smoked Garcia in the shoulder with a liner back in 1999. For Garcia, who was a rookie with the Mariners, the liner ended his first-ever start against the Yankees.

In related news, Garcia became only the fifth active pitcher to make his 300th start in the American League.

-- Expect catcher Russell Martin back in the starting lineup for today's series finale against the A's. Martin went 0-for-4 last night in his first game back since fouling a ball off the big toe of his left foot.

He originally injured the toe about three weeks ago during batting practice when a batted ball hit him on the foot.

"It was better today," Martin said. "It's a bruise in a bad spot."

The bruise makes it difficult to stop quickly while running but Martin said it hasn't affected him at the plate, or even behind it.

-- Alex Rodriguez will likely get a DH day today with Eduardo Nunez at third base.

For more Yankees coverage, follow Marc Carig on twitter at

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Everything Jersey

Yankees' Alex Rodriguez is amused by 'overrated' tag; Derek Jeter isn't

Published: Wednesday, June 01, 2011, 12:56 AM Updated: Wednesday, June 01, 2011, 1:26 AM

By **Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger**

OAKLAND, Calif. — The most overrated player in baseball doesn't know why he's earned that infamous distinction among his peers. But he did find his inclusion on the list laughable.

"I think it will be like that for the rest of my career," said Alex Rodriguez, who has been somewhat of a fixture on the list. "It's been like that for a long time. I think it's pretty amusing."

When Sports Illustrated released its annual poll to determine **the game's most overrated players today**, Rodriguez jumped to the top of the list with 18 percent of the vote to unseat last year's title holder, Joba Chamberlain, who finished second with 12 percent of the vote.

Derek Jeter (7 percent) finished third, giving the Yankees a sweep of the top three. Nationals free agent Jayson Werth and Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon rounded out the top five at 4 percent each, according to ballots cast by 185 major-league players, who were granted anonymity.

"I guess I'm disappointed that I'm not No. 1," said Chamberlain, who joked about passing the honor onto Rodriguez.

While both Rodriguez and Chamberlain laughed off the poll, Jeter wasn't amused.

"Consistency is underrated," said Jeter, who collected a pair of hits in last night's 10-3 victory against the A's, bringing his career total to 2,983.



Ezra Shaw/Getty Images

Alex Rodriguez (left) celebrates teammate Robinson Cano's home run in the Yankees' win over the Oakland A's.

Meanwhile, Rodriguez went 3-for-4 with three RBI.

In the 42 times in which Jeter has led off the game, he has reached base 21 times. In the first inning, Jeter reached on an infield single in front of a two-run homer by Curtis Granderson.

"That's giving your team an opportunity to score in the first inning, so I think he's playing pretty well," manager Joe Girardi said before the game.

Jorge Posada will be splitting designated hitter duties, according to Girardi, who benched the Yankees mainstay tonight against A's lefty Brett Anderson. Posada likely won't play Wednesday either against lefty Gio Gonzalez, with Rodriguez sliding into the designated hitter spot.

"You can look at it that way," Girardi said, when asked if Posada was now part of a platoon. "Georgie hasn't had success right-handed this year, but he's had success in the past. It's just kind of worked out that way. (Brett Gardner) has hit left-handers as well and Andruw Jones has hit them lately."

Girardi said he won't take away every at-bat against lefties from Posada, who struck out against southpaw Craig Breslow on Monday, falling to 0-for-27 against left-handers.

The Yankees have used the DH spot to rest both Rodriguez and Jeter against lefties, with Eduardo Nunez playing at third base and shortstop.

Recently, Girardi had also pulled Gardner out of the lineup against lefties, giving the spot to Jones. But tonight, Girardi kept Gardner in the lineup while moving Jones to the DH spot.

Catcher Russell Martin returned to action after missing two games with soreness in the big toe of his left foot.

For more Yankees coverage, follow Marc Carig on Twitter at

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yankees

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05/31/11 9:38 PM ET

Yankees laugh off SI's 'overrated' poll

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Alex Rodriguez is baseball's active home run leader, cashes the sport's biggest paychecks and -- according to a Sports Illustrated poll of Major League players -- the game's most overrated player.

Rodriguez laughed off the magazine's findings, as 18 percent of the 185 players polled listed A-Rod on their ballots to earn the dubious honors.

"I've been on this list before," Rodriguez said. "I'll see you guys next summer again."

Yankees players appeared in the top three spots, according to SI, which will release the issue on Wednesday. Rodriguez won't run out to buy a copy, but said that appearing on the list wasn't a bad thing.

"I think it will be like that for the rest of my career. It's been like that for a long time. I think it's pretty amusing," Rodriguez said.

"My focus is really just on this team, on the game and on working on my craft each and every day. I'm just glad this is what we're talking about, because that means things are going pretty good."

Joba Chamberlain came out as the second-most overrated player, named on 12 percent of ballots cast, while Derek Jeter ranked third with 7 percent.

"I guess I'm disappointed that I'm not No. 1," said Chamberlain, who actually did hold those honors in 2010. "I don't care. My bills are still paid and I still have a job. You can call me whatever you want, just don't call me late for dinner."

Chamberlain howled through an interview with reporters discussing the poll and used the opportunity to rib Rodriguez about overtaking the throne.

"I guess I passed the torch on to AI," Chamberlain said. "Everybody is entitled to their opinion; that's why this country is so great. ... I could care less, as long as I'm still getting outs and doing the things I need to do. I'm doing my job and that's all that matters."

Jeter -- who coincidentally was SI's Sportsman of the Year two years ago -- was clearly not amused by the magazine's suggestion.

"We're doing this again? I'm focused on more positive things," said Jeter, who added that he did not participate. "I've never understood those anonymous polls."

Jayson Werth of the Nationals was fourth and the Red Sox's Jonathan Papelbon was fifth, according to SI. Interestingly, all five players have World Series rings.

"People are going to vote the way they're going to vote, but I like my guys," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "Those guys have had success, we won a World Series with these guys, so I like them."

Rodriguez said that he did not remember being asked to participate by the magazine, but added he probably wouldn't have responded to that particular question.

"I think playing in the Major Leagues is so hard, everyone playing in the Majors is a great player," Rodriguez said. "I have so much respect for anyone that wears a Major League uniform, I would never answer that."

Catcher Martin returns to Yankees' lineup

OAKLAND -- Yankees catcher Russell Martin returned to the lineup on Tuesday, one day after he was scratched with a sore left big toe.

Martin aggravated an earlier injury when he fouled a ball off his left foot in New York's extra-inning loss to the Mariners on Saturday at Safeco Field.

He went 0-for-4 with two strikeouts in the Yankees' 10-3 drubbing of the A's.

"It's better today. It's a bruise in a bad spot," Martin said. "If I stop suddenly when I'm running, it's sore. If I get a foul tip on there, it's sore. Swinging doesn't really bother me. It's just nagging, nothing more than that."

Yankees manager Joe Girardi removed Martin early from the game, but said that was because he plans to have Martin catch Wednesday's matinee against Oakland.

Martin left the Oakland Coliseum wearing soft Ugg boots for comfort and said that the original injury came about three weeks ago during batting practice, leading to a blood bruise under the toenail.

"Someone was hitting ground balls and I was rounding second base, going first to third, and I ran right into a ground ball and kicked it pretty hard," Martin said. "The first time was worse."

Posada likely to continue sitting against lefties

OAKLAND -- Joe Girardi has not sat down with Jorge Posada to discuss his future as the designated hitter, but the Yankees manager now views the spot as a straight platoon.

"You could look at it that way," Girardi said.

With lefties Brett Anderson and Gio Gonzalez set to go for the Athletics, Andruw Jones is set to DH on Tuesday and Alex Rodriguez will likely get a turn in the role on Wednesday. Girardi also likes the idea of using the DH spot as a half day for Derek Jeter at times.

Posada had another chance against a left-handed pitcher on Monday, as Girardi left him in to face Craig Breslow in the seventh inning of New York's 5-0 win. Breslow struck out Posada, who is now 0-for-27 against southpaws in 2011.

"Jorge hasn't had success right-handed this year, but he's had success in the past," Girardi said. "It's just kind of worked out that way. [Brett Gardner has] hit left-handers as well and Andruw Jones has hit them lately."

Batting .169 (23-for-136) in 42 games, Posada hasn't started against a lefty since May 7, when he saw the Rangers' Derek Holland. Girardi said that he wasn't sure if Posada would get another start against a left-handed pitcher.

"I can't say that I won't, but I can't say that I necessarily will," Girardi said. "I don't want to get boxed in here."

Bryan Hoch is a reporter for MLB.com. Follow him on Twitter @bryanhoch. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

yankees.com

June 1, 2011

Designated Hitter Has Become a Posada-Jones Platoon

It has come to this: the Yankee designated hitter spot is semi-officially, kinda-sorta, a platoon.

"Yeah, I guess you could look at it that way," admitted manager Joe Girardi, before hemming and hawing on the nomenclature.

But the fact stands that Girardi doesn't start Jorge Posada against left-handed pitching anymore. Whatever you call it, that's a platoon, making Posada a de-facto part-time player, whether Girardi has labeled him such or not.

It helps that the Yankees have good right-handed bench options, like Andruw Jones, and a plethora of aging right-handed bench players like Alex Rodriguez who could fill the spot.

Posada is hitting .211 with six homers against righties this year—and a stunning .000, in 27 at-bats, against lefties.

—Daniel Barbarisi

Dickey Pitches Through Pain, but Met Bats Disappear

For 7 2/3 innings, R.A. Dickey gave the Mets his best performance of the season. But with two outs in the eighth inning, the Pittsburgh Pirates reeled off three runs against Dickey en route to handing the Mets a 5-1 loss at Citi Field.

It spoiled an otherwise remarkable outing by Dickey, who set a career-high with 10 strikeouts despite pitching with a partially torn plantar fascia in his right foot. Reliever Bobby Parnell, who was activated from the disabled list Monday, gave up two more runs in the ninth.

With Jose Reyes on the bereavement list, the Mets were held to just six hits.

Their lone run came on an RBI single by Jason Bay in the first inning. The Mets (25-29) have gone 10 consecutive games without hitting a home run.

—Brian Costa

 **PRINT** ESPN.com: New York Yankees

[Print without images] 

Wednesday, June 1, 2011

Yankees Daily Briefing 06/01/11

Although **A.J. Burnett** allowed just two runs in his [last start](#), he walked five and threw 97 pitches in just five innings. He'll attempt to be more efficient in Oakland on Wednesday; the Athletics will counter with **Gio Gonzalez** ([5-2, 2.17](#)), [who has never faced the Yankees](#).

1) [Minor league results were split for the Yankees' affiliates](#).

Triple-A Scranton beat Indianapolis 10-3.

Justin Maxwell was named the [International League Offensive Player of the Week](#). Maxwell was [injured](#) during the game, while [robbing Indianapolis of a home run](#).

Amauri Sanit was [placed on the disabled list](#) with a leg issue; **Jordan Parraz** was [activated](#) to take his place.

Carlos Silva was [hit hard](#), allowing three runs on seven hits in six innings of work. He struck out just one batter but did not walk anyone.

Jesus Montero had two hits in five at bats; the two hits were a triple and a home run (he's had [three triples](#) in the past calendar year). The home run was [opposite field](#).

Double-A Trenton lost to Altoona, 2-1.

Josh Norris has [video](#) of the call that led to shortstop **Jose Pirela's** ejection from the game.

High-A Tampa beat Jupiter 2-0, while Low-A Charleston lost to Savannah 1-0.

In Charleston **Slade Heathcott** struck out in all four at bats while **J.R. Murphy** had two hits in four at bats and struck out once.

2) **Daniel Barbarisi** writes about [Bartolo Colon's sticking with Spanish](#). Barbarisi notes that Colon is among the last of those who came up through a less developed minor league system; now English courses are taught at team-sponsored academies. While Colon's numbers in 2011 make it easy to forget that he still uses an interpreter, the language barrier can be one of the most daunting obstacles for players who are not native English speakers; while difficulties on the field can sometimes be mitigated via bilingual teammates, there is often no such help off the field.

3) **Ben Shpigel** writes about the [relationship between Ivan Nova and A.J. Burnett](#).

In many ways, as Shpigel notes, Burnett and Nova are opposites, but the idea of a veteran pitcher mentoring a younger pitcher is not a new one. While pitching with the Blue Jays, Burnett [learned from Roy Halladay](#), and now has the opportunity to do the same for his teammate Nova. Burnett is [pitching much better this season than last](#) (and by some measures better than 2009), so, it is entirely possible that Burnett is benefiting from the relationship as much as Nova.

Speaking of Nova...

4) **Jay Jaffe** writes that Nova's spot in the rotation may be in jeopardy.

Nova [couldn't make it out of the fourth inning](#) in his last start against the Mariners -- who are not known as a great offensive team. In fact, in Nova's [last four starts](#), he's allowed 16 runs in just 18.2 innings pitched, and his lack of swings and misses has [made him the most hittable pitcher](#) in baseball. Again, Nova is still young -- just 24 years old -- so it's hard to call him a finished product, but the Yankees are in a win-now mode, and in a division as tight as the AL East, they can't afford to wait all season long if Nova continues to struggle.

A's seek answers against Yankees

By Jon Star / MLB.com | 6/1/2011 1:45 AM ET

The Yankees enter Wednesday's matchup having already won the series, something they've now accomplished nine consecutive times against the A's dating back to June 10, 2008.

The Bronx Bombers have also won nine straight against Oakland and 12 of the teams' last 13 meetings dating back to last season.

New York looks to keep the pressure on Oakland after outscoring the A's 15-3 during the first two games of the series. If the A's are to salvage a game in this series, keeping Curtis Granderson off the bases should be a priority.

The Yankees' center fielder continues to mash. He smacked his 17th home run of the season on Tuesday, taking Brett Anderson deep for his ninth home run off a southpaw this season. Granderson is also hitting .327 (20-for-61) off left-handers -- compared to .265 off righties. He has become a complete hitter against lefties, who perplexed Granderson for much of 2010. Manager Joe Girardi complimented his center fielder for the dynamic play he is bringing to the Yankees lineup.

"He has been [an elite hitter]. The numbers say that. When you think of Curtis, you think of his power, but because of his frame, you don't equate it to just a power hitter," Girardi said. "He's more than that. He's a guy that has speed, he can beat you with the way he runs, he can beat you in the outfield, he can steal bases, we've seen him sacrifice bunt and do a lot of things. I don't necessarily just think power hitter, but he has a lot of power."

Granderson's 17th round-tripper passed teammate Mark Teixeira for second place in all of baseball. Last season, Granderson did not hit his 17th home run until Sept. 2.

The starter, and another left-hander, tasked with slowing Granderson and the rest of the Yankees lineup is Gio Gonzalez. The A's starter has allowed just two earned runs in 11 2/3 innings with 15 strikeouts over his last two starts (two no-decisions). The two outings cemented a strong May in which he went 3-0 with a 1.67 ERA, but the performance was not enough to make Gonzalez settle.

"May's gone. I've got to try to stay positive and stay long in the games. You can't change your approach because you're going from month to month," Gonzalez said. "You've got to keep that approach going 100 percent until the end. It seems like starting off June, it's going to be tough. It's not going to be easy, but I've just got to try to go seven, eight innings and try to keep my team in the game and try to minimize damage as much as possible."

Taming the Yankees lineup figures to be a challenge. Gonzalez is 1-2 with a 6.60 ERA in three career starts against New York. Most notably, he has issued 13 walks to a notoriously patient Yankees lineup. The southpaw acknowledged the damage he could face if he isn't disciplined in his approach.

"It's a lineup you well have to respect, and that's guaranteed, but you can't give in automatically because it's the Yankees," he said. "They swing the bat really good and they're good, patient hitters and then they'll just change it up on you and go after a first pitch.

"I'm going to try to take them one step at a time, one hitter at a time and try to minimize damage as much as possible," he continued. "You have to respect the fact these guys are going to score runs. You can't think you're going to go out there and throw a nine-inning shutout."

Yankees: Jeter Meter inching closer

With two more hits on Tuesday night, Derek Jeter's career hit total now stands at 2,983. With fewer than 20 hits before reaching the historic 3,000 mark, is the Yankees captain thinking about his date with history?

"To be honest with you, I don't really know what could be coming up. Today is like every other day. You try to have good at-bats and get hits. I don't think that changes," Jeter said. "I haven't really thought about the pressure of it. I'm sure if you get close and go a game or two, everyone will say the pressure is getting to you. But you try to get a hit every time up."

So when will Jeter start thinking about the milestone?

"One away. Maybe under 10 seems close," Jeter said. "Now I don't really look at it as being close. We're around the corner, the next block, but we're not close.

Athletics: Power vacuum

This year's A's club boasts the lowest ERA in baseball at 2.88, but finding balance between pitching and offense remains a struggle as the bats have struggled to keep pace with the arms. The A's are hitting just .240 on the season and ranked in the bottom three in the American League in runs scored with 201. They have hit six home runs over their past 10 games, but with just 31 on the season, they rank 12th in the AL.

Worth noting

Jeter is hitting .383 (28-for-73) when leading off an inning this season, with three doubles, two home runs and six walks. With Wednesday night's single to lead off the game, Jeter has now successfully reached base in the first inning 21 times in 42 opportunities when he has hit leadoff.



June 1, 2011

Yankees: Granderson's 17th homer continues new success vs. lefties

Chad Jennings

OAKLAND, Calif. — It's the first of June, and by now the sample size is significant. It's safe to say Curtis Granderson is not the product of luck or chance. The Yankees' center fielder is a changed hitter.

On Tuesday night, Granderson had another three-hit game and another home run in a 10-3 Yankees win against the Athletics. It was the Yankees' third win in a row, and it further established Granderson's place in the conversation about who is the most dangerous left-handed hitter in baseball.

"When you think of Curtis, you think of his power," manager Joe Girardi said. "But because of his frame, you don't equate it to just a power hitter. He's more than that. He's a guy that has speed; he can beat you with the way he runs; he can beat you in the outfield; he can steal bases. We've seen him sacrifice bunt and do a lot of things.

"I don't necessarily just think power hitter, but he has a lot of power."

Granderson 17th home run was a first-inning shot to right field, giving the Yankees an early lead that they never lost. He went on to single in two runs in the fourth, and his third hit came as part of a three-run sixth.

Derek Jeter had two infield singles to move within 17 of career hit No. 3,000, Robinson Cano hit his 11th home run, and Freddy Garcia picked up his fourth win. But Granderson stole the show. He's been stealing the show most of the season.

"The big thing is just trying to use what we've been working on (with hitting coach Kevin Long)," Granderson said. "It's still a constant battle."

Granderson has long been considered a good everyday player. He was 10th in the AL MVP voting in 2007 with Detroit, and he made the All-Star team in 2009. But this season Granderson has closed his most glaring hole: His inability to hit left-handed pitching.

Before this season, Granderson had never hit more than five home runs in a season against lefties. This year, he leads the majors with nine home runs against them.

"I knew it was there," he said. "It was just a matter of getting it back."

Oakland's starter was Brett Anderson, one of the top lefties in baseball, who came into the game having faced 95 left-handed hitters without allowing an extra-base hit this season. He hadn't given up a home run to a lefty since Aug. 25, 2009.

But Granderson went deep in his first at-bat. Four innings later, left-handed hitter Cano also homered off Anderson. In the end, the Yankees scored 10 runs on 11 hits against the Athletics' starter. Both were career highs for Anderson.

Garcia pitched seven innings, stranding the bases loaded in the fourth but giving up a two-run homer in the fifth. He was the first Yankees starter other than CC Sabathia to be the beneficiary of a 10-run outburst since A.J. Burnett on April 2.

"This lineup, it's unbelievable," Garcia said.

Granderson is putting up numbers worth believing.

Inseparable Teammates, As Opposite as Can Be

By BEN SHPIGEL

OAKLAND, Calif. — A few months ago, A. J. Burnett added another member to his family. It was all unexpected. The new addition is 24 years old, stands 6 feet 4 inches and hails from the Dominican Republic, and Burnett is still searching for how best to characterize their relationship: Is Ivan Nova more like his third son or his little brother?

From day to day, the answer changes. When he sends encouraging text messages or offers Nova pitching tips in the Yankees' dugout, Burnett assumes more of a paternal role. When Nova teases him about his crude Spanish or tells him to put on his sneakers already so they can go run, Burnett shakes his head and rolls his eyes, as any older sibling would.

Within the clubhouse dynamic, pitchers tend to form their own group, befriending one another based on shared interests, like golf or fishing. And so at a glance, the Nova-Burnett pairing seems incongruous: a heavily tattooed 34-year-old baseball veteran from



JED JACOBSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Ivan Nova, 24 and clean-cut, and A. J. Burnett, 34 and tattooed, have become close friends on the Yankees.

Arkansas and a clean-cut 24-year-old rookie from the Dominican. The friendship was born out of a common goal — Nova's eagerness to learn, Burnett's willingness to teach — and since

Continued on Page B14

Burnett and Nova Have Become Inseparable Teammates, as Opposite as Can Be

From First Sports Page

spring training it has blossomed, complementing their partnership in the Yankees' rotation.

"I wish I knew," Burnett said, when asked about their compatibility. "For some reason, we just understand each other." Nova added: "The only difference is the country and the color, and we're almost the same color. He's got too much sun."

Where Burnett goes, Nova follows. And vice versa. On days when Burnett pitches, Nova watches for signs of distress. So far, with Burnett at 5-3 with a 3.99 earned run average heading into Wednesday's start against Oakland, there have not been many.

"He makes sure I don't snap," Burnett said, alluding to his meltdown at Yankee Stadium last July, when after a frustrating inning he smacked his hands bloody against the clubhouse doors. Burnett radiates intensity, and before and during starts it was understood: do not talk to him. "Nova's the complete opposite, real loose and laughing at everything," Burnett said. "I've worked on that, being able to

come in and relax and then lock it back in when I get between the lines."

On days when Nova pitches, Burnett helps him remain focused. He urges him to trust his fastball, reminds him not to dwell on poor starts, of which there have been a few recently. One more shaky outing could jeopardize Nova's starting spot, but Burnett has instilled in him the importance of extracting something positive, no matter how small, from each performance.

"Even now, it's hard because I'm so hard on myself, but you have to build confidence every time you pitch," Burnett said. "I never go back and watch bad tapes, and that's what I tell him. Go watch when you shove. He'll be like, 'Yeah, yeah, I know, I know.' And I'll be like, 'Shut up.'"

In the long hours before games, their playful banter fills the clubhouse. When the Yankees are on the road, they meet in the hotel lobby and ride together to the ballpark, either in the early bus — the one taken by the coaching staff — or in a cab, the fare paid by Burnett. Earlier this month in Detroit, Burnett asked Nova to meet him in the lobby at

1 p.m. so they could take the bus. Nova boarded immediately and, when Burnett got on, he spotted him and deadpanned, "Mi corazon esta roto" — my heart is broken. A bond formed before a game in Texas last September, when Nova sidled over as they shagged balls during batting practice. Curious about his new teammate, Nova asked Burnett about his time in the minor leagues, how many years he played, how long it took for him to be promoted.

"I'm no Cy Young, I'm no All-Star, but I've definitely put my years into this game, and I think he understands that," Burnett said. "I've had a lot of ups and downs in my career, and whatever little thing he wants to grab from me, it's a plus."

About 10 years ago, Burnett was in Nova's place, grateful other pitchers on the Florida Marlins — Matt Mantel, Brian Meadows and Ron Mahay, among others — made him feel as if he belonged. But a more important phase in Burnett's evolution did not come until he left Florida after the 2005 season, when he signed with Toronto. Sharing a workplace with Roy Halladay im-

proved his preparation.

"Everything I did was turned up a notch when I was around Roy — how could it not?" Burnett said. "I figured out how to blend the mental side and the work I was doing. The fifth day's never going to be easy, but you do all your work in between so it's not as difficult. You don't want to fail."

In spring training, Burnett and Nova had their lockers next to each other, working to overcome what for both of them was, in different ways, a difficult 2010.

Burnett's bumpy career reached a low point when he went 10-15 with a 5.26 earned run average and failed to make the Yankees' division series rotation. Nova proved in his late-season call-up that he could pitch in the majors, impressing with his poise. But in seven starts, he worked as many as six full innings only once. The problem was conditioning — his mental conditioning.

"He taxed himself so much over the first four or five innings that it became burdensome to him," the pitching coach Larry Rothschild said. "You have to develop the mental toughness to go



JED JACOBSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A. J. Burnett, left, and Ivan Nova had lockers next to each other in spring training as they each worked to overcome a difficult 2010 season.

along with the discipline and the conditioning. That's important, and I think with A. J. mentoring him, he's been through it all. He can see the pitfalls when they happen and try to coach Ivan through them."

One such instance arose April 9

in Boston, when Nova was pulled after four and a third innings. Afterward Burnett approached Nova and told him, "Don't give them a reason." Nova stared at him quizzically. "You're a tremendous pitcher, you have great stuff, you have to stay in the game longer," Burnett said, according to Nova. "Don't give them a reason to take you out of the game."

Nova uses it as a mantra to himself between innings, and he said it helped him muddle through his May 22 start against the Mets, when he allowed 11 hits but managed to pitch into the seventh. The first time he worked six innings this season, in an April 4 victory against Minnesota, Nova celebrated with his wife and a few relatives, eating a late dinner out in New York.

Midway through the meal, his cellphone buzzed, notifying him of a text message. It was from Burnett: "Stay humble." Unsure what that meant, Nova passed the phone to his wife, who is from New York, for an explanation. When told, Nova laughed. Then he responded to Burnett: "O.K., hermano."

O.K., brother.

NY Times
6/1/11

June 1, 2011

Colon Sticking With Spanish

By DANIEL BARBARISI

In Baltimore late last month, young Yankee reliever Hector Noesi made his major league debut in extra innings, getting the win in a game started five hours earlier by Bartolo Colon.

Afterward, the media wanted to speak to both Colon, 38, a 14-year major league veteran, and Noesi, 24, a rookie from the Dominican Republic.

Colon, who is also from the Dominican Republic and has never learned English, asked for a translator, calling over bullpen catcher Roman Rodriguez.

After Colon was finished, Noesi asked for Rodriguez to help him. But Rodriguez declined, telling the rookie to handle it himself, using the English he'd been taught by the Yankees.

"I was so nervous," Noesi said. Yet he did just fine.

Asked in Spanish why he never decided to learn English, Colon responded quickly. "I don't know," Colon said in Spanish. "That's it."

Colon and Vladimir Guerrero are among the last of an older group of players who came up when minor-league systems were less well-developed and Latino players weren't given the same level of instruction that they are today, with extensive minor-league academies run by their teams.

Nowadays, nearly every Latino ballplayer is schooled in English, and the ones who aren't try hard to learn.

Those include San Francisco Giants reliever Ramon Ramirez, who took a roundabout route to the majors, including playing in Japan. He reached the majors in 2006 with no English skills. But feeling isolated, spent the winter before the 2009 season learning the language.

"It's important for us, so I studied hard," Ramirez said. "It makes you more comfortable. I tell the young players to learn it."

It's rare to find a veteran player who needs a translator anymore. The young players learn the language now because the teams offer help. Veterans like Mariano Rivera and David Ortiz tell young Latin players that they need to learn English, if only so they can cash in on endorsement opportunities.

Yankees starter Ivan Nova, who speaks excellent English despite knowing only a few words when he signed, said that Ortiz sat him down in the Dominican in 2008 and told him how important it was to learn the new language.

"He told me, 'Hey, you're gonna make money playing baseball, but you don't know how much money you can make outside of baseball,'" Nova said.

When he first arrived in America to play in the Yankees' minor-league system, Nova couldn't speak a word of English. He felt isolated and alone, and he couldn't communicate with his American roommate.

"Every time I'd come back to the room, I'd go in, put the blanket over my head and go right to sleep because I had nothing to say," Nova said.

He would go to restaurants and point to the food items he wanted to eat. He would try shopping at the mall and often strike out because of the language barrier.

On the field, as well, the players found that it is difficult to get by without English. Catcher Francisco Cervelli remembers being called out to the mound as a minor leaguer to try to help his pitchers—and having nothing to say.

"I remember my first time here, they said, 'Talk to the pitchers.' And I went to the mound, and I was just quiet. I was like 'How?' Then, I learned, and it started to get better," Cervelli said.

The Yankees start their Latin minor leaguers on English classes young, holding them after practice in their team complex in the Dominican Republic. Some players are tired and don't try hard. Others take to it right away.

Once they reach the U.S., there are classes at the Yankees' spring training complex at Himes Field in Tampa. By the time they reach the majors, most Yankee prospects have a reasonable grasp of the language.

Colon's decision not to learn English may limit him away from the playing field, but it hasn't hurt his pitching career. When he needs to communicate on the mound, third baseman Alex Rodriguez serves as a translator with manager Joe Girardi, and that seems to work just fine—the pitcher has a 3.26 ERA in his comeback year.

Tex is riding power surge

Teixeira's seven home runs in 11 games vex all sorts of pitchers

By Chad Jennings
cjennings@lohud.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — On a road trip that was supposed to be defined by the opposing starters, the Yankees have had little trouble taking early leads.

They scored a first-inning run against rookie phenom Michael Pineda on Friday. They were ahead 3-1 in the third against Felix Hernandez on Saturday. On Monday, they jumped out to a three-run lead with a first-inning outburst against Trevor Cahill. The decisive blow was the same every time: A home run by Mark Teixeira.

"He's been on a great streak for us," manager Joe Girardi said. "Tex is a guy, it seems like when it starts to warm up, he's one of those guys that really warms up. Even though we haven't been in really warm weather, he's really warmed up."

Monday's two-run shot gave Teixeira seven homers in 11 games. The last three came in notoriously pitcher-friendly parks against three of the best starters in the American League.

During this home-run binge, Teixeira has homered against both a relatively unknown reliever (Chris Jakubauskas) and a Cy Young Award winner (Hernandez). He's hit one off a knuckleballer (R.A. Dickey) and one against the game's hardest-throwing starter (Pineda). He's hit home runs off back-of-the-rotation left-handers (Chris Capuano and Jo-Jo Reyes) and an All-Star right-hander (Cahill).

The late-May outburst gave Teixeira 16 home runs for the year, the second-most in the majors behind Jose Bautista and a number

YANKEES: Teixeira continues to roll

Continued from 1C

he didn't reach last season until July 9. He's hit them at home and on the road, in blowouts and in tied games, down in the count 0-2 and ahead in the count 3-1.

"I've said it before: Home runs come in bunches," Teixeira said. "And right now, I'm just kind of in one of those streaks where I'm hitting the ball out of the park a lot. Hopefully, it keeps up. I feel pretty good up there."

The Yankees have grown used to Teixeira's occasionally streaky production. In his first year with the team, Teixeira finished second in the MVP voting, but he started with a .200 batting average and only three home runs in the month of April. He immediately hit 13 home runs in May. Last season was a similar story: .136 batting average with two home runs in April, .280 average with six homers in May.

"I wish I could bottle it up; this game would be much easier," Teixeira said. "But you just never know. You hit a bunch in a one- or two-week period, and then you don't hit one for three weeks. That's just the way it is sometimes."

Right now, Teixeira is in one of those "hit a bunch" periods, but he's been pretty productive all season. Like most of the Yankees' lineup, he's had some peaks and valleys, but he's generally been the second-most-consistent hitter behind Curtis Granderson.

"Tex is a guy that can carry a club," Girardi said. "That can put up a lot of runs for you in a hurry, and he's been doing that."

Journal News

6/1/11



ESPN.com: New York Yankees [\[Print without images\]](#)



Tuesday, May 31, 2011

Posada to sit vs. lefties

Andrew Jones is in the lineup tonight as the Yankees designated hitter vs. left-handed starter **Brett Anderson**, and although **Joe Girardi** wouldn't officially say it, it certainly appears that **Jorge Posada** has lost half his DH job.

"You could look at it that way," Girardi said when asked if the DH spot in his lineup was now a lefty-righty platoon. "Jorge hasn't had success right-handed this year, but he's had success in the past. It's just kind of worked out that way."

Posada is hitting just .169, and is 0-for-27 batting right-handed against lefty pitching this season. Girardi has recently taken to using Jones as the DH vs. lefty starters, as well as using the DH position as a way to give righty hitters **Alex Rodriguez** and **Derek Jeter** a half-day off. Girardi said Rodriguez was likely to DH in Wednesday's game against the A's and their lefty starter, Gio Gonzales.

"I let Jorgie face the lefty last night," Girardi said to Posada's eighth-inning at-bat against **Craig Breslow**, who struck him out. "It's not like I'm going to completely take every at-bat away from Jorgie against left-handers."

But asked point-blank if Posada would be in his lineup anymore against left-handed starters, the manager said. "I don't want to get boxed in here. I can't say he won't, but I can't say he will either."

'Overrated' Yankees

- **A-Rod, Joba, Jeter** finish 1-2-3 in poll of fellow players
- **Unlike teammates**, Derek is not amused by the vote

BY ERIK BOLAND
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — Not surprisingly, Alex Rodriguez and Joba Chamberlain had fun with the poll.

Equally unsurprising, Derek Jeter wanted nothing to do with it, and manager Joe Girardi was quick to defend his players.

Yesterday Sports Illustrated released the results of its annual poll in which 185 major leaguers were asked to respond to this question: "Who is the most overrated player in baseball?"

Yankees were ranked 1-2-3, led by A-Rod (18 percent), Chamberlain (12 percent) and Jeter (seven percent). Nationals outfielder Jayson Werth and Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon were both at four percent.

"Man, I guess I'm disappointed that I'm not No. 1," Chamberlain said.

He was last year.

This was the third straight year a Yankee stood atop the poll. Jeter "won" in 2009, followed by Chamberlain last year and A-Rod this year.

The latter was Chamberlain's biggest source of amusement.

"I lost," Chamberlain proclaimed for the rest of the clubhouse to hear. "I got beat out. No. 2, though . . . I guess I passed the torch on to Alex."

Upon seeing Rodriguez enter the clubhouse, Chamberlain, surrounded by reporters, yelled at the third baseman.

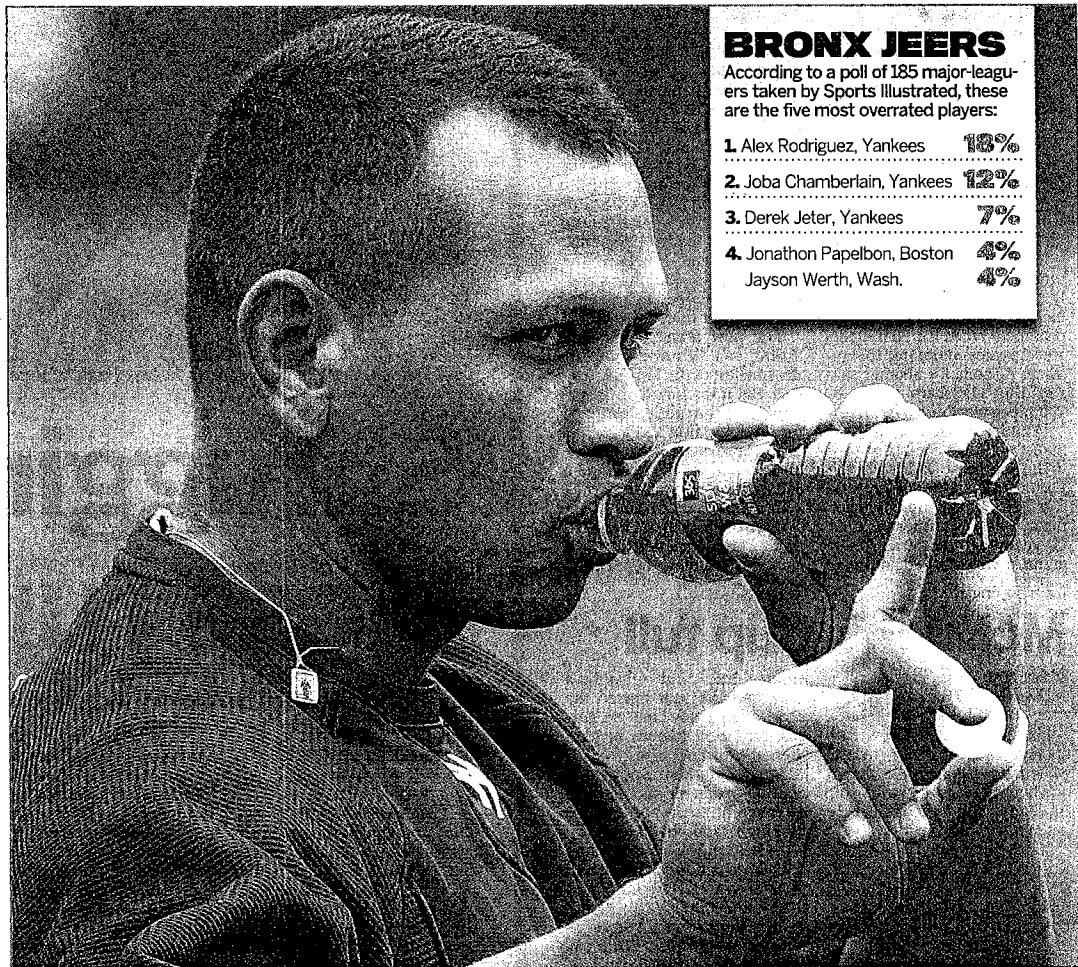
"You're next Al, you're next!"

Rodriguez smiled for almost the entire time he spent talking about the anonymous poll.

"I've been on this list before," A-Rod said before pausing and taking note that three-fifths of the list was comprised of Yankees. "So it's three Yankees? So I'll see you guys next summer again."

Rodriguez also poked fun at his past reasons for making headlines.

"I'm sure I'll be on it next summer so I'll try to come up with some better material for you guys," he said. "But I will



Alex Rodriguez, voted the most overrated player in a Sports Illustrated poll, quenches thirst before last night's game against Oakland.

BRONX JEERS

According to a poll of 185 major-leaguers taken by Sports Illustrated, these are the five most overrated players:

1. Alex Rodriguez, Yankees 18%
2. Joba Chamberlain, Yankees 12%
3. Derek Jeter, Yankees 7%
4. Jonathon Papelbon, Boston 4%
Jayson Werth, Wash. 4%

say this. If this is the only thing we're talking about, fellas, we're doing good."

Jeter was not close to being amused.

"We're doing this again?" he said. "I have no comment on anonymous polls. I've never understood those anonymous polls."

He added: "It's the same thing they do every year, right? I'm focused on more positive things. How about that? There's your quote."

Discussing his chase of 3,000 hits later on, Jeter amended that.

"Consistency is underrated," he said, putting emphasis on "underrated." "That's the quote."

Girardi wasn't as short as Jeter.

"People are going to vote the way they're going to vote but, I have to tell you, I like my guys," Girardi said. "These guys have had success, I've won a World Series with these guys, so I like them."

Does money, especially in the case of Jeter and A-Rod, play a roll in the way some players vote?

"I think money a lot of times

can play a part in how people look at people," Girardi said.

Even though the poll came from fellow players, Chamberlain said he "couldn't care less as long as I'm still getting outs."

"My bills are still paid and I still have a job," he said.

Said A-Rod of it being a player vote: "I don't really think anything of it. My focus is on this team and on the game and working on my craft each and every day . . . I think it [being on the list] will be like that the rest of my career. I think it's pretty amusing."

NOW ONLINE
Last night's Yanks-A's game ended too late for this edition. For story, go to newsday.com/sports

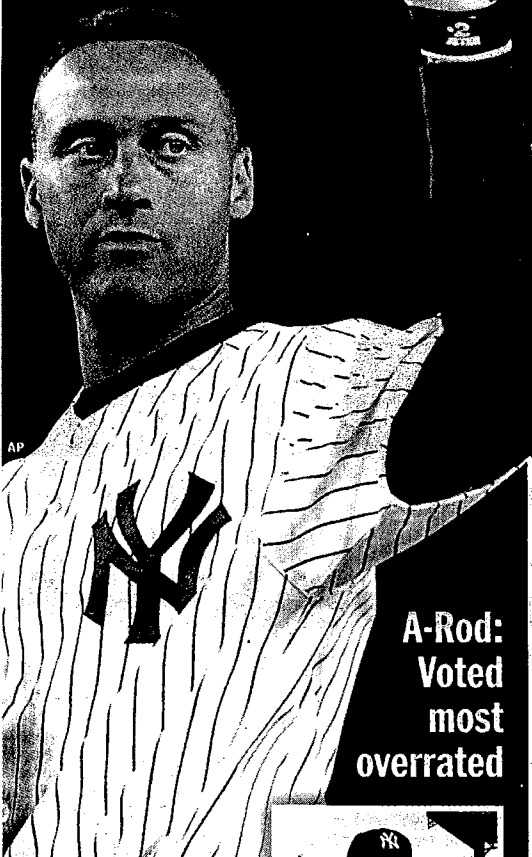
Today **Y A's**

Yankees at Oakland
TV: YES, 3:35 p.m.
Radio: WCBS (880)

JEALOUS HATERS PICK ON YANKS!

Jeter: Headed to Cooperstown

A-Rod, Jeter & Joba 'overrated'



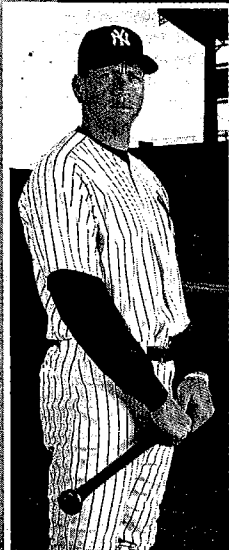
AP

A-Rod: Voted most overrated

Joba: Disappointed he's not 'No. 1'



PHOTOS BY COREY SIPKIN/DAILY NEWS



BY MARK FEINSAND, SAMUEL GOLDSMITH and JONATHAN LEMIRE
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITERS

DO THE Yankee Stadium Bleacher Creatures need to add "Over-rated" to their roll call of chants?

Other Major League Baseball players sure seem to think so.

Alex Rodriguez, Joba Chamberlain and Derek Jeter were voted the most overhyped players in the game by their peers, according to a poll released yesterday by Sports Illustrated.

The trio of Bronx Bombers sit atop the wrong kind of standings after being called out by a survey of 185 ballplayers.

A-Rod received 18% of the vote, Chamberlain 12% and Jeter 7%. Washington Nationals outfielder Jayson Werth, Boston Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon and another Yankee, Nick Swisher, each got 4% of the vote.

"I've been on this list before. I think it will be like that for the rest of my career," Rodriguez joked before last night's game in Oakland, Calif.

Asked if he was among the 185 ballplayers polled by SI, the third baseman said: "I have so much respect for anyone that wears a major league uniform, I would never answer that."

Chamberlain took a lighthearted approach to the poll during pregame interviews, boasting he's "disappointed that I'm not No. 1."

"My bills are still paid and I still have a job," he said. "I could care less as long as I'm still getting out and doing the things I need to do."

Jeter just shrugged off the question.

"We doing this again? I've got no comment on anonymous polls. There you have it," he said.

Some pinstriped partisans were outraged that members of their beloved team — just two years removed from a World Series title — would be so slandered and pointed to jealousy as the culprit.

"Proof-positive that other

teams love to hate the best franchise in history," said Marty Boyd, 48, a life-long Yankees fan from the Bronx.

"Derek Jeter is a legend," Boyd said. "He has done all a player should do to earn the respect of other players."

Some Yankees fans had to agree with the poll.

"I am disappointed with the Yankees," said Frank Kimmelman, 57, of Syosset, L.I. "It's a team that's getting older and a team that's forgetting to behave like Yankees."

All of the Yankees named in the poll have struggled in the early stages of the 2011 season.

Rodriguez is hitting .277 with just nine home runs, numbers far off his usual Hall of Fame pace — and not worthy of the \$31 million salary he is making this year.

Jeter's recent contract squabbles and hitting woes have been well-documented. Even as the 36-year-old Yankee captain closes in on 3,000 hits, he has been having the weakest season of his career — and has been one of the worst hitters in baseball.

And while Chamberlain does not have the Cooperstown pedigree of Jeter or Rodriguez, his on-the-mound histrionics have apparently outweighed his pitching in the minds of his rivals.

"Joba used to be overrated, but now he's rated just right — because he stinks," said Ken Tallia, 29, of Long Beach, L.I. "People don't like him. I guess baseball players don't like him, either."

Fans of the city's other team seemed to enjoy the poll results — but also kept them in perspective.

"Overrated and overpaid," said Omar Kabir, 37, of Rego Park, Queens. "Jeter got a sweetheart of a contract in the off-season even though his best days were behind him," Kabir said.

"I'm a Mets fan," Kabir continued. "Some of our guys are overpaid — none of our guys are overrated." jlemire@nydailynews.com

ONLINE: Who do you think is more overrated?

NYDailyNews.com/sports

☆☆

 **PRINT** ESPN.com: New York Yankees

[Print without images]



Tuesday, May 31, 2011

A-Rod, Joba take SI poll in stride ... Jeter? Not so much

The reaction of **Alex Rodriguez** and **Joba Chamberlain** to the news that an annual Sports Illustrated poll of major league ballplayers voted them the first and second most overrated players in the game, respectively, was reminiscent of an old stand-up comic's routine.

"It's a pleasure to be standing before you tonight. Actually, it's just a pleasure to be standing."

Ba-da-boom.

"I've been on this list many, many times and I'm sure I'll be there again next summer," a laughing Rodriguez said before tonight's Yankees-Athletics game. "I will say this -- if this is the only thing we're talking about, we're doing good."

Informed that he was sharing space atop the list with A-Rod and **Derek Jeter**, who came in third in the anonymous poll of 185 major-leaguers, Chamberlain seemed thrilled.

"I'm in good company, dammit," he said. "I don't care what you say. That's good company there."

But the climate in Jeter's corner of the clubhouse was decidedly chillier.

Simply put, The Captain was not amused.

"We're doing this again? I've got no comment on their anonymous polls," an unsmiling Jeter said. "So there you have it. Got it? All right."

Jeter had been atop the list before the 2009 season, and went on to bat .334 and finish third in the MVP voting. However, he did not see his return to the list -- his name was left off last year -- as a good omen for 2011.

"I've never understood those anonymous polls," he said. "Come on, man. It's the same thing they do every year, right? I'm focused on more positive things. There's your quote."

Jeter's reaction was in sharp contrast to most of the players in the Yankees pregame clubhouse, who laughed off the report.

"So you're not number one?," shouted **A.J. Burnett** to Chamberlain. "That [stinks]."

And when Rodriguez heard he had topped the list, he turned to Burnett and asked, laughing, "Who's next, **Willie Mays**?"

"No, **Babe Ruth**," Burnett replied.

The poll was hardly taken seriously by the players, even though it was voted on by their peers.

"I don't care," said Chamberlain, who topped the list last year. "My bills are still paid and I still have a job. You can call me whatever you want, just don't call me late for dinner. Everybody is entitled to their opinion; that's why this country is so great."

Then he added, "I guess I'm disappointed that I'm not number one again."

Told that **Nick Swisher** barely missed cracking the top five -- he finished just below **Jonathan Papelbon** and **Jayson Werth**, who tied for fourth place -- A-Rod crack, "So the Yankees are popular. That's good."

Manager Joe Girardi also laughed when first informed of the poll by beat writers in his pregame interview session. "I mean, people are gonna vote the way their gonna vote. I gotta tell you, I like my guys. These guys have had success, I've won a World Series with these guys so, I don't know. I like 'em."



ESPN.com: New York Yankees [\[Print without images\]](#)



Tuesday, May 31, 2011

Poll: Jeter, A-Rod, Joba "most overrated"

US Presswire Who are MLB's three most overrated players? According to an SI players' poll, you're looking at 'em.

The next issue of Sports Illustrated will contain its annual poll of 185 major league players rating the game's MOPs -- or Most Overrated Players.

The results were obtained by ESPNNewYork.com and not surprisingly, **Alex Rodriguez** successfully defended his 2010 title as baseball's most overrated player with 18% of the vote.

Joba Chamberlain retained his title as No. 2 on the list with 12%. **Derek Jeter** rounded out the top three, coming in third with 7%. **Nick Swisher** got some love, too, tying Red Sox closer **Jonathan Papelbon** for fifth place with 4% of the vote.

Should make for some interesting pregame clubhouse conversation tonight. We'll keep you posted.

Agree or disagree? Make sure to vote [in our homepage poll](#) (scroll to the bottom of the page) and comment below.

Yanks' trio most overrated

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011

BY PETE CALDERA

OAKLAND, Calif. – Joba Chamberlain discovered that he'd been dethroned by Alex Rodriguez as baseball's most overrated player just as A-Rod entered the Yankees' clubhouse Tuesday at Oakland Coliseum.

"I guess I'm disappointed that I'm not number one," Chamberlain said in a mocking concession.

Like Chamberlain, A-Rod found the humorous side of topping Sports Illustrated magazine's poll of the game's most overrated players. Yet, the third man on that list – Derek Jeter – did not distinguish its entertainment value.

"It's the same thing they do every year, right?" Jeter asked. After a pause, SI's 2009 Man of the Year said, "I'm focused on more positive things. How about that? There's your quote."

This season's poll, released Tuesday, surveyed 185 anonymous MLB players. A-Rod garnered 18 percent of the vote, with Chamberlain receiving 12 percent and Jeter getting 7 percent.

"So the Yankees are popular," A-Rod said cheekily. "That's good."

Nick Swisher also made the top six, after the Nationals' Jayson Werth the Red Sox' Jonathan Papelbon. All three had four percent.

"I've never understood those anonymous polls," Jeter said with a fair degree of disdain. The Yankees' captain – who entered Tuesday's game 19 hits shy of 3,000 – said he did not participate in the polling.

A-Rod initially wasn't sure if he'd participated, but added that he'd never answer such questions – even anonymously – "because I have so much respect for other players."

Rodriguez's big league brethren had ranked him as the second-most overrated player last year, behind Chamberlain.

"I've been on this list many, many times. And I'm sure I'll be there next summer," said A-Rod, after inquiring which players were among the top five. "I'll try to come up with some better material next time.

"But, I will say this – if this is the only thing we're talking about, we're doing good."

Being a marquee name in a big city naturally plays a part in arguing which guys are overrated. According to Sports Illustrated, all but three of its top 14 most overrated played in New York, Chicago or Boston.

Plus, "overrated" can also be translated as "overpaid" in some circles.

"I think sometimes people equate dollars to performance," said Yankees manager Joe Girardi. "If you're making a lot of money, they'll expect big numbers.

But, "there aren't a lot of people knocking on 3,000 hits. And there aren't too many people who've hit 600 homers."

With 622 career homers, the game's biggest contract, and a past link to performance enhancing substances, A-Rod said he's resigned himself to winding up on such lists.

"I think it'll be like that for the rest of my career," he said. "I think it's pretty amusing."

But it's not a distinction he cares about erasing.

"My focus is really on this team, and on the game, and working on my craft each and every day," A-Rod said. Chamberlain felt the same way.

"I guess everybody's entitled to their opinion. That's why this country's so great," Chamberlain said. "I could care less. As long as I'm getting outs and still doing what I need to do, that's all that matters."

"I like my guys. I've won a World Series with these guys," Girardi said. "There's a lot more to the game ... than just the overall numbers."



Tuesday, May 31, 2011

Updated: June 1, 7:53 AM ET

Grandy 'overrated'? Maybe next year

By Wallace Matthews
ESPNNewYork.com

OAKLAND -- Curtis Granderson wasn't one of the four New York Yankees named on the list of baseball's most overrated players in a national magazine poll, but if he keeps hitting the way he has so far this season, it won't be long before his name is at the top of the list.

The anonymous poll of major league ballplayers published annually in Sports Illustrated always seems to zero in on the most well-known players in the game, and right now, Granderson is well on his way to joining them.

Granderson knocked in four runs, two of them with a long home run on the fourth pitch of the game, and had three hits to lead the Yankees to a resounding 10-3 victory over the Athletics on Tuesday night at Oakland Coliseum.

Most remarkably, the home run came off a tough left-handed pitcher, Brett Anderson, who had not allowed an extra-base hit to a left-handed batter all season. Granderson's two-run single in the fourth also came off a lefty, as well as his single in the sixth that became the Yankees' ninth run of the game.

The three hits raised his average against lefties to .306, his home run total against lefties to nine -- one more than he has hit against righties -- and his RBI total to 41, tops on the team and just five behind league-leader Adrian Gonzalez.

Clearly, left-handed pitchers, who once were Granderson's bugaboo, are now his punching bags.

"The adjustment that this guy has made is remarkable," manager Joe Girardi said. "There are days when, if you make a mistake, he just doesn't miss it. That's what good hitters do and that's what he's doing."

On a night when it would be easy to mistake illusion for reality -- the A's, after all, don't boast much of a lineup, with six starters Tuesday night hitting .250 or less and no one with more than nine home runs -- Granderson is looking more and more like the real thing.

"It's still a constant battle for me," said Granderson, who is now hitting .284 with a .627 slugging percentage, second in the AL only to the fearsome Jose Bautista. "Sometimes I swing great, sometimes I don't. I'm still fighting it. Good pitch, good at-bat, bad pitch, bad at-bat.

"I'm still trying to achieve that consistency."

And still, he says, he checks the lineup card every day to see if his name is on it, and where.

"On this team, anyone can move, any day," he said. "Up, down, in, out."

Not Granderson. Not anymore. It used to be if a lefty was pitching, Granderson was either on the bench or buried at the bottom of the order. But lately, he has been in there every day in the 2-hole, no matter who is pitching for the other team or which arm he throws with.

After [Derek Jeter](#) (No. 3 on your list of overrated ballplayers, according to SI) smacked Anderson's first pitch of the game -- a one-hopper off the second-baseman's chest for an infield hit -- Granderson parked one in the right-field seats. Two innings later, [Alex Rodriguez](#), officially SI's Most Overrated Player in Baseball, singled in the Yankees' third run.

Granderson followed with his two-RBI single in the fourth and then [Robinson Cano](#), who has been struggling, sent one into low-Earth orbit for another two runs.

Meanwhile, [Freddy Garcia](#), the other half of the geriatric duo anchoring the Yankees' starting rotation this season, was pitching well enough to hold the lead. In the fourth, he pitched around [Kevin Kouzmanoff](#), loading the bases with two out, and then worked out of the jam by getting [Andy LaRoche](#) to bounce into a force play.

Two innings later, he chose to pitch to Kouzmanoff after [Mark Ellis](#) doubled with one out -- and nearly lost his head over it. Kouzmanoff hit a rocket back at Garcia, who snagged it in self-defense, heaved a sigh of relief, and then tossed to second to double Ellis to end the inning.

"I don't know how I caught that ball," Garcia (4-4) said. "It scared me. It almost hit me in my face. I got lucky."

Garcia finished up with a workmanlike seven innings pitched, nine hits allowed and three runs, including a two-run homer by [David DeJesus](#) in the fifth. But using his baffling assortment of off-speed pitches, Garcia never really allowed the A's puny offense to get a foothold in the game.

Asked if he was surprised by how well he has performed so far this season, Garcia just shrugged. "Not really," he said. "I been in this game a long time. I know how to go out there and do my business, get people out. That's normal for me. I worked hard in spring training for my position and I'm really happy to be doing what I'm doing."

But what Garcia has been able to do is in some ways more remarkable than what [Bartolo Colon](#) has done, considering how much he's had to change his style from the flamethrower he'd once been to the effective junkballer he now is.

"I don't know where we are without them, I really don't," Girardi said of Garcia and Colon, who are a combined 72 years old and have thrown a combined 4,100 innings in their careers. "They've given us a chance to win every game that they've pitched. Their numbers are outstanding."

Not as good as Granderson's numbers, of course, but unlike him, neither Garcia nor Colon is headed to the list of baseball's Most Overrated Players.

Granderson, on the other hand, looks like a lock for next year.

...

Catcher [Russell Martin](#) returned to the lineup after missing a game with a bruised big toe. Girardi removed him in the eighth inning after he went hitless, but said Martin is fine and will catch Wednesday afternoon's series finale. In the clubhouse, Martin said the toe is still sore, and he left the clubhouse wearing bedroom slippers. He originally injured it three weeks ago when he was hit by a grounder while running the bases during batting practice, an injury that required doctors to drill through his toenail to drain it of blood. ... Jeter had two hits, both infield singles, to raise his total to 2,983. He also scored three times. ... [Mark Teixeira](#) was credited with a steal of home in the sixth inning when he broke for the plate after A-Rod got into a rundown between first and second, and was safe when first baseman [Conor Jackson](#) threw wildly to home. ... [A.J. Burnett](#) (5-3, 3.99) goes for the sweep Wednesday afternoon against LHP [Gio Gonzalez](#) (5-2, 2.17), first pitch at 3:35 p.m. ET.

Klapisch: Bartolo Colon's treatments inject controversy into his comeback

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2011

By BOB KLAPISCH

The cynics, doubters and haters are speaking with one voice these days about Bartolo Colon. It's a chorus: no man shaped like a watermelon should be throwing 96-mph on the black.

After all, just look at Colon – try matching the waistline to the nuking of the A's lineup on Monday. Not only did Colon throw his first shutout since 2006, a whopping 86 of his 103 pitches were fastballs, a lopsided total even for a young, fit hurler.

Crazy, right? Colon isn't young (soon to be 38) and he isn't fit (Joba Chamberlain looks like a greyhound in comparison.) So what gives? Major League Baseball is asking that very question, continuing to probe Colon's medical treatments in the Dominican Republic 18 months ago.

The Yankees pitcher, who was out of baseball at the time, was administered a stem cell injection in his shoulder and elbow – a desperate procedure to resurrect his career. It's a stirring comeback, except that the commissioner's office suspects there's more to this story.

The doctor who treated Colon, Florida-based Joseph Purita, admits he's used HGH on his other patients. One industry official says, "it's hard to believe" either Purita or Colon drew the line at stem cells, although investigators have been unable to prove a thing.

At the very least, the commissioner's office believes Colon should've disclosed these treatments when he signed with the Yankees, which he did not. In fact, GM Brian Cashman had no idea Colon had undergone stem cell treatment until the New York Times broke the story last month. The higher-ups at Major League Baseball believe the Yankees have the right to void Colon's contract, although such talk is purely theoretical, dismissed by the Bombers as corporate hot air.

Anyone who thinks the Yankees are going to punish or investigate Colon hasn't paid attention to the mini-emergencies they face – from Phil Hughes' injury to Ivan Nova's chronic under-achievement. Colon isn't just throwing better than at any time since 2005, he's become the No. 2 starter in the Bronx. So whatever he did or didn't do, the Yankees have no motive to dig for an answer.

For all their posturing, MLB knows that Colon is beyond their reach, as well. There is no rule banning the use of stem cells, since it's considered a medical procedure. And even if Colon did use HGH, he was out of the game at the time, not part of the Players Association, not bound by the Basic Agreement.

"[Colon] was a private citizen, free to make whatever choices he wanted," said one person close to the pitcher. "Baseball can't do a thing to him. It's a loophole that'll have to be addressed in the next [Basic Agreement]."

Fair point: Bud Selig will be looking for ways to govern players on hiatus or in semi-retirement, especially those living in other countries. Currently, there's no way to stop anyone from loading up, whether it's HGH or steroids.

Colon, then, would fit neatly into the Yankees' PED culture of the early 2000s. There was Roger Clemens, Andy Pettitte, Jason Giambi, Chuck Knoblauch, David Justice – and now Colon. But Purita is protesting any loose logic that indicts his client.

Not only does the doctor swear Colon never took HGH, he's willing to take a lie-detector test. And for those who object to stem cell usage on ethical grounds, Purita has a separate rejoinder: Colon harvested the cells from his own body (his hip). No embryos were used.

That means Colon is in for the long haul, although the Yankees aren't greedy enough to think his second golden era will last forever. Cashman, for one, says: "I can't sit here and tell you how Bartolo is going to be pitching later on this summer. It's been a long time since he's been this good. So, honestly, I don't know where this is going."

It's both a thrilling and terrifying proposition for the Yankees, knowing Colon's mirage could end at any time. The realists in the front office are more like fatalists, half-expecting Colon to blow out his arm again – a partially torn rotator cuff is what drove him out of the big leagues and into Purita's office.

What's more likely is that Colon loses his elite-caliber velocity. Logic says it has to happen, although there was no sign of decay against the A's. According to BaseballAnalytics.org, Colon ran most of his best fastballs away from righties and lefties, effectively creating a "donut hole" in his computerized pitchchart. The hole was the middle of the strike zone, where Colon rarely visited.

Ninety six is as hard as any Yankees starter has thrown this year, a full 6-7 mph better than his spring training radar reading. It hasn't hurt Colon, either, to be throwing 67 percent first-pitch strikes – his best ratio since '05 – and that his fly ball ratio is just 34.9 percent, his lowest since 2002.

The numbers hardly need a translation. For whatever reason, pure or diabolical, whether it's good chemicals or good luck, it's hard to square up on Colon's moving four-seamer this year. The pitcher isn't about to reveal his secret, although Purita is first in line to defend him.

"We gave [Bartolo] the means, but he has the focus and desire, the killer instinct," the doctor told the Times. "He worked his tail off to get back in the game. That is something stem cells cannot fix."

June 1, 2011

Baseball's Easy-Listening Duo

By RALPH GARDNER JR.

If, as F. Scott Fitzgerald once wrote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function," I'm looking pretty good these days. (Actually, I disagree with the literary sage: I think a better test of intelligence in this age of distraction is to retain the ability to focus on one thing at a time.)

Fitzgerald would be proud of my ability to juggle competing ideas or at least loyalties when it comes to baseball. Here's why: I'm a Mets fan, yet my favorite announcers are the Yankees' John Sterling and Suzyn Waldman.

I can already hear the groans from baseball aficionados, so let's clear the air before we get started. Yes, Mr. Sterling's silken delivery owes more to the golden age of radio, or perhaps Ted Baxter of "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," than it does gladiatorial ESPN. He's been known to call home runs—"It is high, it is far, it is gone!"—only to have to take it back when the balls turn out to be playable. And Ms. Waldman might have momentarily lost perspective when she swooned in 2007 upon spotting Roger Clemens in George Steinbrenner's box at Yankee Stadium, signifying his lordship's return to the Yankee roster for one year at \$28 million, and said: "Oh my goodness gracious. Of all the dramatic things I've ever seen..."

My reaction to the armchair critics is: Lighten up. Get a life. Then again, I may not be the best judge. I started a co-ed softball team in college, with myself the only male player because I wanted nurturing and encouragement rather than vilification when I dropped a pop fly, as I occasionally did.

But for sheer radio listening pleasure for the casual fan, I don't think anybody beats the Sterling-Waldman duo. Their style is conversational rather than testosterone-crazed; it's almost overheard, as if you were eavesdropping on their tête-à-tête from the next table at Sardi's. And they know their stuff—Mr. Sterling because he's been the Yankees announcer for every single game since 1989, Ms. Waldman because she works her tail off—as I discovered when I visited them at the stadium for last Tuesday night's game against the Toronto Blue Jays.

I got there early, at 3 p.m.—before even Ms. Waldman, and hours before Mr. Sterling, who waltzes in about an hour/hour-and-a-half before game time. ("I kind of do everything by the seat of my pants," he admitted upon arrival.) Getting there early was instructive, the immaculate emerald-green field filling slowly—first with the grounds crew, then with members of the military rehearsing that evening's showing of the colors during the National Anthem and finally with the players. Manager Joe Girardi coached catcher Francisco Cervelli on throwing out base runners, Curtis Granderson hammed it up with Joba Chamberlain during a TV interview and the rest of the team—Jeter, Posada, A-Rod, et al.—trickled out to take batting practice.

If anything, Ms. Waldman seems to take the game more seriously than the players, their relaxed body language on a beautiful spring day suggesting that beyond the multimillion-dollar paydays and McMansions, the game's greatest pleasure is making contact with the ball, shagging a pop fly, reveling in their own athleticism. "I spend the next hour in the clubhouse—going between clubhouses," Ms. Waldman said by way of apology when she arrived at 4 p.m. from her home in northern Westchester, where she lives with her two German shepherds. "I talk to people by myself. I like back stories. Anybody can tell you what they threw on a 3-1 pitch."

What Mr. Sterling and Ms. Waldman have most in common may be not baseball but show business. Suzyn Waldman because she came out of musical theatre; before she became a sportscaster she played the role of Aldonza (Dulcinea) on Broadway in "Man of La Mancha" opposite the likes of Howard Keel and Richard Kiley. John Sterling because—well, because he's John Sterling, a gentleman the sonorousness of whose voice (an instrument no less familiar to the Yankee faithful than Mariano Rivera's arm) seems matched only by his delight in exercising it. In the

press cafeteria before the game, with his navy suit with white pocket square, open collar and absurdly ostentatious Yankees 2009 diamond World Series ring, he cuts a figure of jarring elegance among the lumpen sportswriter proletariat at the surrounding tables.

And when Ms. Waldman joins him there for dinner, they discuss their favorite soap operas at least as passionately as that night's starting line-up. In fact, more so. Ms. Waldman watches "The Young And The Restless" when it's broadcast at 12:30 p.m. Mr. Sterling records it. "They're always talking about people I think are real people—"Why would she do that?" said sportswriter Jack O'Connell, who joined them for dinner.

"It's a story line, not unlike soap operas, that goes on day after day," Mr. Sterling said of baseball.

The curious thing about observing Sterling and Waldman in action in the broadcast booth—and it may be the secret of their success among those of us who prefer their company as we drive through the dark—is that they're no different on or off the air, even between themselves. The conversation flows—whether it's awaiting a 3-2 pitch, during a commercial break or while taking a second helping of fruit salad in the cafeteria.

In fact, my favorite part of any game isn't even when they're discussing baseball—though I can appreciate their encyclopedic knowledge of the sport—but when they go passionately off on some tangent, often having little if anything to do with the game. On this evening it was about NYY Steak, a restaurant at Yankee Stadium, the two of them shamelessly but somehow innocently shilling for the joint.

"I go to those steakhouses around the country," Mr. Sterling announced as portentously as if he was discussing the elbow injury that was sending pitcher Rafael Soriano to Florida for tests the next morning. "There's all kinds of Yankee memorabilia."

"It's open year round," Ms. Waldman said.

"It's a great place to take your kids for a confirmation or bar mitzvah," one or the other added.

Unfortunately, the game (yes there was a game in progress) went so fast, running only 2:36, that there were few opportunities for such flights of fancy, carnivorous or otherwise. The Yankees came from behind in the ninth to eke out a 5-4 victory.

"Yankees win! Yankees win! YANKEES WIN!" Mr. Sterling shouted in his trademark victory dance—going blue, or at least crimson, in the face.

"I'll tell you one thing," he said when he calmed down—genuinely, generously and probably no less excitedly than he did after his first Yankee broadcast more than two decades ago—"here you come in and you see the best game of the year."



<http://www.newsday.com/sports/baseball/ken-davidoff-s-baseball-insider-1.1278117/trading-season-currencies-of-choice-1.2917938>

Ken Davidoff's baseball insider

Trading season: Currencies of choice

6:57 AM By Ken Davidoff

No, it's not trading season yet. I just threw that in there to try to get a few more page views.

People are always gossiping about trades, however, and when I reached out to several contacts last week for my [turnaround teams poll](#), I received some interesting thoughts. Here was my favorite, from an official of a "static" club:

"Milwaukee has really good starting pitching and a potent lineup. They have nothing at all in the minors because they mortgaged everything for this year, but this year is pretty good -- and could be even better if they find a way to improve their bullpen. Consider them a sleeper for any major reliever, with the caveat being that they have nothing in their system as opposed to not being willing to take on salary."

Much has been made of the Brewers' emptying of their prospect base to acquire [Shaun Marcum](#) and [Zack Greinke](#), and how that will impact them come July. But owner Mark Attanasio would spend money to acquire, say, Francisco Rodriguez that other teams wouldn't. And that gives Milwaukee some juice for the trade talks, because sometimes non-contending teams prioritize clearing payroll over stocking their farm system.

Some contenders are stocked with prospects, some with cash, some with both and some with neither. If you have one, you can mitigate the absence of the other. Two obvious examples:

Prospects, no cash: The Mariners liked Texas' youngsters so much last July that Seattle paid a nice portion of Cliff Lee's salary in the trade that [made Lee a Ranger](#).

Cash, no prospects: Back in 2006, the Yankees sensed that the Phillies wanted to unload Bobby Abreu's contract, so Brian Cashman waited until Philadelphia GM Pat Gillick relented on his demand for quality players and [accepted Abreu](#) in what was essentially a contract dump.

Let's take a look at the obvious contenders and their likely currency of choice. Their best avenue to complete a trade. We'll include teams that are .500 or better:

AL East: . **Yankees** - both, as they didn't give up much of either last winter. **Boston** - both, as the Sox gave away both dough and youngsters over the winter and are therefore slightly compromised in both areas. **Tampa Bay** - prospects, as the Rays' attendance is still awful.

AL Central: Cleveland - prospects, as the Indians' farm system is highly regarded. **Detroit** - cash, as the Tigers' farm system is thin.

AL West: Texas - both, as the Rangers still have a deep sytem while boasting of deeper pockets than last year. **Angels** - cash, as they don't have many prospects. **Seattle** - cash. The Mariners want to hold onto their best prospects.

NL East: Philadelphia - both, in that like Boston, the Phillies have dispersed plenty of both the past few years. **Florida** - prospects. Maybe the Marlins will spend bucks next year, in their new ballpark. Maybe. **Atlanta** - prospects, as the Braves can boast of a rich farm system.

NL Central: St. Louis - cash, as the Cardinals' farm system is weak. **Milwaukee** - cash, as initially discussed. **Cincinnati** - prospects, thanks to a strong farm system.

NL West: Arizona - cash, as I can't see the Diamondbacks trading too many prospects with their being ahead of schedule. **San Francisco** - cash, as the Giants have grown increasingly protective of their own talent.

Now, what about potential sellers? Which want the payroll relief, and which want the kids? Thanks to parity, I think there are few obvious sellers at this juncture. Just looking at teams that are 10 games under .500 or worse...

AL Central: Minnesota - prospects. The Twins are in good shape financially.

NL Central: Houston - prospects. The Astros desperately need to build a stronger talent base.

Of course, by setting the bar so low on the sell side, I eliminated more potential sellers. I did this for obvious reasons: It's still too darn early to determine which of the other clubs will sell. Shoot, with a modest winning streak, the Mets will be over .500.

To be clear, however, I think the Mets *will* wind up as sellers. And when they do? I think David Einhorn's money will make it easier for Sandy Alderson to get the most in return for his chips.

This shouldn't be a huge issue for Jose Reyes; with an \$11 million salary, the Mets should be able to both shed his remaining commitment *and* get a good package in return. With K-Rod and Carlos Beltran, however, the Mets clearly will benefit by paying some of the freight.

--Today is Day 2 of the autographed Doug Glanville book contest, and I'll check in later today from Citi Field for Pirates-Mets.

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Posted: Tuesday May 31, 2011 10:53AM ; Updated: Tuesday May 31, 2011 10:53AM

Tom Verducci

Two months in, season all but over for eight teams in 5-and-5 Club

Story Highlights

Teams 5 games under .500 and 5 games out of a playoff spot are doomed

The eight are Twins, Cubs, White Sox, Dodgers, Astros, Nats, Padres, Royals

Of the 126 previous teams in that spot in wild card era, all but five missed playoffs

The Twins are toast and the baseball season in Chicago is virtually over. Harsh as that may sound before summer has even arrived, history tells us nothing short of historic comebacks can save the seasons of the Twins, Cubs and White Sox.

People like to talk about the integrity of 162 games in determining the quality of teams. Folks, you don't need nearly that many games to separate the good teams from the bad ones. The late Hall of Fame manager Sparky Anderson said it took about two months to identify the contenders and the pretenders. Anderson came to such an observation without benefit of research and before the six-division format and wild cards. Well, guess what: Sparky knew what he was talking about. Sparky's Law still works.

Even with wild cards, and despite the life ring of rare outliers such as the 2005 Astros to cling to, teams that are bad for the first two months of the season almost never make the playoffs. So with June arriving tomorrow, now is the perfect time to cast aside all the blather about waiting for a trade or guys coming back from injuries or the weather warming up and stick to the facts about the near impossibility of bad teams mounting some historically great charge to the postseason.

I looked at where every team stood in the standings through May 31 in the 15 full seasons with the wild card format (1996-2010). I checked the closest they were to any playoff spot, whether it was the division title or the wild card. Here are the facts:

- Of the 143 teams that began June at least five games under .500, 136 didn't make the playoffs -- a 95.1 percent failure rate.
- Of the 184 teams at least five games out of any playoff spot, 174 didn't make the playoffs -- a 94.6 percent failure rate.
- Of the 126 teams both at least five games under and five games out, 121 didn't make the playoffs, a 96.0 failure rate.
- Coming back from two bad months in the AL in particular -- where the Yankees and Red Sox set high wild-card bars - is virtually impossible. Only one AL team in the wild card era began June more than five games under .500 and wound up in the playoffs: the 2007 Yankees (22-29 on May 31).

Now you understand why the Twins are done. At 17-35, they are 18 games under .500 and 12 games out of a playoff spot. They are an abysmal offensive team -- worse than the 1962 Mets at this point and a challenge to the 2010 Mariners as one of the most inept hitting teams ever with use of the DH. They have the worst bullpen ERA in the league. Any personnel move Minnesota makes this summer should be done to improve the 2012 team, not this one. With huge advance ticket sales, Minnesota will have a hard time selling this reality to its fans.

The situation in Chicago is only slightly less bleak. The White Sox are 6 games under .500 and 6 games out of the wild card. (The 2007 Yankees are the only AL team in the past 15 years to recover from that kind of deficit at the start of June to make the postseason.) The White Sox are woefully below average offensively at DH, third base, second base, centerfield, leftfield and catcher. They are the worst defensive team in the league, as ranked by defensive efficiency. Their bullpen is 10th in the league.

The Cubs are so bad that they have played a third of their schedule without ever winning three games in a row. They are 6 games under and 7 games out of the wild card. They have little speed, they don't take walks, their pitching is atrocious and they are next-to-last in the league in defensive efficiency. This sums up their ineptitude: They have taken the fewest walks in the league while giving the most, resulting in a net deficit of 71 walks in 52 games.

Could it be just three years ago that Chicago hosted four postseason games in two ballparks over a six-day span? When the White Sox and Cubs reached the 2008 postseason, it was the first time since they played each other in the 1906 World Series that Chicago put two teams in the same postseason. Alas, the White Sox and Cubs both lost in their respective League Division Series

in 2008, and there has not been a postseason game in Chicago since. This could mark the first time since 1995-97 that Chicago sits out the playoffs in three straight years.

The Twins, White Sox and Cubs have some company in seeing their postseason chances to dwindle to next to nothing before May is over. Though none qualifies as a surprise pretender, the other members of the 5-and-5 Club (five games under, five games out) are:

Team	Record	Games Under	Games Out
Astros	20-34	14	11
Nationals	22-31	8	8 1/2
Padres	23-31	6	7
Royals	23-30	7	6 1/2
Dodgers	25-30	5	5 1/2

So go ahead if you wish and believe your club is not like 95 percent of the slow-starting teams of the past 15 years. To help you keep such faith through the summer, here are the only four teams of the wild card era who made the playoffs after starting June more than five games worse than .500:

2005 Astros (19-32): This is the only playoff team in the wild card era to start June more than nine games out of a playoff spot. That's a 1-in-120 shot.

Buried in May, the Astros wound up in the World Series, the ultimate example of why the wild card format needs fixing with a wild-card play-in game. The Astros did not play a meaningful game in the NL Central for the last five months, yet played half of their 14 postseason games at home. This was a poor offensive team, but their top three starters (Roger Clemens, Andy Pettitte and Roy Oswalt) didn't miss a start.

2009 Rockies (20-29): This team and the 2003 Marlins are reminders why teams change managers mid-season. One week after replacing manager Clint Hurdle with Jim Tracy, Colorado ran off 17 wins in 18 games to get back in the race.

2007 Yankees (22-29): The Yankees actually went into the season with Kei Igawa in their rotation. They used 11 starting pitchers in just their first 42 games: Carl Pavano, Andy Pettitte, Mike Mussina, Kei Igawa, Darrell Rasner, Chase Wright, Chien Ming Wang, Phil Hughes, Jeff Karstens, Matt DeSalvo and Tyler Clippard. But boy, could they hit. They mashed out 968 runs and stormed back to win the wild card.

2007 Cubs (22-29): Under new manager Lou Piniella, the Cubs started poorly. Then one day on Memorial Day weekend, pitcher Carlos Zambrano scuffled in the dugout with his catcher, Michael Barrett, and the next day Piniella let loose with one of his all-time best meltdowns arguing a call at third base. The Cubs played better after that, but let's be honest here: the division stunk. Chicago claimed the NL Central title despite winning only 85 games -- just fifth most in the league.

Twins must look at long term for Mauer



FOX SPORTS - Updated Jun 1, 2011 2:24 AM ET

Injuries of uncertain origin and severity have limited **Joe Mauer** to nine games as the **Minnesota Twins'** catcher in 2011.

And I can't see the wisdom in him putting on a chest protector again this year. The player is too valuable. The season is too hopeless. Any cost/benefit analysis comes down on the side of Mauer doing anything *but* catch for the Twins between now and October.

Mauer's health has been an enigma for months. He underwent offseason left-knee surgery and required lubricating injections in the joint during spring training. He was placed on the disabled list about six weeks ago, after "bilateral leg weakness" led to soreness in his right shoulder, right elbow and elsewhere.

At one point, the symptoms were ascribed to an unspecified virus. A report in the Minneapolis Star Tribune said Mauer visited the Mayo Clinic seeking clarity about his condition. On Tuesday, Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said the arms and legs of his star player aren't yet "caught up together."

Confused? Me, too. And I wrote those paragraphs.

The lack of clarity about Mauer's condition is the most powerful incentive for the Twins (and the former MVP himself) to lead the league in prudence, seeing as how they already lead the majors in losses.

At the core of this issue is that Mauer is in the first season of an eight-year, \$184 million extension. Mauer is 28 now. He will be 35 when the contract expires. He is a long-term asset, at a time when short-term performance is of little overall benefit.

The Twins have the worst record in baseball at 17-36. After their fourth one-run loss in five days, an 8-7 defeat in Detroit on Tuesday night, starting pitcher **Brian Duensing** acknowledged, "It's getting to the point where it's not very much fun. You used to come to the ballpark, excited to be here. Now, it's hard."

This is the rare Twins season in which we can say on June 1 that they are finished. I realize that they are famous for second-half comebacks. I witnessed the first-of-its kind resuscitation in 2009, when they won the American League Central despite trailing Detroit by three games with four to play. Gardenhire is among the two or three best managers in the game. If there is a way for his team to reach the postseason, he usually finds it.

But to win the division with this team would be harder than driving a golf ball through the Metrodome roof and into the Mississippi.

The Twins' winning percentage is more than 100 points below the closest AL competitor. The **Baltimore Orioles** had the worst record in the majors at this time last year, and the Showalter Miracle was required to avert a 100-loss season. And that was the *best-case* scenario. Realistically, the 2011 Twins should hope that their loss total starts with a 9.

How did it come to this, for one of baseball's best and proudest organizations? Well, let's put it this way: On Tuesday afternoon, assistant athletic trainer Dave Pruemer sat beside Gardenhire in the manager's office and delivered the Twins' daily injury report to the media. At the two-minute mark, Gardenhire pressed a button on his laptop. The "Jeopardy!" theme began to play.

It's been that kind of year, which is why there is little sense in thrusting Mauer back into baseball's most dangerous position.

Didn't we just have this discussion last week, in the wake of Buster Posey's season-ending ankle injury? There is inherent risk when a team's franchise player is its everyday catcher. I'm not suggesting Mauer should give up catching for good. I am saying he shouldn't catch again this year. That's an important distinction.

If Posey's injury reminded us of anything, it's that an elite catcher has an odometer, just like an elite pitcher. In some cases, it's gradual wear and tear. In others, it's one catastrophic play. There are only so many innings in a catcher's career, before he must change positions or retire altogether. The counter rolls forward every time he snaps on the shin guards.

Lest we forget, the Twins fans who will pay to see the local icon for most of this decade aren't particularly concerned with his game-calling. They just want him to play, period. For that to happen, he must stay healthy.

For now, though, the Twins are planning — hoping? — to have Mauer back behind the plate this year, even though he has yet to catch in game conditions while rehabbing in Florida. Gardenhire acknowledged Tuesday that he doesn't expect him back anytime soon.

"Joe's a catcher," Gardenhire insisted. "He's coming back as a catcher. He signed as a catcher. He signed an eight-year deal to catch in the big leagues for the Minnesota Twins. We're trying to get him back as a catcher.

"If it doesn't work out when he comes back, then we're going to have to figure somewhere else. And that's a lot harder than everybody makes it out to be. We have some corner people that are pretty good baseball players. We try not to fire the really good players we have."

By "corner people," Gardenhire presumably was referring to first baseman **Justin Morneau** and third baseman **Danny Valencia**. And that is a fair point. Morneau is signed through 2013. Valencia is under club control through 2016.

But the Twins' outfield depth chart is much more fluid. The Twins have had the worst left field production of any team in the majors this year, and **Delmon Young** is no lock to return there in 2012. Meanwhile, right fielders **Jason Kubel** and **Michael Cuddyer** — not to mention designated hitter **Jim Thome** — will be eligible for free agency at season's end.

Let's say Mauer is ready around the beginning of July, which seems plausible. By then, assuming the Twins don't have an undefeated June, they should be ready to start trading veteran players.

Around that time, General Manager Bill Smith could trade Kubel, Cuddyer and/or Thome for prospects, freeing up at-bats for Mauer that don't involve wearing a mask. That would avoid wear and tear on Mauer's legs, while giving team officials the time to determine where he best fits into their defensive alignment for 2012. (Even in discussing his plans for Mauer to catch, Gardenhire allowed that his superstar could play "anywhere.")

Sure, after the experiment, the Twins may decide that they like Mauer best at catcher. And that would be fine, particularly because Mauer would have more than enough time to rest for his next important start: on Opening Day '12.

I know. None of this is easy for Minnesota fans to read. The Twins aren't used to losing at all. Now they must lose with a purpose.

For years, Minnesotans have longed to see Mauer, St. Paul's favorite son, lead their team to a World Series title. Well, it's not happening this year. But that's OK. Mauer will have *seven* more chances before his contract runs out. The Twins need to do what they can to maximize his contribution in those seasons.

Besides, would it really be *that* bad if the Twins finished with the worst record in the majors? Then they would have the No. 1 overall pick in the draft next year. That worked out pretty well in 2001. That's when they took Joe Mauer.

Indians' hot start has others steaming

**KEN
ROSENTHAL**



Both probably should relax — the Indians have lost five of six and are only 11-12 since their 20-8 start. But Leyland is in the final year of his contract with the **Tigers**. And although Guillen is signed through 2012, his **White Sox** are an immense disappointment.

I understand what Guillen was trying to say Sunday — that fans have short memories and don't always appreciate the passion that managers put into their jobs. But he went too far with his remarks and with his criticisms on Twitter about how those remarks were reported.

Speaking of the fans, Guillen said: "They'll only remember the 2005 team (that won the World Series) in 2020 when we come here in wheelchairs. Oh yeah, thank you. As soon as you leave the ballpark, they don't care about you anymore. They don't.

". . . The monuments, the statues they have for you, they pee on it when they're drunk. That's what they do. Thank you for coming for 30 minutes for all the suffering you did all your life."

Well, that's life in professional sports, a life for which Guillen is well compensated. White Sox fans surely remember 2005. But six years later, they're more concerned that designated hitter **Adam Dunn** leads the majors with 69 strikeouts and that left-hander **John Danks** is 0-8 with a 5.25 ERA.

The White Sox, 8-1/2 games back, are still talented enough to make a run. The Tigers have moved within five games of the Indians, but Leyland, who led a veteran team to the Series in 2006, is struggling to get the most out of a team that features several young players.

The Tigers are now on their third second baseman — **Ryan Raburn**, who has only five hits in his last 54 at-bats. Scott Sizemore, who took over for Opening Day starter **Will Rhymes**, was traded last week to the Athletics for left-handed reliever **David Purcey**.

Sizemore, 26, failed to hit after winning the job out of spring training in 2010 and failed to hit again after replacing Rhymes. But the emergence of Tigers catcher **Alex Avila**, who struggled offensively last season, is testament to the importance of patience.

On the day that Leyland named Rhymes his Opening Day starter, he said of Sizemore, "I want to make it perfectly clear that I was really, totally impressed with Scott Sizemore, totally different guy. I think it's a 100 percent that Scott Sizemore is a big leaguer, and I'm not sure I could have said that before."

The Tigers traded that big leaguer for a 29-year-old out-of-options reliever, albeit one with talent. The move spoke to management's urgency; general manager David Dombrowski, like Leyland, is in the final year of his contract.

I still love the Tigers' pitching — their rotation, at least — but Leyland needs more out of Raburn, center fielder **Austin Jackson** and outfielder **Brennan Boesch**. Veteran third baseman **Brandon Inge** also is struggling, creating another offensive hole.

The Indians aren't going away. The pressure is on.

THE VALUE OF O.C.

The Indians might face a very interesting decision as the season progresses: Should they stick with veteran **Orlando Cabrera** at second base or promote a younger infielder with greater offensive potential?

Cabrera, 36, is batting .258 with a .286 on-base percentage and .330 slugging average, albeit with 26 RBI. The Indians' OPS at second ranks only 24th in the majors. Meanwhile, shortstop Cord Phelps has a .936 OPS at Triple-A, and second baseman Jason Kipnis is at .853.

Kipnis, who was a center fielder at Arizona State, is still learning the nuances of second. Phelps, a switch-hitter out of Stanford, is perhaps more advanced at this point; he possesses a year more of professional experience.

Then there is Cabrera, who also has struggled defensively of late, but whose mentoring of shortstop **Asdrubal Cabrera** and overall impact have contributed to the Indians' success.

"It's very difficult to quantify. It's not something that always shows up on the stat sheet," Indians GM Chris Antonetti said.

"He has had some really big hits to drive in runs. But the biggest thing is his influence on our group of players, his leadership. He's been an important component for our team."

Orlando Cabrera also is on a personal roll. He has appeared in four straight postseasons and six of the past seven. Those playoff appearances have come with five different clubs.

ARIZONA DREAMING

Teams typically don't experience a spike in attendance until the season after they enjoy success. Still, it will be interesting to see how quickly the Diamondbacks regain the trust of their fans.

In 2002, the year after the D-backs won the World Series, their average home attendance was a whopping 39,515. In '08, coming off an appearance in the NLCS, their average was again impressive: 30,986.

That number declined in each of the past two seasons, and stood at only 22,310 after 23 home dates in '11. But the D-backs built momentum in their last home series, drawing nearly 100,000 for three games against Minnesota. They then went 6-1 on a trip to Colorado and Houston to move into first place.

They returned home Monday and drew a Memorial Day crowd of 23,465 for their 15-4 victory over the Marlins. Neither the Marlins nor the D-Backs' next opponent, the Nationals, is a particularly good draw. But the increase in local TV ratings is a positive sign.

Although attendance figures do not yet hint at revivals in markets such as Phoenix, Kansas City, Cleveland and Pittsburgh, the possibility is within reach in each case — a huge development for the sport.

PHILS' MANUEL A FAN OF REDS' BRUCE

Twice in two days, **Phillies** manager Charlie Manuel offered raves for Reds right fielder **Jay Bruce**, who had a monster series in Philadelphia last week.

Manuel, an authority on hitting, said he was particularly impressed with Bruce's bat speed through the hitting zone.

"He doesn't even know what he's got," Manuel said. "He's got a quick bat. He's got pizzazz. He's got a chance to put together a career year as far as batting average and power."

Bruce, 24, leads the NL with 16 homers and 43 RBI. His .937 OPS, which ranks fifth in the league, would be a career high.

PETCO DEBATE RAGES ON

Talk of moving in the fences at Petco Park is gaining momentum. I said on a recent video that the **Padres** should be careful not to lose their competitive advantage; the park enables them to sign previously unattainable pitchers and enhances the performance of their entire staff.

The problem, though, goes beyond how Petco depresses offense, driving the Padres' hitters to distraction. Padres officials also worry that the low-scoring games are too dull — in effect, poor entertainment.

That, obviously, is a major concern.

If the Padres want to bring in the fences at Petco, the place to do it is in right field. Adrian Gonzalez, one of the game's top left-handed hitters, batted under .250 at Petco in both 2008 and '09 (though he did produce an .859 OPS in the second of those seasons).

But there is another issue here: Finding the right types of players for Petco, selfless types who are willing to sacrifice individual statistics for team goals.

The Padres had such a group last season — David Eckstein, **Yorvit Torrealba**, Scott and Jerry Hairston, etc. The players on this year's club aren't necessarily selfish. But when a hitter is playing for a contract, as right fielder **Ryan Ludwick** and first baseman **Brad Hawpe** are this season, it creates a different kind of dynamic, a different kind of pressure.

METS' TURNER: A STUDY IN PERSEVERANCE

Mets infielder **Justin Turner** describes what happened to him on May 21, 2010 as "kind of an emotional 30 minutes in my life."

Turner, then in Triple-A with the Orioles, was elated to learn that Scott Moore, his teammate and childhood friend from Long Beach, Calif., was heading to the majors.

But minutes later, when hitting coach Richie Hebner summoned Turner to manager Gary Allenson office, the painful reality struck.

The Orioles needed to add Moore to their 40-man roster. And Turner would be the one getting bumped off.

The Mets claimed Turner on waivers four days later, but it took almost a year for his fortunes to truly change.

Turner batted .333 at Triple-A, but the Mets declined to make him a September call-up, a development that he says was "devastating."

Spring training wasn't much better. Turner got only 39 at-bats while the Mets took a first look at Rule 5 draft pick Brad Emaus, who made the club, and a last look at Luis Castillo, who was released.

Well, it all worked out.

Turner has been a revelation for the Mets, batting .337/.384/.467 and, in the words of manager Terry Collins, playing "the living hell out of third base."

The Mets plan to move him from third back to second after **David Wright** comes off the disabled list.

ANOTHER POSTSEASON BABY?

Cole Hamels' wife, Heidi, is due to give birth to their second child in late October. Depending upon how the Phillies fare, it could be their second postseason baby.

The Hamels' first child, Caleb Michael, was born shortly after Cole started — and lost — Game 2 of the 2009 Division Series.

Heidi had texted Phillies traveling secretary Frank Copenbarger and said: "I'm in the hospital going into labor. Could you please tell Cole as soon as he's done pitching?"

Copenbarger recalls asking pitching coach Rich Dubee if he could tell Hamels the news after the Phillies took him out of the game. Dubee said yes, and Hamels bolted off the bench so he could get to the hospital.

AROUND THE HORN

- If the **Braves** were crafting a perfect team, the one piece they would need to add is a dynamic leadoff hitter. Such a player might not be available this season, but the answer might come from within.

Jordan Schafer finally appears to be grasping that his future is not in the No. 3 hole but at the top of the order. The Braves believe that the sooner he completes the adjustment, the better the player he will be.

- Phillies reliever **Danys Baez**, a hero in the team's 19-inning victory over the Reds, actually got some negative reaction to his performance that night.

Besides pitching five innings — his longest appearance since Aug. 24, 2002 — Baez struck out leading off the bottom of the 16th in his first at-bat since '09 and only his second since '03.

Braves reliever **George Sherrill**, Baez's former teammate with the Orioles, sent him a text message: "Great game. Terrible at-bat."

- Interesting test for the Brewers, who began a seven-game trip to Cincinnati and Florida with a 7-3 loss to the Reds on Monday.

The Brewers — an NL-best 21-7 at home and NL-worst 8-18 on the road — have replaced the **Rockies** as the team with the biggest split personality in the game.

Miller Park played essentially neutral last season but currently ranks second in park factor for runs, behind only **Rangers** Ballpark in Arlington.

Park factor compares the rate of stats at home to the rate of stats on the road, accounting for both clubs in each game.

- Reds right-hander **Homer Bailey** is on the disabled list because of a shoulder sprain. Righty Edinson Volquez is at Triple-A working on his focus. The Reds are next to last in the National League in rotation ERA.

So, how confident is GM Walt Jocketty in his starting pitching?

"For the time being, we're confident," Jockey said. "We'll see how quickly Bailey comes back, how Volquez does in the next week or so at Louisville.

"There is not a lot of pitching to be had. It would be tough to get anyone if we do need someone."

- **Torii Hunter** finally is hot. **Vernon Wells** is getting closer to a rehabilitation assignment. And a third **Angels** veteran, **Bobby Abreu**, might be reviving, as well.

Abreu, 37, is hitting for minimal power, with only two homers in 203 at-bats. His ground-ball percentage would be the highest of his career. However, he leads the team with a .390 on-base percentage and ranks second with 13 doubles.

- Yes, **Francisco Rodriguez's** fastball velocity is down, but there is an explanation: Rodriguez is throwing more two-seam (sinking) fastballs, continuing a transformation that he began last season.

Rodriguez said he first tried the pitch in a game during the Mets' series against the Marlins in late June. He held his hands about a foot apart to demonstrate the break, and estimated that 90 percent of his fastballs now are two-seamers.

- A scout who recently saw **Pirates** closer **Joel Hanrahan** came away stunned.

"He throws 95 percent first-pitch fastballs and 100 percent fastballs anytime he is behind in the count," the scout said. "I don't know anybody who does that. He's not even throwing a slider."

The scout exaggerated somewhat. Hanrahan is throwing "only" 86.5 percent fastballs. But his average velocity is 97.1 mph, according to Fangraphs.com, so why not?

Hanrahan's strikeouts are down but so are his walks. There is a heaviness to his fastball, the scout says, and hitters find it difficult to square up.

- A final note on closers: The struggles of two of the best — the **Royals' Joakim Soria**, who was taken out of the ninth inning after his latest meltdown Sunday, and the **Rangers' Neftali Feliz**, who has been inconsistent since coming off the DL — points again to the volatility of the role.

Feliz's problems, along with the success of converted reliever **Alexi Ogando**, practically ensure that the Rangers will make Feliz a starter next season. The free-agent market will be deep in closers, and the Rangers ultimately would prefer to get 200 innings from Feliz than 70.



06/01/11 12:36 AM ET

Troubled Mets turn thoughts to Kid

Carter's health issues compound an already difficult period

By Marty Noble / MLB.com

NEW YORK -- Chances are, no other portion of the Mets' already difficult season will wear on the franchise and the players as much as the one that began 11 days ago with the announcement of the cancer challenging Gary Carter. In the interim, late leads routinely have morphed into troubling losses, R.A. Dickey has gone down, Ike Davis and David Wright have stayed down, the club owner has stubbed his tongue and a greater sense of his family's financial desperation has come to the fore. Now, the word on Carter is more distressing, and we can't be certain this challenging period is at end because one of the club's icons has been stricken.

None of the above is to suggest losses and cancer are comparable or that the foot troubles of Dickey are, in any way, akin to all the difficulties the Wilpons endure these days. But misfortune, fiscal and physical, has visited the Mets with such regularity for so long now that down strongly resembles up. They appear to be operating in disfavor more than ever so far this year. And that says a lot.

Now Carter, once a symbol of the Mets' strength and a smile personified, has been attacked by brain cancer. Some of us feel we're within our rights to scold fate: *All right. That's enough now.* Of course, Carter's situation is more compelling and serious than anything that has occurred since the end of the club's charmed life period -- July 31, 2006, when Duaner Sanchez's career and a taxi collided in Miami.

But the seriousness of Carter's disease doesn't eliminate the ripples caused by all that has gone wrong otherwise -- El Duque's calf strain, the deterioration of Pedro's body, Ryan Church's concussion, Jose Valentin's injury, Angel Pagan's many afflictions, John Maine's shoulder, Moises Alou's multiple maladies, Jon Niese's leg, Carlos Beltran's knee, Billy Wagner's elbow, Reyes' hammy, Reyes' blood count, Reyes' oblique, Carlos Delgado's hip, David Wright's concussion, Jason Bay's concussion, all that has beset Johan, everything with Ollie Perez, two final-day shortfalls and all that has happened this year.

Carter's cancer makes all the rest seem worse.

Every team has its troubled periods, even the best ones -- the 1975 Reds, '78 Yankees, '86 Mets, '98 Yankees, 2007 Red Sox and '08 Phillies had them. But the current Mets and the '09 team have had a certain flypaper quality. Misfortune lands on the Mets, and it sticks.

Carter played for neither of these Mets teams. He hasn't been a Mets player since 1989, and had a falling out with the club when he made himself available for Willie Randolph's position while Randolph still filled it. That part is pushed aside now that Carter is facing a dreaded disease. He is a Met again, and not only because most vestiges of the Expos, his other primary employers, have vanished.

As Carter's Mets celebrity has been rightfully renewed, his medical situation has made darker the cloud that hangs over Citi Field.

It occurs to me -- and this is not to be flip or to be considered an attempt to be clever -- that the letter "C" has been central to his professional life: catcher, co-captain, Cooperstown, curtain calls. The nickname that bothers him, "Camera Carter," repeats the consonant. And he is a man who cares, with an upper case "C." But now this: his opponent's name begins with the same letter.

I can't pretend to grasp all that is swirling around the Wilpons or even a smidgeon of what they're experiencing. But I do know the passion Fred Wilpon has for the franchise and the good he has done for people. And his troubles now make for a level of sadness that is deeper and different from what his snake-bitten -- his words -- club has known during most of his 31 years as owner and part owner.

If the team could perform at a higher level, some joy might find its way into the Wilpons' world. But though Terry Collins is doing a masterful job with a diminished roster in quicksand circumstances, the team is much closer to last place than to first. Murphy's Law is being imposed at every turn by insensitive forces that have no regard for fairness.

It's been said here before that baseballs take bounces that are far more fickle than any their pointed cousins, footballs, take. In the case of the New York Mets, it seems that every potential bloop double they hit lands inches into foul territory. Some may prefer to identify it as *unfair* territory. And I won't quarrel with that.

Seeing-eye hits occur only when the Mets are in the field. And the "could-go-either-way" calls seldom seem to be in the Mets' best interests.

So much goes wrong for the Mets, and not only injuries. But by themselves, injuries have been guilty of piling on. For now, Collins' injury-absentee list includes Wright, Davis, Santana and Chris Young. And Jose Reyes is at home in the Dominican, mourning his grandmother. Last week, he was making his presence known, but Pagan was convalescing, Dickey was limping and the bullpen, tired and hurtling, was all about Russian Roulette Relief. Through it all, a proud and determined Bay is fighting -- and losing -- the good fight against the dimensions of his home ballpark and the forces that capriciously attack accomplished hitters from Boston to San Diego and Miami to Seattle.

These are difficult times in Flushing -- unfair territory indeed. The Mets could use a Gary Carter, even one with distressed knees. And Kid could use a curtain call now, a salute and show of support.

Marty Noble is a reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

MLB.com

Surgery Not Option For Carter's Tumors

By RICHARD SANDOMIR

Gary Carter was diagnosed on Tuesday as having glioblastoma, an aggressive, fast-moving brain cancer that will be treated with radiation and chemotherapy, but not with surgery, according to a statement from the Preston Robert Tisch Brain Cancer Center at Duke University Medical Center, where biopsies of the cancer were tested.

Carter's doctors, Henry S. Friedman and Allan Friedman, the co-deputy directors of the Tisch Center, said in a statement that surgery is "not a good option given the location of the tumor." They said that Carter would return home to Florida "to begin the next phase of his treatment" and that his age, 57, and "strong physical condition and fighting spirit will be to his advantage as the treatment commences."

Carter, a Hall of Fame catcher who played primarily for the Mets and the Montreal Expos, announced on May 21 that four small tumors had been found on his brain. According to an online journal kept by his daughter, Kimmy Carter Bloemers, and excerpted on Tuesday by ESPN.com, Carter started feeling confused by his daily tasks on May 20, "forgetting things, repeating questions and tired all the time."

In an entry to the diary made last Saturday, his daughter wrote that her father's cancer resembled "a snake of tumors that are connected across the back of the brain." She said that Dr. Henry Friedman, who is treating her father, told her family that he was "99 percent certain" it was glioblastoma.

Glioblastoma is the same cancer that has struck other baseball players and managers, including Bobby Murcer, Tug McGraw, Dick Howser, Dan Quisenberry and Johnny Oates.

Friedman, who was not authorized by the family to discuss Carter's case, spoke by telephone about glioblastoma in general. "Glioblastoma is the most malignant of the primary tumors we see in adults," he said, "and anywhere from 12,000 to 18,000 cases are diagnosed each year, depending on who you read." He said the average survival rate for patients after surgery, radiation and chemotherapy is 14½ months.

"It is a tumor that generally everyone, not us, believes is a terminal illness," he said. He added: "Bottom line, there are some programs like ours that are seeing long-term survival in an ever-increasing, albeit small, minority of patients."

He said that some patients have survived as long as 15 years.

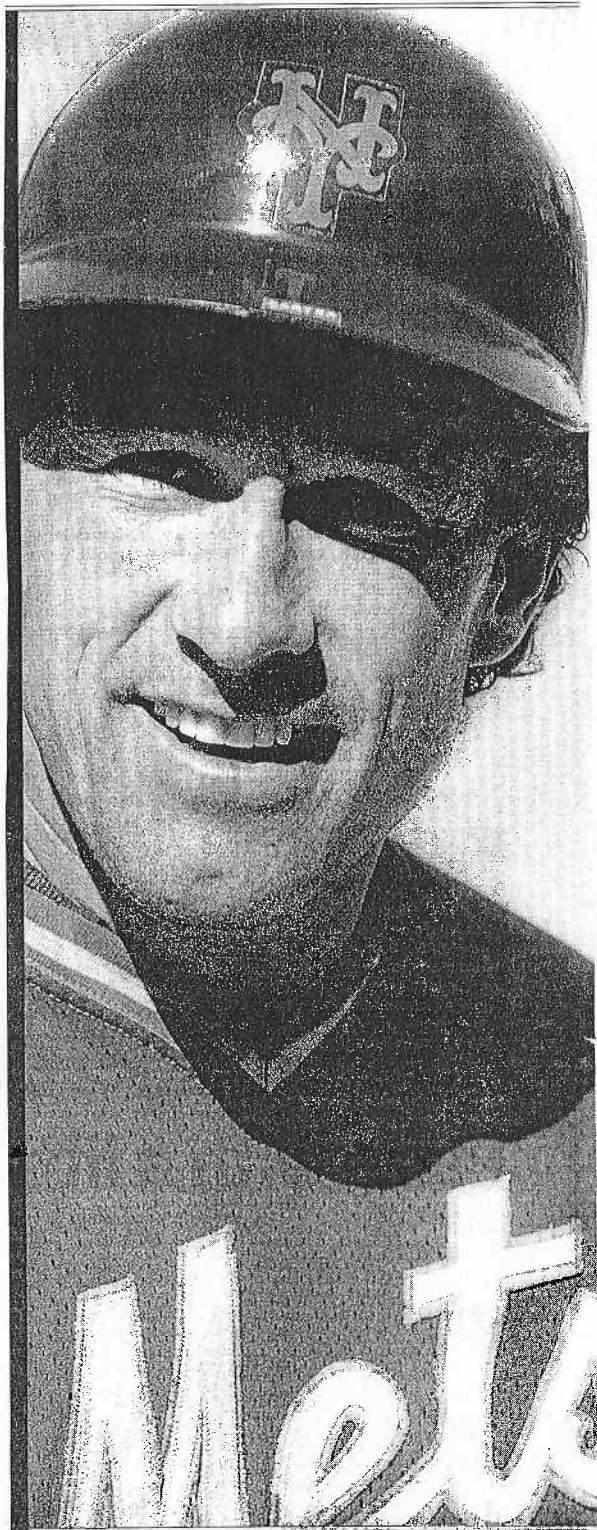
"Is it something we're doing or something unique to the patients' tumors that lend themselves to be more sensitive to the therapies?" he said. "The answer is we don't know."

Murcer, a former Yankees player and announcer, was found to have the disease in late 2006 and had surgery at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. He was then treated with chemotherapy and radiation.

Surgery cannot totally remove glioblastoma because it advances too far along the brain's pathways. Murcer was also in a clinical trial of a vaccine designed to kill new cancer cells and extend life spans. He died in July 2008.

NY Times

6/1/11



'Pray with our family'

Carter's cancer inoperable as his family asks fans to keep up outpouring of support

NOW ONLINE
Check for updates on Gary Carter's condition and see photos of his career.
newsday.com

BY KIMBERLEY A. MARTIN
kimberley.martin@newsday.com

Gary Carter now is praying for a miracle.

The Mets great has Stage 4 brain cancer and his tumors are inoperable, according to a statement released last night by Duke University Medical Center.

Biopsies performed on Carter's brain conclusively show he has a glioblastoma and surgery is not an option, given the location of the tumor.

Grade 4 tumors are the most severe and tend to grow rapidly and spread faster than tumors with a lower grade.

According to a joint statement released by Drs. Allan H. Friedman and Henry S. Friedman of The Preston Robert Tisch Brain Tumor Center at Duke, Carter will begin an aggressive treatment plan that includes chemotherapy and radiation.

"Mr. Carter will be returning home to Florida to begin the next phase of his treatment, but we will continue to work closely with his medical team," the statement read. "Mr. Carter's youth, strong physical condition and fighting spirit will be to his advantage as his treatment commences. The outpouring of support for Mr. Carter has been incredible and we trust that his many friends and fans will join us in continuing to pray for him and his family."

Carter, 57, in his own words, detailed the start of his emo-

tional journey on the family's private website, saying: "My story began last Thursday, May 20th when I wasn't feeling myself and a little confused with daily endeavors. I was forgetting things, repeating questions and tired all the time. I went to the doctor on Friday, May 21st for a checkup of something completely unrelated to my situation now."

"After conversation, the doctor ordered an MRI to see why I was feeling 'out of it.' The MRI showed on Friday that four small tumors were found on my brain. They are located on the back, left side of my head. We were shocked of this news but took immediate action and called Duke medical center for guidance."

Though saddened by the news, Carter's family expressed its appreciation and gratitude for the outpouring of support.

"Gary is getting the best care possible and is blessed with an incredible support network including family, friends and loyal fans," the Carter family said in the statement. "Gary was always a fierce competitor on the baseball field and that same tenacity will help him not only fight but win this battle, so please join Team Carter and continue to pray with our family."

Affectionately nicknamed "The Kid," Carter was inducted into Cooperstown in 2003. He was an 11-time All-Star during his 19-year career with the Montreal Expos, Mets, San Francisco Giants and Los Angeles Dodgers.

GETTY IMAGES

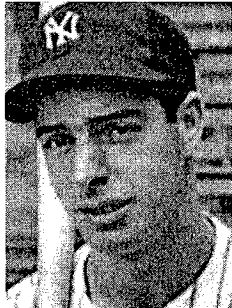
Newsday
6/1/11

THE STREAK & THE CHASE

THE DiMAGGIO WATCH

Following Joe DiMaggio's 56-game hitting streak in 1941.

17, 18 - June 1, 1941



DiMaggio extends his streak to 18 in the second day of consecutive doubleheaders.

Yankees 2, Indians 0

First Game					Second Game														
Yankees		Cleveland			Yankees		Cleveland												
ab	r	h	bi	ab	r	h	bi	ab	r	h	bi								
Sturm 1b	4	0	2	0	Boudreau ss	4	0	1	0	Sturm 1b	4	1	1	2	Boudreau ss	4	0	0	0
Rofe 3b	4	0	0	0	Weatherly cf	4	0	2	0	Rofe 3b	4	1	1	0	Weatherly cf	4	0	1	0
Henrich rf	3	0	1	0	Walker lf	4	0	2	0	Selkirk lf	4	1	1	2	Keltner 3b	4	2	3	1
DiMaggio cf	4	1	1	0	Trosky 1b	4	0	0	0	DiMaggio cf	4	0	1	0	Heath rf	4	1	1	1
Rosar c	3	0	1	1	Heath rf	3	0	1	0	Henrich rf	3	1	0	0	Walker lf	4	0	0	1
Gordon 2b	3	0	0	0	Keltner 3b	3	0	1	0	Rosar c	4	0	0	0	Trosky 1b	3	0	0	0
Keller lf	3	1	1	0	Mack 2b	3	0	1	0	Gordon 2b	4	0	2	1	Mack 2b	4	0	0	0
Selkirk lf	3	0	0	0	Hemsley c	2	0	1	0	Crossetti ss	4	1	1	0	Hemsley c	3	0	1	0
Crossetti ss	3	0	1	1	Rosenthal ph	1	0	0	0	Gomez p	2	0	0	0	Harder p	2	0	0	0
Ruffing p	4	0	0	0	Susce c	0	0	0	0	Breuer p	0	0	0	0	Bell ph	1	0	0	0
					Milnar p	2	0	0	0					Brown p	0	0	0	0	
					Campbell ph	1	0	0	0										
					Heving p	0	0	0	0										
Totals	31	2	7	2	Totals	31	0	8	0	Totals	33	5	7	5	Totals	33	3	6	3

Yankees 011 000 000 - 2 7 0
Cleveland 000 000 000 - 0 8 0

LOB - Yankees 7, Cleveland 4. 2B - Rosar, SB - Keller. CS - Boudreau. DP - Yankees 3, Cleveland 1.

Yankees IP H R ER BB SO
Ruffing W, 5-3 9 8 0 0 0 1
Cleveland IP H R ER BB SO
Milnar L, 6-5 8 7 2 2 5 3
Heving 1 0 0 0 0 1
WP - Milnar. T - 1:57.

Yankees 5, Indians 3

First Game					Second Game														
Yankees		Cleveland			Yankees		Cleveland												
ab	r	h	bi	ab	r	h	bi	ab	r	h	bi								
Sturm 1b	4	1	1	2	Boudreau ss	4	0	0	0	Sturm 1b	4	1	1	2	Boudreau ss	4	0	0	0
Rofe 3b	4	0	0	0	Weatherly cf	4	0	2	0	Rofe 3b	4	1	1	0	Weatherly cf	4	0	1	0
Henrich rf	3	0	1	0	Walker lf	4	0	2	0	Selkirk lf	4	1	1	2	Keltner 3b	4	2	3	1
DiMaggio cf	4	1	1	0	Trosky 1b	4	0	0	0	DiMaggio cf	4	0	1	0	Heath rf	4	1	1	1
Rosar c	3	0	1	1	Heath rf	3	0	1	0	Henrich rf	3	1	0	0	Walker lf	4	0	0	1
Gordon 2b	3	0	0	0	Keltner 3b	3	0	1	0	Rosar c	4	0	0	0	Trosky 1b	3	0	0	0
Keller lf	3	1	1	0	Mack 2b	3	0	1	0	Gordon 2b	4	0	2	1	Mack 2b	4	0	0	0
Selkirk lf	3	0	0	0	Hemsley c	2	0	1	0	Crossetti ss	4	1	1	0	Hemsley c	3	0	1	0
Crossetti ss	3	0	1	1	Rosenthal ph	1	0	0	0	Gomez p	2	0	0	0	Harder p	2	0	0	0
Ruffing p	4	0	0	0	Susce c	0	0	0	0	Breuer p	0	0	0	0	Bell ph	1	0	0	0
					Milnar p	2	0	0	0					Brown p	0	0	0	0	
					Campbell ph	1	0	0	0										
					Heving p	0	0	0	0										
Totals	33	5	7	5	Totals	33	3	6	3	Totals	33	5	7	5	Totals	33	3	6	3

Yankees 000 010 040 - 5 7 1
Cleveland 100 000 002 - 3 6 0

E - Gordon. LOB - Yankees 3, Cleveland 4. 2B - Gordon 2, Keltner 3B - Heath, HR - Sturm (1), Selkirk (4), Keltner (7). SH - Gomez. DP - Yankees 1.

Yankees IP H R ER BB SO
Gomez W, 4-3 8 6 3 3 0 5
Breuer S, 2 1 0 0 0 1
Cleveland IP H R ER BB SO
Harder L, 4-2 8 7 5 5 1 2
Brown 1 0 0 0 0 1
WP - Gomez. T - 1:53. A - 52,081.

HOME RUN DERBY

The 1961 race between Roger Maris & Mickey Mantle to break Babe Ruth's record of 60 home runs.

MARIS 12 MANTLE 14



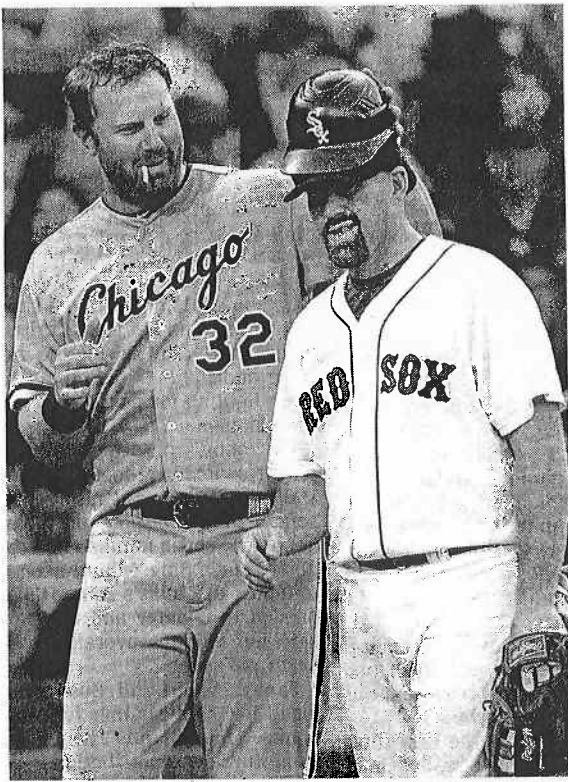
YANKEES' RECORD: 23-18

Mantle doubled twice and scored a run, and Maris went hitless, a rare respite as the home run chase was heating up.

JUNE 1, 1961

Red Sox 7, Yankees 5								
Yankees		Boston						
ab	r	h	bi	ab	r	h	bi	
Boyer 3b	5	0	0	Schilling 2b	4	1	1	0
Kubek ss	5	0	3	Geiger cf	4	2	2	0
Maris rf	5	0	0	Yastrzemski lf	5	1	1	1
Mantle cf	5	1	2	Wertz 1b	2	1	2	3
Berra lf	5	1	2	Runnels 1b	1	0	0	0
Skowron 1b	5	2	3	Jensen rf	4	1	1	1
Blanchard c	2	1	2	Malzone 3b	3	1	1	1
Richardson 2b	4	0	3	Pagliaroni c	3	0	0	0
Turley p	0	0	0	Euddin ss	2	0	0	0
Ditmar p	0	0	0	Monbouquette p	3	0	2	1
Cery ph	0	0	0	Wills p	0	0	0	0
McDevitt p	0	0	0	Stallard p	0	0	0	0
Lopez ph	1	0	0					
Clevenger p	0	0	0					
Howard ph	0	0	0					
Totals	40	5	14	5	Totals	31	7	10
Yankees	010	000	022	-	5			
Boston	104	101	00x	-	7			
LOB - Boston 10, Yankees 13. 2B - Richardson, Blanchard 2, Kubek, Mantle, Berra, Malzone. 3B - Wertz. HR - Skowron 2 (10), Yastrzemski (4). SF - Wertz 2, Blanchard. SH - Monbouquette. GDP - Skowron. DP - Boston 1, E - Wertz, Malzone.								

Yankees IP H R ER BB SO
Turley L 3-3 2 5 4 4 3 3
Ditmar 3 3 2 2 2 2
McDevitt 2 2 1 1 2 3
Clevenger 1 0 0 0 0 0
Boston IP H R ER BB SO
Monbouquette, W 4-5 .77% 11 3 3 4 6
Wills 2 2 2 0 0 0
Stallard, S 1 0 0 0 0 0
Turley faced three batters in the 3rd inning. WP - Ditmar, McDevitt, Wills 2. T - 3:08. A - 5,257.



ELISE AMENDOLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS

After reaching third base, Adam Dunn of the Chicago White Sox tried his helmet out on Boston's Kevin Youkilis. The White Sox beat the Red Sox, 10-7.

ROUNDUP

Longoria's Homer In the Eighth Inning Bails Out the Rays

By The Associated Press

Evan Longoria hit a go-ahead two-run homer in the eighth inning Tuesday night, and the host Tampa Bay Rays beat the Texas Rangers, 5-4.

With the Rays trailing by a run, Johnny Damon reached on an opposite-field bloop single to left that deflected off the glove of shortstop Elvis Andrus. Longoria followed with a two-out drive off Arthur Rhodes (3-3).

Rangers Manager Ron Washington said he should have had his closer, Neftali Feliz, ready to go in the eighth in case the Rays threatened.

"I thought about it but didn't act on it," Washington said. "I'll take the blame for it all."

Longoria was back hitting fourth after three games as the leadoff batter, a move intended to help him work out of an offensive funk.

Sean Rodriguez and Matt Joyce also homered for the Rays.

WHITE SOX 10, RED SOX 7 Alexei Ramirez tied his career high with four hits in Chicago's sixth straight win at Fenway Park. Alfredo Aceves (2-1) lost for the first time in more than two years, allowing eight runs, six earned, in five innings. He had won 12 straight decisions.

Aceves's spot in the Boston rotation looked all the more precarious when John Lackey, recovering from an elbow strain, pitched into the sixth inning in a solid rehab start for Class AAA Pawtucket.

INDIANS 6, BLUE JAYS 3 Grady Sizemore hit two run-scoring doubles as Cleveland ended host Toronto's four-game winning streak. Sizemore had been 0 for 12 in three games since coming off the disabled list.

Mitch Talbot (2-1), who missed more than three weeks with a sore elbow, allowed one run in six and two-thirds innings for his first victory since April 11.

TIGERS 8, TWINS 7 Brennan Boesch broke an eighth-inning tie with a sacrifice fly for host Detroit. Minnesota's Justin Morneau hit two home runs, including a two-run shot in the seventh that gave the Twins a 7-6 lead.

ROYALS 7, ANGELS 3 The rookie Eric Hosmer drove in two runs in a five-run third for host Kansas City, which won for only the fourth time in 17 games.

NATIONALS 10, PHILLIES 2 Danny Espinosa hit two homers and drove in four runs for host Washington. Jason Marquis (6-2) gave up two runs in six and a third innings, beating Philadelphia for the first time since he joined the Nationals for the 2010 season. In his previous six starts against the Phillies, Marquis was 0-5 with a 9.49 earned run average.

Cliff Lee (4-5) allowed six runs in five and a third innings.

BREWERS 7, REDS 2 Corey Hart, still recovering from a stomach illness, homered and drove in four runs for Milwaukee, which had lost 12 of its last 13 games at Cincinnati's Great American Ball Park. The Brewers are 9-18 on the road. Zack Greinke (4-1) got his fourth straight win, giving up two runs in six innings.

PADRES 5, BRAVES 4 Ryan Ludwick had a run-scoring single in a three-run seventh, sending visiting San Diego to its fourth straight victory. Ludwick went 4 for 5 and has raised his batting average 77 points to .258 since May 10.

CARDINALS 4, GIANTS 3 Skip Schumaker's infield hit drove in the go-ahead run, capping a three-run eighth for host St. Louis.

First baseman Albert Pujols, who hit a run-scoring double in the rally, started at third base for the second time since 2002 to free a spot in the Cardinals lineup for Jon Jay, who had two hits and raised his batting average to .349.

ASTROS 7, CUBS 3 Carlos Marmol of host Chicago blew his third save of the season, allowing six runs to Houston in the ninth inning. Matt Downs's pinch-hit, two-run double tied the game, 3-3, and Michael Bourn singled in the go-ahead run. Marmol had not allowed a run in 13½ innings.

CUBS' SORIANO TO D.L. The Cubs put left fielder Alfonso Soriano on the 15-day disabled list with a left quadriceps strain, sustained Monday as he tried to beat out a ground ball. . . . The Red Sox activated reliever Bobby Jenks, who had been out since May 2 with a right biceps strain.

NY Times
5/1/11

BASEBALL

Dickey Floats Along Until Hitting Obstacle in Eighth Inning

By DAVID WALDSTEIN

For four days, ever since he injured his right foot in Chicago and hobbled out of Wrigley Field in a protective boot, R. A. Dickey insisted that he would be well enough to make his next start. For most of the night Tuesday, Dickey proved himself right.

His injured heel was, in fact, up to the task, and Dickey pitched exceptionally well through most of his eight innings. His foot injury was not his Achilles' heel; instead, it was the vagaries of that mystifying and unpredictable pitch he throws.

Dickey went into the eighth inning protecting a shutout and a one-run lead, having set down 13 batters in a row on another night where the Mets were missing three of their biggest offensive weapons: Jose Reyes (bereavement leave), David Wright (back) and Ike Davis, who learned before the game that he would most likely be out at least one more month with a bone bruise.

But Dickey seemed destined to make a first-inning lead stand up. He had allowed only two hits, and although the leadoff batter in the eighth singled, Dickey set down the next two and needed one more out to get out of the inning, and probably the game, intact.

But the out never came. Dickey gave up three runs and three hits and the Pittsburgh Pirates scored two more in the ninth off Bobby Parnell to beat the Mets, 5-1, in front of 26,198 fans at Citi Field.

Dickey allowed three runs and five hits and struck out 10 in a linescore that does not do justice to his overall excellence. He had a terrific knuckleball all night, but one veered away from him at a key moment, hitting Jose Tabata with two outs and Ronny Cedeno on first base. Such is the capricious nature of his craft.

"It's one of the tough things about the pitch," Dickey said. "Sometimes it can be fairly mercurial."

He then gave up, in succession, a run-scoring single to Josh Harrison that tied the score, a walk to Andrew McCutchen and,

finally, a two-run single to Neil Walker that gave Pittsburgh the lead.

Dickey fumed once he left the mound. He walked into the tunnel, where he took out his frustrations on a defenseless phone, before returning to the dugout to watch the rest of the inning. As well as he had pitched, he had given up a lead late in the game, and for him the most unforgivable part was hitting Tabata.

"When you replay that in your mind and you get so close to giving your team a pick-me-up in a game where it doesn't look like you're going to score a lot of runs," he said, "you get the wind knocked out of you, and it's all right to grieve that."

Although he experienced what he termed "a few little electrocutions now and then" of pain in his heel, he said the training staff had done a remarkable job to get him healthy enough to pitch five days after he left a start with a partly torn plantar fascia.

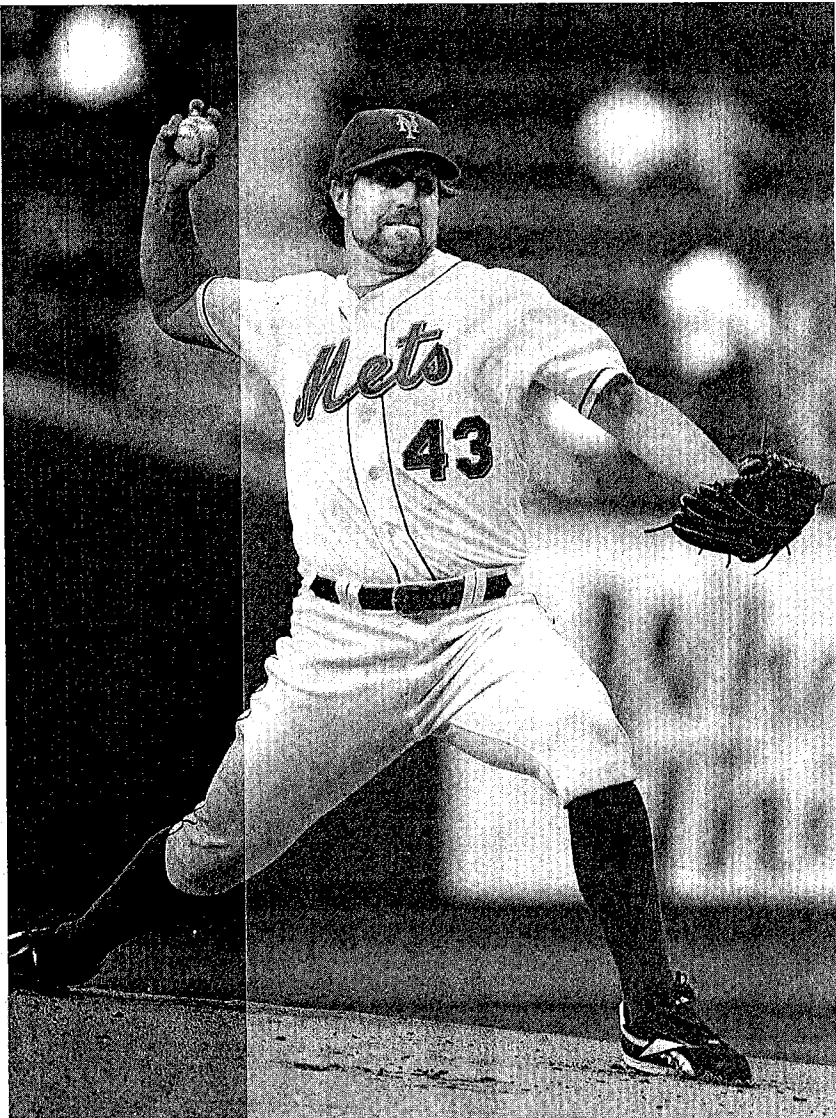
His success in coming back early from an injury was not duplicated by Davis, who was told earlier in the day by a foot specialist to get back into his protective boot. Davis will be in the boot for most of the time over the next three weeks, meaning his return to the team is at least a month away.

He will be permitted to take it off to hit in a cage and play catch, but is expected to wear it while walking around. General Manager Sandy Alderson said Davis could not run or field ground balls during this period, after which he will be re-evaluated.

Davis sprained his ankle and sustained the bone bruise at the base of his tibia on May 9 when he and Wright collided in Denver on an infield pop-up.

"There's been some question, is it really a bone bruise? Is it a stress fracture?" Alderson said. "It hasn't been re-characterized as anything other than a bone bruise, but a bone bruise bleeds into a stress fracture. It's basically the same approach to recovery. So, unfortunately, this is going to be three weeks plus before he gets back."

Davis was hitting .302 with 7 home runs and 25 runs batted in, and the Mets have missed his power, and Wright's as well.



KATHY KMONICEK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

R. A. Dickey struck out 10 Pirates and gave up three runs over seven and two-thirds innings.

With no home run Tuesday, they have failed to hit one in 10 games, their longest drought since 1979. They also failed to hit a home run for their 10th straight game at Citi Field.

INSIDE PITCH

The Mets are hoping that shortstop **JOSE REYES**, who was placed on the bereavement list and went home to the Dominican Republic after the death of his

grandmother, will be back in time to play Thursday against the Pirates. ... **DAVID WRIGHT** is scheduled to have his back examined Thursday, after which the Mets hope to have a better sense of when he can return.

Wilpon and Pelfrey Come Away Smiling After a Pregame Meeting

By DAVID WALDSTEIN

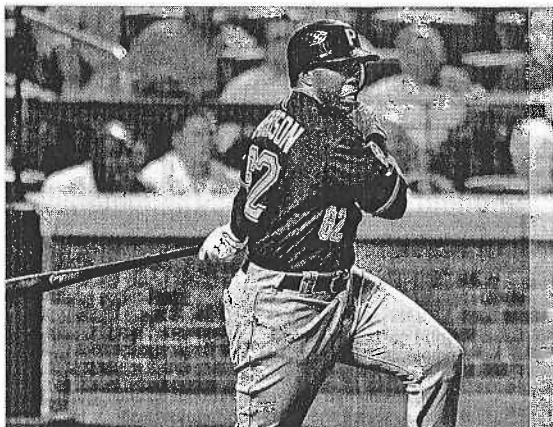
With a big smile and a warm handshake, Fred Wilpon, the Mets' principal owner, told starting pitcher Mike Pelfrey on Tuesday that he loved Pelfrey's recent playful dig at him. Somehow, through all his troubles last week, Wilpon was able to smile and laugh.

On May 23, the day word broke that Wilpon had been critical of his team as a whole and some of his players specifically in comments reported by The New Yorker, Pelfrey joked that Wilpon would benefit from the media training that the team mandates its players go through each spring training.

Wilpon, who declined to speak when approached by reporters, chatted with Pelfrey and Jason Istringhausen for about five minutes during batting practice at Citi Field before the Mets played the Pittsburgh Pirates.

"He said, 'I loved your comment,'" Pelfrey said. "He told me, 'Next year in spring training, I am going to sit down right next to you.' He was great about it."

Wilpon also spoke briefly with



KATHY KMONICEK/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Josh Harrison singled against R. A. Dickey to tie the game, 1-1, in the Pirates' three-run eighth. Dickey took his sixth loss.

Carlos Beltran, to whom he had already apologized on a conference call with Jose Reyes, another target of the owner's comments in The New Yorker.

Pelfrey said he was happy that Wilpon took his comments about media training in good fun, the

way they were intended.

"I love Fred Wilpon," Pelfrey said. "He's like a grandfather to us, and I know how much he loves this team. He's always been supportive and encouraging. But everyone makes mistakes. Like he told me, 'Hey, I messed up.'"

SURVEY-HAPPY A common practice of sporting publications is undertaking surveys that rate players, hoping to provoke a response. The latest version appears in this week's Sports Illustrated, which asked 185 major leaguers to vote in the category of Most Overrated Player.

Such surveys inevitably tend to focus on good players from big-market teams, and perhaps not surprisingly the Yankees dominated the list, filling the top three: Alex Rodriguez, Joda Chamberlain and Derek Jeter.

Outfielder Jayson Werth of the Washington Nationals and Boston Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon, receiving 4 percent of the vote each, rounded out the top five.

"So the Yankees are popular? That's good," said Rodriguez, who drew 18 percent of the vote a year after finishing second, adding, "I've been on this list many, many times and I'm sure I'll be there again next summer."

Chamberlain followed Rodriguez with 12 percent, which elicited quite a reaction at the visitors clubhouse in Oakland, where the Yankees were to play the Ath-

letics. A. J. Burnett, upon learning that Chamberlain had finished second, gave him a thumbs-up and yelled across the room: "Sweet."

Throughout an interview before the game, Chamberlain laughed about the distinction, saying he was disappointed that he lost his grip on the top slot, which he held last year.

"I don't care," Chamberlain said. "My bills are still paid, and I still have a job. You can call me whatever you want. Just don't call me late for dinner."

As amused as Chamberlain and Rodriguez seemed, Jeter found nothing funny about the survey, at first declining to comment. Told of their reaction, Jeter turned in his chair and said: "Amusement? I never understood those anonymous polls."

Jeter said he was not asked to fill one out and would have declined if he had been.

Rodriguez agreed, but he sounded disappointed about missing out on participating in one survey, at least.

"Underrated?" Rodriguez said. "I would certainly do that."

BEN SHPIGEL

NY Times

6/1/11

Inside the major leagues

McCourt makes payroll: Los Angeles Dodgers owner **Frank McCourt** has paid his major league bills — for now.

Despite baseball officials who believed he didn't have enough money to cover the team's end-of-the-month payroll, the embattled owner was able to cover Dodgers-related expenses Tuesday, according to the Associated Press.

If McCourt hadn't been able to meet payroll — a question that lingers for the remainder of the season — Major League Baseball would have taken control and paid the team's bills.

Based on an opening-day payroll of \$103.8 million, the Dodgers' payroll for its major league roster in the second half of May was about \$8.25 million. The figure includes 16 days' salary but not any signing bonus payments that happen to fall due.

ESPN first reported that McCourt was able to make the payroll.

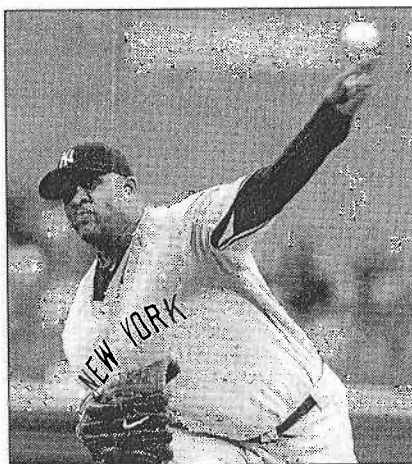
The *Los Angeles Times* reported last week that McCourt needed roughly \$9.8 million to meet Tuesday's payroll. His financial woes will increase in June because the Dodgers owe **Manny Ramirez** more than \$6 million in deferred compensation, the newspaper said.

McCourt took a \$30 million loan from Fox, the Dodgers' television partner, before Major League Baseball Commissioner **Bud Selig's** decision to appoint a monitor, former Texas Rangers President **Tom Schieffler**, to oversee the team's daily operations and to examine its records.

The ability to make payroll gives McCourt more time to reach a settlement with his ex-wife and former team CEO **Jamie McCourt**. The McCourts are embroiled in a nasty divorce, and she recently asked Superior Court Judge **Scott Gordon** to order the sale of the team.

Gordon has ruled that a postnuptial marital agreement signed by the former couple, which gave Frank McCourt sole ownership of the Dodgers, was invalid and cleared the way for Jamie McCourt to seek half the team under California's community property law. Settlement talks are set to resume June 8.

McCourt has urged Selig to approve a 17-year contract with Fox that could be worth



By Carlos Osorio, AP

Giving back: CC Sabathia helped pay to rebuild his former Little League's field.

more than \$3 billion, which would include a front-loaded payment of about \$300 million.

Sabathia's kids: New York Yankees ace **CC Sabathia**, who has underwritten the rebuilding of the North Vallejo (Calif.) Little League's Thurmon Field, will stay behind when his teammates leave the Bay Area to throw out the ceremonial first pitch today at the league's Spring Classic.

"I think it's great to see so many kids playing now, but I feel like we still have a long way to go. This is a great start, but my goal is to see more kids playing. The progress at North Vallejo Little League is amazing how it has turned around so quickly."

There are about 200 boys and girls now playing in the league, compared with 63 in 2009 before Sabathia renovated the field through his foundation. Sabathia also has donated uniforms and baseball equipment, along with a snack bar.

"This game represents the achievement of another major milestone in the 43-year history of North Vallejo Little League and our PitCCh In Foundation," said Sabathia, who grew up playing in the Little League.

Contributing: Bob Nightengale, wire reports

USA TODAY

6/1/11

Deals

Baseball

► American League

Boston Red Sox: Activated P Bobby Jenks from the 15-day disabled list. Optioned P Michael Bowden to Pawtucket (International/AAA).

► National League

Chicago Cubs: Placed OF Alfonso Soriano on the 15-day disabled list. Purchased the contract of OF Tyler Colvin from Iowa (Pacific Coast/AAA).

Cincinnati Reds: Purchased the contract of P Chad Reineke from Louisville (International/AAA). Optioned P Tom Cochran to Louisville.

Philadelphia Phillies: Assigned OF Shane Victorino to Reading (Eastern/AA) for a rehab assignment.

USA TODAY
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