

Oakland A's pitching staff hit by hard times, can't protect early lead against Boston Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BOSTON -- So often, A's pitchers find themselves trying to will their team to victory behind minimal offense.

The roles were reversed Friday night, with Oakland's hitters trying to keep pace as things went awry on the mound.

That's not the A's template for success, as an 8-6 loss to the Boston Red Sox illustrated.

Starting pitcher Josh Outman squandered a four-run, first-inning lead and didn't make it out of the third.

It was reliever Brian Fuentes who allowed the game-winning hit to Carl Crawford in the seventh. It was Joey Devine who took the loss, leaving a bases-loaded mess for Fuentes to try to clean up.

But it was Outman who accepted the blame for why the A's began a 10-game trip on a sour note.

"In my book, it's my loss," Outman said. "Joey shouldn't have to take that one. When the team puts four runs up, there's no excuse to give it back like I did."

The A's dropped their fourth straight and fell a season-high five games behind the first-place Texas Rangers.

They can ill afford to keep giving ground in the American League West, and to avoid that, they need their rotation to round back into form. The starters have accumulated a 6.81 ERA over the past seven games.

"The last flip of the rotation hasn't been as consistent or well-pitched as the entire season," A's manager Bob Geren said. "We start over with Trevor (Cahill), and I expect better results because they have been good all year."

The A's knocked around Red Sox right-hander Clay Buchholz for four runs and five hits in the first.

That rally included a two-out, run-scoring single from Daric Barton. After sitting for two games, Barton was back in the lineup hitting sixth, the first time all season he's batted anywhere except second.

He responded with two RBI singles, though he also hit into an inning-ending double play in the seventh with runners on the corners.

"I put some OK swings on some pitches to hit," Barton said. "I felt relaxed, kind of gave it a 'whatever' attitude."

Given a 4-0 cushion, Outman was hit hard.

The Red Sox scored twice in the first, once in the second (aided by third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff's ninth error of the season) and twice in the third to take a 5-4 lead.

Outman gave up five hits with one walk and was replaced by Guillermo Moscoso after 2²/₃ innings.

"You can't have success falling behind like I was," Outman said. "I wasn't getting my fastball over, I wasn't getting my change-up over, and I wasn't getting my slider over."

Moscoso, who is being skipped in the rotation this weekend because the A's were off Thursday, threw 2¹/₃ scoreless innings. He threw 40 pitches, and his next turn in the rotation is slated for Tuesday at Baltimore. He would be on three days' rest.

Devine was called upon in the seventh to protect a 6-5 lead.

He allowed Adrian Gonzalez's one-out double, hit Kevin Youkilis with a pitch and walked David Ortiz to load the bases. He retired Jed Lowrie on a shallow fly before giving way to Fuentes.

Fuentes went inside with a 3-2 fastball that left-handed-hitting Crawford fisted into center field for a two-run, go-ahead single.

Devine was charged with the runs, which snapped his streak of 33 innings without an earned run dating to 2008. He missed the 2009 and 2010 seasons because of elbow surgery.

His streak is tied with Mike Norris for fifth-longest in Oakland history.

Oakland A's update: Pitcher Trevor Cahill looks to slow things down to put end to struggles

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BOSTON -- Trevor Cahill has a simple goal Saturday against the Boston Red Sox.

Don't be in a rush.

The A's right-hander says his tempo on the mound has been out of whack, one reason for his recent struggles.

"I've just tried slowing myself down," Cahill said. "I think, if anything, I was rushing. Everything was behind, and my arm slot was different. The key is relaxing."

After winning his first six decisions, Cahill hasn't notched a victory over his past four starts. He hasn't been terrible -- he took a no-decision against the Giants on May 20 despite allowing just one hit over six innings.

But he's lost his comfort zone, and hitter-friendly Fenway Park can be a tough place to get it back.

Cahill's only two starts there came when he was a rookie in 2009. He allowed a combined 10 runs over 101/3 innings.

Boston's current hitters are every bit as dangerous.

"They've got their speed guys, they've got the boppers, and they hit for average," Cahill said.

Cahill would have pitched Sunday if the A's had stayed with their regular rotation. The team was off Thursday, so manager Bob Geren elected to skip Guillermo Moscoso's turn Saturday, moving Cahill and Brett Anderson up one day.

Moscoso pitched in long relief Friday and still is slated to start Tuesday in Baltimore on three days' rest.

Reliever Grant Balfour was placed on the paternity list Friday to be with his wife, Angie, who gave birth to the couple's first child, daughter Raegan, on Thursday night.

The A's recalled Fautino De Los Santos from Triple-A Sacramento to take his roster spot. Balfour can stay on the paternity list until Monday, but Geren said he was hopeful of getting Balfour back Sunday.

Rich Harden (side muscle strain) threw a 30-pitch bullpen session. He is still throwing fastballs only but said he's likely to mix in breaking stuff over a couple of more mound sessions before facing hitters.

Infielder Adam Rosales, sidelined all season by a fractured right foot, was scheduled to play seven innings at second base Friday night for Sacramento, and his return appears close. "Once he gets built up to nine innings, obviously that's a key number we're looking at," Geren said.

Chin Music: Daric Barton returns — hitting sixth

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/3/2011 3:50pm

Checking in from Fenway Park, where the A's begin a 10-game road trip with three against the Red Sox. It's not an ideal place to play for a team licking its wounds after being swept by the Yankees. However, the A's are 26-23 against Boston since 2006, the best record vs. the Sox of any team in the American League. Most of that success has come at home, as the A's are just 4-12 at Fenway over their past 16 games. But they've come up with some surprise performances in this park. Josh Outman takes the ball in the opener, and he's never faced the Red Sox before. Only three hitters in Boston's lineup have faced him -- Adrian Gonzalez, Carl Crawford and Jarrod Saltalamacchia, so we'll see if the element of the unknown works in his favor.

--The lineups:

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

Sox: Ellsbury CF, Pedroia 2B, Gonzalez 1B, Youkilis 3B, Ortiz DH, Lowrie SS, Crawford LF, Cameron RF, Saltalamacchia C; Buchholz RHP.

—After sitting for two games, Daric Barton makes his first return to the lineup hitting sixth. It's his first time hitting anywhere besides the No. 2 spot this season. I'd expect to see him hitting lower for an extended period. David DeJesus is swinging the bat pretty well, and he's a natural for the second spot. It doesn't hurt to get Willingham more at-bats right now either, so it makes sense to try him at No. 3. It's clear from hearing Barton and manager Bob Geren talk that Barton's slump has largely been mental.

"It's the same game, just a different spot in the order," Barton said of the switch. "Maybe it's a chance to have some more guys on base, hopefully take the thought out of everything and just go out and play."

—Hideki Matsui is also back in there. Would it be possible to bring the ex-Yankee back to Fenway and not play him? He's hit .316 with nine homers and 36 RBIs in 51 games here.

—Reliever Grant Balfour went on paternity leave to be with his wife, Angie, who gave birth to the couple's first child, daughter Raegan, late Thursday night. Balfour can be away for as many as three days, but Geren said he's hopeful of having Balfour back by Sunday. Fautino De Los Santos was recalled to take Balfour's roster spot. And who takes the ball in the ninth inning tonight if there's a save on the line? "Andrew Bailey," Geren said without hesitation. Geren says he's ready to return to the closer's role, but stopped short of saying Bailey can handle back-to-back outings. That depends on how many pitches Bailey would throw in the first outing, Geren said.

—Rich Harden threw off the mound for the third time today and said he continues to throw well. No timetable for Harden to throw to hitters yet, as he is still throwing strictly fastballs.

—The A's upcoming starting rotation: Outman tonight, followed by Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson, Gio Gonzalez and Guillermo Moscoso (who is being skipped this weekend) on Tuesday at Baltimore.

—All you Adam Rosales fans can start getting excited. It sounds as if the infielder isn't far away from returning. He's scheduled to play seven innings at second base tonight for Sacramento. "Once he gets built up to nine innings, obviously that's the key number we're looking at," Geren said. Expect Rosales to see time at third base when he returns ... only seems to make sense.

A's bullpen lets Boston rally in see-saw game

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Brian Fuentes is no longer in the closer role - Andrew Bailey officially resumed it Friday - but his job didn't get any easier on Friday night at Fenway Park.

Fuentes, whose string of consecutive losses last month led him to publicly question manager Bob Geren's use of the bullpen, came in with the bases loaded and two outs in the seventh, and Oakland up by a run. With a full count, Fuentes made a good pitch to Red Sox outfielder Carl Crawford, an inside fastball that broke Crawford's bat, but Crawford got enough on it to dink a two-run single to center. Boston went on to win the first game of the series 8-6, sending the A's to their fourth loss in a row. Oakland is four games under .500, matching a season low.

"He was able to get enough wood on it to shoot it to center," Fuentes said. "That's the way it goes. Sometimes you make a really good pitch and that happens, sometimes you make a bad pitch and get a line drive into someone's glove."

Crawford's hit made it 7-6 and ended Joey Devine's string of 33 games and 33 innings without allowing an earned run. Earlier in the inning, Devine had allowed a double by Adrian Gonzalez, hit Kevin Youkilis and walked David Ortiz. After watching film after the game, Devine said he was trying to be too fine instead of consistently pounding the strike zone early in the count.

"Hopefully, I'll go 33 more after this," Devine said. "That will be my goal. I want to give my team an opportunity to win, and tonight, I feel like I let the team down."

Starter Josh Outman also rushed to take blame after allowing five runs, four earned, in 2 2/3 innings after being handed a 4-0 lead in the first.

"In my book, that's definitely my loss," Outman said. "Joey shouldn't have to take that one. There's no excuse to give it right back as quickly as I did.

"You can't have success falling behind as much as I did. I fell behind with my fastball, changeup and slider, and I don't have much after that."

Oakland recorded five hits in the first off Clay Buchholz, including a two-run single by Mark Ellis. Josh Willingham had three hits overall for the A's, including two doubles, and first baseman Daric Barton, back in the lineup after getting two days off to work on his swing, had a pair of RBI singles.

Instead of batting second, Barton was moved to sixth for the first time this year. Before the game, Barton said he'd felt no pressure hitting second, but sliding down to sixth didn't bother him. After the game, he said of his at-bats, "I felt more comfortable than I have been, for sure. I think I put some OK swings on some good pitches to hit."

Designated hitter Hideki Matsui also was back in the lineup, and while Matsui did not collect a hit, he did drive in the A's first run with a groundout.

A's starter Trevor Cahill fine tunes his delivery

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Trevor Cahill, today's starter, has walked five batters in each of his past two outings, and after both appearances, he mentioned some mechanical issues he might be having.

On Friday, Cahill said he feels as if he is not repeating his delivery with the sort of reliability he did last year. Last season, he said, he felt he could hit the same location over and over without difficulty. "Now I feel like I'm guessing," he said.

More than anything, Cahill said he needs to slow down.

"It's just small stuff," he said. "I'm trying to be too quick. I need to take my time, do everything the same."

Cahill has lost his past three decisions, and his last win was May 9, but his ERA still stands at 2.31, putting him among the league leaders, as do his six wins.

He is 1-2 with a 5.19 career ERA against Boston.

Injury updates: Rich Harden, out all season with a muscle strain under his right arm, threw 30 pitches, all fastballs, on Friday. He said he'll probably throw one more side session before facing hitters, something that could happen in Chicago next week.

Infielder **Adam Rosales**, coming back from December foot surgery, played seven innings at second base for Triple-A Sacramento on Friday and at the plate was 0-for-3 with a walk; when he can play nine innings, he's likely to come off the disabled list. It's possible that might happen next week in Rosales' hometown, Chicago.

Briefly: As expected, the A's placed reliever **Grant Balfour** on the paternity list and recalled right-handed reliever **Fautino De Los Santos** from Sacramento. Balfour and his wife, **Angie**, welcomed daughter **Raegan Madison** on Thursday. Geren said Balfour might return to the team as early as Sunday. ... Before the game, Geren said if there was a save situation in the ninth, it would be **Andrew Bailey** on the mound. Bailey, the two-time All-Star closer, has made two appearances since coming off the DL. ... Third baseman **Kevin Kouzmanoff** made his ninth error of the year and first baseman **Daric Barton** his seventh.

Leading off

Reminder: Today's game against the Red Sox at Fenway Park was originally scheduled as a night game, but the Boston Bruins' Stanley Cup Finals game in Vancouver tonight prompted the Red Sox to change their start time so fans would not have to choose.

Drumbeat: Daric Barton returns to the lineup, hitting 6th; Bailey will close for A's

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Fenway Park 6/3/2011, 2:47pm

After two days off to work on his stroke with hitting coach Gerald Perry, Daric Barton is back in the lineup, but he's not in his usual second spot - he's batting sixth for the first time this season.

Barton told me that he is working on staying on the ball, he's trying to regain his comfort level at the plate, and, he said, "I'm back to square one." he A's first baseman, who is batting .206, said he's been so frustrated that, more than anything, he needs to go back to what he did in Little League, "just go out there and play." In other words, stop thinking so much and regain the joy of the game.

Barton said he doesn't believe that hitting second put any pressure on him as he went into a funk and stayed there, but he has no trouble with batting sixth. He's just glad to be back in the lineup, anywhere is fine with him.

Hideki Matsui is also back in after two days off; he was among those who showed up for early hitting today. Here's the lineup behind Josh Outman: Crisp cf, DeJesus rf, Willingham lf, Matsui dh, Suzuki c, Barton 1b, Ellis 2b, Kouzmanoff 3b, Pennington ss

Andrew Bailey said he thought he'd be in there tonight if there's a save situation, and then manager Bob Geren confirmed that, saying that Bailey is the closer tonight. Bailey might not quite be ready to go back-to-back the first two games of this series, especially with a night game tonight followed by a day game tomorrow (reminder: that game was changed to a day game because of the Bruins' Stanley Cup Finals game tomorrow night). But I wouldn't be surprised if he were available tonight, Sunday's day game and then was available for a night game Monday at Baltimore, depending on his pitch counts and the game situations, of course.

Rich Harden said he threw 30 pitches today, all fastballs. He'll start working in the changeup (his best pitch) and his slider in his next few sessions. He believes he might face hitters after one more side session, so possibly when the team is at Chicago next week.

Could the A's have Harden available to start by midseason? I know he hopes so. His health is so tenuous, I'm not sure the A's are counting on it, but when the team signed Harden and Brandon McCarthy the same week during the offseason, the theory was that maybe the team would have one available at some points, the other available the rest of the time. McCarthy is now on the DL with a stress reaction in his right shoulder. Harden has been out all year with a muscle strain under his right arm, but he said he is feeling good now.

Geren said that Adam Rosales' rehab assignment is going "fantastic," and it sounds as if he could be back with the team very soon.

I talked to tomorrow's starter, Trevor Cahill, a bit this afternoon. There was a lot of talk about Cahill's mechanics when he had five walks his past two outings; Cahill thinks he needs to slow down, more than anything.

Devine's scoreless streak snapped in A's loss

After righty loads bases in seventh, Fuentes yields two-run single

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 6/4/2011 12:43 AM ET

BOSTON -- The A's are no strangers to handing away large leads in the confines of Fenway Park, having done it twice last year in back-to-back losses.

On Friday, they appeared geared to buck that very trend following a four-run first inning. But the all too familiar storyline ultimately played out just the same, this time with an unlikely and previously untouchable reliever taking the loss in an 8-6 series-opening defeat to the Red Sox.

Righty Joey Devine, seemingly perfect since his return from a lengthy rehab from Tommy John surgery, entered a 6-5 game in the seventh inning riding a 33-game scoreless streak dating back to May 2008. Those very numbers made him the perfect candidate to keep the Red Sox at bay, but the command that brought him there in the first place was essentially gone this time, as he gave up a one-out double before hitting a batter and walking the next to load the bases.

Devine settled down and recorded out No. 2, at which point manager Bob Geren made a rather sensible move by bringing A's lefty Brian Fuentes in to face the left-handed-hitting Carl Crawford, a meek .103 hitter against southpaws this season.

The outcome seemed predictable, but it was anything but that, as Crawford drew some luck in the form of a broken-bat line-drive single to center field that plated the tying and go-ahead runs and put an end to Devine's remarkable stretch of 33 games without a run -- the fifth-longest such streak in Oakland history.

"I fell behind on him, so I was just trying to get back into a count to get him to swing," Fuentes said. "It was a good fastball, but he was able to just get enough wood on it to get it out there."

"I'm just trying to work him a little bit," Crawford said. "We had bases loaded, so he started out with two balls and I decided I was just going to wait until he threw a strike. And the count ended up getting to 3-2, so I had to swing, and I was able to find a hole."

That very approach left the A's, fresh off a three-game sweep at the hands of the Yankees, staring down their fourth straight loss following a season-high four-game winning streak. And it left Devine, who already looked at tape of the frame, downright disappointed.

"I feel like I let the team down," he said. "They forced me into having to throw some really fine pitches. Everybody, with the exception of the first hitter, got into hitters' counts. When you're 2-1, 3-1, it puts a lot of pressure on the pitcher, and I was trying to be too fine instead of sticking with my normal approach of pounding the strike zone from the very first pitch."

Command struggles were shared by fellow Tommy John surgery survivor Josh Outman, who endured his own trouble at the start of the lengthy affair.

After the A's jumped all over Boston righty Clay Buchholz in the first with five singles and four runs, Outman offered up two Red Sox runs in the first to cut Oakland's lead in half and watched it narrow to one in the second when Mike Cameron reached on Kevin Kouzmanoff's throwing error and eventually scored courtesy of a sacrifice fly to make it 4-3.

Boston then moved ahead, 5-4, in the third, as Outman walked Kevin Youkilis with one out and proceeded to surrender an RBI double to David Ortiz. An ensuing run-scoring single from Jed Lowrie plated Ortiz, and one batter later, Outman was gone in the shortest outing of his career aside from the 1 2/3-inning start in San Diego two years ago when he exited with an elbow injury that ultimately led to the Tommy John surgery.

"I just wasn't commanding the strike zone," he said. "I fell behind. That team is full of good hitters, and you can't have success in this league falling behind hitters as consistently as I was. I wasn't getting my fastball over, I wasn't getting my changeup over and I wasn't getting my slider over. I don't really have much else after that.

"In my book, that's my loss. Joey shouldn't have to take that one. If your team comes out and puts four runs up, there's just really no excuse to give it right back as quickly as I did."

At the time, all hope wasn't lost, as the A's regained momentum thanks to Daric Barton's go-ahead RBI single in the fifth. It represented the second of two RBIs on the night for Barton, who watched his move from the second slot in the lineup to the sixth hole pay dividends, as he provided a positive on the night in the form of a 2-for-4 showing.

Barton, whose return to the lineup on Friday followed a handful of mental days off in the wake of struggles at the plate, admitted to not feeling completely comfortable still, but "more comfortable than I have been, that's for sure.

"I think I put some OK swings on some OK pitches to hit. I definitely helped out my confidence a little just by hitting the ball harder a few times, so it's a start, something to work on and keep going from there."

"He looked great," Geren said. "He looked much more relaxed and swung the bat so much better."

Josh Willingham added to the positive vibes, collecting his first three-hit game of the season. And Guillermo Moscoso, whose fifth spot in the rotation was skipped this series, also supplied some good in an otherwise disappointing affair, as he tossed 2 1/3 scoreless innings following Outman's early departure.

Moscoso represented one of six Oakland pitchers used -- the last being Michael Wuertz, who surrendered a solo home run to Jarrod Saltalamacchia in the eighth to make it 8-6.

"You get in the sixth with a lead with our bullpen," Geren said, "and you like our chances. Broken-bat hit was the big one, though."

Balfour on paternity leave after daughter's birth

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- The A's placed reliever Grant Balfour on the paternity leave list and recalled right-handed pitcher Fautino De Los Santos from Triple-A Sacramento for the start of a three-game weekend set in Boston on Friday.

Under Major League Baseball's new paternity rules, Balfour is allowed to be away from the team for 24-72 hours. However, manager Bob Geren is hopeful the right-hander will rejoin the club for Sunday's series finale.

Balfour, 33, and his wife, Angie, welcomed their first child on Thursday night. Daughter Raegan Madison Balfour weighed in at 6 pounds and 10 ounces and is 20 1/2 inches long.

As of Friday, the right-hander was tied for third among American League relievers in wins (three) and had posted a 2.92 ERA in 25 appearances, striking out 28 along the way.

De Los Santos joins the A's for the second time this year, as he was previously recalled May 20 but was optioned just four days later before he was afforded the chance to make his Major League debut.

The 25-year old right-hander had a 0.82 ERA in nine relief appearances with Sacramento, holding his opponents to a .184 batting average, including .067 against left-handed hitters.

"He was throwing better than anyone down there," Geren said. "I asked who was throwing the best, and they said him."

Barton, Matsui return to lineup with RBIs

BOSTON -- The struggling duo of Daric Barton and Hideki Matsui returned to the A's lineup on Friday following a couple of days to regroup mentally.

Barton, regularly in the No. 2 slot, was dropped down to the sixth spot in the order for Friday's series opener against the Red Sox, with David DeJesus -- 21-for-65 over his last 19 games -- batting behind leadoff hitter Coco Crisp.

Manager Bob Geren downplayed his decision to move Barton in the order, noting, "If you're feeling good, you're feeling good no matter where you're hitting."

"DeJesus has been swinging the bat as good as anybody on the team," he said. "Guys that are doing that, you want them to get as many at-bats as possible."

Barton brought a .206 average into Friday's contest and is just 3-for-24 over his past seven games. The 26-year-old infielder has hit second 234 times in his career, with the next highest number of starts coming in the eighth spot, where he's been placed 48 times.

Matsui, normally one of the later arrivals in the A's clubhouse, was one of the first to show at Fenway on Friday and took part in early batting practice. The veteran designated hitter batted just .197 in the month of May, but he is a .300 career hitter in June and also boasts a .307 average in the month of July.

Even more, Matsui entered Friday's game a career .375 (6-for-16) hitter against Red Sox starter Clay Buchholz and has a .316 average and .933 OPS spanning 51 games at Fenway Park.

"He's always hit well here," Geren said. "He's had success in June before, and he had a great second half last year. We expect him to be just fine."

The moves paid early dividends, as both picked up first-inning RBIs.

Bailey slides back into closer's role with A's

BOSTON -- A's right-hander Andrew Bailey appears geared to regain the club's closer role after putting together two scoreless innings of work following rehab from a strained forearm.

Bailey has been utilized in non-save situations since being activated from the 15-day disabled list on Sunday in an effort to ease him back into big league action. When asked who would close Friday in a potential save situation, manager Bob Geren replied, "Andrew Bailey."

The two-time All-Star closer has yet to throw in back-to-back games, which would represent his next step. However, that time likely won't come immediately, as the A's would prefer to avoid a situation where Bailey would throw in a day game following a night appearance.

Oakland and Boston meet for consecutive day games on Saturday and Sunday, before the A's head to Baltimore to take part in three straight night contests against the Orioles.

Worth noting

- Right-hander Rich Harden, who has yet to pitch in a game this year because of a sore lat muscle, threw off the mound again on Friday and is expected to face hitters soon.
- Nothing but good reports have been delivered to A's manager Bob Geren regarding rehabbing infielder Adam Rosales, who is playing seven-inning stints at Triple-A Sacramento while working his way back from right foot surgery. The next step for Rosales is extending play to nine frames.

- Kurt Suzuki entered Friday's contest batting .328 (40-for-122) lifetime against Boston, which marks his highest average against any team.

Before puck drops, baseball takes center stage

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com | 6/3/2011 11:53 PM ET

Saturday is a big day for sports fans in Boston.

During the afternoon, they'll get a chance to see the Red Sox and A's square off in the second game of their series. In the evening, the Boston Bruins and the Vancouver Canucks will face each other in Game 2 of the Stanley Cup Finals.

In fact, Saturday's game was moved from 7:10 p.m. ET to 1:10 p.m. to accommodate Boston's baseball fans who also want to watch hockey.

In other words, Boston's Josh Beckett and Oakland's Trevor Cahill will have everyone's undivided attention Saturday afternoon at Fenway Park.

Beckett suffered his first loss since April 5 in his last outing, allowing two runs to the Tigers while walking a season-high five batters. It was the first time he allowed more than one run in the month.

"Yeah, he was up with some pitches," Red Sox manager Terry Francona said. "To his credit, after that, he really settled down and battled. I thought part of the night he was rushing a little bit and getting under some pitches, but he never gave in and he never gave up any more runs. He gave us a chance."

As for Cahill, he has struggled with his mechanics in his last couple of starts. In his last start, he tied season highs in walks (five) and runs (four).

"I've just kind of been toying with my mechanics a little bit," he said. "I feel like I haven't gotten it consistent where I feel like I can repeat myself. In the first inning especially, no matter how good I feel in the bullpen, when a hitter stands in there, stuff can change."

Overall, Cahill is 0-3 with a 3.57 ERA and a .282 opponents' average during his last three starts after going 6-0 with a 1.72 mark and a .209 opponents' average over his first eight outings. He's 1-2 with a 5.19 ERA in three career starts against the Red Sox.

A's: Matsui looks to get hot in June

The A's hope Hideki Matsui's offensive woes are behind him. The veteran went 1-for-5 with one RBI on Friday and has a history of heating up at the plate when the summer temperature rises. He is .300 career hitter in June and sports a .307 average in July.

- Kurt Suzuki is batting .328 lifetime against Boston, his highest average against any team.

Red Sox: Papi dialed in

David Ortiz has hit safely in 13 of his last 15 games and is hitting .414 with 14 extra-base hits during that stretch. He has also 10 multihit games.

- The Red Sox have won 13 of their last 17 matchups with the A's in Boston dating back to 2007, including a 2-1 mark against Oakland at Fenway Park last season. Boston dropped the 2010 season set with Oakland, 4-5, only the Sox's second series loss against the A's since 2004.

Worth noting

- The A's are 3-4 during the current stretch of 12 consecutive games against the AL East. Moreover, Oakland is 5-7 against the division this season.
- The A's committed 41 errors in their first 57 games. Those errors led to 32 unearned runs.
- Red Sox starter Clay Buchholz donated \$500 for every strikeout Friday to Joplin, Mo., tornado victims. He struck out five batters.

Strong start isn't enough for A's

After staking 4-0 lead against Buchholz in first, bullpen falters as Devine takes loss

By HOWARD ULMAN, ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — The Athletics showed plenty of life offensively. It just didn't last long enough.

After taking a 4-0 lead seven batters into the game, the A's bats were quieted and their bullpen fell apart for the first time in a while as they dropped an 8-6 decision to the Boston Red Sox on Friday night.

"I've been encouraged the way we've been swinging the bats lately, especially in the first inning," Oakland manager Bob Geren said.

It was just the second time in 13 games this season that Oakland lost when it scored six runs or more, the other coming in its fourth game of the season at Toronto.

"It's good to get some runs early," said A's left fielder Josh Willingham, who went 3 for 5 with two doubles. "But you have to give them credit, they came back."

The Athletics had gone ahead 6-5 in the fifth on Daric Burton's sacrifice fly before Boston answered with two runs in the seventh and one in the eighth. It was the first poor outing by Oakland's bullpen after five solid games.

"In the (fifth) with our bullpen with the lead, I like our chances," Geren said. "We have a good bullpen and I like our chances."

The A's relievers had allowed just one run over 23 innings before the Red Sox started their go-ahead rally against Joey Devine (0-1), who hadn't given up a run in seven games this season before allowing two on Friday.

"I've already looked at film. Mechanically everything is fine," he said. "It's just the approach. Just returning to what I was doing — except for tonight."

Carl Crawford blooped a go-ahead, two-run single to center field in the seventh off Brian Fuentes after Devine struggled, sending Oakland to its fourth straight loss.

Fuentes came in to face lefty Crawford, who came through with his broken-bat hit just beyond second base.

Devine had loaded the bases, giving up a double by Adrian Gonzalez, hitting Kevin Youkilis and walking David Ortiz. The Red Sox ended a four-game losing streak with the victory.

Bobby Jenks (2-2) got the win and Jonathan Papelbon pitched a perfect ninth for his 11th save in 12 opportunities.

Jarrold Saltalamacchia added a solo homer, his fifth of the year, for Boston in the eighth.

The Red Sox ended their longest losing streak since they began the season 0-6.

Before his hit, Crawford was batting just .103 (7 for 68) against lefties this season. And of his 21 RBIs before Friday, only six were at Fenway Park, although two came from walkoff hits.

The A's ripped Clay Buchholz for four runs and five hits in the first, but the Red Sox came back to take a 5-4 lead in the third. Oakland tied it with a run in the fourth before taking a 6-5 lead on Daric Barton's RBI single in the fifth. Barton had two hits and drove in two runs before bouncing into an inning-ending double play against Jenks in the seventh.

"Barton swung the bat great all night, but he got beat on a fastball," Geren said. "He hit into the double play. He had a couple of days off and swung the bat good."

David DeJesus started the first-inning rally with a single, took second on a single by Willingham and scored when Hideki Matsui grounded into a fielder's choice for the second out. Then Buchholz gave up three straight hits — a single by Kurt Suzuki that sent Matsui to second, an RBI single by Barton and a two-run single by Mark Ellis.

The Red Sox began chipping away at the 4-0 lead with two runs in the bottom of the first. Jacoby Ellsbury led off with a single, took second on his 20th stolen base of the season and third on a wild pitch, then scored on Gonzalez's groundout. Youkilis followed with a double and scored on Ortiz's single.

Ellsbury's sacrifice fly made it 4-3 in the second and Boston took the lead in the third when Ortiz doubled in one run and Jed Lowrie singled in another off starter Josh Outman. After retiring the next batter, Outman was replaced by Guillermo Moscoso, who pitched 2 1-3 scoreless innings.

Oakland tied the score at 5 when Kevin Kouzmanoff singled, took second on a wild pickoff throw by Buchholz and third on a wild pitch before scoring on Coco Crisp's groundout.

Buchholz kept struggling in the fifth. Willingham led off with a double, moved up on a flyout by Matsui and scored on a single by Barton that drove Buchholz from the game.

Struggling A's proving real life is no Hollywood tale for GM Beane

Jon Heyman, SI.com, 6/7/3/2011

Billy Beane is one of the most celebrated sports general managers ever, and the Oakland A's GM is about to become even more so with the release of the movie *Moneyball*, in which he is portrayed by Brad Pitt. Beane isn't worried that it won't look too good if his team is still around .500 -- the A's are three games under right now, at 27-30 -- when the movie hits big screens, reportedly on September 23.

"Why?" he said by phone. "They are completely separate entities. One is a Hollywood production. The other is real life."

Beane said he has seen the movie but declined to say how it turns out. But assuming the Hollywood version follows the storyline of the best-selling book of the same name, Beane can do no wrong. He is as brilliant as he is innovative. And while that may be so, in real life his A's haven't exactly been dominating the AL West the past few years following the string of success that inspired the Michael Lewis book. Going into this season, the A's had posted four straight non-winning seasons (a .500 record in 2010 was preceded by three losing years). That down period followed eight straight winning seasons from 1999-2006 that included four division titles and one wild card despite the team's low revenues and correspondingly low payroll.

Beane definitely has a few detractors, particularly among scouts who felt slighted by the book, which praised him mostly for taking advantage of market imbalances but also for his reliance on stats and computers as much as scouts. Those detractors can point to Oakland's average of 77 wins the last four seasons heading into this one as evidence that Beane's approach isn't fool-proof. The A's payroll has remained well below average (at \$66 million, it ranks 21st of 30 teams). While they are still better than their payroll, thanks largely to one of the better and deeper pitching staffs in the game, they aren't where they expected to be.

Those expectations were overshadowed recently by a major distraction when Beane's hand-picked choice to manage the team, boyhood friend Bob Geren, had an unflattering spotlight put on him. Respected but struggling A's reliever Brian Fuentes made critical comments about Geren that were followed by an even harsher slam of Geren by former A's pitcher Huston Street. After a bitter defeat, Fuentes called Geren's handling of him "pretty poor," and said there was "zero communication" between the two men. That harsh assessment triggered one of the most negative reviews of a manager ever when the Rockies' Street texted to the *San Francisco Chronicle's* Susan Slusser that Geren was the "least favorite person I have ever encountered in sports from age 6 to 27." It's rare to hear two such ruthless reviews about a current manager, and it inevitably shined a light on the tight relationship between Beane and Geren, who was the best man at Beane's wedding.

Beane dismissed Street's comments, saying, "I'm not necessarily going to care what is said by one player from three years ago," and chalked up Fuentes' words to a difficult stretch. "There were a lot of close tough games and everyone was on edge," Beane said. "The issue was handled (in house) instantly and the case was closed."

Maybe so, but the A's will have to recover for Geren not to remain an issue. Initial difficulties and defeats under Geren were understandable as the small-revenue team was beginning a rebuilding phase when he took over before the 2007 season. However, a fifth straight non-winning season in his five years wasn't part of the plan. As a former ballplayer who rose from being an advance scout for Oakland to become by far the most widely admired general manager in the game, Beane is undeniably one of the smartest men in baseball, if not the smartest. He must know his manager has the potential to be a continuing topic.

Fair or not, Beane's close relationship with Geren became an issue again thanks to Fuentes' comments. There have been whispers in the past about a communication issue regarding Geren, and it doesn't help that the perception exists that he got the job because of his tight relationship with the boss, and has a better chance of keeping it for the same reason. Beane disputes that perception but he does have to walk a fine line between being supportive and appearing too supportive. He has backed his manager, but also disputed a story I heard from a person claiming Beane told him Geren was "the best manager in baseball," saying that's just not something he'd say. Beane is in a tough spot here. He knows whatever he says is being viewed through the prism of the perception that he and Geren are buddies. If he's too complimentary, he risks feeding the widely-held belief that Geren is a made man.

Beane's public comments, while kind, remain somewhat more circumspect. "The position itself is challenging, and even more challenging when we have a consistently inconsistent start," Beane said of being A's manager. He maintained that he's "not one to evaluate employees publicly," but eventually added, "Under the circumstances, he and the staff have done the best job they can, understanding three starting pitchers went out and the closer just came back." Which sounds like a highly-couched passing grade.

The outside reviews regarding Geren aren't all that glowing (though most aren't as bold as Fuentes, who had to know about the Beane-Geren relationship). But what matters is Beane's evaluation, and he knows his own communication with Geren is excellent. "Given the choice, I'd rather have a good relationship than a poor one," Beane said, adding that he can "separate the professional and personal relationships."

That won't necessarily alter the perception that Geren has a unjustified grip on his job that's usually reserved for icons like Tony La Russa or Mike Scioscia. The relationship might slightly benefit Geren (it very likely got him the job), but in the end, Beane has to know he must do what's right for the organization. Beane doesn't soft-sell the team's ability in an effort to protect Geren, that's for sure. Beane gave a fair evaluation of that, saying, "We all think we're good enough to compete." Barring a string of Fuentes-like evaluations from A's players (which won't happen), Geren almost surely gets the year, which happens to be the last one on his contract. But there appears to be tremendous pressure on him for the first time.

Beane's own spot is set and his reputation forever sterling. He was so coveted as a GM that the A's did something no other team has done for its GM, and that is to make him a part owner (sources indicate he owns about four percent of the team). Ever since the book explained in detail why he's so far ahead of his competitors, his speaking fees are through the roof. Beane absolutely glows in the book, and it can't hurt a person's image to have Pitt play them.

The team could still steal a tight division, which would raise Beane's profile further. One competing GM maintained they are a threat because "their pitching is so strong and deep" despite an offense that can tend to be moribund. Beane himself acknowledged that in the American League West, the Rangers "have the best offense ... I don't think there's any getting around that."

Injuries have been a killer for Oakland this year, with starting pitchers Dallas Braden, Tyson Ross and Brandon McCarthy all out simultaneously, with Braden gone for the year. But other issues have crept in, too. Most obviously, the team can't hit. They are 26th in runs with 202 and 27th in OPS -- one of the new stats that were part of the sabermetric revolution ignited by the Moneyball book -- at .659, even below 15 of 16 National League teams that don't have the benefit of the designated hitter (only the Padres are lower).

Oakland enters the weekend last in the four-team AL West but just four games out of first. However, Beane's all-pitch, no-hit team may need a Hollywood ending to reach the World Series that his eluded him during his storied tenure.

Around the Majors

- Beane did the right thing by telling his catcher Kurt Suzuki to do what he could to avoid major home plate contact. It has been proven not to be worth it, as Buster Posey's devastating injury has shined a light on the danger of home-plate collisions.
- Giants manager Bruce Bochy's campaign to protect catchers with new rules is admirable even if there appears to be little momentum to change them. Giants GM Brian Sabean's comment about the baserunner -- "If I never hear from (Scott) Cousins or he never plays another game in the big leagues, I think we will all be happy" -- was over the top, though. Cousins' play was within the rules given that Posey had part of the plate blocked and there's no obligation to slide. One of the problems in legislating the play is the fear that baserunners might be hurt more if they were forced to slide into the catcher.
- The Padres' Heath Bell is believed to seek at least a three-year deal in the range of other top closers not named Mariano. And even if Bell takes a discount, which he's suggested he would, that would still put him at \$10-to-12 million a year for the three years, too rich for San Diego, which understandably isn't up for spending 20 percent of its payroll on a reliever, even an excellent one. So if the Padres don't play themselves into the race, look for Bell to go. Teams that could be interested include the Cardinals, White Sox, Rangers, Angels, Phillies, Red Sox, Tigers, Phillies and Yankees
- Mets outfielder Carlos Beltran should interest the Yankees and possibly the Red Sox, which always make things interesting.
- Kirk Gibson's no-nonsense approach is paying off for the surprising Diamondbacks. In his first full-year as manager, he has stressed accountability, and a team that underachieved in recent years has obviously listened to his message.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Rally Hawks help lift Cats to narrow victory

By Max Lush / Sacramento River Cats

Matt Carson did not reach one of his four looming Minor League milestones Friday night. However, the right fielder played an integral part in the River Cats clinching the series against the Bees with a 2-1 victory.

Carson sparked a fourth-inning rally, ripping a double into left center for the River Cats' second hit off rehabbing Bees pitcher Scott Kazmir. Carson is tied for the team lead in doubles with catcher Anthony Recker, both with 17. The River Cats scored both runs in the fourth, when Kazmir walked three batters in a row and eight River Cats went to the plate.

"Kazmir kind of lost his concentration there a little, we get a few walks and then we get a few across," Carson said. "Then our pitchers shut the door like they have been doing all year."

Carson also made sure the River Cats would keep the 2-1 lead in the top of the sixth. He robbed a two-run home run from Andrew Romine in front of the River Cats bullpen with a leaping catch against the fence.

"I know it's a short fence over there, so I knew I can lean back and try to make the catch," Carson said. "I just kind of jumped and leaned back and it worked out."

Carson, who has played 949 minor league baseball games, needs 81 hits to reach 1,000, three RBIs to reach 500 and one steal to reach 100 (he stole third base in the fourth inning Friday). He also needs two home runs to reach 50 with Sacramento.

Carson has six steals this season, with out a caught stealing.

Salt Lake struggled to turn men on base into runs, leaving 13 on base (including 12 in the first six innings).

River Cats starter Bobby Cramer, who was on a 75-pitch pitch count, pitched 3.2 innings allowing one earned run and five hits while earning a no-decision. The left-hander struggled to find the strike zone, walking four and hitting another, but worked out of trouble to avoid giving up a big inning.

Dating back to August 21 of last year, Cramer has been stellar against the Bees, giving up one earned run in 15.1 innings. He also tossed 3.2 scoreless innings May 3 earlier this season.

Trystan Magnuson was magnificent again in relief for the River Cats, pitching 2.1 scoreless innings, striking out three, walking one and allowing two hits. Magnuson has not allowed a run in nine of his last 10 games.

Vinnie Chulk earned his second save of the season, pitching a scoreless ninth.

The River Cats took three of four from the Bees and will head to Colorado Springs in the morning to kick off a four-game set with the Sky Sox at 6:05 p.m.

Drillers shell RockHounds

From staff reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

TULSA — No extra innings needed.

After the Midland RockHounds and Tulsa Drillers split a pair of extra inning games the past two days, the Drillers decided to make short work of the RockHounds on Friday with a 14-1 rout.

The Drillers shelled out 16 hits, including six doubles and four home runs. Hector Gomez, Darin Holcomb, Bronson Sardinha and Thomas Field each had a double and a home run in the game, while every player in the lineup had at least one hit.

The Drillers erupted for seven runs in the third inning, making RockHounds pitcher Jason Bergmann pay for every mistake he made. Lars Davis led off the inning with a double and Field followed with a walk. Both scored on a Tim Wheeler single, which was followed by a two-run homer by Gomez for a 4-0 lead.

Following a Ben Paulsen single and Darin Holcomb walk, Sardinha hit the second homer of the inning — a three-run shot to right with two outs — giving the Drillers a 7-0 advantage.

Bergmann gave up a third home run to start the fourth when Field hit a solo shot and the RockHounds starter was finally relieved two batters later when he walked Wheeler with one out.

Trey Barham and Jared Lansford combined to finish the game on the mound for the 'Hounds, but both surrendered three earned runs during their time on the hill.

Midland's lone run came via a solo homer by center fielder Jermaine Mitchell in the sixth inning. Mitchell was just one of three RockHounds to record a hit. He had two as did first baseman Michael Spina, while top prospect Grant Green also added a single.

Josh Sullivan earned the victory for Tulsa, allowing one earned run on three hits and two walks with four strike outs in seven innings.

The 'Hounds leave Tulsa to start a three-game series with the Northwest Arkansas Travelers at 7 p.m. today in Springfield, Ark.

RICKEY STILL HAVING A BALL

BASEBALL GREAT TEACHES PORTS TO SAVOR GAME

By Jason Anderson, Stockton Record

STOCKTON - Rickey Henderson is a baseball legend with a wealth of knowledge to impart on players he visits as a roving instructor with the Oakland Athletics, but he said his best advice can be summed up with one word.

"Relax," Henderson said. "Sometimes I think organizations make it too much like business, too much concentration, too much serious stuff. I try to help the guys get loose, relax, have a little laugh and enjoy the game."

Henderson will wrap up a three-day stop in Stockton when the Ports conclude a four-game series against the Bakersfield Blaze at 7:05 p.m. today at Stockton Ballpark.

The 1990 American League MVP, who played 25 seasons, was inducted into the baseball Hall of Fame in 2009. Widely regarded as the game's greatest leadoff hitter, Henderson holds major league records for career stolen bases (1,406), runs (2,295), games led off with a home run (81) and unintentional walks (2,129).

"He was the best leadoff hitter ever in my book, and definitely one of the best players," Ports manager Webster Garrison said. "I can't say there's one guy that's the best player of all-time because I didn't see all of them play, but I saw him and he's definitely in the conversation."

Ports general manager Pat Filippone said Henderson's presence adds to the sense of excitement inside the ballpark.

"It's always great to have Rickey here," Filippone said. "He's a lot of fun and makes the atmosphere great. He's one of the greatest players ever and he enjoys what he does, and his enthusiasm for the game is second to none. To me, Rickey Henderson is baseball."

Henderson joined the A's as a roving instructor in 2010 and made a number of trips to Stockton last season. He watches players closely, asks questions about their approach to hitting and tries to share technical tips they can use to become better hitters.

"He was working with me on my leg kick a little bit," Ports outfielder Myrio Richard said. "He used to do a big leg kick, and I kind of do a leg kick, so he helped me work on that. Anything you can get from a Hall of Famer, especially Rickey, you try to soak it all up."

The Ports had lost nine of their last 12 games and were shut out in three of their last four before Henderson arrived Thursday. They promptly snapped out of their slump in a 7-3 victory over the Blaze.

"I noticed the team is more excited and it feels like we have more energy right now," Richard said. "Rickey's funny, so he's keeping us loose and relaxed."

Henderson said young players put too much pressure on themselves and spend too much time thinking about scouting reports and mechanical adjustments.

"We give the kids so much information," Henderson said. "The big league players know how to use that information to their advantage. Down here, we give them so much information, all they do is think about information instead of just seeing the ball and hitting it. The game's supposed to be fun. We've got to let these kids relax and have fun."

Ports Win Second Straight Against The Blaze

06/04/2011 1:52 AM ET

The Stockton Ports won their second in a row against the Bakersfield Blaze in the third game of a four-game series at home. The Ports broke out of a 4-4 tie in the eighth inning to come out ahead with the 6-4 victory.

Ports pitcher Murphy Smith started strong, retiring three in a row to begin the first inning. Bakersfield's starter, Josh Ravin, would hold Stockton scoreless in the first as well, but not without giving up a bunt single from second baseman Conner Crumbliss, and another single from the bat of first baseman Anthony Aliotti.

Smith got into some trouble in the second, when Blaze catcher Yasmani Grandal and first baseman Chris Richburg hit back-to-back singles, then advanced a base each on a throwing error by Smith. With a strike out and a ground out, it looked as though damage might be avoided, until designated hitter Mark Fleury drove both runners in on a single to right field.

The Blaze scored a third run in the top of the third on another Ports throwing error, this time by catcher Ryan Ortiz as he attempted to catch third baseman Henry Rodriguez stealing second on a strike out.

In the bottom of the fourth, the Ports would get all three runs back and then take the lead. Ortiz and left fielder Mitch LeVier would draw back-to-back walks, and right fielder Rashun Dixon would single to load the bases for designated hitter Jason Christian. Christian grounded into an out, but allowed Ortiz to score. Third baseman Leonardo Gil drew a one-out walk before Ravin was replaced on the mound by Tim Crabbe. Crumbliss came to the plate and singled to centerfield, bringing in two more runs. Shortstop Michael Gilmartin drew the fourth walk of the inning, bringing centerfielder Michael Choice to the plate. Choice struck out, but the last pitch would get by Grandal, allowing Gil to score from third.

Bakersfield responded in the fifth with two singles, both to left field, by shortstop Didi Gregorius and left fielder Josh Fellhauer. With one out and Grandal at the plate, both runners would advance on another Smith throwing error. Grandal took the opportunity for a sacrifice fly to bring in Gregorius and tie the score up at four a piece.

The Ports went down in order in the bottom of the fifth and with Bakersfield coming up in the top of the sixth, Stockton brought in Andrew Carignan to replace Smith on the mound. Carignan had a productive inning, retiring three in a row.

Brett Hunter would do the same when he came in to pitch for the Ports in the top of the seventh, but in the bottom half, Crabbe would strike out three Ports in a row in turn.

The bottom of the eighth was another huge inning for the Ports, beginning with a single to right field for LeVier. With one out, Christian hit a double to right field. Crabbe struck out Gil for the second out, then intentionally walked Crumbliss to fill the bases and face Gilmartin. Gilmartin hit a grounder to second baseman Brodie Greene and beat it out for a 2-RBI single. Scott Gaffney would come in to pitch for the Blaze, after Crabbe went 4.1 innings, giving up five hits and two runs. Gaffney struck Choice out, but Choice reached first on a wild pitch. Gaffney would then strike out Aliotti to end the inning, but the Ports had their lead.

Jose Guzman came in to pitch for the Ports in the ninth, and with two strike outs and a pop out, would get the save. Hunter would be the winning pitcher, Crabbe getting the loss.

The Ports close out the series against the Blaze tomorrow evening as LHP Jacob Brown gets the start for Stockton, who will face off against RHP Mark Serrano for the Blaze.

Bees Break Out For 13-6 Win

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

LANSING, MI-The Burlington Bees (38-18) amassed a single-game high with 13 runs and 13 hits to earn a 13-6 win over the Lansing Lugnuts (31-22) at Cooley Law School Stadium on Friday night. LF Douglas Landaeta (3-6) became the first Bees' hitter this season to drive in five runs in the win.

The Lugnuts scored four runs in the first inning against Burlington RHP Jose Macias. The first four hitters reached base. LF Marcus Knecht (3-5) drilled a two-run double as part of a 4-0 Lansing lead.

The Bees responded by batting around in the second and third innings. In the second inning Landaeta hit a two-run single to tie the game at 4-4.

Burlington loaded the bases in the third inning. RF Royce Consigli (0-4) earned a walk to force in 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (2-5). 2B Nino Leyja (1-5) and Landaeta followed with RBI singles. The Bees scored five in the inning to lead 9-4.

C John Nester (3-4) hit an RBI double in the fourth inning to give Burlington a 10-5 lead.

The Bees scored three more runs in the seventh inning, including an RBI single from Landaeta for a 13-6 lead.

BEES BUZZINGS: The single-game high in runs and hits surpassed the previous highs of 9 runs and 11 hits at Beloit on May 24.

The Bees and Lugnuts continue their series on Saturday night at 6:05 p.m. RHP Blake Hassebrock (3-1, 1.46) gets the start for the Burlington Bees against RHP Drew Hutchison (2-2, 3.94) for the Lugnuts.