

Oakland A's losing streak reaches five in 14-inning loss to Boston Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BOSTON -- The A's 14-inning marathon Saturday against the Boston Red Sox offered a little bit of everything.

All the A's wanted was a victory, and those are nowhere to be found right now.

After 5 hours and 17 minutes of baseball, the A's were left to stew over missed opportunities in a 9-8 loss at Fenway Park.

J.D. Drew's two-out single off Guillermo Moscoso in the bottom of the 14th scored Carl Crawford from second base, sending the Red Sox into celebration and Oakland to its fifth straight defeat.

"It's just tough to lose a game like that, when you're battling so hard and just don't have anything to show for it," A's starting pitcher Trevor Cahill said.

The A's pulled off a stunning ninth-inning rally, scoring four times off Boston closer Jonathan Papelbon and erasing a 7-3 deficit.

They went ahead 8-7 on Ryan Sweeney's sacrifice fly in the top of the 11th, only to watch closer Andrew Bailey blow the lead in the bottom half.

The teams combined for 32 hits in the longest game the A's have played -- in terms of innings -- since a 15-inning loss to the Seattle Mariners on May 3, 2009.

Moscoso, scheduled to start Tuesday in Baltimore, was the eighth reliever A's manager Bob Geren used. Oakland hadn't used nine pitchers in a game since Sept. 20, 1997 -- a 15-inning affair against Seattle.

"It's a game of momentum," said Conor Jackson, who delivered the tying hit in the ninth. "I don't think I've ever played a game where there were so many swings."

Nor so much theater.

During the A's ninth-inning rally, Papelbon and Boston catcher Jason Varitek were ejected for arguing balls and strikes with home plate umpire Tony Randazzo.

The A's trailed 7-3 entering the inning, but Coco Crisp's potential game-ending double-play grounder shot through the legs of Red Sox second baseman Dustin Pedroia.

Mark Ellis scored to make it 7-4.

Cliff Pennington doubled down the left-field line, scoring Daric Barton and leaving runners on second and third with one out.

That's when Varitek started jawing with Randazzo and got the thumb.

Jackson pinch hit for Andy LaRoche and smacked the first pitch he saw for a two-run single to tie it.

"My thought process was, 'Get it done early,' " Jackson said. "You don't want to get behind on a guy like Papelbon."

After that hit and a questionable strike call to Sweeney, Papelbon said he told Boston writers that he was gesturing to catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia. He wound up in a heated exchange with Randazzo. After getting ejected, Papelbon made a beeline for Randazzo and appeared to bump the umpire as he continued to rant.

With two outs, the A's could have taken the lead when the ball squirted past Saltalamacchia on Hideki Matsui's swinging third strike.

Jackson would have scored from third, but Matsui, unaware of the wild pitch, broke late for first and was easily thrown out.

"I was paying attention to the umpire to see if I had swung," said Matsui, who finished 1 for 7. "When the umpire said it was a swing, then I ran."

After Sweeney's sacrifice fly, Bailey was summoned in the bottom of the 11th, his third appearance since coming off the D.L. but his first in a closer situation.

Bailey struck out Jed Lowrie and Drew, but Saltalamacchia drilled a double off the Green Monster that came within three feet of being a home run. Jacoby Ellsbury then yanked a ground-rule double down the right-field line to tie it.

Bailey said he missed his location with cut fastballs each time.

"It doesn't feel good to blow a lead anytime," Bailey said, "but especially when you have a chance to break a losing streak."

Oakland A's notebook: Trevor Cahill can't deliver shutdown inning in loss to Boston Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BOSTON -- Trevor Cahill was rolling along fairly well Saturday until the sixth inning arrived.

That's when the Boston Red Sox struck for three runs in an eventual 9-8 A's loss in 14 innings.

Cahill allowed a season-high five runs in seven innings, and he was disappointed that he couldn't deliver a shutdown frame after the A's scored twice in the top of the sixth to pull into a 2-2 tie.

"You fall behind (in the count) to a good team that many times in an inning and it's going to hurt you," Cahill said.

Dustin Pedroia, Kevin Youkilis and Carl Crawford all had run-scoring hits in the bottom of the sixth.

Crawford has been quite the thorn in the A's side this weekend, going 5 for 11 with five RBIs and a stolen base in two games.

Cahill worked on mechanical issues coming into the start, and manager Bob Geren said the right-hander showed improvement in that area.

But Cahill stretched his winless streak to five starts. After allowing one earned run or less in eight of his first 10 starts, Cahill has surrendered 12 earned runs in his past three outings.

Designated hitter Hideki Matsui's single in the 11th inning snapped an 0-for-19 slump -- his longest hitless streak in the major leagues -- but overall he endured a disappointing 1-for-7 day.

He struck out twice with runners in scoring position and saw his average drop to .216.

Missed opportunities hurt the A's throughout the game.

Trailing 5-2 in the seventh, they loaded the bases with no outs but came away with just one run on Cliff Pennington's sacrifice fly.

Reliever Grant Balfour is expected to rejoin the A's on Sunday from paternity leave.

Fautino De Los Santos seemed a sure-fire bet to be sent down, but he might need to stick around given the fatigued state of the A's bullpen. De Los Santos made his big league debut Saturday, entering with two outs in the eighth. He struck out Jed Lowrie on a fastball that clocked 97 mph.

Chin Music: Ryan Sweeney gets a look as No. 2 hitter

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/4/2011 9:45am

All is quiet on the A's front leading into Game 2 of this three-game set against the Red Sox. Coco Crisp and Kurt Suzuki both have the day off, so David DeJesus leads off and Ryan Sweeney hits second, with Daric Barton in the No. 6 spot again. A's

manager Bob Geren was asked how long he envisions Barton batting lower in the order. "I don't know," he said. "I actually like the lineup better when he's hitting second – when he's going good. We'll go day to day. I like the way he swung the bat last night."

Geren also said he expects Guillermo Moscoso to be fine to start Tuesday after his extended relief stint Friday night. Moscoso threw 40 pitches, which still leaves him an option to go on three days' rest Tuesday against Baltimore. If Moscoso wasn't ready for Tuesday, the A's would probably have to call someone up from the minors, because I don't see Geren going with Josh Outman on short rest after Outman struggled Friday in his 67-pitch stint.

The lineups:

A's: DeJesus RF, Sweeney CF, Willingham LF, Matsui DH, Ellis 2B, Barton 1B, Powell C, Kouzmanoff 3B, Pennington SS; Cahill RHP.

Red Sox: Ellsbury CF, Pedroia 2B, Gonzalez 1B, Youkilis 3B, Ortiz DH, Crawford LF, Lowrie SS, Drew RF, Varitek C; Beckett RHP.

A's rally with 4 in 9th, lose to Red Sox in 14th

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A meltdown by Red Sox closer Jonathan Papelbon and catcher Jason Varitek in the ninth was a plus for the A's on Saturday at Fenway Park, fueling an Oakland rally that sent the game into extra innings, but it wasn't quite enough.

The A's took the lead in the 11th, and they had their own All-Star closer, Andrew Bailey, back in a save situation for the first time this year. But Bailey couldn't shut the door, allowing two-out doubles to Jarrod Saltalamacchia and Jacoby Ellsbury, and the Red Sox went on to win 9-8 in the 14th inning of a wildly back-and-forth affair.

J.D. Drew ended it with a two-out RBI single to right off Guillermo Moscoso. It was the fifth loss in a row for the A's, who fell a season-high five games under .500, and the up-and-down emotions of a 14-inning game did not make it any easier.

"It's a mentally and physically draining game," said A's utility player Conor Jackson, whose two-run single in the ninth off Papelbon tied the game. "To pull out a loss is draining.

"It's tough. It's a game of momentum, and I don't think I've played in a game with that many swings."

Moscoso, working in his second game in a row in relief, retired the first two men he faced, but Carl Crawford did his patented move of this series so far, providing a big two-out, two-strike hit, in this case, a double to left. The A's walked Jed Lowrie to set up a force and to get to Drew, who had struck out four times in the game, and Moscoso said perhaps he should have thrown Drew a breaking pitch. The fastball, down and away, wasn't that bad, but Drew got just enough of it.

Bailey was kicking himself for letting it get to that point. The A's went ahead 8-7 in the 11th after Cliff Pennington walked, Jackson doubled and Ryan Sweeney hit a sacrifice fly.

Bailey, who came off the disabled list a week ago after missing two months with a forearm strain, struck out the first two batters he faced in the bottom of the inning, but he said he left a pitch up to Saltalamacchia, and Ellsbury hit a pitch that flattened out.

"Obviously, I didn't do my job," Bailey said. "I let the team down. It doesn't feel good to give up the lead when the team battles back and there's a chance to end a losing streak."

The Red Sox lost their cool in the ninth, when an increasingly agitated Papelbon allowed three hits, a walk and a game-tying four runs before being ejected by home-plate umpire Tony Randazzo - who had tossed Varitek one batter earlier for complaining about the strike zone.

"I don't recall ever seeing that in the ninth inning like that," A's manager Bob Geren said of Boston losing its battery in the space of two batters.

Mark Ellis opened the ninth with a single and Daric Barton walked, which was about when Papelbon started looking upset. With one out, second baseman Dustin Pedroia missed a grounder by Coco Crisp, and Ellis scored on the error. Pennington doubled to left, sending in Barton. That's when Varitek got the heave-ho.

Jackson hit for Andy LaRoche, and he took advantage of the fact that Papelbon was irked, swinging at the first pitch and shooting it down the third-base line, scoring Crisp and Pennington and tying the game.

"My thought process was to get it done early," Jackson said of the at-bat.

The game-tying single was it, as far as Papelbon was concerned. After a called strike, he charged toward Randazzo and it appeared he might have bumped him.

Crew chief Brian Gorman told a pool reporter that he could not comment until the report was filed with the league.

A's Hideki Matsui ends his longest hitless stretch

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Hideki Matsui's 11th-inning single to right Saturday ended the longest hitless stretch of his major-league career, an 0-for-19 skid.

"Maybe a sense of relief," Matsui said through translator **Roger Kahlon**. Matsui said he felt as if he'd had some good at-bats, a boost for his confidence.

The A's designated hitter went 1-for-7 and struck out twice, both with men in scoring position. The second time, catcher **Jarrod Saltalamacchia** dropped the ball; had Matsui made it to first, **Conor Jackson** easily would have scored the go-ahead run.

Matsui said he had been watching the umpire, trying to find out if he had ruled a swing. "If I had not been focused on that, we might have had a run," Matsui said.

Pitching plans: **Guillermo Moscoso** threw 40 pitches in relief Friday and 19 pitches Saturday. He said he believes he would still be available to start Tuesday as planned.

If he cannot, the A's have no starter options on the 40-man roster at Triple-A Sacramento; **Bobby Cramer** is not eligible to come back until Wednesday except in the event of an injury. If **Dallas Braden** went on the 60-day DL, **Travis Banwart** could be called up, but bullpen help might be the bigger need.

Briefly: Brandon McCarthy (stress reaction, right shoulder) has begun playing catch. ... The Oakland A's never have come back from four runs down in the ninth to win a road game.

Leading off

Slick start: Fautino De Los Santos made his big-league debut and struck out the only man he faced, Jed Lowrie. It's unclear, with the A's pitching stretched thin, if De Los Santos still will return to Triple-A Sacramento today when Grant Balfour comes off paternity leave.

Drumbeat: Ryan Sweeney is batting second today, day off for A's catcher Suzuki

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Fenway Park, 6/4/2011 9:30am

Some quick pre-game notes, with a slightly different lineup: Coco Crisp gets a day off and Ryan Sweeney is in center and batting second, erstwhile No. 2 hitter Daric Barton is back in the sixth spot for the second day in a row.

Landon Powell is getting the day game after a night game behind the plate; it sounds as if Kurt Suzuki will catch the entire rest of the trip, though.

Here's the lineup behind Trevor Cahill: DeJesus rf, Sweeney cf, Willingham lf, Matsui dh, Ellis 2b, Barton 1b, Powell c, Kouzmanoff 3b, Pennington ss

It's Cahill, with a 2.31 ERA, vs. Josh Beckett, 1.80 ERA, today.

Manager Bob Geren said that Brandon McCarthy, who is on the DL with a stress reaction in his right shoulder, has resumed throwing, which is a very good sign considering that that same injury has cut short much of the past four seasons for McCarthy. That was good, proactive work shutting him down briefly if he's back doing some throwing already.

Geren said that Tyson Ross (oblique) is feeling better; he is still not throwing yet.

Adam Rosales went 0-for-3 with a walk at Triple-A Sacramento and it seems possible that he could join the team toward the end of this trip.

John Shea: Baseball Sunday

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Scouts shaken up as new college bats send stats tumbling

Third baseman **Anthony Rendon**, a junior at Rice, is the best college hitter in the country - a .329 batting average and six home runs.

But he's nothing like he was as a sophomore, when he hit .394 with a nation-leading 26 homers.

Or as a freshman: .388 and 20.

One theory is that Rendon's numbers have declined because of a shoulder injury, but it's more than that. Rendon has swung a different bat this year, as have all Division I hitters, and stats have fallen across the board as a result, which has changed how pro teams scouted players and prepared for the amateur draft, which begins Monday.

The new bats are at least 5 percent less lively, reducing the speed of the ball off the bat, and have a smaller sweet spot. Home runs are down nearly 50 percent and teams are scoring 1.5 fewer runs per game, according to an NCAA report released in midseason. Consequently, ERAs have dropped too.

"In the past, big guys hit 20 home runs and little guys hit 20 home runs. It was hard to know if guys had true power or not," [A's](#) scouting director **Eric Kubota** said. "Now, guys who hit home runs have real power. You feel a little more confident they'll make a linear progression and will have power in pro ball as well."

Rendon's stock hasn't taken a dive as have his numbers. He's still expected to be drafted first by the Mariners or second by the Pirates. He'll be long gone by the time the A's select 18th and [the Giants](#) 29th.

The new composite metal bats, with graphite cores, more closely resemble wood bats and don't have that annoying "ping" sound on contact. The ball supposedly comes off the bat 5 to 10 mph slower.

Both the A's and Giants need power hitters, and the new bats could make it easier to find genuine sluggers.

Or maybe not. Two local coaches say scouting actually has become tougher.

"I don't think it's easier," Cal coach **David Esquer** said. "I've heard from scouts who say players they follow are harder to sell to the scouting director, who asks, 'How's he doing?' The scout says, 'Well, he's hitting .260 with a few homers.' It was the same player who hit .330 with a lot of homers last year."

For example: Cal catcher **Chadd Krist**, who hit 10 homers last year and hit just one this year. Krist hasn't suddenly lost power. In fact, he led the Pac-10 in doubles and still is targeted to be drafted in the top 10 rounds.

The difference is, the bat has less juice, and, as Kubota said, "You see pitchers being a little more aggressive with fastballs." Pitching and defense are at a premium, just like in the majors in the steroid-testing era.

Cal has scored 278 runs, down from last year's 395. Homered 25 times, down from 45. Team ERA is 2.89, down from 4.91.

Stanford has experienced similar drops. Left-handed closer **Chris Reed** had a 6.10 ERA last year. This year, while he has evolved anyway, it's down to 2.61, and he's projected as a sandwich pick between the first and second round.

"Pro scouts might say scouting is easier now, but I think it makes it more difficult," Stanford coach **Mark Marquess** said. "If a sophomore hits 20 home runs and hit six as a junior, what is he?"

Maybe we'll find out Monday.

Shea Hey: A-Rod gives champs mad props

A-Rod was in awe of the 2010 Giants.

Asked how his Yankees would have fared against the champs, **Alex Rodriguez** said, "I don't think anyone would've hit them last year. I can't think of anyone who could've consistently put up runs against them. They were so good."

Was Rodriguez admitting the Yanks would have rolled over in the World Series had they beaten the Rangers in the ALCS?

"I'm saying they pitched extremely well," A-Rod said of the Giants. "They were the best team, had the best pitching and played the best. That's why they deserved to be world champions. Their pitching was impressive, it was great team chemistry, and they had a great manager. The whole package."

CC Sabathia won Game 5 in the Bronx to send the ALCS to Texas, where the Rangers clinched in Game 6, which ended when Rodriguez admired a **Neftali Feliz** curve for strike three.

A-Rod wanted a Yankees-Giants final, and it wasn't because he has a higher average (.478), on-base percentage (.549) and slugging percentage (.855) against the Giants than any other team, with six homers and eight doubles in 69 at-bats.

"It could've been an epic event," he said. "The history of the teams in New York. The great traditions. But it ended up great for baseball and San Francisco. It was their year. It seemed nobody was going to beat them. Texas was the best offense, and they neutralized them."

By late October, the Yankees were a mess. They hit .201 and posted a 6.58 ERA in the ALCS (A-Rod hit .190), and **Mark Teixeira** would have been a World Series no-show after straining a hamstring.

Bull pen

-- Los Angeles loves footage from TV helicopters of vehicles moving to and fro, so it was natural for cameras to follow the Angels' team bus from LAX to Angel Stadium on Wednesday night. Returning from Kansas City, the Angels were diverted to LAX (instead of the John Wayne Airport) because their charter flight had a hydraulic issue. It wound up not being a problem, but prime time is prime time.

-- Only player from last year's draft currently in the bigs: White Sox reliever **Chris Sale**, who made his debut in August, two months after he was the 13th overall pick.

-- For those Giants fans who wanted **Adam Dunn** instead of **Aubrey Huff**, check this: Huff is 20-for-60 against left-handers while the White Sox's Dunn was 0-for-40 with 17 strikeouts against lefties before he got an infield single off Detroit reliever **Charlie Furbush** on Friday.

-- Milwaukee's **Casey McGehee**, desperate to snap out of a slump, borrowed a bat from pitcher **Shaun Marcum** on Tuesday. A pitcher's bat? Actually, Marcum got it from a teammate in Toronto last year. **Jose Bautista**. Didn't help. McGehee was hitless in that game, bringing his skid to 3-for-23.

-- Tampa Bay's **James Shields** is the only big-leaguer this year to pick off a runner at first, second and third. He has six pickoffs overall, more than the total of 15 entire staffs. Orioles? Just one.

-- **Jack Cust** tripled against the Orioles on Monday, the second in his career. The first came with the A's in August 2007. It was at the Coliseum, and the ball took a crazy bounce in center field off some football-mangled turf, fooling the Royals' center fielder - **David DeJesus**.

Giants' DL actually less busy than most

Al Saracevic, San Francisco Chronicle sports editor

Andres Torres. Barry Zito. Brian Wilson. Cody Ross. Pablo Sandoval. Mark DeRosa. Santiago Casilla. Darren Ford. Buster Posey. Mike Fontenot. And now **Brandon Belt**.

They're all key members of the Giants. And they've all landed on the disabled list this season.

Through June 2, the team's players had logged 251 days on the disabled list, which sounds like a whole lot. "Obviously, we've been busy," Giants trainer **Dave Groeschner** said late this week. "But that's what we're here to do. Honestly, the perception has been a little worse than the reality."

Indeed, if you compare the Giants to the rest of the league, they're having a fairly average run of bad luck. The team ranks 13th out of 30 teams in terms of time lost.

"We're only two months into the season," Groeschner said.

"And we've certainly been (busier) in those two months than we have been in years, but we have four more months to go."

Groeschner and his staff should be applauded for the work they've done so far. Consider the names at the top of this item. It seems like a miracle the team is only a halfgame out of first. But it's more a function of design.

"Depth allows you to cope with the injuries," team President **Larry Baer** told me this week, adding that manager

Bruce Bochy "sees the rhythm of the season and sees guys who can carry the team for a stretch."

When Torres was out, **Aaron Rowand** stepped up. When Ross was out, **Nate Schierholtz** stepped up. **Ryan Vogelsong**

has shined in Zito's absence. Now, with Posey out, it's **Eli Whiteside's** turn. The team is hoping he can rectify a dismal campaign at the plate so far, one in which he is hitting .176.

Or maybe this is the one position at which the Giants don't have the proper depth, and they need to look outside.

Baer acknowledged that possibility but didn't sound too worried.

"The DNA of this team is the same as last year," Baer said. "Strong pitching, strong bullpen and timely hitting."

Management missteps:

General manager.

The title suggests an executive that has a fundamental understanding of management principles. A person who understands how to manage above and below. An administrator who knows how to portray the proper public image.

Here in the Bay Area, we've had the privilege of watching two of the best in the business. **Brian Sabean** with the Giants and **Billy Beane** with the A's are two of the longesttenured GMs in the league, and it's hard to argue with their success.

Sabean just won the World Series. And Beane is widely credited with changing the way talent is measured in baseball.

(Oh, and **Brad Pitt** is playing him in the upcoming "Moneyball" movie.) That said, I would argue both men have exhibited some poor general management skills in recent weeks.

Here is my unsolicited advice to the Bay Area's GMs:

On San Francisco's side of the bay, Sabean is mishandling Posey's gut-wrenching injury.

His public comments this week, further criticizing the Marlins' **Scott Cousins** for running over Posey at the plate, were inappropriate. Regardless of how angry or emotional Sabean feels about Posey's situation, he is the public face of the franchise. The team's management should focus its efforts on getting the rules on home plate collisions changed, if it feels this strongly about it.

I suggest they take a strong look at how college baseball legislates home plate — essentially outlawing collisions — and lobby to move the major leagues in that direction.

On Oakland's side of the bay, criticism of A's manager **Bob Geren** has grown louder and stronger in recent weeks, punctuated by former closer **Huston Street** saying Geren was his least favorite person he has "encountered in sports from age 6 to 27."

Beane came out in support of Geren, saying the matter was discussed and the team had moved past it. Since then, the A's have played .500 baseball, losing five straight and falling into last place in the very weak AL West.

It's no secret to anyone surrounding the team that Geren is viewed as a man with a flat personality. He's a solid baseball

man and a close friend of Beane's. But as a business manager, Beane should consider whether that's the kind of field general he wants.

Your manager should inspire confidence in your players and your fans.

Jimmer speaks: BYU sharpshooter **Jimmer Fredette** is ready to test his talents in the NBA.

But first he's going to play some golf.

The nation's leading scorer was a late addition to the upcoming American Century Championship in Tahoe, coming up July 12 to 17 at the Edgewood Tahoe golf course. He'll join more than 70 fellow sports personalities on the links, including **Jerry Rice, Aaron Rodgers, Rex Ryan** and **Tony Romo**.

According to the bookies in Tahoe, Fredette is a 40-1 shot to win the celebrity tournament, which puts him somewhere in the same neighborhood as **Michael Jordan**. For comparison's sake, **Charles Barkley** is posted at 400-1. Get your bets down.

Fredette sat in on a conference call this week about the upcoming tournament and told the media he was nervous about playing on TV. "I'm not up to Michael Jordan's level. I'm probably more like Barkley," said Fredette. "I need to work on my driving so it doesn't hook so much."

You and me both, pal.

When asked about the upcoming NBA draft, Fredette said he's worked out for the Pacers, Knicks, Kings, Suns and Jazz. "I think they're all pretty interested," said Fredette.

But Phoenix is where he really wants to play.

"It would be a good situation because I could learn from **Steve Nash**, one of the greatest of all time," said Fredette. "And they play in a system that I love."

Asked what kind of feedback he's getting from the teams he's working out for, Fredette focused on his defense.

"They know I can play offense at an NBA level," he said. "The biggest thing they're concerned with is on the defensive end, whether I can defend NBA point guards."

"It's a screen-and-roll league," said Fredette. "I have to continue to work on the defense for that play."

You and the rest of the NBA, pal.

Sellout streak: The Giants have sold out all 24 of their home games this season, including today's.

In our conversation this week, Baer said they could very well sell out every game for the whole season ... if they can get through this week.

The Nationals are coming to town, and that could be the one series all year that doesn't draw a packed house, Baer said.

He laughed as we talked about it, remembering some criticism the team took when it first built AT&T Park. "I remember people saying, 'You'll still draw 6,000 fans on a Monday night when the Expos are in town.'" Well, here we are, 11 years later, and the former Expos are coming to town for a Monday night game.

I'm guessing they'll draw more than 6,000.

A's come away feeling empty after loss in 14

Oakland erases four-run deficit before taking fifth straight defeat

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 6/4/2011 9:04 PM ET

BOSTON -- Following a 5-hour, 17-minute marathon that saw a combined 32 hits and 16 pitchers, the A's were left staring down a slightly more consequential number -- their fifth consecutive loss.

The latest, which put them 5 1/2 games out of first place in the American League West, culminated when right-hander Guillermo Moscoso surrendered a walk-off RBI single to J.D. Drew in the 14th frame of a 9-8 loss to the Red Sox.

It was the A's longest game -- by inning and time -- of the season, and it tied for the fifth-longest contest in Oakland history.

"The guys were fighting the whole way," said manager Bob Geren. "They were into it, I'll tell you that."

Drew, who struck out in his previous four at-bats, came to the plate following Carl Crawford's two-out double -- his fourth hit of the game -- and an intentional walk to Jed Lowrie, seemingly the right move given Drew's recent struggles.

But Moscoso, making his second relief appearance in as many days despite being scheduled to start Tuesday's game in Baltimore, watched the Boston outfielder line a fastball into right-center field to put the game away.

"Got the barrel to it, hit it to short right-center field, which was the perfect spot for it," Drew said.

The disappointing finish followed a hearty comeback attempt made possible by a couple of clutch hits off the bat of Conor Jackson -- the first completed a four-run, game-tying effort in a wild ninth that brought about the ejections of Boston's battery, and the latter paved the way for Ryan Sweeney's go-ahead sacrifice fly in the 11th inning.

Jackson's heroics set up a potential feel-good story surrounding Andrew Bailey, who was brought on in the bottom of the 11th following two scoreless innings from Brian Fuentes to face his first save situation of the season.

Two quick swinging strikeouts made it all the more probable, but Bailey proceeded to surrender back-to-back doubles to Jarrod Saltalamacchia and Jacoby Ellsbury to keep the Red Sox in the game and blow his first save.

"I didn't execute my pitch on that first pitch to Saltalamacchia," Bailey said. "Just kinda left it over the plate and he hit it off the Monster out there, and with Ellsbury, it was the same thing. He did a good job of putting the ball in play.

"Obviously, I didn't do my job today, and I let the team down. Any time you come back against a guy like [Red Sox closer Jonathan] Papelbon and put some runs on the board, it doesn't feel too good when you go out there and blow the lead -- anytime, but especially when your team battles back, and you have a chance to break a losing streak and get things right."

The A's jump-started their ninth-inning comeback rather innocently, as Mark Ellis led off the inning with a bloop single and moved to second on Daric Barton's walk. Following a Landon Powell strikeout, Coco Crisp hit a grounder off Papelbon that had "game-ending double play" written all over it. Instead, it went right through second baseman Dustin Pedroia's legs for an error, extending life in Oakland's at-bats.

With runners still on first and second, Cliff Pennington doubled home Barton to narrow Boston's lead to two before Jackson was brought in to pinch-hit in the leadoff hole. He set off a see-saw affair with a first-pitch single that was just fair down the left-field line.

"That's what you dream of," Jackson said. "A couple guys on, a couple runs down, obviously my thought process right there was to get it done early in the count."

Papelbon's ejection -- like catcher Jason Varitek's, fueled by arguing balls and strikes with home-plate umpire Tony Randazzo -- immediately followed the game-tying hit, forcing right-hander Bobby Jenks into the game against Ryan Sweeney, who singled to put runners at the corners with one out.

Jenks struck out Josh Willingham and did the same against Hideki Matsui, whose swing-and-miss came on a ball that went in the dirt and away from Saltalamacchia. With Jackson headed for the plate, Matsui got a late start out of the box and was ultimately thrown out at first.

"I was paying attention to the umpire to see if I had swung," said Matsui, who in the 11th snapped a career-long 0-for-19 skid with a single. "I was focused on that. The umpire said I swung, and then I ran."

It represented one of several what-ifs in the game, which was started by right-handers Trevor Cahill and Josh Beckett.

Cahill quickly allowed Boston on the board, surrendering a two-out solo shot to Adrian Gonzalez in the first before settling down for three consecutive 1-2-3 innings. He found trouble in the sixth, though, giving up three runs and, ultimately, a season-high five over seven innings.

Despite sporting a 4.19 ERA over his past five starts after going 6-0 with a 1.72 mark in his first eight outings, Cahill noted improved mechanics.

"I think at least the first four or five innings, my strike percentage was up," he said. "I was trying to attack the zone, and I felt more confident in doing that."

Beckett, meanwhile, went six-plus innings, giving up four hits and three runs while joining Cahill in walking away with a no-decision.

"The offense came through and tied it up off one of the best closers in the game," Cahill said. "It was an all-around good job by them. It's just tough to lose a game like that when everybody's battling so hard and there's nothing to show for it."

Lackey returns from DL with sweep of A's in mind

By Cash Kruth / MLB.com | 6/4/2011 8:07 PM ET

Once again on Saturday, the A's didn't get a win or a solid starting pitching performance. With the state of their bullpen following Saturday's 14-inning affair, the latter could just be as important as a victory in Sunday's series finale.

A's starters are 0-3 with an 8.18 ERA in the team's past five games -- all losses -- with opponents hitting .286 against them during that stretch.

On Sunday at Fenway Park, A's left-hander Brett Anderson (3-5, 3.68 ERA) looks to break that dismal stretch against the Red Sox and right-hander John Lackey (2-5, 8.01), who is making his return from the 15-day disabled list.

Anderson is coming off his worst outing of the season. On May 31 against the Yankees, the 23-year-old allowed 10 runs (nine earned) on 11 hits in 5 1/3 innings. Although it can't often be said for starting pitchers, facing the Red Sox might be just what Anderson needs. He is 4-1 with a 2.08 ERA in six career starts against Boston, the latest of which was an eight-inning, eight-strikeout scoreless performance on April 19. Boston batters are hitting only .111 (10-for-90) against him with 23 strikeouts.

While Anderson looks to stop Oakland's skid, Lackey is hoping for a solid return from the disabled list. The 32-year-old right-hander struggled in his prior two starts -- giving up 17 earned runs on 19 hits and eight walks in 10 2/3 innings -- before being shelved with a right elbow strain.

Shortly after being placed on the DL, Lackey received a cortisone shot, which allows him to follow through and finish his pitches. It seemed to work in a rehab start for Triple-A Pawtucket, where he allowed only one run in 5 1/3 innings.

"I think [the shot will] help him get the ball down and get some of that movement back on that downward plane, because he can extend," said Red Sox manager Terry Francona. "To have some consistency, and he can hold his stuff."

Francona said Lackey will probably throw about 90 pitches Sunday.

"We don't want to overdo because he's coming back from an elbow problem, because I think you can make a mistake, come back too quick and do too much," Francona said. "We don't want to get him where he was a couple weeks ago."

Lackey, who spent his first eight seasons in the AL West with the Angels, is 17-6 with a 2.86 ERA in 32 starts against the A's.

A's: Crisp, Suzuki expected back

Center fielder Coco Crisp and catcher Kurt Suzuki didn't start Saturday -- although Crisp came in to pinch-hit in the seventh inning and went 1-for-3 -- and A's manager Bob Geren said it was just to give the two players a break. Ryan Sweeney and Landon Powell started in their stead.

"Just a day after a night game," Geren said. "Trying to get a couple guys in there."

- The A's are 3-5 in a stretch of 12 straight games against American League East opponents.

Red Sox: Big Papi on fire

Designated hitter David Ortiz went 1-for-4 on Saturday and has now reached base safely in 14 of his past 16 games. During that stretch, Ortiz is batting .403 (25-for-62) with 15 extra-base hits, and he has four home runs in his past 10 games.

- Jonathan Papelbon has 199 career saves and likely will become the fastest pitcher to reach the 200-save mark. Yankees closer Mariano Rivera holds the mark, recording his 200th save in his 382nd game. Papelbon has appeared in 358 games.

Worth noting

- Suzuki is a .328 (41-for-125) career hitter against Boston.
- The Red Sox have won 14 of their past 18 vs. the A's at Fenway Park.

Geren shuffles lineup to give Sweeney start

Barton bats sixth with Crisp, Suzuki getting days off

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- A's manager Bob Geren shuffled his lineup for the middle contest of a three-game set against the Red Sox on Saturday, handing Ryan Sweeney a start in center field while giving Coco Crisp and Kurt Suzuki days off.

Landon Powell started behind the plate in Suzuki's stead, marking his seventh time teaming up with starter Trevor Cahill in his 13th start of the season.

"Just a day after a night game," Geren said. "Trying to get a couple guys in there."

At the top of that list was Sweeney, who entered the game 3-for-8 with a home run against Red Sox hurler Josh Beckett. Sweeney is batting .365 over his past 19 games and, spanning 79 at-bats against righties this season, is hitting .329.

Crisp was available off the bench, Geren said, and is expected to resume center-field duties for Sunday's finale.

The A's skipper kept Daric Barton in the six-hole after the first baseman went 2-for-4 in that slot in Friday's game, following a stretch that saw him go 3-for-24. It's simply a matter of when, not if, Barton will resume his role in the No. 2 spot.

"I actually like the lineup better when he's hitting second and he's going good," Geren said. "We'll go day-to-day."

Injured McCarthy throwing for first time

BOSTON -- A's starter Brandon McCarthy, nursing a stress reaction in his right scapula (shoulder blade), is throwing recently for the first time since suffering his injury, manager Bob Geren said on Saturday.

That's encouraging news for McCarthy, who hoped he caught the familiar shoulder injury -- he's incurred it three times before -- soon enough to avoid a prolonged rehab process.

The 27-year-old McCarthy, who was placed on the disabled list on May 20, put together a 1-4 record in nine starts despite compiling a 3.39 ERA.

Fellow rehabbing hurler Tyson Ross, sidelined by a left oblique strain, has not begun throwing, and there is no timeline on when he'll begin doing so, Geren said.

Worth noting

- Guillermo Moscoso, who worked 2 1/3 relief innings on Friday night, is still slated to start Tuesday's game in Baltimore, Geren said.
- Entering Saturday, A's starters were 1-4 with a 8.65 ERA and a .283 opponents batting average over the past five games, after going 5-5 with a 2.21 ERA and a .238 opponents batting average over their previous 16 games.

A's lose to Red Sox in 14 innings

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — A ninth-inning rally couldn't save the Oakland Athletics from extra-inning heartbreak.

The A's absorbed their fifth consecutive loss Saturday when J.D. Drew hit a two-out RBI single in the 14th inning to give the Boston Red Sox a 9-8 victory.

Oakland scored four runs off closer Jonathan Papelbon in the ninth to tie it at 7, then took the lead in the 11th. But its bullpen couldn't preserve an unlikely victory.

"It was a great, great comeback to tie the game in the ninth, then to actually go ahead in extra innings," manager Bob Geren said. "We had the game. We were in pretty good shape."

Drew's winning single came against Guillermo Moscoso (2-1), who was the ninth A's pitcher in the 5-hour, 17-minute game.

"We did a great job. The offense came through — tied it up off one of the best closers in the game," said starter Trevor Cahill, who lasted seven innings.

"We got hits when we had to. Just an all-around good job by them. It's just tough to lose a game like that when everybody's battling so hard and just doesn't have anything to show for it."

Oakland, which entered with the second-fewest runs in the AL, scored four times in a wild ninth against Papelbon after second baseman Dustin Pedroia booted a potential game-ending double-play grounder. Catcher Jason Varitek and Papelbon were ejected by plate umpire Tony Randazzo in the inning.

Mark Ellis hit a leadoff single and Daric Barton walked. After Landon Powell struck out, Pedroia had pinch-hitter Coco Crisp's grounder go through his legs, scoring a run. Pennington's RBI double made it 7-5 and Varitek was ejected while arguing during the hit.

Conor Jackson then tied it with a two-run single.

Papelbon was ejected after throwing the first pitch to the next hitter, Ryan Sweeney, and had to be restrained by manager Terry Francona. He appeared to bump Randazzo before being shoved out of the way by Francona.

Bobby Jenks got out of the inning when he struck out Hideki Matsui with runners on first and third with a pitch in the dirt that bounced away. Jackson would have scored from third on the play, but catcher Jarrod Saltalamacchia fired to first just in time.

The Red Sox opened a 5-2 lead in the sixth inning on RBI hits by Pedroia, Kevin Youkilis and Carl Crawford.

Crawford's two-run double made it 7-3 in the eighth.

The late blowup spoiled another solid start by Josh Beckett, who yielded three runs and four hits in six-plus innings. It was just the third time in 12 starts that he's given up more than two runs.

Cahill, coming off his worst consecutive starts of the season, surrendered five runs and eight hits. The right-hander, who won 18 games last season, is 0-2 with a 5.49 ERA in his last three outings.

Jackson also had a key double in the 11th as Oakland grabbed the lead, but Andrew Bailey couldn't hold it.

"You've got a chance to break a losing streak and get things right," Bailey said. "Just kind of obviously didn't do my job. Really not much to say other than that."

Boston tied it with two outs in the 11th. Saltalamacchia doubled high off the left-field wall and scored on Jacoby Ellsbury's double down the right-field line.

Matsui snapped a career-worst 0-for-19 slump with an 11th-inning single.

Crawford had four hits and drove in three runs and Adrian Gonzalez hit a solo homer for Boston.

Alfredo Aceves (3-1) pitched four innings for the win.

A's Insider notes: Sluggers boost confidence in loss

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

A few observations from the A's come-from-ahead 8-6 loss to the Boston Red Sox Friday night at Fenway Park...

- Was intrigued and, I guess, pleasantly surprised by Bob Geren's lineup to start the A's 10-game roadie. After two days off, Daric Barton returned, but hit sixth for the first time this season, rather than his usual second. Plus, Hideki Matsui, who I've advocated should be the team's everyday designated hitter until he either breaks out of his slump or shows that he has absolutely nothing left, was also back after missing the previous two games against right-handed pitchers. He hit clean-up.
- Matsui had an 0-for-5 night but, in what might serve as a confidence-builder, he drove in the A's first run of the night with a first-inning fielder's choice.
- Barton, meanwhile, had a pair of two-out, run-scoring singles that no doubt will help his confidence. But he also committed his seventh error of the season, on J.D. Drew's bouncer between first and second, and he could have padded the A's slim lead in the seventh. With one out, Josh Willingham at second and Kurt Suzuki at first, Barton grounded into a rally-killing, inning-ending double play. It was only the second time all season he's had a multi-hit, multi-RBI game (May 15 against the Chicago White Sox).
- There are few things in sports as deflating to a team as a pitcher, handed a four-run lead before he even takes the mound, giving it all back, plus one, before the end of the third inning. Welcome to Josh Outman's painful world. The left-hander lasting only 2 2/3 innings - the shortest non injury-related outing by an A's starter this season - and gave up five runs, four earned, in his third start of the season. His inability to get outs made it a battle of the bullpens.
- To which Guillermo Moscoso answered the challenge, with 2 1/3 scoreless innings. Initially skipped in the rotation due to Thursday's off day, the right-hander got his work in anyways, and impressed in doing so. Especially after giving up lead-off singles to Adrian Gonzalez and Kevin Youkilis in the fifth inning before getting out of it unscathed.
- If Matsui does flame out and the A's have to part ways with him, Josh Willingham should be the D.H. and Ryan Sweeney should be the everyday left fielder. Willingham had trouble playing the Green Monster - as has every player not named Carl Yastrzemski - but had a grate day at the plate with three hits, including two doubles.
- While it might be fashionable to beat up on Brian Fuentes for giving up the hit that allowed the winning run, he made the pitch that had to be made, shattering Carl Crawford's bat in the process. The problem was, Fuentes fell behind, first 2-0 and then 3-1, so he had to serve up a strike rather than a slider to get Crawford to chase. The runs that scored on the flare to

shallow center field were charged to Joey Devine, the first runs he's allowed in 33 innings over 33 games, dating back to Sept. 4, 2008. Yes, he's coming back from Tommy John Surgery.

A's place reliever Balfour on paternity leave

UPDATE -- 12:30 p.m.: Grant and Angie Balfour welcomed their daughter, Raegan Madison Balfour, into the world at 10:19 pm on June 2, 2011. She weighed in at 6 lbs 10 oz and 20.5 inches long.

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

A's right-hander Grant Balfour remained in the Bay Area Thursday for the birth of his daughter. As such, the relief pitcher was placed on the paternity list Friday by Oakland, which also recalled right-hander Fautino De Los Santos from triple-A Sacramento, in time for the opening game of the A's 10-game road trip to Boston, Baltimore and Chicago beginning tonight against the Red Sox.

Balfour, who signed a two-year, \$8.1-million free-agent contract with the A's on Jan. 11 after three-plus years in Tampa Bay, has made 25 relief appearances thus far and is 3-1 with one save and a 2.92 ERA. Among American League relievers, he is also tied for third in victories, tied for seventh in strikeouts (28) and tied for 10th in appearances. Opponents are hitting .205 against him, while left-handers are hitting .171, .083 with runners in scoring position.

De Los Santos, meanwhile, was initially called up to the big leagues for the first time in his career on May 20, but did not get into a game before being sent back to the River Cats four days later. In Sacramento, he has made nine appearances without a decision and has a 0.82 ERA with 11 strikeouts and six walks in 11 innings. De Los Santos, who has undergone Tommy John Surgery, has yet to allow a home run this season and opposing batters are hitting .184 against him, with lefties hitting just .067.

Balfour is the second A's player this season to go on the paternity list, as catcher Kurt Suzuki did for the birth of his daughter Malia for two days in late April.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sacramento opens road trip with 4th win in row

By Alex Sadorf / Sacramento River Cats

The River Cats were off to a rough start against the Sky Sox on Saturday night in Colorado Springs, but were able to turn it around and further solidify their lead in the Pacific Coast League Pacific Division standings.

Scott Sizemore and Matt Carson hit Sacramento's first back-to-back home runs of the season to put Sacramento ahead in the sixth inning. The River Cats held on to open their four-game road trip to Colorado Springs with a 5-3 victory.

The Sky Sox started the bottom of the first with the bases loaded and no outs. Right-handed pitcher Graham Godfrey was able to escape the situation, however, with only one run by Willy Taveras. Godfrey continued on for six innings and earned the win, his seventh in eight starts.

Designated hitter Anthony Recker entered on a 13-game hitting streak. He wasted no time making that number 14 with an RBI single in the second inning, bringing home Jai Miller to tie the game, 1-1.

In the top of the sixth the River Cats really made an impact, with the season's first back-to-back home runs. With Jemile Weeks on first, Sizemore hit the ball over the wall in right-center field. Carson hit the ball over the left-center field wall moments later, bringing the score up to 5 - 2 River Cats.

In the seventh inning, the Sky Sox built up a bit of momentum, with two instances of runners in scoring position, but it was not enough to catch the River Cats. The River Cats claimed the first game in this four-game series with a win of 5-3.

Sacramento is now 4.5 games ahead of Las Vegas in the division.

On Sunday the River Cats again face the Sky Sox at Security Service Field in Colorado Springs at 12:05 p.m.

RockHounds score 7 in 10th to beat Naturals

From staff reports , Midland Reporter-Telegram

SPRINGFIELD, Ark. -- For the third time in four days, the Midland RockHounds were forced to play into extra innings. And thanks to a timely offensive outburst in the 10th inning, the RockHounds picked up their second extra innings victory in three days.

Midland scored seven runs in the top of the 10th, pulling away for a 16-9 victory against the Northwest Arkansas Naturals at Arvest Ballpark on Saturday.

Five of the RockHounds' first six batters reached base in the inning with second baseman Tyler Ladendorf and center fielder Jermaine Mitchell each connecting on RBI singles.

A fielding error allowed Mitchell to score, which was followed by a three-run homer by Adam Heether.

Jon Meloan pitched a perfect bottom of the 10th to pick up the victory. Catcher Petey Paramore also had a three-run homer in the top of the second.

Northwest Arkansas forced the game into extra innings after a Christian Colon solo homer led off the bottom of the ninth.

The RockHounds face the Naturals in Game 2 of a three-game series at 6 p.m. today at Arvest Ballpark.

Ports Split Series With Blaze

06/05/2011 12:57 AM ET

The Ports were unable to keep their bats hot on Saturday, falling to the Blaze by a final score of 5-1. Ports Starter Jacob Brown made his second appearance of the season, and unfortunately fell to 0-2 despite having been solid in both appearances.

The Blaze got off to a quick start, putting two runs on the board in the first. With two outs already recorded in the first, Yasmani Grandal, who had a big night going 3-for-5 on the evening, got the first hit of the evening, a scorching single to right center field. Henry Rodriguez stepped up to the plate after Grandal and blasted a 0-1 pitch over the left field wall. Ports starter Jacob Brown got out of the inning without any more trouble.

The Blaze would strike again in the fourth, putting two more runs on the board. Chris Richburg started the inning with a single, and was quickly advanced to second as Ryan LaMarre reached on a fielding error. After Alex Bucholz grounded out, a strange play made it appear that the Ports might get out of the inning unscathed. Blaze designated hitter Stephen Hunt hit what would have been a single and loaded the bases until LaMarre made a poor base-running decision, heading towards third base which was already occupied by Richburg. Richburg was forced to head towards home and an easy throw to Ports catcher Ryan Ortiz resulted in the second out of the inning. However, a well hit single from AJ Means brought LaMarre and Hunt across home plate to make it 4-0 through four innings.

The Blaze would grind out one more run in the sixth. Bucholz started the inning off with a double, advanced to third on a groundout, and was driven home by a Josh Fellhauer single.

The Ports bats were quiet for most of the game. Anthony Aliotti three of the Ports five hits, including a single in the ninth with Ortiz on base to start a rally. Jason Christian hit a bloop single to send Ortiz home and prevent the Ports from being shutout. The Ports were unable to do anything else in the game, splitting the series with the Blaze.

The San Jose Giants come into town next, as Dan Straily faces off against Zack Wheeler on Sunday. The Giants have had the Ports number all season leading the season series 8-1. Tomorrow's Root Beer Float Day has been postponed to a yet-to-be-determined date due to incimate weather.

Lugnuts Blank Bees 6-0

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

LANSING, MI- The Lansing Lugnuts (32-22) held the Burlington Bees (38-19) to just four hits en route to a 6-0 win at Cooley Law School Stadium on Saturday night. Saturday's game was the first the Burlington offense was shut out in 2011.

The Lugnuts scored one run in the first inning against Burlington RHP Blake Hassebrock (3-2). LF Marcus Knecht (3-4) doubled and went to third base when DH Michael Crouse (1-3) grounded into a double play. 3B Bryson Namba (3-4) singled home Knecht for a 1-0 lead.

Lansing added a run in the fourth inning on an RBI single by C Jack Murphy (2-4) and pushed across two runs on a throwing error in the fifth inning. Knecht singled with two outs in the fifth inning and went to second base on a walk to 1B K.C. Hobson (2-3). Crouse reached first base on a single and moved to second base on a throwing error by SS Yordy Cabrera. Both runners scored on the error for a 4-0 lead.

RF Marcus Brisker (0-3) hit a sacrifice fly to center field in the sixth inning to score Pierre for a 5-0 lead.

The Bees and Lugnuts finish their series on Sunday afternoon at 1:05 p.m. RHP Josh Bowman (5-1, 2.77) gets the start for the Bees against RHP Daniel Webb (4-4, 6.43) for the Lugnuts.