

Oakland A's lose 6-3 to Boston Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's have seen enough of Fenway Park for a while.

But their problems extend beyond the storied venue that served as their house of horrors over the weekend.

Left-hander Brett Anderson got roughed up again in Sunday's 6-3 loss that completed a three-game sweep for the Boston Red Sox.

The A's (27-33) have lost six in a row. Their tailspin couldn't have come at a worse time, as the American League West-leading Texas Rangers have won eight of their past nine.

Oakland is in last place and trails Texas by seven games, having dropped 5 1/2 games in the standings in the past week.

"It might be a little cliché, but you start worrying about other teams, and you're done," second baseman Mark Ellis said. "We've got things in here we need to worry about without worrying about other teams."

Topping the list of concerns is starting pitching, and who would have thought that to be the case with this team?

Anderson (3-6) gave up five runs in five innings, serving up Carl Crawford's three-run homer in the second and Adrian Gonzalez's two-run shot in the fourth.

The left-hander is 1-5 with a 5.73 ERA and eight home runs allowed over his past eight starts, and he scolded himself for not pitching deeper to help a tired bullpen.

"Today was pretty much terrible," Anderson said. "I was trying to eat up innings to try to help our team. It's pretty much as bad a job as I can do to go five innings."

Anderson said his slider, a go-to pitch, is lacking sharpness and velocity.

Crawford crushed a slider for his three-run blast.

The A's had pulled to within 3-2 when Anderson tried spotting a fastball on the outside corner to Gonzalez. The first baseman sent it over the Green Monster for an opposite-field two-run shot that left the A's trailing 5-2.

"He just hasn't been as crisp or sharp with any of his pitches," A's manager Bob Geren said.

Anderson said his slider usually sits in the 82-83 mph range, but recently it's dipped to around 79 or 80 mph.

"Even when I get ahead and set them up for it, it's just rolling through the zone and getting hit," he said.

His fastball -- which hit 96 mph in his rookie season of 2009 -- now seems to clock in the low 90s regularly. But Anderson, who missed a large chunk of time last season because of elbow problems, contends that his velocity from two seasons ago was an aberration and that his current reading is more the norm.

The A's top three starters -- Anderson, Trevor Cahill and Gio Gonzalez -- all have shown vulnerability lately.

Gonzalez will start Monday's series opener against Baltimore, but Geren hasn't decided if Guillermo Moscoso or Josh Outman -- or someone else -- will start Tuesday. It's Moscoso's turn, but he was needed in relief Friday and Saturday, and Outman would be on three days' rest.

Geren was asked if he's concerned about his team falling into a hole it can't escape from, given the Rangers' hot streak.

"We can't look at other teams," Geren said. "We've just got to get it going and string together some wins."

Anderson hit Crawford with a fastball on his next at-bat after the homer, prompting Crawford to jaw at him on his way to first.

Home plate umpire Larry Vanover warned both benches at that point but took no action after Red Sox starter John Lackey hit Kurt Suzuki and Conor Jackson later in the game.

A's report: Pitching-heavy draft class may be worth tapping into

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BOSTON -- The A's took hitters in the first round in each of the last three drafts, trying to replenish a farm system that lacked impact offensive players.

This year's major league draft, which begins Monday, is particularly stocked with pitching. Might the A's break from recent history and look to the mound early?

Their first pick comes at No. 18.

"You can say there's lots of pitchers so we should take a pitcher," A's scouting director Eric Kubota said. "Or you can say there's not many position players so we should take a position player (while they're available)."

Baseball America's Jim Callis and ESPN's Keith Law both have predicted the A's will take University of Connecticut outfielder George Springer, a raw talent who Baseball America says "may have the best all-around tools of any college player in the last decade."

But most of the best pitchers in the A's system have graduated to the majors in recent seasons, leaving a lack of depth on the mound.

"We're a tad thin in starters," special adviser to baseball operations Grady Fuson said. "I think anyone will tell you that you don't draft for need. But in the first three to four rounds, there's a lack of premium college position players. That may lean us more toward pitching with those first three picks."

After picking 18th, the A's hold the 105th pick (third round) and the 136th pick (fourth round). They relinquished their second-round pick to Tampa Bay for signing Type A free agent Grant Balfour in the offseason.

Balfour was reinstated from paternity leave Sunday. To make room for him, infielder Andy LaRoche was designated for assignment. The A's have 10 days to trade LaRoche, release him or send him to the minors if he clears waivers.

The move left the A's with eight relievers, a reflection of how fatigued their relief corps was after Saturday's 14-inning defeat. It's also a sign that the A's believe infielder Adam Rosales (fractured right foot) is close to being activated from the disabled list. The A's are without a true backup infielder right now.

Josh Willingham did not play after injuring his left Achilles tendon Friday. The outfielder did play Saturday and is hopeful of returning Monday.

Chin Music: Andy LaRoche designated for assignment; Geren dealing with a thin bench

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 6/5/2011 10:22am.

Here's the rundown on A's news from Fenway this morning ...

With reliever Grant Balfour coming off the paternity list, infielder Andy LaRoche was designated for assignment, meaning the A's have 10 days to trade him, release him or send him to the minors if he clears waivers. Other teams have a shot to pluck him off waivers and just assume his salary.

The move is a reflection of how much the A's need bullpen depth right now after Saturday's 14-inning game. Oakland has eight relievers, choosing not to ship a pitcher out to make a roster spot for Balfour. It's also a sign that infielder Adam Rosales is very close to being activated from the DL. LaRoche even mentioned that he knows Rosales is close to returning, so even without LaRoche, the A's shouldn't be without an extra infielder for long. For now, manager Bob Geren said Kevin Kouzmanoff would be his choice to play shortstop if something happened to Cliff Pennington.

—Along with a fatigued bullpen, Geren has a very light bench today. Left fielder Josh Willingham is out of the lineup after injuring his left Achilles tendon on Saturday. Geren lists him as day to day, but he'd like to avoid having to use Willingham. That leaves catcher Landon Powell and Hideki Matsui as the only healthy position players on the bench. It's no surprise that Geren said he'd be OK using Matsui for outfield duty if it came to that. Geren was asked light-heartedly if he was hoping to avoid extra innings today. "Win in nine," he said of his preferred plan.

The lineups:

A's — Crisp CF, Sweeney LF, DeJesus DH, Jackson RF, Suzuki C, Barton 1B, Ellis 2B, Kouzmanoff 3B, Pennington SS; Anderson LHP.

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

Oakland Tech High baseball prospect James Harris seeking to end the Oakland Athletic League's major league draft drought

By Jimmy Durkin, Oakland Tribune

Oakland Tech High center fielder James Harris doesn't bat an eye when asked which baseball player he tries to emulate on the field.

"Oh, Rickey Henderson," Harris said. "It's been easy. I go to his high school, play on his field "... he played for the A's.

"He runs fast, I'm a runner. His instincts, that first step. Everybody in the park can know he's going (to steal), but you've still got to get him out. I want to be like that. One of the greatest to play."

Harris is likely to be selected in the Major League Baseball amateur draft, which begins with the first round Monday. Rounds two through 30 occur Tuesday, which is when Harris' name likely will be called.

He's looking to be next in the line of baseball legends from the Oakland Athletic League, a list that includes greats such as Frank Robinson, Joe Morgan, Curt Flood, Vada Pinson and Henderson, a 1976 graduate of Oakland Tech for whom the school's baseball field is named.

Harris figures to be the first Oakland Tech player drafted since Michael Denard in 1998. In the tradition-rich OAL, there hasn't been a player drafted who eventually reached the big leagues since Oakland High's Rob Sasser in 1993, according to information on thebaseballcube.com. Sasser, a 10th-round pick, totaled one major league at-bat in 1998 for the Texas Rangers.

Harris worked out for the Giants on Tuesday at AT&T Park and traveled to Petco Park in San Diego on Wednesday to work out for the Padres. He's heard from teams that he could go as high a sandwich pick (the round of compensatory picks in between the first and second rounds) and as low as the fifth round. Baseball America says Harris is "raw and may need two years in rookie ball, but he has huge upside." They also call him an "explosive athlete" who "can fly on the bases and in center field." ESPN's Keith Law ranked Harris as the No. 67 overall prospect in the draft as of May 12.

Bip Roberts, who was drafted from Skyline in 1982, had a 12-year major league career that included an All-Star appearance. Since then, few baseball players have come through the pipeline that seems to have shifted sports to basketball and football.

"Back in my day, there were a lot of Oakland ballplayers in the big leagues," Oakland Tech baseball coach Eric Clayton said. "We had people that we knew that made it. In this day and age, it's few and far between."

Denard, Tech's most recent draftee, was also a star fullback who chose to honor a football scholarship to Oklahoma State when he fell to the 31st round in the baseball draft. His brother, longtime OAL coach Eugene Denard, said his brother's football talent hurt his draft status and forced him to choose against his preferred sport.

"If he had gone in the fifth round like (scouts) had expressed he would've gone, he wouldn't have gone to Oklahoma State," said Eugene Denard, who was Tech's coach from 1994-2004 and coached at Fremont from 2007-11. "Mike always wanted to play baseball."

Harris always played basketball growing up and was a first-team OAL All-City pick this past season for the Bulldogs. But he fell in love with baseball the minute he stepped on the diamond when he was 5 years old.

"My mom convinced me to play baseball one year," Harris said. "At the end of the season, I said, 'Mom, can you sign me up next year?' It was the last game of the season. We hadn't even got to the summer and I was ready for next year."

He's watched as friends have veered toward other sports, but he's never wanted to leave baseball. He says his biggest motivation is one of his first coaches, Ramon Beamon.

"The way I play baseball now is the way he taught me as far as my instincts and being aggressive and going hard out there every time," Harris said. "It's just having the mindset knowing that you're the best player out there on the field."

Beamon died when Harris was 12. Harris said he feels that summer is when he took his game up a notch.

"It took a lot out of me when it happened," Harris said of Beamon's death. "And that summer, I think it showed because I played with more heart. I play the game for him, and I know he's watching me."

Harris also hopes his success can have a lasting impact on his teammates and others in the OAL.

"I've been talking to my teammates all year," he said. —%o'Take advantage of this. I'm happy (scouts are) looking at me, but I've already done what I've had to do to bring them. Now it's your job to bring them back. I want to give you guys the opportunity I have.'

"I don't want it to be just a one-time thing where they come out one year and don't come out again for the next four, five, six, seven years and it's just some big thing again. Because Oakland does have talent, and I just want people to know that."

OAL BASEBALL STARS

Some notable Oakland Athletic League products:

Player, school Year signed
Curt Flood, McClymonds 1956
Rickey Henderson, Oak. Tech 1976
Jackie Jensen, Oakland 1949
Ernie Lombardi, McClymonds 1931
Joe Morgan, Castlemont 1962
Lloyd Moseby, Oakland 1978
Vada Pinson, McClymonds 1956
Bill Rigney, Oakland 1943
Bip Roberts, Skyline 1982
Frank Robinson, McClymonds 1953

Red Sox power past A's, 6-3

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Three games at Fenway Park against the Red Sox were no more kind to the A's than last week's series against the other beast of the AL East.

The Yankees started Oakland's six-game losing streak by sweeping the A's at the Coliseum, and Boston continued things by taking all three at Fenway over the weekend, finishing with a 6-3 victory Sunday.

The A's fell a season-high six games below .500 and are suddenly seven games behind division-leading Texas.

"We ran into a couple of good teams that beat us up pretty good," A's second baseman Mark Ellis said.

Oakland starter Brett Anderson, kept on his regular rest in order to pitch against Boston - a team he usually handles well - gave up five runs, three on a homer by Carl Crawford and two on a homer by Adrian Gonzalez.

Anderson had allowed 11 hits and 10 runs, nine earned, against New York in his previous outing. The primary problem he is having lately, Anderson said, is that his slider doesn't have its customary bite, and he also has lost velocity on it. The pitch is usually in the 82-83 mph range, Anderson said, but now it's 79-80 mph.

His fastball is also down a few ticks from where it was two years ago, but Anderson said that the low- to mid-90s he was hitting then was the anomaly, not the high 80s he's throwing now. The uncooperative slider is the bigger issue.

"It's rolling in there," he said. "It doesn't have good sharpness in the zone. It's not a good swing-and-miss pitch."

Crawford's homer in the second was a case in point.

Anderson said he needs to follow fellow starter Trevor Cahill's lead and watch video to see what mechanical adjustments he can make to regain his most important pitch.

The next time he faced Crawford, Anderson tried to go inside and hit the Boston outfielder. Both benches were then warned, in part because Crawford was hit after a home run and in part because A's outfielder David DeJesus had been hit on the right foot in the first inning.

Boston starter John Lackey hit two more men after the warning, but he was not ejected because it was clear neither was intentional. The consensus was that the initial warning probably wasn't necessary.

"It's not like Crawford pimped the home run or did anything to be hit," Anderson said.

"I thought it was silly," Ellis said of the warning. "It had no bearing on the game."

In six previous outings against the Red Sox, Anderson was 4-1 with a 2.08 ERA. He was unhappy he wasn't more efficient Sunday, because the A's bullpen was worn out after a 14-inning game, but the characteristically patient Boston lineup ran up his pitch count to 103 through five innings. Rookie Fautino De Los Santos had to go two innings, and Brad Ziegler worked the eighth.

Starting pitching carried the A's through the first two months, and though Oakland still leads the league in ERA, over the past eight days, the starters have gone 1-4 with an 8.52 ERA in seven starts.

"When we hit, we don't pitch. When we pitch, we don't hit," Ellis said. "That's the way you lose games. Hopefully, we can get it all together and get on a roll."

Beasts of East

After sweeping Baltimore to get back to .500, the A's have lost six straight to the Yankees and Red Sox. Some of the numbers:

-- The A's were outscored 42-22.

-- A's starters had an 8.73 ERA.

-- The A's were outthomered 8-3.

A's designate Andy LaRoche for assignment

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

With **Adam Rosales** close to coming off the disabled list, the A's decided to designate backup infielder **Andy LaRoche** for assignment slightly earlier than planned.

Oakland had a more urgent need for pitching after heavy bullpen use, 12 innings, over the previous two games, so rookie right-hander **Fautino De Los Santos** remained on the roster Sunday when reliever **Grant Balfour** came off paternity leave.

"They just told me that with Rosy coming back, they had to make a decision," LaRoche said. "It's definitely disappointing, but I guess I'll play it by ear now and see what my best opportunity is."

LaRoche, who started 28 games and played all four infield positions, said he had enjoyed his time with the A's, and he's hopeful that another team will have interest in him for a big-league spot.

Should LaRoche clear waivers, the A's would like to keep him, according to assistant general manager **David Forst**. LaRoche would have the right to decline a minor-league assignment if he clears waivers.

Rosales has been on the DL all season after right-foot surgery in December. He went 0-for-3 with two walks in Triple-A Sacramento's 12-10 win at Colorado Springs on Sunday.

Willingham out: **Josh Willingham** was out Sunday with left Achilles tendon discomfort, which he said he incurred running on a double Friday night. Willingham said he is hopeful he'll be able to play tonight.

With Willingham sidelined, the A's bench Sunday consisted of catcher **Landon Powell** and slumping designated hitter **Hideki Matsui**.

Briefly: **Guillermo Moscoso**, who pitched in relief Friday and Saturday, will start Tuesday or possibly Wednesday in Baltimore. If he goes Wednesday, **Josh Outman**, who threw 67 pitches Friday night, would move up a day to pitch Tuesday. ... All four of **Kevin Kouzmanoff's** homers have come on the road.

A'S LEADING OFF

A new home? Since dropping from second to sixth in the order, first baseman Daric Barton is 6-for-12 with four RBIs, three runs and three walks. David DeJesus has a .393 average when hitting second this year.

Drumbeat: Andy LaRoche designated, Josh Willingham out; A's very thin

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Fenway Park, 6/5/2011 9:28am

With the A's bullpen worn out after 14 innings on Saturday, the team elected to keep right-hander Fautino De Los Santos - who worked only one third of an inning in his big-league debut yesterday - and they designated infielder Andy LaRoche for assignment in order to reinstate reliever Grant Balfour from the paternity list.

LaRoche was going to come off the roster later this week, anyway, when Adam Rosales comes off the DL, but that might not have been until Thursday at Chicago - until the 14-inning game. But five A's pitchers, including starter Guillermo Moscoso, had worked each of the first two games of the Boston series, and closer Andrew Bailey isn't ready to go back-to-back yet.

Josh Willingham is not available today with Achilles tendon discomfort. He's considered day-to-day, the problem is thought to be minor, but that leaves the A's bench today as: backup catcher Landon Powell and Hideki Matsui.

Manager Bob Geren said that he'd consider using Matsui in the outfield today if needed. David DeJesus is serving as the DH today. Here's the lineup behind Brett Anderson: Crisp cf, Sweeney lf, DeJesus dh, Jackson rf, Suzuki c, Barton 1b, Ellis 2b, Kouzmanoff 3b, Pennington ss

The available reliever: Balfour, De Los Santos, Brad Ziegler, Criag Breslow and maybe Michael Wuertz.

Moscoso's scheduled start Tuesday might be moved back to Wednesday at Baltimore and Josh Outman might be moved up from Wednesday to Tuesday because he threw only 60 pitches on Friday. So no need at this point to dip down to Sacramento for a starter during the week.

LaRoche said that he'd enjoyed his time with Oakland, but he is hopeful that another team will have interest in him for a big-league spot. The A's probably would be OK with that; not only do they have Rosales coming back but they also now have Scott Sizemore at Sacramento as potential backup infielder, if needed.

Breaking ball betrays Anderson, A's vs. Sox

Lefty yields two homers as Oakland gets swept out of Boston

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- Brett Anderson had the credentials to do it.

The A's lefty, entering Sunday's series finale against the Red Sox looking to halt the club's five-game winless drought and save a drained bullpen that was overworked in the previous day's 14-inning contest, brought with him a 2-0 record and 2.65 ERA in three career starts at Fenway Park.

But one dysfunctional breaking ball and two long balls later, Anderson was gone after just five innings. And the A's, with not enough offense to counter the attack, were ushered out of Boston with a 6-3 loss, marking their second-straight three-game sweep at the hands of an American League East powerhouse.

Anderson gave up nine hits and five runs, with two walks and two strikeouts, and Oakland's starting staff is now 1-4 with an 8.29 ERA in the team's last seven games, allowing at least four earned runs in each -- all following a 16-game stretch in which A's starters went 5-5 with a 2.21 ERA and .238 opponents' batting average.

The Red Sox, who tagged Oakland for 23 runs in the weekend set, were well aware of those very numbers.

"We just beat up on the best pitching in the league," said Boston's David Ortiz, who went 6-for-11 in the series. "You look at the board, and those guys' ERA, it seems like they're playing Nintendo with the hitters or something like that. It's just crazy, you know? But if you look at them, pretty much every single one of them knows how to spot their pitches. They can throw any pitch at any time. That's what makes them so good."

Normally, yes, but that good has been missing. And it just so happens that the previously absent offense has suddenly found life.

"I think, sooner or later, it was bound to happen for us to start swinging the bats," said Mark Ellis. "When we hit, we don't pitch, and when we don't hit, we pitch. That's how you lose games. Hopefully we can get it all together and get on a little bit of a roll."

Oakland got a long ball of its own from Kevin Kouzmanoff in the third inning, but it was the ones before and after from the other side that dictated the game.

Anderson offered up back-to-back singles to Ortiz and Jed Lowrie to open the second, and an ensuing inside breaking ball to Carl Crawford made its way just over the right-field wall to hand the Red Sox a three-run lead.

"That was a great swing -- and against a guy that's really been tough on us," Boston manager Terry Francona said. "We have nobody with numbers against this guy. He's kind of had his way with us."

"It wasn't really a location problem," Anderson said. "It was more lack of movement and sharpness to it. It just kind of rolled right into his bat instead of breaking hard away from him."

The laboring southpaw walked away from the frame with 53 pitches attached to his name, and in the fourth -- for the second time of the day but just the fourth all season -- he surrendered a home run to another lefty, this time to Adrian Gonzalez in the form of a two-run shot into the Green Monster Seats.

All four long balls against left-handed hitters have come in Anderson's last two starts. The previous 60 of his career, in comparison, resulted in just six. Much of that can be traced to a continual struggle with a breaking ball that was nearly untouchable at the start of the season.

"My stuff was pretty bad," he said. "I'll go back and look at it mechanically and hopefully make an adjustment, get my breaking ball back to where it has been and where I want it to be. It's not very good right now. It's just kind of rolling in there. It doesn't have any sharpness going into the zone, and it's not a good swing-and-miss pitch. Even when I get ahead and set them up for it, it's just kind of rolling through the zone and getting hit, whether it's a righty or lefty."

Anderson said such issues have surfaced in the past "a little bit, but not where I'm at right now.

"Usually, even if it was slow, it would be 82-83 [mph], and right now, it's 79-80 [mph]. Hopefully I can make a mechanical adjustment and get it back to where it needs to be."

As for his fastball, "I can get outs with it if I just make quality pitches and locate well, and I haven't been doing that the past couple of starts," he noted.

Following Anderson's five-inning performance, rookie Fautino De Los Santos was handed the ball for two frames. The hard-throwing righty gave up a run in the sixth, but he also struck out four and walked none.

The A's, meanwhile, took advantage of a wild John Lackey, who hit three batters in the game -- two of which scored. The Boston right-hander plunked David DeJesus in the first frame, and after Anderson hit Crawford with a pitch in the third, home-plate umpire Larry Vanover issued warnings to both sides.

"I didn't mean to hit him," Anderson said. "My stuff wasn't good enough to hit him today. I tried to go in, and it got away from me a bit. It wasn't intentional."

Just an inning later, Lackey hit Kurt Suzuki -- who ultimately scored on an RBI base hit from Daric Barton -- without a word from Vanover, who again stayed quiet when Conor Jackson was hit by a Lackey pitch in the sixth. However, Lackey again paid for it, as Jackson was brought home via a run-scoring double off the bat of Barton, who is 6-for-13 since being dropped to the sixth spot in the order.

Oakland will look to halt its season-high-tying six-game losing streak on Monday in Baltimore, where the team is set to begin a three-game series against an Orioles team it swept last weekend.

"We just have to get it going tomorrow," manager Bob Geren said. "That's all you can look forward to. You can't look back. We've played well against Baltimore in the past, we've played well against them this year, so we'll start tomorrow."

Oakland designates LaRoche for assignment

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- The A's, in need of as much bullpen help as possible following Saturday's five-plus hour game vs. the Red Sox, elected to designate infielder Andy LaRoche for assignment on Sunday morning when they reinstated right-hander Grant Balfour from the paternity leave list.

The move means the A's are without an extra infielder, though Adam Rosales is expected to join the club soon barring any setbacks in his rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento following nearly six months of nursing his surgically-repaired right foot back to health.

"I was surprised," LaRoche said. "I didn't see it coming, but with Rosales coming off the disabled list, they were going to have to make a decision quick. With the game yesterday, they needed an extra pitcher, so I guess they can do all right for a couple of games without an extra infielder until Rosales comes back."

LaRoche, 27, was batting .247 with five RBIs in 40 games. He started 28 games at four different positions, including 17 at third base, after beating out Eric Sogard for the utility job out in Spring Training.

The A's, who now have an open spot on the 40-man roster, have 10 days to either place LaRoche on waivers, trade or release him.

"Obviously there were a lot of things that I could have done better," he said, "but I was happy with the opportunity to get to play all of the positions. I got a lot more playing time than I was expecting. Now I'll just see if another team out there needs me."

"I would obviously prefer to be in the big leagues, and if that's not here, hopefully it's with another team. If there's not that need, then I'll probably be in [Triple-A] Sacramento."

For the time being, manager Bob Geren said Kevin Kouzmanoff would play at shortstop or second base in the event Cliff Pennington or Mark Ellis was unavailable, and Conor Jackson could fill Kouzmanoff's place at third base.

"Obviously we needed the pitching today," Geren said. "Andy played all the positions and did a fine job of what we asked him to do."

Balfour activated off paternity leave list

BOSTON -- The A's welcomed back a familiar face with open arms on Sunday, reinstating right-handed reliever Grant Balfour from the paternity leave list.

Balfour represents one of just a handful of pitchers available out of the bullpen for the club's series finale against the Red Sox following Saturday's 14-inning contest.

A's manager Bob Geren said his available arms include Balfour, along with lefty Craig Breslow and right-handers Fautino De Los Santos, Brad Ziegler and possibly Michael Wuertz.

"A win in nine would be best," Geren said, smiling.

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

Willingham out of lineup with sore Achilles

BOSTON -- Outfielder Josh Willingham has been deemed day to day after aggravating his left Achilles tendon during Saturday's 14-inning game against the Red Sox.

Willingham's absence from Sunday's series finale, combined with the team's decision to designate Andy LaRoche for assignment, meant the A's had only two bench players available in Hideki Matsui and Landon Powell -- the former whom Geren said could play in the outfield if need be.

The 32-year-old Willingham has represented the club's biggest run producer, batting .304 with five doubles, four home runs and 14 RBIs over his last 13 games. Overall, he's batting .249 with 10 homers and 39 RBIs and is hitting .362 with runners in scoring position this season.

Willingham, who missed a couple of games earlier in the year because of back tightness, is coming off a 2010 campaign in which he played in just 114 games before watching his season come to a premature end following left knee surgery.

Worth noting

- The A's are still considering starting right-hander Guillermo Moscoso in Baltimore on Tuesday, even though he pitched in relief on Friday and Saturday. Another option, manager Bob Geren said, is moving up Josh Outman and having Moscoso throw on Wednesday. Outman threw just 67 pitches in his last start on Friday.

Last-place clubs looking to regain swagger

By Tom Singer / MLB.com | 6/5/2011 5:39 PM ET

Oakland pitching, the pace car in what a few days ago was the tight American League West's pitching race, has blown a tire. The Orioles also seek to rediscover the swagger they had only a week ago.

The three-game series between last-place teams kicking off Monday in Camden Yards is a chance for one team to get well quickly.

Will it be the Athletics, who have lost six straight since the AL West was bridged by merely a game-and-a-half top-to-bottom on May 29?

Or will it be the Orioles, who sat on .500 (24-24) on May 27 prior to seven losses in their last nine games?

In a battle of left-handers, Oakland's Gio Gonzalez takes the next stab at reversing mound mishaps which have seen the team's vaunted staff pierced for 42 runs in those six games.

Gonzalez will be opposed by Brian Matusz, making the second start of a season delayed by a muscle strain on his left side.

The A's continue a challenging portion of their schedule, a 10-game road trip that began with their sweep in Boston. Oakland has dropped eight of its last 10 away games.

Given the circumstances, manager Bob Geren will be handing the ball to the right guy. Gonzalez has been impressively consistent wherever he has pitched this season, and in the past has flourished in Camden Yards, where he has allowed a total of three runs in two previous starts.

O's manager Buck Showalter is happy to again be able to hand the ball to Matusz, who in his comeback started one of Baltimore's two wins in the last 10 days. The 23-year-old was extremely sharp in that 5 2/3-inning outing on Wednesday in Seattle, allowing only four hits while striking out three without a walk.

Athletics: Matsui back in familiar territory

- Hideki Matsui, rested Sunday in the throes of a 1-for-21 slump, should enjoy the visit to Camden Yards, a frequent stop during his New York Yankees days. Matsui has driven in 33 runs in 53 career games in the Birds' nest.

Orioles: Jones seeks to keep bat smoking

- Adam Jones remains hot, having gone 9-for-20 in his last five games.
- The Orioles remain without consecutive victories since a five-game winning streak came to an end on May 26.
- Derrek Lee has gone 2-for-8 with an RBI in his first two games back from his strained oblique muscle. He will miss some more time later this week to attend his grandfather's funeral.

Worth noting

The Orioles played a clean game in the field on Sunday, ending a streak of five games with at least one error. Third baseman Mark Reynolds is tied for the Major League lead with 11 errors -- with Toronto third baseman Edwin Encarnacion, who stayed off the field to DH in the series finale between the teams.

Reynolds has also homered his last two games -- the first time he has gone deep in consecutive games since last Aug. 30-31, with the D-backs.

A's in deep trouble, but denial's sky-high

Ann Killion, Special to The Bee (Sacramento)

If it's a little overcast in Baltimore this week, you'll have to forgive the A's. They arrive there today, bringing along their thick cloud of denial.

They've been swept in back-to-back series by the American League big boys, the Red Sox and the Yankees. Previously, they were swept by the reigning World Series champions at AT&T Park. They're in last place in the A.L. West, seven games out of first place and are six games under .500.

After more than a third of the season, the A's don't look anything like what they professed to be before the season: A.L. West title contenders.

And it's hard to detect any sense of urgency surrounding the team. The prevailing vibe is that things are just fine.

Denial seems to be the A's best game these days.

The team needed a productive trip to prevent yet another summer of apathy, wheel spinning and invisibility. Instead, they're flailing.

The A's young pitching hasn't been able to match up with the big boys: the starters are 1-4 with an 8.29 ERA over the past seven games.

The A's offense has been struggling. The biggest issue coming into the season -- whether manager Bob Geren could lead a team into contention -- remains a burning issue, whether A's general manager Billy Beane likes it or not.

Something seems dreadfully wrong -- at least from the outside, if not in the land of green and gold.

For example, when confronted with the fact that the A's had lost 10 in a row and 24 of 28 to the Yankees, Geren said that was "mostly a coincidence."

A coincidence? Like Rafael Nadal's dominance on clay is mere happenstance? In sports, lopsidedness is not a coincidence -- not the A's record against the Yankees, or the fact they've lost 15 of 20 at Fenway Park.

Remember the premise of "Moneyball," the book that made Beane famous, that the low-budget A's could compete with the big-money teams?

The season before the book's narrative, in 2001, the A's went 6-3 against the Yankees. But when the "Moneyball" movie comes out in September, it may look like a preposterous ancient myth.

The people in charge of the A's offer up denial at every turn. Beane insisted that being swept by the Yankees was comparable to the A's sweeping Baltimore – the second worst team in the American League – in the previous series. Geren said he fully expects offseason addition Hideki Matsui "to be fine and contribute and have a fine second half," despite Matsui wallowing in the longest hitless streak of his career, 0 for 19.

And then there was the public dustup between Geren and reliever Brian Fuentes.

Fuentes, frustrated by the way he was being used as the team's closer in the absence of injured Andrew Bailey, publicly called out Geren on two counts. He ripped Geren for how he was using the bullpen and for his lack of communication. In essence, he yanked the curtain back and revealed Geren's flaws for the world to see, making public one of the team's worst-kept secrets.

Poor communication and a puzzling mishandling of the bullpen are the two issues that have frustrated the A's for the four-plus years of Geren's reign. The faults are so glaring employees of the A's openly joke about them.

The rupture with Fuentes – a 10-year veteran who was clearly troubled by Geren's tactics, wasn't afraid to speak his mind and didn't back down from his remarks later – broke the seal of privacy.

Then former A's closer Huston Street weighed in from afar, telling a San Francisco Chronicle reporter that Geren was "my least favorite person I have ever encountered in sports from age 6 to 27."

The barb not only did further damage to Geren but reminded A's fans of one of their least favorite trades: when Beane sent Street and Carlos González to the Rockies for Matt Holiday, who played just 93 games with the A's.

Beane insisted that the Geren-Fuentes matter was closed, and he added that "the best response is to play good ball."

But that's exactly what the A's aren't doing right now.

Beane's protection of Geren is documented – he hired his best friend, the best man in his wedding, and doesn't seem to hold him accountable.

Though Geren is a lame duck, working in the last year of his contract, he doesn't seem to be in any danger or feeling the heat.

Beane undervalues the importance of a manager, and he seems fine with letting Geren manage out the string even though expectations have changed this year.

Even worse, owner Lew Wolff weighed in on the Geren-Fuentes issue, using the words "fantastic" and "terrific" to describe Geren. Wolff gushed, "I personally love the way he deals with everybody. I love the guy. I love everything about him."

That doesn't do much to endear himself to frustrated A's fans who blame Wolff for most of the A's woes.

The culture of denial starts at the top. Wolff and co-owner John Fisher have little incentive to improve either their product or the ballpark experience, thanks to revenue sharing.

Their position is that everything will get better once they are allowed to move to San Jose. That overlooks the fact they may never get approval, they have driven away almost all of their fans, and the process looks suspiciously like a deliberate strategy: alienate their fans in order to prove they can't survive in Oakland.

Beane, once the shining star of baseball activity, doesn't seem particularly bothered by his team's mediocrity.

Maybe Beane is older and more patient. Maybe he's basking in the glow of being played by Brad Pitt in the upcoming "Moneyball" movie. Or maybe, now that he has an ownership stake, he's personally invested in the A's strategy of apathy.

Meanwhile, the players are dealing with the harsh reality of being the A's, getting rolled by the big boys, playing in front of tiny home crowds in a rundown stadium, and being told by their bosses that their problems are either coincidences or that everything is terrific.

The denial is thick. And the season is slipping away.

Baseball players have a special love for their gloves

By MIKE DIGIOVANNA, Los Angeles Times

ANAHEIM, Calif. -- Last December, Bobby Wilson married a woman he met in 2004 while playing minor league baseball in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. But the Los Angeles Angels' reserve catcher readily admits she was not his first love.

Wilson wistfully recalled that his first soul mate had a nice tan, leathery skin and a musky scent he found intoxicating. The two were inseparable for five years.

And his wife isn't even jealous. That's because the object of Wilson's affection was a Rawlings infielder's mitt he got when he was 5 years old.

"I don't think that glove left my side for five years," says Wilson, 28. "I carried it to school with me. As soon as we got home, we played baseball until dinner. It was with me when I went to bed.

"To be honest, I think I slept with my first glove every single night the first year I had it. Most kids that age have a teddy bear. I had my baseball glove to cuddle with."

Few connections are deeper and more intimate than the bond between ballplayers and their gloves. It's not merely a tool of the trade, it's an extension of the hand - a crafted piece of leather players rely on to scoop up grounders, haul in fly balls, catch 95-mph fastballs and, in the case of pitchers, prevent line drives from shattering their cheekbones.

Baseball players are unique in this regard. Hockey players are fussy about their sticks, preferring certain curvatures of blade and degrees of flexibility and personalizing them with gobs of tape. But like baseball bats, hockey sticks break and often last only a few games.

A good glove, one that fits just right, can span a career.

"If you're a samurai, it's your sword," Wilson says.

Some players name their gloves, treating them as if they had personalities and feelings.

Angels outfielder Torii Hunter's current glove is called "Coco." Before Coco, there were Sheila, Vanity, Susan and Delicious, a glove he used in the minor leagues.

"I switch up," Hunter says. "When she's being disrespectful and doing what she's not supposed to do, like missing balls, I get rid of her and pick up another one."

How does he name the gloves?

"I might see a beautiful woman on TV or in a magazine," says Hunter, 35, "and that's the name of the glove."

Hunter has used the same Rawlings "Trapeze" model his whole career, replacing it every two or three years. He wore four mitts winning his nine Gold Glove awards. He switched to Coco last August, when he moved from center field to right field.

Mizuno, Rawlings and Wilson are the largest glove manufacturers, each offering a variety of models ranging in price from \$75 to about \$400. Most major leaguers get at least two new gloves each spring - for free.

Players use spring-training games to determine which glove they will use in the regular season and which will be their backup if their "gamer" breaks. Gloves that don't make the cut are usually given away or signed and donated to charity auctions.

"It's like a relationship, you just know," Hunter says. "You start dating a girl, you hang out with her a couple times, you know this is the one for you. After a year, you get comfortable and you figure out whether she's the real deal. So after this year, I'll know if Coco is a keeper or not."

If you think that's a bit wacky, consider the odd methods players use to "break in" a new glove just the way they like it. That can include: stuffing it under a mattress, dipping it in water and tossing it in a clothes dryer, popping it in a microwave oven, lathering it with shaving cream, driving over it in a car, and beating it against a wall with a baseball bat.

When they find one they're comfortable with, one they trust, they don't like to part with it.

Former Oakland Athletics utility infielder Mike Gallego was so attached to his glove of eight years that he risked his life to rescue it as the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake rocked San Francisco's Candlestick Park before a World Series game.

"The power went out, there's complete havoc, and people are yelling, 'Get out! Get out!' " recalls Gallego, now the A's third base coach. "We're bumping into things, tripping over chairs and trying to get out of the stadium.

"I get halfway out there - I could actually see the parking lot by the door - and I realized, 'Oh, my God, my glove!' So I turn around and go against traffic back to the clubhouse, to the other side of the room.

"It's pitch black. At that moment, I didn't even think; instincts just took over. I grabbed the glove and made my way back outside."

Gallego loved his Rawlings RYX-Robin Yount model glove, named after the former Milwaukee Brewers star, because it was the perfect size - 11 inches from the palm to the tip of the index finger - to use for all three infield positions he played, shortstop, second and third. And it truly was one of a kind.

Eight years before the earthquake, Rawlings told Gallego that the company had stopped making that model because Yount wasn't playing the infield anymore.

"I told them, 'I'm still using it,' " says Gallego, 50. "And they said, 'You better take good care of it, because that's the last one.' "

Gallego had the glove restrung and patched a few times. He dabbed leather conditioner on it when needed. When he traveled, he put a little plastic shell inside so it wouldn't get flattened in his equipment bag.

Gallego's bat didn't pack much punch; he hit .239 with 42 home runs in 13 big league seasons. But his glove, he says, "got me to the big leagues. And that's what kept me there."

Former Angels shortstop Gary DiSarcina used the same Mizuno glove for 11 seasons. He says he liked it because it was a little heavier than his previous glove, prompting him to hold his fingertips to the ground in better fielding position.

"It was a good, quality glove, the tool of my trade," says DiSarcina, 43, a special assistant to Angels General Manager Tony Reagins. "If I was a carpenter, it would be my hammer. If I was a doctor, it would be my scalpel."

The glove, now retired, sits atop DiSarcina's desk in his home office in Massachusetts.

"It's beat up, ratty, filled with dirt and pine tar, smelly, stinky, crusty ... when I look at it, I can't believe I used it for that long," he says. "It needed two or three surgeries over the years. But it just ... fit like a glove. That's the best way to describe it. It was more of a security blanket. It was my little binky."

Cubs first base coach Bob Dernier's glove could win an award for continuous service. A minor league teammate gave it to him in 1979. He played with it throughout his 10-year major league career (1980-89) and has used it ever since in his coaching career.

The glove, a Mizuno outfielder's mitt, is flat as a skillet, faded to a light tan in some spots and discolored in others, cracked, torn and dried out.

"Look at me. I'm giving it a big hug as we talk. That's how I feel about this glove. It's sort of like me," Dernier, 54, says before a recent game at Dodger Stadium. "It needs a makeover, but it feels good inside."

The Angels' Hunter, known for his acrobatic catches, never puts his glove on the dirt and rarely lets it out of his sight.

"Every once in a while during batting practice, while I'm hitting, I'll turn around and look at my glove and say, 'Are you OK?' " Hunter says. "It's very personal. That glove was something that got me to the big leagues. I make a living with it."

Players who can't part with a favorite glove extend its life by having it reconditioned.

Nori Itoh, a Mizuno employee, comes to the U.S. from Japan each spring to work on mitts. Among the gloves Itoh has salvaged is one worn by Chicago White Sox outfielder Juan Pierre.

Its nickname: Old Faithful.

"You know in the movies when you blow on the mummy and it goes to dust? That's how Juan's glove was when Nori got it last winter," says Jim Guadagno, Mizuno's director of promotions.

"What he did was like a surgical procedure. He laced pieces together that had no business being laced together. He sewed patches into the glove. He mended where he could, used some glue in areas. It was like putting somebody back together."

In 2001, Pierre got "Old Faithful" - the first glove he'd ever had with his name stitched into the thumb - and has used it ever since.

"Every year it will be like, 'Oh, this is the last year,' but it's still holding on," Pierre says.

Wilson, the Angels catcher, has used Mizuno gloves as a professional, but he still has that first Rawlings mitt, which he keeps in a trunk at his parents' home in Seminole, Fla.

Every spring, he opens a box containing a new catcher's mitt, takes a long whiff of it, and thinks back to his first glove affair.

Red Sox down A's, 6-3

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — Adrian Gonzalez hit a two-run homer to reach 50 RBIs for the season and Carl Crawford had a three-run shot, powering John Lackey and the Boston Red Sox to a 6-3 victory over the Oakland Athletics on Sunday.

John Lackey pitched into the sixth inning in his first start in nearly a month as Boston swept the A's to salvage a split of a six-game homestand that started with three losses to the White Sox.

Matt Albers, Tommy Hottovy and Dan Wheeler combined for 2 1-3 innings of two-hit ball before Daniel Bard worked the ninth for his first save of the season — one day after regular closer Jonathan Papelbon blew a save opportunity and was ejected in the ninth inning of Boston's 9-8 victory.

Kevin Kouzmanoff homered for the Athletics, who have lost six straight. Brett Anderson (3-6) allowed five runs and nine hits in five innings.

Lackey (3-5), who was coming off a stint on the disabled list with a strained elbow, gave up three runs and three hits. He struck out two, walked two and hit three batters.

Boston now heads to New York for a three-game series with the first-place Yankees starting Tuesday.

The Red Sox got off to a fast start Sunday behind Crawford, who hit his fifth homer after David Ortiz and Jed Lowrie started the second inning with consecutive singles.

Kouzmanoff led off the third with his fourth homer and Daric Barton added a run-scoring single in the fourth, but Boston responded in the bottom half.

Gonzalez's drive into the Green Monster seats above left field made it 5-2 and gave him 50 RBIs just 59 games into the season. It was the second homer in as many games for the big first baseman, who has 12 for the season after hitting just one in his first month with the Red Sox.

Lackey had some control problems in his first start since May 11. His last hit batter was Conor Jackson, who stole second and scored when Barton doubled off Albers to get Oakland within two in the sixth.

Fautino De Los Santos, who struck out the only batter he faced in his major league debut on Saturday, had a more difficult time in his second appearance. Jacoby Ellsbury singled off De Los Santos with one out in the sixth, then advanced on two wild pitches and scored on Dustin Pedroia's single to left.

That put Boston up 6-3 and the bullpen held it, something it failed to do the day before when the Red Sox blew a 7-3 lead in the ninth and needed 14 innings to win.

NOTES: Red Sox manager Terry Francona said before the game that Clay Buchholz has been pushed back in the rotation in order to give his back some more rest. Tim Wakefield will take Buchholz's spot on Wednesday against the Yankees and Buchholz will start Friday at Toronto. ... Oakland manager Bob Geren gave slumping DH Hideki Matsui the day off. Matsui broke a career-worst 0-for-19 slump with an 11th-inning single Saturday. ... The Red Sox last swept the A's in August 2008.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Sign of summer: River Cats dominance

By Nick Lozito / Sacramento River Cats

There are two signs of summer in Sacramento.

The first is triple-digit weather: still waiting.

The second is total, utter and complete River Cats domination: check.

Sacramento topped host Colorado Springs 12-10 on Sunday afternoon, winning its fifth game in a row and improving its Pacific Coast League-best record to 38-20.

Jai Miller's grand slam highlighted a seven-run fourth inning that gave Sacramento a 12-2 lead. From there, Sacramento's bullpen allowed two runs over 5.0 innings to preserve the victory. Willie Eyre earned his sixth save of the season in a scoreless ninth inning. The veteran right-hander has recorded a save in his last five appearances.

Miller's home run was his team-leading 13th of the season. The center fielder has pounded the ball all season, as 23 of his 39 hits (59 percent) have been for extra bases. He has a team-high 13 home runs, eight doubles and two triples with a .300 average. To put that in perspective, entering Sunday, 33 percent of Sacramento's hits as a team were for extra bases.

Adrian Cardenas, Michael Taylor and Anthony Recker also homered for Sacramento, which entered Sunday with a 4.5-game lead over Las Vegas in the Pacific Coast League South Division. Las Vegas is playing a doubleheader with Fresno. Cardenas added a double and improved his team-best batting average to .338.

Pitching on the road is a challenge in the PCL, especially in the high altitude of Colorado Springs. Sacramento starter Travis Banwart struggled through 4.0 innings, allowing eight runs on seven hits and four walks.

RockHounds fall after bad fifth inning

From staff reports , Midland Reporter-Telegram

SPRINGFIELD, Ark. — Tim Smith smacked a three-run home run to right in a five-run fifth inning that helped the Northwest Arkansas Naturals bust open a close game in a 8-3 win against visiting Midland on Sunday.

Smith had four RBI on the day as the Naturals avenged a 16-9 extra-inning loss to the RockHounds Saturday, giving themselves a chance to win the three-game series in the finale tonight at 7.

The RockHounds grabbed the early lead on a two-out solo home run by Stephen Parker in the top of the first.

Northwest Arkansas tied the game when Derrick Robinson scored on a wild pitch by Fabian Williamson in the top of the first, then took a 2-1 lead on an RBI single by Anthony Seratelli in the bottom of the third.

Midland tied the game again on an RBI single by Grant Green, but the Naturals responded again, this time with an inning that put the game away for good.

The bottom of the fifth started with a walk by Robinson, who later gave the Naturals the lead again on an RBI double by Christian Colon.

But the Naturals weren't done there.

The next batter, Will Myers, scored Colon on an RBI double to left, then following a single by Seratelli, Smith launched his three-run shot to right to put Northwest Arkansas up 7-2.

The homer ended the night for Fabian Williamson, who gave up seven runs, all earned, on nine hits in four innings of work.

The RockHounds end the series with the Naturals tonight before returning home for an eight-game homestand.

Giants Beat Stockton: Jump to 9-1 Against Ports

06/05/2011 8:02 PM ET

The Stockton Ports fell behind the San Jose Giants in the first game of a three-game series at home, taking a 5-1 loss this afternoon.

Ports starter Dan Straily and Giants starter Zack Wheeler were off to ideal beginnings, both pitching perfect first and second innings. Offense on both sides came to life in the third inning, beginning with a single to centerfield by Giants catcher Tommy Joseph. Left fielder Nick Liles reached on a hit off the glove of third baseman Michael Gilmartin, ruled an error. Straily retired shortstop Carter Jurica, but then centerfielder Gary Brown would reach on a fielding error by shortstop Dusty Coleman. With the bases loaded, right-fielder Jarrett Parker drew a walk, which brought in Joseph to give the Giants a 1-0 lead before the end of the top half.

Stockton returned the favor in the bottom of the third with three two-out singles in a row by Dusty Coleman, second baseman Conner Crumbliss, and Michael Gilmartin, the last of which scored the tying run.

The 1-1 tie lasted until the top of the fifth, when Jurica doubled to left field. A sacrifice bunt by centerfielder Gary Brown moved Jurica to third, giving him the opportunity to score on the wild pitch that would come while designated hitter Francisco Peguero was at the plate. The Giants further padded their lead in the sixth, with a solo home run for Joseph over the left-field wall. Connor Hoehn would come in to replace Straily in the following inning, Straily having gone 6 innings, allowing five hits and three runs. Hoehn would retire the first three Giants batters he faced.

In the bottom of the seventh, the Ports attempted to get another two-out rally going, Coleman beating out a throw for an infield single, followed by a walk for Crumbliss. However, the inning would end on a ground out by Gilmartin.

Hoehn would not have as much luck in the eighth, giving up a home run to third baseman Chris Dominguez, which would also bring in Peguero, who had reached on a fielding error by Crumbliss, then stole second.

Hector Correa replaced Wheeler on the mound for the Giants in the eighth, after Wheeler went seven innings, giving up five hits and a run. Correa kept the Ports off the bases, retiring three in a row.

In the top of the ninth, Josh Lansford would come in to pitch for the Ports, after Hoehn allowed two hits and two runs in his two innings of work. Lansford struck out two before giving up a triple to right-fielder Jarrett Parker. No further damage was done, as Peguero grounded out to Lansford to end the inning.

Facing Giants closer Chuck Lofgren, the Ports failed to catch up in the bottom of the ninth, going down on two fly outs and a strike out. The Giants scored their 5 runs on 8 hits with no errors, and the Ports earned their lone run on 5 hits with 3 errors.

The Ports will have an interesting night tomorrow as the Giants have starter Barry Zito of the San Francisco Giants on a Major League rehab assignment. Zito will face off against Ports starter AJ Griffin, who has been solid in his first two starts in the Cal League. First pitch is scheduled for 7:05 p.m.

Landaeta Leads the Charge to a 4-2 Win

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

LANSING, MI-LF Douglas Landaeta (2-4) hit a two-run in the eighth inning to give the Burlington Bees (39-19) a 4-2 win over the Lansing Lugnuts (32-23) at Cooley Law School Stadium on Sunday afternoon. The Bees finish their six-game road trip with three wins and three losses.

The Bees scored a single run in the first inning against Lansing RHP Daniel Webb. RF Royce Consigli (0-3) walked and scored on a double by 2B Nino Leyja (2-5) for a 1-0 Burlington lead.

The Lugnuts scored two runs in the fourth inning to take a 2-1 lead. After RHP Josh Bowman retired the first nine Lugnuts hitters, DH Markus Brisker (1-5) doubled to lead off the fourth inning and went to third base on a groundout by C Carlos Perez (0-4). CF Jake Marisnick (2-4) lined an RBI single to left field to score Brisker.

Following a Marisnick steal of second base, RF Michael Crouse (2-4) hit an RBI single to drive him in from second base and make it 2-1.

Burlington tied the game in the eighth inning. Leyja reached base on an error and scored on an RBI double by DH Tony Thompson (1-4).

In the ninth inning DH Josh Whitaker (0-0) walked and went to second base on a single by CF Tyreece House (1-4). Consigli walked to load the bases and Landaeta hit a bloop single to left field to score both Whitaker and House for a 4-2 lead.

Pedro Vidal (4-1) pitched two scoreless innings to get the win. Bowman finished with two runs over seven innings.

After a league-wide off day on Monday, the Bees return home to start a three-game series with the South Bend Silver Hawks, the Midwest League affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks on Tuesday night at 6:30 p.m. It's KRAFT Singles Two for Tuesday with a two for one ticket offer when you present your KRAFT singles wrapper at the Community Field Box Office. It's also Hawkeye Two-for-Tuesday. Fans can get two for one general admission tickets when they present the Hawkeye

ticket ad at the Community Field Box Office. RHP Bradin Hagens (4-2, 4.22) gets the start for the Silver Hawks against RHP Jonathan Joseph (0-1, 6.46) for the Bees.