

**Oakland A's lose 7-4 to Kansas City Royals**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Trevor Cahill may not be on the disabled list like several of the A's other starting pitchers, but the once ruthlessly effective ace is definitely in a deep, debilitating funk.

Cahill, who was 6-0 on May 9, lost his fifth consecutive decision over seven starts Tuesday night as the A's fell to Kansas City 7-4, dropping their fourth game in five outings under new manager Bob Melvin.

Looking for some stability at home following a 1-9 trip, Cahill looked like he might give it to the A's after he breezed through a perfect first inning. But from that point until he was knocked out in the fifth, the 23-year-old right-hander was almost constantly in trouble.

Cahill (6-5) wound up pitching a mere 4 1/3 innings, allowing just four hits but a career-high seven walks. He also uncorked two wild pitches and didn't strike out a batter in Oakland's 13th loss in 14 games.

Answers? Cahill wishes he had some.

"I didn't know where the ball was going," he said. "At one point in the second and third inning, I was just trying to throw the ball down the middle and I couldn't even do that. So I knew it was going to be a rough night."

Cahill has given up 22 earned runs in his past five starts, and his ERA has jumped from 1.72 at the point of his last win on May 9 to 3.42.

Melvin has only seen two of Cahill's starts since being hired, so he is playing catch-up on the mystery. The manager thought the pitcher might have worked out some issues after throwing a strong bullpen session following his last poor start in Chicago, but now it's back to the drawing board.

"He was just pulling some balls, wasn't getting his comebacker," Melvin said. "The left side of the plate he was obviously having trouble with, but we'll just have to get that sorted out next time."

Melvin thinks Cahill's frustration level may be affecting his performance as well, but the pitcher didn't think so.

"I try not to think about it, really," he said. "I'm usually a laid-back guy. Even in Chicago (when he gave up six runs in his last start), I told myself I wasn't going to let it get to me. I was just going to try and throw strikes and not worry about it."

Cahill dug himself an early 2-0 hole through four innings largely through walks. The A's answered against Royals starter Danny Duffy in the bottom of the fourth inning when Hideki Matsui slammed his fifth homer of the year over the right-field wall, the fifth straight game he has driven in at least one run. It was also Matsui's 498th career home run spanning the Japanese and American major leagues.

But Cahill couldn't keep it close. He walked Eric Hosmer to open the fifth, threw two wild pitches while facing Jeff Francoeur and eventually walked him, then surrendered a Billy Butler two-run double over the head of left fielder Josh Willingham. Cahill surrendered a walk to Mike Moustakas and a single to Matt Treanor to load the bases, and that was it -- Melvin went to the bullpen.

Kansas City padded its lead with two more runs in the eighth off reliever Joey Devine, largely as a result of what appeared to be a missed call by third-base umpire Mike Estabrook.

"Those things are tough to comment on, but I trust your eyes," Melvin said. "It looked like the ball beat him there, but we didn't have the luxury of replay."

Oakland did score two runs in the bottom of the eighth to keep it close, but after Alcides Escobar's RBI double gave Kansas City another run in the top of the ninth, Joakim Soria pitched a scoreless bottom half and preserved the first major league victory for Duffy (1-2) in his sixth career start.

**New A's manager warms to charm of old Coliseum**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Bob Melvin conducted his first home introductory news conference Tuesday night by promptly pouring some praise on home -- the increasingly maligned O.co Coliseum. The new A's manager said he did his daily run around the ballpark and memories started flooding back, like the time he was 15 years old and took in a Day On The Green.

"The Who and The (Grateful) Dead," he said. "The Who never encored and they encored that day -- 'Johnny B. Goode.' When they left, I remember them standing up in the right-field bleachers looking down at the crowd. That was one of the things that popped into my head (Tuesday)."

Melvin said he attended many events at the Coliseum, both in the stadium and the arena, when he was growing up in Palo Alto. Most people agree it was a fine place then, but now?

"I still think it is," he said. "The field's terrific. I like older ballparks. I like ballparks with history. Got a few World Series in this ballpark, as well, that I've been to. People talk about this not being a great ballpark, but I'm biased. I kind of like it."

He wants his players to like it, too.

"I'm fine with playing here," Melvin said. "I know there are a lot of people that have different outlooks on that. Not in my position; you play the cards that are dealt. I want this club thinking this ballpark's an advantage to them."

Even owner Lew Wolff?

"Well, I haven't talked to Lew," he admitted. "I think he would understand my rhetoric, because we play here, and I want my team to feel good about playing here. If we have that conversation, I probably won't let you know how it goes, to tell you the truth."

Brandon McCarthy (stress reaction in right shoulder) and Tyson Ross threw bullpen sessions Tuesday. McCarthy threw 45 pitches and said he felt great. Ross threw 30 pitches and said he's pain-free from the oblique injury that landed him on the D.L.

And dare you get excited about Rich Harden? Melvin said Harden's ahead of Ross and McCarthy. He'll pitch a simulated game Wednesday and, if he comes out of that well, likely will get a rehab assignment in Stockton or Sacramento.

### **Chin Music: Melvin gives O.co Coliseum much-needed love, pitcher injury updates, Matsui**

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 6/14/2011, 6:56pm

In for Joe Stiglich tonight ...

Bob Melvin conducted his first home introductory press conference Tuesday night by promptly pouring some praise on the oft-bashed Coliseum. Obviously, owner Lew Wolff didn't brief him on what to say.

Melvin said he did his daily run around the ballpark and memories started flashing back, like the time he was 15 years old and took in a Day On The Green.

"The Who and The Dead," he recalled. "The Who never encored and they encored that day — Johnny B. Goode. When they left, I them remember standing up in the right-field bleachers looking down at the crowd. That was one of the things that popped into my head today."

Melvin said he attended many events at the Coliseum, both in the stadium and the arena, while he was growing up in Palo Alto. Most people agree it was a fine place then, but now?

"I still think it is," he said. "The field's terrific. I like this place. Maybe I'm biased because I grew up here, but I like older ballparks, I like ballparks with history. Got a few World Series in this ballpark as well that I've been to. People talk about this not being a great ballpark, but I'm biased. I kind of like it."

And he wants his players to like it, too. He doesn't want them thinking about an escape to a new yard.

"As far as the ballpark goes, until there's a decision on that, I'm fine with playing here," Melvin said. "I know there are a lot of people have different outlooks on that, but in my position, you play the cards that are dealt and that's playing in this

ballpark right now. I don't want myself thinking, 'We have to get in another ballpark.' I want this club thinking this ballpark's an advantage to them."

Even Lew Wolff?

"Well, I haven't talked to Lew," he admitted. "I think he would understand my rhetoric, because we play here, and I want my team to feel good about playing here. If we have that conversation, I probably won't let you know how it goes, to tell you the truth."

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Brandon McCarthy and Tyson Ross both threw bullpen sessions Tuesday. McCarthy threw 45 pitches and said he felt great. Ross threw 30 pitches and said he's totally pain-free from the oblique injury that landed him on the DL. And dare you get excited about Rich Harden? Melvin said Harden's ahead of both Ross and McCarthy. He'll pitch a simulated game Wednesday, and if he comes out of that well, will likely get a rehab assignment in Stockton or Sacramento.

"I feel the last few times I've been on the mound, I could have done more," Harden said. "So I'm pretty excited."

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Hideki Matsui said he's working hard in the outfield and is essentially ready to go when the A's play interleague games in NL parks. Melvin said he's still undecided on whether he'll make that move, but is dead set on Matsui remaining in the No. 3 hole.

"I was a little uncomfortable with rotating that third spot," Melvin said. "I think it's a significant position and it's a psychological position. If you're rotating guys in and out of the three-spot who aren't playing every day, what are you saying about your lineup?"

Melvin said he's intent on letting role players and bullpen guys what's expected of them well ahead of a day they might be expected to play.

"I can tell from my experience as a player and a guy who didn't play every day, it worked a lot better for me when I knew when I was going to play," he said. "It worked a lot better for me when I knew I had something to prepare for and had a chance to go in there and be successful. It's easy for the every-day players, they know when they're going to play, all you have to do is tell them when they're not going to play. It's the role players and the bench players who need the communication the most, and to an extent, the guys in the bullpen knowing what their roles are."

Tonight's lineup:

A's: CF Crisp, SS Pennington, DH Matsui, LF Willingham, RF Jackson, 3B Sizemore, C Suzuki, 1B Barton, 2B Weeks. P Cahill

KC: LF Gordon, CF Cabrera, 1B Hosmer, RF Francoeur, DH Butler, 3B Moustakas, C Treanor, 2B Getz, SS Escobar. P Duffy

### **A's, Trevor Cahill lose to Royals**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

On the field, the A's struggles continued. Trevor Cahill, one of two remaining starters from the Opening Night rotation, had another poor outing, and manager Bob Melvin's home debut was not a success.

Cahill, an All-Star last year, is winless in his past seven outings. On Tuesday, he allowed a career-high seven walks in the A's 7-4 loss to the Royals at the Coliseum.

Oakland continued to have defensive trouble, and for the second time in two games, the team was on the wrong side of a bad call on the bases.

Cahill gave up four hits and four runs in 4 1/3 innings, and he did not strike out a single Kansas City batter. He has struggled with his mechanics for more than a month.

Melvin said he thought that Cahill might be frustrated with his recent outings and trying to do too much as a result. Cahill said that he just hasn't had his usual feel for his delivery. "I don't feel comfortable repeating my delivery more than once in a row," he said.

Cahill said that, checking video, there are several mechanical issues that might be coming into play, but he can't stop and think about mechanics during the game. On Tuesday, even the basics eluded him.

"I was just trying to throw the ball down the middle, and I couldn't even do that," he said.

Cahill, who started the season 6-0, has lost five consecutive decisions. His opposing starter Tuesday, rookie Danny Duffy, earned his first big-league win and was showered with milk after the game - the A's do not provide alcohol in the Coliseum clubhouses.

The A's were charged with only one error but didn't play well in the field. And in the eighth, a blown call at third base by umpire Mike Estabrook - on what would have been the third out of the inning - cost Oakland two runs.

So Oakland is looking for positives in any place possible, and on Tuesday, one bit of bright news came from an unlikely area - the team medical report: The club, currently down five starting pitchers, might get three back by the start of July.

Rich Harden, out for four months with a muscle strain under his right arm, will throw a couple of simulated innings today at the Coliseum. He then is likely to make a start for Triple-A Sacramento on Monday.

Brandon McCarthy (shoulder) threw a 45-pitch bullpen session Tuesday and, he said, he believes he could be back in the Oakland rotation by July 1.

Tyson Ross (oblique strain) is just a tad behind McCarthy - he threw a 30-pitch bullpen session Tuesday.

"It was definitely a punch in the gut for us to have everyone go down at the same time," Ross said. "Three of us are coming back, and hopefully, we can build on that."

McCarthy's recurring stress fractures and reactions in his right shoulder are troubling, because the underlying problem remains a mystery to the many experts he has seen. McCarthy has been told that there are only five instances of the problem in baseball - and he accounts for four of them.

"They can at least name the thing after me," McCarthy said with a smile. "The B-Mac or something."

### **A's David DeJesus sits against former team**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**David DeJesus** did not play in Tuesday night's game against his former team, the Royals. Manager **Bob Melvin** has noted that right field is the most difficult decision for him each day.

Melvin thinks he has three options, including **Conor Jackson**, who played there Tuesday and who entered the night batting .339 against left-handers, and **Ryan Sweeney**, who leads the team in on-base percentage.

DeJesus was expected to be an everyday player after the A's traded right-hander **Vin Mazzaro** and a minor-leaguer for him. And at this time last year, DeJesus was considered one of the top potential midseason trade targets for contenders.

"I'll get my turn," DeJesus said, "and when I do, I'll do the best I can. I can't worry about it. All I can do is my best."

The logjam could be solved in several potential ways: injury, which is the reason the team has so many outfielders in the first place; Melvin could use Jackson at first base more often if **Daric Barton** continues to struggle; or the team could trade an outfielder at some point. **Josh Willingham's** name is being mentioned with regularity in connection with the Phillies.

**Matsui hits No. 498: Hideki Matsui** smoked a homer to right in his second at-bat against Kansas City's **Danny Duffy**, leaving him two home runs from 500 in his career, combined between Japan and the major leagues.

Matsui has two homers and six RBIs in five games since Melvin put him back in the everyday designated-hitter role Thursday.

**Lots of signings:** The A's agreed to terms with 22 players from last week's draft, including center fielder **Bobby Crocker** from Cal Poly, a fourth-rounder; Central Florida catcher **Beau Taylor** (fifth round); Feather River College center fielder **Dayton Alexander** (sixth round) and right-hander **Blake Treinen**, a seventh-rounder from South Dakota State.

### Leading off

**Slumping:** A's catcher Kurt Suzuki is having a tough time of it of late; he is 14-for-76 (.184) in his past 23 games, and baserunners have been successful in 30 of their past 34 stolen-base attempts against him.

### Accepting the things they cannot change

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

On the eve of the 1986 season, Roger Craig addressed his ballplayers with a message that reverberated through his time as the Giants' manager.

"We are not going to bitch about the stadium," Bob Melvin recalled Craig saying. "We are going to use it to our advantage."

The stadium was Candlestick Park, and the player criticism — from Jack Clark, a Giant through 1984, to several members of the 100-loss team of 1985 — was so overwhelming that it became a defeatist working atmosphere.

Craig, who managed the final 18 games of '85, and then general manager Al Rosen figured it was time to stop blaming and badmouthing the home yard, so Craig told everyone to zip it or beat it. By '87, the Giants were division champs, and Candlestick was tolerable, even advantageous.

As a 24-year-old backup catcher, Melvin was present when Craig made his demands known. Twenty-five years later, Melvin is 49 and taking a page from his roots, refusing to blame or badmouth the Coliseum even though ownership made it clear the A's future is in San Jose or anywhere but 7000 Coliseum Way.

In fact, in Melvin's first address to his players Thursday in Chicago, he told them not to use the facility as an excuse.

"As far as the ballpark goes, until there's a decision on that, I'm fine with playing here," Melvin said Tuesday when making his Coliseum debut as A's manager with a 7-4 loss. "In my position, you play the cards you're dealt, and that's playing in this ballpark right now. I don't want my club thinking about, 'We have to get into another ballpark.' I want my club thinking this ballpark is an advantage to them."

Melvin likes that the Coliseum is pitcher-friendly, but "I'm fine with playing here" has never come out of Lew Wolff's mouth, and Melvin was reminded that he contradicted the company line. He spoke with Wolff once over the phone, and the stadium issue didn't surface. Perhaps it will later.

"I think he would understand my rhetoric because we play here, and I want my team to feel good about playing here,"

Melvin said.

"So if we have that conversation ... we probably won't let you know how it goes, to tell you the truth."

In a Tuesday phone interview, Wolff was relayed Melvin's comments and said his priority, like Melvin's, is winning at the Coliseum — so long as the A's have to play there, adding his preference is moving to a venue with a "better fan experience."

Wolff called Melvin a "very impressive, intelligent and dedicated guy" and spoke with Commissioner Bud Selig, who "endorsed" Melvin. Asked if Selig led him to believe that his three-man committee is close to concluding its 27-month examination of the A's ballpark dilemma, Wolff wouldn't comment, suggesting that's Selig's wish.

Could that mean the committee actually is close to a resolution?

Or simply that Selig is tired of getting second-guessed about a pursuit that keeps the A's in limbo?

Melvin doesn't want to hear about it. He has nothing but good memories of the Coliseum from his days growing up in Menlo Park. He watched the A's and Raiders and recalled a 1976 Day on the Green featuring The Who and Grateful Dead.

"The Who never encored, and they encored that day with 'Johnny B. Goode,' " Melvin said.

"When they left, I remember seeing them in the right-field bleachers, looking down in the crowd. I was 14, 15 years old.

When I was doing my running early on, that's one thing that popped in my head today."

Tuesday, it was 68 degrees.

Fans got introduced during the lineup exchange to Melvin. Top prospect Jemile Weeks made his Coliseum debut and tripled. Hideki Matsui, Melvin's new No. 3 hitter, homered.

Lots of reasons to show up, but the crowd was the usual 11,439, and the A's didn't overcome Trevor Cahill's career-high seven walks, defensive breakdowns and third-base umpire Mike Estabrook's blown call, helping to prolong the Royals' eighth-inning rally.

Exactly one week after U2 filled the place (including the upper deck), it was back to normal at the Coliseum with the tarps back in place, miles of new sod covering the mess left by Bono and his Dublin pals and a 13th loss in 14 games.

There's a new manager in town with a fresh attitude and some pro-Coliseum thoughts, but many A's issues go well beyond Melvin's powers. For now, he's simply trying to embrace his new job, his team's potential and even his workplace.

"When people talk about the Coliseum not being a great ballpark, I'm biased," Melvin said. "I kind of like it."

Now that's a new twist.

### **Drumbeat: Positive injury news for A's: Rich Harden, Brandon McCarthy, Tyson Ross**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum, June 14, 2011, 6:28pm

With all the non-stop bad injury news for the A's - it's so much the past few years, general manager Billy Beane calls himself "Debbie Downer" when it comes to the topic - the team actually is getting more optimistic updates on the medical front the past few days.

On Monday, the team learned that No. 2 starter Brett Anderson will *not* have Tommy John surgery but had an injection of platelet-rich plasma for elbow tendinitis or inflammation. He'll miss a minimum of six weeks, although it certainly is likely to be more with a rehab assignment also necessary.

On Tuesday, injured starters Brandon McCarthy (stress reaction, right shoulder) and Tyson Ross (oblique strain) threw bullpen sessions, and McCarthy told me his is aiming to be back by July 1, and Ross is only slightly behind him.

Rich Harden, out since reporting day with a muscle strain under his right arm, is also on a similar timetable - he'll be sent out on a rehab assignment at the end of the week, and depending on how many starts the A's would like him to make, he also could be back around July 1.

Now, all three of these starters have had health issues in the past few years, particularly McCarthy and Harden, but still, the way the A's are looking at it right now, the team could be getting three members of the rotation back for the second half - and after losing five starters since the start of the season, including three in just the past few weeks, that is good news. There aren't a lot of positive days when it comes to Oakland and health, so the team plans to enjoy it while possible.

"It was definitely a punch in the gut for us as a team to have everyone go down at the same time," Ross said. "Three of us are coming back, and hopefully, we can build on that."

Bob Melvin held a pre-game press conference before his first home game as the A's manager and he had some fun with it, particularly when asked about the Coliseum, where he attended games as a kid. And more: He recalls attending a Day on the Green that featured The Who and the Grateful Dead, and being amazed that The Who played an encore, "Johnny B. Goode."

After he'd said several nice things about the Coliseum, Melvin was asked if owner Lew Wolff knows about his positive feelings about the place (which Wolff has been trying to leave for years). Melvin said they hadn't talked, but he said he thought that Wolff would understand that Melvin wants the players to have positive thoughts about the place they work.

He then said that after he and Wolff do discuss the topic, he probably won't share the details with us, and he laughed.

Here's Melvin's lineup for tonight, and as he'd said Sunday, Hideki Matsui is back in the third spot: Crisp CF, Pennington SS, Matsui DH, Willingham LF, Jackson RF, Sizemore 3B, Suzuki C, Barton 1B, Weeks 2B. Trevor Cahill is starting against Kansas City.

David DeJesus will be back in tomorrow night. That jammed right field spot is the one that is causing Melvin the most angst, as he's said, with Conor Jackson, Ryan Sweeney and DeJesus all available and all good options. It will be interesting to see how this plays out: Will one of them get moved? Could Jackson play first more regularly?

### **Cahill, A's continue to struggle against KC**

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Trevor Cahill hasn't been himself lately, and he knows it.

The right-hander's struggles continued on Tuesday night, and the slumping A's fell, 7-4, to the Royals to kick off a six-game homestand.

It was Oakland's third straight loss -- its 13th in the last 14 games -- and for the fourth time during that span a rough start from Cahill was at the core of it.

"Just been off lately," Cahill said. "Trying to work on things and get back on track. Hopefully, I can figure it out and get out of this funk I'm in."

The righty failed to reach the fifth frame for the second start in a row, lasting just 4 1/3 innings and giving up four earned runs with zero strikeouts. It was Cahill's inability to find the strike zone that hurt the A's, as he walked a career-high seven batters and threw 49 of his 96 pitches off the plate.

"I didn't know where the ball was going," he said. "One point after the second or third inning, I was just trying to throw the ball down the middle and I still couldn't do that, so I knew it was going to be a rough night."

It turned out to be a long night, despite his second-shortest outing of the season.

The location issues began early on, with Cahill (6-5) walking the first two batters he faced in the second inning. After a sacrifice bunt from Mike Moustakas moved the runners to second and third, Royals catcher Matt Treanor grounded out to short to plate Jeff Francoeur for a 1-0 lead that Kansas City would not relinquish.

The Royals tacked on another run in the fourth before the A's answered in the bottom of the frame. Hideki Matsui, whose bat has come to life since interim manager Bob Melvin reinserted him into the lineup, hit his fifth home run of the season and the 498th of his career -- 166 in the Major Leagues and 332 in Japan -- on a 2-1 pitch off Royals southpaw Danny Duffy. It was Matsui's sixth RBI since Melvin took over as skipper.

"[498] is a pretty big number," Melvin said. "That's more than I had. He's a guy that needs at-bats, there's no doubt about that. He's used to playing every day. He's played every day his whole career. He needs at-bats.

"He's the first to admit he was struggling early on, but he works hard, he knows how to make adjustments and he seems to be swinging the bat a lot better."

Although Matsui's solo shot seemed to pump up the A's dugout, it didn't do much to help Cahill, who the Royals chased from the game in the fifth.

Cahill's inability to find the strike zone came back to bite him again in that frame. With one out, he surrendered back-to-back walks before Royals designated hitter Billy Butler made him pay. Butler hit a two-run double over the head of left fielder Josh Willingham.

"Just looking at video from last year and the beginning of this year now, something kind of looked different," Cahill said. "It's just me finding a comfort zone is the biggest thing, and I don't feel like I'm comfortable out there to repeat my delivery more than once in a row. All around I'm just kind of in a funk right now."

Melvin said it was uncharacteristic to see Cahill struggle so much with location and that he believes the righty needs to trust his pitches more. But the A's skipper doesn't think Cahill's problems are mechanical as much as they are mental.

"I think he's just a little frustrated right now because this has gone on a little longer than he would like it to go on for," Melvin said.

"I try not to think about it, really," Cahill added. "I'm usually a laid-back guy. I told myself in Chicago, I'm not going to let it get to me. I'm just going to try to throw strikes and not worry about mechanics during the game, and just try to get outs, and not get too much adrenaline going and do too much. Once guys get on base it's kind of tough."

Trying to overcome Cahill's struggles, the A's cut into the lead in the bottom of the fifth after Jemile Weeks hit his third triple in six games and Coco Crisp followed with an RBI single. The teams exchanged runs again in the eighth, when the Royals plated two off reliever Joey Devine and the A's scored on an RBI single from Scott Sizemore, who then came around to score following a wild pitch and a throwing error.

But the two late runs wouldn't be enough to stop the Royals, who added an insurance run in the ninth off Grant Balfour. Duffy (1-2) gutted through six innings of two-run ball before the Royals' bullpen secured his first Major League win, dropping the A's a season-high 12 games below .500.

"It felt good out there," said Duffy, a Lompoc, Calif., native who had 100 to 150 family and friends among the Coliseum crowd of 11,439. "Everything was working. It was awesome. I couldn't ask for a better night to get a win."

### **Matsui, A's look to even things with Royals**

By Jon Star / MLB.com

When Bob Melvin took over as interim A's manager last Thursday, he did so with the belief that the lineup would need some tweaking. One button Melvin has pushed is to slot Hideki Matsui in the third spot in the order. So far, the move has paid fairly good dividends.

The Oakland designated hitter is hitting just .221 in 54 games this season, but in the five games under Melvin's watch, is proving that his manager's trust in hitting him third was the right move. On Tuesday, Matsui swatted his fifth home run of



the season and his second since the switch. The two long balls are the high points of a stretch that has included six RBIs since Melvin's arrival. The manager says the decision to move Matsui up in the order came fairly quickly.

"I didn't have a lot of time to think about the lineup. Literally, the day before I got to Chicago, was the day I found out I was going to be the manager here. It was a quick study, almost sitting-on-a-plane type of study," Melvin explained. "This was scratching out a lineup on a plan that made sense to me. Just looking at it from afar, I felt like this team needed Matsui in the lineup to be productive and have a chance."

The veteran slugger, known for his steadiness, is taking the new hitting position in stride.

"The important thing is to make something positive out of that opportunity. In a way now, it's the same situation as where I was last year. The important thing is the opportunity is now there and what has to come through is the results," Matsui said through his translator Roger Kahlon.

Where Matsui hits in the lineup isn't the only change Melvin is formulating. The new skipper is also trying to find a balance in right field among David DeJesus, Conor Jackson and Ryan Sweeney. Melvin wants to find consistency, but acknowledged that Matsui's everyday presence in the DH slot makes it tougher.

"That's a difficult one. The one I'm struggling most with is right field. With Hideki being in there every day and not being able to rotate [those guys] into the DH spot," Melvin said. "It's made the Sweeney-Jackson-DeJesus situation a little bit more difficult. That's where I'm struggling a little bit, and I've talked to those guys and I will talk to them this series."

Josh Outman makes the start for Oakland.

Looking to quiet a changing Oakland lineup for a second straight night will be Luke Hochevar. The Royals' right-hander picked up his fourth victory of the season in his previous start, holding the Blue Jays to two earned runs on six hits in seven innings. Wednesday's start marks the second time Hochevar will square off against Oakland this season. On May 7, Hochevar limited the A's to one run on four hits with three strikeouts, but took a no-decision.

### **Royals: Welcome to the bigs, Moose**

Third baseman Mike Moustakas is the second highly-touted prospect the Royals have promoted this season, following the early ascension of Eric Hosmer. So far, Moustakas -- the Royals' top pick from the 2007 Draft -- has hit safely in each of his four games, including his first big league home run on Saturday against the Angels and his first multi-hit game on Tuesday. Moustakas has also walked and scored a run in each of his first four games. Moustakas was ranked as the Royals' No. 3 prospect by *Baseball America* prior to the 2011 season.

### **Athletics: Pennington setting a pace**

Cliff Pennington is rarely heralded for his bat, but the A's shortstop has significantly contributed to his club's offense over the past month. In his last 30 games, Pennington is hitting .314 (34-for-108), including hitting safely in nine of his last 11 games. After hitting just .228 in 26 games in April, Pennington has been on a steady offensive climb, batting .287 in May and .292 so far in June.

### **Worth noting:**

David DeJesus is riding a 295-game errorless streak, which is the longest active stretch by an outfielder. Meanwhile, outfielder Ryan Sweeney has not committed an error in 149 games -- the fourth-longest streak by an outfielder in A's history.

## **Harden may soon help an ailing A's rotation**

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's pitching staff, widely accepted as the team's strength, has been decimated by a string of injuries early in the season with four starters -- Dallas Braden, Brandon McCarthy, Tyson Ross and Brett Anderson - currently on the disabled list.

"It's kind of a punch in the gut for us as a team, having everyone go down around the same time," Ross said.

But interim manager Bob Melvin said on Tuesday that help is on the way, and from a source few expected.

While McCarthy and Ross each threw bullpen sessions before Tuesday's home opener against the Royals, Melvin said right-hander Rich Harden's progress is ahead of both of them. The A's skipper said Harden, who has been sidelined all season with a strained lat muscle, will throw a simulated game on Wednesday and is nearing a stint in rehab.

"I'm really excited," Harden said. "It's hard not to get too far ahead of myself and looking toward next week, or the week after that, and where I'm going to be. Basically I just need to get through [Wednesday] and get through the sim game and go from there."

Harden, who signed a one-year, \$1.5 million contract with the A's in the offseason, said he will likely pitch two or three simulated innings of about 20 pitches each. If all goes well on Wednesday, Harden expects to make his first rehab outing with Triple-A Sacramento on Monday.

The setbacks have been tough to avoid so far, but the righty said he finally feels ready to get back on the mound.

"I'm feeling good, I feel ready," Harden said. "Every time I'm throwing off the mound I feel like I've got a lot more in me and I wanted to do more. That's always a good sign."

Harden isn't sure how long he expects the upcoming rehab stint to last, but hopes that it will be just a few outings before he can return to the club and make his first contributions of the season. As for his role when he returns, Harden doesn't know yet what Melvin has in mind, and whether he will come out of the bullpen or be part of the starting rotation.

As for Ross and McCarthy, two of the A's starters currently on the disabled list, each threw a bullpen session on Tuesday. McCarthy, who has been out with a stress reaction in his shoulder, threw his second session since the injury and tossed about 45 pitches.

Ross, who is a step behind McCarthy, threw his first session since hitting the disabled list with a strained oblique. Ross threw 30 pitches and said he will throw another session of about 40 to 45 pitches on Friday following regular throwing the next two days.

"I took about 10 days off throwing completely, so I got a little gassed at the end of that 'pen," Ross said. "I'm just going to keep building, though."

The righty, who has never experienced an oblique injury before, said he isn't feeling any pain right now. While he didn't set a timetable for a return, he hopes it is soon.

"It's been frustrating, but it's a long season," Ross said. "Hopefully after this, that's it for the year and I can be healthy playing in September."

Before being placed on the disabled list after straining his oblique against the Twins in May, Ross was 2-2 in six starts and sported a 2.75 ERA in nine appearances this year. Meanwhile, McCarthy was 1-4 with a 3.49 ERA before his injury and is still likely a few weeks away from a return.

"The players recognize that there's help on the way," Melvin said. "Not that we're down about what we have here, but some guys with some track record -- and like I've said before, the starter for that particular day goes a long way in the confidence of the team that particular day. These guys know we have some guys coming along."

## **Crocker, Taylor among 22 Draft picks signed**

OAKLAND -- The A's on Tuesday announced the signings of 22 of their selections from last week's First-Year Player Draft.

Among those signed were the team's fourth- and fifth-round selections, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo center fielder Bobby Crocker and Central Florida catcher Beau Taylor.

Crocker hit .339 with 13 doubles, a triple and five home runs this season en route to being named to the All-Big West Conference team. Taylor hit .325 for the Knights as a junior this season with five home runs and 47 RBIs a year removed from hitting .354 as a sophomore.

The team also signed sixth-round pick Dayton Alexander, a center fielder from Feather River College, and seventh-round draftee Blake Treinen, a right-handed pitcher from South Dakota State.

The 18 other selections who signed were outfielder Xavier Macklin (12th round), third baseman Jacon Tanis (13th round), catcher Nicholas Rickles (14th round), righty T.J. Walz (15th round), righty Tanner Peters (16th round), shortstop Sean Jamieson (17th round), lefty Brent Powers (18th round), southpaw Eric Potter (19th round), righty Kurt Wunderlich (20th round), outfielder Rhett Stafford (22nd round).

Also signing were right-hander Cecil Tanner (23rd round), center fielder Chad Oberacker (25th round), shortstop Sam Roberts (26th round), right-handed pitcher Thomas Girdwood (28th round), righty Nate Eppley (29th round), righty Nathan Kilcrease (30th round), right-hander Drew Granier (32nd round) and righty Maxwell Perlman (35th round).

### **A's lose to Royals, 7-4**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Alcides Escobar had three hits and two RBIs, Danny Duffy pitched six innings for his first major league win and the Kansas City Royals beat Oakland 7-4 on Tuesday night to spoil the home debut of Athletics interim manager Bob Melvin.

Mike Moustakas singled twice and scored both times, and Billy Butler added a two-run double while helping the Royals to their fourth victory in five games. Kansas City improved to 3-1 on its current road trip following a 4-7 homestand.

Duffy (1-2), who began the season in the minors, gave up two runs and four hits. The rookie left-hander pitched out of jams with two runners on and less than two outs in three innings and overcame four walks to win for the first time in six starts.

After the Royals scored two runs in the eighth to take a 6-2 lead, the A's scored twice with two outs against reliever Greg Holland in the bottom half. Aaron Crow got the final out of the inning and Joakim Soria pitched the ninth for his 10th save in 15 chances.

Hideki Matsui homered and scored twice for the A's.

Melvin, who took over when Bob Geren was fired June 9, was greeted warmly by the Coliseum crowd during pregame introductions. But those cheers turned to boos as the A's lost for the 13th time in 14 games and fell a season-high 12 games under .500.

The Royals didn't get much going early and scored their first run without a hit, but took advantage of Trevor Cahill's wildness.

Cahill had a career-high seven walks and two wild pitches, continuing a troubling trend for A's starters who have not won in 14 consecutive games.

Jeff Francoeur and Butler drew consecutive walks in the second against Cahill and both moved up on a sacrifice. Matt Treanor grounded out, scoring Francoeur.

Kansas City failed to score after loading the bases with one out in the third but got to Cahill for another run in the fourth despite hitting only one ball out of the infield. Moustakas singled, took second on first baseman Daric Barton's throwing error and moved to third on a sacrifice before Escobar's RBI groundout made it 2-0.

Escobar, who also doubled home a run in the ninth, has nine hits in his last four games. The four straight multihit games are a first for the Royals shortstop.

Oakland cut the lead to 2-1 in the fourth on Matsui's fifth home run. It was the 498th homer of his professional career, including Japan.

Cahill's command problems cost him again in the fifth. The right-hander issued consecutive one-out walks to Eric Hosmer and Francoeur before Butler doubled over the head of left fielder Josh Willingham. Hosmer and Francoeur both scored, making it 4-1.

Cahill (6-5) was done two batters later despite giving up only four hits. He looked like a potential Cy Young Award candidate after starting the year 6-0, but is winless in his last seven starts.

Duffy had his own command problems but kept the damage to a minimum. He gave up a triple to rookie Jemile Weeks in the fifth, and Weeks scored on Coco Crisp's sinking single to right. Beyond that, Duffy was solid while pitching his way to his first win in the majors.

NOTES: Oakland RHP Rich Harden (muscle strain) will throw a simulated game Wednesday and hopes to begin a rehab assignment in the minors as early as next week. ... Cahill did not strike out a batter for the first time since July 23, 2010. ... Weeks' triple was his third since being called up from the minors last Tuesday. ... Escobar has a season-high seven-game hitting streak. ... Hosmer's single in the sixth snapped an 0-for-20 skid on the road.

### **Gutierrez: A's Cahill in a galactically-bad funk**

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

OAKLAND - When he woke up on May 10, Trevor Cahill was looking like the leading candidate to start the All-Star Game for the American League. The right-hander was sitting at 6-0 with a ridiculous 1.72 ERA in his first eight starts.

Now? Cahill should have to buy a ticket to watch the Midsummer Classic ... on some old-school closed circuit showing of the game in someone's garage. Oh yeah, and Cahill should have to supply the red cups for the adult beverages.

The erstwhile Darth 'Dactyl has been that bad, and getting progressively worse since his otherworldly start to the season.

Consider: the Star Wars fan has been getting diced up of late, like Darth Maul by Obi-Wan. Like Jango Fett by Mace Windu. Like Anakin by Obi-Wan. Like Obi-Wan by Vader. Like Luke getting his hand chopped off by his pops.

After being uncharacteristically wild in the A's 7-4 loss to the Kansas City Royals Tuesday night at O.co Coliseum, Cahill is now winless in his last seven starts, going 0-5 with a 5.67 ERA in that stretch.

Whither the Force?

"In the second and third inning, I was just trying to throw the ball down the middle, and I couldn't even do that," Cahill said. "I knew it was going to be a long night."

A long, and strange one, indeed.

Cahill lasted but 4 1/3 innings, and needed 96 pitches to do that. Plus, only 47 of those pitches were strikes as he gave up four runs on four hits and a career-high seven walks. It was only the third time in his career Cahill, who also had two wild pitches, did not have a strikeout in a game and he became only the second starter in Oakland A's history to walk at least seven batters but not strike one out, joining Mike Norris, who actually won his such game in 1979.

A's interim manager Bob Melvin has seen the worse of Cahill.

In his last start, Melvin's debut with Oakland, Cahill lasted only 2 2/3 innings at Chicago and was roughed up for six earned runs by the White Sox. Before that, the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees pounded Cahill.

"Maybe he's trying to do a little too much," Melvin said. "He needs to let it go and just trust it.

"He's just a little frustrated right now, because it's gone on a little longer ... he's trying to muscle it a little bit, pulling the pitch."

Of course, with how drastically different Cahill's results have been since May 10, and with the injury bug ravaging the A's rotation, you have to wonder if something more than mechanics or psychology is eating at Cahill.

"Nah," he said when I asked if there was anything physically wrong. "Just in kind of a funk."

Call it the Dark Side of the Force for Darth 'Dactyl. It's a team-wide phenomenon.

### **A's Harden to throw simulated game Wednesday**

Paul Gutierrez, CSNCalifornia.com

A's right-hander Rich Harden, on the disabled list since March 22 with a strained right shoulder, is scheduled to throw a simulated game Wednesday with an eye toward a possible rehab outing next week in Sacramento with the Triple-A River Cats.

"I don't want to get too far ahead of myself but I'm excited," Harden said before the A's series opener against the visiting Kansas City Royals at O.Co Coliseum on Tuesday. "It feels good and I'm ready to go. No issues.

"I'm really excited. It's hard not to get ahead of myself. I'll just get through (Wednesday), the simulated game and see where we go next."

A's interim manager Bob Melvin said Harden was actually ahead of fellow injured pitchers Tyson Ross (oblique) and Brandon McCarthy (scapula) on the rehab schedule.

Both Ross and McCarthy threw their second bullpen sessions on Tuesday.

Harden, whose injury history is well documented, signed a one-year, \$1.5 million deal this past offseason.

### **A's Roundup: Anderson's injury, homestand challenges and more Royalty**

Sam McPherson, examiner.com

The Oakland Athletics take on the Kansas City Royals tonight at the Overstock.com Coliseum, and the A's haven't done so well since the last time their hometown fans got a glimpse of them.

Oakland was playing .500 ball during its last homestand, although a sweep at the hands of the New York Yankees changed that -- and the A's proceeded to lose a lot more. In fact, the team has a single win in the month of June.

A lot of changes have happened since the team was last at home, too -- a new manager, some new players, more injuries.

### **Brett Anderson out for at least six more weeks**

The left-handed starting pitcher has received a platelet rich plasma (PRP) injection into his left elbow and will undergo six weeks of rehabilitation. He will be re-evaluated in three weeks, and while it's good news that Anderson didn't need Tommy John surgery, it's still not a good sign he's on the disabled list for the third time in his short career.

Anderson was placed on the 15-day disabled list June 7 with a left sore elbow, during a stretch that saw the A's lose four starting pitchers in three weeks.

So the A's will be scrambling, as usual, to replace a great contributor to their success for the long term. Oakland has used the DL so many times in the last five seasons, it's hard to even keep track any more.

Organizationally, it's a problem that simply changing the trainers didn't remedy. Perhaps former manager Bob Geren had something to do with it, and only time will tell if new interim manager Bob Melvin can keep his pitching staff healthier than Geren could keep it.

### **Tough homestand ahead**

Sure, the Yankees aren't in town again, but six games in six days against the Royals and the San Francisco Giants lie ahead.

The A's won two of three in Kansas City in early May, and since then, the Royals have struggled just as much as Oakland has to win ballgames. Kansas City was 18-16 when the A's left town on May 8, while Oakland was 18-17 after taking the series.

Since then, the two teams have gone a combined 21-43 -- both squads are desperate to turn their seasons around before it's too late.

Oakland has Trevor Cahill, Josh Outman and Gio Gonzalez slated to start the three games against the Royals, but that leaves the backend (Guillermo Moscoso and Graham Godfrey) of the injured rotation to face the defending World Series champion Giants over the weekend.

The A's got swept in San Francisco last month, losing two extra-inning games during one of Brian Fuentes' meltdown stretches.

San Francisco is in first place in the National League West despite having been outscored this season by its opponents, as the Giants offense has scored even less this year than the Oakland offense -- which is pretty shocking.

Last year, the A's swept the Giants at home, but it would be surprising if they could repeat that feat this time around against Tim Lincecum, Jonathan Sanchez and Matt Cain.

### **Another Royals prospect arrives in time to face the A's**

When Oakland played in Kansas City, highly-touted first baseman Eric Hosmer made his major-league debut in the series. He had three hits and one RBI in the three-game set against the A's in May.

Since then, he's been pretty good, with a season line of .284, five HR and 21 RBI.

Now, Oakland gets to face an even better prospect -- third baseman Mike Moustakas -- this time around.

The highly-regarded third baseman made his MLB debut over the weekend against the Los Angeles Angels on the road, and he registered three hits, one home run and one RBI in that three-game series.

So with the future having arrived somewhat for the Royals, the A's get to see an improved Kansas City team -- one the Royals organization hopes can have them competing in the American League Central very soon.

Teams like the A's -- with mediocrity at both first and third base -- would love to have a pair of young rookies like Hosmer and Moustakas playing for them.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Carter, Dinardo keep Cats' train rolling**

By Kyle Tucker, Sacramento Rivercats

The Sacramento offense stung the Bees on Tuesday night, putting up 10 runs on 11 hits and earning the 10-2 victory. In a matchup of winless pitchers, the River Cats took control early and never looked back.

Recently activated first baseman Chris Carter fueled the offensive onslaught by hitting two bombs-- a line drive over the wall in left and a towering fly ball over the center field fence.

The River Cats beat Scott Kazmir for the second time in two weeks, jumping all over him early and chasing him in the second inning. Sacramento touched him up for six runs on five hits, handing Kazmir his fifth loss and boosting his ERA to an astronomical 17.02.

Sacramento got on the board early, scoring six times in the second inning. Anthony Recker started things off with a double that drove in Carter. This brought out the Salt Lake pitching coach, who didn't like what he was seeing from Kazmir and tried to calm him down.

This was only the beginning of the River Cats dismantling of Kazmir.

Shane Peterson then dropped in a softly-hit single that scored Recker and loaded the bases with one out. Eric Sogard did his job, hitting a deep fly ball to center, scoring Michael Taylor and giving Sacramento the early three-run cushion. Andy LaRoche, the River Cats' newest second basemen, then got in the mix. He laced a double into center, scoring Peterson and Matt Carson. Kevin Kouzmanoff finished off the six-run rally by singling in LaRoche.

The River Cats sent left-hander Lenny DiNardo to the mound, who has struggled in his first three starts and looked to capitalize on the early run-support. DiNardo did just that, going seven strong, surrendering two runs on just five hits and earning his first win. DiNardo looked sharp for the first time this season, which is a good sign for River Cats fans given the recent call-ups that have depleted the Sacramento pitching staff.

Chris Carter looked comfortable at the plate Tuesday night. In just his second game back with the River Cats since his 47-day stint on the disabled list, Carter went 2-for-3, launching two home runs and walking twice. Carter looks to have his home run stroke back after hitting three home runs in six games with Single-A Stockton, and now hitting two more in two games in Triple-A.

The Sacramento bullpen was strong once again, not allowing a hit and keeping the eight-run lead in tact. Jerry Blevins came on in the eighth inning and faced three batters, striking out one. Joe Bateman shut it down in the ninth retiring the side in order.

With the win, the River Cats improve to 29-10 when they homer and to 8-1 on the road against lefties. Sacramento looks to continue its dominance of Salt Lake this season on Wednesday night when they will send Travis Banwart (2-4, 4.72) to the mound against Matt Palmer (2-5, 7.29). Listen live on rivercats.com or tape-delayed on Talk 650 KSTE. First pitch scheduled for 6:05 p.m.

### **RockHounds again forced to play catch-up in loss**

Jordan Mason, Midland Reporter-Telegram

An early ambush by the Frisco RoughRiders' bats powered them to a convincing victory for the second straight night in a 10-4 win against the Midland RockHounds on Tuesday.

The Frisco bats had the help of former Cy Young winner Brandon Webb, who was on rehab assignment for the Texas Rangers, as he retired the first seven batters he faced, allowing just one hit in three innings in front of a crowd of 7,836 at Citibank Ballpark.

For the RockHounds it was an all-too familiar feeling as they found themselves playing from behind early for the sixth time in seven games and dropped to 2-5 in what has been a disappointing home stand.

"They really didn't knock the ball around," RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone said of the early scoring flurry. "(Jason) Bergmann I thought was throwing okay -- just a little unlucky tonight."

Bergmann did start strong by retiring the side in eight pitches despite allowing a hit in the top of the first.

The right-hander fanned the side in the second, but the problem was that in between those strikeouts five straight RoughRiders reached base as they tallied four runs on four hits.

With that, the RockHounds again found themselves in a hole they never climbed out of.

And it didn't get better after that.

Already up 4-0, Frisco's Elio Sarmiento, who was a home run away from the cycle Tuesday, slapped a two-run double just past Jermaine Mitchell in center that pushed the lead to 6-0 in the third.

With the score the same in the fourth, the RoughRiders loaded the bases again and cashed in on an infield RBI single by Jonathan Greene and an RBI walk by Sarmiento that made it 8-0.

Sarmiento, already excited to work with Webb to start the game, had four RBI on the day.

"It was good, it was good," he said. "Especially for me, I don't get to play as much as the rest of the guys.

"It's always nice to contribute to the team and get the guys a score."

Midland responded in the fourth on a two-run shot that Adam Heether crushed to left, and the RockHounds appeared to be mounting a rally when Matt Sulentic followed with a single to right.

But the rally was short-lived as Sulentic was thrown out at third on a single by Barfield in the next at-bat.

Midland pulled to within 9-4 in the seventh thanks to a sacrifice fly by Grant Green and a wild pitch by Adelberto Flores that scored Mitch Canham, but were again unable to mount a serious rally.

The RockHounds will again look to salvage a series tie today when they face Frisco in the final game of an eight-game home stand.

And despite the disappointing 2-5 record in the home stand to this point, Scarsone remained encouraged by the play of his team.

"We had some opportunities," he said "Sometimes it's the way it is.

"We're aggressive for the most part. We're fighting to the end, and we'll continue to work."

'HOUND BITES: Second baseman Josh Horton and pitcher Ben Hornbeck joined the RockHounds Tuesday from Triple-A Sacramento. Horton started the game while Hornbeck will wait for his first appearance... Outfielder Kent Walton was released by the Oakland A's Tuesday. ... Frisco swept the last series between the two, winning by an average of 1.5 runs. After losing the first game in this series, Frisco has won by an average of 6.5 runs. ... Tommy Mendonca, Jonathan Greene and Elio Sarmiento went a combined 9-for-12 Tuesday and drove in six of Frisco's 10 runs.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: The RockHounds are expected to start Shawn Haviland (2-5, 7.04) today while the RoughRiders are expected to start left-hander Robbie Erlin (2-0, 3.26).

### **Ports Big Bats Beat Mavs**

06/15/2011 1:03 AM ET

The game may have gotten off to a slow start, but the Ports broke it open in the late innings to extend their win streak to three on Tuesday evening, beating the Mavericks 6-3. Big bats were the key to the Ports success, as three separate Ports players hit long balls for five of the Ports six runs.

The Ports got on the board first in the fourth inning with their first home run of the evening. Michael Choice, who was in the lineup as the designated hitter, blasted a 1-0 pitch over the right field wall for his 13th home run of the season. The Ports looked to have a rally started as Ryan Ortiz followed Choice with a single, but a struggling Dusty Coleman struck out before Jason Christian grounded into a double play to end the inning.

Ports starting pitcher Jake Brown looked solid through four scoreless innings, giving up just two hits, before running into trouble in the fifth. With one out recorded in the fifth, Denny Almonte hit a weak single right in front of home plate, and then advanced to second on a throw from Ortiz that sailed into the stands. Almonte would promptly score on a James Jones single. Brown ran into trouble after Trevor Coleman singled to put men on first and second. After turning to check Jones on second, Brown made a throw to second with nobody covering the base, advancing both runners ninety feet. Jones scored the second run of the inning on a Gabriel Noriega sac fly. The final run of the inning came on a deep single by Daniel Carroll. The inning may have continued, had Carroll attempted to take second and was thrown out.

The Ports tied the game up in the sixth with their second home run of the night. Choice started the inning off with a walk before the Mavs brought in Daniel Cooper to replace their starter Anthony Fernandez. Cooper got the first out quickly, getting Ortiz to ground into a force out of Choice at second. Unfortunately for Cooper, Rashun Dixon stepped up to the plate and drilled a two-run homer over the left field wall to tie up the game. Cooper retired the next two Ports batters quickly to prevent the Ports from taking the lead.

Both teams were quiet in the seventh, and Ports reliever Josh Lansford, who earned his third win of the season tonight, made quick work of the Mavs in the eighth to keep the game tied at three a piece. But the Ports broke it open in the bottom of the eighth, thanks in part to their third home run of the evening.

The Ports lone All-Star, Michael Gilmartin, demonstrated why he was an all-star to start the inning, leading the inning off with his sixth triple of the season. Choice brought the All-Star home on a single to center field to break the tie. The Ports weren't finished yet though, as Ortiz stepped up and drilled the first pitch of his at bat over the left field wall to add two insurance runs to the Ports lead.

The Ports brought in their closer Jose Guzman to attempt the save in the ninth, and Guzman delivered the goods, recording one strikeout and earning his ninth save of the season. The Ports look to earn their second series sweep of the season tomorrow as Ports starter Dan Straily takes the mound at 7:05 p.m.

### **Bees Clinch Playoff Spot With 4-3 Win**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

BURLINGTON, IA- The Burlington Bees (42-23) rallied on a pair of two-run home runs to defeat the Kane County Cougars (27-37) by a score of 4-3 to secure the First-Half West Division Championship and the first playoff spot in the Midwest



League in 2011 before 444 fans at Community Field on Tuesday night. SS Yordy Cabrera (1-3) hit a two-run home run in the seventh inning to give the Bees the lead.

Kane County LF Brian Fletcher (1-4) hit an RBI double in the 1st inning that scored DH Angel Franco (1-4) for a 1-0 lead.

The Cougars scored one run in the third inning as 2B Yowill Espinal (1-3) led off the inning with a double and scored after back-to-back singles by Franco and CF Brett Eibner (1-3).

Bees LF Douglas Landaeta (1-4) hit a two-out single in the fourth inning and scored after 3B Tony Thompson (2-3) blasted a two-run home run over the left field wall to knot the score at 2-2.

RF Alex Llanos (1-3) doubled and eventually scored on a single by 3B Cheslor Cuthbert (1-4) in the fifth inning to give the Cougars a 3-2 lead.

After a single by Thompson to lead off the seventh inning, Cabrera smacked a home run over left field to give the Bees a 4-3 lead.

The win gives the Bees their first playoff berth since 2009. It is the seventh time in the last nine years the Oakland Midwest League affiliate has made the playoffs.

The Bees and Kane County Cougars will play game two of this three-game series on Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. It's "Kids Eat Free Wednesday" at Community Field, where all kids 12 and under get a free hot dog and drink at the game sponsored by Newsradio 1490 KBUR and Today's Light Favorites 93.5 KKMI. RHP Sugar Ray Marimon (3-5, 3.27) gets the start for the Cougars against RHP Jose Macias (1-1, 3.00) for the Bees. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at [www.gobees.com](http://www.gobees.com).