

## A's News Clips, Monday, June 27, 2011

### Oakland A's miss scoring opportunities in loss to Roy Halladay, Philadelphia Phillies

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

PHILADELPHIA -- The positive energy that is usually a staple of Bob Melvin's postgame media sessions was absent Sunday.

The A's manager spoke frankly after a 3-1 loss to Roy Halladay and the Philadelphia Phillies, which kept Oakland from breaking even on its six-game interleague trip.

"I thought we had our opportunities, and we missed them," Melvin said. "We had a chance to beat him today, and I hope everybody in (the A's clubhouse) realizes that everybody can be beat."

The truth is that Halladay showed why he's a two-time Cy Young Award winner.

The right-hander tossed his National League-leading fifth complete game, becoming the majors' fourth 10-game winner. The A's got to him for eight hits, but there was little solid contact as Halladay (10-3) shackled them with his sinker, cutter and change-up.

After a 2-4 trip that saw the A's suffer two one-run losses and two other defeats by three or fewer runs, Melvin saw the bottom-line reality.

"For me, it's disappointing," he said. "We want to try to play .500 on the road. We lost a tough one in New York and a tough one (Sunday) when we had some opportunities. So we fell one (win) short."

The A's enter a stretch where they play 20 of 29 games at home through the end of July. One of their brief road stretches will be a four-game series July 7-10 against the Texas Rangers, who are hardly distancing themselves from the American League West pack. Oakland trails Texas by six games.

The A's are getting quality starting pitching, and their defense is tightening up.

But -- and you can finish this sentence by now -- they can't let scoring opportunities fizzle as they did Sunday.

Oakland put two runners on with no outs in the second but couldn't score.

Then in the seventh, trailing 3-1, they had runners on second and third with one out. Landon Powell popped out to second on the first pitch he saw, and pinch hitter David DeJesus took a called third strike down the pipe.

"We just couldn't come up with the big hits when we needed to," third baseman Scott Sizemore said.

A's starter Josh Outman (3-2) -- whose velocity was down in the first inning, according to Melvin -- gave up two-first inning runs but got stronger as the game went on. He allowed three runs over six innings.

That early two-run cushion was big for Halladay. Since joining Philadelphia to start the 2010 season, Halladay is 30-3 in 35 starts in which the Phillies have given him a lead at some point in the game.

As for Outman, he said he's merely feeling the effects of pitching regularly after missing 11/2 years because of elbow surgery in June 2009.

"Physically, I'm fine," Outman said. "It's just a little fatigue. I'm close to 70 innings (he's at 78 1/3 combined between the minors and majors). It's one of those things we'll be able to recognize right now and stay on top of."

It was a 2-1 game in the fifth when Philadelphia loaded the bases with two outs. Outman fielded Ben Francisco's dribbler to the left side. Outman looked toward third -- Sizemore had charged the ball -- and then threw late to first to let a third run score.

"It was just a mental lapse on my part," Outman said. "If I had gone to first, I don't think (Francisco) was running that hard."

## **A's manager learning to appreciate Jackson's versatility**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

PHILADELPHIA -- Conor Jackson is guaranteed to be in the A's lineup regularly, but it's anyone's guess where that might be.

Manager Bob Melvin christened Jackson his starting first baseman after Daric Barton was optioned to the minors Wednesday. But in the five games since then, Jackson has started three times at first, once in left field and once in right field.

He's showing a good glove everywhere, and he earned praise from Melvin before Sunday's 3-1 loss to the Phillies.

"I tell you what, Conor has been a really versatile guy for us," Melvin said.

The A's are tied with the Astros and Cubs for the second-most errors in the majors with 61 (Texas leads at 63). But their series in Philadelphia was marked by great plays all around the diamond.

Melvin canceled infield practice Sunday afternoon -- the A's have taken infield on days when they don't hold batting practice -- as a reward for the recent showing.

Second baseman Jemile Weeks' backhanded glove flip that started a game-ending double play Saturday made the ESPN highlights.

Would Melvin prefer the rookie execute a more conventional barehand toss on such a crucial play?

"I would prefer it, but at this point in time you pick your battles," Melvin said. "I think that's part of his instincts, and if you broach that too harshly, I think his instincts (will suffer)."

Reliever Grant Balfour was unavailable for a third straight day with a sore right oblique. A's players were required to turn in their All-Star ballots Sunday, and Balfour is considered one of the favorites to be the team's representative for the July 12 game. He's 4-1 with a 2.48 ERA and .198 opponents' batting average.

A's reliever Brad Ziegler and Phillies first baseman Ryan Howard, college teammates at Southwest Missouri State, faced each other for the first time in the majors Sunday.

Ziegler intentionally walked the slugger with two outs and a man on third in the seventh, then struck out Ben Francisco to strand both runners.

Trevor Cahill is 5-0 with a 1.89 ERA in interleague play since the start of 2010. According to the Elias Sports Bureau, the White Sox's Mark Buehrle (5-0) is the only other starter with at least five wins and no losses in interleague over that span.

## **Chin Music: A's aiming for .500 on interleague road trip**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune 6/26/2011 10:20am

It's game six of the A's six-game interleague road trip. If they finish this journey 3-3, it would be quite an accomplishment considering they would have beaten Cole Hamels and Roy Halladay in doing so.

--There's nothing particularly essential to report from the A's pregame scene. Pretty standard lineup, other than Landon Powell starting behind the plate in place of Kurt Suzuki. That's the typical day-game-after-night-game scenario, and Oakland manager Bob Melvin pointed out that Suzuki has caught some long games in hot weather on this trip. But I'd expect to continue seeing more of Powell, especially if Suzuki continues to struggle at the plate. "I'm staying pretty consistent with the fact that I want to get him involved," Melvin said of Powell. "He's done a nice job." Melvin did praise Suzuki on Saturday for calling a good game for Trevor Cahill.

--Grant Balfour is still bothered by a sore right oblique, and Melvin was assuming he wouldn't be available today. He'll also try to stay away from Brian Fuentes, who has either pitched, or warmed up to pitch, often over the past several days. Melvin has come to Fuentes' defense this weekend, saying he didn't fault him for giving up a chopper that went for the game-winning hit for the Phillies on Friday, and adding that Fuentes has been flexible and agreeable to whatever role he's been asked to fill.

The lineups:

A's – Weeks 2B, Pennington SS, Crisp CF, Matsui LF, Jackson 1B, Sweeney RF, Sizemore 3B, Powell C, Outman LHP.

Phillies – Rollins SS, Polanco 3B, Victorino CF, Howard 1B, Francisco RF, Ruiz C, Ibanez LF, Valdez 2B, Halladay RHP.

–It's been a good few days in Philadelphia, an out-of-the-ordinary stop for us on the road trip circuit. The cheesesteak at Pat's King of Steaks was excellent. I give it a slight edge over Geno's, the other landmark cheesesteak establishment located right across the street from Pat's. I tried Geno's on a non-baseball trip to Philadelphia a few years ago. You can't go wrong trying either one. But Pat's is a little grittier, the service is very no-nonsense, bordering on bossy. Somehow that adds to the authenticity of the experience, if that makes any sense.

I was told that the Courtyard by Marriott where I stayed was used for filming scenes for "The Sixth Sense" and "Twelve Monkeys." That information came from a cabbie, who was a handy tour guide when he wasn't spewing obscenities at the "crazy drivers" all around him.

And if you get to Philadelphia, you have to stroll through the Italian Market, where Rocky went for his epic jog while training for his second fight against Apollo Creed. This is the second "Rocky II" clip I've provided on this blog. Obviously, this movie has affected me deeply ...

### **Bay Area's Brian Sabean and Billy Beane avoid the same bargaining table**

By Monte Poole / The Oakland Tribune

It's almost unfathomable that two baseball general managers, both restless and daring, can share a region for almost 14 years without once conducting a mutual trade of players.

Athletics GM Billy Beane and Giants GM Brian Sabean have been the chief architects of roughly 200 swaps, dating back to 1996, yet none was with each other.

Insofar as there is occasional polite dialogue, the barrier between Billy and Brian isn't exactly a cold war. But these gamblers have carefully avoided working the same table.

It's natural they do so now.

Mark Ellis, the longest-tenured member of the A's and a team leader, has become a part-time player in Oakland. His heir apparent at second base, Jemile Weeks, summoned June 7 when Ellis was disabled by a hamstring injury, needed about a week to become the team's most captivating player.

After all Ellis has done for the A's, they can't ask him to earn his \$6 mil by sitting and watching his replacement. Nor can they rationally consider demoting Weeks, 24, to the bench or back to the minor leagues. Ellis conceded this much when he returned from the disabled list the other day.

Fortunately for the A's, there is a convenient alternative. They can give Ellis, 34, a ride across the bay, where the Giants are seeking a second baseman with a reliable glove.

The Giants also are shopping for a catcher with some pop. Oakland has one in burly backup Landon Powell. The Giants surely remember Powell, for his homer beat them the last time they saw the A's.

Suddenly, Oakland has something San Francisco needs \_ which brings us back to Billy and Brian. If they continue to ignore each other now, it looks personal.

Sabean, who was promoted after the 1996 season, has made at least one deal with every major league team except Oakland and Cincinnati. Beane, promoted a year later, has made at least one deal with every team except San Francisco.

Inactivity between the two can't be attributed to fear of failure - or projected fan reaction - because neither GM gives a whit about that. Both have made trades fantastic and awful. Both have sparkled and both have gotten played. They've been praised and criticized locally with enough volume and regularity to grow scar tissue.

Yet, between them, not one player deal. Only that 2004 transaction in which the A's gave the Giants a few dollars for a minor league pitcher named Adam Pettyjohn.

The last swap between the local teams was on Dec. 4, 1990, when the Giants sent veteran infielder Ernest Riles to the A's for young outfielder Darren Lewis and a player to be named later, who became minor leaguer Pedro Pena. The Giants won

the deal by a wide margin, as D-Lew became a Gold Glove center fielder of such personal integrity he was the inspiration for former Giants manager Dusty Baker naming his son.

That deal, though, was consummated by former Giants GM Al Rosen and former A's GM Sandy Alderson. Their successors have since closed off the border. The Bay Bridge, for Sabean and Beane, may as well be 4,000 miles long.

Supply and demand, however, are reminding both GMs the span is about 4 { miles.

Moving Ellis and/or Powell wouldn't suggest the A's are in sell mode but, rather, that they are in a numbers game that works to their advantage. Ellis is a veteran who has become gratuitous, and Powell is a reserve 19 months older than starter Kurt Suzuki.

This is an opportunity for Beane to shed salary while adding a young player or two to a core that certainly would seem to include Suzuki and Weeks. And remember, in every minor league system, there is someone Billy likes.

For the Giants, it would address the losses of catcher Buster Posey, who is out for the season, and second baseman Freddy Sanchez, whose 2011 return is uncertain.

Acquiring Ellis would instantly patch their infield defense, which is a priority when you rely on pitching. Bill Hall, an emergency pickup released by Houston, has power but comes with a low on-base percentage and a mediocre glove.

As for Powell, it's not likely the Giants are going to get much more on the market. Quality catchers are an exceedingly valuable commodity and seldom get traded. The Nationals would part with Pudge Rodriguez, but the Giants reportedly haven't shown much interest in adding a 39-year-old wheezing toward retirement.

Giants fans can look down their noses at Ellis and/or Powell. They can cling to fantasies about Mets shortstop Jose Reyes, who might be unattainable. They can dream about Johnny Bench, who is 63.

But Sabean is in no position to dismiss a reasonable option.

The phones are warm, a deal table-ready. All the GMs have to do is dust off the seats, look each other in the eye and play.

### **Phillies' Roy Halladay too tough for A's bats**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Take the premier starter in baseball, send him out against the A's unimposing offense, and the outcome is almost a foregone conclusion.

Oakland didn't buck the odds against two-time Cy Young Award winner Roy Halladay in a 3-1 loss on Sunday at Citizens Bank Park. Halladay threw a complete game and allowed eight hits and no walks, striking out four.

The A's did have a few opportunities, and after the game, manager Bob Melvin was slightly testy that the one "big hit" that might have turned things around never came.

"I thought we had our opportunities and missed them. We had a chance to beat them," Melvin said, then added, gesturing toward the clubhouse, "I want everyone in there to realize that everyone can be beat.

"We got our share of hits. We just didn't get the big hit when we needed to."

Melvin's club went 2-for-8 with runners in scoring position.

It was Halladay's fifth complete game of the season. He is the career leader among active pitchers, with 63. He entered the day with a 6-4 lifetime record against Oakland with a 4.54 ERA, but he hadn't faced the A's since Aug. 4, 2008.

Oakland starter Josh Outman got off to a bumpy start, allowing three straight hits to start the game, but he got a double play to minimize the first-inning damage to two runs.

His velocity was slightly down early, Melvin said. Outman said that's because of fatigue - he's close to 80 innings, including at Triple-A Sacramento, and hadn't pitched in a year and a half after Tommy John surgery. He said he is able to loosen up as games go.

In the fifth, Jimmy Rollins singled with one out, Placido Polanco added another hit, and with two outs, Outman walked Ryan Howard. Ben Francisco hit a tapper toward the mound, and Outman looked toward third, but Scott Sizemore was not at the bag. So Outman wheeled to throw to first and made a strong throw but could not get Francisco as Rollins came in from third.

"I thought the way the ball was rolling and with my momentum, the easy play was at third," Outman said. "It was a mental lapse. If I come up throwing to first, I would have made that play without any trouble."

Oakland's run came in the fourth, when Coco Crisp reached on a bunt single, went to second on a groundout and scored on Ryan Sweeney's two-out bloop single to center.

The A's had three doubles off Halladay, but none of the men came around to score, most glaringly in the second, when Conor Jackson led off with a double, stayed at second when Sweeney reached on an infield single - and was erased at third on a double-play grounder by Sizemore. Landon Powell grounded out to end the inning.

In the seventh, the A's had two men in scoring position with one out after a base hit by Jackson and a double by Sizemore, but Powell popped out to second and pinch-hitter David DeJesus struck out looking against Halladay (10-3).

"I guess that's why he's so good," Sizemore said. "When he needs to make a big pitch, he does."

After finishing its last homestand with five straight wins and winning the opener of this road trip, Oakland finished the trip 2-4, but the four losses were by a combined seven runs.

"We're getting there as a team," Outman said. "I don't think there's anything to be down about. We lost a couple of one-run games on the road trip, but we played great baseball. I think we're going to head on another six-game winning streak - or better than that."

### **A's Grant Balfour unavailable due to oblique strain**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

For the third day in a row, reliever **Grant Balfour** was out of action Sunday because of an oblique strain on his right side.

Balfour, who hasn't had an oblique strain before, said, with some disgust in his tone, "I could do without this." The right-hander is considered day-to-day, but oblique strains can be tricky and long-lasting. Starter **Tyson Ross** has been on the disabled list with an oblique strain for more than a month.

The A's would like to avoid placing Balfour on the DL if possible. He has an 0.90 ERA over his past 10 appearances, and opponents are batting .198 against him this season, including .136 with men in scoring position.

**Brian Fuentes** also was not available Sunday, according to manager **Bob Melvin**, who had Fuentes up the night before in the eighth inning in case he was needed to get the second out. Fuentes is 1-8, and Melvin said, "I see the losses, too, but Brian has been terrific for me. ... He's been really good, available to give whatever he has on a given day."

**Briefly:** Melvin said that **Hideki Matsui** probably will be the designated hitter the first few games at home so **David DeJesus** can get several starts in a row against right-handers. ... **Rich Harden** threw 72 pitches in a rehab start at Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday and allowed three hits and three runs. He walked two and struck out six. He's likely to make another rehab start Thursday, then rejoin the A's if all goes well. ... **Josh Outman's** ERA over his past three starts is 1.89.

## **A'S LEADING OFF**

**Not a hit:** The A's pitchers did not record a hit in interleague play this year, going 0-for-18 with seven strikeouts and three sacrifice hits. Since interleague play began in 1997, Oakland's pitchers are batting .086, the lowest by an AL team.

### **Drumbeat: A's vs. Phillies, Josh Outman vs. Roy Halladay; lineup tidbits**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Citizens Bank Park 6/26/2011 9:44am

The main event today: Roy Halladay goes up against onetime Phillies farmhand Josh Outman, and Outman told me yesterday he'd like to record his first big-league hit against Halladay. A nice bold approach.

Here's the lineup: Weeks 2b, Pennington ss, Crisp cf, Matsui lf, Jackson 1b, Sweeney rf, Sizemore 3b, Powell c, Outman p

Manager Bob Melvin noted that he's staying consistent with his plan to get Landon Powell into the mix on a regular basis, although he said that Kurt Suzuki's one start off in New York originally was not scheduled - it was just because the team played 13 innings the night before.

Melvin said that Hideki Matsui will DH the first few games back at home so he can get David DeJesus a chunk of playing time against three right-handed starters in a row. I'm sure Melvin would like to give DeJesus the opportunity to get his bad going, something that has worked fairly well with Matsui.

Watching Matsui in the outfield is one of my favorite things so far this season; I'd been under the impression he wouldn't be too effective out there any more because of his surgically repaired knees, but he positions himself perfectly and he gets to everything he should. He's made some very nice plays. Sort of unexpected, sort of fun to see.

For those of you wondering yet again about Chris Carter not getting any playing time (I'm getting tweets and e-mails about it still), I went into all the potential thinking about that in yesterday's Drumbeat. But if Matsui is at DH back home, I don't know if Carter will get many starts, if any, before Josh Willingham comes off the DL when eligible on Sunday.

Melvin said that the report he got on Rich Harden's 72-pitch outing at Sacramento was that Harden was hitting 94 mph with his fastball, and he felt great. One more start at Sacramento for Harden, I believe, probably Thursday, and then it's likely he's back with the A's.

### **Outman solid, but A's held in check by Doc**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 6/26/2011 6:07 PM ET

PHILADELPHIA -- Much like his predecessor, A's manager Bob Melvin thrives on the positives.

That very energy, normally on display through both wins and losses, was missing almost entirely following his club's 3-1 defeat to the Phillies on Sunday afternoon.

Nevermind that it was Roy Halladay on the mound for Philadelphia, that a likely future Hall of Famer put together a complete-game effort against Melvin's lineup.

"I thought we had our opportunities," he said. "We had our opportunities and we missed them today. I hope everybody in there realizes that everybody can be beat."

Aggravated, frustrated and downright disappointed, Melvin wasn't going to use Halladay's presence to justify a second straight series loss, one which left the A's staring down a 2-4 Interleague road swing on the heels of a five-game home winning streak.

"It's frustrating against anybody, but certainly we put ourselves in a position, one hit here and one hit there, of at least tying the game up," he said. "I thought our approach was good. Certainly, [Halladay's] going to be difficult, but we got our share of hits. We just didn't get a big hit when we needed to. That's the only thing we were lacking today."

It surely wasn't the first time the A's fell short on a handful of scoring opportunities this season. But a rare meeting with Halladay wasn't the time to continue such a trend, marked by a 2-for-8 showing with runners in scoring position and five men left on base.

The chances were there for the A's, who tallied eight hits total and put runners on second and third with just one out against Halladay in the seventh, only to watch Landon Powell go down on an infield popout and pinch-hitter David DeJesus strike out looking on a full-count changeup.

Oakland also was unable to advance a runner past second base in both the first and second innings, and saw its only production come in the fourth, when Coco Crisp led off with a bunt single and scored on a bloop single off the bat of Ryan Sweeney.

"We got quite a few hits, but we couldn't piece them together," third baseman Scott Sizemore said. "When [Halladay] needs to make that big pitch, he does. He's pretty tough to beat.

"It seemed like he threw a lot of good changeups with two strikes, and even earlier in the count, when he needed to get an out pitch. Of course, he's got 'em all -- he's got the sinker and the cutter."

Faced with the task of keeping the Phillies' lineup in check, A's lefty Josh Outman struggled with the undertaking in the first and was tagged for two quick runs. More trouble nearly ensued in the second, but he proceeded to strand a pair of runners to keep his club within striking distance.

"He started out a little slow," Melvin said. "It looked like his velocity was down, his command wasn't as good, but then the third inning on, he started to pitch a lot better."

Outman, making his first career start against the team that drafted him in the 10th round in 2005, attributed his early struggles to a dose of fatigue felt by the grind of a Major League season -- this one representing his first since 2009, when an impressive year was interrupted by an elbow injury that led to Tommy John surgery.

"I haven't played in a year and a half, and the game takes its tolls, and this is one of those lulls I just have to get through," he said.

The southpaw calmed down after that, compiling a scoreless third and fourth innings before allowing the Phillies to extend their lead in the fifth. With two outs and the bases loaded, Outman fielded a slow chopper by Ben Francisco and turned to throw to third. But Sizemore also rushed in, leaving the bag open and allowing enough time for Francisco to beat the throw to first.

"I thought, the way the ball was rolling, that the easy play would be to third, just because of my momentum, so I checked third," Outman said. "I guess, more or less, it was just a mental lapse on my part. If I throw the ball to first right away, I don't think he was really running hard out of the box, so I should have made that play."

Melvin was more forgiving of the decision.

"It's gotta be your instinct," he said. "I think he just thought he had a different play at a different base, and once he went to first, he was a little bit late. It's not a mental error or anything."

Outman went six innings, giving up all three runs along with eight hits and two walks with four strikeouts. He has now posted a 1.89 ERA over his last three starts, following a stretch of four outings that brought about a 4.15 mark.

His efforts, though, were overmatched by those from Halladay, who became the fourth pitcher in the Majors with 10 wins this season.

The A's, meanwhile, head home for a nine-game homestand beginning Tuesday, all the while standing nine games under the .500 mark.

"As a team, we had that six-game winning streak and we've played great baseball," Outman said. "I don't think we've played any worse baseball. We had a lot of hits off Halladay today, it's just one of those things you get one hit here or there, it's a whole different ballgame."

"For me," Melvin said, "[the trip] was disappointing. We want to try to play .500 on the road."

### **A's fine with Weeks' flashy defense for now**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHILADELPHIA -- Jemile Weeks' flashy style of play undoubtedly has some jaws dropping, but it's also got a few hearts pounding.

The A's second baseman topped off Saturday's 4-1 victory over the Phillies with a game-ending 4-6-3 double play by utilizing a backhanded glove flip that surely made its way onto SportsCenter later in the night.

It's not the first time Weeks has displayed such showy maneuvers. He's a big fan of the glove flip, but it doesn't exactly scream textbook play. Just ask his predecessor and longest-tenured A's player Mark Ellis, who learned the tools of the trade from Rangers manager and former A's infield coach Ron Washington.

"It's probably something he's been doing a long time," Ellis said. "Most people in this clubhouse probably prefer you using your hand."

But the veteran infielder was quick to add praise, much like manager Bob Melvin did when asked about Weeks' style on Sunday morning.

"I would prefer him not to do that, but at this point in time you kind of pick your battles, and I want him to be confident, and he is confident," Melvin said. "I think that's kind of an instinctive thing for him right now, and if I broach that too harshly at this point, he would probably start to think about what he's doing, and I want him to just continue playing the game the way it is."

"Now, if it became a problem, that's obviously something we'd have to address."

Weeks, 24, is still learning his way around a Major League infield and adjusting to the basics of a game that tends to speed up on a player fresh from the Minors. The grooming process, then, will continue for awhile.

The glove flip likely will, too.



"I don't think he's doing that just to be flashy," Melvin said. "I think he's doing that because that's the way he's done it. It's like basketball years back, if you were to dribble the ball in between your legs. Now it's just an everyday occurrence. You kind of have to an extent, at times, advance with the times, but we'll see how it goes from here."

### **Balfour out again, hopes to avoid disabled list**

PHILADELPHIA -- Dependable righty Grant Balfour remained unavailable out of the bullpen on Sunday because of discomfort in his right oblique, but the A's reliever is hoping to avoid a trip to the disabled list.

"I still feel it a little bit," he said, "but hopefully it's nothing more than a little soreness."

Balfour first experienced the pain on Friday and was set to test it by playing catch on Sunday. With Monday's off-day, he believes the extra dose of rest could have him returning for Tuesday's series opener against the Marlins.

Balfour is tied for first among American League relievers in wins (four), and tied for eighth in appearances with 33. He's also held opponents to a .198 batting average, including a .136 mark with runners in scoring position.

Manager Bob Melvin said that, along with Balfour, lefty Brian Fuentes was likely off limits on Sunday. Fuentes, who has worked in five of the team's last seven games and given up two earned runs in 4 1/3 innings during that span, was charged with his eighth loss of the season on Friday -- tying him for most among AL relievers.

Melvin sees past those numbers, though.

"Since I've been here, I don't know what happened before, and I see the losses too, but Brian's been terrific for me," he said.

### **Worth noting**

Manager Bob Melvin received nothing but positive reports from Rich Harden's second rehab start with Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday night. The A's righty (shoulder) went 4 2/3 innings, giving up three runs -- including a home run -- and three hits with two walks and six strikeouts. He threw 72 pitches, 44 for strikes, and reached 94 miles per hour with his fastball.

"He felt great," Melvin said. "Everything went as planned."

Harden is expected to make his third and possibly final start with the River Cats on Thursday, at which point the A's will determine if he's ready to join the club's rotation.

- Hideki Matsui received his third straight start in left field on Sunday, and his fifth in six days. Melvin plans on inserting the veteran back into the designated hitter's role for the most part beginning Tuesday, when the A's return home.

That will allow David DeJesus to get three consecutive starts against a trio of right-handers, Melvin noted. DeJesus, normally an everyday player, has recently been shuffled in and out of the lineup and has just three hits in his last 37 at-bats.

"That's something that's going to be important, getting DeJesus in there on a regular basis," he said.

- Melvin, normally a fan of infield practice even before day games, nixed the drills on Sunday.

"It's to reward last night for playing a couple of really good defensive games," Melvin said.

### **Marlins continue stretch on West Coast vs. A's**

By Joey Nowak / MLB.com | 6/27/2011 3:20 AM ET

As the Athletics return to the West Coast this week, the Marlins will already be waiting, as the result of a "homestand" played in unfamiliar territory.

The two teams will meet for the opener of a three-game Interleague set on Tuesday at Oakland Coliseum.

Because of a scheduling conflict in Miami, the Marlins were the home team this weekend during their series in Seattle. Against the Athletics in Oakland, they'll be the true road squad.

It's the Marlins' second consecutive series on the West Coast, and third in a stretch of four straight against American League West foes.

And as the Athletics return from Philadelphia, manager Bob Melvin said he plans to insert veteran Hideki Matsui back into the designated-hitter spot. Matsui received five starts in left field in six days against National League opponents.

That will allow David DeJesus to start against a trio of Florida right-handers. DeJesus, normally an everyday player, has recently been shuffled in and out of the lineup, and has just three hits in his last 38 at-bats.

"That's something that's going to be important, getting DeJesus in there on a regular basis," Melvin said.

The Athletics will take their cuts against Marlins hurler Javier Vazquez, who is 5-3 with a 4.36 ERA in his career against Oakland.

Vazquez (4-7, 6.37 ERA) snapped a three-game losing streak in his last outing, pitching 5 1/3 scoreless frames against the Angels. He struck out four and did not walk a batter, helping the scuffling Marlins end an 11-game slide and give the club its first win under new manager Jack McKeon.

"It was good to get this win for the team," Vazquez said afterward. "And hopefully we can keep going."

#### **Marlins: Sanchez strong against the AL**

- First baseman Gaby Sanchez owned one of baseball's top averages in Interleague Play. In 27 career Interleague games, Sanchez is 38-for-106 (.358).
- Outfielder Logan Morrison is 23-for-98 (.235) with four home runs and 13 RBIs in 26 games at home this season, compared to 33-for-114 (.289) with five home runs and 15 RBIs in 30 games on the road.
- Utilityman Emilio Bonifacio is batting .286 (18-for-63) over his last 17 games, with five doubles, a triple and two RBIs, but is 5-for-38 (.132) in his last 11 games (10 starts).

#### **Athletics: Gio looking for first Interleague win**

- Oakland's Tuesday starter, Gio Gonzalez, has two no-decisions in a pair of Interleague starts this season -- despite a 1.32 ERA. This marks his first career start against the Marlins.
- A's pitchers are 0-for-18 with seven strikeouts and three sacrifice hits this season, and now have a .086 (23-for-267) batting average since Interleague Play began in 1997. That mark is the lowest among AL teams during that time.
- Brian Fuentes saved the 199th game of his career last Sunday, which is the most among active left-handers. He needs one more to become the sixth left-hander in Major League history to reach the 200 plateau (John Franco, Billy Wagner, Randy Myers, Dave Righetti, Sparky Lyle).

#### **Worth noting**

- The Marlins already have set the franchise record for losses in a single month (22). A 20-loss month had been achieved five times previously before Florida eclipsed the mark with a loss on Friday night.
- The Athletics have hit one home run or fewer in each of their last 30 games, which is the second-longest streak in franchise history. The record is 31 games from July 21-Aug. 19, 1978.

## **Halladay, Phils beat A's**

### ASSOCIATED PRESS

PHILADELPHIA — Roy Halladay pitched his NL-leading fifth complete game and Jimmy Rollins went 4 for 4, leading the Philadelphia Phillies to a 3-1 win over the Oakland Athletics on Sunday.

Halladay (10-3) gave up eight hits and walked none in tying for the major league high in victories. He struck out four, raising his NL-topping total to 123.

The Phillies have won each of Halladay's last eight starts and the right-hander is 5-0 with a 2.64 ERA during the stretch. He improved to 30-3 in a Philadelphia uniform in the 35 starts in which the Phillies have given him the lead.

Rollins scored twice, Placido Polanco had two hits and Halladay added a single for Philadelphia. Conor Jackson had three hits for the A's, who have lost four of five.

The Phillies are off Monday before hosting the Boston Red Sox for three games in what many are billing as a possible World Series preview.

Josh Outman (3-2), a former Phillies minor leaguer, allowed three runs and eight hits in six innings. He was picked by the Phillies in the 10th round of the 2005 draft and traded to Oakland in 2008 as part of the deal for Joe Blanton.

The Phillies started the game with three straight hits off Outman. Rollins singled, Polanco doubled, Shane Victorino hit an RBI single and Ryan Howard had a double-play groundout that scored a run for a 2-0 lead.

Oakland got on the board in the fourth when Coco Crisp singled and later scored on Ryan Sweeney's bloop single.

The Phillies got that run back in the fifth on Ben Francisco's two-out infield single with the bases loaded. Outman cleanly fielded Francisco's slowly hit roller to the left of the pitcher's mound and looked to third to try to get Polanco, but third baseman Scott Sizemore was charging and not on the bag. By the time Outman turned and fired to first, it was too late to get Francisco.

The A's threatened in the seventh when Jackson led off with a single and, after an out, went to third on Sizemore's double down the right-field line. Jackson may have scored on the hit, but he appeared to hesitate rounding second. Oakland couldn't get the run home as Landon Powell popped out and pinch-hitter David DeJesus struck out looking. DeJesus has three hits in his last 38 at-bats (.079).

Philadelphia right fielder Domonic Brown, booed for failing to run out a grounder in Saturday's game, was not in the lineup on Sunday. Brown, who might not have started against the lefty Outman anyway, was replaced by Francisco.

Manager Charlie Manuel, however, could've elected to play Francisco in left field and sat slumping left-handed hitting Raul Ibanez, who entered 4 for 35 with no RBIs in his last 10 games. Ibanez, who hasn't homered in his last 23 games, went 1 for 4.

**NOTES:** Howard went 0 for 2 and is hitless in his last nine at-bats. But he stole his first base of the season in the seventh. ... Cliff Pennington went 0 for 4 for Oakland and is now hitless in his last 19 at-bats. ... Outman went 0 for 2, dropping A's pitchers to 0 for 18 this season. ... The Phillies recorded their 166th consecutive sellout and second-largest regular-season crowd with 45,863 fans.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Aces topple Cats, Interstate-80 rivalry intensifies**

By Veronika Tafoya / Sacramento River Cats

A steady rally of single runs escalated into a heated game between the Sacramento River Cats and the Reno Aces. Reno won the Interstate-80 rivalry matchup, pushing ahead with a 9-2 victory Sunday at Raley Field.

Sacramento leads Las Vegas by 9.0 games in the Pacific Coast League South Division, and Reno leads Tacoma by 9.0 in the North, so it's understandable to see competitive heat in this possible playoff matchup.

River Cats Pitching Coach Scott Emerson said the rivalry isn't confined to just Reno and Sacramento.

"We play everyone the same way," Emerson said. "These are two good veteran clubs that know how to and want to win, so if that's what you consider a rivalry then it is one."

Even if both teams won't admit to a specific rivalry, you wouldn't know by watching Sunday's game.

Aces outfielder Evan Frey kicked off the battle in the first plate appearance of the game with a solo homer on a 1-2 pitch by Travis Banwart. Banwart answered by striking out the next three batters swinging.

Josh Donaldson tied the score with a homer in the second inning, and Daric Barton scored on a Kevin Kounmanoff double in the third, but those would be Sacramento's final runs.

Instead, it was the Aces who were hot - each batter in Reno's starting lineup had at least one hit, and five had at least an RBI.

The heat from the Aces offense continued to rise in the sixth inning, in which they collected four more runs. A base hit from Cole Gillespie scored Brandon Allen and Tony Abreu to end Banwart's 5.2-inning performance. Banwart allowed six runs, three on solo home runs, and struck out seven.

Fautino De Los Santos replaced Banwart and allowed two runs to give the Aces an 8-2 lead.

After Reno picked up another run in the seventh, the pressure was on for the River Cats. Aces right-hander Barry Enright threw a pitch behind Donaldson, and both team's benches cleared. Enright and Donaldson were ejected and no punches were thrown. The moment was heated, but not enough to spark a change in the scoreboard as the River Cats fell to the Aces with a final score of 9-2.

The win marks the sixth in a row for Stockton native Enright, and makes him the first pitcher in franchise history to win six games in a month.

The River Cats meet the Aces again Monday at 7:05 p.m. in the third game of the four-game series, with Cats right-hander Doug Mathis (0-0, 4.50) battling against Aces left-hander Tom Layne (6-3, 6.53).

### **Hounds Knock Off Missions In San Antonio**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

The RockHounds defeated San Antonio, 7-6, Sunday in a game that went down to the last batter, yet was largely decided on a catch in the third inning.

With the RockHounds having scored four in the top of the third for a 4-2 lead, the Missions loaded the bases with no outs against starter Polin Trinidad. The left-hander got a strikeout and a pop out, but Dean Anna then ripped a shot to deep right-center. Shane Peterson made a sensational, diving catch to rob Anna of at least a three-run swing, and the game stayed 4-2. "Pete also had a 2-run triple in the game, and scored two runs.

The RockHounds built the lead to 7-2, but San Antonio stormed back, scoring three in the sixth and threatened to complete the comeback in the ninth, getting a hit and a walk against Jared Lansford.

Paul Smyth entered the game with two on and two out, but walked Jaff Decker and James Darnell, the latter bringing home a run and drawing San Antonio to within 7-6. Smyth then struck Sawyer Carroll out on three pitches to end the game with the bases full.

- San Antonio left a remarkable total seventeen (17) men on base (including a 1-2-3 eighth).

- The loss was just San Antonio's seventh at home all season (32-7).

**BATS** - Adam Heether extended his hit streak to 13 games, going 1-for-2 with two walks. Adam is hitting .372 (17-46, .370 ... a corrected figure) in the 13-gamer.

Michael Spina busted out of a 3-for-31 stretch, going 3-for-5 with a double, triple and three RBI, bringing his team-leading RBI total to 50.

Matt Sulentic went 3-for-5 and is now hitting .460 (23-for-50) in his last 13 games.

**ROAD 'HOUNDS** - Sunday was game 11 of the club's 12-game road trip (4-7). The RockHounds and Missions conclude their series 9th the second of the road face off Sunday and Monday evenings, followed by the Texas League All-Star game (two-day)

break. On Wednesday, all eight Texas League clubs went back to 0-0 for the start of the 70-game second half. Arkansas (36-31) and San Antonio, with the league's top record (49-21), were the first half pennant-winners.

**CONGRATS, WAGS!** - Pitcher Neil Wagner has been promoted to (Triple-A) Sacramento. The right-hander, acquired last season via trade from Cleveland, was 1-3, 3.38 with the 'Hounds, and had been sensational of late, touching 99 mph on the radar gun. In 10 appearances in June, "Wags" was 1-1 with a 0.87 ERA with four walks and 16 K's.

Filling the roster spot is right-hander Brett Hunter. Oakland's 8th round draft choice in 2008 out of Pepperdine, Brett opened the season in extended Spring Training to work on mechanics. The work has paid off, as he pitched 2.0 scoreless innings for Sacramento and posted a 1.35 in 12 games with (Advanced-A) Stockton. He made his debut with the RockHounds Sunday night, pitching two-thirds of an inning.

**ROCKY TOWN** - The RockHounds' current road trip ends Monday (June 27), followed by the two day break for the Texas League All-Star Game (in San Antonio, June 29). The 'Hounds then open a 6-game home stand, hosting the Arkansas Travelers and Springfield Cardinals, June 30n through July 5. The 6-gamer opens with a Thirsty Thursday (featuring Breakin' B-Boy McCoy) and also includes Cap Night (Friday, July 1) and three fireworks shows celebrating Independence Day weekend. Check out all the details at [www.midlandrockhounds.org](http://www.midlandrockhounds.org).

### **Season-High 19 Hits Carry Ports To 11th Straight Win**

**SAN JOSE, Calif.** - At times the Stockton Ports have struggled offensively during the 2011 season. Saturday night was not one of those occasions at San Jose Municipal Stadium. The Ports banged out a season-high 19 hits and took advantage of a season-high five errors committed by the San Jose Giants to earn their 11th straight victory by a final of 9-7. In winning Saturday's contest, the Ports have won their first series of the season versus the Giants.

It was San Jose on the board with the game's first run in the 2nd. James Simmons tripled to left-center field with one out and scored when Michael Choice's throw towards third went into the Ports dugout, awarding Simmons the plate and giving the Giants a 1-0 lead.

Stockton took their first lead of the game in the 4th. With one out, Ryan Lipkin doubled to left and Leonardo Gil followed with an RBI single to center to make it a 1-1 game. Two batters later, Conner Crumbliss singled to right to give the Ports a 2-1 lead. Myrio Richard followed with a single to right to score Dusty Coleman and Michael Gilmartin followed with a sac-fly to right to make it a 4-1 game.

San Jose cut the deficit to a run in the 4th on a two-run homer from Jose Flores off Ports starter A.J. Griffin to make it a 4-3 ballgame.

Griffin would go just four innings, his shortest outing of the season. He received a no-decision after allowing three runs (two earned) on five hits while striking out four.

The Ports would get to Giants starter Kelvin Marte in the 5th. With Rashun Dixon at first base and one out, Ryan Lipkin hit a double toward the wall in left field. The throw in to third was cut off by Giants shortstop Juan Ciriaco, who fired a throw to second to try and get Lipkin. The throw went into right field, an error that allowed Dixon to score and make it a 5-3 lead. Two batters later, Coleman hit a two-out double to left-center to score Lipkin and increase the Ports lead to 6-3.

Marte would receive a no-decision, going five innings and allowing six runs on a season-high 12 hits while striking out three.

San Jose would come through with their biggest inning of the night in the 5th. With Scott Deal (3-1) on the hill, Jarrett Parker reached on a fielding error committed by Coleman. Alex Burg followed with a double to put runners at second and third, and Parker scored on a wild pitch to make it 6-4. Ryan Cavan followed with an RBI single to center to cut the Ports lead to 6-5. Cavan would later score on a fielder's choice hit into by Flores to tie the game at 6-6.

The Ports took the lead back in the 6th against Giants reliever Jake Dunning (5-2). Dunning gave up a leadoff double to Richard and after a throwing error by Dunning on a pick-off attempt moved Richard to third, Gilmartin knocked an RBI single to right to give Stockton the lead back at 7-6. Two batters later, after an error put two aboard, Ryan Ortiz laced an RBI single to center to make it an 8-6 Ports advantage.

Dunning would take the loss on the night, going 2.1 innings and allowing two runs on five hits while striking out three.

The Giants would get one final run off Deal in the 6th. With two on and one out, Josh Lansford came into the game and gave up an RBI single to Burg. The run was charged to Deal and the Giants cut the deficit to a run at 8-7. With runners at the corners and one out, Lansford would get an inning-ending 6-3 double-play ball off the bat of Cavan to preserve the one-run lead.

Deal would pick up the win, going 1.1 innings and allowing four runs (two earned) on three hits while striking out three.

The hit from Burg in the 6th would be San Jose's final one of the night. Beginning with the double-play, Ports pitchers combined to retire 10 of the final 12 hitters of the game.

Lansford tossed 1.2 scoreless innings of relief. Jose Guzman (SV, 12) came on to pitch the 8th and pitched around a two-out error that put the possible-tying run at second base with two outs.

The Ports added an insurance run in the 9th on a two-out RBI single from Crumbliss to make it a 9-7 lead. Guzman came back out for the 9th and struck out the side, pitching around a two-out walk and getting Tommy Joseph swinging to end the ballgame.

Richard, Lipkin and Crumbliss all went 3-for-5 for Stockton. Gilmartin and Crumbliss each had two RBI on the night.

Stockton and San Jose will wrap up their four-game set on Sunday at Municipal Stadium. Rob Gilliam (7-4, 4.60 ERA) will head to the bump for the Ports, opposed by Giants right-hander and the California League's ERA leader Craig Westcott (8-0, 2.09 ERA). First pitch is set for 5 p.m. PDT.

### **LumberKings Walk Off With the 5-4 Win**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

CLINTON, IA -The Clinton LumberKings (2-1) scored a single run in the ninth inning on an RBI single by CF Robbie Anston (2-4) to beat the Burlington Bees by a score of 5-4 at Alliant Energy Field on Sunday afternoon.

Burlington (1-2) scored a single run in the first inning against LHP Anthony Fernandez. LF Royce Consigli (2-5) singled and moved to second base on a throwing error by Fernandez. Consigli stole third base and scored on a sacrifice fly by DH Tony Thompson (2-4) for a 1-0 Burlington lead.

2B Nino Leyja (1-4) hit his first home run of the season, a solo shot over the left field wall in the second inning for a 2-0 Bees advantage.

Clinton scored a single run in the third inning. 1B Tim Morris (0-3) struck out and reached first base on a wild pitch. RF Kalian Sams (2-4) hit a single against RHP Josh Bowman to make the score 2-1.

In the third inning 3B Ryan Pineda (2-4) worked a leadoff walk and scored on a double from Thompson to make it 3-1.

The LumberKings scored three runs in the fourth inning on a three-run home run by RF Kalian Sams (2-4) to take a 4-3 lead.

The Bees tied the game in the fifth inning on a solo home run by Thompson. The eighth home run of the season for Thompson made the score 4-4.

The Bees return home to begin a three-game series against the Kane County Cougars on Monday night at 6:30 p.m. It's Little League Recognition Night with all kids and coaches in their uniforms getting in free. The Bees will host a pre-game parade of teams at 6:15 tomorrow night. It's also Dollar Monday presented by Miller Lite. Adult general admission tickets are just \$2.00 while senior/student general admission tickets, hot dogs, pizza, popcorn and cans of Pepsi are just \$1.00. 16-ounce cans of Miller Lite and Coors Lite are just \$3.25. RHP Leondy Perez (1-7, 3.13) gets the start for Kane County against RHP Blake Hassebrock (4-2, 1.71) for Burlington. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:10 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at [www.gobees.com](http://www.gobees.com).

### **Vermont Falls 4-1 On Sunday At Lowell**

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

LOWELL, MA --- Will Middlebrooks hit a solo homer in the second and added a sacrifice fly in a two-run sixth inning as the Lowell Spinners held Vermont to just four hits in a 4-1 victory over the Lake Monsters in New York-Penn League action Sunday evening at LeLecheur Park.

Middlebrooks, who joined the Spinners on Sunday for a rehab assignment from Double-A Portland, lined a 2-0 pitch from Jose Macias over the leftfield wall to lead off the second inning to give the Spinners a quick 1-0 lead.

Lowell added a run in the fifth without a hit on a walk, stolen base, groundout and a Macias wild pitch before their two-run sixth game the Spinners a 4-0 lead. Jose Garvia led off the inning with a double, knocking Macias from the game, and scored two batters on Middlebrooks sac fly. Boss Moanaroa added an RBI single later in the frame off reliever Chaz Mye.

Spinner starter Luiz Diaz (1-1), who had allowed seven runs on eight hits in just 3 1/3 innings last Monday at Centennial Field in Vermont's 8-6 home-opening win, rebounded on Sunday to shut down the Lake Monsters over five innings. Diaz gave up just two hits (both to Xavier Macklin) on a two-out double in the second and one-out single in the fifth.

Trailing 2-0 in the top of the sixth, the Lake Monsters got the first batters aboard off reliever Luis Bastardo on an Aaron Shipman check-swing single and Sean Jamieson walk. But Bastardo got Chih-Fang Pan to popout on a bunt attempt, Jordan Tripp on a fly ball and struckout Chris Affinito to kill the Vermont rally.

The Lake Monsters finally got on the scoreboard in the ninth as Tripp walked, moved to second on a flyout and third on a wild pitch before scoring on a Chad Oberacker RBI groundout. Since a two-run homer from Tripp in the first inning on Friday and including four innings from Sunday's suspended game, Vermont is just 7-for-71 (.099) with three runs scored over the last 20 innings.

Macias (1-1) allowed three runs on four hits with two walks and seven strikeouts in six-plus innings to take the loss, while Ryan Hughes and Nathan Kilcrease both tossed one scoreless inning of relief. Macklin had three of the four hits in the game for Vermont, which dropped the opener of its six-game roadtrip.

The Lake Monsters and Spinners will play the second of the three-game series at Lowell on Monday. Vermont's roadtrip continues later in the week at Connecticut before the Lake Monsters return home for a quick two-game homestand on Saturday at 6:05 pm and Sunday at 1:05 pm.