



SEATTLE MARINERS NEWS CLIPS

July 4, 2011



Beavan nabs maiden Major League win

By Taylor Soper / MLB.com | 7/3/2011 8:39 PM ET

SEATTLE -- Seattle starters are on a record-setting pace this season, and currently lead the American League with a combined 3.14 ERA.

Welcome to the club, Blake Beavan.

Beavan, who was called up from Triple-A Tacoma on Saturday to start in place of injured lefty Erik Bedard, made his MLB debut in style. He threw seven innings of three-hit ball to help the Mariners take the rubber game over San Diego, 3-1, on Sunday afternoon at Safeco Field.

The Texas native found out that he'd be pitching in the big leagues after Tacoma manager Daren Brown informed him on Saturday morning. By Sunday afternoon, he was on the hill at Safeco in a Seattle Mariners uniform for the first time ever.

Was this effort -- seven innings, three hits, four strikeouts and his first MLB win -- what he expected?

"Everything and more," Beavan said. "It was just good to get out there and get the butterflies out. After the first inning, I calmed down and locked in."

The 6-foot-7, 250-pound Beavan, who is just the sixth Mariner starting pitcher this season, said he had "a lot" of pregame butterflies, but it wasn't really apparent on Sunday afternoon in front of 28,001.

Bevan hit his spots all day and sported impressive control with a consistent fastball and an occasional changeup and slider.

"I was really impressed with the way he used his fastball, but also the way he mixed it in with the secondary stuff," Seattle manager Eric Wedge said. "He had to make some pitches at certain points in time in a tight ballgame, and he was very efficient. Can't ask for anything more than that in a debut."

It helped Beavan to have a familiar face behind the plate. Catcher Josh Bard made his fourth consecutive start in place of Miguel Olivo -- who is day-to-day with a tight right hamstring -- and it worked for the better on Sunday.

Bard and Beavan have spent time together in Tacoma and the pair worked off each other well. Beavan seemed slightly flustered at a few points during the game, but Bard was quick to jump up and pay a visit to the mound to calm his guy down.

"I had Bard in Tacoma, and just feeling comfortable with somebody helps a lot," said Beavan, who had his parents and wife in attendance. "It calms the nerves down, him telling me to calm down and stay composed."

With Bedard on the 15-day disabled list -- Wedge said he expects Bedard back after the All-Star break -- the Texas native should see another start before the All-Star break. This season with Tacoma, Beavan was 5-3 with a 4.45 ERA.

Reliever David Pauley escaped a bases-loaded jam in the eighth and closer Brandon League, who was named an American League All-Star for the first time on Sunday, pitched the ninth for his AL-leading 22nd save. League has not given up an earned run since giving up a game-winning home run against Cleveland on May 13.

One night after putting up just two hits and no runs for starter Doug Fister in a 1-0 loss to the Padres, the Mariners provided an early cushion for Beavan.

Third baseman Adam Kennedy gave Seattle the early 1-0 advantage with an RBI single in the first inning, and the Mariners padded their lead in the third with consecutive bases-loaded sacrifice flies from Justin Smoak and Dustin Ackley.

Ackley, who returned to the lineup after missing the past two games with bruised ribs, finished 1-for-4 with an eighth inning single. He has now reached base in each of his first 13 MLB games, and nine of his 13 hits this season have come in the seventh inning or later.

San Diego starter Mat Latos went six innings and gave up three earned runs on four hits. He fell to 5-9 on the season.

Mariners right fielder Ichiro Suzuki, who was left off the All-Star roster for the first time in his 11-year MLB career, finished 2-for-3 and scored two of Seattle's three runs.

Seattle finished 5-1 against San Diego this season, and the Mariners' pitching staff was 5-1 with a 0.50 ERA in those six games.

"We saw six different starters and they all pitched with an upbeat tempo," Padres manager Bud Black said. "It seemed like all six guys were throwing strikes and locating their pitches. In these six games, their starters pitched pretty well."

The Mariners head to Oakland to begin a seven-game road trip that will end with a four-game series against the Angels right before the All-Star break.

"It was a good win today, good to win this series before we head to Oakland and Anaheim," Wedge said. "We're getting back into our division now. That's where you got to get it done."

League and Seattle ace Felix Hernandez were named All-Stars on Sunday morning and will represent the Mariners in Phoenix, although Hernandez most likely won't pitch because he is scheduled to start next Sunday's game against the Angels.

Taylor Soper is an associate reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

Felix, League tabbed for AL All-Star squad

By Greg Johns / MLB.com | 07/03/11 4:25 PM ET

SEATTLE -- Mariners ace Felix Hernandez and closer Brandon League were named to the American League All-Star team on Sunday, as announced on the MLB All-Star Selection Show presented by Taco Bell.

Hernandez's selection is not a big surprise, given he won last year's AL Cy Young Award and continues to be one of the top pitchers in baseball.

The news was a little more of a surprise for League, though he shares the AL lead for saves with Mariano Rivera of the Yankees. Five closers were named to the AL team and while League is happy to be included, he acknowledged that it wasn't the first thing on his mind over the weekend.

"Even though the All-Star selection is a big deal, my wife is pregnant and we're due any day now. So I've got that going for me," League said with a grin. "We went to the hospital [on Saturday night], but it was a false start. So it could be any day now."

League, awaiting his third child, won't have to wait much longer for his first All-Star bid. The 82nd Major League Baseball All-Star Game will be played July 12 at Chase Field in Phoenix. It will be televised nationally by FOX Sports, in Canada by Rogers Sportsnet and Sportsnet HD and Le Réseau des Sports, with pregame ceremonies beginning at 5 p.m. PT.

ESPN Radio and ESPN Radio Deportes will provide exclusive national radio coverage. MLB Network, MLB.com and Sirius XM also will provide comprehensive All-Star Game coverage.

Hernandez earned his second All-Star selection, having also made the team in 2009. The 25-year-old won the AL Cy Young Award last season without making the All-Star team. This time Hernandez earned an All-Star bid, but he likely won't be able to pitch in the Midsummer Classic since he's scheduled to start for the Mariners next Sunday, two days before the All-Star Game.

By MLB rules, as soon as any starter throws a pitch on Sunday, they become ineligible to be used in the All-Star Game and must be replaced. Mariners manager Eric Wedge said that Hernandez would remain on schedule for Sunday in Anaheim.

Hernandez jokingly noted that he could still easily throw an inning on Tuesday, given that would be his normal bullpen day. But barring unlikely weather problems in Oakland or Anaheim this week, he seems destined to be bumped out of the actual game while still being allowed to take part in the festivities.

Tampa Bay's James Shields and Detroit's Justin Verlander are also scheduled to pitch on Sunday. When those pitchers are taken out of the game, the AL will need replacements, and it's conceivable that could open a spot for Mariners rookie Michael Pineda, who is 7-5 with a 2.65 ERA.

Hernandez was among those raising their eyebrows over Pineda's non-selection.

"I'm a little surprised," Hernandez said. "He's got pretty good numbers. I don't know. Maybe he can go there and pitch for me if I can't pitch."

Also not selected was right fielder Ichiro Suzuki, who saw his run of 10 straight All-Star selections come to an end. Ichiro had the longest active streak in the Majors, having been voted into the All-Star game nine of his first 10 years in Seattle and being named as a reserve in '05 when he wasn't voted in by the fans.

Ichiro, 37, is hitting .268, with an on-base percentage of .313 and slugging percentage of .327, all well below his career averages of .331/.376/.430.

"He's had a heck of a run," Mariners manager Eric Wedge said. "Ichiro has had a great career. He's worked hard this year to find it, to get back to being as productive as he's been in the past. He's still fighting that fight."

"He comes to the ballpark each and every day and prepares like he prepares, and that's all you can do. He's been better here the last 2-3 weeks, and hopefully he can be more consistent in the second half for us."

League, 28, took over as the Mariners closer this season for the injured David Aardsma, and has been perfect outside of a four-game blip in mid-May when he lost four straight games. Prior to that, he racked up nine straight saves and since then he's gone 12-for-12 in save opportunities while not allowing an earned run in 18 straight appearances.

"That was a tough week, but I did what I could to get back on the horse and not look back," he said. "I'm definitely throwing all my pitches now, whereas that week I relied too much on my fastball. Now I'm mixing in splits and sliders a lot."

League, 0-4 with a 3.48 ERA, has 27 strikeouts and five walks in 33 2/3 innings. The Hawaiian native came into the season with just eight saves in seven Major League seasons, having worked primarily as a setup man in Toronto from 2004-09 and then Seattle last year after being acquired in a trade for right-hander Brandon Morrow.

Hernandez has followed up on last year's Cy Young season with an 8-7 start and a 3.35 ERA. He ranks third in the AL in innings pitched with 129 and strikeouts with 124, and again is the ace of a Mariners staff that has kept Seattle in contention in the AL West.

Hernandez pitched in the 2009 All-Star Game in St. Louis, but didn't get selected for the game last year when he went on to win his first Cy Young.

Fans, having already decided the starters, this week will have the opportunity to select the final player on each All-Star team. Balloting began immediately following Sunday's Major League All-Star Selection Show presented by Taco Bell and continues until 4 p.m. ET on Thursday, July 7. The winners will be announced on MLB.com shortly thereafter.

Mobile voting in the U.S. is exclusive to Sprint, Nextel and Boost subscribers. To receive the 2011 All-Star Game Final Vote Sponsored by Sprint mobile ballot, text the word "VOTE" to 1122. To vote for a specific player, simply text message your choice to 1122. EXAMPLE: Text "A3" to vote for AL Player 3 or "N3" to vote for NL Player 3. Msg&Data Rates May Apply. Mobile voting in Canada is open to all carriers; fans should text their choices to 88555. Std rates may apply.

On July 12, fans once again will have the opportunity to participate in the official voting for the Ted Williams Most Valuable Player presented by Chevy via the 2011 All-Star Game MVP Vote Sponsored by Sprint on MLB.com during the All-Star Game.

Greg Johns is a reporter for MLB.com. Follow him on Twitter @GregJohnsMLB as well as his Mariners Musings blog. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

McCarthy returns to the hill to face Mariners in opener

By Quinn Roberts / MLB.com | 7/3/2011 9:00 PM ET

The last month and a half have been tough on A's starter Brandon McCarthy.

On the disabled list since May 18 with a stress reaction in his right shoulder, McCarthy has done just about anything to stay busy.

Yet he won't have to wait any longer. After being activated on Sunday, he'll take the mound on Monday in the series opener against the Mariners at Oakland Coliseum.

"I definitely get bored and get tired of sitting around and feeling worthless, so it's going to be good to be back and have a chance for my competitive energy to go somewhere, instead of just sitting around playing Playstation," said the right-hander.

While this is the fourth time that McCarthy has dealt with such an injury, he is now 100 percent healthy.

"When I come back and it's healthy, it's healthy," McCarthy said. "There's no issues, nothing lingers, so it's been pretty similar."

Before he hit the DL, McCarthy was in the midst of a career-long four-game losing streak, with a record of 1-4 and a 3.39 ERA.

He is still a welcome sight for the A's, whose starting rotation has been crippled by injuries the entire season. McCarthy is the second starter to come back to the team in less than a week, with Rich Harden making his debut on Friday against Arizona.

To break such a streak and get back to his winning ways, McCarthy will have to go through the Mariners' hard-throwing right-hander Michael Pineda.

As one of the Mariners bright new lights, Pineda (7-5, 2.65 ERA) has managed to keep opponents success against him at a minimum. Team's he's faced are hitting just .198 against him. Also having pinpoint control, the right-hander has walked just 32 batters on the season and struck out 99.

However, he lacked that type of control in his last start against Atlanta, walking a season-high five and losing for the first time since June 11. In 6 1/3 innings, he surrendered five runs on four hits, while striking out five.

"Well he just didn't have the command that we've seen him have," Mariners manager Eric Wedge said. "His stuff was good, but as the game wore on, he started getting underneath some fastballs and just working from behind. He battled -- I mean he gave us everything he has, like he does, but he just wasn't as crisp as we've seen him as the game wore on."

Mariners: Felix, League tabbed with All-Star nod

- Mariners ace Felix Hernandez and closer Brandon League were selected to the American League All-Star team on Sunday.

While the news was a little bit of a surprise for League, who came into Sunday sharing the AL lead for saves with Mariano Rivera of the Yankees, it was the last thing on his mind.

"Even though the All-Star selection is a big deal, my wife is pregnant, and we're due any day now. So I've got that going for me," League said with a grin. "We went to the hospital [on Saturday night], but it was a false start. So it could be any day now."

- After missing the past two games with bruised ribs, second baseman Dustin Ackley started Sunday's game against San Diego. He went 1-for-3 with an RBI.

"We could have pushed him in there [Saturday], but we didn't feel that was the smart move," Wedge said. "He continues getting treatment and he's been doing some work [Sunday] morning, so we feel comfortable getting him back in there."

Athletics: Gonzalez to represent A's

- Gio Gonzalez earned his first trip to the Midsummer Classic when the 2011 American League All-Star team was announced on Sunday. He's the A's lone representative.

Gonzalez, who got his eighth win of the season on Sunday against the D-backs, has one of the lowest ERA's in the AL, with a mark of 2.31.

"Anytime you're below three, it means you're having a heck of a year," A's manager Bob Melvin said.

"Certainly every time I've seen him he's pitched terrific. Consistency is one of the things they look at, then they look at the numbers. To me, it was an easy decision."

Worth Noting

- With the A's activating Brandon McCarthy on Sunday, Josh Outman was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento.

- In one start against the A's back on April 22, Pineda got the win. He tossed six shutout innings and gave up only five hits.

Wedge apologizes to team for missing call

By Taylor Soper / MLB.com | 07/03/11 5:08 PM ET

SEATTLE -- Mariners manager Eric Wedge met with his team on Sunday morning and took responsibility for not noticing Saturday's missed call that gave a base on balls to Padres center fielder Cameron Maybin, who really only had three balls called on him.

Maybin would come around to score the game's lone run, as the Mariners fell, 1-0, to the Padres on Saturday night. After Seattle starter Doug Fister threw a ball in the dirt on a 1-2 count, the Safeco Field scoreboard count mistakenly went from 1-2 to 3-2. Fister's next pitch was a ball, and Maybin -- who said afterward that he thought the count was actually full -- walked to first.

No one noticed -- not Wedge, not home plate umpire Phil Cuzzi, not Fister -- and Wedge let his players know that in the end, it was his fault for not catching the mistake that ended up costing Seattle the game.

"I preach to these guys about being accountable, and I sure as heck need to be accountable for that yesterday," Wedge said. "So I felt I needed to get in front of them and let them know that one was on me.

"I just wanted to be accountable in front of them. Ultimately, I'm the captain of this ship and something like that can't happen, and that falls on me. I should have trusted my instincts with what I felt it was, and I didn't. And that's my fault. That can't happen."

Wedge said after Saturday's game that he thought he had just missed a pitch and didn't think much of it. On Sunday, utility man Adam Kennedy said, "It's not just on his shoulders," but he appreciated the first-year skipper's motion.

"We wouldn't expect anything less of him," said Kennedy, who started at third base on Sunday. "With or without him addressing us, those of us who know him would know he felt bad about it. You expect that from him -- it's the kind of guy he is."

Taylor Soper is an associate reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

Carp optioned down to Triple-A Tacoma

By Taylor Soper / MLB.com | 07/03/11 5:08 PM ET

SEATTLE -- With righty Blake Beavan starting on Sunday against San Diego, left fielder Mike Carp was optioned down to Tacoma on Sunday.

"It's more about [catcher Miguel Olivo] and just making sure we've got some protection with [catcher Josh Bard]," Seattle manager Eric Wedge said. "Obviously, I'm giving Olivo another day today. His availability today is still somewhat uncertain right now. He's starting to up his activity, but we've just got to be real careful with the guy."

Olivo missed his fourth consecutive game on Sunday after leaving Tuesday's 5-4 loss due to cramps. He is listed out with a tight right hamstring. Bard has started in his place and is 3-for-11 through three games.

To make room for Beavan, who's starting in place of injured Erik Bedard, the Mariners also moved catcher Chris Gimenez to the 60-day disabled list from the 15-day DL. Gimenez strained his left oblique in Tuesday's loss to Atlanta.

Carp made his debut on June 8 against the White Sox. In 15 games, he batted .200 (7-for-35) with two doubles. Before he was called up, Carp hit .348 with 19 home runs and 58 RBIs in 57 games for Tacoma.

"I don't think it's a bad thing that he gets to go down and play for a little while," Wedge said. "He deserves to be up here, and we want to get him back up here at some point in time."

Worth noting

After missing the past two games with bruised ribs, second baseman Dustin Ackley started on Sunday in the rubber match against San Diego.

"We could have pushed him in there [Saturday], but we didn't feel that was the smart move," Wedge said. "He continues getting treatment and he's been doing some work [Sunday] morning, so we feel comfortable getting him back in there today."

Ackley made his debut on June 17 and has reached base in his first 12 MLB games. He's hitting .300 with two home runs and six RBIs.

Taylor Soper is an associate reporter for MLB.com. This story was not subject to the approval of Major League Baseball or its clubs.

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Dazzling M's debut

Blake Beavan threw seven innings of three-hit ball and became the first M's starter in seven years to win his major-league debut, 3-1.

By Bud Withers

Seattle Times staff reporter

It's an old piece of down-home, social-class commentary, but the San Diego Padres can vouch for its relevance to a pitching staff as well: Them that has, gets.

The Mariners, who have already made a serious impression with their collection of formidable arms in 2011, unveiled one of their young guns Sunday at Safeco Field, a fill-in for injured Erik Bedard.

And Blake Beavan, 22, a strapping, 6-foot-7, 240-pound right-hander, looked a lot like the other guys who have helped the M's to a 3.15 earned-run average, second-best in the American League. He threw seven innings of three-hit ball and became the first M's starter in seven years to win his major-league debut, 3-1.

"That was awesome," said a happy Beavan. "I was just trying to soak in the moment."

Some 28,001 soaked it in with him and saw the M's complete an absolute stuffing of the Padres over six interleague games. In that six-pack, Seattle starters allowed all of three earned runs over 54 innings, for an ERA of 0.50.

It was unlikely that Beavan (say BEV-un) would continue the domination quite so effectively. After all, he had to face the expected first-game jitters, and his last start Tuesday in Las Vegas for Tacoma was a four-inning, 12-hit, six-run stinker.

Not to worry. Beavan, obtained in the Cliff Lee deal a year ago from Texas, got the word Saturday he would be making the start, called his wife and parents in the Dallas area and made a trip to the airport at midnight Saturday.

Recalled Beavan, "She said, 'Are you going to be able to sleep right now?' and I said, 'No, probably not.'

"It was just great waking up in the morning and knowing I was going to be driving to Safeco."

Beavan, 5-3 with a 4.45 ERA in Tacoma, credited a newfound curveball taught him by Tacoma pitching coach Dwight Bernard with his rise this spring; he had five quality starts in June before the bad night in Vegas.

But Sunday was about hitting spots with his fastball, not throwing off-speed stuff, which has to be encouraging for the M's brain trust.

"Sometimes we make it so complicated, trying to trick guys and do all this stuff," said catcher Josh Bard, who had caught Beavan in Tacoma. "We really talked to him about execution with his heater. He pitched in and pitched out. He probably only threw 20 off-speed pitches the whole game."

"What a great performance," exclaimed manager Eric Wedge. "You never know what to expect when a guy comes up here for the first time. Tight ballgame, and he was able to work through some innings when he had to.

"You can't ask for more than that from a debut."

Beavan threw an economical 90 pitches and first-pitch strikes to 21 of 27 hitters.

"Make 'em beat you," nodded Wedge. "That's what the good ones do."

Bard, the 33-year-old veteran, was the perfect complement to Beavan, who said he never shook him off.

"Just feeling comfortable with somebody helps a lot," Beavan said. "He was telling me with his hands to be calm and stay composed, and I tried to do the best I could. It ended up working for us."

The Padres, hitting .235, aren't to be mistaken for the 1976 Reds. But Beavan had only two innings when he allowed as many as two base runners.

Seattle broke a 1-1 tie in the third on consecutive sacrifice flies by Justin Smoak and Dustin Ackley. Smoak, who had a miserable 1-for-27 homestand, sent an off-field drive to the warning track in left on his bid for a grand slam.

Ackley's eighth-inning single, meanwhile, extended his streak of consecutive games reached base to 13, or every one since he was called up from Tacoma.

But this was a day that belonged to Beavan. In the M's pregame media notes, the reference to their pitching success against the Padres began with the heading, "No Pressure, Blake, But ... "

No pressure, and no sweat.

Rookies on the mound

Mariners debuts of 7-plus innings by a starting pitcher:

Pitcher Year Opponent Result IP H ER

Enrique Romo 1977 California L, 2-0 7.0 4 2

Matt Young 1983 NYY W, 6-2 7.0 10 2

Mark Langston 1984 Milwaukee W, 3-2 7.0 4 2

Terry Taylor 1988 NYY L, 5-3 7.1 4 2

Erik Hanson 1988 Minnesota L, 2-0 7.1 6 0

Clint Zavaras 1989 Texas L, 6-1 8.0 3 4

Jim Converse 1993 Kansas City L, 4-1 7.0 6 2

Blake Beavan 2011 San Diego W, 3-1 7.0 3 1

Bud Withers: 206-464-8281 or bwithers@seattletimes.com

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Hernandez, League named All-Stars

By Bud Withers

Seattle Times staff reporter

The Mariners placed pitchers Felix Hernandez and Brandon League on the American League All-Star team, but the omission of two others will no doubt stimulate conversation this week.

Hernandez made it for a second time, but he likely won't be able to pitch. He's scheduled to start Sunday in the last game before the break, and the rules prohibit those starters from appearing two days later as a precaution against arm injuries.

"Maybe he can go there and pitch for me," Hernandez joked, referring to right-handed rookie teammate Michael Pineda, who was snubbed despite a 7-5 record and 2.65 earned-run average, sixth best in the American League.

Also likely to sit home is Ichiro for the first time in his 11-year Mariners career. Hitting only .272 compared to his career average of .331 entering 2011, Ichiro was passed over by Texas manager Ron Washington for a reserve spot, so his only possible entry would be as an injury replacement.

"Ichiro's had a great career," said manager Eric Wedge. "He's worked hard this year, he's come to the ballpark every day prepared, which is all you can do.

"He's been better the last month, and hopefully he can be even more consistent in the second half for us."

Through his translator, Ichiro declined to comment.

Not only is Hernandez unlikely to pitch in the July 12 game, League might be a question mark as well. That's dependent on his wife, Sasha, who is pregnant and due July 13.

"I can't say I didn't think about it," said League, referring to his first-time selection, "but I've got other things on my mind right now. We went to the hospital two nights ago, and the doctor said, 'Any day.' "

League, who recorded his 22nd save Sunday, said there was no question he'd skip the All-Star Game if the impending birth conflicted with the trip.

"It wouldn't have been possible if Wedgie hadn't given me an opportunity to close and stuck with me," said League, who also credited his teammates and said, "If it wasn't me, it could have been anybody on this pitching staff."

Wedge lauded League for his rebound from a bad week in mid-May, saying, "You're not going to be perfect. What I like most about League is, he was able to stand up to it."

As for Hernandez, 25, Wedge said, "He's an impressive young man. He's got a great personality, he's a good teammate and he's a hard worker. He doesn't let his ego get in the way and he handles the good and bad like you'd like anybody to handle it."

Hernandez acknowledged inconsistency in his first half — his ERA is 3.35, compared to the 2.27 that won him the Cy Young Award last year, but added, "I just need to try to do what I did last year."

A year ago, Hernandez had a 1.53 ERA in 15 starts after the All-Star break, third lowest by an AL starter in the last 25 years over that period.

Wedge said he didn't want to get into specific snubs of his players. And as for the hard choices that had to be made by last year's World Series managers — Washington and San Francisco's Bruce Bochy — he quipped, "It's something I wouldn't mind having the burden of doing."

Notes

- The M's sent LF Mike Carp to Tacoma to make room for Sunday's starter, Blake Beavan.
- Wedge had a short pregame team meeting, partly as a mea culpa for not catching the three-ball walk to Cameron Maybin that scored the only run of the game Saturday night. "I preach being accountable, and that falls on me," Wedge confessed. "I'm the captain of the ship."

Next five

Monday @ Oakland, 1:05 p.m., ROOT | Pineda (7-5, 2.65) vs. McCarthy (1-4, 3.39)

Tuesday @ Oakland, 7:05 p.m., ROOT | Hernandez (8-7, 3.35) vs. Cahill (8-6, 3.28)

Wednesday @ Oakland, 12:35 p.m., ROOT | Vargas (6-5, 3.57) vs. Moscoso (2-4, 2.51)

Thursday @ L.A. Angels, 7:10 p.m., ROOT | Fister (3-9, 3.02) vs. Weaver (10-4, 1.92)

Friday @ L.A. Angels, 7:10 p.m., ROOT | Beavan (1-0, 1.29) vs. Santana (4-8, 3.89)

For the record

W-L 41-43; W PCT .488; Streak: W1 Home: 23-22 Road: 18-21 vs. AL West: 9-9 vs. L.A.: 3-2 vs. Oakland: 4-3 vs. Texas: 2-4 vs. AL East: 11-8 v. AL Cent: 12-17 vs. NL: 9-9 vs. LHP: 8-14 vs. RHP: 33-29 Day: 10-14 Night: 31-29 One-run: 15-15 Extra inngs.: 4-3

Bud Withers: 206-464-8281 or bwithers@seattletimes.com

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Mariners Notebook: Hernandez. League make All-Star squad

By Kirby Arnold, Everett Herald Writer

SEATTLE — Mariners closer Brandon League called his wife on Sunday moments after he learned he'd made the American League All-Star team, then braced for the ultimate reaction.

It wasn't just Sasha League's joy he was concerned with, but also her condition.

She is eight-plus months pregnant and, last week, experienced contractions.

"The due date is July 20 and we're planning to induce (labor) on the 13th, but she's been having contractions all week," Brandon League said. "We went to the doctor's office two nights ago and they said it could be any day now."

Any day but July 12 — the day of the All-Star Game in Phoenix — would be nice. Otherwise, League said he's prepared to miss the biggest moment of his professional life.

"As great of an honor as it is, family comes first," said the 28-year-old. "We'll just have to see what happens."

League and starting pitcher Felix Hernandez were the only Mariners chosen to the AL squad.

Right fielder Ichiro Suzuki, batting .272 after a 2-for-3 game Sunday, was left off the AL squad after a streak of 10 All-Star appearances. Also left off was rookie starter Michael Pineda, who's 7-5 with a 2.65 ERA, and reliever David Pauley, whose 1.41 ERA is the lowest on the team.

Suzuki sent word through his interpreter, Antony Suzuki, that he would not comment on the All-Star selections.

From where League started this year, it's been an impressive climb to All-Star status.

He went to spring training thinking he would get a chance to close games because last year's closer, David Aardsma, would need at least part of this season to recover from hip surgery. With other late-inning relievers like veteran Chris Ray and rookies Josh Lueke and Dan Cortes also in camp, nothing was certain for League.

He emerged the clear-cut choice to close, then started the season with nine straight saves and a 2.08 ERA through one month. Then League blew three straight save opportunities, May 10 and May 12 at Baltimore, and May 13 at Cleveland.

"You're not going to be perfect, but what I love about Leaguer is that he had a tough couple of days and he was able to stand up to it, face it head-on and be even better after that," manager Eric Wedge said.

Sunday, League converted his 13th straight save since the May meltdowns. His 22 saves lead the league.

Hernandez won't be eligible to pitch in the All-Star Game if he pitches as scheduled next Sunday against the Angels. Wedge said he won't juggle the Mariners' pitching schedule, so the Mariners' reigning AL Cy Young Award winner plans to enjoy the festivities in Phoenix.

"I told my wife, 'We're going to Arizona,'" Hernandez said. "She was more excited than me.' It's a great honor to be part of the All-Star game and it's going to be fun."

Reflection on the three-ball walk

Manager Eric Wedge called a team meeting Sunday morning, partly to congratulate All-Stars Felix Hernandez and Brandon League, and partly to take the blame for the three-ball walk Saturday night that led to the run that beat the Mariners.

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Wedge told reporters Saturday night that he accepted responsibility for not catching the mistake, and he repeated it to the players Sunday.

"That's why I met with the guys," Wedge said. "I wanted to be accountable in front of them. I'm the captain of this ship and something like that just can't happen. That falls on me. I should have trusted my instincts with what I felt it was, and I didn't and that's my fault. That can't happen.

"I preach to these guys about being accountable, and I sure as hell needed to be accountable for that. That one's on me."

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Carp optioned to Tacoma

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The Mariners had been prepared to send catcher Jose Yopez down but had to keep him as insurance because starting catcher Miguel Olivo continued to be sidelined with a sore left leg. Olivo was hurt Tuesday night in the same game when Gimenez suffered a strained oblique.

Yopez and Josh Bard were called up Wednesday, but Bard has started every game since then.

Carp was batting .200 in 35 at-bats when he was optioned.

"It's more about (Olivo) and making sure we've got some protection (behind) Bard," Wedge said. "I don't think it's a bad thing that (Carp) gets to go down and play every day for a while. He deserves to be up here and we want to get him back up here at some point in time."

Short Hops

Dustin Ackley returned to the lineup after missing two games because of bruised ribs. He went 1-for-3 with a sacrifice fly and has a .302 average. Ackley has reached base in all 13 games, the second-longest streak by a Mariner at the beginning of his career behind Alvin Davis' 47 straight games in 1984. KJR radio producer Kevin Shockey ate four hot dogs in two minutes to win the media hot-dog-eating contest before Sunday's game.

Published: Monday, July 4, 2011

Mariners rookie Beavan wins debut over Padres

By Kirby Arnold, Everett Herald Writer

SEATTLE – The biggest challenge Blake Beavan faced Sunday was sleeping.

He didn't get to bed until the early morning hours after picking up his family at the airport, and even then it was a restless night.

It's typical of anyone on the eve of their major league debut, but especially for Beavan, 22, because he was the Seattle Mariners' starting pitcher Sunday.

How much sleep did he get?

"I got enough," Beavan said, moments after he held the San Diego Padres to three hits in seven innings of a 3-1 Mariners victory at Safeco Field.

Selected to start in place of Erik Bedard, who's on the disabled list because of a sprained left knee, Beavan wasn't told of the Mariners' plans until Saturday afternoon. He was with the Triple-A Tacoma Rainiers, where he'd put together a 5-3 record with a 4.45 earned-run average, including a seven-game stretch in which he'd gone 4-2, 2.93 since May 26.

Rainiers manager Darrin Brown broke it to Beavan that he'd start Sunday's game, and the right-hander immediately made phone calls and travel arrangements.

"It was kind of a shock," he said. "Then I realized I had to call my parents and my wife and try to get them out here (from Dallas). I was fortunate enough to get them here, and them being here kind of helped me calm down."

Beavan, a 6-foot-7, 240-pounder, said he was a bundle of nerves when he stepped to the mound, but he settled down quickly.

He didn't allow a hit until Alberto Gonzalez's one-out single in the third inning, and Will Venable's RBI double in the next at-bat scored the Padres' only run. After that, Beavan allowed only three more base runners through seven innings – another Venable single in the fifth, plus a hit batter and a walk.

By then, the Mariners had a 3-1 lead.

Adam Kennedy's RBI single in the first inning scored Ichiro Suzuki, and both Justin Smoak and Dustin Ackley hit sacrifice flies in the third inning off Padres starter Matt Latos.

"He was on the plate and he stayed aggressive," manager Eric Wedge said of Beavan's performance. "You make them beat you and put them on the defense. That's what the good ones do."

Yeah, but not always in their first major league outing.

“I took a deep breath out there and told myself it was just another game,” Beavan said. “It was everything I could have imagined and more. It was good to get out there, get the butterflies out. After the first inning I calmed down and locked in and realized, ‘You’re up here. Make some pitches and go from there.’”

David Pauley escaped a bases-loaded jam to pitch a scoreless eighth, and Brandon League retired three straight in the ninth for his American League-leading 22nd save.

It ended the Mariners’ stretch of 15 straight games against National League teams and sent them onto a seven-game road trip before the All-Star break. Today’s game at Oakland begins a stretch of 11 straight against A.L. West teams.

“We’re getting back into our division now,” Wedge said. “That’s where you’ve got to get it done.

Published: Monday, July 4, 2011

Mariners' Wedge accepts responsibility for three-ball walk

By Kirby Arnold, Everett Herald Writer

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"It's more about (Olivo) and making sure we've got some protection (behind) Bard," Wedge said. "I don't think it's a bad thing that (Carp) gets to go down and play every day for a while. He deserves to be up here and we want to get him back up here at some point in time."

Olivo's status has been considered day-to-day since the injury, but Sunday was the fourth straight game he has missed.

"He's starting to up his activity, but we've got to be real careful with the guy," Wedge said.

Of note

Dustin Ackley returned to the lineup after missing two games because of bruised ribs. He went 1-for-3 with a sacrifice fly and has a .302 average. ... Ackley has reached base in all 13 games, the second-longest streak by a Mariner at the beginning of his career behind Alvin Davis' 47 straight games in 1984. ... KJR radio producer Kevin Shockey ate four hot dogs in two minutes to win the media hot-dog-eating contest before Sunday's game.

Kirby Arnold, Herald Writer

Published: Sunday, July 3, 2011

AquaSox win third straight 8-7

Everett Herald staff

KEIZER, Ore. -- After a woeful start to the season that included an eight-game losing streak, the AquaSox are starting to look like the NWL defending champions.

At least against the Salem-Keizer Volcanoes.

With a 8-7 victory Sunday evening at Volcanoes Stadium, the Sox completed the three-game series sweep of the last-place team in its division, Everett's first series sweep of the season.

The AquaSox jumped ahead early, scoring a run in the first on a wild pitch.

Nathan Melendres opened the fifth with a line-drive triple to center field and scored on a Jarrett Burgess single. Burgess later scored from third on Patrick Brady's ground out.

Everett continued in its hitting spree in the sixth, adding another pair of runs. Jabari Blash singled, stole second and came home to score on a James Wood double to left field. Michael Dowd singled home Wood from second base.

Everett used four pitchers in the winning effort, with Max Krakowiak getting the win. Matthew Bischoff earned the save while striking out two and only giving up one hit and no runs in 12/3 innings.

Hernandez, League earn trips to Arizona

DOUG PACEY; Staff writer
Published: 07/04/11 12:05 am
The Tacoma News Tribune

When the Major League All-Star rosters were released Sunday, Seattle starting pitcher Felix Hernandez and closer Brandon League were on the American League team. Outfielder Ichiro Suzuki, a 10-time All-Star, failed to make the team for the first time in his career.

The game will be played July 12 at Chase Field in Phoenix.

Hernandez found out he made the team Sunday morning when he received a congratulatory text message.

“I told my wife, I think we’re going to Arizona,” the 25-year-old said. “She was more excited than me.”

Making his second All-Star Game appearance, Hernandez (8-7, 3.35 ERA) said he was looking forward to the home run derby – he’s backing Toronto’s Jose Bautista in the American League and Milwaukee’s Prince Fielder in the National. That might be as close to the field as Hernandez will get.

The AL’s reigning Cy Young winner is scheduled to pitch Sunday at the Los Angeles Angels and MLB rules prohibit using pitchers in the All-Star Game who start the Sunday prior to the contest.

Yet, Hernandez was hopeful he could find a way around the rule. He claimed he could throw one inning in Phoenix because he would be scheduled to throw a post-start bullpen session, anyway.

“It’s my bullpen day,” he explained, “I can pitch.”

If he can’t, Hernandez was hopeful teammate Michael Pineda could pitch in his place. Enjoying a fantastic rookie season, Pineda has a 7-5 record with a 2.65 ERA.

“He’s had pretty good numbers,” Hernandez said. “I don’t know, we’ll see. Maybe he can go and pitch for me, if I can’t pitch?”

Earning his first spot on the All-Star team might have seemed like a pipe dream in mid-May when League lost four games in five nights.

“What I do love about ‘Leaguer,’” manager Eric Wedge said, “is the fact that he had a tough couple of days there, he was able to stand up to it, face it head on, come back and even be better after that.”

League, 28, has not lost a game since, has saved an AL-best 22 games and made 19 straight appearances without allowing a run.

“It was a tough stretch,” League said. “But it’s been out of my mind for a while now.”

Like Hernandez, League might not get into the 82nd All-Star Game. His wife is pregnant with the couple’s third child and nearing the due date.

“The All-Star (Game) is a big deal and a great honor,” he said, “but my wife is due any day now so I have a lot things to think about.”

SHORT HOPS

Baseball America backtracked from a report stating the Mariners had signed outfielder Heslin Martinez in the Dominican Republic. The website now says a deal has not been reached. ... Dustin Ackley started at second base Sunday after missing the previous two games with bruised ribs. With a single in the eighth inning, Ackley has reached base in all 13 games he's played. ... To make room on the 40-man roster for pitcher Blake Beavan, who made his first major league start, Seattle optioned first baseman Mike Carp to Triple-A Tacoma and moved catcher Chris Gimenez to the 60-day disabled list from the 15-day DL.

ON TAP

Seattle begins a seven-day swing through California, starting with a game against Oakland at 1:05 p.m. today. Probable starting pitchers are Seattle's Pineda (7-5, 2.65 ERA) and the Athletics' Brandon McCarthy (1-4, 3.39). The game will be broadcast on Root Sports and 710-AM.

More pitching, enough runs

RYAN DIVISH; Staff writer

Published: 07/04/11 12:05 am

The Tacoma News Tribune

It's doubtful that the smile will be removed from Blake Beavan's face any time soon.

Not after making a brilliant major-league debut in the Seattle Mariners' 3-1 win over the San Diego Padres on Sunday at Safeco Field.

"It was awesome," he said. "I'm just trying to soak up the moment. I tried to do what I could do to give these guys a win."

What Beavan did was deliver a quality start the first time he stepped on a big league mound.

At the ripe old age of 22, the Texas native threw seven strong innings, allowing one run on three hits while striking out five and walking two.

The last time a Mariners pitcher won his big league debut was Travis Blackley in 2004.

So was it everything that Beavan envisioned when he thought about making his big league debut?

"Everything and more," he said. "It was just good to get out there and get the butterflies out. After the first inning, I calmed down and locked in."

Once he was locked in, Beavan kept things simple against a Padres team that had scored three runs against the Mariners in the previous five games.

He pumped fastball after fastball by a Padres lineup that makes the Mariners' anemic offense look like a juggernaut.

"I was really impressed with the way he used his fastball, but also the way he mixed it in with the secondary stuff," Mariners manager Eric Wedge said.

Beavan didn't throw many offspeed pitches, just enough to keep hitters honest.

“If you can locate a fastball, you’re going to be a big league pitcher for a long time,” catcher Josh Bard said. “Sometimes, you make it so complicated trying to trick guys and do all the stuff, you can throw the perfect trick pitch but if you throw it down the middle and it’s hanging, it doesn’t matter.”

“We really talked to him about execution with his heater. He pitched in, he pitched out. He probably only threw 20 off-speed pitches the whole game.”

It was a bonus for Beavan having Bard catch him Sunday, because the two had worked together in Tacoma earlier in the season.

“Just feeling comfortable with somebody helps a lot,” Beavan said.

Beavan was so comfortable with Bard he didn’t shake off a pitch.

“I don’t usually shake them off much,” he admitted.

Beavan cruised through the first two innings, allowing one walk and striking out three.

Ichiro Suzuki led off the bottom of the first inning with a single and later scored on Adam Kennedy’s single to right.

The only run Beavan allowed came in the third inning.

Alberto Gonzalez dumped a one-out single into center and Max Venable took advantage a fastball up in the strike zone, doubling to center and scoring Gonzalez.

Beavan retired the next seven hitters. He ran into trouble in the fifth when he hit Gonzalez with a pitch with two outs and then gave up a single to Venable, but was able to get Jason Bartlett to ground out to end the inning.

“He made some pitches at certain points in time in a tight ballgame, was very efficient,” Wedge said. “You can’t ask for any more than that in a debut.”

Seattle scored the go-ahead run and an insurance run in the third inning.

Ichiro led off the inning by reaching on an infield single. Brendan Ryan followed with a hard single to left. Padres starter Mat Latos then walked Kennedy to load the bases for clean-up hitter Justin Smoak.

The big first baseman drove a pitch to the warning track in left field.

Ichiro tagged up and raced home for the second run. Ryan made a heads-up play and tagged from second base to advance to third.

“With Smoak, I feel like he’s heading in the right direction,” Wedge said. “I thought that ball had a chance to get out of here.”

With one out, Dustin Ackley hit a hard liner to center field that was deep enough to score Ryan on a tag-up.

“This type of a game, that type of situation and with his speed, he needs to do that,” Wedge said. “That was big for us. That’s the way we want to play.”

Two sacrifice flies are far from offensive fireworks, but the Mariners will take them and the runs that came from them.

Beavan turned over the 3-1 game to David Pauley, who pitched a scoreless eighth. He got himself in a tough situation, loading the bases thanks to a hit by pitch, a single and a walk. But he came back to strike out Cameron Maybin to end the inning.

That set up closer Brandon League for the ninth inning. Having been named to the American League All-Star Game earlier in the day, League came in and gave an all-star performance, striking out two of three batters to secure his 22nd save of the season.

Ryan Divish: 253-597-8483 ryan.divish@thenewstribune.com blog.thenewstribune.com/mariners/

Carp returns to hit key homer

CHRIS WELLS; Staff writer
Published: 07/04/11 12:05 am
The Tacoma News Tribune

Although the official fireworks didn't start until later in the evening, Mike Carp made sure he put on a show of his own, muscling the Tacoma Rainiers to a 7-6 win over the Fresno Grizzlies on Sunday.

Carp, who was sent down from the Mariners earlier in the day to make room for starting pitcher Blake Beavan, hit a deep three-run home run to left field in the first inning. The long ball was his 20th on the season. Scoring on the play was Ryan Langerhans and Alex Liddi.

Rainiers manager Daren Brown said Carp played well despite being a little downtrodden.

"Obviously, he is disappointed to be here, but at the same time we are trying to get all of these guys to the big leagues," Brown said. "He's had a really good year here and again he steps in tonight. I understand being disappointed, I understand all of that when you get back here, but it's time to go to work and he got in there today and got a couple big hits for us."

Carp also scored the game-winning run off of Sean Kazmar's sacrifice fly to deep center field in the sixth inning and later scored on Matt Tuiasosopo's single in the eighth for Tacoma (41-43).

Carp went 2-for-3 with three RBI, three runs scored and one walk.

Langerhans, who led off the first inning with a double, extended his hitting streak to 17 games.

Also extending his hit parade was Kyle Seager, who has at least one hit in 10 straight games after an infield single in the seventh. He has a hit in every game since being called up from Double-A Jackson.

Rainiers starter Luke French had a solid night, allowing three earned runs on 11 hits, a walk and three strikeouts over 6 2/3 innings while picking up his fifth win of the season. However, he wasn't given much help from the bullpen.

After Josh Fields – the Mariners' 2008 first-round pick – made his debut for the Rainiers, Brown summoned Dan Cortes from the pen.

The reliever's control was chaotic. He allowed three runs to cross the plate in the ninth via two walks and a wild pitch (Cortes threw 15 balls out of his 31 pitches).

Cortes was lifted and closer Josh Lueke was brought in with one out and a runner at second.

He managed to close the door on the Grizzlies, retiring the two batters he faced to earn his eighth save of the year.

Lueke, who was part of the trade that sent pitcher Cliff Lee to Texas last year, threw 12 pitches, 11 for strikes.

ON TAP

The Rainiers will return to the road on Monday for a 6:05 p.m. start against the Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

Right-hander Jarrett Grube (0-0, 4.50 ERA) will make his first start for the Rainiers this season. The Sky Sox have yet to announce their starting pitcher.

Beavan's big-league debut a Texas-size splash

JOHN MCGRATH; STAFF WRITER

Published: 07/04/11 12:05 am

The Tacoma News Tribune

Blake Beavan had just shared some details with reporters about the best afternoon of his baseball life Sunday when Mariners general manager Jack Zduriencik extended a congratulatory hand slap.

It was difficult to tell who was more pleased. Beavan had made a big-league debut that exceeded all logical expectations – a 90-pitch, seven-inning exhibition in efficiency that ranked among the most impressive first starts in the history of the franchise – but Zduriencik had reasons to beam as well.

Beavan, 22, represents the latest bounty from the gift that keeps on giving, otherwise known as the 2010 Cliff Lee trade with Texas. In addition to Beavan, the Rangers gave the Mariners first baseman Justin Smoak, whose third-inning sacrifice fly pushed across the lead run in a 3-1 victory over the San Diego Padres, as well as Josh Lueke, the Rainiers reliever recently invited to the Pacific Coast League All-Star Game.

There was a time – a year ago this Saturday – when Beavan wasn't as thrilled about Zduriencik's work. A native of the Dallas area, Beavan grew up a Rangers fan. In 2007, Texas selected the right-hander in the first round of the amateur draft (No. 17 overall). The Mariners interest in Beavan had to flatter him, but his heart that was deep in Texas.

“At first, I was upset,” Beavan recalled Sunday. “My home is in Texas, and I'd always dreamed of pitching in Arlington. But it didn't take long to get over it.

“Everybody's dream is to make it to the majors, and where you make it doesn't really matter.”

A year later, the trade away from Beavan's hometown team continued to pose some logistical challenges. When Tacoma manager Daren Brown told the pitcher of his promotion to Seattle before the Rainiers' game at Cheney Stadium on Saturday night, Beavan realized his family in Texas – his wife, and his mom and dad – would have to assemble 11th-hour travel plans.

“When I picked my wife up at the airport at midnight,” Beavan said, “she told me, ‘You're not gonna get any sleep tonight.’”

Beavan slept some, not much, which may have been for the best. The exhaustion caused by the hectic turn of events and the restless night served as a calming influence on the mound. He was too tired to be jittery.

Another calming influence was a familiar presence behind the plate: former Rainiers catcher Josh Bard. The veteran called a game that relied on Beavan's ability to locate his pinpoint fastball. It's not an overpowering pitch – it topped out at 91 mph on the scoreboard radar gun – but as Bard explained: “If you can locate a fastball, you can be a big-league pitcher for a long time.”

An easy first inning can be pivotal for any rookie making his debut, and Beavan got it. He coaxed Padres leadoff man Will Venable into tapping a grounder back to the mound – Bard said that might've been the most important at-bat of the game, as the defensive play helped loosen up the pitcher – then retired Jason Bartlett on a bouncer to third and Chase Headley on a swinging strikeout.

Three up, three down. Even against a lineup as unimposing as the Padres, that's not as easy as Beavan made it look. But it's not reinventing the wheel, either.

Bard kept things simple for his pitcher: Trust your fastball, stay aggressive early in the count, and let the fielders behind you make the plays.

Beavan followed the cue. Of the 27 batters he faced, he threw first-pitch strikes to 21.

“Sometimes we make it so complicated, trying to trick guys and do all that stuff,” Bard said. “You can throw the perfect trick pitch, but if it's down the middle and hanging, it doesn't matter.

“We pitch to our team, we pitch to the ballpark.”

Once Beavan got in the flow of things, he stayed in the flow. He didn't dawdle, maintaining a no-nonsense pace that reminded Padres manager Bud Black of Doug Fister, another Mariners starter who takes advantage of Safeco Field's spacious outfield.

“He did well,” Black said of Beavan. “He's got a good arm. He pitched a lot like Fister did on Saturday – a lot of fastballs on both sides of the plate, slider at times, and good tempo in between pitches. From what I saw, he's a good looking young pitcher.”

Beavan's immediate future in the Mariners' rotation remains in doubt.

He was called up to replace Erik Bedard, on the disabled list with a sprained left knee. Bedard figures to miss at least one more start, maybe two, but the injury isn't considered serious enough to affect the Mariners' five-man starting-pitching cycle beyond the All-Star break.

But how Beavan fits in the long term is a concern for another day. He cleared the first hurdle Sunday, when he stood upon a major-league mound and comported himself with the poise of somebody who knows he belongs there.

His wife was able to enjoy the show, as were his parents.

“I got a text message from my dad this morning,” Beavan said. “He told me he loved me.”

A dream had come true. No matter that Blake Beavan was 2,000 miles away from where he'd envisioned his dream coming true, it had come true, deep in the heart of the Pacific Northwest.

Beavan wins debut as Seattle beats San Diego 3-1

TIM BOOTH, AP Sports Writer

Updated 04:53 p.m., Sunday, July 3, 2011

The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — What the Seattle Mariners starting pitchers accomplished against San Diego this season was impressive.

Blake Beavan's major league debut was a fitting capper.

Beavan threw seven strong innings of one-run ball Sunday, Ichiro Suzuki had two hits and scored twice and the Mariners beat the Padres 3-1.

Seattle took five of six against San Diego in interleague play and the Mariners' pitching staff was at their best versus the Padres. In the six games, Seattle's starters were 5-1 with a 0.50 ERA in 54 innings, with 56 strikeouts and just eight walks. The Padres hit .162 against Felix Hernandez, Michael Pineda, Doug Fister, Jason Vargas, Erik Bedard and Beavan.

While he was the newest member of that group on Sunday, Beavan (1-0) fit right in.

"It was definitely a great feeling being out there on that mound," said the 22-year-old Beavan.

Starting in place of Bedard, who went on the 15-day disabled list earlier this week with a sprained left knee, Beavan looked as if he belonged in the majors.

Beavan allowed just three hits and struck out four, becoming just the eighth pitcher in club history to go at least seven innings in his major league debut, and the first since Jim Converse in 1993. David Pauley pitched the eighth and All-Star Brandon League picked up his 22nd save in 25 chances in the ninth.

While he was considered the likely choice since Bedard went on the disabled list earlier in the week, Beavan didn't find out until Saturday afternoon he'd be making the short trip up Interstate 5 to make his major league debut. He scrambled and was able to get his wife and parents on flights from Texas to Seattle in time to see his first start.

"Them being here kind of helped me calm down, too, so it felt comfortable out there," Beavan said.

Known for his control in the minors, Beavan showed that ability to throw strikes and get ahead of hitters in his debut. Beavan started 21 of the 27 batters he faced with strikes and his strikes to balls ratio was nearly 3-to-1 — 64 strikes, 26 balls.

He relied mostly on a sharp fastball and his slider, but Beavan also mixed in a sinker and a new curveball he's been working on in the minors. It helped too that Beavan was throwing to Josh Bard, who caught Beavan at Triple-A Tacoma.

"It was fortunate that I was down there in Triple-A. We had been talking about this moment and trying to get him prepared for it and I thought he did a very good job," Bard said. "We've been preaching ... about execution, execution, execution and slowing his heart rate down and he did a great job today."

Beavan was the final piece of the trade that sent Cliff Lee to Texas last July to make his major league debut. Justin Smoak has started 74 games this season at first base while Josh Lueke started the season in Seattle's bullpen before being sent down to Tacoma and developing into a Pacific Coast League All-Star.

The Padres lone run off Beavan came in the third when Will Venable followed Alberto Gonzalez's single with a double into the right-center field gap that rolled all the way to the wall and allowed Gonzalez to score from first base.

Venable had the only other hit off Beavan with a two-out single in the fifth.

"We didn't have a whole lot on him but he threw a lot of fastballs and we didn't make the adjustment," San Diego's Nick Hundley said.

A day after being shut out and watching San Diego score its only run when Cameron Maybin walked after a ball made the count full and no one in the stadium caught on it was only ball three, Seattle needed just three batters to take the lead on San Diego starter Mat Latos (5-9).

Suzuki led off with a single, stole second and scored on Adam Kennedy's opposite-field single. The Mariners got two more off Latos in the third when Suzuki and Brendan Ryan started the inning with consecutive singles and Kennedy walked to load the bases.

Smoak then hit a 3-2 pitch to deep left field that off the bat looked like it could be Seattle's first grand slam of the season. But the ball died and fell into Chris Denorfia's glove on the warning track, deep enough to score Suzuki and for Ryan to tag up and advance to third. Ryan's aggressiveness was rewarded when rookie Dustin Ackley followed with a flyball to center that was deep enough for Ryan to score and give Seattle a 3-1 lead.

NOTES: Home plate umpire Bill Miller was visibly using a pitch indicator on Sunday, a day after the count on the stadium scoreboard was wrong when Maybin walked. ... Suzuki was left off the initial American League All-Star roster for the first time in his career when the team was released on Sunday. Suzuki responded with hits in his first two at-bats. Suzuki was an All-Star each of first 10 seasons. ... Padres closer Heath Bell was San Diego's only All-Star representative. Manager Bud Black held out hope middle reliever Mike Adams might get selected.

Follow Tim Booth on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/tjbooth7>

Padres offense shut down again by Seattle 3-1

TIM BOOTH, AP Sports Writer

Published 05:25 p.m., Sunday, July 3, 2011

The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — It wasn't just one or two members of Seattle's starting staff that San Diego couldn't solve during interleague play this season.

It was six, and all of them had their way with the Padres' hitters.

The most recent was Blake Beavan, who made his major league debut on Sunday by holding the Padres to just one run over seven innings in the Mariners' 3-1 victory over the Padres.

Seattle took five of six from San Diego during their two interleague series, and the numbers Seattle's starters put up were impressive.

"We saw six different starters, they pitch with an upbeat tempo between pitches (and) they come at you with fastballs," Padres manager Bud Black said. "It seemed as though they six guys were throwing strikes and pitching the fastball to both sides of the plate and locating."

In the six games, Seattle's starters were 5-1 with a 0.50 ERA in 54 innings, with 56 strikeouts and just eight walks. The Padres hit .162 against Felix Hernandez, Michael Pineda, Doug Fister, Jason Vargas, Erik Bedard and Beavan.

While he was the newest member of that group on Sunday, Beavan (1-0) fit right in. He struck out four and walked only two batters, becoming just the eighth pitcher in club history to go at least seven innings in his major league debut, and the first since Jim Converse in 1993.

The Padres' lone run off Beavan came in the third when Will Venable followed Alberto Gonzalez's single with a double into the right-center field gap that rolled all the way to the wall and allowed Gonzalez to score from first base.

Venable had the only other hit off Beavan with a two-out single in the fifth.

"We didn't have a whole lot on him, but he threw a lot of fastballs and we didn't make the adjustment," San Diego's Nick Hundley said.

San Diego briefly threatened in the eighth loading the bases with two outs when Chris Denorfia walked on a 3-2 pitch, but reliever David Pauley got Cameron Maybin waving at a curveball for strike three to end the threat.

San Diego's Mat Latos struggled early before settling down and pitching six innings, giving up just four hits and three runs. Latos (5-9) lost for the third time in his past five starts and hasn't pitched beyond the sixth inning since May 25.

"I just got off to a slow start with getting ahead of hitters and putting them away," Latos said.

A day after being shut out and watching San Diego score its only run when Maybin walked after a ball made the count full and no one in the stadium caught on it was only ball three, Seattle needed just three batters to take the lead on Latos.

Ichiro Suzuki led off with a single, stole second and scored on Adam Kennedy's opposite-field single. The Mariners got two more off Latos in the third when Suzuki and Brendan Ryan started the inning with consecutive singles and Kennedy walked to load the bases.

Justin Smoak then hit a 3-2 pitch to deep left field that looked as if it could be Seattle's first grand slam of the season. But the ball fell into Denorfia's glove on the warning track, deep enough to score Suzuki and for Ryan to tag up and advance to third. Ryan's aggressiveness was rewarded when rookie Dustin Ackley followed with a fly ball to center that was deep enough for Ryan to score and give Seattle a 3-1 lead.

"In this type of game and that type of situation with (Ryan's) speed he needs to do that," Seattle manager Eric Wedge said. "Obviously that was big for us."

NOTES: Home plate umpire Bill Miller was visibly using a pitch indicator on Sunday, a day after the count on the stadium scoreboard was wrong when Maybin walked. ... Suzuki was left off the initial American League

All-Star roster for the first time in his career when the team was released on Sunday. Suzuki responded with hits in his first two at-bats. Suzuki was an All-Star each of first 10 seasons. ... Padres closer Heath Bell was San Diego's only All-Star representative. Manager Bud Black held out hope middle reliever Mike Adams might get selected.

Follow Tim Booth on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/tjbooth7>

Beavan selected by Seattle; Carp sent to Triple-A

Published 12:35 p.m., Sunday, July 3, 2011

The Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — The Seattle Mariners selected right-hander Blake Beavan from Triple-A Tacoma to start Sunday's series finale against San Diego and optioned outfielder Mike Carp to Tacoma.

Beavan will be making his major league debut. He was acquired by Seattle as part of the deal that sent Cliff Lee to Texas last July.

Seattle also transferred catcher Chris Gimenez from the 15-day to 60-day disabled list to clear a spot on the 40-man roster for Beavan.

Beavan is 5-3 with a 4.46 ERA in 16 starts for the Rainiers this season. He'll be taking the spot in Seattle's rotation of Erik Bedard, who was placed on the 15-day disabled list on Wednesday with a sprained left knee.

After playing well at Triple-A, Carp struggled following his call up. Carp was hitting just .200 in 15 games and his playing time had been limited.

Mariners 06:19PM 07/03/2011

After ump-fail, Mariners have rookie-prevail

Rookie Blake Beavan made the Mariners feel better Sunday after a ghastly 1-0 loss Saturday wasted a great game from pitcher Doug Fister.

Art Thiel

SportsPressNW.com

A virtue of baseball is that indignity can be followed quickly by inspiration.

Eighteen hours after perhaps their freakiest loss of the season, the Mariners recovered Sunday via splendor from a rookie starting pitcher, Blake Beavan.

The only difficult part of the 3-1 win over the San Diego Padres was the fans' collective sore neck from the whipsaw.

"Everyone's dream is to make it in the bigs," Beavan, a 6-foot-7, 240-pound, 22-year-old Texan, said after giving up one run and three hits in seven innings. "It was awesome."

The stellar start — Beavan made the emergency drive from Tacoma for injured Erik Bedard — was salve for some indignities preceding it, chiefly the absence of reward for achievement.

By a new rule designed to protect the arms of starting pitchers, Felix Hernandez will be ineligible to pitch in the All-Star Game Tuesday, July 12, because he is scheduled to start the Sunday prior to the break.

No word yet whether his TV-commercial avatar, Larry Bernandez, will be named his replacement.

Also on the All-Star front, Ichiro, for the first time in his 10-year MLB career, was not elected to play. Not that he deserved it, given his worst seasonal start, but his absence is for Seattle fans a void that amplifies the decline in the franchise's 37-year-old centerpiece.

Didn't aging All-Stars used to get honored occasionally on body of work, like older actors? Hey, it's only a fake game, not public office.

The biggest slap, however, was losing to the Padres 1-0 Saturday partly because of an umpiring error so goofy that Mariners manager Eric Wedge felt compelled to hold an unusual team meeting Sunday morning before the game to take responsibility for it.

"If I ask (players) to be accountable, I sure has hell have to be accountable to them," he said.

Except his part in it was error by omission, not commission.

The gesture by Wedge was the honorable thing to do. But first, he and everyone in umpiring gear and Mariners gear, as well as some civilians in charge of tracking the game, should have made a more directed apology — to Doug Fister, who pitched a brilliant nine innings only to lose in part because the game's only run scored due to a three-ball walk.

More than two-headed calves and five-legged dogs, three-ball walks are a rarity, mostly because MLB rules do not permit them. But this little freak escaped the gene pool and, gremlin-like, made everyone look a little foolish.

"Do we feel bad? Absolutely," said Tom Hallion, the umpiring crew chief, to a pool reporter after the game Saturday. "We count the pitches, and it was just one of those things that gets away with you, with the scoreboard having the 3-2 count up there and then nothing being said by anybody. He thought he had the wrong count."

"He" was umpire Phil Cuzzi, who was behind the plate and the principal miscreant, although he chose the aggravating baseball custom of letting the crew chief speak for him.

Replays showed that an at-bat in the fifth inning by Padres center fielder Cameron Maybin contained only two balls in the first six pitches. But because the scoreboard erroneously showed 3-2, Maybin took a free pass on ball three. No one said anything.

According to a Mariners employee, there was a stir among those recording the game's video, but not among anyone in uniform. Any complaint would have to register with the umpire before the next pitch. Fister, a quick worker, delivered to the next batter in less than 20 seconds, ending the chance for correction.

A few moments later, Maybin scored the contest's only run.

In the history of baseball injustice, single-game, that was a top-10 nominee.

Yes, Wedge and his staff probably should have caught the miscount – “we definitely have become too reliant on the scoreboard,” he said, in partial self-defense – but the matter was compounded post-game when Hallion claimed Cuzzi used a manual hand-clicker to track the pitch count, when TV replays showed he did not.

Feeble as was the umpires’ deed and defensiveness, the Mariners’ support of Fister’s pitching was equally feeble.

“To win the game,” Wedge said dryly, “we have to score a run.”

Fister has the worst run support (2.19 per game) of any MLB pitcher, which explains how he can have a 3-9 record with a 3.02 ERA.

The umpiring and the offense combined to create a new promotion – “Turn Back the Game Night.”

But in less than 24 hours, the Mariners piled up three runs, won a game, a series (2-1), finished interleague play 9-9 and found promise in another 2011 rookie.

Beavan, one of four players acquired from Texas last year in the trade for Cliff Lee and Mark Lowe, is the third pitcher in club history (Matt Young, 1983, Mark Langston, 1984) to go at least seven innings and win in his debut.

These Mariners heal quickly.

The weekend underscored a hoary baseball bromide: A single game means little — unless the playoffs are missed by one game.

That’s when it will be remembered why July 2 was circled in umpire-black.

Mariners 05:54PM 07/03/2011

Mariners may come up short in All-Star Game

A curious set of circumstances may keep the Mariners from having anyone actually participate in the All-Star Game, even though Felix Hernandez and Brandon League have been picked for the team.

John Hickey

SportsPressNW.com

When it comes time to play the All-Star Game a week from Tuesday in Phoenix, will anyone in a Mariner uniform take part?

Well, despite the fact that Seattle had two men named to the American League team Sunday – pitchers Felix Hernandez and Brandon League were selected with 10-time All-Star Ichiro Suzuki bypassed – it’s likely the Mariners’ representation could be in name only.

Hernandez is currently scheduled to start the last game before the All-Star break, July 10 against the Angels in Anaheim. In recent years it has become standard practice for managers – in this case Texas skipper Ron Washington – to skip any starter on the roster who pitches the Sunday before the game.

The rule is one that Hernandez scoffs at, but it’s there to keep pitchers from hurting themselves by pitching on unusually short rest. And Seattle manager Eric Wedge said the club still plans to have Hernandez pitch that Sunday when the first half ends.

As for League, his wife, Sasha, is expecting the couple's third child any day now. The due date is July 13, one day after the All-Star Game. And while League said Sunday that doctors are now saying "it could be any day now," there's at least a chance that League will be called away to higher duties.

That storyline will play itself out over the course of the next week or so. Sunday, the Mariners were happy that two of their pitchers had been selected to represent the team. But they were also dealing with the fact that Ichiro was off the team for the first time in a decade. And there was more than a little puzzlement that Michael Pineda, who has seven wins and a team-best 2.65 ERA, also was skipped.

"Maybe he can go out there and pitch for me," said Hernandez in a light moment while talking about the omission of Pineda. This is Hernandez's second selection to the All-Star team, having pitched a scoreless inning in 2009.

He is coming off a Cy Young Award winning season in 2010, when, curiously enough, he was not an All-Star. With two starts left before the break he's 8-7 with a 3.35 ERA. A year ago at the break he was 7-5 with a 2.88 ERA and didn't get picked, which demonstrates the power of seeing your name on the list of Cy Young Award winners.

After all, those numbers are almost identical to Pineda's 2011.

"I haven't pitched as consistently (as last year)," Hernandez said. "I'm close (to being at the level he wants), but I haven't had the consistency I want."

League was supposed to be the setup man in Seattle this year, but when David Aardsma needed off-season surgery, the idea was for League to take over for a few weeks. A few weeks have evolved into a few months, and League has been up to the challenge. Save for a four-game-stretch in early May, League has been almost untouchable. With a save on behalf of rookie Blake Beavan on Sunday in a 3-1 win over the Padres, League has reeled off 13 consecutive saves and has not allowed an earned run in his last 17.2 innings, getting his once bulky ERA down to 3.38.

He leads the AL with 22 saves and said that while he was extremely excited to be selected as an All-Star, his focus has been elsewhere.

"I can't say I didn't think about it," League said. "but I've got other things on my mind right now. We went to the hospital two nights ago and the doctor said, 'any day.'"

League has saved 22 of 25 chances after having gone 6-for-12 in save opportunities as a setup man a year ago.

"I've always wanted to be a closer, ever since I became a bullpen guy," League said. "It wouldn't have been possible if Wedgie hadn't given me the opportunity to close."

As for Ichiro, who had two hits and scored two runs Sunday while pushing his batting average up to .272, he declined to talk about his All-Star status. Before this year, he was voted into the game by the fans nine times in 10 years and the 10th year (2005) he was picked as a backup.

The season has been difficult on Ichiro, who is enjoying playing for a competitive (41-43) team but who is also saddled with the understanding that if he wasn't almost 50 points under his career batting average (.331 at season's start), the Mariners would be over .500 at a minimum and possibly close to or in first place.

Wedge didn't talk specifically about any of his players who were passed up in the All-Star selection process, but of Ichiro he said, "he's had a great career.

"He's working hard to find what's missing," Wedge said. "He's still trying to fight through it."

Though Beavan didn't learn until Saturday that he'd be starting for the Mariners Sunday, he had time to get his wife and his parents on planes from the Dallas-Fort Worth area so they could see his debut. It was worth the flight.

Beavan, a 6-foot-7, 240-pounder, threw seven innings in which he allowed just three hits and one run. Ichiro scored a run in the first inning on an Adam Kennedy single, then scored again in the third on a Justin Smoak sacrifice fly, a run that put Seattle up 2-1. The game's final run scored moments later on a Dustin Ackley sacrifice fly, and that was enough for Beavan, who retired seven of the final eight men he faced.

"It was awesome," Beavan said. "I didn't shake off (catcher) Josh Bard once. I just tried to hit the mitt and let him call the pitches."

Felix Hernandez, Brandon League named to AL All-Star team

Posted by Christian Caple on July 3, 2011 at 11:44 am

SeattlePI.com

A quick post to pass along the news that Seattle Mariners pitchers Felix Hernandez and Brandon League have both been named to the AL All-Star team. For the first time in his career, Ichiro Suzuki was not selected.

Hernandez, honored as an All-Star for the second time in his career, is 8-7 with a 3.35 ERA this season. He pitched in the 2009 game, but was not selected last year despite winning the Cy Young award at season's end.

It will be League's first All-Star appearance. He's tied for the American League lead in saves with 21.

Ichiro has been voted as a starter every season of his career except 2005, when he finished outside of the top three in outfielder fan voting but was still selected as a reserve. It's not out of the question that he could still be picked to replace an injured player, but as of now, it appears Ichiro's streak of 10 consecutive All-Star appearances is coming to an end.

We'll have plenty more in a bit.

More All-Star reaction from Felix Hernandez, Eric Wedge

Posted by Christian Caple on July 3, 2011 at 1:40 pm

SeattlePI.com

Here's some more reaction from Felix Hernandez and Eric Wedge about Sunday's All-Star selections.

Hernandez and Mariners closer Brandon League were each selected to the American League roster, and you can read more about League's surprising All-Star nod in this post here.

First, some reaction from Felix. It should be noted that because he's scheduled to pitch one week from today (Sunday, July 10, two days before the All-Star game), Hernandez could be replaced on the roster. There's a rule now that allows the manager to replace a starting pitcher if he pitches the Sunday before the game, due to the short amount of rest.

Hernandez said he's hoping he can throw one inning, because that day would be his scheduled bullpen session anyway. But he seemed half-joking when he said it, so that may be nothing more than a pipe dream.

(Thoughts on being selected) “I got a text message that said, ‘congratulations.’ ... I told my wife, ‘I think we’re going to Arizona.’ She was excited. She was more excited than me.”

(Were you surprised?) “I was not surprised. I knew I had a chance and when they said yes, I was happy.”

(How close are you to last year?) “Close enough. I’m close, but I’m a bit inconsistent right now. I throw one game good, the other ones OK. I’ve got to be more consistent and try to do what I did last year.”

(Were you surprised Michael Pineda wasn’t selected?) “Little surprised, yeah. He deserved it too. He’s got pretty good numbers. Maybe he can go and pitch for me.”

Here’s what Wedge had to say:

“It’s a great honor, it’s a great accomplishment. Well deserved by both those guys (Hernandez and League). As I’m sure most managers feel, we’ve got others that we feel are deserving too, but to have two players picked on the All-Star team, it’s a great accomplishment. It’s something they should both treasure.”

(On League’s season) “He’s had a great first half for us. You’ve got to have a solid closer if you’re going to be a winning ballclub and that’s the way he’s been for us. As many tight games as we’ve had this year, he’s been right there and stood tall through all of that. You’re not going to be perfect but what I do love about Leaguer is he had a tough couple of days there, but he was able to stand up to it, face it head on and come back and even be better after that.”

(His impressions of Felix so far) “He’s an impressive young man. I recognized that over the course of the winter, just doing some different functions with him. He has a great personality, he’s a good teammate, he’s a hard worker. He doesn’t let his ego get in the way. He’s grounded. He handles the good and the bad like you like to see anybody handle it. I’ve got nothing but respect for the man.”

(On Ichiro not making the team) “He’s had a heck of a run. Ichiro has had a great career, he’s worked hard this year to find it, to get back to being as productive as he’s been in the past. He’s still fighting that fight. He comes to the ballpark each and every day and prepares the way he prepares and that’s all you can do. He’s been better here the last month or so or whatever it’s been, two or three weeks, and hopefully he can be even more consistent in the second half for us.”

Mike Carp optioned to Tacoma to make room for Blake Beavan

Posted by Christian Caple on July 3, 2011 at 1:06 pm

Seattle PI.com

A bit of a whirlwind of news at Safeco today, with All-Star selections and roster moves and more discussion of Saturday night’s three-ball walk.

But we should pass along the news that Mike Carp has been optioned to Triple-A Tacoma to make room for Sunday starter Blake Beavan on the 25-man roster, and Chris Gimenez has been placed on the 60-day disabled list to make room for Beavan on the 40-man roster.

The decision to send Carp down is based more on the health of Miguel Olivo than anything else. Since Olivo still isn’t healthy enough to go — he’s recovering from hamstring cramps suffered in the fourth inning of Wednesday’s game — manager Eric Wedge wanted to keep backup catcher Jose Yopez on the roster in case something happens to Josh Bard.

“Obviously, I’m giving Olivo another day today,” Wedge said. “His availability is still somewhat uncertain right now. He’s starting to up his activity. Just got to be real careful with the guy.”

Once Olivo returns, the guess here is that Yopez will head back to Tacoma and Carp will rejoin the team.

“I don’t think it’s a bad thing for him to go down and play every day for a little while,” Wedge said. “He deserves to be back up here and we want to get him back up here at some point in time.”

Carp is hitting .200 in 15 games with the Mariners this season.

Dustin Ackley was back in the lineup on Sunday after sitting out Friday and Saturday with bruised ribs.

New All-Star Brandon League, wife expecting child ‘any day’

Posted by Christian Caple on July 3, 2011 at 12:39 pm

Seattle PI.com

Brandon League’s wife is pregnant with their third child. She is due on July 20, but plans have been made to induce labor on July 13.

That would be one day after dad appears in his first career All-Star Game.

League isn’t sure when to expect the birth. His wife, Sasha, has been having contractions all week, and League said the couple has been informed by doctors that the child could come “any day now.”

Of course, after being named to the American League All-Star team on Sunday along with teammate and reigning AL Cy Young award winner Felix Hernandez, League is hoping for a birth schedule that will allow him to be alongside his wife during delivery while still allowing for a trip to Phoenix for the July 12 All-Star game.

League, who already has two young daughters, said he called his wife first after being told he’d been selected.

“All-Star game, as great of an honor as it is, family comes first,” League said. “We’ll have to see what happens. Whether it be heading into the All-Star break ... as much of an honor and big deal the All-Star game is, I’d rather miss that game than our games.”

It’s League’s selection to the team that has to be most impressive – if not surprising – to those in the Mariners organization. Hernandez, of course, is generally regarded as perhaps the best pitcher in baseball, and his 8-7 record and 3.35 ERA were enough to carry him to his second career selection.

But League wasn’t even supposed to be the team’s full-time closer this season. David Aardsma appeared close to returning from offseason labrum surgery when he began a rehab assignment in the minors in late April, but had to be shut down after straining his ulnar collateral ligament.

So here’s League, his 21 saves tied with Mariano Rivera for best in the American League, that three-blown-save Baltimore swoon well behind him as he prepares for his first All-Star appearance.

“As many tight games as we’ve had this year, he’s been right there and stood tall through all of that,” manager Eric Wedge said. “You’re not going to be perfect, but what I do love about Leaguer is he had a tough couple of days there but he was able to stand up to it, face it head on and come back and even be better after that.”

Indeed, it was hard to imagine League as an All-Star back in mid-May, when he suffered losses in four consecutive appearances and blew three straight save opportunities.

But Wedge stuck with him and League recovered. He hasn't blown a save or lost a game since.

"This year has been a definite learning experience," League said. "I've learned a lot about myself, a lot about the job. I'll carry that with me the rest of my career."

Blake Beavan shines in MLB debut, helps M's past Padres 3-1

Posted by Christian Caple on July 3, 2011 at 4:52 pm

Seattle PI.com

Blake Beavan smiled, recounting the events of the last 24 hours that landed him on the mound at Safeco Field on Sunday, pitching for the first time as a Major Leaguer.

To be in a Seattle Mariners uniform, standing atop the hill in a big league stadium, Beavan said, was humbling.

Imagine how the San Diego Padres feel, then.

Beavan located his fastball and mixed off-speed pitches with effectiveness well beyond his 22 years, baffling the Padres over seven innings to lead the Mariners to a 3-1 win.

In those seven innings, Beavan, called up from Tacoma this weekend to fill in for the injured Erik Bedard, allowed just three hits, walked two and threw 90 pitches to earn his first career win in his first career start.

"It was great waking up in the morning," Beavan said, still beaming some 30 minutes after the game's completion, "and knowing I was driving to Safeco Field."

They might want to keep a parking spot open for him.

"He made some pitches at certain points in time in a tight ballgame, was very efficient," manager Eric Wedge said. "You can't ask for any more than that in a debut."

It helped that Beavan was throwing to catcher Josh Bard, a veteran who has experience calling Beavan's pitches in Tacoma. Beavan said he didn't shake him off once on Sunday.

He didn't need to. Because Bard followed one of the cardinal rules for handling a rookie pitcher— keep it simple.

"If you can locate a fastball, you're going to be a big league pitcher for a long time," Bard said. "Sometimes, you make it so complicated trying to trick guys and do all the stuff, you can throw the perfect trick pitch but if you throw it down the middle and it's hanging, it doesn't matter. We really talked to him about execution with his heater. He pitched in, he pitched out. He probably only threw 20 off speed pitches the whole game, and did a good job."

It also helped that the Padres can't hit Seattle's pitching. San Diego has scored four runs in six games against the Mariners this season, winning only Saturday's 1-0 decision.

The Mariners' offense wasn't exactly sizzling in support of Beavan. But since Doug Fister wasn't pitching, they decided to go ahead and score a few runs off San Diego starter Mat Latos, anyway. They got one in the first inning, thanks to an RBI single by Adam Kennedy that scored Ichiro from second base.

They got another two in the third inning, loading the bases with nobody out to allow Justin Smoak and Dustin Ackley to drive home two more runs with a pair of sacrifice flies. Smoak's flyout was crushed, a towering drive to left field that died at the warning track but was deep enough to score Ichiro easily as Brendan Ryan tagged from second to third.

He scored easily when Ackley ripped a deep drive to the center-fielder.

And somehow, even with a 22-year-old rookie on the mound making his big league debut, that was a sufficient cushion for the Mariners.

The only batter Beavan seemed to have trouble with was Padres right fielder Will Venable, who had two of San Diego's three hits.

It was Venable whose third-inning double drove in the Padres' only run, scoring Alberto Gonzalez from first base with one out. But Beavan retired the next two batters, then allowed only one hit the rest of the way.

Beavan, acquired last summer from Texas in the Cliff Lee trade, said his wife and parents flew in from Dallas to watch the game. Having them in the stands helped calm him, he said, though admitted to some butterflies in the early going.

Bard said the first play of the game helped Beavan settle down. It was a slow tapper by Venable right back to the mound, where Beavan calmly fielded the ball and tossed to first base for the out.

After that, he cruised.

"I tried to keep the plan as simple as possible," Bard said, "but when I really needed a pitch, he really executed."

Seattle's more experienced bullpen didn't fare quite as well as Beavan, though it got the job done. David Pauley, an All-Star snub despite ranking in the AL's top five in ERA, wins and innings pitched among relievers, loaded the bases with two outs in the eighth but struck out Cameron Maybin on three pitches to retire the side.

That was a matter of revenge, also, for Maybin's three-ball walk that led to the deciding run in Saturday's 1-0 Padres win.

There was no such wackiness at Safeco on Sunday, unless you count Beavan's improbable gem. He's likely to make at least one more start in Seattle before Bedard is eligible to return from the disabled list, though if he tops what he did Sunday, Beavan may have a shot at forcing Bedard into Wally Pipp status.

OK, maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration. Beavan is no Lou Gehrig, and Bedard has been lights out this season. But the rookie's unexpected debut went about as well as any in franchise history.

Asked if he got any sleep the night before, Beavan responded, "I got enough."

Enough to help the Mariners take this series, and help them absorb the loss of Bedard.

Caple's Corner: When is it OK to boo your team's players? Some guidelines

Posted by Christian Caple on July 3, 2011 at 10:43 pm

Seattle PI.com

It's not often that Seattle sports fans turn on one of their own.

Success has been fleeting in this city. Especially on the baseball diamond. So the expectations here not only tend to be lower from a team perspective, but individual players also receive more slack than you would typically see in, say, Boston. Or New York. Or Ohio. Or most high schools in Texas.

Put yourself in Chone Figgins' shoes, then. The Seattle Mariners third baseman (sort of) has been the target of boos from the home crowd for some time now, especially recently as his batting average has plummeted to .185 and his play in the field has been ... not great.

But is the public vitriol really fair?

Sure, he's having a tough year. A really, really tough year. But does that instantly qualify a guy for the hometown heckle treatment?

At Caple's Corner, we seek to answer that question with this week's column, in which we examine the requirements a player must meet – and those Figgins has met – before even his own fans finally decide they've had enough.

To me, there are two primary factors at play here.

People don't like jerks (unless they produce): Face it. Seattle fans are a lenient bunch. Typically, it's not enough for a player to simply underperform. If that were the case, Franklin Gutierrez, Jack Cust, Michael Saunders, Chris Gimenez and most every other player who's been in the lineup would have inspired boo-birds at some point this season.

Thing is, fans need to feel like it's OK to dislike someone for reasons that aren't performance-related. They do have souls, after all, and in a city as friendly as ours, a person's first instinct is to want the good guys to do well and the bad guys to flop.

That's why the boos keep coming for Figgins. His dugout altercation with former manager Don Wakamatsu last season only compounded the fact that he's not hitting anywhere near the same clip he used to. Then he complained about being dropped in the batting order.

Then this year, he began the season by snapping at a couple of reporters following a loss on the team's first homestand, telling each of them that they were asking "dumb questions" that he refused to answer. That came after Figgins had just snapped an 0-for-26 slide by collecting two hits in that night's game. (Full disclosure: I was one of the reporters. And while I'm certain I've asked a dumb question or two in my life, I didn't ask any that night.)

Ultimately, it's his off-field incidents – however mild they may be – that have really turned the tide of fan opinion against Figgins here.

If a sub-Mendoza Line batting average won't make the hometown supporters sour, a lack of accountability certainly will. To his credit, Figgins has been fairly forthcoming and open about his struggles since. But all fans are going to remember – unless he starts hitting again – are the moments he chose the low road.

I'm not comfortable labeling Figgins as a jerk. He can be friendly and insightful, and has at times this season. But it's safe to say he's had his moments.

Sunk cost: This one is critical, though not necessarily justified. Part of the reason Figgins is a target of such staunch, voiced criticism is his status as a big-money free-agent signing.

If the guy were making less money, the circumstances may be a little different. But you have to figure his \$9 million per-year salary (he signed a four-year, \$36 million deal prior to last season) offers quite a bit of justification for fans who let loose on him every time he pops out to third base.

Does that make it right, though? Yes and no. Higher expectations are inherent among players with higher salaries. That's common sense. But at the same time, Figgins didn't force the Mariners to pay him \$9 million per year. And it's not like he's trying to fail.

I'm reminded of the criticism heaped upon Adrian Beltre during his time in Seattle. He was a solid hitter and a great defensive third baseman, but will forever be viewed as a disappointment by some because he never replicated the wild success of his 2004 season with the Dodgers. And never lived up to the five-year, \$64 million deal the Mariners gave him.

But was it Beltre's fault the Mariners overpaid him? No. And though some labeled him a bust, he avoided being booed at home by going about his business, grinding through nagging injuries and staying away from controversy.

I do believe Figgins is playing as hard as he can. He obviously cares. That's what makes his case a bit of a paradox – you want to see someone with his kind of passion succeed, but he's done too much here to turn fans against him.

Nobody likes getting booed. And when it happens at home, it hurts. Period. Guys notice that stuff. Save for a solid hit or diving stop here or there, Figgins can't seem to do much to silence the boos at this point.

I want to take his side and plead with fans to give him a break. The heckling can't help, after all. But as detailed above, it's not just about Figgins. It's about a precedent set by sports fans since grown men started playing this game for money. If you can't hit above the Mendoza Line, you better bat 1.000 off the field and in the clubhouse.

Because Figgins hasn't done that, the boos will continue. And with Adam Kennedy now seeing the bulk of the time at third base, Figgins might not get enough opportunities to make fans forget about the past and start cheering for him again.

But at this point, they're well within their rights not to.

THUMB'S UP: Chris Gimenez

We've seen guys play hurt before. But what Gimenez did on Wednesday against the Atlanta Braves was something else.

After starting catcher Miguel Olivo left the game with leg cramps, Gimenez, suffering from a strained oblique muscle, had to finish the game behind the plate.

The injury was bad enough to force him onto the 15-day disabled list, then eventually the 60-day DL. But knowing that he was the only catcher still available, Gimenez gutted it out, even applying a tough tag on a play at the plate in the ninth inning.

Yes, he did have to stand and watch as strike three zoomed right down the middle of the plate in a crucial spot in the seventh inning of that game, as the injury left him unable to swing.

But as far as tough-guy performances go, that one ranked right up there with Beltre finishing a 2009 game despite having a contused testicle.

THUMB'S DOWN: Chip Kelly

The way this whole Willie Lyles thing is shaking out, Kelly appears to be headed for some trying times in the months ahead. Some are already speculating that Lyles' allegations – that Oregon paid him for his connections to LaMichael James and Lache Seastrunk – may signal the downfall of Oregon's program.

Now, I don't know about all that. There's plenty still to be said by both sides, and any potential NCAA investigation could take quite a while.

But as the head coach, this is on Kelly. Even if no penalties are ever brought against the Ducks, Kelly bears the responsibility for putting them in this mess to begin with. At the absolute best, it's a public relations nightmare. At worst, it could destroy Kelly's career.

Not that anybody in this region would take any pleasure in that, right?

Christian Caple covers Seattle sports for Seattlepi.com. This is his weekly column. For more Seattle sports news, visit the front page of the Seattle Sports blog. Twitter: @ChristianCaple, @pisports

Felix, League named to AL All-Star team

Posted on July 3, 2011 at 9:33 am

Greg Johns

Mariners.com

Mariners ace Felix Hernandez and closer Brandon League were named to the American League All-Star team on Sunday, as announced on the MLB All-Star Selection Show presented by Taco Bell.

Hernandez won the AL Cy Young Award last season without making the All-Star team. This year Hernandez earned an All-Star bid, but likely won't be able to pitch in the Midsummer Classic since he's scheduled to start for the Mariners next Sunday, two days before the July 12 All-Star Game in Phoenix.

League earned his first All-Star berth as he shares the AL lead in saves at 21 with the Yankees' Mariano Rivera heading into Sunday's games. He was one of five closers named to the AL team.

League, 28, took over as the Mariners closer this season for the injured David Aardsma and has been perfect outside of a four-game blip in mid-May when he lost four straight games. Prior to that, he racked up nine straight saves and since then he's gone 12-for-12 in save opportunities while not allowing an earned run in 18 straight appearances.

League (0-4 with a 3.48 ERA) has 27 strikeouts and five walks in 33 2/3 innings. The Hawaiian native came into the season with just eight saves in seven Major League seasons, having worked primarily as a set-up man in Toronto from 2004-09 and then Seattle last year after being acquired along with Minor League outfielder Johermyn Chavez in a trade for right-hander Brandon Morrow.

Hernandez has followed up on last year's Cy Young season with an 8-7 start with a 3.35 ERA. He ranks third in the AL in innings pitched at 129 and strikeouts at 124 and again is the ace of a Mariners staff that has kept Seattle in contention in the AL West despite an offense that ranks at the bottom of the league in nearly every statistical category.

Hernandez pitched in the 2009 All-Star Game in St. Louis, but didn't get selected for the game last year when he went on to win his first Cy Young.

Ichiro Suzuki saw his run of 10 straight All-Star selections come to an end when he was left off the AL team after the slowest first half of his Major League career. Ichiro, 37, is hitting .268, more than 60 points below his career .331 average.

The veteran right fielder has stolen 20 bases, but has current career lows in on-base percentage (.317) and slugging percentage (.330). Both numbers are well below his career averages of .376 and .430.

Ichiro had been voted into the All-Star game nine of his first 10 years in Seattle and was named as a reserve in '05, the one year he didn't get chosen by the fans. He had the longest active streak of All-Star appearances.

Ichiro was the only Mariner selected to the All-Star Game last year and the club hasn't had more than two All-Stars in the same season since '03, when five Seattle players were selected.

Mariners rookie Michael Pineda was not named to the initial group, but some pitchers likely will be added as others — like Hernandez — are subtracted due to their schedules. Hernandez, Detroit's Justin Verlander and Tampa Bay's James Shields are all slated to start next Sunday, which would mean they'll need to be replaced.

So we'll have to see how that plays out.

July 3, 2011 at 1:55 PM

Reaction to the M's All-Stars

Posted by Bud Withers

Seattle Times Blog

The Mariners placed pitchers Felix Hernandez and Brandon League on the American League All-Star team announced Sunday morning, but the omission of two others will no doubt stimulate conversation this week.

Hernandez made the team for the second time - he threw a scoreless inning in 2009 in the mid-summer classic - but this time, he likely won't be able to pitch. He's scheduled to start Sunday in the last game before the break against the Angels, and the rules prohibit those starters from appearing two days later as a precaution against arm injuries.

"Maybe he can go there and pitch for me," Hernandez joked, referring to righthanded rookie teammate Michael Pineda, who was snubbed despite a 7-5 record and 2.65 earned-run average, sixth-best in the American League.

Also likely to sit home is Ichiro for the first time in his 11-year Mariners career. Hitting only .271, compared to his career average of .331 entering 2011, Ichiro was passed over by Texas manager Ron Washington for a reserve spot, so his only possible entry would be as an injury replacement.

"Ichiro's had a great career," said manager Eric Wedge. "He's worked hard this year, he's come to the ballpark every day prepared, which is all you can do.

"He's been better the last month, and hopefully he can be even more consistent in the second half for us."

Not only is Hernandez unlikely to actually pitch in the July 12 game, League might be a questionmark as well. That's dependent on his wife Sasha, who is pregnant and due July 13.

Asked if he had thought lately about being a first-time pick, League, tied for the AL lead in saves with 21, said, "I can't say I didn't think about it, but I've got other things on my mind right now. We went to the hospital two nights ago, and the doctor said 'Any day.' "

That could impact League on the M's six-game road trip starting Monday to Oakland and Anaheim. But at least he'll be on the West Coast.

League said there was no question he'd skip the All-Star game if the impending birth conflicted with the trip.

League, 28, had a stretch to forget the second week of May, resulting in his 0-4 record. But other than that, he has been eminently reliable, converting all but three of 24 save opportunities as a stand-in for closer David Aardsma.

"It wouldn't have been possible if Wedgie hadn't given me an opportunity to close and stuck with me," said League, who also credited his teammates and said, "If it wasn't me, it could have been anybody on this pitching staff."

League conceded that "I've always wanted to close ever since I came to the big leagues and became a bullpen guy."

Wedge lauded League, and in reference to the Baltimore meltdown in May, said, "You're not going to be perfect. What I like most about Leaguer is he was able to face up to it (the blown saves) and stand up to it."

As for Hernandez, 25, Wedge said, "He's an impressive young man. He's got a great personality, he's a good teammate and he's a hard worker. He doesn't let his ego get in the way and he handles the good and bad like you'd like anybody to handle it."

Hernandez' numbers aren't to the level of his Cy Young season of 2010 - he's 8-7 with a 3.35 ERA, compared to 13-12 with an eye-opening 2.27 ERA at the finish last year - but he said he's "close enough. I've got to be more consistent. I throw one game good, the next one OK. I just need to try to do what I did last year."

A year ago, Hernandez had a 1.53 ERA in 15 starts after the All-Star break, third-lowest by an AL starter in the last 25 years over that period.

Wedge said he didn't want to get into specific snubs of his players. And as for the hard choices that had to be made by last year's World Series managers - Washington and San Francisco's Bruce Bochy - he quipped, "It's something I wouldn't mind having the burden of doing."

July 3, 2011 at 1:14 PM

Game Thread July 3: M's 3, Padres 1 (final)

Posted by Bud Withers

Seattle Times Blog

M's 3, Padres 1

League mowed down Anthony Rizzo (flyout) and pinch-hitters Orlando Hudson and Kyle Phillips with killer split-fingered fastballs to finish it for the M's. League now has 22 saves in 25 chances.

After 8: M's 3, Padres 1

Mariners have done very little at the plate since the third inning, but it should be enough if League is on his game. Dustin Ackley just nudged a soft single to left, only the second M's hit since they scored two runs in the third. League is coming on to try to close out the M's fifth victory in six tries against the Padres this year, and no

doubt San Diego has seen enough of the Mariner pitching staff. With Beavan's strong effort today, the M's go into the final inning having allowed a mere three earned runs in six games against the Padres.

After 7 1/2: M's 3, Padres 1

Pauley got himself into trouble, and then got out of it by striking out Cameron Maybin on three wicked sinkers. Pauley had hit Jason Bartlett in the side with one out, then allowed a single by Chase Headley, and an out later, a walk to load the bases. But he rallied himself and got Maybin waving, which means Brandon League, one of the M's two newest All-Stars, likely will be on to try for his 22nd save in the ninth. He's getting ready in the bullpen.

After 7: M's 3, Padres 1

David Pauley on in the eighth for the M's. Beavan threw 90 pitches, 64 for strikes.

After 6 1/2: M's 3, Padres 1

Beavan has thrown fewer than 90 pitches, getting first-pitch strikes to 21 of 27 hitters. Now it's a question of whether M's manager Eric Wedge wants to send him out for one more inning or ensure that it's a confidence-builder for the rookie. David Pauley is warming hard in the bullpen -- first action all day out there -- so that might be it for Beavan.

After 5 1/2: M's 3, Padres 1 Beavan has thrown only 76 pitches in his six innings, with 54 strikes. Granted, this isn't the '76 Reds he's facing (the Padres are hitting only .235, next-to-last in the NL), but it's still an impressive debut for the big righthander.

After 4 1/2: M's 3, Padres 1

Beavan continues to give the Mariners what they needed in replacement of injured Erik Bedard. He's allowed only three hits over five innings and at one point, had thrown 16 of 17 first-pitch strikes. The Padres threatened in the fifth, with runners at second and third and two out, but he induced a grounder to third by Jason Bartlett to get out of it.

After 3: M's 3, Padres 1

Consecutive sacrifice flies -- you don't see that every day -- from Justin Smoak and Dustin Ackley have given the M's a two-run lead. They loaded the bases on hits by Ichiro and Brendan Ryan, plus a walk to Adam Kennedy. Smoak's drive to left carried to the warning track in leftfield and just might have made it out but for a slight breeze coming in from that direction.

After 2 1/2: Padres 1, M's 1

Padres nicked M's starter Blake Beavan for their first hits and a run. Alberto Gonzalez, the No. 9 hitter, drilled an off-speed pitch from Beavan to left for a single, and leadoff man Will Venable followed with a well-stroked RBI double to right-center.

After 1 1/2: M's 1, Padres 0

M's manager Eric Wedge said beforehand that simply getting comfortable and overcoming the expected first-game jitters would be important for first-time starter Blake Beavan. So far, so good for the rookie: He allowed a two-out walk to Cameron Maybin (this one actually came after four balls, unlike Saturday night's), but came back to strike out Anthony Rizzo for his third punch-out in two innings. So far, Beavan has showed a live fastball and what appears to be a workable slider.

After 1: M's 1, Padres 0

Padres starter Mat Latos, who has had some struggles in mid-to-late June, muddled through the first, allowing a leadoff hit to Ichiro, a stolen base, and Adam Kennedy's run-scoring hit to left.

After half an inning

Nice start for M's rookie righty Blake Beavan, who used only 10 pitches to set down the Padres in the first, getting Will Venable on a soft comebacker, Jason Bartlett on a grounder to third and Chase Headley on a fastball up for a strikeout.

July 3, 2011 at 12:01 PM

Mariner Pre-Game notes, July 3

Posted by Bud Withers

Seattle Times Blog

The M's sent down Mike Carp to Tacoma to make room for Sunday's starter, Blake Beavan. Carp had hit .200 in 35 at-bats since he was called up after a sizzling season in Tacoma.

The move of Carp, rather than catcher Jose Yopez, reflects the fact Miguel Olivo isn't quite ready for action after he suffered a hamstring injury Tuesday night against Atlanta.

"I want to make sure he's (Josh Bard) got some protection," said M's manager Eric Wedge, referring to Yopez's role of backup to last week's callup, Bard, who is in the lineup for the series finale with San Diego.

"Miggy's availability is still somewhat uncertain right now," Wedge added.

Chris Gimenez, Olivo's backup, went to the 60-day disabled list with a strained oblique suffered the same night Olivo went down.

Meanwhile, second baseman Dustin Ackley, who had a slight rib problem that kept him out the first two games of the Padres series, is back in the lineup.

The Walk That Was, Revisited

Wedge called a brief pre-game meeting, partly to hold himself responsible for the already infamous three-ball walk that ended up costing the M's a possible victory Saturday night. Cameron Maybin of the Padres got a free pass after only three balls, and it wasn't caught immediately by either the umpiring crew or anybody on the Mariners bench.

"That's why I met with the guys this morning," Wedge said. "I just wanted to be accountable. I preach being accountable, and ultimately, that falls on me. I'm the captain of the ship."

While acknowledging there is naturally "human error," Wedge said, "You've just got to follow the game."

He added that "we've definitely become too dependent on the scoreboard."

The scoreboard had Maybin with an extra ball when he drew the third one, leading to the conclusion he had walked. He came around to score the game's only run.

Hard-Luck Fister

Doug Fister, the victim in the 1-0 defeat Saturday night, is 14th in the American League in earned-run average (3.03), but the lack of run support has him third in losses with nine (3-9). He has the poorest run support in the major leagues at 2.19 a game.

July 3, 2011 at 11:40 AM

Mariners-Padres lineups, July 3

Posted by Bud Withers

Seattle Times Blog

Mariners (40-43)

51 Ichiro Suzuki (L) RF
26 Brendan Ryan 2B
4 Adam Kennedy (L) 3B
17 Justin Smoak (S) 1B
13 Dustin Ackley (L) 2B
56 Greg Halman LF
8 Carlos Peguero (L) DH
21 Franklin Gutierrez CF
3 Josh Bard (S) C

49 Blake Beavan RHP

Padres (38-46)

25 Will Venable (L) RF
8 Jason Bartlett SS
7 Chase Headley (S) 3B
47 Ryan Ludwick DH
13 Chris Denorfia LF
24 Cameron Maybin CF
27 Anthony Rizzo (L) 1B
4 Nick Hundley C
14 Alberto Gonzalez 2B

38 Mat Latos RHP

July 3, 2011 at 10:19 AM

Felix Hernandez, Brandon League named to AL all-star team, but Ichiro out

Posted by Geoff Baker

Seattle Times Blog

Hardly a surprise to see Felix Hernandez named to the AL all-star team today. A bit of a good surprise that Brandon League made it, though he's arguably been the best closer in MLB this year.

Thing is, a lot of this voting and selecting has to do with past performance.

That helped a guy like Derek Jeter make the squad. Unfortunately for Ichiro this year, past performance was not enough. For the first time in his career, he wasn't named to the team.

Hernandez goes as much for his Cy Young Award last season as anything he's done this year. And that's OK, since he hasn't exactly tanked this season and deserves the honor based on how he overtook the field after last year's All-Star Game to win the Cy Young going away despite only 13 wins.

League was deserving based on this year's performance. So was David Pauley. So was Michael Pineda.

But let's face it. You were never going to see four all-stars from an M's team that lost 101 games last year and is sub-.500 so far in 2011. Just doesn't happen that way.

Hernandez and League are good representatives.

Published: Sunday, July 3, 2011

Thoughts on All-Stars, three-ball walks and massive quantities of hot dogs

By Kirby Arnold

Everett Herald Blog

1 PM UPDATE:

The hot dog eating contest is over, and Kevin Shockey of KJR put down four to win it. Tacoma News Tribune writer Ryan Divish, who I've tormented all morning about the contest ("Ryan, I know this sounds crazy, but if you eat a dozen shrimp just before the contest, the hot dogs go down much easier." Or, "there's no shame in puking in front of 20,000 people."), gobbled two-plus.

Nice effort by Divish, although that still didn't keep me from grabbing a sheet of plastic and setting aside a Ryan Divish Spash Zone in the press box. I've also moved up to the second row until I see how Divish, whose seat is next to mine on the first row, handles the first couple of innings.

There's already a lot going on this morning at Safeco Field, and the Mariners haven't even gotten their two hits yet.

Here's a condensed version of today's news and notes:

- Stating pitcher Felix Hernandez and closer Brandon League have made the American League All-Star team. They consider it a huge honor, naturally, although there are circumstances that may prevent both of them from playing in the game July 12 in Phoenix.

Hernandez is scheduled to pitch next Sunday, and by rule he wouldn't be allowed to pitch in the All-Star game.

League's situation more cloudy. His wife, Sasha, is due to give birth to the couple's third child on July 20. She's been having contractions and a doctor told the couple this week that the baby could be born at any time.

“As great of an honor as this is, family comes first,” League said. “We'll just have to see what happens.”

A couple of notable All-Star omissions are starting pitcher Michael Pineda (who's 7-5 with a 2.65 ERA) and Ichiro Suzuki (with a very un-Ichiro-like .268 average). Unless Ichiro is a late addition, it'll break his streak of 10 straight All-Star appearances.

- Right-hander Blake Beavan is up from Class AAA Tacoma to start for the Mariners today (in place of Erik Bedard, who's on the 15-day disabled list because of a sprained left knee). We've known that since Saturday when the Mariners announced Beavan would start.

What comes as a surprise is the guy the Mariners sent out to make room on the roster for Beavan. It's outfielder Mike Carp, who batted .200 in 15 games since being called up.

There was every reason to think Jose Yopez, the third catcher on the team (and a guy who hasn't played since he was called up last week), would be sent down. However, catcher Miguel Olivo's left leg remains tender and, with him not being available to play, the Mariners need to keep Yopez around to back up Josh Bard.

Carp was optioned to Class AAA Tacoma and, to make room for Beavan on the 40-man roster, the Mariners moved catcher Chris Gimenez to the 60-day DL from the 15-day list.

- Manager Eric Wedge called a team meeting at 11 a.m., not only to congratulate the Mariners' two All-Stars but also to accept responsibility for not keeping track of the ball-strike count Saturday night when the Padres' Cameron Maybin walked despite having only three balls.

“That falls on me,” Wedge said. “I preach to them about being accountable, and I sure as hell need to be accountable.”

- And finally, the Mariners are holding a media hot dog eating contest before today's game, and no, I'm not in it. I eat three hot dogs per season -- one on opening day, one on the final day of the season and one at-large dog at a day of my choosing.

Given the scene we're about to witness, I doubt today will be the at-large day.

Among those participating is Ryan Divish of the Tacoma News Tribune, a good guy who we love to needle. Today's advice: If you're going to spew, do it on the field and don't bring it back to the press box. Still, I've got a big plastic bag because Divish sits next to me in the press box.

Mariners 3, Padres 1: Beavan wins in his big league debut

Posted By Ryan Divish on July 3, 2011 at 4:38 pm

The Tacoma News Tribune Blog

How happy is this guy?

That's Blake Beavan and he picked up his first big league win in his first big league start, pitching seven innings allowing one run on three hits, while striking out four and walking two.

Obviously, he didn't do it against the Yankees. Realistically, the Padres' offense or lack thereof, is comparable to the team Beavan pitches for. Regardless, the 22-year-old right-hander kept his emotions and nerves in check, had great location with his fastball and made the pitches necessary to earn his first big league win and a beer shower afterward.

What did Eric Wedge think?

Obviously, Beavan also benefited from pitching in Safeco Field. But he was outstanding, and if you look at his recent run in Tacoma - with the exception of a rough start in Tacoma - he has been solid.

"Just trying to hit the mitt and keep the ball down," Beavan said.

Sound simple? Well, it can be that simple.

"I think that's one thing that Carl (Willis) does a great job of, we pitch to our team, we pitch to the park," catcher Josh Bard said. "If you can locate a fastball, you can be a big league pitcher for a long time. Sometimes we make it so complicated trying to trick guys and do all this stuff. You can throw the perfect trick pitch, but if it's down the middle and hanging it doesn't matter. We really talked to him about execution with his heater. We probably only threw 20 offspeed pitches the whole game."

Against a team like the Padres you can do that.

Beavan isn't overpowering. He's very similar in many ways to Doug Fister. He won't dominate but he will keep you in most games. That's not bad to have.

The Mariners got just enough offense. Adam Kennedy delivered an RBI single in the first inning and Justin Smoak and Dustin Ackley delivered sac flies in the third inning.

Smoak's deep fly ball to left with bases loaded was hit well enough to be a grand slam in about 3/4 of the MLB parks. But the vortex in left field knocked it down. While the fly scored Ichiro. Brendan Ryan, who was on second, tagged up and advanced to third, setting up Ackley's fly ball to center. It was a head's up play from Ryan, who seems to make plenty of those types of plays.

VIDEO: Media hot dog-eating contest

Posted By Doug Pacey on July 3, 2011 at 2:01 pm
The Tacoma News Tribune Blog

Ever want to be in a hot dog-eating competition? Me either.

But at least eight members of the Seattle-area media thought it would be fun, or at least a good thing to do for charity. So before the Mariners took the field against the San Diego Padres on Sunday at Safeco Field, the Mariners' put on their inaugural Chowdown for Charity hot dog-eating contest.

Contestants were given two minutes to eat as many hot dogs as possible. The winner earned the respect of his soft-stomached competitors and \$1,000 to the charity of his choice.

The News Tribune's Ryan Divish -- he's wearing the Montana T-shirt -- was one of the contestants. The others were KCPQ's Bill Wixey, KJR-950 AM's Kevin Shockey, 710-AM Mike Salk, Seattle Times' Danny O'Neil, King-5's Chris Egan, KOMO-4's Mike Dardis and ESPN.com's Jim Caple.

Shockey won easily, downing four hot dogs. He took the Kobayashi-approach, double-fisting dogs and dunking the buns in water. Shockey ate for Northwest Literacy, a noble non-profit foundation that promotes youth literacy, but probably not eating competitions, given America's child obesity epidemic.

The other seven ate two or fewer hot dogs. Weak.

Mariners 3, Padres 1: Beavan wins in his big league debut

Posted By Ryan Divish on July 3, 2011 at 4:38 pm
The Tacoma News Tribune Blog
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Carp optioned to Tacoma, Gimenez placed on 60-day DL

Posted By Doug Pacey on July 3, 2011 at 10:38 am

The Tacoma News Tribune Blog

To make room for pitcher Blake Beavan -- who's making his first major league start today (Sunday July 3) -- the Mariners have optioned first baseman Mike Carp to Triple-A Tacoma and moved catcher Chris Gimenez to the 60-day disabled list from the 15-day DL, the Mariners announced.

Beavan was not on the 40-man roster prior to being called up from Tacoma and these moves create a spot for him.

Manager Eric Wedge will have his pre-game press conference with the media around 11:30 a.m. and we'll be back with more information then. I'm helping out today -- Ryan Divish is also here and will be your usual, gracious host.

Felix Hernandez, Brandon League named to AL All-Star team, Ichiro left off

Posted By Ryan Divish on July 3, 2011 at 10:17 am

The Tacoma News Tribune Blog

The rosters for the 2011 All-Star game were announced and the Mariners had two players named to the squad that will be managed by Ron Washington. But neither of the players were Ichiro Suzuki.

The 10-time all-star outfielder failed to make the team.

Instead, two pitchers - Felix Hernandez and Brandon League will be going to Phoenix. Although per MLB rules, Felix likely won't be able to pitch since he's scheduled to start that Sunday before the game. And Mariners manager Eric Wedge said that he won't be adjusting his starting rotation.

Felix suggested that Michael Pineda could throw his inning if they don't allow him to pitch.

Hernandez, 25, has been the anchor of the best starting pitching staff in the American League. Hernandez is 8-7 with a 3.35 ERA (48 ER, 129.0 IP) in a Major League best (tied) 18 starts. Among AL starters he ranks 3rd in strikeouts (124) and 4th in innings pitched (129.0). This will be Hernandez's second All-Star game, as he pitched a scoreless inning in 2009 in St. Louis.

League, 28, is tied for the American League lead with 21 saves (with Mariano Rivera). He is 0-4 with a 3.48 ERA (13 ER, 33.2 IP) in a team-high 36 appearances. The Hawaiian native heads into today's game with 18 consecutive appearances without allowing an earned run, and has converted his last 12 save opportunities. This is League's first All-Star selection.

American League

Starters

1B: Adrian Gonzalez, Red Sox

2B: Robinson Cano, Yankees

3B: Alex Rodriguez, Yankees

SS: Derek Jeter, Yankees

OF: Jose Bautista, Blue Jays

OF: Curtis Granderson, Yankees

OF: Josh Hamilton, Rangers

DH: David Ortiz, Red Sox

C: Alex Avila, Tigers

Reserves

1B: Miguel Cabrera, Tigers

2B: Howard Kendrick, Angels

3B: Adrian Beltre, Rangers

SS: Asdrubal Cabrera, Indians

OF: Michael Cuddyer, Twins

OF: Jacoby Ellsbury, Red Sox

OF: Matt Joyce, Rays

OF: Carlos Quentin, White Sox

DH: Michael Young, Rangers

C: Russell Martin, Yankees

C: Matt Wieters, Orioles

Pitchers

RHP: Josh Beckett, Red Sox

RHP: Felix Hernandez, Mariners
LHP: David Price, Rays
RHP: James Shields, Rays
RHP: Justin Verlander, Tigers
RHP: Jered Weaver, Angels
LHP: C.J. Wilson, Rangers
LHP: Gio Gonzalez, Athletics
RHP: Aaron Crow, Royals
RHP: Brandon League, Mariners
RHP: Chris Perez, Indians
RHP: Mariano Rivera, Yankees
RHP: Jose Valverde, Tigers

National League

Starters

1B: Prince Fielder, Brewers
2B: Rickie Weeks, Brewers
3B: Jose Reyes, Mets
SS: Placido Polanco, Phillies
OF: Lance Berkman, Cardinals
OF: Ryan Braun, Brewers
OF: Matt Kemp, Dodgers
C: Brian McCann, Braves

Reserves

1B: Gaby Sanchez, Marlins
1B: Joey Votto, Reds
2B: Brandon Phillips, Reds
3B: Chipper Jones, Braves
SS: Starlin Castro, Cubs
SS: Troy Tulowitzki, Rockies
OF: Jay Bruce, Reds
OF: Matt Holliday, Cardinals
OF: Hunter Pence, Astros
OF: Justin Upton, D-backs
C: Yadier Molina, Cardinals

Pitchers

RHP: Matt Cain, Giants
RHP: Roy Halladay, Phillies
LHP: Cole Hamels, Phillies
RHP: Jair Jurrjens, Braves
LHP: Clayton Kershaw, Dodgers
LHP: Cliff Lee, Phillies
RHP: Tim Lincecum, Giants
RHP: Ryan Vogelsong, Giants
RHP: Heath Bell, Padres
RHP: Tyler Clippard, Nationals
RHP: Joel Hanrahan, Pirates
LHP: Jonny Venters, Braves

RHP: Brian Wilson, Giants

Sunday, July 3, 2011 @ 4:46pm

Sunday news and notes All Star edition

Shannon Drayer

MyNorthwest.com

Interesting day...All Stars, roster moves, a debut, and Mike Salk in a hot dog eating contest.

Start with the All Stars. Brandon League was named to his first All Star team this morning. Well deserved after putting up 21 saves in the first half of the season. League was summoned to Eric Wedge's office and given the news by his manager this morning. Felix Hernandez who also was named to the team found out in a different way.

"I read the text message, congratulations, and I was like what?" Felix said. "I was sleeping and they sent me a text and I told my wife I think we are going to Arizona, really? Oh yeah! She was really excited. I think more than me!"

Felix is looking forward to the Home Run Derby. He always appreciates the power display but this year will be special as his son Jeremy will be old enough to be down on the field with him. As for whether or not he will pitch in the the game it is a safe bet to say that he will not as he is scheduled to start Sunday. Felix has not received that memo however.

"I don't know man," he said when asked if he would pitch. "I think I can pitch. I got a bullpen on Tue., I can throw one inning. I will be okay."

I think we have more chance of seeing Larry Bernandez in that game but a guy can dream.

Brandon League may well find himself in the game and may have quite a week leading up to that appearance as his wife is due to give birth to the couple's third child any day now. League, who told me that he has not been getting much sleep the last couple of weeks with all that has been on his plate is determined find a way to make both "debut."

"I don't want to miss any games and I am definitely not going to miss the birth, I will get back as soon as I can," he said.

This year has been an eye opening one for League who thanked his manager this morning for giving him the opportunity to close and sticking with him when he struggled.

"This year has been a learning experience," he said. "I learned a lot, a lot that will stick with me in my career. This year? One half down, one more to go. It is not how you start it is how you finish."

As for Felix, I asked where he stood in relationship to last year at the halfway mark.

"Close enough," he said. "I'm close but I have been inconsistent right now. I throw one game good, the other is okay, but I need to be more consistent try and do what I did last year."

News and notes...Mike Carp was optioned to Tacoma to make room for today's starter Blake Beavan. The move was necessary as Eric Wedge was not quite ready to let Miguel Olivo return to game activity yet. Tough news for Carp but Wedge is hardly down on him. "It's more about Miggy," he said. "His avail is still somewhat uncertain. Mike has played sporadically, the whole National League week was tough on us. I don't think that is a bad thing that he gets to go down and play every day for awhile, he deserves to be up here and we want to get

him back at some point in time."...There was still a lot of buzz about the 2-2 walk last night in the clubhouse and broadcast booth. I spoke with a couple of pitchers about being aware of where they were in a count and one said he never was. The focus is on getting out of an at bat with less than four pitches. He knows if he is ahead or behind in a count and focuses on the next pitch. Once he gets to two strikes he isn't thinking of what the ball count is. Makes sense to me...In the spirit of Nathan's Hot Dog Eating Contest which takes place every 4th of July the Mariners held a media contest before today's game. Mike Salk represented 710 ESPN and put up a valiant effort finishing one before being disqualified for knocking the hot dog out of a competitors hand. If you can't beat 'em...

pitchers generally don't know where they are. they know if they are behind or ahead in the count and once they get to two strikes that's

Sunday, July 3, 2011 @ 10:51am

Hernandez, League selected to All-Star Game

710sports.com Staff

MyNorthwest.com

The Seattle Mariners will send two players to the desert for the 82nd annual All-Star Game in Phoenix on July 12, and for the first time Ichiro won't join them.

Starting pitcher Felix Hernandez and closer Brandon League were chosen to the American League roster by Texas Rangers manager Ron Washington Sunday morning, while RF Ichiro Suzuki failed to make the team for the first time in his MLB career.

Suzuki, a ten-time All-Star, was not named to the AL roster for the first time in his Major League career. Ichiro was named Most Valuable Player of the 2007 All-Star game after going 3-for-3 including the first ever inside-the-park-homerun in the game's history. Ichiro has gotten off to a slow start this season, as his .268 batting average is the lowest it's ever been at this point in the season.

Hernandez will appear in his 2nd All-Star game after earning his first AL Cy Young Award last season. Hernandez represented the American League in 2009, tossing a scoreless inning in his first ever All-Star appearance. Hernandez is currently 3rd in the American League in strikeouts (124) and 4th in innings pitched (129.0).

League, 28, earns his first ever All-Star selection. His 21 saves are tied for the American League lead with fellow All-Star Mariano Rivera of the Yankees. League has filled in admirably in the closer role this season, as David Aardsma has been plagued with injuries all season long.

Originally published July 3, 2011 at 9:13 PM | Page modified July 3, 2011 at 9:14 PM

All-Star rosters announced | Baseball notebook

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK — A team known for sausage races more than pennant races made quite an All-Star splash.

The Milwaukee trio of Ryan Braun, Prince Fielder and Rickie Weeks won fan elections to start in the National League lineup, sending a mini-Brew Crew to join the usual slew of Yankees, Red Sox and Phillies at baseball's glitter-fest.

"It means the Milwaukee Brewers have arrived on the national scene," Braun, the top NL vote-getter, said Sunday.

Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez are among six Yankees on the AL roster for the All-Star Game July 12 in Phoenix. Once again, New York had the most players picked.

Philadelphia, having built the best record in the majors on pitching, provided aces Roy Halladay, Cliff Lee and Cole Hamels. Adrian Gonzalez and David Ortiz led a Boston quartet. World Series champion San Francisco added four arms, including former Washington Husky Tim Lincecum.

Toronto outfielder Jose Bautista, the reigning home-run champion, drew a record 7.4 million votes. He became the first Blue Jays player elected to start since Carlos Delgado in 2003.

The AL starting lineup: Gonzalez at first base, Robinson Cano at second, Jeter at shortstop, Rodriguez at third base, with Bautista, Josh Hamilton and Curtis Granderson in the outfield, Alex Avila behind the plate and Ortiz at designated hitter.

The NL starters: Fielder at first, Weeks at second, Jose Reyes at short, Placido Polanco at third, with Braun, Matt Kemp and Lance Berkman in the outfield and Brian McCann catching. Giants manager Bruce Bochy will choose the DH.

Fans can vote on MLB.com through Thursday for the 34th player on each side.

Originally published Sunday, July 3, 2011 at 9:17 AM

Bautista top vote-getter for All-Star spots

By BEN WALKER

AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK —

Joel Hanrahan planned to spend the break buying a couch. Matt Joyce figured to be out on a boat. Ryan Vogelsong, well, there was no telling where he might be these days.

They're now all headed to the All-Star game, part of the rosters released Sunday after fans, players and managers had their say on who should be in Phoenix on July 12.

Milwaukee's Prince Fielder and Rickie Weeks were among several players who overcame voting deficits in the final week to earn starting spots. Dodgers outfielder Matt Kemp, Mets shortstop Jose Reyes and Detroit catcher Alex Avila rallied to claim slots, too.

Overtaken by Avila, New York Yankees catcher Russell Martin felt relieved.

"He's got much better numbers than I do. I'm glad he's going to get the start," said Martin, who still made the AL team as a backup. "I was kind of worried about that, actually."

Derek Jeter and Alex Rodriguez are among six Yankees on the AL side. Once again, New York had the most players picked.

Philadelphia, having built the best record in the majors on pitching, provided aces Roy Halladay, Cliff Lee and Cole Hamels. Adrian Gonzalez and David Ortiz led a Boston quartet.

The Milwaukee trio of Ryan Braun, Fielder and Weeks will form a mini-Brew Crew in the desert, a nice nod to a team known more for sausage races than pennant races.

"It means the Milwaukee Brewers have arrived on the national scene," said Braun, the top NL vote-getter.

The small-market Brewers celebrated their largest haul of All-Star starters. Milwaukee draws a lot of attention for its in-game dash of meat mascots - the team, however, has made the playoffs just once since 1982.

The World Series champion San Francisco Giants added four arms, including Vogelsong.

Vogelsong will certainly be among the feel-good stories. At 33, he'd spent the previous four years in Japan and the minors before getting called up early this season.

"There's never been a time in my career when this seemed like even a realistic possibility," he said, choking up while discussing his selection. "A year ago, almost to the day, I got released and didn't know if I would ever pitch again."

This year's squad includes 13 first-time All-Stars in the AL and 11 in the NL, with Hanrahan among them. The closer is Pittsburgh's lone representative and said he won't mind changing his vacation plans.

"I think it will be a lot more fun than going to a furniture shop. They say it takes three months to get a couch - wanted to see one and get it on order," he said.

Joyce hadn't thought about a detour to Phoenix, either.

"It wasn't even on my mind. I was actually planning what I was going to do on the off-days. Probably was going to stay in a condo on the beach that my buddy has. Maybe go out on the water in a boat," the Tampa Bay outfielder said.

Toronto outfielder Jose Bautista, the reigning home run champion, drew a record 7.4 million votes. He became the first Blue Jays player elected to start since Carlos Delgado in 2003.

Bautista homered Saturday off Halladay, then hit his major league-leading 27th homer Sunday against Philadelphia's Cliff Lee.

"People are recognizing that you're doing well and for me it's been in three different territories - the United States and Canada and the Dominican," Bautista said. "I can't even describe how good that feels."

The AL starting lineup under manager Ron Washington of Texas: Gonzalez at first base, Robinson Cano at second, Jeter at shortstop, Rodriguez at third base, with Bautista, Josh Hamilton and Curtis Granderson in the outfield, Avila behind the plate and Ortiz at designated hitter.

The NL starters: Fielder at first, Weeks at second, Reyes at short, Placido Polanco at third, with Braun, Kemp and Lance Berkman in the outfield and Brian McCann catching. San Francisco manager Bruce Bochy will choose the DH.

Fans can vote on MLB.com through Thursday for the 34th player on each side. Injuries are sure to impact the final rosters - three-time NL MVP Albert Pujols was left off while recovering from a broken left wrist and Reyes is nursing a hamstring problem.

Once again, the league that wins will get home-field advantage in the World Series. Led by McCann, the NL won last year for the first time since 1996.

Jeter, a 12-time All-Star, is set to come off the disabled list Monday after recovering from a strained calf.

The 37-year-old Yankees captain always seems to be a lightning rod when it comes to awards and honors, ratcheting up the debate of popularity vs. production. He's in the midst of another down year - Cleveland shortstop Asdrubal Cabrera is having a breakout season and made the AL team as a backup, deserving Jhonny Peralta of Detroit was left off.

The Yankees own the best record in the AL, although two of their stars were among the notable omissions: CC Sabathia, tied for the major league high in wins, and first baseman Mark Teixeira, among the leaders in homers and RBIs.

The rival Red Sox put four players on the team: Gonzalez, Ortiz, pitcher Josh Beckett and outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury.

"Seems like the Yankees always take care of all the All-Star voting every year, so it's just disappointing to not see more Red Sox on that team," Boston ace Jon Lester said.

On the ballot for the extra AL player are outfielders Alex Gordon of Kansas City and Adam Jones of Baltimore, White Sox first baseman Paul Konerko, Detroit DH Victor Martinez and Tampa Bay second baseman Ben Zobrist.

"I know it's very possible that when you play the position I play there will be somebody left without a chair," Konerko said.

Candidates for the final NL spot are outfielders Andre Ethier of the Dodgers, Mike Morse of the Nationals and Shane Victorino of the Phillies, first baseman Todd Helton of Colorado and pitcher Ian Kennedy of the host Diamondbacks.

Two themes sure to attract interest at the All-Star game are the heat - it was 118 degrees in Phoenix this week and even though the ballpark has a retractable roof, some of the festivities are outdoors - and Arizona's immigration law.

The law requires immigrants to carry their registration documents and police who are enforcing other laws to question the immigration status of those they suspect are in the country illegally. Last year, several All-Stars said they would boycott the game if picked.

Atlanta pitcher Jair Jurrjens, a first-time All-Star and a native of Curacao, said the Arizona politics were not a concern to him.

"I don't try to think about stuff I don't have control of. They need to do what they need to do to make it safe for the people. If they need to do that under the law, everybody knows a lot of people do bad stuff and they're just trying to be safe," he said.

AP Sports Writers Stephen Hawkins, Larry Lage, Chris Duncan, Charles Odum and Rick Gano and AP freelance writers Mike Cook, Ian Harrison and Rich Dubroff contributed to this report.