

A's News Clips, Wednesday July 6, 2011

A's lose to Mariners after rally in ninth

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's did not go quietly, which they seemed destined to do most of Tuesday night.

But their 4-2 defeat to the Seattle Mariners in 10 innings left quite the hollow feeling.

After rallying from a run down to tie it in the bottom of the ninth, the A's watched an error by shortstop Cliff Pennington send them toward their ninth loss in 13 games.

"To battle in the ninth off their closer and tie the game, it's one of those things that if we would have pulled it out, it would be a big momentum push for us," A's starter Trevor Cahill said.

The score was 2-2 in the top of the 10th with two runners on when A's closer Andrew Bailey coaxed what appeared to be an inning-ending double play from Brendan Ryan.

Second baseman Jemile Weeks flipped to Pennington for the force at second, but with Ichiro Suzuki sliding in on him, Pennington uncorked a wild throw that went far right of first base.

That allowed Franklin Gutierrez to score and Ryan to advance to second. Adam Kennedy's bloop double down the left field line scored Ryan to make it 4-2.

Pennington, whose 11 errors are tied for second-most among American League shortstops, said he never had a handle on the ball and it slipped from his hand.

"I just didn't get a grip on the ball," he said. "I tried not to throw it and threw it."

The loss dropped the A's eight games out of first in the American League West, tying a season high.

The 10th-inning sequence erased the A's good vibes from the ninth, after they'd been bottled up most of the night by defending A.L. Cy Young winner Felix Hernandez.

Weeks led off the ninth by flaring a double to left off Brandon League and was sacrificed to third by Scott Sizemore. Coco Crisp blooped a shallow fly that Mariners left fielder Carlos Peguero couldn't corral, scoring Weeks to make it 2-2.

Cahill bounced back from a poor start against Florida and delivered seven innings of five-hit ball.

He gave up an unearned run in the second, when Dustin Ackley singled, stole second and went to third when catcher Kurt Suzuki's throw sailed into center field. He scored on Peguero's sacrifice fly.

Ackley, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2009 draft, then crushed a homer to dead center off Cahill in the seventh to make it 2-0.

Hernandez was phenomenal through eight innings, allowing just four hits.

He faced one batter over the minimum through seven innings and finished with 10 strikeouts, no walks and one hit batter.

His lone mistake came in the eighth -- when Suzuki hit a 2-0 pitch for a towering homer to left.

"It seemed like every first pitch of an inning was a fastball at the knees," Sizemore said. "And of course, he's got a good changeup and good curveball."

The A's combined for just three runs and nine hits in losing the first two games of this series, but shabby defense also bit them Tuesday.

Aside from Pennington's error, Suzuki airmailed his second-inning throw to second base and bounced another one as Franklin Gutierrez stole second in the 10th.

Opponents have been successful on 38 of their past 43 steal attempts against him.

Chin Music: Jemile Weeks, Gio Gonzalez earn honors; Willingham might play vs. Texas Rangers

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 7/5/2011 6:24pm

Here's the latest on another very warm day at the Coliseum ...

A couple of individual awards came the A's way Tuesday, as second baseman Jemile Weeks was named the American League's co-Rookie of the Month along with Minnesota Twins outfielder Ben Revere. Left-hander Gio Gonzalez earned AL co-Player of the Week honors with the Toronto Blue Jays' Jose Bautista. It's the sixth time an A's player has earned Rookie of the Month, but Weeks is just the second position player to do it. Shortstop Bobby Crosby was honored in June 2004.

It's impressive in that this truly was Weeks' first month in the major leagues. He's hitting .299 with 13 runs and six stolen bases in 25 games since being called up June 7, providing a jolt of excitement immediately upon his arrival. But I'll be interested to see what happens with him once cleanup man Josh Willingham returns from the DL. I would think Hideki Matsui goes back to the No. 3 spot, Coco Crisp returns to leadoff and Weeks might drop back down to the No. 9 spot. I think that makes for an overall stronger batting order. Where would you like to see Weeks hit once Willingham comes back? ...

—Speaking of Willingham, he's been running for the past couple days and is doing well enough that both he and manager Bob Melvin think he could return sometime during the four-game series at Texas that begins Thursday. "Cautiously optimistic" is how Melvin characterized things. Willingham said the key is how his strained Achilles responds AFTER he's done running. That's when he still experiences problems. "If it continues to get better, I'll play in Texas," he said.

—Check out this [all-encompassing review of the Oakland Coliseum](#), courtesy of www.stadiumjourney.com. Do you agree with the points made? Disagree? Feel free to share ...

The lineups:

A's – Weeks 2B, Sizemore 3B, Crisp CF, Matsui DH, Jackson 1B, DeJesus RF, Suzuki C, Sweeney LF, Pennington SS; Cahill RHP.

Mariners – Ichiro DH, Ryan SS, Kennedy 3B, Smoak 1B, Ackley 2B, Olivo C, Peguero LF, Guterrez CF, Halman RF; Hernandez RHP.

A's rally against Mariners, then throw it away

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Down 2-0 in the eighth inning with two outs and no one on against Seattle's Felix Hernandez doesn't exactly bode well for any team, particularly the [A's](#).

On Tuesday night at the Coliseum, Oakland overcame that predicament to send the game to extra innings. Cliff Pennington's error in the 10th became the critical moment in the A's 4-2 loss.

Andrew Bailey (0-1) began the 10th by allowing a single to Franklin Gutierrez. With one out, Gutierrez stole second. The A's then intentionally walked Ichiro Suzuki.

Brendan Ryan followed with a grounder to Jemile Weeks at second. Weeks flipped to Pennington for the forceout. Pennington's throw to first was wild, allowing Gutierrez to score the go-ahead run.

Pennington didn't intend to make the throw.

"I didn't get a grip," the A's shortstop said. "I tried to hold on to it. I threw it away."

Suzuki slid well to the right-field side of second base and the play could have been called an automatic double play. Second-base umpire Jim Reynolds did not make that call.

Said Pennington: "Somebody told me" that Ichiro slid too far from the bag, "but I didn't feel it on the play."

Adam Kennedy's double to left brought home Ryan with an insurance run.

Hernandez isn't known as "King Felix" for nothing. The 6-foot-3 right-hander can dominate almost any lineup.

So when Brandon League replaced Hernandez (122 pitches) to begin the ninth with the Mariners leading 2-1, the A's had to feel fortunate.

Jemile Weeks greeted League by slicing a double down the left-field line. Scott Sizemore sacrificed Weeks to third.

With the infield in, Coco Crisp blooped one to shallow left. Carlos Peguero raced in and went into a slide but could not make the grab. Weeks hustled home and it was 2-2.

Hernandez, 25, owns a 79-60 career record. He owns the A's to the tune of 11-4, including 2-0 this season.

His three 2011 starts against the green and gold:

1) April 1: He tossed a five-hitter in Seattle's 6-2 win on Opening Night. Trevor Cahill, who started for the A's on Tuesday night, took the loss.

2) April 21: He gave up four hits in 7 2/3 innings, striking out eight, in the Mariners' 1-0 victory.

3) Tuesday: Kurt Suzuki's solo homer with two outs in the eighth accounted for the only run Hernandez allowed. He gave up four hits, struck out 10 and did not issue a walk.

His combined numbers against the A's this season: 24 2/3 innings, three earned runs (1.09 ERA), 13 hits, three walks and 23 strikeouts.

When asked what makes Hernandez so tough, Pennington responded, "You name it: 94, 95 (mph fastball), sinker, changeup, slider, curveball. He's usually got it all working and he did tonight."

The Mariners got on the board first. Rookie Dustin Ackley singled to lead off the second. As Miguel Olivo struck out, Ackley stole second and moved to third when Suzuki's throw sailed into center field for an error.

Peguero lifted a flyball to Ryan Sweeney in left. A good throw by Sweeney would have cut down Ackley at the plate, but Sweeney's throw went up the first-base line. Kurt Suzuki did a nice job of grabbing the throw and lunging to the plate, but Ackley slid home safely for a 1-0 game.

Ackley led off the seventh inning by taking Cahill over the wall in center, just to the left of the 400-foot marker. It was the rookie's third homer this season.

Cahill went seven innings, allowing two runs (one earned) on five hits. He struck out five and walked one.

A's Jemile Weeks is Co-Rookie of the Month

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Less than a month into his big-league career, A's second baseman **Jemile Weeks** owns a monthly honor: On Tuesday, he and Minnesota outfielder **Ben Revere** (.294, seven stolen bases) were named the American League's Co-Rookies of the Month for June.

Oakland brought up Weeks from Triple-A Sacramento on June 7. In 21 games in the month, he hit .309 (25-for-81) and stole six bases.

Weeks was enthused about the award.

"It's always a positive to come up and get an accolade in the major leagues when you're not used to even being here," he said.

Manager **Bob Melvin**, who joined the A's two days after Weeks did, said he was impressed early by Weeks' ability to process information.

"You could talk to him during a game about adjustments and he actually listened," Melvin said. "I remember when I was a young player, when someone asked me to do something intricately in the course of a game, it went right in one ear and out the other. ...

"But, he's able to sustain it and actually go up there and do exactly what you ask of him."

After an 0-for-4 afternoon Monday, Weeks took early batting practice Tuesday. He was working on "trying to let the ball get deeper, be more consistent with my strike zone. I've been a little erratic lately."

For his consistent June, Weeks will receive a trophy. He'll gladly accept it, but he joked, "A watch would have been nice, too."

A watch is what **Gio Gonzalez** will receive for being the AL's Co-Player of the Week with Toronto's **Jose Bautista** (four homers). The A's lefty went 2-0, allowing one run in 15 innings while racking up 16 strikeouts.

Briefly: Guillermo Moscoso (2-4, 2.51 ERA) has his final start before the All-Star break this afternoon. With **Tyson Ross** probably ready to return after the break, this could be Moscoso's last start for a while.

Ross allowed four runs, all earned, and seven hits in 3 1/3 innings for Triple-A Sacramento at Fresno on Tuesday night. **Grant Balfour**, who's scheduled to come off the disabled list Thursday, gave up a run on two hits in an inning against the Grizzlies.

Cust sits: Seattle designated hitter Jack Cust had Tuesday night off against his former team. Cust is hitting .215 overall and is 2-for-21 against the A's this season. Ichiro Suzuki took the DH duties Tuesday and went 2-for-4, his fifth consecutive multihit game against Oakland.

Drumbeat: On Moscoso and Weeks

From Steve Kroner at the Coliseum 7/5/2011 6:30pm

Guillermo Moscoso (2-4, 2.51 ERA) has his final start before the All-Star break this afternoon. With Tyson Ross probably ready to return soon after the break, this could be Moscoso's last start for a while -- not that he's looking at it that way.

"I don't want to talk about it," Moscoso said. "I don't want to think about it. I just want to get focused on the game and do my best."

"He's impressed me," A's manager Bob Melvin said of Moscoso, "but he can be a versatile guy. I'd hate to just come out and say, 'This is his last time and he's pitching for his job,' because he's pitched too well to be put in that position."

During his pregame news conference, Melvin also discussed second baseman Jemile Weeks, who was named the American League's Co-Rookie of the Month with Minnesota's Ben Revere.

"He's confident in his ability and whether he takes an 0-for-4 or goes 3-for-4, he comes in the next day expecting to do good things. I don't know if it's his background, being around his brother (Milwaukee second baseman Rickie) and so forth, or just something that's in his makeup, but I noticed that early. He likes the big stage and he likes a challenge."

The A's have a challenge against Seattle's Felix Hernandez tonight. Melvin's lineup: Weeks, 2B; Sizemore, 3B; Crisp, CF; Matsui, DH; Jackson, 1B; DeJesus, RF; Suzuki, C; Sweeney, LF; Pennington, SS.

And one note about the Mariners' lineup: Jack Cust, who's hitting .215 overall and is 2-for-21 against the A's this season, will begin this evening on the bench. Ichiro Suzuki will handle the designated-hitter duty.

Error in 10th inning proves costly for A's

By Tom Green / MLB.com | 7/6/2011 3:00 AM ET

OAKLAND -- Fans came to the Coliseum on Tuesday night anticipating a pitchers' duel between Oakland's Trevor Cahill and Seattle's Felix Hernandez.

The pitching matchup -- a rematch of Opening Day -- lived up to expectations, but it was a throwing error that decided an extra-inning affair that saw the A's fall, 4-2, in 10 frames.

With the game tied in the 10th, Franklin Gutierrez led off the inning with a base knock before stealing second. Following an intentional walk to Ichiro Suzuki, Brendan Ryan grounded into what would have been a 4-6-3 inning-ending double play -- until shortstop Cliff Pennington's throw went errant and allowed Gutierrez to score the go-ahead run.

"I just didn't get a grip on the ball," Pennington said. "I tried not to throw it, and threw it away."

The error, Pennington's 11th of the season, overshadowed fine performances from Cahill and Hernandez.

Cahill tossed seven strong innings for the A's, giving up just two runs on five hits, while striking out four and walking one. Hernandez, the reigning American League Cy Young winner, matched Cahill pitch for pitch -- and then some. The righty tossed eight innings of one-run ball while fanning 10 and surrendering no walks.

"It's always fun going up against the best in the league," Cahill said. "It makes you know you're going to have to be real sharp and that one run here or there could hurt you and get you the loss. I didn't want to think about that too much because I knew he was going to be sharp and there's nothing I can do about him, so I was going to try to have them score as little as possible."

Cahill limited the damage, allowing just one earned run -- a leadoff home run from Dustin Ackley in the seventh. It was Ackley's third home run of the year, and the second time he crossed the plate in the game, scoring an unearned run in the second off a Carlos Peguero sacrifice fly to left.

Hernandez, meanwhile, was even better. The righty allowed four hits on the night and faced the minimum through five, thanks to each of the A's only two baserunners to that point getting thrown out trying to steal second.

"Felix was as good as we've seen him all year long tonight, and that's saying a lot," Seattle manager Eric Wedge said.

"He was good," Pennington said. "He was really good. He was typical Felix."

The lone blemish on Hernandez's night came in the eighth when Kurt Suzuki launched a solo shot -- his seventh of the year -- over the wall in left with two outs in the frame.

While both starters dazzled, neither came away with a decision thanks to the late-inning dramatics. The A's rallied in the ninth to force extras when Jemile Weeks led off with a double before moving to third on a sacrifice bunt and eventually scoring on a Coco Crisp blooper to left, setting the stage for Pennington's costly error.

"Certainly that one, that's kind of just a freak play," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He comes out of his glove and knows he doesn't have a good grip and as he goes to throw he tries to hold on but it just sneaks out of his hand. It's not like he booted the ball, but certainly it plays the same, it is an error. But he's our shortstop, and I believe in him."

The errors have been a persistent issue for the A's, who fell to 5-10 in extra-inning games, the worst record in the AL. After Pennington's error, the team's second of the night, the A's upped their season total to 68 -- one of the highest marks in the Majors. And thanks to the two errors and the resulting runs off them, the A's tied Texas for the most unearned runs allowed off errors with 47.

"In close games defense ends up playing big," Melvin said. "When you make errors and you make them late in the game when you're not scoring many runs, typically it will cost you. We've lost a few games this year with bad defense. And when you have good pitching, you really want to concentrate on your defense."

Willingham nears return from DL

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Josh Willingham is still listed as day to day with a strained left Achilles tendon, but the slugger is inching closer to a return from the disabled list.

Willingham hasn't played since June 17, but is eyeing a return to the A's lineup when the team travels to Texas for a four-game set with the Rangers.

"It just depends on how it feels," Willingham said. "If it continues to get better, we'll look at playing in Texas. If it doesn't, then we won't sweat it and wait until the end of the All-Star break."

"I think there's a good chance," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "I'm cautiously optimistic about him playing before the break. What day that is, I'm not sure. But based on the last two days, they've been his best days by far."

Willingham was originally expected to come off the disabled list this past Sunday for the A's series finale against the D-backs. But the pain in his Achilles persisted after a rehab stint with Triple-A Sacramento, and his return was pushed back.

However, he said he has been able to run on it the last three days, and that it is gradually getting better.

"The key isn't how I do running on it," Willingham said, "it's how it responds to running."

The Achilles is responding well to the rehab, and Melvin said the left fielder got over a "significant hurdle" in the healing process in recent days.

"[Tendinitis] is really a nagging injury that, all of a sudden, one day you'll wake up and it's dramatically better," Melvin said. "So I think that's what he had a couple days ago. I know he had a smile on his face, and for the first time felt like maybe we really can do this before the break. I don't want to jump the gun, but I'm cautiously optimistic he can play before the break."

If Willingham does return during the Texas series, it could give the A's offense -- which is one of the worst in the Majors -- a needed boost against a division opponent before heading into the break. Before hitting the disabled list, Willingham was hitting .231 with 10 home runs and 42 RBIs, leading the A's in the latter two categories.

In his place, the A's have rotated four players in left field, including Hideki Matsui, Ryan Sweeney, Adam Rosales and Conor Jackson. With his best power hitter out of the lineup, Melvin also moved Matsui to Willingham's usual cleanup spot, while slotting Coco Crisp third in the order.

Weeks, Gio receive honors

OAKLAND -- In Oakland, a pair of Florida natives took home Major League Baseball honors on Tuesday.

A's rookie second baseman Jemile Weeks was voted co-winner of the American League Rookie of the Month Award for June, and left-hander Gio Gonzalez was named American League Co-Player of the Week.

Weeks was called up from Triple-A Sacramento on June 7 to replace an injured Mark Ellis at second base. What was expected to be a short-term stint turned into a long-term situation, when Weeks got off to a fast start for the A's -- eventually securing the second-base job and leading the A's to trade Ellis to the Rockies.

"He came up here swinging the bat and swinging hot," Gonzalez said. "I'm surprised he hasn't burned his hands, already."

In 21 games in June, Weeks hit .309 with seven doubles, three triples, six RBIs and six stolen bases, which was good enough to finish tied atop voting for the award with Twins outfielder Ben Revere. Weeks also had seven multi-hit games for the month.

Weeks, who described his first month in the Majors as a "whirlwind," was hitting .299 entering Tuesday's game against the Mariners, with a .330 on-base percentage.

"Not bad for his first month," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "We've seen what he brings to the table. ... He's been as advertised, and we expect big things out of him."

"It feels good," Weeks said. "Just to get any accolade this early in your Major League career, it's all positive, right now. It's something I never really thought about getting. I was just out here trying to help the team win and play well. I'm glad to know it's been noticed."

Meanwhile, Gonzalez earned AL Player of the Week honors for the first time in his career, after going 2-0 with a 0.60 ERA and a Major League-leading 16 strikeouts in wins over the D-backs and his hometown Marlins. Gonzalez shared the award with Toronto's Jose Bautista.

"It's an exciting award," said Gonzalez, who was also named an All-Star for the first time in his career on Sunday. "I'd like to continue to try to keep my head down and receive more awards like that."

"When we get Florida guys representing, it's even more exciting."

Worth noting

- Setup man Grant Balfour, who is on the 15-day disabled list with a strained right oblique, made his first rehab appearance for Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday. The righty tossed one inning for the River Cats in Fresno, giving up one run on two hits, with a walk. He threw 23 pitches, 12 of which went for strikes.

Balfour expects to return to the A's on Thursday, when he is eligible to come off the disabled list. At the time of his injury, Balfour held opponents to a .198 batting average, including a .136 mark with runners in scoring position.

- Righty Tyson Ross, who has been sidelined since straining his left oblique on May 19 against the Twins, made his second rehab start for Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday night. Ross tossed 3 1/3 innings in Fresno and gave up four runs -- all

earned -- on seven hits. He struck out four and walked two, but also gave up a home run and threw a wild pitch. In all, the righty threw 71 pitches in his outing, with 43 of them finding the strike zone.

Unlikely pitchers' duel set for series finale

By Doug Miller / MLB.com

It might be an unlikely pitchers' duel, but when Seattle's Jason Vargas takes the hill against the A's Guillermo Moscoso on Wednesday at Oakland Coliseum, fans will be watching two of the better starters of late in the American League West.

Vargas has pitched three shutouts in his last six starts. He blanked San Diego on six hits in his last outing.

"I can't say I've had a better stretch," Vargas said. "I've felt good like this before, but never was able to string it together in such a short period of time."

Mariners manager Eric Wedge said it's all about command, because Vargas already has his approach down pat.

"When he's throwing the ball where he wants to, he's tough," Wedge said. "He repeats his delivery so well. He's very consistent with his arm action, and he knows how to pitch."

Meanwhile, Moscoso has been a very pleasant surprise for Oakland. But will it last?

The righty joined the rotation in May after Tyson Ross sustained a left oblique strain. But with Ross' return on the horizon (he made his second rehab outing for Triple-A Sacramento on Tuesday), Moscoso's future in the rotation remains uncertain.

But in nine outings (seven starts) this season, Moscoso has amassed a 2.51 ERA -- despite a 2-4 record.

"He has a game to pitch, and we'll see where it goes from there," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He's been really good for us. Look at his ERA, and look at his batting average against. He's kept us in every game."

Mariners: Gutierrez looking for a groove

Franklin Gutierrez was back in center field on Tuesday after getting a day off. The Gold Glove center fielder has been struggling to find his offensive rhythm (hitting .184), and Wedge said it's time for him to get going. Wedge said Gutierrez is fine physically now, after missing the first six weeks of the season with a stomach issue.

"That's a part of it, no doubt," Wedge said. "But I think we're beyond that now. ... There's certain things he needs to do to get himself in better position to hit the baseball, and it's time for him to start doing it, because we need him."

- Reliever Jamey Wright earned his first Major League save with a perfect inning in Tuesday night's win. It also was the 500th appearance of his career. The veteran right-hander has made 246 starts and 254 relief appearances in 16 seasons in the Majors.

- Second baseman Dustin Ackley is batting .300 (15-for-50) with three homers and five walks in his first 15 big league games, and is 7-for-10 (.700) vs. left-handed pitchers.

A's: Pitching dominating again

The A's pitching staff has compiled a 1.95 ERA (37 earned runs in 170 1/3 innings) over the last 19 games, after going 0-11 with a 7.30 ERA, .312 opponents batting average, 41 walks, 37 strikeouts and 14 home runs over the previous 14 games.

- The A's have hit just 46 home runs, which is the fewest in the Majors. They are on pace to hit 86 home runs, and the Oakland record for fewest home runs in a season is 94 in 1968. The A's have hit two home runs or fewer in each of the last 58 games.

Worth noting

- Forty-seven of the Mariners' 86 games have been decided by two or fewer runs. Seattle is 16-16 in one-run games, and 7-8 in two-run decisions.

- A's designated hitter Hideki Matsui has 499 career home runs between Japan and the United States. Twenty-five Major Leaguers and eight players in the Japanese Leagues have hit 500.

A's lose to Seattle, 4-2, in 10

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Franklin Gutierrez scored the go-ahead run on a throwing error by Athletics shortstop Cliff Pennington in the 10th inning and the Seattle Mariners held on to beat Oakland 4-2 on Tuesday night after wasting a stellar performance by All-Star Felix Hernandez.

Gutierrez singled off A's closer Andrew Bailey (0-1) leading off the inning and stole second with one out. Brendan Ryan then hit a soft grounder to second baseman Jemile Weeks, who flipped the ball to Pennington for the force at second before Pennington's relay sailed wide left of first base.

Adam Kennedy followed with an RBI double to make a winner of Brandon League (1-4), who blew a save opportunity in the ninth.

Kurt Suzuki homered for the A's, who have lost nine of 13.

Dustin Ackley singled and scored an unearned run in the second then homered against Oakland starter Trevor Cahill leading off the seventh, helping the Mariners to their third straight win.

Jamey Wright earned his first career save in his 500th career appearance.

Seattle's win came after League, the AL leader in saves, failed to hold a 2-1 lead.

Oakland rookie Jemile Weeks led off the ninth with a ground-rule double and was sacrificed to third. Coco Crisp then hit a short fly to left but Carlos Peguero bobbled the ball, allowing Weeks to score the tying run. It was the first run allowed by Seattle's bullpen since June 24.

Gutierrez and Kennedy helped get League off the hook.

Before that, the A's didn't get much at all against Hernandez, who struck out 10 over eight innings. It's the fifth time this season and the 14th time in his career that Hernandez has reached double digits in strikeouts.

Seattle's ace, who dominated Oakland with a complete-game gem on opening day, did not walk a batter and only allowed an eighth inning solo home run to Suzuki while lowering his ERA to 1.09 against the A's this season.

Cahill allowed two runs with four strikeouts over seven innings and was on the hook for the loss until the A's bailed him out in the ninth.

Instead, Bailey (0-1) took the loss after giving up both runs in the 10th.

NOTES: Cahill has a 1.53 ERA in three starts against the Mariners this season. ... A's manager Bob Melvin said there's a good chance OF Josh Willingham will accompany the team on its upcoming road trip and is cautiously optimistic that the injured veteran will return to Oakland's lineup before the All-Star break. Willingham, who recently completed a two-game rehab assignment with Triple-A Sacramento, has been on the disabled list since June 18. ... Weeks, Oakland's rookie second baseman, was named co-winner of the American League rookie of the month after batting .309 with seven doubles, three triples and six RBIs in June. ... LHP Gio Gonzalez, the A's only All-Star this year, joined Toronto's Jose Bautista in being named AL co-players of the week. Gonzalez went 2-0 with a 0.60 ERA in two starts last week.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

8 is enough: Cats still looking to end slide

By Kyle Tucker / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento failed to complete the late-game comeback and fell to the Grizzlies 7-6 for a franchise-record eighth consecutive loss Tuesday night. On a hot, muggy and overcast night from Chukchansi Park in Fresno, the River Cats looked to put an end a seven-game slide and get the season back on track. After taking a 5-0 lead in last night's ballgame, the River Cats let the game slip through their fingers and failed to earn their first game in July.

The River Cats entered Tuesday night 5.0 games ahead of second-place Las Vegas. Before the seven-game losing streak started, Sacramento held a 9.0-game lead in the PCL South division.

Tyson Ross made his second rehab start for the River Cats and looked to bounce back after a rough first outing. Ross lasted just 2.0 innings while allowing four runs on six hits and three walks.

Ross allowed a line-drive home run over the left-field wall off the bat of center fielder Justin Christian on his first pitch of the night. That home run was Christian's third in seven games with the Grizzlies after four home runs in 73 games with Double-A Richmond this season.

Ross found himself in more hot water in the second inning. After striking out Cole Gillaspie, Ross allowed a base hit to Thomas Neal on a flare into shallow right field. Ross then struck out Brad Eldred for the second out of the inning. Grizzlies catcher Hector Sanchez then singled to center, scoring Neal. Ross then walked Christian, putting two men on with two out. Second baseman Mike Fontenot then hit another flare down the left field line scoring Sanchez.

In the third inning, Ross walked the first batter Brandon Belt. Brett Pill then doubled down the right-field line, scoring Belt and extending the Fresno lead to four. Ross was able to get out of the inning without any further damage, but not before putting the River Cats in a four-run hole.

Ross went out to the mound to start the fourth inning but was pulled after retiring one batter in the inning. In his two starts with Sacramento, Ross has pitched 5.1 innings, giving up eight runs on 13 hits while walking five.

Sacramento's offense had a tough time getting started Tuesday night, which has been a familiar sight as-of-late. During their losing streak the River Cats have scored just three runs per game while allowing eight runs per game.

Grant Balfour worked the sixth inning in relief for Sacramento. This was Balfour's first appearance in a River Cats' uniform. With Oakland this year, Balfour has been stellar out of the bullpen. In 33 games, Balfour has a 4-1 record with a 2.48 ERA. After retiring the first batter, Balfour gave up a triple off the center field wall by Neal, followed by a single by Sanchez giving Fresno a 5-0 lead.

The River Cats finally came to life in the seventh inning.

Jermaine Mitchell led off with a single up the middle. Josh Donaldson then drew a walk, putting runners on first and second with one out. Andy LaRoche came through with a double down the right-field line, scoring Mitchell and Donaldson. A wild throw allowed Kevin Kouzmanoff to score, pulling the River Cats within two.

The Grizzlies added another run in the seventh off reliever Bruce Billings. Gillaspie tripled in Edgar Gonzalez to give Fresno a 6-3 lead.

Sacramento bounced back again against the shaky Grizzlies' bullpen. Michael Taylor and Jai Miller led off the inning with back-to-back walks, followed by a Cardenas single that loaded the bases with no out. Mitchell then came up with another clutch hit, a double that scored Taylor and Miller and brought Sacramento within one.

After a Fresno pitching change, Donaldson grounded out to the pitcher and Cardenas took off toward home on the throw to second. Cardenas just beat the throw and tied the game as he slid head-first.

The scoring would be put on hold for the next three innings as the game went into extra innings for the second time in two nights.

Sacramento failed to score after the eighth inning as Fresno scored the game-winning run in the bottom of the 11th.

Willie Eyre has been outstanding out of the bullpen, but wasn't in his All-Star form this night. Eyre came on in the 11th to try and give his teammates another chance to put a run on the board, but was unsuccessful as he gave up a single to Christian with two outs. Christian then stole second on the next pitch, putting the game-winning run in scoring position with Ryan Lormand coming to the plate in a pinch-hit appearance.

Lormand ended the game swiftly with a line drive to right fielder Matt Carson, whose throw home was just behind the runner as Christian slid in to home much to the delight of the restless crowd.

The Grizzlies have now beaten Sacramento in extra innings for the second consecutive night and extended the River Cats' losing streak to eight games.

Tune in tomorrow as Sacramento looks to get back in the win column. The River Cats send lefty Carlos Hernandez (4-3, 5.24) to the mound against Shane Loux (4-9, 4.33).

Questionable call kills RockHounds' rally

Jordan Mason, Midland Reporter-Telegram Midland Reporter-Telegram

A controversial call foiled an opportunity for the Midland RockHounds to load the bases in the bottom of the ninth with no outs, trailing the Springfield Cardinals by two on Tuesday.

But first base umpire Jimmy Volpi ruled Tyler Ladendorf offered at a 1-1 pitch that took his helmet off as he barely evaded the pitch, and instead of the bases being loaded, Ladendorf became the first of three straight outs in the Cardinals' 5-3 win at Citibank Ballpark.

"I thought that was just a poor decision, and it potentially really changed the outcome of the game," RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone said. "I would've loved to have had the bases loaded, no out opportunity there with the top of the lineup coming up."

The rally that never was came after a four-inning stretch that saw just two RockHounds reach base on one hit.

Midland (33-49) scored a run in the fourth inning when after a Jeremy Barfield walk, Cardinals right fielder Chris Swauger dropped a routine fly ball in deep right that allowed Barfield to score, narrowing the Springfield lead to 3-2.

The next batter, Ladendorf, slapped an RBI double into left that tied the game at three and erased the two-run deficit.

Springfield, though, retaliated in the next inning starting with a two-out single by Jose Garcia.

Garcia then swiped one of his four stolen bases to move into scoring position, and for the second time that night it paid off, as shortstop Ryan Jackson drove him in with a scorching RBI double to right that put Springfield up 4-3.

Garcia went 2-for-3 on the evening with two walks and two runs to go with his four stolen bases.

"Get on base is my role leading off for the team, so I tried to help the team get on base," Garcia said. "If they give me a chance to steal a bag, I'm going to do it."

The Cardinals (36-46) added a run on an RBI infield single by Audry Perez in the sixth that made it 5-3 as the RockHounds offense began to fade.

Yet when Springfield relief pitcher Jorge Rondon walked Barfield and Ryan Ortiz to start the ninth, the RockHounds were given new hope.

Ladendorf stepped to the plate looking to move his teammates into scoring position but had to duck to avoid being decapitated on the 1-1 pitch.

Ladendorf started to take his base before Volpi sent him back to the plate saying he had offered at the pitch.

"You've got to use common sense over maybe the letter of the law," Scarsone said. "It's a self-defense situation at that point."

Ladendorf struck out on a foul bunt on the next pitch, and the RockHounds never seriously threatened again.

Midland will now begin a six-game, eight-day road trip on Thursday after splitting its six game homestand.

The RockHounds will start the road swing at Arkansas.

'HOUND BITES: RockHounds shortstop Grant Green saw his five-game hitting streak end after he had doubled in four straight games entering Tuesday. ... Jeremy Barfield and Stephen Parker extended their hitting streaks to five games and seven games respectively. ... For the second time in the six-game homestand, RockHounds starting pitcher Jason Bergmann missed out on his first win of the season despite giving his team a chance to win.

THURSDAY'S PROBABLES: A.J. Griffin (1-0, 4.76) is expected to make his second start for the RockHounds on Thursday while Arkansas is expected to start southpaw Andrew Taylor (2-4, 4.81) in the series opener.

Ports Reach New Heights In 17-4 Win

Stockton Ports

ADELANTO, Calif. - On a rare night in High Desert where the wind was non-existent, the Stockton Ports offense still found a way to put up crooked numbers. The Ports pounded out a season-high 17 runs and matched a season-high 19 hits while launching six home runs en route to a 17-4 rout of the High Desert Mavericks. The Ports' 20th win in their last 21 games is also their 11th straight versus a South Division opponent.

It was High Desert getting off to a fast start over the first two frames. In the first, the Mavericks plated two runs on an RBI single from Kuo Hui Lo and an RBI groundout from Matt Cerrione to take a 2-0 advantage.

The Mavericks added to their lead in the 2nd. After back-to-back singles from Billy Marcoe and Gabriel Noriega and a sac-bunt from Roberto Velasquez, Daniel Carroll singled to left to score a run to make it 3-0 and James Jones followed with a sac-fly to give the Mavs a 4-0 advantage.

All four High Desert runs came off Ports starter James Simmons who went 2.2 innings and allowed eight hits while striking out three.

After being shut down over the first two frames by Mavericks starter Brandon Maurer (2-2) started to crack in the 3rd. With a runner at third and two down, Michael Gilmartin hit a clutch triple to right-center field to score Mitch LeVier and put the Ports on the board. Michael Choice followed with an RBI single to left to make it a 4-2 game.

Stockton took the lead in the 4th and never looked back. With two on and nobody out, Petey Paramore clubbed a three-run homer to center to give the Ports a 5-4 lead. Three batters later, with two down, Myrio Richard walked and advance to second on a wild pitch. Gilmartin then came through with another two-out RBI knock-this time a single to center to make it a 6-4 game. Choice once again followed with an RBI double to right-center to give the Ports a 7-4 advantage and chase Maurer from the game.

Maurer went 3.2 innings and allowed seven runs on eight hits in a losing effort.

After Simmons was taken out of the game with two down in the 3rd, A.J. Huttenlocker (2-0) came into the game and completely took over. Huttenlocker retired the first nine batters he faced en route to retiring 13 of 14 hitters, taking him

through his longest outing of the season. Huttenlocker would earn the win after going 4.1 innings and allowing just one hit while striking out a season-high six.

Meanwhile, the Ports offense kept churning out hits and runs. With one out in the 5th, Rashun Dixon homered to right off Mavericks reliever Daniel Cooper to make it 8-4. It was the only run Cooper allowed in his 2.1 innings of work.

In the 7th, the Ports began to tee off on Mavericks reliever Tim Boyce, who was making his first appearance in nearly two months after a stint on the DL. With one on and two out, Dixon hit his second home run of the night, this one to dead center to make it a 10-4 lead. Paramore followed with his second blast of the night-a solo shot to left that stretched the lead to 11-4.

Boyce stayed on to pitch into the 8th and encountered more two-out trouble. With two down and the bases empty, Boyce hit Gilmartin, then served up a two-run homer to Choice to make it a 13-4 game. Once again the Ports would go back-to-back as Anthony Aliotti followed with his first hit of the night-a solo homer to left give Stockton their 14th run of the game.

Boyce would go 1.2 innings in relief and allow six runs on six hits-four of the six hits being home runs.

The Ports added three more runs in the 9th off Austin Hudson on a two-run double from Richard and an RBI double from Choice to make it a season-high runs and match a season-high with 19 hits.

On his 22nd birthday, Conner Hoehn came on and pitched two scoreless innings to close out the game for Stockton.

With his home run on Tuesday as part of a season-best 5-for-6 effort with 5 RBI, Choice has now homered in four straight games and is now one off the pace of Lancaster's Kody Hinze for the league lead. It also marks the first time this season a Ports batter has had a five-hit game and stands as the 15th five-hit performance in the Cal-League this season.

Paramore, with his 2-for-5 effort, drove in four runs on the night. Dixon drove in three while going 3-for-4 while Gilmartin and Richard each drove in a pair of runs.

The Ports will try for their fifth series sweep in their last six series as they wrap up their series with the Mavericks on Wednesday. Rob Gilliam (9-4, 4.55 ERA), who is tied for the league lead in wins, will head to the bump for Stockton. He'll be opposed by High Desert right-hander Yoervis Medina (1-7, 6.40 ERA). First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

Kernels Win Series

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

CEDAR RAPIDS, IA- The Cedar Rapids Kernels (5-7) hit four home runs, including two in the seventh inning, to beat the Burlington Bees (5-7) by a score of 12-3 at Perfect Game Field on Tuesday night.

The Kernels scored a single run in the first inning against the Burlington starter RHP Nate Long (5-2). SS Rolando Gomez (4-5) tripped and scored on a single by 3B Ricky Alvarez (2-4) for a 1-0 lead.

The Bees tied the game with a run in the fourth inning. 3B Ryan Pineda (2-4) singled and stole second base. CF Jose Rivero (1-4) singled home Pineda for a 1-1 tie.

Cedar Rapids scored three runs in the fourth inning. LF Justin Bass (2-4) singled and moved to second base on a throwing error. DH Brandon Decker (2-4) hit an RBI double to score Bass and C Marcus Nidiffer (2-4) hit a two-run home run over the left field wall for a 4-1 lead.

The Kernels scored two runs in the fifth inning against Burlington LHP Max Peterson to take a 6-2 lead.

Burlington made the game interesting with two runs in the sixth inning against right-handed reliever Seth Fowler. DH Josh Whitaker (1-3) hit a solo home run over the left field wall to lead off the inning. SS Yordy Cabrera (2-4) singled and moved to third base on a double by Pineda. Rivero grounded out to first base to score Cabrera and get the Bees within three runs at 6-3.

1B Jeremy Cruz (2-4) and Decker added home runs in a five-run seventh inning for an 11-3 Kernel lead.

The Bees return home to start a three-game series with the Quad Cities River Bandits on Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m. It's Kids Eat Free Wednesday with all kids 12 and under getting a hot dog and drink voucher at the game. LHP Ryan Copeland (0-1, 5.04) gets the start for Quad Cities against RHP Josh Bowman (6-2, 3.24) for Burlington. Pre-game coverage begins tomorrow at 6:15 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at www.gobees.com.

Vermont Wins 12-8 At Tri-City Tuesday

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

TROY, NY --- The Vermont Lake Monsters broke a 4-4 tie with four runs in both the sixth and seventh innings for a 12-8 New York-Penn League victory over the Tri-City ValleyCats on Tuesday night at Bruno Stadium.

Jacob Tanis, who went 3-for-5 with three runs, snapped the 4-4 tie in the top of the sixth with a two-run homer off reliever Kristian Bueno for his first home run of the season. Bueno struggled with his control after the homer as he walked two and hit a batter as the Lake Monsters scored two more runs on an error and Jordan Tripp sacrifice fly.

Vermont quickly loaded the bases with no outs in the seventh inning before a two-run double down the rightfield line from Aaron Shipman, who scored two runs and added three RBI. Two batters later Chih-Fang Pan collected his third single of the game to plate Nick Rickles and then Shipman scored on a fielding error by rightfielder Andrew Muren for a 12-4 lead. Tri-City was able to cut the lead in half with four runs in bottom of ninth, but Tanner Peters retired final two batters for his fourth save.

Sean Jamieson had given the Lake Monsters a 1-0 lead in the third with a two-out solo homer, his first home run of the season. After the ValleyCats got the run back in the bottom of the third, Vermont scored three times in fourth on a Chad Lewis sacrifice fly, wild pitch and a bases loaded walk to Shipman for a 4-1 lead. The ValleyCats again tied the game in the fifth with three runs, including a two-run homer from Jacke Healey.

The 12 runs were a season-high for Vermont (11-6), which is now 10-1 when scoring five or more runs in a game. T.J. Walz tossed 2 1/3 scoreless innings for the victory in relief of starter J.C. Menna, who allowed four runs (two earned) on seven hits in 4 2/3 innings.

Brandon Meredith went 4-for-4 with a double and triple for Tri-City (7-11), while former University of Vermont baseball standout Matt Duffy went 2-for-3 and is now hitting .338 (22-for-65) on the season for the ValleyCats.

Vermont, winners in six of its last eight, continues the roadtrip with a three-game series at Brooklyn beginning on Wednesday night at 7:00 pm. The Lake Monsters return home to historic Centennial Field on Saturday for a three-game series against the Staten Island Yankees through Monday.