

**They're the Swinging Oakland A's again these days**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Before the All-Star break the A's treated fans to so few offensive highlights this season.

They responded Wednesday night by cramming as many as they could into the fourth inning.

Oakland sent 12 men to the plate in a nine-run outburst that paved the way to a 13-4 waxing of the Tampa Bay Rays at [O.co](#) Coliseum.

The A's are 8-4 since the All-Star break, second-best in the A.L. behind the Boston Red Sox (9-3). The A's are averaging an even six runs per game in that span after mustering just 3.42 runs before the break.

"We're trying to get them to draw from previous experiences, not the couple months that preceded where we are right now," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "Once a few guys start hitting, and we score some runs, then it gets contagious."

The nine-run rally was Oakland's biggest inning since a nine against Texas on June 1, 2008.

Hideki Matsui finished 3 for 5 with five RBIs. Ryan Sweeney had three-fourths of the cycle complete after his first three at-bats.

And rookie leadoff man Jemile Weeks drove in three runs and scored three more.

The crowd of 18,640 also was treated to a double-dip of rarities:

Sweeney going deep to snap a 108-game homerless drought in the fourth and not-so-fleet-footed catcher Landon Powell scoring from first on Weeks' triple in the fifth. It was a nutty night, indeed.

The beneficiary was right-hander Trevor Cahill (9-9), who rebounded from Friday's disastrous outing at Yankee Stadium (10 earned runs, two-plus innings) to throw 7 1/3 innings of scoreless, four-hit ball. He snapped a five-start winless streak.

"When I go out there and they put up that many runs, I'm kind of relaxed and just worry about throwing strikes and not being too perfect," Cahill said.

On the flip side, Rays starter James Shields (9-9) tied his career highs by allowing 12 hits and 10 runs in four innings. He entered the game with a 2.53 ERA but left at 3.03.

Ironically, the momentum turned in Oakland's favor with a defensive play.

With the A's up 1-0 third baseman Scott Sizemore saved a run in the top of the fourth, diving to make a backhanded stop of Kelly Shoppach's sharp grounder and firing across the diamond for the third out.

Then Sizemore ignited the nine-run rally in the bottom half with a two-run triple to right-center.

Matsui blasted a three-run homer to right to make it 7-0. Matsui has lifted his average to .244, and he's 20 for 45 with three home runs and 17 RBIs in his 11 games since the break.

Sweeney (3 for 4, two RBIs) capped the rally with a two-run homer to right-center to make it 10-0, his first homer since May 4, 2010.

Sweeney got a rare start in right field with David DeJesus resting. Sweeney entered 6 for 17 career vs. Shields and now is 9 for 20.

Melvin told Sweeney he will start again Thursday, when the A's go for a four-game sweep.

"Sometimes in my first at-bat after not playing for a week, it kind of feels like I've never even played baseball before," Sweeney said. "Getting in there and being able to get a couple of hits (helps)."

According to A's stats expert David Feldman, Wednesday marked the first game in which the A's had at least two doubles, two triples and two homers since Sept. 4, 2002.

That win vs. Kansas City happened to be No. 20 and final in the A's A.L.-record streak.

### **Oakland A's update: Struggling reliever Joey Devine is sent down to Triple-A Sacramento River Cats**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's optioned reliever Joey Devine to Triple-A Sacramento on Wednesday and recalled Trystan Magnuson to take his spot in the bullpen.

Devine had struggled with command, particularly in two appearances last weekend against the New York Yankees, when he fired pitches behind hitters in each game.

He said during that series that he had trouble gripping the ball because of the humid weather in New York. But he also had a shaky outing before that against the Detroit Tigers.

Devine had surrendered a combined four runs and four walks over his last three outings (two innings).

"Joey was struggling with his command, and in his role, being the seventh-inning guy, it's a difficult one to struggle with your command in," A's manager Bob Melvin said.

With Devine's demotion, right-hander Fautino De Los Santos is likely to be called upon in more late-inning situations, Melvin said.

Magnuson, called up for the third time this season, will serve in long relief.

No final decision has been made as to whether River Cats first baseman Daric Barton will have surgery on his right shoulder.

Barton said in a phone interview Tuesday that he had a torn labrum. But he was examined by orthopedist Dr. Lewis Yocum on Wednesday, and Yocum couldn't say for sure if there was a tear in the labrum after reviewing an MRI, according to A's assistant general manager David Forst.

Yocum wants to consult with A's doctors before deciding if surgery is necessary, Forst said.

Melvin wouldn't be a huge fan of extending instant replay in baseball, a hot topic in light of umpire Jerry Meals' blown call at home plate Tuesday that gave the Atlanta Braves a win over the Pittsburgh Pirates in 19 innings.

"I think they did it the right way (by adding replay) with home run calls," Melvin said. "But if you start opening that up for different plays, then there's no stopping. Everybody's going to want it for everything, and the next thing you know, we're going to have sensors out on the field. That's not the way baseball is supposed to be played to me."

### **Chin Music: A's option reliever Joey Devine to minors, recall Trystan Magnuson**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 7/27/2011 7:04pm

The A's optioned reliever Joey Devine to the minors today and recalled right-hander Trystan Magnuson to take his place. Obviously, they think Devine's recent struggles weren't just about him losing his grip on the baseball. A's manager Bob Melvin pointed to Devine's past three outings, when Devine allowed four earned runs and four walks combined against Detroit and the New York Yankees. "Joey was struggling with his command, and in his role, being the seventh inning guy, it's a difficult one to struggle with your command in," Melvin said. "... We just felt like it was best to work on things in the minor leagues and get his command back there."

Devine unintentionally threw pitches behind hitters on Friday and Sunday against the Yankees, saying he was having trouble gripping the ball because of the extreme humidity. He didn't appear to have much confidence in his fastball Sunday. I lost track of how many sliders he threw in a row at one point, and when a guy possesses a mid-90's fastball, you don't want him shying away from it.

Magnuson impressed the A's with 3 1/3 scoreless innings against Florida on June 30, but then he had to be sent down because the A's needed a fresh arm for the next day. He told me he's been working on his split-fingered fastball to use as another weapon against lefties.

Here's your lineups:

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

Rays: Jennings CF, Damon DH, Zobrist 2B, Longoria 3B, Kotchman 1B, Joyce RF, Shoppach C, Fuld LF, Rodriguez SS; Shields RHP.

### **Nine-run fourth sends A's over Rays**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Maybe it was all a bad dream.

You remember the A's in the 3 1/2 months before the All-Star break: They possessed little power and weren't particularly good at manufacturing runs, either.

In the glow of their 13-4 pasting of Tampa Bay at the Coliseum on Wednesday night, you must wonder if the first 92 games were simply a mirage.

"All it takes really is a couple of games," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "That's my thoughts. We kept preaching as a staff that we're a good offensive team, no matter what the numbers looked like in the first half."

It's not only what Oakland did in winning for the third consecutive night against the Rays, though that was impressive enough:

-- The A's scored nine runs in the fourth inning - and 10 total - off James Shields (9-9), who brought a 2.53 ERA into the game. It's now 3.03.

-- Hideki Matsui went 3-for-5, with a homer, double and five RBIs. It was his eighth career game with at least five RBIs.

-- Jemile Weeks went 3-for-4, scored three times and drove in three runs.

-- Ryan Sweeney went 3-for-4, including a two-run homer to cap the nine-run fourth, the A's highest-scoring inning of the year. The HR was Sweeney's first since May 4, 2010.

Sweeney's night was even more impressive considering he has not played much recently and did not have an at-bat since Saturday.

Said Sweeney: "Sometimes my first at-bat after not playing for a week, it kind of feels like I've never even played baseball before."

Now after the A's collected a season-best 17 hits Wednesday, consider how Oakland has become almost cartoonishly better in 12 post-break games:

-- The A's are averaging six runs per game. They averaged 3.42 runs before the break.

-- The A's are hitting .321 (134-for-417). They hit .233 before the break.

Melvin believes the improvement after four off days is no coincidence.

"I think there probably had to be something to the break," Melvin said, "because we got beat pretty badly four games in a row in Texas and that was not a good feeling. So, it's just about starting over."

Trevor Cahill (9-9) was the beneficiary of all the offensive support Wednesday. One start after giving up 10 earned runs in two-plus innings at Yankee Stadium, Cahill limited the Rays to four hits in 7 1/3 shutout innings.

Cahill and the A's led 1-0 in the fourth. Scott Sizemore delivered the first big hit of the inning, driving in two runs with his first career triple.

Sizemore had saved a run in the top of the inning with a dive and brilliant backhand stop of Kelly Shoppach's rope down the third-base line. Sizemore got to his feet and threw out Shoppach by plenty.

The A's had plenty more offense in the fourth. Weeks had an RBI single, Matsui a three-run homer, Conor Jackson an RBI single and Sweeney a two-run HR.

Matt Joyce's two-run homer off Fautino De Los Santos was the big blow in the Rays' four-run ninth inning.

### **A's Cliff Pennington has another summer hot streak**

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

Since the All-Star break, **Cliff Pennington** has enjoyed a seemingly career-best stretch. Through Tuesday, he was riding a 10-game hitting streak, going 18-for-36.

His .500 average was the best in the majors since the break - but it actually isn't something Pennington hasn't done before. As A's stats guru **David Feldman** noted, Pennington put together a 20-for-40 stretch in June and July last year.

In any event, the switch-hitting shortstop doesn't want to go much deeper than "That's baseball" to describe how he had raised his average from .235 to .264.

"I'm just seeing the ball and hitting the ball," Pennington said. "Sometimes you're seeing it good and sometimes you're not, and right now I'm seeing it good."

Manager **Bob Melvin** offered a little more analysis for Pennington's surge.

"I see a shorter swing. I really do," Melvin said. "He's short to the ball right now. He's letting the ball travel a little farther and he's just getting a better look at it."

On Wednesday, Pennington extended his hitting streak to 11 games with a sixth-inning single. He went 1-for-3, meaning he's 19-for-39 (.487) after the break.

**Roster move:** The A's recalled right-hander **Trystan Magnuson** from Triple-A Sacramento and optioned righty **Joey Devine** to the River Cats.

Devine, who missed the 2009 and '10 seasons after Tommy John surgery, struggled with his command in three outings on the previous road trip. Magnuson will fill the "long man" role.

**Replay thoughts:** In the aftermath of the disputed ending to the 19-inning Pittsburgh-Atlanta game Tuesday night, Melvin was asked his opinion on expanding the use of replay.

He said he likes replay on home run calls - but that's enough.

"If you start opening that up for different plays," Melvin said, "then there's no stopping and everybody's going to want it for everything. And the next you know, you're going to have sensors out on the field and everything like that.

"That's not the way baseball's supposed to be played for me."

### **Leading off**

**Forever young:** The Rays set an obscure major-league mark Wednesday night. They started a pitcher younger than 30 for the 705th consecutive game, breaking the record set by the Washington Senators, 1913-17.

### **Drumbeat: Roster move, tonight's lineup**

**Steve Kroner from the Coliseum** ... 7/27/2011 5:19pm

The A's have recalled right-hander Trystan Magnuson from Triple-A Sacramento and optioned right-hander Joey Devine to the River Cats. Manager Bob Melvin said Devine's lack of command on the previous road trip was a motivation for the move.

Melvin's lineup tonight against the Rays' James Shields: Weeks, 2B; Crisp, CF; Matsui, DH; Willingham, LF; Jackson, 1B; Sweeney, RF; Pennington, SS; Sizemore, 3B; Powell, C

### **A's come out in beast mode, rip Rays**

#### **Matsui, Sweeney at forefront of nine-run fourth; Cahill also dominant**

By Tom Green / MLB.com | 7/28/2011 2:38 AM ET

OAKLAND -- Something has happened to the A's since returning from the All-Star break. Suddenly, one of the Major Leagues' worst offenses has transformed into one of the league's best.

It's no coincidence, either.

Manager Bob Melvin and his staff have preached drawing on past success and forgetting about shortcomings in the first half -- and now things are beginning to click.

After a 13-4 romp of the Rays on Wednesday that has the A's off to an 8-4 start to the second half, made possible by a nine-run fourth inning in which the club hit for the cycle, the team believes in itself again.

"There probably had to be something to do with the break, because we got beat pretty badly four games in a row in Texas and that was not a good feeling," Melvin said. "It's just about starting over. It's not like leaning into it we were swinging that great -- it was just trying to put everything in the past and literally start over."

One player who has started over -- not just in the second half, but since Melvin took over -- is Hideki Matsui, who once again spearheaded the A's newfound offense Wednesday night at the Coliseum.

Matsui went 3-for-5, launched his ninth home run of the season and recorded his eighth five-RBI game in the big leagues -- his first since Sept. 13, 2009, against the Orioles.

"[Matsui] looked pretty good," said Rays manager Joe Maddon. "The ball's really hot off his bat right now. He's doing what he used to do, he'll drive the ball to left-center, then the middle of the ballpark, then he can pull it like he did. The ball's coming off his bat really hot, and that's who he was in the past."

And that's something Melvin and Matsui's teammates all recognize.

"I think he's always been a great second-half player and I think everybody knows what he can do," said Ryan Sweeney. "Right now, he's just locked in and it's fun to watch. Hopefully he continues to do that."

Matsui has a Major League-leading 17 RBIs since the break, and Melvin hopes the veteran slugger can be the cog to lead the team the rest of the way -- both in production and presence.

"This guy has been through the wars and won world championships," Melvin said. "Guys like that, even when they're struggling, they're working hard and setting an example."

But Matsui was hardly the only A's player to get in on the action against the Rays and starter James Shields -- the hot offensive spell has slowly trickled throughout the lineup and all nine A's starters recorded a hit.

While Matsui stayed hot and Jemile Weeks kept up his torrid rookie campaign with a three-RBI night, Sweeney was the latest A's player to come alive.

Sweeney couldn't quite match Matsui's five RBIs, but he made the most of his start in right field with David DeJesus getting the night off. Sweeney went 3-for-3 against Shields (upping his career average against him to .450), and hit a two-run home run in his second at-bat of the fourth inning -- his first round-tripper since May 4, 2010.

The blast snapped a 108-game drought for Sweeney and was the A's second of the inning, after Matsui's three-run shot earlier in the frame. It was the cherry on top of a monstrous inning in which the club sent 12 men to the plate and saw Scott Sizemore record his first career triple, which plated a pair.

"All it takes, really, is a couple of games," Melvin said. "Once a few guys start hitting and we score some runs, then it gets contagious and everybody gets involved, and that's where we are right now."

In all, the A's tagged Shields (9-9, 3.03 ERA) for 10 runs on 12 hits over four innings. It marked the third time in Shields' six-year career that he has allowed 10 earned runs.

If there was anyone in the Coliseum on Wednesday who could sympathize with Shields, it was A's starter Trevor Cahill, who was coming off the worst start of his career -- a two-inning outing against the Yankees in which he allowed 10 runs of his own.

But Cahill (9-9, 3.58 ERA), like the A's offense this half, reversed his fortunes this time around. The righty was dominant for 7 1/3 shutout innings, stifling the Rays' offense to the tune of four hits while striking out six, to give the A's their second consecutive complete-game effort.

It marked the third straight win for the A's, who have not only found their grooves at the plate, but have also found a renewed sense of confidence in the American League West, where they stand 11 1/2 games back of the first-place Rangers.

"Baseball is a streaky game," Sweeney said. "Right now, everybody is hitting, everybody's feeding off each other, and hopefully we can still come back and be in this thing somehow."

### **Bullpen shuffle: Magnuson up, Devine down**

#### **De Los Santos figures to get seventh-inning role after roster move**

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Right-handed pitcher Joey Devine lost command of his fastball during his last three outings. On Wednesday, something else was out of his control, as the A's optioned the reliever to Triple-A Sacramento.

To take Devine's spot on the 25-man roster, the A's recalled righty Trystan Magnuson from Sacramento for his third stint with the big league club this season.

Devine started the season with the River Cats, but he was promoted to the A's on May 20. He sported a 2.14 ERA with seven holds in his first 23 relief appearances, but Devine struggled on the club's recent road trip.

In those games -- one against the Tigers and two against the Yankees -- the righty allowed four runs on three hits over a combined two innings of work while walking four batters.

"Joey was struggling with his command, and his role, being the seventh-inning guy, it's a difficult one to struggle with your command in," A's manager Bob Melvin said, admitting that Devine's last three outings played a role in the decision. "We figured it was best to work on these things in the Minor Leagues and get his command back there. This is a guy who's very important to us and we need, and has been very good for us in that role, so he'll work on that there."

In two prior spells with the A's this season, Magnuson made three appearances out of the bullpen that totaled 6 1/3 innings and resulted in an 8.53 ERA.

Only one of those outings was with Melvin at the helm. The righty tossed 3 1/3 scoreless innings against the Marlins on June 30, and Melvin was impressed with what he saw out of the rookie.

"It was hard to send him down," Melvin said. "A guy goes out there and gives you 3 1/3, and you have to send him back down. First impression, for me, was great. The velocity was more than I anticipated -- saw some [94-mph pitches] and I think a 95. He was ahead in the count, mixed his pitches, and he's a tall guy with a downhill plane."

Melvin anticipates a similar role for Magnuson out of the bullpen this time around, as he is the one reliever on the Oakland roster who can eat up innings, if necessary. Magnuson's long-relief potential, combined with the move to send Devine back to the Minors, means Melvin will move rookie right-hander Fautino De Los Santos into the seventh-inning role.

In 10 appearances (12 1/3 innings), De Los Santos has given up just four earned runs while striking out 18, and he entered Wednesday having held opponents to a .125 batting average.

"He's pitched well for us and has plus stuff, and you can see his confidence growing," Melvin said. "The fact that Devine is not here, there's a chance that he can pitch a little deeper into games and have a more prominent role."

### **Pennington downplays hot stretch since break**

OAKLAND -- No one in the league has been hotter than Cliff Pennington coming out of the All-Star break.

The A's shortstop entered Wednesday leading the Majors with a .500 batting average this half and was riding a career-high 10-game hitting streak, all while helping the A's play some of their best offense of the season.

Pennington ran that streak to 11 games with a hit in three at-bats during Wednesday's 13-4 rout of the Rays.

"He's been hot, no question about it," said A's manager Bob Melvin. "I hope that continues. He's playing with a lot of confidence and swinging well from both sides of the plate, so I'm sure he -- and us as well -- hopes that continues and rides this streak. He's doing a nice job."

A nice job might be an understatement. The switch-hitter has eight RBIs and has drawn five walks since the break. He has knocked a pair of home runs, hit three doubles and scored eight runs of his own.

Melvin said it looks to him like Pennington has shortened his swing, but the shortstop said he hasn't changed anything in his approach.

"It's just balls are falling in and I'm seeing the ball well," Pennington said. "I'm just trying to have good at-bats. When I hit them hard, they're not going at somebody. Some of it is stuff that's out of your control."

What is in his control, though, is his confidence at the plate, which is soaring during one of the best short stretches of offense in his four Major League seasons. Although his bat is hot and his esteem is high, Pennington downplayed his surge.

"If it lasts for a month, then we can talk," Pennington said.

### **A's skipper Melvin opposed to more replay**

OAKLAND -- Don't count A's manager Bob Melvin among those who would like to see more instant replay instituted in Major League Baseball.

The skipper is a fan of the human element of the game -- even after watching the controversial ending to Tuesday night's 19-inning marathon between the Braves and Pirates, in which Julio Lugo was ruled safe at home plate by umpire Jerry Meals after Pirates catcher Michael McKenry attempted a swiping tag for a 4-3 Atlanta victory.

"I did see the play, and I was surprised at the call," Melvin said.

But that doesn't mean Melvin would like to increase the use of instant replay. He thinks the system is fine with the way it's currently set up, reviewing only home-run calls.

"There's always been a human element in baseball with umpires, and that's just part of it," Melvin said. "If you start opening that up for different plays, then there's no stopping and everyone's going to want it for everything, and next thing you know, you're going to have sensors out on the field and everything like that, and that's not the way baseball is supposed to be played."

### **Worth noting**

- David DeJesus was given the day off and was out of the lineup Wednesday. That gave Ryan Sweeney the nod in right field, his ninth start on that side of the outfield this season. After Wednesday's three-hit performance, Sweeney is 9-for-20 in his career against Rays starter James Shields.

"Shields is no day at the beach, but he does have some success off of him," said Oakland manager Bob Melvin.

- After being limited to designated-hitter duties for the first two games of the series with a stiff neck, Josh Willingham returned to left field for Wednesday's matchup, moving Hideki Matsui back to the DH role. Willingham doubled and scored a run, and Matsui recorded his eighth career five-RBI game.

### **Rays, A's trending in opposite directions**

By Jesse Sanchez / MLB.com

The A's are playing some of their best baseball of the season, and they have the numbers to prove it.

Wednesday's 13-4 victory over the Rays was the club's third win in a row and seventh in its past 10 games. The A's are one victory away from completing a four-game sweep and have scored four or more runs in a season-high seven straight games.

On Thursday, it will be up to Tampa Bay starter Wade Davis to stifle Oakland's hot-hitting offense. Davis was activated from the disabled list on Friday and pitched against Kansas City that night, taking the loss in a 10-4 final that saw him allow five earned runs on 11 hits in 5 1/3 innings. He did not walk a batter in the outing and deserved a better fate after several balls were misplayed by his defense during the early-evening sun.

Davis said the tightness in his right forearm that put him on the DL and prevented him from throwing his slider is no longer a problem. He called his last outing "a crazy game."



"Just the shadows, the way the game was going," Davis said. "It was one of those quicksand games, where the harder you try, the worse it got. I felt good. Physically, everything was good. And the slider was great. That's something I can definitely carry into this game."

Davis was one of the Rays' most effective pitchers in the second half of 2010, when he went 6-1 with a 3.28 ERA after the All-Star break. He's looking forward to another strong finish.

"I'm going to put my foot on the gas pedal and go," he said. "It's a key point in the season right now. I'm strong and healthy. It's a good time for all of us pitchers to step up." The A's will counter with Rich Harden, who is 3-2 with a 5.01 ERA in six career starts against the Rays. He's 1-0 with a 3.65 ERA in two starts since the All-Star break and is holding opponents to a .200 batting average in those starts.

### **Rays: Staff enters annals of history**

- On Wednesday, Tampa Bay made Major League history by starting a pitcher under the age of 30 for the 705th consecutive time. The Rays broke the record established by the 1913-17 Washington Senators, who were led by Hall of Famer Walter Johnson.
- The Rays optioned right-hander Jay Buente to Triple-A Durham on Wednesday and replaced him on the 25-man roster with fellow righty Rob Delaney.

Delaney was 4-1 with a 1.78 ERA and two saves in 35 appearances with the Bulls, holding opposing hitters to a .206 average. He appeared in three games with the Rays in May, allowing three runs on no hits and four walks in two innings pitched. He relieved starter James Shields on Wednesday and allowed three runs on four hits in three innings.

### **A's: Trade Deadline a distraction?**

- The A's are 11 1/2 games back in the American League West, the non-waiver Trade Deadline is approaching and some wonder if the A's will be sellers this week.

"The best thing to do is to try not to pay any attention to it," said A's manager Bob Melvin. "Wherever you are, depending on the situation your team's in, whether you're adding or subtracting -- there seems to be a lot of teams this year that are kind of in between and don't really know. It's just the time of year. At least in my standpoint -- I don't pay too much attention to it."

### **Worth noting**

- Oakland's David DeJesus was given the day off and was out of the lineup Wednesday. Ryan Sweeney made the start in right field and went 3-for-4 with a double and his first home run since last May.
- A's shortstop Cliff Pennington went 1-for-3 Wednesday to extend his hitting streak to 11 games.

### **A's rout Rays, 13-4**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Hideki Matsui and Ryan Sweeney both homered as part of a nine-run fourth inning and the suddenly resurgent Oakland Athletics beat the Tampa Bay Rays 13-4 on Wednesday night.

Matsui was 3 for 5 with five RBIs, Jemile Weeks had three hits, three RBIs and three runs scored, and Scott Sizemore added two hits and two RBIs to lead the A's to their third straight win over the Rays.

Trevor Cahill went 7 1-3 innings with six strikeouts for his first win in more than a month, benefiting from Oakland's best offensive output of the season.

The Rays, who broke one of baseball's oldest records when they played their 705th consecutive game with a starting pitcher younger than 30 years old, lost for the 11th time in 15 games and dropped a season-high 11½ games behind first-place Boston in the AL East.

Every Oakland starter had at least one hit while seven scored.

The A's had a season-high 17 hits. Sweeney had three hits and scored twice — both times in the fourth when Oakland broke the game open.

Conor Jackson also scored twice in the inning when the A's, who lead the majors in batting since the All-Star break, sent 12 men to the plate in the inning to chase starter James Shields (9-9).

Matsui, who went 5 for 5 in a 7-5 loss to the Yankees on Sunday, hit an RBI double in the third, homered in the fourth and had a run-scoring single in the fifth. His ninth homer of the season highlighted the A's highest-scoring inning of the season. The five RBIs are the most by Matsui since he had five against Baltimore on Sept. 13, 2009.

Sweeney had two hits in the fourth, including his first home run since May 4, 2010 that gave the A's a 10-0 lead.

Cahill (9-9) gave up four hits and walked four but stayed out of trouble all game. The right-hander, 0-4 in his previous five starts, only allowed one runner past second while earning his first win since beating Philadelphia on June 25.

Oakland, which has won seven of its last eight games at home, improved to 8-4 since the All-Star break after beating the Rays' top three pitchers — rookie Jeremy Hellickson, David Price and Shields.

It could have been worse for Tampa Bay.

The A's made it 13-0 on Weeks' bases-loaded sacrifice fly in the sixth but missed a chance for more when Cliff Pennington was doubled off second base on the play. It was the only mistake Oakland made.

Outside of breaking the Washington Senators' 94-year-old record for young pitchers, not much went right for Tampa Bay.

Shields, the All-Star right-hander who pitched the first game of the Rays' record-breaking streak when it began on May 25, 2007, allowed 12 hits and 10 earned runs — the third time in his career he has given up 10 runs in a game.

Tampa Bay, which has been outscored 26-10 through the first three games of this four-game series, scored four times in the ninth to avoid its 11th shutout of the season.

Matt Joyce hit his 15th home run of the season, while Desmond Jennings and Johnny Damon also drove in runs.

The Rays played without slugging outfielder B.J. Upton, who has been the subject of trade rumors. Manager Joe Maddon said the decision to sit Upton had more to do with his 3-for-38 slump than the trade talk.

"I've just been looking for moments to give B.J. a rest," Maddon said before the game. "I know all these different things that are being swirled about has got to have some kind of an impact on him, too. I wouldn't think it would be easy to read that stuff all the time."

Notes: The Rays last started a pitcher 30 or older on May 24, 2007, when Jae Seo took the mound on his 30th birthday. ... Tampa Bay optioned RHP Jay Buente back to Triple-A Durham, one day after the reliever was called up and made his Rays debut. The team called up RHP Rob Delaney from Durham to take Buente's spot on the roster. ... The A's optioned RHP Joey Devine to Sacramento (PCL) and called up RHP Trystan Magnuson.

### **A's offense dominates Rays**

Malaika Bobino, Oakland Post

Oakland, CA – The better they get the more fans come out to see it for themselves. An outstanding performance tonight from the Oakland A's as their offense completely dominated the Tampa Bay Rays.

Since the All-Star break the A's have been hitting .322 and tonight every starter got at least one hit. They have turned things around in the second half, collectively the offense shinned in a 13-4 victory over the Rays.

"We got beat pretty badly before the break," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "Losing four games in a row in Texas was not a good feeling. It's about starting over, we are just trying to put everything in the past and literally start over."

The defense was spectacular shutting down any attempts to score runs. Most memorable would probably be Scott Sizemore's play on Kelly Shoppach's ground ball. Sizemore saved a run top of the fourth by diving to make a back handed stop off Shoppach's ball than threw to first for the third out.

Hideki Matsui finished 3-for-5, he hit a three-run home run and doubled to put Oakland on the board first with a 1-0 lead. His first five-RBI game since Sept 13, 2009 against the Orioles. Matsui is batting .421 (17 for 40) with two home runs and 12 RBI's in 10 games since the All-Star break. Four of his eight home runs have put the A's ahead but tonight the hits came to all.

"[Matsui] looked pretty good," said Rays manager Joe Maddon. "The ball's really hot off his bat right now. He's doing what he used to do, he'll drive the ball to the left-center, then the middle of the ballpark, then he can pull it like he did. "The ball's coming off his bat really hot and that's who he was in the past."

James Shields tied a career-high by allowing 10 runs on 12 hits in four innings and recorded his ninth loss of the season. He entered the game with a 2.53 ERA but it ballooned to 3.03. The A's saw success behind the right-handed pitcher's bad night.

"[Shields] stays away a lot and throws a lot of change-ups out over the plate," Ryan Sweeney said. I'm kind of a guy that doesn't try to pull the ball a lot and takes the pitches where I get them. The one that I hit out was a change-up in and I just turned on it."

Sweeney hit his first home run since May 4, 2010. He blasted a two-run homer in the fourth and replace David DeJesus in the starting lineup who go the night off. Ryan has made only two starts against a left-handed pitcher, went 3-for-3 tonight and snapped a 108-game drought.

"All it takes, really is a couple of games," said Melvin. "Once a few guys start hitting and we score some runs, then it gets contagious and everybody gets involved. It was big night for Sweeney, he's seen Shields before and has some experience against him."

End of the fourth the A's were up 8-0 and the hits continued. Weeks hit a triple RBI in the fifth, Matsui followed with a RBI single and the insurance run came in the sixth when Jemile's sacrifice fly scored Sweeney. This is the first time Oakland had a game with at least two doubles, two triples and two home runs since Sept 4, 2009. A perfect night ended in the ninth when Tampa rallied back off the bullpen.

Matt Joyce blasted a two-run home run, followed by RBI's from both Desmond Jennings and Johnny Damon. They cut the lead with four runs but it wasn't enough to make a difference in the hole that was created early on in the game. Brad Ziegler replaced Fautino De Los Santos in the ninth to strikeout the last batter to a standing ovation from the crowd of 18,640.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Sacramento has 4-game win streak snapped**

Sacramento River Cats

A crucial fielding error cost Sacramento in a 3-1 loss to host Tacoma on Wednesday afternoon, ending the River Cats' four-game winning streak.

With two outs in the fifth inning, Anthony Recker misplayed a ground ball to first base, allowing Matt Mangini to reach and extend the inning. Ralph Henriquez and Kyle Seager followed with RBI doubles, giving Tacoma a 2-1 lead.

Sacramento was unable to score after a Chris Carter home run in the second inning, and Tacoma tacked on another run in the seventh inning to beat Sacramento for the first time at home all season. Sacramento is now 8-6 against Tacoma on the season, and 5-1 at Cheney Stadium.

Carter's home run was his eighth of the season, but Sacramento could muster only five other hits on the day.

Sacramento starter Travis Banwart (5-7, 4.99) allowed three runs (one earned) over 6.2 innings, taking the loss. He struck out five, walked one and allowed six hits.

Tacoma starter Anthony Vasquez was equally impressive, allowing one run and five hits over 6.0 innings for the win. Former River Cat Scott Patterson pitched 2.0 scoreless innings for the save.

Matt Carson, hitting lead-off for Sacramento, collected his 33rd double of the season. The River Cats record for doubles in a season is 41, set by Mike Edwards in 2004.

Sacramento returns to Raley Field on Saturday to face the Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

### **Ladendorf, Spina both collect 4 hits in 'Hounds win**

From staff reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram

FRISCO — The Midland RockHounds snapped a three-game losing streak as their bats came alive in an 8-3 victory against the Frisco RoughRiders at Dr Pepper Ballpark on Wednesday.

The RockHounds churned out 19 hits against four different RoughRiders pitchers. Leading the offensive charge was shortstop Tyler Ladendorf, who went 4 for 5 with three RBI — all of which came on a homer in the second inning.

Also with four hits on the night was first baseman Michael Spina, who was 4 for 5 with two runs scored.

The RockHounds' offensive outburst began in the second inning when Ryan Ortiz hit a sacrifice fly to center that scored Spina. Ladendorf followed with his fifth home run of the year, giving Midland a 4-0 advantage.

Frisco got one back in the bottom of the third courtesy of a sacrifice fly by Renny Osuna, which scored Elio Sarmiento who had doubled to lead off the inning.

Midland right fielder Jeremy Barfield led off the fourth inning with a solo homer, putting the RockHounds back in front by four, 5-1. Two more Midland runs came across in the fifth as the first three RockHounds batters reached base.

Third baseman Stephen Parker led off the fifth with a double to center, advanced to third on a single by Spina and scored on a single by designated hitter Adam Heether. Two batters later, Barfield loaded the bases with an infield single, which set up Spina scoring from third when a Frisco first baseman couldn't handle a ball smacked by Midland catcher Ryan Ortiz for a 7-1 RockHounds advantage.

Frisco got as close as 7-3 with a single run scored in the fifth and seventh innings, but couldn't pull any closer. Parker rounded out the scoring when he came across on a fielder's choice hit by left fielder Matthew Sulentic.

The damage the RockHounds did at the plate could have been even bigger as they stranded 13 runners on base.

But while the RockHounds' bats were doing their part, the team also got Jason Bergmann's best performance as a RockHound. Bergmann (1-6) picked up his first victory with the club, allowing three runs — all earned — on four hits and two walks with seven strikeouts in 6 2/3 innings pitched.

The RoughRiders and RockHounds play the rubber game of a three-game series at 7 p.m. today at Dr Pepper Ballpark.

## **Ports Rally Late For 11-7 Victory**

Stockton Ports

**VISALIA, Calif.** - Early in Wednesday night's game at Recreation Park, it looked as if the Stockton Ports would run away with the opener of their four-game set with the Visalia Rawhide. As it turned out, the Ports would have to rally for a come-from behind win. After blowing an early 6-0 lead, the Ports scored five runs in the top of the 8th to beat the Rawhide by a final of 11-7.

Stockton scored six runs over the first four innings. Conner Crumbliss opened the game with a single to center, followed by a Myrio Richard double to left to put runners on second and third. Back-to-back RBI groundouts from Michael Gilmartin and Petey Paramore gave the Ports an early 2-0 lead.

In the 2nd with two down, the Ports managed to load the bases. The first run came in on a passed ball charged to Rawhide catcher Rossmel Perez. Richard would drive in the other with an infield single to make it a 4-0 game.

The Ports added two more in the 4th. With the bases loaded and two out, Jason Christian singled to center to give the Ports a 6-0 advantage.

Visalia starter Eric Smith would go four innings, allowing six runs on eight hits while striking out three.

Ports starter Fabian Williamson didn't allow a hit to the Rawhide over the first 3.2 innings. With one on and two down in the bottom of the 4th, Williamson allowed a bloop-single to Brent Greer down the right-field line. Bobby Borchering, who reached via a walk, scored after sliding in safely on a play at the plate to give the Rawhide their first run. Williamson would yield two more singles to Perez and Raoul Torrez, resulting in another run.

Williamson went 3.2 innings and allowed two runs on three hits and did not factor into the decision.

Scott Deal, after recording the final out of the 4th, came on to start the 5th. With one out, Deal allowed a double to David Nick. After Matt Davidson drew a walk, Borchering singled to right to score Nick and make it a 6-3 game. Alfredo Marte followed with a single to center to score Davidson. Greer followed and hit a bouncing ball to third that went off the glove of Gilmartin the third baseman. The play was backed up by shortstop Dusty Coleman, who threw home to get Borchering on a bang-bang play at the plate for the second out. Perez, however, would come up next and hit a three-run homer to right to give the Rawhide a 7-6 lead.

Deal would go 1.1 innings and allow five runs on four hits.

Stockton's offense would be shut down in innings 5-7 by Rawhide reliever Dan Taylor, who went three innings and retired 9 of the 10 batters he faced without yielding a hit.

Trailing 7-6 heading to the top of the 8th, the Ports came back while facing Rawhide reliever Christian Beltre (3-5). Beltre allowed a leadoff single to Coleman, and the Ports proceeded to load the bases with one out on an ensuing walk and hit batsman. Visalia then went to the bullpen and brought in left-hander Taylor Sinclair to face Gilmartin. Gilmartin grounded a 3-2 pitch slowly to second. Nick went to second for the force, and on the turn for the double-play shortstop Chris Owings threw the ball out of play, allowing two runs to score and giving the Ports an 8-7 lead. Evan Marshall was then brought in and Marshall, after walking Paramore, allowed a three-run homer to Christian to make it an 11-7 Ports lead.

Three of the five runs that scored in the inning were charged to Beltre, who took the loss after going a third of an inning. The other two runs were charged to Marshall, who pitched 1.1 innings.

Stockton's bullpen proved solid down the stretch. Mike Hart (1-1) pitched 2.1 scoreless innings of relief and earned the win. Mike Benacka (SV, 1), who came on in the 8th with one out and the possible-tying run in the on-deck circle, closed out the game with a scoreless 1.2 innings to earn his first save of the season.

Christian went 3-for-5 on the night for the Ports with a home run and 5 RBI.

The Ports and Rawhide will play Game 2 of their four-game set on Thursday night at Recreation Park. James Simmons (1-1, 8.31 ERA) will make the start for Stockton, opposed by Visalia right-hander Derek Eitel (5-6, 5.48 ERA). First pitch is set for 7 p.m. PDT.

## **Snappers Snap Out of Their Funk**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

BURLINGTON, IA- The Beloit Snappers (14-15) pounded out 21 runs on 18 hits to earn a 21-8 win over the Burlington Bees (9-22) before 556 fans at Community Field on Wednesday in a loss that snapped a six-game losing streak for the club.

The Snappers scored four runs in the first inning against Burlington RHP Jonathan Joseph (2-4), keyed on a three-run home run from 3B Jairo Perez (4-5) for a 4-0 lead.

Burlington responded with three runs in the first inning. CF Jose Crisotomo (2-4) and 2B Nino Leyja (1-4) singled. After 3B Tony Thompson (0-2) struck out, DH Josh Whitaker (2-5) lifted a fly ball to center field. Upon the catch by Wang-Wei Lin, Crisotomo tagged up and advanced to third base. With 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (1-4) at the plate, Beloit LHP Ryan O'Rourke (3-2) was called for a balk. Crisotomo scored and Leyja moved to second.

Kirby-Jones walked to load the bases and SS Yordy Cabrera (2-5) hit a two-run single to get the Bees within one run at 4-3.

The Snappers pushed across five runs in the second inning. Lin hit a two-run home run over the right field wall and Perez followed with a two-run bomb in the second inning.

Whitaker smacked an opposite field home run in the third inning to get the Bees within five runs at 9-4.

The Snappers scored 10 runs over the fourth and fifth innings to take a 19-4 lead. After the Snappers scored two runs in the 9th inning to increase their lead to 21-4, the Bees pushed across four runs in the bottom of the 9th inning. Kirby-Jones added a three-run home run to round out the scoring at 21-8.

Bees Buzzings: The 21 runs is the most scored against the Bees in a single game in 2011, surpassing the old record of 14 set by West Michigan on June 12 at Community Field. The Whitecaps recorded 21 hits in that game. The Snappers put up 18 hits on Wednesday.

## **Bats cold as Cutters topped by Vermont**

By Joe Charlton/ Williamsport Crosscutters

July 27, 2011 - The Williamsport Crosscutters had their three-game winning streak snapped Wednesday night, as they tallied just six hits in a 4-1 loss at home versus Vermont.

Williamsport was baffled by Vermont pitching for nearly the entire game, as the Cutters were unable to muster a run until the bottom of the ninth inning. It was just their fifth home loss on the season.

Cutters starter Colin Kleven breezed through his first inning of work tonight, but ran into trouble in the top of the second. He allowed two singles and a stolen base before Vermont's Nick Rickles knocked an infield RBI single to second to give the visitors a 1-0 lead. Kleven escaped further damage by recording a strikeout and groundout to strand two runners in the frame.

After a scoreless third inning, the Lake Monsters went back to work off Kleven in the fourth. With runners at second and third and one out, Rickles delivered another RBI single to increase his team's lead to 2-0. Sam Roberts followed that hit with a line drive single to center to plate another Vermont run and make it a 3-0 game.

The Cutters bats were stifled by Lake Monsters starter Brent Powers, as the left-hander allowed just four hits through his five shutout innings. The home team managed to put runners at first and third with one out in the fourth, but Brock Stassi grounded into a 4-6-3 double play to end the threat.

Right-hander Cody Fick took over for Kleven to start the fifth inning, striking out two of the first three batters he faced. He and Colton Murray each fired two scoreless innings of relief to keep Vermont from doing further damage.

The Lake Monsters added some insurance in the top of the ninth off Cutters reliever Matt Campbell. Rickles led off with a double for his third hit of the game, moved to third on a wild pitch, and scored on another RBI single by Roberts to make it 4-0.

The Cutters worked their best scoring opportunity in the bottom of the ninth, as they managed to load the bases with one out against Vermont lefty Eric Potter. After a pitching change brought righty Tanner Peters into the game, Stassi lifted a sac fly to right field to score Aaron Altherr and put the Cutters on the board 4-1. But Peters struck out Cody Asche to end the game, stranding two more runners in the process.

Powers earned his first win of the season for his strong performance, while Kleven dropped to 2-3 on the year. Kelly Dugan went 2 for 3 with a walk to earn Cutters "Player of the Game" honors.

The Cutters continue this six-game homestand on Thursday at 7:05pm versus Vermont. Every matchup can be heard on ESPN Radio 104.1 FM, ESPN 1050 AM, or online at [crosscutters.com](http://crosscutters.com)

### **Cutters Carvings**

The Cutters are down an outfielder, as Witer Jimenez was assigned to the Gulf Coast League Phillies on Tuesday...he hit .152 in 13 games with Williamsport... Mike Nesselth's 1.016 WHIP is the third-best in the Philadelphia organization among right-handed starters... After rallying for a 4-3 win Monday, the Cutters are now 1-16 when trailing after seven innings...they are 15-0 when leading after seven... The team is now 13-4 when scoring last in a game... The Cutters are last in the New York-Penn League in home runs with 11...Lowell is first with 35... The Cutters drew 2,931 fans in the Marcellus Shale "Pack the Park Night" matchup.

### **Oakland A's Prospect Q&A: Drew Bailey**

Donald Moore, [OaklandClubhouse.com](http://OaklandClubhouse.com)

Jul 26, 2011

TROY, NY - The first time the Oakland A's called the name "Andrew Bailey" on draft day, it brought great returns for the organization. The A's are hoping to catch lightning in a bottle a second time with another Andrew Bailey, who was selected in the 35th round of last year's draft by Oakland. The younger Bailey shares some characteristics with his more famous namesake.

Like the current Oakland A's closer, Vermont Lake Monsters' right-hander Andrew Bailey (who answers to Drew) is a hard-throwing right-hander who played his collegiate ball at a small college not known for its baseball program. For the A's Bailey, it was Wagner College in Staten Island, New York; for Vermont's Bailey, it was Concord University in West Virginia.

Andrew Bailey's selection in the sixth round by the A's in 2006 was the highest-ever draft position for a player out of the Northeast Conference. Drew Bailey was drafted in the 35th round, making history as the first player from Concord University to have his name called on draft day.

Like Andrew, Drew Bailey is a big bodied (6'5", 215) right-hander with a solid fastball that has been clocked as high as 95 MPH. The younger Bailey also possesses a curveball and a change-up, as well as a developing slider.

Drew Bailey spent his first professional season with the Arizona Rookie League A's, but saw his season cut short after 12.1 innings due to arm soreness. That soreness lingered into the A's fall Instructional League, so Bailey was kept at extended spring training at the start of this year. He was on the Opening Day roster for the Vermont Lake Monsters and has already logged 22.2 innings in five-plus weeks of games. Bailey currently sports a 3.18 ERA and a 21:11 K:BB ratio.

Donald Moore spoke with the Virginia native during a recent Vermont roadtrip.

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*Donald Moore: Hi Drew, hows everything going for you this season?*

**Drew Bailey:** Good, I'm just trying to make the adjustment from going to Arizona. Making the adjustment of playing in front of no fans, and just no adrenaline, to coming here, pitching in front of five, six, seven thousand people. So trying to be consistent. I'll have a good outing, a bad outing, a good outing. Just trying to get it to where I can go out and throw consistently every night. But, I like it. I like to travel. The buses are, ah, whatever, you know it's a part of minor league baseball. But I'm enjoying my time and Coach Wasdin has really helped me out a lot. Other than that, I enjoy traveling and playing in front of fans. Having a reason out there to get amped up, listen to people trash talk you and shut them up.

*DM: Is there one person who taught you the most about baseball?*

**DB:** Probably my dad definitely. Always stays on me after a good or bad outing. He'll already know what I did wrong and usually it's walks. So I have to cut down on my walks. The sky is the limit from there, what everyone has told me. I just got to keep working and try to harness my talents.

*DM: Any special goals for you this season?*

**DB:** Well, I had a couple bad games that kind of set me back, but I'd like to make the All-Star team and possibly go into low-A ball before the season's over. So we'll see how that goes. Like I said to start with, just be consistent.

*DM: Favorite team growing up?*

**DB:** Dodgers.

*DM: Favorite player?*

**DB:** Shawn Green and Clayton Kershaw and Matt Kemp. I have a couple of them.

*DM: In five years, where would you like to be?*

**DB:** The big leagues. Whether it's starting, relieving, or doing whatever they want me to do, sitting in the bullpen.

*DM: Thank you so much for your time and the best of luck to you.*