

Oakland hitters rock on in blowout win, and no trades yet in sight

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

There has been much speculation about the A's dealing some of their heavy hitters in advance of Sunday's nonwaiver trade deadline, but they simply might be hitting too well for general manager Billy Beane to break up the party.

Amid premature reports out of Boston that the A's were set to trade pitcher Rich Harden to the Red Sox, Oakland once again was wielding some impressive lumber Saturday night in an 8-3 victory over the Minnesota Twins at O.co Coliseum.

The A's didn't announce a trade after the game, and Harden said he was reassured by Beane that he wasn't going anywhere.

"A lot of rumors," Harden said. "But I just spoke with Billy and he says I'm an A, and I'm starting in Seattle on Tuesday. From what I hear, I'm here, and I'm staying here."

Harden said he was aware that news reports on the trade made it sound as if it were a done deal and that he received a flood of text messages from friends. Asked if he'd be happy if a trade to Boston were to go through, he straddled the fence.

"Yeah, there's definitely some positives in doing that," Harden said. "But I'm happy to be here, being part of this organization and pitching here."

Beane was in the clubhouse after Oakland's victory but wouldn't comment on any potential trade.

Several reports had said the Red Sox had acquired Harden for first-base prospect Lars Anderson and a player to be determined.

Any number of things could hold up or cause a trade to fall through. One thing is certain: It will all be sorted out before Sunday's 1 p.m. (PDT) trade deadline.

It also a mystery as to whether the A's will keep their offensive nucleus together, but suddenly, those runs that were so hard to come by before the All-Star break are flowing across the plate like a torrent.

The A's pounded out 12 hits -- their 15th straight game since the break with eight or more -- and scored five runs or more for the seventh straight contest. They are hitting .315 since the break.

The A's are 9-6 since the break, and their streak of 15 games with eight hits or more matches the most in Oakland history.

In this latest effort, the A's had eight by the fifth inning.

"Right now we're on a roll, and pretty much everybody from 1-9 is having some input," said rookie Jemile Weeks, whose second-inning RBI triple put the A's ahead 3-2, a lead they never lost. "I think this is what Billy Beane and everybody envisioned when they brought in (Josh) Willingham, (Conor) Jackson, Coco (Crisp), (David) DeJesus.

"They're just doing what they've done in their careers, so I don't think it's a fluke or anything like that."

Guillermo Moscoso (4-5) was the beneficiary of the latest offensive explosion. He allowed two early runs but settled down to pitch 6 1/3 innings before turning it over to the a trio of relievers to close it out. Moscoso walked one and struck out two while allowing seven hits.

"They were getting me pretty early, so I started mixing up all those pitches and tried to get ahead in the count," Moscoso said. "That's what I did after the second inning, and that was the key through the sixth."

The teams traded offensive punches early, each scoring a single run in the first inning.

The Twins took a 2-1 lead in the top of the second, but the A's jumped ahead with two runs in the bottom half, one scoring on a bases-loaded double play and the second on Weeks' RBI triple.

Oakland broke it open with a four-run fifth, the big blow coming on a bases-loaded double by Scott Sizemore that cleared the bases.

Oakland A's update: Rich Harden trade to Boston Red Sox reportedly falls through

By Carl Steward

Several media outlets out of Boston reported Saturday night that the A's had traded right-handed pitcher Rich Harden to the Red Sox for first base prospect Lars Anderson and a player to be named. But it's possible the deal may have fallen apart at the last minute.

At least two Boston media outlets reported the deal was done, but after the game, Billy Beane refused to confirm or deny that a trade had been made, and Harden said he was told by the A's general manager that he was still a member of the team and would be making his scheduled start for Oakland on Tuesday in Seattle. Citing sources close to the negotiations, The Associated Press reported that the deal had fallen through.

It's still possible something could be worked out before Sunday's 1 p.m. non-waiver trade deadline.

The deal certainly seemed to make sense for both sides. The left-handed hitting Anderson, 23, is an Oakland native who attended Jesuit High-Carmichael and committed to play baseball at Cal in 2006 but instead signed with the Red Sox.

Anderson has spent the past two seasons at Triple-A Pawtucket but did play 18 games with Boston as a 2010 September call-up. He was hitting .261 with 10 homers and 58 RBIs at Pawtucket this year.

Harden, 29, signed a one-year, \$1.5 million free agent contract with the A's in the offseason. He spent the first three months on the disabled list with an injury behind his pitching shoulder but made five straight starts beginning July 1, going 2-1 with a 4.30 ERA.

Anderson was rated among Baseball America's Top 100 prospects from 2008-10. But with Boston's signing of free agent Adrian Gonzalez in the offseason, he was an expendable commodity in the Red Sox organization.

Anderson also could fill a void at first base with the shoulder injury issues surrounding demoted Daric Barton and the stalled development of prospect Chris Carter.

Right-handed reliever Michael Wuertz was put on the 15-day disabled list with what the A's termed right thumb tendinitis, and lefty reliever Jerry Blevins was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento. Wuertz said the injury is more in the wrist, and it flared up in a long eighth inning Friday in which he allowed four runs. "It started toward the end of the outing," he said. "It's kind of hard to pitch when you can't feel the ball."

Chin Music: Wuertz to DL, trade talks cool

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune, 7/30/2011 4:58pm

In for Joe Stiglich again tonight ...

Friday night, Bob Melvin almost made it through a 13-minute session with the media without talking about an A's injury. Then he blew it by mentioning on his own that reliever Grant Balfour was iffy to pitch after he was hit in a back with a baseball earlier in the week.

Saturday night, it was back to the status quo — injury talk right out of the blocks. This time, reliever Michael Wuertz. He's headed to the 15-day DL with what the A's are terming right thumb tendinitis, and Jerry "The Human Yo-Yo" Blevins is being recalled once again from Triple-A.

If you saw Wuertz pitch Friday night in giving up four earned runs in the eighth inning, including a three-run homer to Minnesota's Michael Cuddyer, you might have suspected something was wrong. Wuertz has ... well, he isn't sure. It's not really a thumb injury so much as a wrist condition which affects him almost like carpal tunnel.

He said he started his outing feeling fine, but then the sensation — or lack thereof — kicked in.

"It started toward the end of the outing, once I got over about 20 pitches," he said. "It's kind of had to pitch when you can't feel the ball."

Wuertz had this same issue late last year, got a shot of cortisone but never really knew what it was. "After the season I got it checked out and now I think we have a better handle on it," he said. "But I still don't even know what it is, to be honest with you. It swells up and there's a little numbing in the fingers. It's kind of a hard thing to explain."

Manager Bob Melvin said Wuertz will have another cortisone shot, shut it down 4-5 days and then begin throwing again. Wuertz added that he'll have the shot in an area more specific to where the problem is originating this time.

"(The shot last year) wasn't in the problem area because we didn't really know what was wrong with it," he said. "Now that we have it narrowed down to a specific area we know a little bit more. It's more so in the wrist. It just swells up and gets real tight and stiff."

Melvin hypothesized that the way Wuertz throws certain pitches may have created the problem.

"The way he torques his slider, it puts a lot of pressure on that area," the manager said. "He grips the ball back and throws a slider a little bit differently than most. After the first 15 pitches or so, you could see the stuff go down and the velocity on the slider go down. So it's flared up on him enough that it's been a little bit of a concern."

Josh Willingham was in the lineup Saturday night. He's at DH, Hideki Matsui's in LF. Suppose it doesn't matter where to those who don't wish to see the A's biggest power threat traded. Right now, it looks like he just might stay. Even his wife sent a note out on Twitter saying that she'd be surprised if her husband was dealt.

The Pirates were reportedly interested in Willingham and possibly one of the A's relievers, but ESPN's Buster Olney reported that those talks are now dead and that they never really caught fire in the first place. The Braves and Red Sox have also been mentioned regarding Willingham, but nothing serious appears to be in the works.

Willingham going to DH is just a precautionary thing, by the way. He said Friday his Achilles is feeling good, but as Melvin said, "We want to make sure it continues to feel good."

As for all the other A's possible trade commodities ... nothing worth mentioning. The Rangers acquired reliever Koji Uehara Saturday, which will surely end all the speculation regarding their reported pursuit of Andrew Bailey, which never seemed like a serious possibility.

Of course, things could change on a moment's notice, and the trade deadline isn't until 4 p.m. Sunday.

If there was a bright spot to Friday night's 9-5 loss, it was the performance of right-handed reliever Fautino De Los Santos, who replaced Gio Gonzalez in the sixth and got out of a one-out, bases-loaded jam. He had a long two-out battle with the Twins' Joe Mauer, but finally retired Mauer on a weak fly to left.

Melvin said he really likes what he's seeing from De Los Santos

"We're kind of spoon-feeding him into a more prominent role," he said. "He is definitely a stuff type of guy who has the ability to either be a set-up guy or a closer down the road. You don't want to throw him all at once and say, 'Here's the seventh inning.' But we're moving him up and last night was another step in that direction. He comes in bases loaded, one out and gets us out of it. As long as he throws the ball over the plate, he's going to be good."

Melvin doesn't really have any concrete answers about the woefulness of the A's defense other than to say it's a "work in progress." He did say that after Gonzalez's throwaway at second base on a potential double play comebacker might prompt some pitchers' fielding practice soon.

The lineups:

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

Twins: CF Revere, 2B Plouffe, C Mauer, 1B Cuddyer, RF Kubel, DH Thome, 3B Valencia, LF Young, SS Nishioka. P Blackburn

Sizemore, Moscoso lead A's past Twins, 8-3

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland's offense continued to do its post-break thing in an 8-3 victory over the Twins on Saturday night at the Coliseum, and the A's pitching also joined the plus side of the ledger.

The team, which was all-pitch, no-hit in the first half, has reversed that from mid-July on, going on a hitting tear but having some troubles on the mound.

On Saturday, however, the team recorded eight hits or more for the 15th consecutive game, tying the all-time Oakland record for consecutive games with at least eight hits (Sept. 12-27, 1980).

"I think we are the hottest team in the league right now," A's starter Guillermo Moscoso said. "We just have to keep battling up there, pitching the same way and try to get more wins."

Moscoso pitched into the seventh and allowed just two runs. The A's bullpen gave up one unearned run in 2 2/3 innings. Oakland had a 6.72 ERA over the previous 10 games - and it was 7.86 for the bullpen over the past eight games. The offense entered the night batting .312 since the break.

A's manager Bob Melvin noted that Moscoso, who allowed a run in the first and another in the second, got better as the night progressed. Melvin likes the cutter that Moscoso has added after working with pitching coach Ron Romanick.

"After the first inning, he looked a little upset with himself," Melvin said of Moscoso. "He put his nose to the grindstone a little more."

Scott Sizemore had the big hit of the evening, a three-run double off Nick Blackburn in the fifth, and Conor Jackson recorded three hits, including a double.

Cliff Pennington extended his career- and team-high hitting streak to 14 games with a double in the second inning, and he's 22-for-51 (.431) during the run. Hideki Matsui has a season-high eight-game hitting streak (18-for-33, .545).

"Everyone has a three- or four-day period where they swing the bats well," Melvin said. "... It's getting contagious. Guys feel good as a group."

A's don't trade Rich Harden to Red Sox

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

For much of Saturday evening, it appeared as if the A's were set to trade **Rich Harden** to the Red Sox, but after Oakland's 8-3 win over Minnesota, Harden said that general manager **Billy Beane** told the right-hander that he's staying.

"It's dead," Harden said of any potential deal. "I don't know what happened."

The proposed trade would have brought the A's Triple-A first baseman **Lars Anderson** and a player to be named, according to the Boston Globe.

There remains a chance that the A's will make a move before the 1 p.m. PDT non-waiver trade deadline today. The Braves, who are in need of an outfielder, are trying to pry away outfielder **Coco Crisp**.

The Red Sox had attempted to obtain Harden and outfielder **Josh Willingham** from the A's earlier in the week, but that trade also fell through.

Earlier Saturday, Boston acquired infielder **Mike Aviles** from Kansas City and stopped pursuing Willingham, according to sources in Boston. That's when the team turned its efforts toward acquiring solely Harden.

Harden has been on the disabled list 10 times in his career, including the first three months of this season with a muscle strain under his right arm.

"I'm happy to be part of this organization," Harden said. "I'm looking forward to starting on Tuesday."

On July 8, 2008, Oakland dealt Harden and pitcher **Chad Gaudin** to the Cubs for pitcher **Sean Gallagher**, infielder **Eric Patterson**, outfielder **Matt Murton** and catcher **Josh Donaldson**.

Willingham doesn't appear to be going anywhere - and that could include beyond this year. Willingham told The Chronicle last week that he'd have interest in a long-term deal in Oakland, and according to a source, that's more likely now that he is in place for the rest of the season.

Should Crisp be dealt, he also could be back: The A's are very happy with the free-agent-to-be and Crisp often has said how much he likes playing in Oakland.

Anderson, 23, was born in Oakland and played high school baseball at Jesuit in Sacramento. He committed to Cal before being drafted by Boston in the 18th round in 2006. The biggest needs for the A's to address in any deal were at first base and third base.

Harden is 2-1 with a 4.30 ERA. He has been particularly strong in his past two starts, allowing two runs each to the Yankees (in 5 1/3 innings) and Rays (in six innings).

Thumb problems for Wuertz, DeJesus: The A's placed reliever **Michael Wuertz** on the disabled list with a right thumb injury, and outfielder **David DeJesus** exited Saturday's game in the third inning with right thumb soreness.

Thumb surgery ended DeJesus' season with the Royals last summer, just as he was one of the top names on the trade market.

Wuertz said his injury is similar to the one he had in September.

He'll get a cortisone shot in the area near the base of the thumb, just above the wrist. He felt the problem 15 pitches or so into his outing Friday night.

Left-hander **Jerry Blevins** was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento. A's manager **Bob Melvin** said that reliever **Joey Devine** will remain with the River Cats to sharpen his command.

A'S LEADING OFF

Back to work: Pitchers have made 14 of the A's 86 errors this season, the most errors by an AL staff. Manager Bob Melvin said that pitchers' fielding practice is in the offing. Oakland's overall error total is tied with Texas for the most in the AL.

Drumbeat: No trade to Boston, according to Rich Harden

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser 7/31/2011 10:19pm

Well, if you saw tonight's earlier Drumbeat, you saw the progression of the evening's Rich Harden reporting as the news unfolded, but as it turns out, funny story, the expected trade to the Red Sox fell through.

"It's dead," Harden told me. "I don't know what happened."

Harden said that after the game, general manager Billy Beane told him he'll be pitching on Tuesday for Oakland and he's not going anywhere.

Like everyone, Harden had most recently heard that he was Boston bound. Sources on the Boston end had told me that the deal was agreed upon and just waiting finalization, and judging by stories in much of the Boston and national media, everyone else was getting the same information, that Harden was going to the Red Sox for Triple-A first baseman Lars Anderson.

It's unclear what happened, but it's certainly no secret that Harden has been on the DL 10 times in his career. It's possible Boston was scared off by medical reports, certainly - and I know that they were expected to be looking at Harden's records tonight - but it's equally possible there was some other snafu. Or maybe the deal was never quite 100 percent nailed down to begin with, despite the large number of us all hearing the same thing. Or maybe Boston is veering a different direction.

No one from the A's side ever confirmed anything in the way of a trade, by the way. Not a one.

Harden is more than happy to stay in Oakland. He loves it here, and I'm sure he'd like to come back next year. He's close to pitching coach Ron Romanick, and Harden's sister, Kristin, lives in the Bay Area with her family. Had he gone away, I wouldn't have been surprised to see him come back this winter.

By the way, Triple-A Sacramento starter Graham Godfrey was pulled from his scheduled start tonight, and speculation there was that he was going to pitch here on Tuesday. I'd have figured that spot for Josh Outman, who has been pitching well at Sacramento, but hey, that was the buzz in Sacramento tonight.

Of course, for two innings here, the buzz was that David DeJesus might be getting traded when he came out of the game. It turns out he has a sore right thumb. That's the trading deadline for you.

There's some interesting precedent for the non-A's trade to Boston: Beane himself accepted the GM job there only to turn around and immediately decline it, and former owner Charlie Finley tried to accelerate his sell-off of his great A's teams by dealing Rollie Fingers and Joe Rudi to Boston in 1976 only to have Commissioner Bowie Kuhn nullify the trade. There's a famous photo, however, of Rudi and Fingers in Red Sox uniforms before the deal was squelched.

Drumbeat: Clock ticks, A's quiet so far; Michael Wuertz goes on DL

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 4:35pm 7/30/2011

The trading deadline is less than 24 hours away, and the A's haven't pulled the trigger on anything yet. I'd imagine that as outfielders start to come off the board and some teams try to fill spots (hello, Atlanta) while watching their rivals improve, the A's might start to get some more substantial offers.

Billy Beane told me earlier in the week he's not going to make any moves just to trim payroll, nor is he going to accept a less-than-decent return for any of his pieces.

Coco Crisp is the player I believe would most help a contender in need of a bat - Josh Willingham can drive in runs and he has power, and he's heated up, but I think his Achilles tendinitis is keeping offers lower than they might be. Crisp, though, is a nice package: a switch hitter who can hit leadoff (or anywhere else), runs extremely well, plays a strong center field, has a little pop - and he can carry a team when hot. A change of scenery to a contender can rev players up, and Crisp is the kind of player who could just go off. I'm surprised no one has flat overwhelmed the A's for Crisp, he's such a potential difference-

maker down the stretch. I know Atlanta has good interest, and I think it would be a smart move for the Braves - but they'd need to pony up.

Even if Crisp did get traded, I wouldn't be surprised to see him back here next year. The A's love him, and he likes playing in Oakland.

The above is all my own speculation only. Although I do know, from two sources, that the Braves have real interest in Crisp. Still, at this point, it's far more likely that the A's will have the same roster at game time tomorrow that they do today.

Michael Wuertz went on the DL today with a thumb injury similar to the one he had late last season; the discomfort is at the base of his thumb near the wrist. Manager Bob Melvin said it winds up affecting Wuertz's right index and middle fingers, too, and the base of his palm - all pretty important for a pitcher, especially one who throws a slider. Left-hander Jerry Blevins returns from Triple-A Sacramento. I asked if Joey Devine was a consideration, because he could come back early from Sacramento in the event of an injury, but Melvin said Devine still isn't quite where they'd like him to be as he works on regaining his command.

Melvin believes that Wuertz will be back after the 15-days - he'll get a cortisone injection, then will start throwing again in three or four days if the discomfort is gone.

Grant Balfour, struck by a ball during batting practice two days ago after picking up another ball, said he believes he'll be available tonight. He felt he could have gone last night, too. He's a former rugby player; a little bruise, no big deal.

Here's the lineup, with Guillermo Moscoso on the mound: Weeks 2b, Crisp cf, Matsui lf, Willingham DH, DeJesus rf, Jackson 1b, Pennington ss, Sizemore 3b, Powell c

A's hit on all cylinders to subdue Twins

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Searching for a remedy for his team's inability to come together both on the mound and at the plate, A's manager Bob Melvin got his wish in the middle game of the series, as the A's were finally able to get everything to click on the field.

The pitching returned to its first-half form and the A's rejuvenated offense stayed hot as the A's downed the Twins, 8-3, on Saturday night in front of a crowd of 19,605 at the Coliseum.

While the offense has been among the best in the Majors since returning from the All-Star break, the same can't be said for the A's pitching, which entered Saturday with a 6.72 ERA over the last 14 games.

One of the biggest contributors to that lofty number was righty Guillermo Moscoso, who had a 10.24 ERA in two second-half starts before taking the mound against the Twins.

Those struggles looked like they were going to continue to haunt the A's, after the righty gave up a run in each of the first two innings. Melvin thought he might witness another early exit by another one of his starting pitchers.

But something happened with Moscoso after those two frames, and he settled down to give the A's 6 1/3 solid innings.

"After the first inning, I saw him and he looked like he was a little bit upset with himself," Melvin said. "He put the nose to the grindstone a little bit more, and I think he was tired of seeing some of the results he was getting the last couple of games, when he was getting behind in the counts and being more predictable than he should be.

"He persevered, after what looked to be a little bit of a shaky start early on the first couple of innings."

The cure for Moscoso's second-half troubles was something he hadn't used in his pitching repertoire since arriving in Oakland. Melvin described it as a cutter that the righty worked on with pitching coach Ron Romanick between outings. But Moscoso said it was more of a slider like he had while he was with the Rangers last season.

"I was trying to mix the pitches they were jumping on early," Moscoso said. "After those two innings, I spoke to Romanick, and we mixed it up a little bit and tried to mix those pitches and be more aggressive down and away and get ahead in the first three pitches. That's what I did after the second inning, and that was the key to the [6 1/3 innings]."

While Moscoso (3-5, 3.41 ERA) was able to return to the form that earned him a job in the A's rotation, the club's bullpen also bounced back from a rocky stretch that saw the group sport a 7.68 ERA over the last eight games, and allow 16 runs over the last three, as it tossed 2 2/3 innings without giving up an earned run on Saturday.

With things clicking on the mound, the pitching staff got plenty of help from the A's surging offense, which has now scored four or more runs in a season-high 10 straight games.

"That's outstanding," Moscoso said. "I think the offense is doing pretty well. I think we are the hottest team in the league, right now."

The A's knocked around Twins starter Nick Blackburn, tagging the righty for seven runs (six earned) in 4 1/3 innings. Cliff Pennington extended his career-high hitting streak to 14 games, while Josh Willingham, Landon Powell and Ryan Sweeney all picked up RBIs and the A's chased Blackburn (7-8, 4.49 ERA) in the fifth, after Scott Sizemore hit a three-run double to cap a four-run frame.

Coco Crisp went 2-for-3 with two stolen bases, while Hideki Matsui added a 2-for-3 night of his own, giving the slugger a season-high eight-game hitting streak. Matsui is now hitting .473 in 14 games since the break.

"He's a veteran and has been around for a long time," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "He played in the Big Apple for a number of years, and was around a lot of good hitters. He's been in a lot of big situations, and is just a great hitter. He's proven that."

In all, the A's recorded 12 hits on the night, and the club now has 15 straight games -- all since the break -- with eight or more hits, which matches the longest such streak in A's history.

"Everybody goes through a three-, four-, five-, six-day period where they swing the bats well. So to continue to do it since the break, it's getting contagious and guys are feeling good about it as a group," Melvin said.

As a result, the A's no longer doubt themselves when teams jump out to early leads like the Twins did on Saturday.

"When we got down before, it was a little bit difficult to raise up and come back," Melvin said. "Now, I don't think a run or two bothers us early in the game. We think we really have the type of focus and confidence where we think we're going to come back."

"We just got to keep battling there, pitching the same way and try to get more wins," Moscoso said.

No deal: Harden to remain in Oakland

A's GM Beane tells pitcher that trade to Red Sox won't happen

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A deal that was to send A's right-hander Rich Harden to the Red Sox in exchange for two Minor Leaguers, one that appeared close to being finalized on Saturday evening, is no more.

"I just spoke with [general manager] Billy [Beane], and he says I'm an A, and I'm starting Tuesday in Seattle," Harden said late Saturday after Oakland's 8-3 win over Minnesota.

Hours earlier, the A's appeared to finally be entering play in a bustling trade scene, with a Major League source confirming that the two clubs were closing in on a deal. Harden was to join a depleted Red Sox rotation, with the A's receiving first-base prospect Lars Anderson and a player to be named later in return.

"That's obviously what I had heard too, but I talked to Billy, and he said I'm here and not going anywhere," said Harden, who received premature congratulatory text messages and phone calls from friends.

Though a source directly involved in the talks said the deal indeed fell through, the A's have until 1 p.m. PST on Sunday, when the non-waiver Trade Deadline expires, to make a move.

It's no secret that the Red Sox have tirelessly been working to add a starter to the mix, and Harden admitted he sees plenty of positives in Boston via a contending squad and a familiar face in former A's pitching coach Curt Young -- now in the same position for the Red Sox -- but said, "I'm real happy to be here. I love being a part of this organization and pitching here."

Harden, 29, is no stranger to midseason deals in Oakland. On July 8, 2008, he was traded by the A's alongside hurler Chad Gaudin to the Cubs for pitcher Sean Gallagher, catcher Josh Donaldson, infielder Eric Patterson and outfielder Matt Murton.

Fast forward to the present, following stints in Chicago and Texas, and the righty is 2-1 with a 4.30 ERA in five starts in his second tour of duty with the A's, who signed him to a one-year deal worth \$1.25 million this offseason. He suffered a strain to his lat muscle on report day in Spring Training, and he didn't make his debut until July 1.

This isn't the first time a deal between the Red Sox and A's has fallen apart. In November 2002, Beane was set to be named general manager of the Red Sox. However, he had a change of heart, and that was when Theo Epstein became Boston's GM.

The A's, then, could potentially stay quiet through Sunday's Trade Deadline. Outfielders Josh Willingham, Coco Crisp and David DeJesus -- all free agents at season's end -- were thought to be prime candidates to be dealt, but Beane has said he won't make a move just to trim payroll. However, the deadline looms, and Beane could be seeing offers for such players increase as the market thins. Willingham and Crisp have both been linked to the Braves.

Several A's relievers, including righties Grant Balfour and Brad Ziegler, have also been rumored with a multitude of teams looking for bullpen help.

Pavano, McCarthy face off in rubber game in Oakland

By Nick Kosmider / MLB.com | 7/31/2011 2:45 AM ET

Despite their pitching woes this season, the A's are heading into the Trade Deadline as sellers. During the final innings of Saturday night's game with the Twins, it appeared general manager Billy Beane was living up to that expectation. Beane was about to part ways with arguably his biggest trade chip in right-hander Rich Harden in exchange for Red Sox Triple-A first baseman Lars Anderson and a player to be named later.

Ultimately, the deal evaporated under still unclear circumstances. So for now, the A's have retained Harden, but the club's pitching issues remain.

On Sunday, the A's staff will try to reverse the struggles that saw the team's hurlers post a 6.72 ERA since the All-Star Game entering Saturday's action.

Manager Bob Melvin will turn to one of his few pitching bright spots in the second half, Brandon McCarthy. The right-hander is 2-0 with a 3.44 ERA in two starts since the break, striking out 14 against four walks. The Twins will send right-hander Carl Pavano to the hill.

Though the A's entered Saturday hitting .312 since the All-Star break, finding ways to get their offense, pitching and defense -- Oakland's 86 errors are the second-most in the Majors -- clicking at the same time has proven difficult.

"It is frustrating," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "The one thing is, you have pitching for a period of time, you've got hitting for a period of time and, really, we haven't been consistent defensively, yet. That goes hand in hand with pitching a lot of times."

Though the Twins fell to the A's, 8-3, on Saturday, they have fought their way back into contention in the American League Central. Minnesota is seven games under .500 and trails first-place Detroit by six games, after being 20 games under and 16 1/2 games back on June 1.

"We're still trying to get back to that .500 mark, which is the hardest thing to do," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "We have to win a lot of games to get back to .500 after you get that far below. So we're a work in progress, but we're also keeping the other teams ahead of us within reach, too."

Pavano is looking to bounce back from a rough start his last time out, when he gave up eight runs on nine hits and two walks over five innings against the Rangers. He avoided the loss, as the Twins pulled off a comeback win.

Twins: Resiliency has team in division race

- The playoffs didn't seem likely a likely destination for the Twins after a disastrous start to the season. But a surge over the past two months has them in position to climb back into the conversation for the AL Central crown.

"If we were 10 games out now, I don't think it would be the most positive situation," Gardenhire said. "We're still out six games, which isn't too bad going into August. We've actually handled ourselves pretty well and gained 10 games back."

A's: DeJesus exits early on Saturday

- A's right-fielder David DeJesus left Saturday's game in the third inning with right thumb soreness.

DeJesus was 0-for-1 with a strikeout in his only at-bat. He was replaced by Ryan Sweeney. DeJesus missed most of the second half of last season after undergoing surgery to repair a torn ligament in the same thumb.

Worth noting

- The A's are 12-13 in July, and must win on Sunday to avoid a losing record for the sixth consecutive month.
- The Twins have won 11 of their last 17 meetings against the A's dating back to 2009.

DeJesus leaves game with thumb soreness

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's right fielder David DeJesus was pulled from Saturday's game in the bottom of the third inning with soreness in his right thumb.

DeJesus was 0-for-1 with a strikeout in his only at-bat before sustaining the injury, and was replaced in the lineup by Ryan Sweeney. A's manager Bob Melvin said the thumb wasn't bothering DeJesus during batting practice, but the left-handed hitter felt it after his first plate appearance.

It's not the first time DeJesus has dealt with right-thumb issues, either. While with the Royals last season, he sprained the same thumb and missed most of the second half of the season after undergoing surgery to repair a torn ligament.

"It was the thumb he had his surgery on, so we wanted to be careful with that," Melvin said.

A's place Wuertz on DL, recall Blevins

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A struggling A's bullpen lost a member to injury on Saturday, as right-hander Michael Wuertz was placed on the 15-day disabled list with right thumb tendinitis.

Lefty Jerry Blevins was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento for his fourth stint with the A's to fill Wuertz's place in a bullpen that entered Saturday's contest against the Twins with a 7.86 ERA over the past eight games.

Largely contributing to that mark was Wuertz, who has allowed nine runs on nine hits and eight walks in just 4 1/3 innings since the All-Star break for an 18.69 ERA and .450 opponents' average. Prior to that time, he had compiled a 2.67 ERA and .196 opponents' average.

On Friday, Wuertz labored in 2/3 of an inning against Minnesota, surrendering four runs and walking three, while throwing 34 pitches.

"I don't want to use him that long, but I had to yesterday with some guys unavailable. And, obviously, [his thumb] flared up today," manager Bob Melvin said. "Hopefully, he'll be ready to go after the 15-day period."

The 32-year-old Wuertz, who suffered soreness in his right thumb last season, has now been on the disabled list three times -- twice this season -- after agreeing to a two-year deal worth \$5.25 million at the beginning of 2010.

"It's flared up on him enough this year to where it's been a little bit of a concern," Melvin said. "But at this point, we needed to inject it and put him on the DL."

Blevins, owner of a 3.86 ERA in 16 relief appearances while in Oakland this year, appeared in four games with the River Cats following his last option on July 20 and surrendered two runs on six hits with one walk and four strikeouts in a combined four innings.

The recently demoted Joey Devine, trying to get his command back in Sacramento, was seemingly an option, but Melvin said, "I don't think we're quite there with him, yet."

A's vs. Twins

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Scott Sizemore hit a three-run double in the fifth inning and the Oakland Athletics beat the Minnesota Twins 8-3 on Saturday night.

Hideki Matsui singled twice and reached five times for the A's, who snapped a three-game losing streak to the Twins. Matsui is batting a major league-best .473 since the All-Star break.

Oakland also got three hits from Conor Jackson and two from Coco Crisp, who is being mentioned in trade rumors as Sunday's non-waiver deadline approaches. Cliff Pennington extended his career-high hitting streak to 14 games and scored the go-ahead run in the second.

Jim Thome had two hits and an RBI for Minnesota.

Oakland also was working on a trade that would send right-hander Rich Harden to the Boston Red Sox.

Philadelphia side resurrects 19th century "base ball"

By Frank Fitzpatrick

Inquirer Staff Writer

As Scott Alberts tore through the clutter in the trunk of his compact car, he began to unearth a 19th-century baseball museum.

The round, white metal plates he extracted served as pitching mound and home plate in the days when handlebar mustaches such as Alberts' were in vogue. The "lemon peel" ball was curiously stitched but slightly softer than today's models. The woolen uniform - long, dark pants, a small-brimmed jeff cap, and a long-sleeved top whose buttoned breastplate was adorned with a large italicized "A" - looked unbearably stifling in the 90-degree heat.

"I know there's a bat in here somewhere," said Alberts, 32, an Upper Darby resident who works in the business office at the University of Pennsylvania's medical school, as he pushed aside a spare tire, a folding chair, and considerable paper.

Alberts' hunt was analogous to the quest that has become his life's passion - an ongoing search for authentic information on baseball's earliest rules, equipment, and customs.

The interest began in 2010 and led him to cofound the Athletic Base Ball Club. That team, which plays like-minded foes from several nearby states, is a revived version of the team that brought Philadelphia early baseball glory in the second half of the 1800s.

"I've been able to combine three great loves," he said. "The performing arts - because there's a certain aspect where you're playing a character, dressed up like we do - primary-source history research, and sports."

He and his two dozen Athletics compete against other vintage "base ball" teams in the Mid-Atlantic region. They use rules from 1864 and bats, balls, bases, and uniforms constructed to resemble the originals.

A history major, Alberts won't rely solely on anecdotal evidence or the mythology surrounding the game's shadowy origins. "We are really focused on sourcing," he said.

His curiosity about the era when baseball was emerging as America's game grew out of his devotion to the Phillies. Curious about where the team played before Baker Bowl, he began to research online, eventually stumbling upon the old Athletics.

Founded in 1859, that club would later play in the amateur National Association, then won the first pennant when that league went professional in 1871.

"I thought, 'Here's a team I don't know anything about,' " he said. " 'Here's a league I don't know anything about.' I was totally ignorant of 19th- century baseball except for the fact that they played it.

"When I came across references to the first guy to wear a glove or the first pitcher's mound, I just thought it would be a great idea to get 18 guys together with a case of beer and play in the park one day."

Alberts was convinced his was a unique concept. A week later, his mother brought him an article from a Maryland newspaper about a game between two vintage teams there.

"So I looked up online to find out where the Philadelphia team was," he said. "When I saw there wasn't one, my civic pride was offended. As much of a baseball town as we are, as important to the history of baseball as we are, as important as history is to our civic identity, how did this not already happen?"

Eventually, with the help of brothers Eric and Ryan Berley, who own the Franklin Fountain ice cream parlor in Old City, he found enough people with similar interests to field a team and challenge other clubs, many of whom play by different sets of rules from baseball's chaotic first decades.

These Athletics pitch underhanded from a box rather than a raised mound. Though the bases are 90 feet apart, many of the 1864 rules seem so quirky a century and a half later that the resulting game sometimes resembles cricket more than baseball.

"The game that has evolved is ultimately a better one, but the old game is interesting too, and that's why we enjoy it," said Alberts. "It's similar enough to be familiar but different enough to be a novelty. It's a unique challenge and much more interesting cerebrally than playing softball."

There are no gloves. The bats can be only 21/2 inches around and, unless someone can find an early reference to maple, must be either ash, poplar, or oak.

Their uniforms were based on what they saw in wood-cut engravings from Harper's Weekly and read about in books. The more research Alberts did, the more intrigued he became.

"In 1867, 40,000 showed up for a game here at, I think, Camac Woods [a field near the present-day site of Temple University]," he said. "That was 5 percent of the city's population."

Alberts' Athletics have traveled as far as Queens, often playing doubleheaders in which their rules are used for one game and the opponents' for the other. They went winless in their inaugural season but have won a few this year, though victories, he said, aren't the point.

"On one level, our ultimate goal is to create a divisional structure nationwide for vintage base ball," he said. "But that's way down the road. On another level we joke that we're a revolution designed as a baseball team. We're trying to re-create a sense of community.

"There's a certain nostalgia for innocence that goes with what we're doing that I think is wrong-headed. It used to be in this city that there were neighborhoods where everyone worked at the same factories, drank at the same bars. Some still have that, and it's beautiful. But for those of us who don't, we're looking to re-create it, and this is a part of that."

"It's less of a movement," he said, "than kind of the zeitgeist for our era. Let's create something as opposed to just consuming."

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

It's a home run 12-pack for Miller in July

By Alex Sadorf / Sacramento River Cats

July has been Miller Month at Raley Field.

Jai Miller tied a River Cats record with his 12th home run in July as Sacramento topped Colorado Springs, 4-3, on Saturday night at Raley Field. With his third inning, two-run blast to give Sacramento a 3-1 lead, Miller tied Graham Koonce (August, 2003) and Dallas McPherson (August, 2010) for most homers in a single month by a River Cat.

"It feels great," said Miller of being tied for the record. "I didn't even know that there was the opportunity for that."

As for the specific home run, "It's just focus," said Miller, who has 27 homers on the season. "You see a pitch and get to it early."

The River Cats took an early lead in the first when Miller hit his 19th double of the season, a line drive to center field. Kevin Kouzmanoff followed with a single off a soft fly ball to shallow right field, putting Miller on third. With runners on the corners, Chris Carter rocketed the ball to right-center for a grounds-rule double into the Sky Sox' bullpen, scoring Miller.

The Sky Sox tied it up in the third. After three consecutive walks from left-handed pitcher Anthony Capra, Mike Jacobs hit a sacrifice fly to center field that scored Warren Schaeffer.

Capra, making his River Cats debut after an arrival from Midland, pitched 5.0 innings allowing three hits and one run while striking out four.

Miller again stole the show in the fifth with an RBI single to left field. The hit scored Jermaine Mitchell, who had singled and stole second.

The Sky Sox attempted a comeback in the sixth with a solo homer from Mike Jacobs.

In the ninth, the Sky Sox again attempted to bring up their score. With one out and two on base, Matt Macri popped out to left field, giving Joe Mather time to score from third to close within one run, 4-3. Ferndnado Cabrera escaped without further damage, earning his fourth save.

Saturday night's win puts the River Cats 11.0 games ahead of the Las Vegas 51s in the PCL South Division standings. It is the largest lead the Cats have held this season.

The River Cats take on the Sky Sox again Sunday afternoon at 1:05 p.m. Be sure to bring canned, non-perishable food for the Players' Wives Food Drive presented by Kinder's Meats & Deli.

Big 6th inning propels RockHounds to 4-game winning streak

Jordan Mason, Midland Reporter-Telegram

Corpus Christi pitcher Dallas Keuchel seemed to be pitching lights-out when he returned to the mound to start the seventh inning Saturday.

But a leadoff single by Stephen Parker provided a glimmer of hope in the West Texas night and paved the way for a six-run rally, ignited by a two-run single by Ryan Ortiz that gave the Midland RockHounds their first lead of the night in a 6-5 win at Citibank Ballpark.

The RockHounds (17-18) held off a furious three-run rally in the ninth to preserve their fourth straight win, matching their longest win streak of the season.

"There's still a lot of baseball left," RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone said. "There's no reason that we can't say that we can't be in the mix here in the end."

Talk of a four-game win streak seemed moot early Saturday thanks to two early runs from the opportunistic Hooks.

Wes Timmons has had his share of highlight-reel plays at second and attempted to turn another one to start the fourth when he scooped up a Jonathan Villar grounder while charging to his right and tossed it to Tyler Ladendorf in an attempt to turn a 6-4-3 groundout.

The throw to first, though, got past Michael Spina and Villar reached and then advanced to second on the error.

That cost Midland when, after a Jimmy Paredes sacrifice bunt, Jacob Goebbert ripped an RBI single up the middle to draw first blood.

A seemingly harmless misstep cost the RockHounds again in the sixth when Paredes reached on a hit by pitch and later crossed the plate on an RBI double by Chris Wallace.

Yet Midland never gave up despite the fact that Keuchel had only allowed one RockHound past second.

"He was throwing well tonight," Ortiz said. "His changeup was good and then he was throwing his fastball, hitting spots.

"Parker getting the base hit right there to start that rally was huge."

Midland finally got to Keuchel two batters after Parker when an Adam Heether flare dropped just inside the right field line for an RBI single to cut the lead to 2-1.

Ortiz, hitless at that point, then opened the floodgates two batters later with his two-run single to put Midland ahead 3-2.

A Paredes fielding error allowed Tyler Ladendorf to reach and Jeremy Barfield to score on the next at bat, putting Midland up two.

Then, with the count full to Timmons, the runners on first and second left on the pitch and Timmons punched an RBI single into left.

Grant Green punctuated the rally by ripping an RBI single into right to put Midland up 6-2 and seemingly in the clear.

Yet Corpus Christi (16-19) didn't go easy, mounting a last-ditch rally in the ninth on a Jose Vallejo two-run single that made it 6-4.

But Jon Meloan, who entered with one man down, earned the save by forcing a Villar sacrifice fly and a Paredes flyout to right to end the game.

"It's always nerve-wracking to finish a game like that that's close," Meloan said "But it's fun to go in there.

"I've been around a while, I've done this before, so having some experience helps."

The RockHounds will look to win their fifth straight game today in game three of the four-game series.

'HOUND BITES: RockHounds pitcher Yadel Marti is no longer with the team and manager Steve Scarsone said he hasn't had any contact with the pitcher since he left the team after his July 22nd start against the San Antonio Missions. Marti is still listed as part of the RockHounds' roster and the Oakland A's are said to be handling his status as a member of the organization. ... RockHounds center fielder Grant Green was presented with his 2011 All-Star Futures Game MVP trophy before Saturday's game. Green had an RBI pinch-hit double in the fifth inning of the game and a run-igniting double in the eighth. ... Hooks center fielder T.J. Steele was tossed after barking at home plate umpire Ian Fazio following a strikeout in the top of the fifth inning. ... Wes Timmons continues to impress at second, going airborne to make a diving stop in the sixth then throwing out Jacob Goebbert from his knees. ... RockHounds first baseman Michael Spina reached base for the 20th consecutive game.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: The RockHounds are expected to start right-hander A.J. Griffin (2-2, 4.66) while the Hooks are expected to start Henry Sosa (2-0, 0.00)

Texas League: Green thinks he can be center field

BY ADAM ZUVANICH, Odessa American

MIDLAND Playing in the outfield is "kind of boring" to Grant Green, who had done so only one or two times since childhood before the 2011 Texas League season began.

But if it helps him realize his dream of playing Major League Baseball, he's all for it.

Green, a first-round draft pick of the Oakland Athletics in 2009, was a shortstop at USC and for most of his first two seasons in the minor leagues. He played 79 games there this season for the Double-A Midland RockHounds, then was asked by A's general manager Billy Beane if he'd be willing to give center field a go.

Green agreed to the move and has manned center field since July 15, under the premise that the outfield might provide a more direct path to Oakland.

"They said that the whole thing is just to get to the major leagues," Green said Friday, when he made his 14th start in the outfield. "If they say this is the best way for me to get there, the fastest way, I might as well do it."

It's been a significant adjustment for the 23-year-old Californian, who is learning how to think and react like an outfielder along with picking up the nuances of the position. He must make longer throws, for starters, and learn the proper angles for fielding fly balls as well as grounders that find their way to the outfield.

Green has made it look relatively easy, though. He hadn't made any errors in the outfield through Friday's game, when he made a pair of tough running catches in the right-center field gap and a strong throw toward third base to keep a Corpus Christi runner at second.

"Grant has been an infielder his whole life, but he's making some adjustments and making some very good progress," RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone said. "As a natural athlete, he's been able to just kind of naturally go about the position out there. There have been some things that he'll continue to have to learn, mostly through experience."

Green might not need to become the best outfielder in the business if he continues to hit. He batted .318 with 20 home runs and 87 RBIs at the Single-A level last season and has been one of the RockHounds' leading run-producers this year.

After Friday's game, Green was batting .281 with six homers, 47 RBIs, 53 runs scored and a team-high 25 doubles. He was the most valuable player of the MLB Futures Game on July 10, going 2-for-2 with two doubles, an RBI and a run scored to help the United States team win 6-4 against the World team.

"He's projected to be able to hit at the major league level, and one of the things the A's want to do is figure out a way of getting him there quicker," Scarsone said. "The way the personnel is with Oakland right now, I guess they felt like that could be an opening that might happen sooner than maybe the shortstop position."

Green realizes he still has plenty of work to do before he's able to advance to Triple-A, let alone crack the Oakland lineup. He said he needs to become more disciplined at the plate – he struck out 86 times in his first 93 games this year – and continue to develop as an outfielder.

He's committed to the latter undertaking, saying he wouldn't have made the switch if he didn't expect it to be permanent.

Scarsone has seen that commitment, along with several other tools that give Green a bright future in baseball.

"He brings a lot of good things," Scarsone said. "He's a hard worker and plays the game hard, and I think if you combine those two things with the natural ability, it's just a matter of time."

Ports Pummeled By Rawhide 11-2

Stockton Ports

VISALIA, Calif. - On the night right-hander and 3rd overall pick Trevor Bauer made his professional debut for the Visalia Rawhide, everything went right for the home team. Not only did Bauer start his career with two scoreless innings, but the Rawhide offense pitched in with 11 runs on 15 hits as they defeated the Stockton Ports by a final of 11-2 to earn a series split.

Bauer was the headliner coming into the game and he lived up to his top billing. The right-hander and Golden Spikes Award winner out of UCLA tossed two scoreless innings, including a perfect 1st frame in his professional debut.

Bauer went two scoreless frames, allowing one hit while walking one and striking out three.

Visalia's offense got started early and never stopped. In the bottom of the 1st, David Nick hit a two-run homer off Ports starter Jake Brown (3-5) to put the Rawhide on the board first.

The Rawhide would really pull away in the 3rd inning. With one out, Chris Owings, Nick, and Matt Davidson each singled, with Davidson's scoring Owings to make it a 3-0 game. After Brown walked Bobby Borchering to load the bases, Alfredo Marte hit a tapper to third that was taken by Jason Christian. Christian threw to Gilmartin who dropped the ball in his haste to transfer and try for a double-play and no out was recorded as two more runs scored. Brent Greer came up next and hit a bouncer to first that went off the glove of Anthony Aliotti, resulting in another run to make it 6-0. With Marte at third, Mark Reed came up next and grounded out to drive him in and give the Rawhide a 7-0 advantage.

Brown took the loss on the night, going three innings and allowing seven runs (four earned) on six hits while striking out one and walking one.

Scott Deal came on to start the 4th and, with two outs, gave up a double to Nick. Two batters later, Borchering hit a bouncer to first that went off the glove of Aliotti, a play initially scored an error but later changed to a hit that allowed Nick to score and make it an 8-0 game.

In the 5th, with one on and one out, Raoul Torrez doubled to left to drive in another run, making it a 9-Visalia lead.

Deal allowed two runs on three hits over 1.2 innings of work.

After Bauer went the first two innings for the Rawhide, Mike Belfiore (2-4) came on and shut down the Ports over the next three frames. Belfiore earned the win, going three scoreless innings and allowing three hits while striking out five.

Stockton's lone runs came in the 6th. With two out, Rashun Dixon singled and Mitch LeVier followed with a two-run homer off Rawhide reliever Dan Taylor to make it a 9-2 game. It was LeVeir's 12th home run of the season.

The Rawhide, however, would get both runs back over their final two innings on offense. In the 7th, a throwing error committed by Ports shortstop Dusty Coleman while trying to turn a double play allowed another run to score. The run was unearned and charged to Mike Hart who went 1.2 innings in relief.

In the 8th, back-to-back extra base hits with two outs off Conner Hoehn-a triple from Marte and a double from Greer-led to another Rawhide run to make it 11-2.

Christian Beltre tossed the final two scoreless innings for the Rawhide.

The Ports stranded 13 baserunners on the night while going 0-for-10 with runners in scoring position.

After splitting their set with Visalia, the Ports travel to Modesto on Sunday night to kick off a three-game set with the Nuts. Dan Straily (10-6, 3.58 ERA) will head to the bump for the Ports, opposed by Nuts right-hander Chad Bettis (8-5, 3.81 ERA). First pitch is set for 6:05 p.m. PDT.

Kirby-Jones' Career Night Powers Burlington to Win

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

GRAND CHUTE, WI - 1B AJ. Kirby-Jones (2-5) hit a two-run home run in the seventh inning and recorded a career high five RBIs to lead the Burlington Bees (11-23) to an 8-2 win over the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (13-21) before 5,597 fans at Time Warner Cable Field on Saturday night.

Burlington scored its first run of the game in the second inning on a solo home run from 3B Tony Thompson (1-5). He jumped on a pitch from Wisconsin RHP Matt Miller (4-5) and shot it over the left field wall for his 10th home run of the season and a 1-0 Burlington lead.

The Bees put up a "four spot" of runs in the third inning. C Beau Taylor (4-4) doubled, LF Royce Consigli (0-3) walked and DH Josh Whitaker (3-3) singled to load the bases. Kirby-Jones smacked a bases-clearing double to bring in all three runners and make it 4-0. RF Douglas Landaeta (2-5) added an RBI single to score Kirby-Jones and push the lead to 5-0.

Wisconsin scored a single run in the third inning against Burlington RHP Jose Macias (3-3). SS Nick Shaw (2-5) led off the inning with a triple and scored on a groundout by LF T.J. Mittelstaedt (0-4) to make it 5-1.

In the fourth inning 2B Wade Kirkland (1-4) led off the inning with a double and moved to third base on a single by Taylor. CF Tyreece House (0-5) grounded out to first to score Kirkland and give Burlington a five run lead once again at 6-1.

The Timber Rattlers scored a run in the fifth inning to make it 6-2. In the seventh inning Kirby-Jones smacked a two-run home run over the left field wall to make it 8-2.

Macias picked up the win by tossing five innings and allowed two runs on six hits. LHP Max Peterson and RHP Drew Tyson each logged two innings of work.

The Bees and Timber Rattlers continue their series on Sunday afternoon at 1:05 p.m. RHP Blake Hassebrock (5-6, 2.48) gets the start for Burlington against LHP Charly Bashara (4-3, 4.90) for Wisconsin. Pre-game coverage begins at 12:45 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at www.gobees.com

Lake Monsters Thump Brooklyn 12-1

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

BURLINGTON, VT --- Five Vermont batters had a multi-hit game as the Lake Monsters offense broke out of a two-week slump by scoring 12 runs on 15 hits in a 12-1 New York-Penn League victory Saturday night at historic Centennial Field.

The 12 runs matched the total number of runs that the Lake Monsters had scored over the previous six games combined, while the 15 hits were the most for a Vermont team at Centennial since June 23, 2008 vs. Tri-City. Nick Rickles led the attack going 4-for-5 with two runs, a double, triple and three RBI, while Chad Oberacker had three hit and a pair of RBI.

Vermont jumped out on top 3-0 in the first inning on a Chad Lewis RBI single and a two-run homer to left by Dust Robinson. It was the first home run of the season for Robinson, who also doubled and scored two runs. The Lake Monsters added two runs in the third on a Rickles RBI triple and Jacob Tanis RBI single, then took a 7-0 lead with two runs in the fourth on a Rickles two-run single.

Brooklyn scored its only run of the game in the sixth on a Richard Lucas home run, the first extra-base hit allowed by a Vermont pitcher in a 55-inning stretch. The home runs was the only blemish for Lake Monster starter Tyler Vail (1-2), who allowed four hits over 5 1/3 innings for his first win.

Vermont added four unearned runs in the seventh on a Oberacker two-run single and Lewis two-run double, then closed out the scoring in the eighth with an Aaron Shipman RBI groundout. Lewis, Robinson and Tanis each had two for the Lake Monsters, who tied a season-high with 12 runs in the game.

Eduardo Aldama (2-2) allowed five runs on six hits over the first three innings to take the loss for Brooklyn (23-18), while Charley Thurber had three of the Cyclones six hits. The win was the third straight for Vermont (21-19) against Brooklyn this season and snapped a Lake Monsters three-game home losing streak to the Cyclones.

Vermont and Brooklyn continue the series on Sunday with a doubleheader beginning at 1:05 pm. Sunday is also Warriors In Pink Breast Cancer Awareness Day presented by New England Ford Dealers at Centennial.