

Oakland A's beat Minnesota Twins, trade Brad Ziegler to Arizona Diamondbacks

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The major action involving the A's on Sunday was relegated to the diamond.

Oakland made one deal before the 1 p.m. nonwaiver trade deadline, shipping reliever Brad Ziegler to the Arizona Diamondbacks in exchange for first base prospect Brandon Allen and reliever Jordan Norberto.

More significant were the moves that didn't transpire.

Outfielders Josh Willingham and Coco Crisp, both rumored to have drawn interest from the Atlanta Braves, remained with the A's and helped them beat the Minnesota Twins 7-3 to finish a seven-game homestand.

Closer Andrew Bailey and starting pitcher Rich Harden also stayed put, though A's general manager Billy Beane acknowledged he came close to a deal that would have sent Harden to the Boston Red Sox.

Viewed as potential "sellers" as the deadline approached, the A's held on to their best trade chips despite facing an 111 2-game deficit in the American League West.

Beane said he was underwhelmed by the offers he got.

"If someone's asking for a player, and (the trade makes you) worse today and no better tomorrow, there's no reason to make it," Beane said. "That's essentially how we viewed the trade market. We felt there was a lot of value in holding on to our guys."

Part of that value comes in potential draft-pick compensation. The A's have several players - Willingham, Crisp, Hideki Matsui and David DeJesus among them - whose stats could classify them as Type "A" or "B" free agents after the season, meaning the A's would get extra draft picks if they offer those players arbitration and the players sign elsewhere.

But the A's recent play also was motivation not to deal players away.

Oakland continued its offensive hot streak, notching seven straight hits during a six-run rally in the third inning Sunday to finish a 5-2 homestand.

The A's are 10-6 since the All-Star break and lead the majors in hitting (.316), slugging percentage (.479) and on-base percentage (.388) over that span.

"We know we're a ways back, but we're a good baseball team," said right-hander Brandon McCarthy (4-5), who allowed three runs over six innings Sunday. "This is where we should have been all year. I'm glad everybody is still here together."

Beane also had reason to maintain a competitive roster as he's evaluating interim manager Bob Melvin, who took over for the fired Bob Geren on June 9.

"To be able to keep that group together certainly makes the guys feel good, and it makes me feel good," said Melvin, 22-23 since being hired.

Beane would not discuss specifics of why the Harden-to-Boston trade fell through. Red Sox G.M. Theo Epstein was tight-lipped with Boston reporters as well. A source indicated that Harden's injury history might have scared off the Red Sox.

The A's and Diamondbacks had discussed a Ziegler trade over the past month, but Beane said it didn't come together until Saturday night.

One source familiar with the negotiations said the A's initially pushed for Triple-A outfielder Collin Cowgill in a straight-up deal for Ziegler. The A's instead got the left-handed hitting Allen, 25, and Norberto, 24, a lefty who Melvin said is likely to join Oakland's bullpen immediately.

Allen, listed at 6-foot-2 and 235 pounds, will join Triple-A Sacramento. Power is considered his biggest asset, but he had seen his stock fall in Arizona's eyes over the past couple seasons.

He was hitting .306 with 18 homers and 66 RBIs with Triple-A Reno this season. But he's hit just .213 with eight homers and 27 RBIs in 65 major league games spread over three seasons.

Norberto's fastball touches 96 mph, but control has been an issue. He appeared in 33 games with Arizona in 2010 and walked 22 in 20 innings.

Oakland A's update: Good at-bats adding up to big innings

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's continued their recent penchant for big innings Sunday, riding a six-run third to beat the Minnesota Twins 7-3 at O.co Coliseum.

The rally included a string of seven straight hits against Carl Pavano (6-8), including Ryan Sweeney's two-run double.

The A's put together a five-run first inning Thursday in a loss to Tampa Bay, which included six straight hits at one point. A four-run fifth helped them beat Minnesota on Saturday.

"The at-bats are just really good right now," A's manager Bob Melvin said.

The A's also took advantage of Pavano's inability to hold runners. They notched a season-high four stolen bases. Three came from Crisp, who stole third twice in the first three innings. Jemile Weeks also swiped third.

Crisp's 32 stolen bases matches his career high from 2010, and his third-inning steal was the 200th of his career.

Brad Ziegler was following trade rumors closely Sunday morning, so he knew of his eventual trade to Arizona long before he was called in to Melvin's office to get the official news.

"I feel like I'm going into a situation where they appear to want me and they appear to think I'm a piece to help them get over the top," Ziegler said.

Ziegler was 3-2 with a 2.39 ERA in 43 appearances this season. He etched his way into A's history in 2008, when he set a major league record with a 39-inning scoreless streak to start his career.

The Diamondbacks begin a series against the Giants at AT&T Park on Monday, so Ziegler planned to stay in his apartment and drive to the park to meet his new teammates.

Brandon McCarthy (4-5) overcame a two-run, 34-pitch first inning to win his third straight decision. He went six innings and struck out a career-high nine with no walks.

"I felt like my command was pretty sharp today," McCarthy said. "I made some better pitches with two strikes than I've made recently, and that helped."

Right fielder David DeJesus did not start because of a sore right thumb, but he entered as a defensive replacement after Sweeney was ejected for arguing with home plate umpire Dan Bellino in the seventh.

The Los Angeles Times reported Sunday that A's owner Lew Wolff called on Frank McCourt to sell the Dodgers, becoming the first owner to publicly urge McCourt to give up his fight to keep the team.

Left largely intact, A's beat Twins 7-3

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland is playing its best baseball, overall, of this season, and with none of the team's major figures departing Sunday, the current group remains intact just as everything is finally coming together.

"There were no trades out there - or they're keeping us together to make a run," A's starter Brandon McCarthy said after the team's 7-3 victory over the Twins. "We're a little ways back, but this is a good baseball team. ... We're where we should have been all year, even if it's for the last two months, and even if we come up a little short, it's going to be a lot of fun."

The A's are in third place, 11 1/2 games behind division-leading Texas, and they're 10 games below .500, but they won five of seven games on the homestand, and none of the pending free agents - including Josh Willingham, the team's leader in homers and RBIs - is going anywhere.

"Listen, there are two months of the season left, and we place a lot of value on every day we can get a win," Oakland general manager Billy Beane said. "We're under .500 - the first thing we'll try to do is scrape to .500, not look two or three spots ahead; that would be daunting." Beane said that besides the deal that sent reliever Brad Ziegler to Arizona on Sunday and the failed one with Rich Harden and the Red Sox on Saturday night, the A's were not close to any trades. Beane reiterated what he'd said early last week - the team thought that none of the offers it was getting would have made the A's better at any point.

Teams are still permitted to make trades after Sunday's deadline, but players must go through waivers, which is a dicier proposition, and Beane said, "There's always a chance, but I don't think we go into Aug. 1 putting that down as part of the plan."

The A's have recorded at least eight hits in each of the past 16 games, an Oakland record, and the team's .316 average since the break leads the majors.

On Sunday, the Twins scored three runs in the first three innings against McCarthy, but the A's piled up six runs in the third inning, recording seven hits in a row, the final six of which came with two strikes.

Oakland stole four bases, including third three times - manager Bob Melvin said the team was aware that holding runners isn't one of Carl Pavano's strengths. Coco Crisp stole three bases and has 201 for his career. His 32 steals match his previous high.

The A's had nice things going all over the place: Cliff Pennington extended his career- and team-season-high hitting streak to 15 games, and he's 23-for-55 (.418) in that stretch. McCarthy recorded a career-high nine strikeouts in earning his third win in three decisions. And Scott Sizemore, converted from second base to third base, made two good plays in the field.

A's deadline deal sends Brad Ziegler to Arizona

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland's lone move at the trading deadline was to send reliever **Brad Ziegler** to Arizona in exchange for left-handed reliever **Jordan Norberto** and first baseman **Brandon Allen**.

Norberto, 24, will join the A's today, and Allen, 25, will report to Triple-A Sacramento, although general manager **Billy Beane** indicated that Allen - who hit three homers in 29 at-bats with Arizona this year - will be in the big leagues "very soon." Beane said that Allen also is capable of playing the outfield.

Norberto, whose fastball registers in the upper 90s, improves his command every month, Beane said, and Norberto told The Chronicle by phone that he's happy to be joining the A's. "Great, man, I feel great!" he said.

Ziegler had a 2.49 ERA in 223 appearances with Oakland while pitching in almost every role in the bullpen. He also was the player representative, a job that will go to **Craig Breslow** or **Andrew Bailey**.

"I'm excited to jump into the pennant race, but it's also tough because I've been here with the A's since 2004," Ziegler said.

With Ziegler's departure, rookie **Fautino De Los Santos** is likely to move into a more prominent role in the bullpen, according to manager **Bob Melvin**.

Asked if Allen's acquisition changes **Chris Carter's** status as a top first-base prospect, Beane replied that the team is going to need a first baseman, a designated hitter and outfielders down the line. It's widely thought that Carter is now seen more as a potential big-league DH.

Briefly: Outfielder **Ryan Sweeney** earned his first career ejection in the seventh. "I think he was fed up with everyone complaining," Sweeney said of home-plate umpire **Dan Bellino**. "I never say anything, but he was making bad calls all day." ... **David DeJesus**, out with right thumb soreness, had to play right field. DeJesus said he's OK to play defense, and he's day-to-day overall. He had right thumb surgery last season. ... In the Los Angeles Times, owner **Lew Wolff** called for Dodgers owner **Frank McCourt**, who is going through bankruptcy, to sell the team. Wolff said he has no interest in buying them. ... **Brett Anderson** was placed on the 60-day disabled list.

Leading off

'Not' again: The collapse of Saturday's Rich Harden deal after Boston saw his medical records brought back memories of other non-happenings with Boston: Billy Beane's acceptance, then decline of the Red Sox's GM job in 2002 and Charlie Finley's nullified trade of Joe Rudi and Rollie Fingers in 1976.

Drumbeat: A's send Brad Ziegler to Arizona for Jordan Norberto, Brandon Allen

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 12:31pm 7/31/2011

Brad Ziegler is the only player departing the A's today, it appears - just as The Chronicle reported might be the most likely scenario in last Wednesday's editions. I'd heard at that time that Arizona was the top suitor for Ziegler, but the A's initially asked for outfielder Collin Cowgill, and the Diamondbacks weren't willing to part with him.

Instead, the A's moved Ziegler for left-hander Jordan Norberto, who tells me he's flying to Reno tonight to pack his things and then joining Oakland in Seattle tomorrow, and first baseman Brandon Allen. The A's have not announced where either player is reporting, but with the Ziegler move, they have one open spot on the 25-man roster, and Norberto's heading to Seattle.

So it's possible that the team will send Allen to Triple-A Sacramento, at least initially, but it's logical to think he'd be up in September at the very least.

Considering that the A's were close to getting Triple-A first baseman Lars Anderson from Boston last night before Rich Harden's medical records reportedly scared off the Red Sox, and that today they obtained Allen, it doesn't appear that Chris Carter is considered a lock as the future at that spot. It also indicates that, whatever is going on with Daric Barton's shoulder, he might not be back this season. I'd say that it's clear that Barton's stock has slipped, but that was already obvious from his demotion.

Ziegler had been hearing rumors about Arizona for the past week, so he was prepared, but he told me this morning that he's never worn black cleats in his career, so that will be a change. He doesn't have a very long trip to get to the Diamondbacks - they're at San Francisco tomorrow night.

"I'm excited, but it's also tough because I've been here with the A's since 2004," he said. "It's exciting to jump into a pennant race, and that they'd give up a couple of guys that the A's are so high on, I know it's a situation where they want me and they think I'm a piece that will help them."

Norberto, 24, told me by phone that he's also happy with the deal.

"It's great, man, I feel great!" he said. "I told the GM (Billy Beane) so. A new team, new people, that's all great. I'm looking forward to it."

Norberto said that he's been working on his command, which has been the one knock on him, and it's improving. He can throw 96-97 mph, "When I need to," he said with a laugh.

Conor Jackson is familiar with both players from his time with Arizona, and he was impressed the A's were able to pry away both of them. "Really good players," he said.

Jackson and left-hander Jerry Blevins, who faced Allen a lot in the minors, compare Allen, 25, to a left-handed Carter, though without quite as much power.

"He has a lot of potential, and he's a real good kid, too," Jackson said. "And Norberto has a power arm."

The A's also had obtained Carter from Arizona, in the Dan Haren deal.

Manager Bob Melvin said he didn't anticipate the team making any more moves by 1 p.m., "but you never know." Melvin said that Fautino De Los Santos is likely to pitch later in games with Ziegler's departure.

With Norberto's arrival tomorrow, the A's will be back to a four-lefty pen: him, Blevins, Craig Breslow and Brian Fuentes.

David DeJesus remains out with right thumb soreness, but Melvin is hopeful he'll be back in another day or two.

The lineup behind Brandon McCarthy: Weeks 2b, Crisp cf, Matsui DH, Willingham lf, Jackson 3b, Sweeney rf, Pennington ss, Suzuki c, Sizemore 3b

Ziegler isn't the A's only departure: home clubhouse attendant Jordan Iserson is also leaving for a job with a news and sports website. Iserson's non-stop chatter will be missed.

Also, he was The Chronicle's inside source during the Moneyball filming at the Coliseum - here's hoping he makes the final cut as one of the movie batboys.

A's follow post-break formula to down Twins

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- After a busy Trade Deadline came and went, the A's kept their team intact -- save for dealing reliever Brad Ziegler to the D-backs. The lack of activity for a team once believed to be a big mover as the Deadline approached left A's manager Bob Melvin pleased to see the club stand pat and see what the current group of players is capable of doing -- and rightfully so.

"To be able to keep that group together certainly makes the guys feel good -- and makes me feel good," Melvin said. "You want to finish this thing out strong and win as many games as you can, and see where you are in September. We have some good momentum, right now."

That momentum continued on Sunday, when the A's beat the Twins, 7-3, to take the weekend series, as Oakland continued its offensive turnaround and got a solid outing from a starting pitcher for the second straight game. Much like Saturday's win, the A's followed a familiar formula that has worked well for them since the break.

Oakland fell behind early, after righty Brandon McCarthy gave up a pair of runs in the first and one in the third. But the A's roared back with another huge inning, scoring six in the third off Twins starter Carl Pavano, and ultimately putting the game out of reach.

"It's great when you can put the team in an early deficit, and they come right back and get it back for you -- and get it back with even more," McCarthy said. "I think it helps team morale that we know we're not out of games, now. We can go out there and slug our way to some wins."

The A's did just that against Pavano (6-8, 4.90 ERA) in the decisive third. After Scott Sizemore grounded out to lead off the frame, the A's registered seven straight hits -- five of them coming with two strikes -- and the club extended its season-high streak of four or more runs in a game to 11 straight.

"The at-bats are just really good, right now," Melvin said. "We've had a few big innings where we've put up some crooked numbers here since the second half started. We have an eight, we have a seven, and the momentum builds the better the at-bats get, and they pass the baton ... and everybody feeds off everybody."

"Typically, you don't see big innings like that, as many as we've had here in a two-week period."

All nine A's starters reached base, as Hideki Matsui extended his season-high hitting streak to nine games, Cliff Pennington extended his career-high streak to 15 games and the A's recorded more than eight hits for a franchise-record 16th game in a row.

"They're swinging good," Twins manager Ron Gardenhire said. "They had all the hits and had the big inning there. They had the big inning there and ran the bases aggressively. That's what they've been doing. We didn't stop them."

Six different A's picked up an RBI on the afternoon, including Coco Crisp -- who was primarily responsible for the aggressive baserunning Gardenhire mentioned. Crisp swiped three bags, including No. 200 for his career, and matched a single-game career high. The three stolen bases upped his season total to 32, which also matched his career high for a season, set last year with the A's.

While the offense continued its current hot streak, McCarthy (4-5, 3.58 ERA) settled in after laboring through a 34-pitch opening frame. The righty tossed six solid innings, allowing just three hits after the first inning and striking out a career-high nine, while surrendering no walks.

"They swung and missed at stuff," McCarthy said. "I felt like my command was pretty sharp today. I was able to throw a lot of strikes, some better pitches with two strikes than I had been making recently, and that helped."

The only blemish against McCarthy after the first was a third-inning homer by Jim Thome, who hit No. 597 of his career and tied Tony Perez for 27th on the all-time career RBI list with 1,652.

But that's all the Twins would get off the righty, who got ahead of the Twins all afternoon, throwing first-pitch strikes to 20 of the 26 batters he faced. Overall, he threw 85 of his 109 pitches for strikes, while winning his third straight decision. The A's improved to 3-1-1 in five series since the break.

After a 5-2 homestand and the front office's decision to keep the team intact at the deadline, the resurgent A's see their confidence soaring as they get ready to embark on the final two months of the season.

"I know we're a little ways back, but we are a good baseball team," McCarthy said. "We certainly can pitch, the defense has been great lately and, obviously, the offense [is in a groove] with this streak we got going."

"This is where we should have been all year. So I think, even if it's the last two months and we're playing to maybe just come up a little short, we've still got a lot of energy and excitement in here. ... I'm glad everybody's still here and together. It's a good group of guys that's starting to jell, and there's a lot of talent in here."

Sweeney ejected for first time in career

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's outfielder Ryan Sweeney was ejected for the first time in his career on Sunday, after arguing balls and strikes with home-plate umpire Dan Bellino.

Sweeney's departure, which came after he struck out swinging against Twins right-hander Matt Capps to end the seventh inning, forced manager Bob Melvin to place David DeJesus in right field in the top of the eighth.

"It was funny, because I never say anything. You know what I mean?" said Sweeney. "He had been making bad calls at me all game, and he was kind of surprised, I think, because I didn't say anything before -- so he was probably. I told him he had been whatever-ing me all day."

DeJesus was expected to miss at least another game or two because of a sore right thumb that led to his early exit from Saturday's contest. Infielder Eric Sogard remained as the only player available off the bench.

Ziegler trade marks A's lone shakeup

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- When Sunday's non-waiver Trade Deadline passed, the A's roster was largely unchanged -- except for right-hander Brad Ziegler, who was dealt to the D-backs following a month-long pursuit by Arizona general manager Kevin Towers.

The move, which reeled in left-hander Jordan Norberto and first baseman Brandon Allen, marked the only shakeup of an A's team that for weeks was expected to make several trades. But by day's end, Josh Willingham, Coco Crisp and David DeJesus -- at the forefront of such talks -- remained in green and gold, a nod to GM Billy Beane's insistence on not purging his team just for the sake of trimming payroll.

Ziegler was an integral part of Oakland's bullpen since 2008, when he made his Major League debut and set a modern Major League record with a career-opening 39-inning scoreless streak. Since, he's compiled a 2.49 ERA, with 19 saves in 223 appearances for the A's, who avoided arbitration with him in the winter by way of a \$1.25 million contract.

The 31-year-old sidearmer, who served as Oakland's player-union representative, was aware of the trade speculation that surrounded his name and was prepared for such a move. But he still appeared emotional as he addressed local media before saying his goodbyes to longtime A's fans and teammates.

Oakland initially signed Ziegler to a Minor league contract in 2004, after he was released by Philadelphia. A's pitching coach Ron Romanick is responsible for the hurler's successful conversion into a submariner.

"I'm excited, and also it is tough to leave here," Ziegler said. "I've been with the A's since 2004, so it's all I really know in pro ball, other than the short stint with the Phillies. I'm excited to jump into a pennant race, knowing that they gave up a couple guys that the A's are really high on, that the D-backs are really high on, too. I feel like I'm going into a situation where they appear to want me, where they appear to think I'm a piece to help them get over the top and, hopefully, make a playoff run in the last two months."

Arizona entered Sunday just 2 1/2 games behind the first-place Giants in the National League West. Oakland, meanwhile, stood 12 1/2 away from Texas in the American League West.

"Ziegler's been around here for awhile, and everybody knows him and likes him. And the one thing you feel good about is, he's going to a team that's in the race, right now," manager Bob Melvin said. "I'm sure all players appreciate the fact you get to be a part of the pennant race, and one that's a little closer than we're in right now. If there's any consolation in sending a guy off that you've grown close to as an organization, it's that."

Ziegler is set to join the D-backs on Monday across the Bay Bridge in San Francisco, so he planned to simply stay in his Bay Area apartment on Sunday night.

His former club is slated for a nine-game road trip spanning 11 days in Seattle, Tampa Bay and Toronto beginning on Monday. Norberto, who was 6-2 with one save and a 4.25 ERA in 41 appearances with Arizona's Triple-A club in Reno, will fill Ziegler's spot on the 25-man roster and join the A's for the Mariners series.

"I know, looking at the reports and numbers, Norberto is a guy with a high ceiling, throws real hard," Melvin said. "Command had been the issue in the past, and it looks like he's gotten under control. [He has] plus stuff and a power arm."

The 24-year-old Norberto, who is averaging 9.99 strikeouts per nine innings, transitioned to the bullpen in 2008, and is known to throw a mid-90s fastball while occasionally flashing a plus slider. His presence will give the A's four left-handed

options in the bullpen. And with Ziegler out of the mix, Melvin said the club is considering a role promotion for right-hander Fautino De Los Santos, who has a 2.31 ERA and 20 strikeouts in 14 innings through nine appearances since being recalled from Triple-A Sacramento on July 1.

Allen, who was on Arizona's roster at the time of the trade, will land at Sacramento, Beane confirmed. He had just five hits in 29 at-bats for the D-backs, but three were home runs. He was hitting .306 with 18 homers and 66 RBIs in 83 games for Reno at the time of his promotion on July 15.

"Allen's a guy we've always liked," Beane said. "He's got power, walks and homers. He's pretty athletic for a guy his size. He's obviously a guy, at some point soon, we think is going to be a very good player for us. He's ready to take the next step. We'll let him sort of go through the growing pains of being a young player."

The A's also like the potential versatility he brings.

"One of the things we investigated was the possibility of him going to the outfield, and he is a good enough athlete [that], if we needed that, he could," Beane said. "But at some point, we're going to need a first baseman, a DH, some outfielders, so this is all part of that."

His arrival, which came a day after the A's were close to trading for Red Sox first-base prospect Lars Anderson, may prove that Oakland does not consider Daric Barton or Chris Carter a lock as the future at that position.

Slightly overwhelmed by the move, Allen still expressed a grateful attitude for the opportunity waiting in Oakland.

"That's the only way to go about it. Somebody wants you, somebody has been watching you and appreciates what you have to offer. And, hopefully, I can take something over there," Allen said.

To clear a spot on the 40-man roster in the wake of Sunday's moves, the A's transferred lefty Brett Anderson -- on the mend from Tommy John surgery -- to the 60-day disabled list.

Now that the non-waiver trade deadline has passed, deals involving players on the 40-man roster cannot be made unless the players already have cleared waivers. In other words, the player must be offered to the other teams in reverse order of the standings, and if he is claimed by one of the teams, he cannot be traded to a team other than the club that claimed him. The club that placed the player on waivers can either withdraw the request and keep the player, work out a trade or let the player go to the claiming team, which would then have the rights to the player.

Recuperating DeJesus pressed into duty

By Tom Green / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Entering Sunday's series finale with the Twins, A's manager Bob Melvin expected right fielder David DeJesus to be out "a day or two," due to soreness in his right thumb.

DeJesus was out of the starting lineup on Sunday. But what was supposed to be a rehab day for the left-handed hitter turned into an emergency defensive appearance, when Ryan Sweeney was ejected by home-plate umpire Dan Bellino in the seventh inning after arguing about the strike zone.

"Defensive-wise, it wasn't a big deal," said DeJesus, who played two innings of defense, but didn't have a plate appearance in the A's 7-3 win.

Because the club expects DeJesus' injury to be a day-to-day issue, no roster moves were made and the A's were working with a two-man bench of catcher Landon Powell and infielder Eric Sogard. But Sweeney's first career ejection changed those plans, as DeJesus was the only outfielder in the dugout.

DeJesus left Saturday's 8-3 win over the Twins in the third inning, after he felt pain in his right thumb following his first at-bat of the night -- a strikeout. The A's removed him from the game as a precaution, because it was the same thumb he had surgery on to repair a torn ligament last season while he was with the Royals.

"It was just random. Walking up to the plate, I felt it a little bit and I didn't want to push anything," DeJesus said on Saturday. "We'll go from there, and hopefully it's only a couple of days and I can get back out there."

While DeJesus did not attempt to hold a bat on Sunday, he said he plans on seeing how the thumb feels with a bat in his hand on Monday, after the team arrives in Seattle for a three-game set.

Crisp, McCarthy lead A's to 7-3 win over Twins

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Coco Crisp keyed Oakland's offense with two hits and three stolen bases, leading Brandon McCarthy and the Athletics past the Minnesota Twins, 7-3, Sunday.

Ryan Sweeney drove in two runs and McCarthy threw six effective innings as the A's won their fifth in seven games.

Jim Thome had three hits, including his 597th home run, for the Twins, who have lost three of four. Joe Mauer added three hits and drove in a run while Danny Valencia added two hits and an RBI.

McCarthy (4-5) allowed three runs and eight hits. He did not walk a batter and struck out a career-high nine. He won his third straight decision following a five-game losing streak.

Craig Breslow, Grant Balfour and Andrew Bailey each pitched a scoreless inning to finish it.

Twins starter Carl Pavano (6-8) lasted four innings, giving up seven runs and nine hits. He is winless in four starts since the All-Star break.

The day began with Oakland players learning that popular reliever Brad Ziegler had been traded to the Arizona Diamondbacks, who open a series across the bay in San Francisco on Monday night.

The A's scored six runs on seven consecutive hits in the third to erase a 3-0 deficit.

Sweeney's two-run double highlighted the outburst.

Pavano got Scott Sizemore on a grounder to start the inning before Jemile Weeks doubled to spark the rally. Crisp, Josh Willingham, Conor Jackson and Cliff Pennington, who extended his hitting streak to 15 games, also drove in runs.

Ben Revere tripled on the second pitch of the game and scored when Mauer grounded out.

Valencia added an RBI single to give the Twins a 2-0 edge in the first.

McCarthy kept the damage to a minimum despite allowing five hits in the inning as the Twins left the bases loaded.

With two outs in the third, Thome drilled McCarthy's pitch to left-center for his 597th career home run. With his 1,652nd RBI, he matched Tony Perez for 27th on the career list.

Thome has put together three consecutive multihit games for the first time since Aug.

28-30, 2007, at Texas. The last time he recorded more than three hits in a game was July 8, 2008.

Thome extended his hitting streak to seven games and is batting .480 (12 for 25) during that span.

NOTES: A's OF David DeJesus (sore right thumb) entered as a defensive replacement when Sweeney was thrown out of the game (his first career ejection) by plate umpire Dan Bellino in the seventh. ... Thome has hit 31 home runs against the A's. ... LHP Jordan Norberto will join the A's in Seattle on Monday. ... The A's set an Oakland record with their 16th straight game with at least eight hits. ... The A's entered as the only team in the majors without a win against Pavano. ... The A's had at least three steals of third for the first time since April 17, 1993, at Milwaukee.

Small-market teams turn buyers at trade deadline

By HOWIE RUMBERG, AP Sports Writer

Michael Bourn went from the bottom of the NL Central in Houston to the top of the wild-card standings with Atlanta — and he wasn't the only player who suddenly found himself in a pennant race.

Ubaldo Jimenez, Erik Bedard, Rafael Furcal and Mike Adams were also on the move at the end of a topsy-turvy weekend, when the surprising Indians, Pirates and Diamondbacks made some of the boldest moves at baseball's trade deadline, shedding those longtime seller tags and shopping for immediate help.

All in all, it was a relatively quiet deadline day as the non-waiver cutoff came and went Sunday. The biggest deals came days earlier when All-Star outfielders Carlos Beltran and Hunter Pence changed teams.

Among the big names staying put after weeks of speculation: Padres closer Heath Bell, Tampa Bay outfielder B.J. Upton and Astros lefty Wandy Rodriguez.

And standing pat — unusually — were the New York Yankees, content to try and catch Boston in the AL East with a rotation that has reclamation projects Bartolo Colon and Freddy Garcia at the back end.

"I'm very confident with the position I've taken," Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. "It's not like I'm blowing smoke, trying to promote our guys. ... No, I believe in our guys."

Just 2 1/2 games back of Detroit in the AL Central, the Indians completed their Saturday night deal with Colorado for Jimenez about a half-hour before the 4 p.m. EDT deadline. Until then, they were waiting for results of the pitcher's physical.

"This was a rare and unique opportunity, especially in our market, which comes along few and far between," Cleveland general manager Chris Antonetti said.

The Indians don't seem concerned about recent reports that Jimenez, who was 19-8 and an All-Star a year ago, has seen his velocity drop and his ERA rise this year. He is 6-9 with a 4.46 ERA in 21 starts. He had a 2.88 ERA in 2010.

They paid a hefty price for the right-hander who spent much of April on the DL, giving up minor league pitchers Alex White and Joe Gardner, first baseman Matt McBride and a player to be named, expected to be lefty Drew Pomeranz.

White and Pomeranz were considered the top two pitching prospects in Cleveland's organization.

"It was painful for us," Antonetti said, "but we decided the time was right. We're a better team than we were."

Division-rival Detroit made a move, too, getting right-hander Doug Fister from Seattle on Saturday and will add him to the rotation. The Tigers also received reliever David Pauley for two prospects and a player to be named.

After a record 18 straight losing seasons, the Pirates are in the thick of it in the NL Central race, and they showed they're serious in dealing for San Diego outfielder Ryan Ludwick — a day after acquiring Baltimore first baseman Derrek Lee.

The Diamondbacks bolstered their bullpen, adding Oakland submariner Brad Ziegler as they chase the World Series champion Giants in the NL West. On Saturday, Arizona obtained Jason Marquis from the Nationals.

"We're trying to get better and trying to make the bullpen better," Diamondbacks manager Kirk Gibson said. "I think you're seeing an effort by the organization to try and let us continue to do what we've done and go beyond what we've done. So that part of it energizes you."

In other deals Sunday:

_ The AL East-leading Red Sox picked up Bedard after a deal for Rich Harden fell through late Saturday. Six prospects were involved in a three-team, seven-player trade involving the Los Angeles Dodgers.

_ The St. Louis Cardinals acquired Furcal, a two-time All-Star shortstop, from the Dodgers for Double-A outfielder Alex Castellanos.

_ Texas further bolstered its bullpen a day after adding Baltimore right-hander Koji Uehara by dealing for Adams, San Diego's stellar setup man.

Adams, who was 3-1 with a 1.13 ERA in 48 games for the Padres, will be under Texas' control through next season. The Padres received minor league pitchers Robbie Erlin and Joe Wieland.

_ Atlanta made a move to keep up with the NL East-leading Phillies, getting Bourn from the Astros, who also sent Pence to Philadelphia on Friday night.

Bourn, a two-time Gold Glove winner, is hitting .303 and leads the majors with 39 stolen bases. He goes from the last-place Astros to a playoff-contending team that has one of baseball's best pitching staffs.

"I'm excited," Braves manager Fredi Gonzalez said. "He makes the defense do things they don't want to do. Pitchers are going to throw pitches they don't want to throw."

The Astros received outfielder Jordan Schafer and three minor league pitchers, but the Braves didn't give up any of their top prospects.

"We did not go to the mat to get Pence," Atlanta general manager Frank Wren said. "If we had gone to the mat for Pence, we would have gotten him."

Earlier this week, the Giants acquired Beltran from the Mets and Orlando Cabrera from the Indians; Toronto traded for St. Louis center fielder Colby Rasmus in a three-team deal that sent former White Sox pitcher Edwin Jackson to the Cardinals; the Brewers landed utility man Jerry Hairston Jr. from Washington; Detroit got infielder Wilson Betemit from the Royals; and Boston added Mike Aviles from Kansas City for infield depth.

Teams can still make trades for the rest of the season, but it becomes more complicated. Players must first pass through waivers, meaning any club gets an opportunity to claim them before a deal is done.

Trades must be completed before Aug. 31 for a player to be eligible for the postseason with his new team.

The Big Lew Wolff Interview, Part 1

Marine Layer, newballpark.org 8/1/2011

Last Monday, I received an email from A's PR man Bob Rose. He indicated that his boss, A's owner Lew Wolff, wanted to have a chat with me. After some back and forth, we arranged for a meeting at the Fountain Restaurant inside Wolff's Fairmont San Jose early Wednesday morning. The discussion went two hours long and covered a wide range of topics. Wolff expressed his interest in having an unedited conversation to explain what he's been doing, and I was more than happy to have that chat. The transcribed discussion below has minimal editing – only to clean up incomplete sentences, the inevitable "uh" and "um" moments, and for me to add brief editor's notes when I felt the need. My comments and questions are all in bold, while Wolff's is in regular font. Editor's notes are in italics/square brackets. I have intentionally not included links so as to not distract the reader. The interview runs more than 12,000 words. This is Part 1 of 5. The topics covered are as follows:

- Part 1 – History of working in Oakland, 980 Park site, Process

- Part 2 – Oakland now and what it takes, Earthquakes, contraction
- Part 3 – Territorial rights, Giants' motives, Dodgers/Mets, Coliseum
- Part 4 – Tarps, discounts, player development, CBA, payroll, T-rights again
- Part 5 – Redevelopment, Target Field, Cisco Field, Keith Wolff, museum and history

I hope you enjoy this interview as much as I did. I think you'll feel that there are many revealing answers in there, and plenty of stuff for Oakland and San Jose backers to dislike. I'd also like to thank Lew for allowing me the opportunity to do this Q&A.

- Marine Layer

-ML: You became managing partner in 2005, after a year-plus stint as VP of venue development. Coincidentally, I started this blog in 2005, partly as a writing exercise, and to inform fans. Over six years have elapsed. Did you think it would take this long?

LW: No, obviously I didn't. Prior to buying the team I was working on the thing. I'm not sure the title meant anything. I thought that we would figure out a way to do it on the Coliseum site or one of the sites in Oakland. At the time the economy was booming and the value of residential entitlements or zoning was huge. There were a lot of public companies, all these big homebuilders, were dying for the ability to get more and more residential rights, to build apartments or homes.

We came up with the idea. The very first editorial which I saved in Oakland – this was before I was even the owner – said "No public money in baseball." Which is okay. Except for the Giants and Dodgers, all teams' new ballparks have had some form of public help (financing). So we had an idea that if we brought a new ballpark to Oakland or any place, we could say to the community, "You don't have to write a check, but we'd like to entitle certain property for residential" – not for our developer. The reason this escapes everybody is because nobody's going to take their time to look into it except you.

The idea was this: Say someone wanted to build 1,000 apartment units. And they're going through the process. You entitle that – assuming the city wants that – those entitlements back then were worth \$100k per unit just for the right to build, sort of like land value. Instead of the developer taking that money, that money would go into a small joint powers unit (authority) and be used to fund a baseball park. That's a double win there. The city gets more housing and those entitlements don't have to be by the ballpark. They could be in Dublin or Fremont, they could be anywhere (in Alameda County). This was a very interesting concept and we checked it legally. It was very clearly stated in an article in the Chronicle, so it wasn't a hidden idea. With all the delay and difficulty in both Oakland and Fremont – Oakland in the sense of land availability because it's a built up city – to get land assembled, and then all the issues with traffic and freeways and off-ramps and so on – so time went on and of course the economy changed. So this entitlement approach to build a ballpark is a dead issue, and we don't see it coming back for a long time. That says, "Oh my goodness," instead of putting up \$100 million, which we were hoping to do at the most, we now have to do the whole thing ourselves. That pretty much requires us to be in a central business district (downtown) because the infrastructure is already there. We don't have to rebuild the freeway or an off-ramp. The entitlement aspect of it – somebody should've jumped on it. We couldn't do it by ourselves. We weren't looking for money, we were looking for process. So we spent the time before we bought the team and about a year or so after. I think I told you before – I don't have the book with me- that it takes me one hour, forty-five minutes to go through everything we did in Oakland. Even though somebody has a sign in RF saying, "Lew lied, he never did anything." That person hasn't come and sat down and asked, "Tell me what you did do?"

The other side of it is that side – Oakland, Richmond – that whole area was built up rapidly during WWII, shipbuilding and so on. (Land) ownership is very diverse. Just land acquisition alone is difficult. Even though some of the areas look blighted, as soon as you say we're trying to build a ballpark there, immediately the land values go way up. Some people say that the "North of 66" plan was just a gimmick. What they're not willing to do and be fair about is that we looked at every possible site – Coliseum, Laney, even the Victory area – all that stuff and somebody at the City said to me, "We can't help you here. What do you think?" At the same time Councilman Larry Reid was looking at another area around the Coliseum where he was going to acquire a lot of stuff. I drove through there and it looked pretty blighted. All I wanted to do is start a dialogue with 50 property owners or 30. Except for one or two people, nobody wanted to even discuss it. There was relocation, we could've moved people to the (shuttered Oakland) Army Base. People will just say, "Oh he just made that up." If I had my material with me you'd see that before even looking at that we looked at every opportunity that was available. We wouldn't do it if everybody didn't want to do it. We couldn't even get traction.

It's very simple. One of the very first things any city should do is look at their (county) assessor's office. Draw a boundary around Victory Court or something. It takes a day or two determine there are 20 property owners and their names. Some of them are in a trust or something. If you just took the assessed value – and because you're going to buy the property add 50% – you'd have a good idea of the that (total value) is and if you really wanted to, you'd call each person and say, "We're just thinking about this. You're a property owner here. We're not doing anything yet." Then you'd get an idea of the desire to participate from the beginning. Someone might say, "Oh my god, that's my business, I can't take it." If we gave you that assessed value, and then we paid for relocation to the Army Base and a nicer (newer) facility – I mean it's a lot of work. I didn't expect Oakland to do that. But I also didn't expect them just to draw a line around six blocks and say, "Oh there's a ballpark."

ML: We get that too much now.

That's all we're getting, because I believe – and this is not a defense – it's because we've explored everything more than once. For two years now this committee, which I've had very little access to – and I'm sure they haven't talked too much to the Giants either – guys I know, they're good guys. They're supposed to step in and check out if I did everything, and if I missed something. I haven't heard that I missed anything. You could've written a PhD dissertation by now.

ML: Certainly.

There's other reasons that perhaps Bud Selig is contemplating this. He's my friend, and he's involved in lots of stuff in baseball.

ML: You've had that information that you showed me last time we talked here two years ago. Because it's taken this long and you have access to this panel, do you feel that the you and the argument you've made have been somewhat rebuked?

No, just the opposite. I think they can't find a flaw in it. If they can, tell me what it is. They're not rebuking me. I think it's so overwhelming. If someone flew in from Mars and you were going to put a ballpark somewhere and one was already in San Francisco, where would you put the next one? [laughs]

Had they come up with a different approach that could be refuted or digested, I think it I would've seen it by now. At the same time, I can't give a reason why a decision hasn't been made. It's a baseball decision. The commissioner is a very contemplative person. I'm an owner that wants to cooperate with baseball. When I got into this Bud Selig told me, "What I encourage owners to do is to put baseball first and their teams a very close second." Instead of putting a team in bankruptcy or whatever's happening in other cities. I'm just not cut out for that. I feel that being in baseball is a privilege, and we're enjoying it.

ML: We've already gone plenty into my second topic, which is a lot about the pro-Oakland crowd who've said you've lied. I've written that the only thing you've really lied about is that you didn't have a Plan B. Is that right, or am I off-base there?

Well, the word lie is a very strong word in my life. I don't call people liars. The Plan B would be that if someone says to us – no fault of Oakland by the way – that "you have a team that you can't move and you have to stay in this facility and make it work with the Raiders there." Plan B is fairly simple, it's just that we haven't addressed them. Moving out of the state to other markets, of which there aren't many. Selling the team to somebody that can do what we can't do.

ML: Which a lot of them are hoping that you do.

That's fine, but that party should also have a real plan, go through what we've gone through. The one thing that I wanted to do, because I've been in public dealings with cities my entire life, is that I didn't want to be the owner who says, "If you don't do what I tell you we're moving to San Antonio." Also, I didn't want to get on a plane and start schmoozing with the mayor of San Antonio or Portland or Las Vegas or Monterrey, Mexico. I don't think that's the way to do one of these things. I still don't think it's the way to do it. But almost every new ballpark, including the Giants', has been done under the threat of leaving town. So Plan B, the options are obvious. I think a better way to phrase your question is, "Have you spent time doing that?" The answer is, "We have not." We still don't feel like we're moving out of the market.

ML: I'm in the market and I just took the train down here.

Exactly. Frankly, I don't have the energy to start discussing with another city council outside the state of California. If we were dead in the water, we'd have to ask baseball what they'd want us to do.

ML: You've led into my next subject already with the discussion about what's been done in Oakland. What is the difference between getting something done here, in San Jose, and in Oakland right now?

Very simple. One, we have a downtown location. When I say "San Jose" all I'm talking about is a specific site in San Jose.

ML: That one. [Ed.: I point in general direction of Diridon]

If somebody that you could go to San Jose instead of Oakland, that doesn't mean it just happens. San Jose acquired land and went through the process of acquiring it in a downtown area where the off-site costs are minimized. They would be in downtown Oakland if there was a site. There's a demographic difference, but if our entitlement program worked in either Oakland or Fremont we would've been there. I don't care what people say. We would've been there. As much as I love San

Jose I wasn't thinking about San Jose at the time at all. We wouldn't have spent the amount of time and money we did on Fremont if we wanted to get out of our district. People don't remember that.

There have been huge demographic changes since the Bash Brothers and the A's drew X attendance. Back then the population of Oakland was probably twice what it is today. [Ed.: The 1990 population of Oakland was 370,000, slightly less than the current figure of 390,000.] I don't track it. St. Louis is the city where I came from, and the city used to be 800,000 people, it's 300,000 now [Ed.: This is correct]. There used to be ten, twelve major company headquarters there. Now there aren't any except Anheuser Busch, who is rumored to be leaving. There's been a shift. Even if there were a site in Oakland, if we didn't have the entitlement program it would be very hard to rationalize it. It's even hard now. \$400-450 million for a privately financed stadium – which it should be private, why should the people pay for it. The process that the public can help you with it can be huge. San Jose, through whatever reasons, has gotten the process so that we can go ahead.

If we started in Oakland, whether it's Victory Court or floating over the freeway – I want to talk to you about that one.

ML: Yeah. We'll get to that one (980 Park).

Can I tell you my quick stance on that one?

ML: Sure, go ahead.

It's an A+ in planning and an F in implementation. [laughs]

ML: Okay!

I love concepts like that.

ML: Well, it came from an architect.

Geodesic dome over a city so that you can control the climate?

ML: [laughs]

I like that stuff, but I'll let somebody else do it.

ML: That reminds me of a documentary on Robert Moses. There were all these concepts for a Dodgers' stadium. One of them was a geodesic dome by Buckminster Fuller, which would've been interesting for 20 years until they got tired of it.

Two things about that. One thing I think you'll like intellectually. Housing filters down. So if the Rockefellers live in a mansion with a roof and spread out. I did some work years ago in Guam. A subdivision house with a carport and so on is what filtered down. Now if the Rockefellers were living in a geodesic dome we'd have geodesic domes everywhere.

ML: Makes sense.

Give me Robert Moses for one year and I'll have a new ballpark anywhere you want. [laughs] He had more power than the mayor and the president. This great metropolis (New York), that great ability to create, we don't have that today. I always give a speech that if you have a cure for cancer somebody will be against it. I like the democratic approach to things, but it's inhibiting the state getting things done.

ML: Sure is. State. Country.

You know when the President said, "shovel ready?" If he meant shovel ready after the environmental work, we'd be talking about a decade sometimes.

A's owner Lew Wolff calls on Frank McCourt to sell Dodgers

By [Jorge L. Ortiz](#), USA TODAY

Commissioner Bud Selig is not only one who wants Frank McCourt to just go away. One of the Los Angeles Dodgers owner's brethren is now calling for him to leave.

Oakland Athletics co-owner Lew Wolff told the [Los Angeles Times](#) that McCourt's

attacks on Selig are misguided and called for him to sell the team. Wolff is the first owner to publicly speak out against McCourt.

"My hope is that the Dodgers will be sold to a party that will restart this great franchise, and that Frank and his family will benefit from a positive sale," Wolff told the Times. "But to try and equate or compare what Bud Selig has done with the administration of the current Dodger franchise is unsupportable."

McCourt's lawyers have contested in divorce court Selig's claim that McCourt has taken more than \$100 million from the team for his personal use, and they argued that Selig has received more than that amount from MLB through his yearly salary of more than \$18 million.

Wolff stood up for his former University of Wisconsin fraternity brother, saying his comments were not an attempt to gain favor with Selig as the A's continue to wait for a report on their stadium options. Wolff also denied any interest in buying the Dodgers.

"For anyone to seek to diminish Bud's accomplishments in order to rationalize their own actions is, in my opinion, ludicrous and hugely disingenuous," Wolff said.

Selig rejected a proposed TV rights deal with Fox that McCourt said would be worth upwards of \$3 billion, citing concern over McCourt's handling of the Dodgers' revenues. McCourt responded by filing for bankruptcy.

"I can't think of one owner that is not supportive of the actions taken by MLB," Wolff said.

Oakland Athletics owner calls on Frank McCourt to sell Dodgers

Lew Wolff is first MLB owner to publicly encourage McCourt to abandon fight for team. Wolff says McCourt's 'ludicrous' personal attack on Bud Selig in divorce court filing prompted him to speak out.

By Bill Shaikin, LA Times, 8/31/2011

Oakland Athletics owner Lew Wolff on Sunday called upon Frank McCourt to sell the Dodgers, becoming the first Major League Baseball owner to publicly urge McCourt to give up his fight to keep the team.

Wolff also said he believes owners are united behind Commissioner Bud Selig, whose authority McCourt has challenged in Bankruptcy Court.

Wolff, who lives in Los Angeles, said he decided to speak out after attorneys for the Dodgers' owner argued in a divorce court filing that whatever money McCourt might have taken out of the Dodgers was exceeded by the money Selig took out of MLB.

"For anyone to seek to diminish Bud's accomplishments in order to rationalize their own actions is, in my opinion, ludicrous and hugely disingenuous," Wolff said.

Steve Sugerman, the spokesman for McCourt, declined comment.

Wolff said the legal process should have played out without a personal attack on Selig.

"My hope is that the Dodgers will be sold to a party that will restart this great franchise, and that Frank and his family will benefit from a positive sale," Wolff said. "But to try and equate or compare what Bud Selig has done with the administration of the current Dodger franchise is unsupportable."

In a filing in Los Angeles Superior Court, McCourt's attorneys disputed the MLB claim that McCourt had taken more than \$100 million out of the Dodgers for personal use.

"Even taking the commissioner's false claim that \$100 million was taken out of the Dodgers at face value," the filing read, "it is difficult to understand how the commissioner can complain about this when he pays himself a salary of approximately \$20 million a year — meaning that he has taken out between \$120 million and \$140 million from baseball revenues during the same period that he complains about \$100 million being taken out by the owner of a team."

Selig's annual salary is \$18.35 million, according to the most recent tax documents available online. That salary is set and approved by major league owners, according to MLB executive vice president Rob Manfred.

Since Selig became commissioner in 1992, annual MLB revenue has increased from \$1.2 billion to \$7 billion, according to the league.

Under McCourt, the Dodgers' revenue increased from \$156 million in 2003, the last year of prior ownership, to \$286 million in 2009, the last year available in divorce court records.

Selig, concerned in part about what McCourt has done with that revenue, rejected a proposed multibillion-dollar television contract, a decision McCourt has said forced the Dodgers into bankruptcy.

"I can't think of one owner that is not supportive of the actions taken by MLB," Wolff said.

Wolff said he did not speak out as a way to curry favor with Selig, his fraternity brother at the University of Wisconsin, who has kept the A's waiting more than two years for a decision on a proposed move to San Jose. Wolff said no one — including Selig — had asked him to speak out and said he had no interest in buying the Dodgers.

Magic Johnson, however, said he might be interested in buying the team. In a public discussion with Times columnist Bill Plaschke on Saturday at Loyola Marymount University, the Lakers legend reminded the crowd that the Dodgers are not for sale at this time.

"If the Dodgers ever came up for sale, would I take a look at it, with some other people?" Johnson said. "Of course you would look at it. The brand is so strong."

Johnson did not say who those "other people" might be. He has partnered in business ventures with billionaire Ron Burkle.

Burkle, the co-owner of the Pittsburgh Penguins, is believed to be interested in buying the Dodgers.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Seven-run rally lifts surging River Cats

By Veronika Tafoya / Sacramento River Cats

A massive seven-run second inning gave Sacramento starter Graham Godfrey plenty of support in Sunday's 12-4 win over Colorado Springs at Raley Field.

Godfrey, who became the 11th River Cat to win 10 games in a season, allowed four runs and five hits over 7.0 innings.

A two-run homer by Chris Carter gave Sacramento a 2-0 lead in the first inning. The Sky Sox picked up two runs in the next inning when Matt Macri homered to bring in Michael Paulk. But the River Cats, who are 16-7 over their last 23 games, couldn't wait to answer back.

Before any outs had been made, seven River Cats reached base and five runs crossed the plate. Five players collected doubles in the inning. For Matt Carson, his 34th double of the season leaves him seven shy of matching the franchise record doubles in a season.

"It's an honor to be able to have a chance to break the record," said Carson, "but it's not something that I am focusing too hard on or is pushing my play in any way."

Carson's hit scored two runs, Adam Rosales had a two-run double, and Jermaine Mitchell and Josh Donaldson each picked up an RBI in the seven-run inning.

Colorado Springs threatened to cut the lead with Mike Jacob's two-run homer in the third, but it would be the last time they would score.

The seven-run inning wasn't enough for the River Cats, who picked up one run in the fifth and two more in the sixth, crushing the Sky Sox with a 12-4 lead.

Godfrey has not given up more than four runs in any of his starts this season. Sacramento relievers Joey Devine and Andrew Carignan tossed two more scoreless innings to close the game.

Godfrey is second in the Pacific Coast League with 10 wins, a team high.

The River Cats will face Colorado Springs on Monday at 7:05 p.m. with left-hander Josh Outman going against right-hander Edgar Gonzalez in the third game of the four-game series.

Players' Wives Food Drive presented by Kinder's Meats & Deli

River Cats fans donated more than 1,000 pounds of food and the organization raised the cash equivalent of \$15,000 in food and cash donations during the Players' Wives Food Drive presented by Kinder's Meats & Deli on Sunday afternoon at Raley Field.

Willie Eyre's wife, Rachel; Matt Carson's wife, Lisa; Josh Outman's wife, Ashley; and Justin Souza's girlfriend, Brittany, helped benefit the Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services during the 12th annual event. The River Cats organization thanks its fans for their great generosity on this afternoon.

RockHounds' comeback bid falls short

Jordan Mason, Midland Reporter-Telegram

What looked like a blowout started to feel like a comeback, but ultimately proved too large a hole for the Midland RockHounds to dig out of Sunday as the Corpus Christi Hooks held them off late for an 8-7 win at Citibank Ballpark.

The RockHounds (17-19) nearly erased a six-run deficit but were never able to get that final push to get over the hump as the Hooks' bullpen held them scoreless in the final three innings.

"It's nice," Hooks first baseman Jimmy Van Ostrand said. "We had a rough first couple games of the series ... to get the win here is always a good feeling."

Sunday started as bad as a home start can possibly start for 'Hounds starter A.J. Griffin when Corpus Christi's Jonathan Villar creamed the first pitch of the game just over the short porch wall in right for a solo home run.

Griffin appeared to settle in, retiring the next two batters, but the Hooks (17-19), brimming with confidence from Villar's blast, extended the inning before Jon Gaston blasted an 0-1 pitch over the short porch bullpen for a three-run shot and a 4-0 lead.

"It got us off to a good start in the game," Van Ostrand said. "We had (Henry) Sosa on the mound so we had a lot of confidence, and it got us off to a quick start, so it's nice."

The RockHounds, though, responded later in the inning by loading up the bases with just one man down.

Adam Heether then ripped an RBI single to cut the lead to 4-1, but two straight pop outs left the bases loaded, and the RockHounds left with a missed opportunity.

"We let them off the hook there," RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone said.

Griffin, meanwhile, got into a jam again in the third when the Hooks loaded the bases with just one man down.

Griffin fanned Frostad for the second out and got up to a full count on Jose Vallejo, but Vallejo smacked a two-run single to right on the next pitch, and a fielding error by Matt Sulentic allowed the bases to clear.

After Jonathan Villar was hit by a pitch, Wikoff punctuated the Hooks' second four-run inning by slapping an RBI single to right for an 8-1 lead.

Midland, again, answered with a run later in the inning, a solo shot by Heether, but seemed buried by the early barrage of runs.

Stephen Parker, though, was the catalyst for the RockHounds' rally again, getting Midland started with an RBI single in the fifth.

After RBI doubles from Michael Spina and Shane Peterson made it 8-5, Wes Timmons poked one over third base that stayed fair for an RBI single to trim the lead to two.

The momentum seemed to favor a third straight comeback win in the sixth when Sulentic reached on a single, then stole second, advanced to third on a wild pitch and later scored on a passed ball to bring Midland within one.

Meanwhile, the Midland bullpen continued to give the RockHounds a chance by quieting the previously noisy Hooks bats.

"You see (Jonathan) Ortiz, (Trey) Barham and (Jared) Lansford just shut them down right there," Scarsone said. "That gave us not only the chance to come back, but the hope to come back."

But the Hooks bullpen was just as dominant allowing two RockHound hits in the final three innings with the frustration boiling over in the ninth as Michael Spina was tossed after a called third strike.

Scarsone said he's looking forward to the series finale at 6:30 p.m. today, yet he couldn't help but wonder what might've been Sunday.

"Maybe if we had one more inning," he said, "we would've got them."

'HOUND BITES: The loss for the RockHounds snapped a four-game winning streak, tied for the longest of the season. ... RockHounds designated hitter Adam Heether became the team's leading home run hitter with his solo blast in the third inning. Heether (11) passed first baseman Michael Spina (10) who took sole possession of the lead when Jermaine Mitchell, who was tied with Spina, was promoted to Triple-A Sacramento. ... After being ejected for arguing a called strikeout in the ninth, Spina returned to the plate where he threw his bat, helmet and gloves at the feet of home plate umpire Adam Schwarz before arguing more vehemently. Spina had to be separated by RockHounds manager Steve Scarsone before returning to the dugout. Scarsone said the team will wait on word from the Texas League as to whether or not he will be disciplined but until then will proceed as normal. ... Spina extended his on-base streak to 20 games while Wes Timmons extended his hit streak to eight games.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: Jason Bergmann (1-6, 6.67) is expected to start the series finale today while the Hooks are expected to start Jonnathan Aristil (4-8, 6.61).

Modesto Pitching Mows Down Ports 6-2

Stockton Ports

MODESTO, Calif. - As the month of July wound down on Sunday night at John Thurman Field, the Modesto Nuts continued to stay hot. Having won nine of their last 10 games entering Sunday's contest, Modesto earned their fourth straight victory, beating the Stockton Ports by a final of 6-2 and in doing so handing the Ports their third straight loss.

Ports starter Dan Straily (10-7) was able to weave is way in and out of trouble over the first three innings. Straily put the first two batters aboard in the 1st and got Nolan Arrenado to hit into a rally-killing 5-4-3 double-play. In the 2nd, Jared Clark drew a leadoff walk and Angelys Nina followed with a double to put runners at second and third with nobody out. Straily would bear down and get David Christensen to foul out, Beau Seabury to strike out and Eliezer Mesa to ground to short to end the frame. In the 3rd, Straily pitched around a leadoff walk and retired the next three batters in succession.

Stockton rewarded Straily with a pair of runs in the 4th off Nuts starter Chad Bettis (9-5). Anthony Aliotti led off the inning with a single to left, followed by an RBI double from Petey Paramore to give the Ports a 1-0 lead. Two batters later, with Paramore and third and one out, Ryan Lipkin picked up an RBI with a groundout to short to make it a 2-0 Ports advantage.

As it turned out, Paramore's 4th inning double would be Stockton's final hit on the night. After the double, Nuts pitchers combined to retire 18 of the final 19 Ports hitters to finish the game.

Modesto's offense came to life in the bottom of the 5th. Eliezer Mesa singled to start the inning followed by a walk drawn by Delta Cleary, Jr. Two batters later with one out, Nolan Arrenado drove in the first Nuts run with a single to left to cut Stockton's lead to 2-1. Kent Matthes came up next and gave Modesto the lead for good with a two-run double to left to make it a 3-2 game. Two batters later with one out, Nina tripled to right to score Matthes and extend the Nuts lead to 4-2. Nina was thrown out on a relay trying for an inside-the-park home run to end the inning.

The Nuts added runs over the final two innings. In the 7th with one out, Josh Rutledge extended his hitting streak to 24 games with a triple to right to knock Straily from the game. Mike Benacka entered from the Ports bullpen and, after getting a ground-out to the mound, yielded an RBI single to Matthes to make it a 5-2 game.

The run was charged to Straily who took the loss after going 6.1 innings and allowing five runs on seven hits while striking out seven and walking a season-high four.

Benacka didn't allow a run in two-thirds of an inning of work.

In the 8th, Ports reliever Omar Duran allowed another run on a two-out RBI single from Cleary to make it a 6-2 advantage. It was the only run allowed by Duran in his lone inning of work.

Bettis picked up the win for Modesto, going seven innings and allowing two runs on five hits while striking out seven.

Kurt Yacko and Mike Marbry each tossed a perfect inning of relief down the stretch. Bettis, Yacko, and Marbry combined to retire 13-in-a-row to finish the ballgame.

Stockton and Modesto will play the second game of their three-game set on Monday night at John Thurman Field. Murphy Smith (3-7, 4.55 ERA) will make his first start for the Ports since being placed on the disabled list on July 22nd. He'll be opposed by Nuts right-hander Parker Frazier (7-9, 4.19 ERA). First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

Bees Win Third Straight

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

GRAND CHUTE, WI- The Burlington Bees (12-23) hit two home runs and got five shutout innings from RHP Blake Hasebrock (6-6) to earn a 5-3 win over the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (13-22) before 2,423 fans at Time Warner Cable Field on Sunday afternoon.

The Bees scored three runs in the third inning to take a 3-0 lead. LF Royce Consigli (2-4) hit a double and moved to third base on a single by 1B Josh Whitaker (1-4). DH A.J. Kirby-Jones (1-3) smacked a home run over the left field wall for a 3-0 Burlington lead.

Burlington added another run in the fourth inning. RF Douglas Landaeta (2-4) doubled and moved to third base on a throwing error by Timber Rattlers RF Franklin Romero, Jr. Landaeta scored on a throwing error by Wisconsin C Tony Pecheck.

Consigli pulled a pitch from Wisconsin LHP Charly Bashara (4-5) over the right field wall in the fifth inning for a solo home run and a 5-0 lead.

Hasebrock surrendered just three hits. RHP Daniel Tenholder pitched two scoreless innings and the Timber Rattlers scored one unearned run against Burlington RHP Blake Treinen in the eighth inning.

Wisconsin scored two runs in the ninth inning, highlighted by a solo home run from 1B Nick Ramirez (1-4).

The Bees and Timber Rattlers finish their series on Monday night at 7:05 p.m. RHP Jonathan Joseph (2-4, 6.85) gets the start for Burlington against RHP Maverick Lasker (1-4, 6.16) for Wisconsin. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:45 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at www.gobees.com

Vermont And Brooklyn Split Twinbill

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

BURLINGTON, VT --- Chih-Fang Pan snapped a 3-3 tie with a two-run double as the Vermont Lake Monsters scored three runs in the bottom of the sixth inning for a come-from-behind 5-4 victory and a split of a NewYork-Penn League doubleheader Sunday afternoon at historic Centennial Field after the Brooklyn Cyclones had taken the opener 4-1.

Brooklyn had scored three runs in the top of the fifth inning of the nightcap on a Nelfi Zapata two-run single and Ismael Tijerina RBI single to take a 3-2 lead before the Lake Monsters recorded their 14th come-from-behind victory of the season with the three-run bottom of the sixth.

A Jordan Tripp leadoff walk and Michael Fabiaschi one-out single gave Vermont runners on first and third before Aaron Shipman's suicide squeeze bunt scored Tripp with the tying run. Shipman was safe at first as pitcher Jeremy Gould bounced the throw to first and a walk to Sean Jamieson loaded the bases before Pan lined the two-run double down the righthfield line to give the Lake Monsters the lead.

Nathan Kilcrease (2-1) picked up the win despite allowing two runs on four hits over two innings, while Tanner Peters gave up his first run of the season in the seventh inning but also picked up his ninth save. Tijerina was 2-for-4 and Chase Greene 2-for-2 with a triple for the Cyclones.

In the opener, Brooklyn scored three of its four runs in the first inning off Vermont starter Drew Granier (0-1) on a pair of sacrifice flies and a Brian Harrison RBI single. Travis Taijeron led off the sixth with his seventh home run of the season. Vermont scored its run in the second on a two-out Jacob Tanis single and Diomedes RBI double.

Reliever Tyson Seng (2-1) tossed three scoreless innings with six strikeouts for the win as four Cyclone pitchers combined to strikeout 15 Lake Monsters over the seven innings of game one. Bobby Crocker, playing in his first game with Vermont after being promoted from the Arizona League, went 2-for-3 in the opener and 1-for-3 with a run scored in the nightcap.

Vermont (22-20) and Brooklyn (24-19) will wrap up the four-game series at Centennial Field on Monday night starting at 7:05 pm with a team photo giveaway courtesy of Catamount Color for all fans in attendance. The homestand then continues as the Lake Monsters host State College in a three-game series Tuesday and Wednesday at 7:05 pm and Thursday at 11:05 am.