

**Oakland A's lose to Seattle Mariners**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

SEATTLE -- The A's travel itinerary for their current nine-game trip is confusing, but the goal is simple.

Forget the memories of their past road struggles and start fresh.

That plan never took root Monday in an 8-4 loss to the Seattle Mariners at Safeco Field.

Starting pitcher Trevor Cahill was knocked around for 12 hits and was charged with seven runs in four-plus innings.

The A's came up empty in the top of the first after loading the bases with no outs against right-hander Blake Beavan, and never found their rhythm after that.

"It ended up not being a good game for us," manager Bob Melvin said.

And there was troubling news for the A's that had nothing to do with the scoreboard.

Shortstop Cliff Pennington left the game in the bottom of the sixth and was diagnosed with Bell's palsy, a nerve condition that causes temporary facial paralysis.

Pennington said he started having problems with the left side of his face after the team arrived in Seattle on Sunday night, and his condition worsened Monday.

"I couldn't blink my left eye to see," he said after the game. "I was trying to play with it, but I was not able to see the ball well."

He also described it by saying "it feels like you went to the dentist and the whole side of your face is numb."

A quick online search said symptoms can vanish -- even without treatment -- as quickly as 10 days, although the condition has been known to affect others for several weeks.

Pennington said he and teammate Brandon McCarthy found research saying that the condition can improve in a couple of days. He was administered medication and the team is listing him as day to day.

"They said it can occur overnight and be gone overnight," Pennington said.

There seems a strong chance the A's would put him on the disabled list, especially since the team is already operating with a three-man bench and outfielder David DeJesus is unavailable with a sore right thumb.

The A's wanted to build on momentum from a 5-2 homestand. They are now 18-36 on the road, but will have ample opportunity to right the ship.

They began a nine-game trip Monday that also takes them to Tampa Bay and Toronto.

The A's led off the game with consecutive singles from Jemile Weeks, Coco Crisp and Hideki Matsui. But Josh Willingham and Ryan Sweeney both took called third strikes and Conor Jackson flied out to left to end that threat.

"That took a little momentum away from us," Melvin said.

Seattle struck for five in the second off Cahill (9-10), whose 12 hits allowed tied his career high.

Cahill was not helped by his defense. Third baseman Scott Sizemore misplayed a ball that loaded the bases in the second, and Ryan Sweeney let Dustin Ackley's low liner skip by him for a three-run triple.

But Cahill worked his way into trouble constantly and couldn't make pitches to get out of it.

He admitted some frustration at his inconsistency this season after his 6-0 start.

"Last year I felt like I got in a groove and was able to keep it up for the most part," Cahill said. "At the beginning of the year, I felt like I was in a groove, and then couldn't (sustain it) for more than two or three starts."

Kurt Suzuki went 2 for 3 with a double and a homer to lead the A's.

### **A's update: New reliever Jordan Norberto has rough debut outing**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

New A's reliever Jordan Norberto endured a shaky Oakland debut in Monday's game at Seattle.

The left-hander, obtained from Arizona on Sunday in the Brad Ziegler trade, relieved Trevor Cahill in the fifth inning and got himself into immediate trouble. Norberto made a throwing error on a snap pickoff throw to first. He went on to allow one single, one walk and a wild pitch that scored a run in one inning of work.

No surprise that the book on Norberto, 24, says getting the ball over the plate is his key. His fastball touches 96 mph, and he also throws a slider and changeup.

Norberto recognized several familiar faces when he joined the team earlier in the day.

Among them were outfielder Conor Jackson (a former Diamondbacks teammate), second baseman Jemile Weeks (an opponent in the minors) and fellow reliever Fautino De Los Santos (they grew up near each other in the Dominican Republic).

His memories of Weeks?

"He got me twice. Two hits, 2 for 2," Norberto said.

The A's played Sunday with a 24-man roster, and Norberto's addition gives them an eight-man bullpen -- four left-handers and four right-handers.

A's manager Bob Melvin likes the flexibility that gives him for late-inning matchups, but it also leaves him a three-man bench. He hinted the A's might send a reliever down after the Seattle series in order to add a position player.

The A's began a nine-game road trip in which they will zigzag from Seattle, to Tampa, Fla., to Toronto. They will have flown 6,544 miles by the time they return home Aug. 11.

"You would think potentially (the cities) could get a little closer," Melvin said, "whether you go out somewhere and puddle-jump a little bit, or get out (east) and work your way back."

The A's traded minor league outfielder Matt Carson to the Rays for future considerations. They also released minor league reliever Willie Eyre.

Right fielder David DeJesus was out of the lineup for a second straight day, but he hit off a tee and said his right thumb was feeling better.

### **Chin Music: Update on Cliff Pennington's condition, and other notes from A's 8-4 loss to Mariners**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/2/2011 12:00am

A quick postgame recap of the A's 8-4 loss to the Seattle Mariners. I figure many of you will get the early-edition story in your papers, and it won't include the postgame news ...

--Shortstop Cliff Pennington left the game in the bottom of the sixth and was diagnosed with Bell's Palsy, a nerve condition that causes temporary facial paralysis. He said he began having problems closing his left eye Sunday night, and the condition worsened Monday to the point he had to come out of the game.

Scary stuff, obviously. Scanning some online articles, it appears Bell's Palsy can last a couple days, a couple weeks or even longer. Sometimes it's just a one-time occurrence for people and never surfaces again. Pennington had never experienced any problems of this sort before Sunday night.

He is on medication right now and is listed as day to day. But I wouldn't be surprised if he goes on the DL. This isn't a condition you want to take lightly, or attempt to play baseball with until you know it's under control. Plus, the A's only have a three-man bench right now, and that's really two when you consider that David DeJesus is still unavailable because of right thumb soreness (manager Bob Melvin hopes to have him back Wednesday).

A reporter who was in the A's clubhouse afterward said he had a bout with Bell's Palsy about 30 years ago. It affected him for about six weeks, then symptoms disappeared and he's never experienced it again. That's just one person's experience.

Pennington said "it feels like you went to the dentist and the whole side of your face is numb."

You have to hope this is a temporary thing ...

—As for the on-field news, the A's did not start this nine-game road trip off on a good note. That bases-loaded, no-out situation in the first, when they came away with no runs, looked an awful lot like their pre-All Star break offensive form.

But perhaps more concerning for the A's was Trevor Cahill's outing. He went just four-plus innings, allowed 12 hits and was charged with seven runs. Cahill just hasn't been able to string together several good outings in a row since his 6-0 start. "We know he's an elite pitcher, he's just having trouble running two or three starts together (to build on)," Melvin said.

It's worth noting that not everything was hit hard off Cahill. And his defense let him down at times. But he was constantly putting runners on base, and when you do that, there's no margin for error.

—With a double and home run Monday, nine of Kurt Suzuki's last 12 hits are for extra bases.

That's all for now ...

## **MARINERS 8, A'S 4**

### **Road trip begins with another Cahill loss**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

A stinker of a start makes Oakland's already lengthy road trip look even more taxing for the club, which is hitting the three farthest points of the American League in the next week and a half.

The 6,544-mile journey opened at Safeco Field, where the last-place Mariners, coming off a horrendous month that ended with two members of the rotation getting traded, topped the A's 8-4.

Oakland starter Trevor Cahill gave up 12 hits, matching his career high, in four-plus innings. His defense wasn't particularly fine, either as Seattle's five-run second inning was fueled by two poor decisions.

With two on and one out, Scott Sizemore fielded a grounder by Ichiro Suzuki and turned around and moved toward the runner at third before throwing to first, and Suzuki was safe on the fielder's choice. After Brendan Ryan's RBI single, Dustin Ackley hit a sinking liner to right. Ryan Sweeney tried to make a sliding catch, but the ball got by him and went for a three-run triple.

Melvin said Sweeney thought he'd be able to make the catch, but, Melvin said, "With the bases loaded, you want to make sure you catch it and not let it get by you."

Cahill has not found his footing with any consistency after an All-Star 2010 season and a strong first six weeks of this season. Since going 6-0 with a 1.72 ERA in his first eight starts, he is 3-10 with a 5.12 ERA.

"At the beginning of this year, I was in a groove, and ever since then, I haven't been able to figure it out for more than two starts in a row," Cahill said. "Whether it's command or stuff, it hasn't been there, time in and time out."

The A's scored three runs off Mariners rookie Blake Beavan, and Kurt Suzuki hit a solo homer in the ninth. Coco Crisp recorded his career-high 33rd stolen base.

Oakland's 11-day road trip, which will stop at Tampa Bay beginning Friday and Toronto next week, is the first in team history to include domed stadiums (Safeco counts, though the roof should be open this week) in all three cities.

It's the distance between cities, though, that has the A's shaking their heads.

"I'm trying not to think about it too much, because if you break it down game by game, it's not too bad," reliever Craig Breslow said. "But if you look at it in totality, it's ridiculous."

According to travel secretary Mickey Morabito, the team will spend 16 hours in the air all told. Its trip to Japan was shorter.

"Worst *ever*," Suzuki said.

"The city pairings make no sense," Morabito said. "Look at a map - you can't fly farther in this league."

Oakland is 18-36 on the road this season, the second-worst record in the league, and the team is 0-8-3 in its past 11 road series. The A's have lost 27 of their past 34 away from the Coliseum.

### **A's shortstop Cliff Pennington has Bell's Palsy**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Cliff Pennington** was diagnosed with Bell's Palsy on Monday, and by the sixth inning, he was having trouble seeing because he couldn't close his left eye and it kept tearing up.

"It feels like I went to the dentist and the whole left side of my face is numb," he said.

Pennington, who was replaced in the sixth by **Eric Sogard**, is hopeful that the usually temporary condition, in which a nerve causes facial paralysis, clears up within a day or two. He was put on medication immediately, which is expected to shorten the duration.

"I was trying to play, but I couldn't see the ball very well," Pennington said. "I didn't want to cost the team. As soon as I can blink, I can play."

Considering that outfielder **David DeJesus** is also day-to-day with right thumb soreness, the A's bench tonight would consist of only catcher **Landon Powell** unless the team makes a move. Oakland has eight relievers, so it's likely that the A's would return to their usual seven-man bullpen and call up utilityman **Adam Rosales**.

Pennington's career-high hitting streak came to an end at 15 games.

**Norberto's debut:** Left-hander **Jordan Norberto**, acquired the day before from Arizona, made his Oakland debut in the fifth, replacing **Trevor Cahill** with one on and no outs, and after throwing one pitch, he made an error on a pickoff attempt. Then he allowed a hit and a walk, and let the inherited runner score.

"New team, coming in, I think nerves bit him a bit," manager **Bob Melvin** said.

**Minor-league doings:** With all of the A's outfielders remaining at the trade deadline, the team will have little need this year for **Matt Carson**, so Oakland sent the 30-year-old to Tampa Bay for future considerations, a deal made to give him a better shot at making the big leagues. The A's also released Triple-A Sacramento reliever **Willie Eyre**, 33, so he can pursue free agency.

First baseman **Brandon Allen**, acquired Sunday in the **Brad Ziegler** trade, was driving from Phoenix to Sacramento on Monday and he is likely to be in the River Cats' lineup tonight. His stay in Sacramento might be a short one; general manager **Billy Beane** said that Allen will be in the majors "very soon."

## **A'S LEADING OFF**

**Round number:** Hideki Matsui was awarded an infield single rather than a fielder's choice on a grounder to third in the first inning when Chone Figgins tried to get runner Jemile Weeks, instead. Why a big deal? It was the 60,000th hit in Oakland history.

## **Drumbeat: Jordan Norberto joins A's bullpen, David DeJesus still out**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Safeco Field 8/1/2011 5:45pm

Jordan Norberto met the A's in Seattle today, and I do mean met - he knows Conor Jackson from Arizona and Fautino De Los Santos a little because they are from the same part of the Dominican Republic, but otherwise, Norberto was greeting strangers. He remembers facing Jemile Weeks in the Pacific Coast League, saying "He got me a few times. I think he might be 2-for-2 off me."

Norberto, who throws fastball-slider-changeup said he's comfortable facing both left-handers and right-handers, but manager Bob Melvin said he'd like to ease Norberto in with maybe a left-on-left situation. Melvin joked that having said that, Norberto's first appearance will wind up being in the 10th inning with the bases loaded.

Norberto has worked hard on improving his command, and scouts believe that when he consistently throws strikes, he'll be a very effective big-league pitcher - a hard-throwing lefty is always a plus for a bullpen. Norberto said he is now able to repeat his delivery consistently, so he's repeating his pitches - that means more strikes.

Plus, give pitching coach Ron Romanick a week or two, and he undoubtedly will make some small changes that pay off. Romanick has a knack for little fixes that turn pitchers around.

David DeJesus took 15 swings off a tee in the cage today and it went well; he'll take batting practice tomorrow if his sore right thumb is feeling good, and Melvin is hopeful he can play Wednesday.

In the meantime, the A's bench is basically Eric Sogard. Melvin won't use backup catcher Landon Powell if he can avoid it, because he'd be needed in the event Kurt Suzuki has to come out of the game. DeJesus is limited to defense only - though he said if he had to, he could probably just bunt if he had to go up to the plate.

Could the A's drop down to seven relievers and bring up an extra bench player - Adam Rosales, say? It's possible but it doesn't sound like it's in the cards right now. Should someone else get dinged up a little, count on it, though. The A's have a little less need for an eight-man bullpen with two days off during this trip.

This trip, by the way, is nearly 7,000 miles total. It hits the three farthest points of the American League. It's a bear.

"Worst *ever*," Suzuki said.

Here's the lineup behind Trevor Cahill: Weeks 2b, Crisp cf, Matsui DH, Willingham lf, Sweeney rf, Jackson 1b, Pennington ss, Suzuki c, Sizemore 3b

In other news, the A's traded Matt Carson to Tampa Bay for future consideration (cash or a player to be named), but really, this is a reward for Carson for being a solid member of the organization for several years. He could have a shot to play with the Rays, and he wasn't going to have one with Oakland, and the A's always have been very good about letting their older minor-leaguers go elsewhere if they have a shot - and, of course, if they are not in Oakland's plans. For similar reasons, the

A's released reliever Willie Eyre, who'd pitched well at Sacramento, in order to pursue free agency. Both very good guys, best of luck to them.

### **Big inning dooms Cahill, A's in opener**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com | 8/2/2011 2:22 AM ET

SEATTLE -- Blame it on the change of scenery, or perhaps the flip of the calendar.

The A's, coming off a 5-2 homestand that resulted in 54 runs, entered Seattle on Monday oozing with confidence, hoping to utilize the momentum to distance themselves from previous road woes as they embarked on a nine-game trip.

But signs of differing results proved visible from the start in an eventual 8-4 loss to the Mariners that brought the club's season road mark to 18-36.

Oakland jumped all over Seattle starter Blake Beavan for three consecutive hits to lead off the game and load the bases with no outs. But the threat ended just as quickly as it began, with Josh Willingham and Ryan Sweeney left frozen at the plate on called strikeouts before Conor Jackson's flyout.

"It just didn't end up being a great game for us all the way around," manager Bob Melvin said. "We have the bases loaded, nobody out, have the same feeling we've been having here for a while and don't score, that took away a little momentum from us."

More of the same misery continued for the A's on the pitching end, where righty Trevor Cahill labored through just four-plus innings, giving up seven runs and a career-high-tying 12 hits with two walks and two strikeouts.

Lack of consistency continues to plague the young right-hander, who is now 3-10 with a 5.16 ERA over his last 16 starts after going 6-0 with a 1.72 ERA through his first eight outings following an All-Star 2010 campaign.

"Last year I felt like I got into a groove and was able to keep it up for the most part," he said. "At the beginning of this year, I felt like I was in a groove, and ever since then I haven't been able to figure it out for more than a couple starts in a row. Whether it's command or velocity, it just hasn't been there.

"I've been watching video since I started struggling a little bit, and comparing it to last year. Everything's kind of the same, it's just that my stuff's a little bit off, not as good or sharp, just kind of a consistency thing."

Cahill escaped the first inning unscathed despite allowing two baserunners, but he allowed the Mariners to bat around in a five-run second frame.

Back-to-back one-out hits from Casper Wells and Chone Figgins were followed by an RBI line-drive double off the bat of Franklin Gutierrez. With runners on second and third, Ichiro Suzuki hit a sharp grounder to third, where Scott Sizemore hesitated near Figgins at the bag before making a throw to first that proved too late. The decision was followed by more trouble, as Brendan Ryan followed with an RBI hit, and an ensuing triple from Dustin Ackley that flew past a diving Ryan Sweeney in right field cleared the bases.

"At first I thought he had a chance, then I saw him kind of slow down and do that little dive, and I knew after that it would get down but I definitely didn't know it would get by him," Ackley said. "That was a nice surprise."

Not so much for the A's on a must-make play.

"I think Sweeney thought he was going to catch the ball," Melvin said. "He came in, tried to make the play, and with the bases loaded, you want to make sure you catch the ball, not let it go right by you."

Following Hideki Matsui's third-inning sacrifice fly to narrow the Mariners' lead to four, Ackley scored Seattle's sixth run of the night in the fourth on Miguel Olivo's base hit to extend the advantage back to five.

Cahill's departure with a runner on first base in the fifth paved the way for the A's debut of lefty Jordan Norberto, who arrived Sunday via the Brad Ziegler trade from Arizona. The hard-throwing southpaw struggled, quickly making a throwing error to first base on a pickoff attempt and eventually allowing Seattle's seventh run to score from third base on a wild pitch.

Melvin chalked up Norberto's performance to some nerves, as Cahill's showing that resulted in just 39 of his 73 pitches for strikes -- coupled with his ongoing struggles -- was more disconcerting.

"His strike-ball ratio isn't great," Melvin said. "Over the course of his career, he hasn't been a type of guy that's thrown a ton of strikes above the balls, but he's had success because he mixes his pitches and makes pitches when he has to.

"The games he's getting hit around, he's leaving some balls up, and there are some innings where there are some cheap hits, some hard hits, and it kind of snowballs. He's going to keep working to find more consistency. We know he's an elite pitcher."

The A's, meanwhile, finally chased Beavan away in the seventh. Leadoff doubles from Eric Sogard and Kurt Suzuki plated a run, and, after Suzuki reached on Coco Crisp's second hit of the night, righty Jamey Wright's wild pitch allowed Oakland's third run to cross the plate.

Despite the loss, the A's still managed to garner at least eight hits for the 17th consecutive game, extending an Oakland record. One of the last of the night, Kurt Suzuki's ninth homer of the season, came in the ninth.

### **Pennington exits, diagnosed with Bell's palsy**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SEATTLE -- A's shortstop Cliff Pennington was diagnosed with Bell's palsy, a disorder of the nerve that controls movement of the face muscles, following Oakland's 8-4 loss to the Mariners on Monday night.

Pennington was deemed day to day after exiting the game in the sixth inning when he couldn't move his left eye. He has since been given medication and the A's infielder is hopeful his symptoms don't last long.

"I was trying to play with it, but I wasn't able to see the ball real well, and I didn't want to cost us the game or something because I couldn't see the ball," he said. "It can happen overnight, and it can be gone overnight. Obviously there are cases where it's lasted a lot longer, but hopefully we made it so we got it fixed quickly and I won't miss a beat."

Pennington's symptoms surfaced on Sunday night when the team landed in Seattle before increasingly worsening. His vision becomes blurred because the eye can't close, which causes them to water.

"As soon as I can blink, I can play," he said. "It feels like you went to the dentist and the whole side of your face is just numb."

Pennington is expected to return when he can at least close his eye, meaning he doesn't necessarily have to be symptom-free. Still, the A's can't predict when that will happen, so manager Bob Melvin will likely consider expanding his bench, especially with David DeJesus (right thumb) currently listed day to day, as well.

"I haven't made any calls yet, but certainly we'll discuss that tonight," he said. "If Pennington is more than a day, if DeJesus is more, we basically have a catcher on the bench."

Eric Sogard replaced Pennington in the bottom of the sixth inning, leaving Landon Powell as the lone option left on the bench. Pennington was 0-for-2 on the night before his departure, which snapped a career-high 15-game hitting streak.

## **Still with A's, Harden ready to battle King Felix**

By Doug Miller / MLB.com | 8/2/2011 2:36 AM ET

Rich Harden wasn't supposed to make the start for the A's on Tuesday, but he'll nevertheless take the ball.

Mariners right-hander Felix Hernandez is better than the 9-9 record he brings into the same game at Safeco Field, and he showed it in his last start.

For Harden, it's been a strange Trade Deadline period. The right-hander, who began his injury-riddled career with the A's in 2003, was set to join a depleted Red Sox rotation before Sunday's non-waiver Trade Deadline. The A's would have received first-base prospect Lars Anderson and a player to be named later in return.

But the Red Sox nixed the deal because of concerns over Harden's medical history: Harden suffered a strain to his lat muscle on report day in Spring Training, and he didn't make his debut until July 1.

Now that he knows he's still with Oakland, he'll get the ball Tuesday in Seattle, and he said he's happy about that.

"I like it here," Harden said. "This organization has been a big part of my life, given me a lot of opportunities. I'm excited to continue pitching and getting ready for Tuesday."

Meanwhile, Hernandez turned in his most important victory of a trying season for the Mariners in his last start, when he beat the Yankees in New York to put an end to Seattle's season-high 17-game losing streak, which was the longest in the Majors this year.

"As he continues throughout his career and gets deeper into his career, that's going to be part of it," Mariners manager Eric Wedge said. "He's already done a tremendous job for a young man with experience, taking on a leadership role. That's going to continue for him and ultimately even more so as he gets a little older and these kids keep getting younger as they come up.

"He's done a fine job with that. What everybody is going through right now, which you have to go through as a young team, is just the business and professional side of the game when it comes to making tough decisions. You have to understand and be strong enough to handle that."

### **A's: Long-ball shortage**

The A's have hit two home runs or fewer in each of the last 80 games, which is the third-longest such streak in Oakland history, and the longest since an 86-game stretch from July 5, 1978-April 10, 1979 (the record is 91, from July 31, 1974-May 16, 1975). The A's last three-homer game was May 2 against Texas. Oakland has hit 64 homers this season, the fewest in the AL.

- The A's have committed 15 errors in 17 games since the All-Star break and have 87 errors this season, second-most in the league.

- Oakland is 14-20 in one-run games, the worst record in the AL and fourth-worst in the Majors. The A's are 6-10 in extra-inning games.

### **Mariners: Singles guy**

Ichiro Suzuki is tied for the Major League lead with Boston first baseman Adrian Gonzalez with 101 singles. Ichiro has led the Majors in singles in nine of his 10 seasons with the Mariners, including seven straight.



- Second baseman Dustin Ackley has 42 hits in 37 games. He is looking to become the fifth Seattle rookie to average a hit per game in a minimum of 50. He would join Alvin Davis (1984), Danny Tartabull (1986), Ichiro (2001) and Kenji Johjima (2006).
- First baseman Justin Smoak leads the team with 23 doubles, and 35 of his 78 hits this year have been for extra bases.

### **Worth noting**

- A's outfielder Conor Jackson has hit safely in 15 of his last 18 games (23-for-67, .343) with five doubles, two homers, 12 RBIs and six multihit games.
- Hernandez is 11-4 with a 2.53 ERA in 20 career starts against Oakland, and he's won his last four decisions against the A's. Seattle is 7-1 in his last eight starts against Oakland.

### **Newly acquired Norberto ready to roll**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SEATTLE -- Lefty Jordan Norberto, reeled in through Sunday's trade that sent hurler Brad Ziegler to the D-backs, was immediately welcomed to the big league scene on Monday, joining an A's bullpen that now boasts four southpaws.

Norberto was 6-2 with one save and a 4.25 ERA in 41 appearances with Triple-A Reno. Sporting No. 59, the 24-year-old was expected to be available for the A's opening contest against the Mariners.

Though comfortable facing both righties and lefties, Norberto will likely be eased into a non-pressure situation against a left-hander, manager Bob Melvin said -- before joking, "The minute I say that, I'll probably have him in a tied game in the 10th inning with the bases loaded."

Norberto was averaging 9.99 strikeouts per nine innings and is known to throw a mid-90s fastball with a changeup while occasionally flashing a plus slider. The Dominican native made his Major League debut with Arizona in 2010 and was 0-2 with a 5.85 ERA in 33 appearances.

Although he's endured past struggles with command, Norberto has worked to improve those woes by repeating his delivery for consistency.

"I'm excited to be here and for the opportunity they gave me to come straight to the big leagues," he said. "They told me they're happy to have me here, and I'm just going to try to do my best to help the team. That's what we're here for."

Said Melvin: "I talked to some of the guys in Arizona today, and they say a guy that throws the ball over the plate, he's going to have success. He's worked pretty hard on that this year, and we're looking forward to getting him in a game."

### **Still in Oakland, Willingham thinking big picture**

SEATTLE -- It's rather easy for a player to disguise any thoughts or worries about trade speculation in front of the media -- especially when there's nothing to hide.

Long considered prime trade bait leading up to Sunday's non-waiver Trade Deadline, A's outfielder Josh Willingham had plenty of reasons to let the idea of going to another team seep into his mind a bit.

Except it didn't.

"I'm sure now that it's passed, some guys are relieved," Willingham said before Monday's game in Seattle. "But I was never stressed out about it. I wasn't even thinking about it. I was able to block it out."

Willingham's wife, Ginger, occasionally brought up the topic, "but I wouldn't want to talk about it," he said. Instead, the veteran used the month to get healthy and revamp his season stats by hitting .324 with five home runs, five doubles and 16 RBIs over 19 games after being reinstated from the disabled list on July 7.

He entered Monday with a .253 average, the highest it's been since the first week of the season.

"I can't say I'm doing anything much differently," he said. "Just keeping it simple. I think we all are in here."

Oakland has hit a Major League-leading .316 since the break and has collected at least eight hits in each of its 16 games during that time. And with the club's roster largely unchanged -- aside from right-hander Brad Ziegler's departure to Arizona via trade -- after Sunday, the A's have the chance to keep it up.

The idea excites Willingham, who noted he'd be interested in a long-term deal with the club should the offer present itself.

"I like it here," he said. "It hasn't been discussed, but if it was an option, then for sure."

Willingham will be a free agent -- currently of the Type-A type -- at season's end, meaning the A's could choose to let him go to another team and receive a first-round Draft pick as compensation.

### **DeJesus swings off tee, nearing return**

SEATTLE -- Already playing with a small bench, A's manager Bob Melvin is hopeful that outfielder David DeJesus will be able to return by Wednesday.

DeJesus, who exited Saturday's contest with a sore right thumb, was supposed to undergo a rehab day on Sunday, but in the wake of Ryan Sweeney's ejection following an argument over the strike zone in the eighth inning, he was forced to enter the game as an emergency defensive replacement.

DeJesus swung the bat off a tee on Monday afternoon in Seattle and could take part in batting practice as early as Tuesday, he said. The A's are being cautious with him, as it's the same thumb he had surgery on to repair a torn ligament last season.

Melvin is currently owner of an eight-man bullpen, equating to a bench of Landon Powell and Eric Sogard, minus DeJesus. Moreover, the A's skipper said Sogard is essentially the only option, as he'd prefer to keep Powell available in the event catcher Kurt Suzuki was forced out of a game.

Melvin might be inclined to expand his bench when the road trip continues through Tampa Bay and Toronto -- both home to artificial turf -- in an effort to give a handful of his players a day off during that span. But the team also has off-days both before and after the Rays series.

"If something happens injury-wise, you always like to have at least that fourth guy on the bench," Melvin said. "We have had a need here recently for the eight pitchers, and with a couple off-days coming up we'll see how it goes."

### **Worth noting**

- Oakland's road trip through Seattle, Tampa Bay and Toronto will accumulate to 6,544 total miles, marking perhaps the lengthiest trip by any team this year.

"It is what it is," manager Bob Melvin said. "We could be traveling commercial, sitting in airports. In the grand scheme of things, we get treated pretty well."

Included in the trip are two off-days -- one Thursday and another Aug. 8, giving Melvin the option of tweaking his rotation. But the A's skipper has never been a fan of skipping a guy in the rotation, especially in the second half.

"If I can give a guy an extra day, I'm going to do that," he said. "We'll see how it goes."

- Outfielder Matt Carson, most recently stationed at Triple-A Sacramento after appearing in a combined 46 games with the A's during the 2009 and 2010 seasons, was traded to Tampa Bay on Monday for future considerations.

"Matt deserved a better opportunity to get back to the big leagues than he had here," assistant general manager David Forst said.

- The A's on Monday released right-handed reliever Willie Eyre, who was 4-5 with a 3.48 ERA in 39 games -- two starts -- for Sacramento.

- Right-hander Tyson Ross has been listed as temporarily inactive on the River Cats' roster because of personal reasons.

### **A's lose at Seattle, 8-4**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE — The A's travel itinerary for their current nine-game road trip is confusing, but the goal is simple.

Forget the memories of their past road struggles and start fresh.

That plan never took root Monday in an 8-4 loss to the Seattle Mariners at Safeco Field.

Starting pitcher Trevor Cahill was knocked around for 12 hits in four-plus innings and was charged with seven runs.

The A's came up empty in the top of the first after loading the bases with no outs against right-hander Blake Beavan. They never got another chance to do major damage against Beavan (2-2), who lasted 6½ innings and was making just his fifth major league appearance.

In short, it was the kind of formula that led to the A's 18-35 road record coming into the game. And it wasn't the carry-over in momentum they hoped for on the heels of their 5-2 homestand.

The A's will have plenty of time to right the ship.

After playing three games in Seattle, they cross the country for a three-game set with the Tampa Bay Rays and then head north for three against the Toronto Blue Jays. All told, they will cover 6,544 miles by the time they return from the three-city trek, and they want something positive to show for it.

"Having a good homestand and swinging the bats a little bit better hopefully would lead to a little more confidence on a road trip," A's manager Bob Melvin said before the game.

The A's had a chance to get things rolling early Monday.

They led off the game with consecutive singles from Jemile Weeks, Coco Crisp and Hideki Matsui. But Josh Willingham and Ryan Sweeney both took called third strikes and Conor Jackson flied out to left to end that threat.

Seattle struck for five in the second off Cahill (9-10), whose 12 hits allowed tied his career high.

Franklin Gutierrez lined a one-out RBI double down the right-field line to score Casper Wells for the Mariners' first run. With runners on second and third, Ichiro Suzuki grounded a ball to third baseman Scott Sizemore. Sizemore went toward third, where Chone Figgins had wandered off the bag, before spinning and throwing late to first, which loaded the bases.

Brendan Ryan lined an RBI single to left to make it 2-0. With the bases still loaded, Dustin Ackley followed with a low liner to right. Ryan Sweeney made a sliding attempt to block the ball, but it got by him and went for a three-run triple and 5-0 Mariners lead.

The A's trailed 6-1 when Cahill left after Justin Smoak led off the fifth with a single. The right-hander had allowed one earned run or fewer in six of his previous career starts against the Mariners.

Seattle tacked on a run in the fifth off Jordan Norberto, who made his A's debut in relief of Cahill.

Oakland would get no closer.

The A's got two runs in the seventh to make it 7-3. Eric Sogard and Kurt Suzuki delivered back-to-back doubles to bring home a run, and Crisp's single scored Suzuki.

Suzuki added his ninth homer in the ninth for the final margin.

## **The Big Lew Wolff Interview, Part 2**

Marine Layer, newballpark.org 8/2/2011

### **Part 2**

**ML: As I understand it, you had met with Mayor Quan in Oakland recently.**

I'm actually having lunch with her today. I have not met with her (yet). She has been very nice to make time to see me. There's no agenda.

*[Ed. - I have not heard anything from either camp about what was discussed during that meeting. Nothing to the regular media either, AFAIK.]*

**ML: Just a chat, really.**

What I'm telling you is what I'll tell her. There's no magic bullet here. If there was it's simple. MLB (the panel) would've come to me with Oakland and said, "Here's a suggested financial plan"

**ML: Comprehensive.**

Remember that they're the messenger. They're just doing what they've been asked to do and I'm sure they've done it three times now. It sort of says to me that nothing has been produced that means anything, to my knowledge. There may be other reasons. The commissioner is contemplating whatever he wants to do. I think we're getting there soon. I just don't know.

**ML: Okay.**

The only thing missing is that I would've enjoyed the process of building the ballpark, financing it, and doing all these things. It looks like because of my age (I won't be able to). So my son (Keith Wolff), who I think is as good or better at this than I am, and he's a lot more calm than I am. I believe that development – public or private – can't get done without a sense of urgency.

**ML: It sure seems that way.**

We have the resources and we have the people. It's just that I final – I mean I can but I'm the commissioner's age. I want to be very careful. None of us are going to live forever or be as active forever. I'm lucky, I think baseball's keeping me active.

*[Ed.: I have to point out that he ordered a frittata with fruit on the side, no starches, coffee with no cream. I ordered Eggs Benedict with potatoes, lots of cream with my coffee. Multiple cups.]*

**ML: It seemed like that happened with the Marlins, where Jeff Loria fought for years, and when he finally got approval his son-in-law took over.**

That's also true in Minnesota. I'm sad that the owner (Carl Pohlad) didn't get to see his ballpark. We're very advanced in our opinion. Why go out and spend \$20 million on working drawings if you don't know you have a site?

So it's just a matter of waiting for a decision. I'm not a patient person but I've become very patient. The thing that makes me most comfortable is that I have a lot of backup to get this done. That's number one. On the hand this is affecting our whole organization. We've got great people – Billy's been there for fifteen, sixteen years, twenty years for Mike Crowley. I've promised them a new, modern facility and I feel responsible.

There's something I think you'll like to know. When we bought the team (2005), six teams had payrolls above \$100 million. Now it's twelve or thirteen. While Billy and his guys are fantastic at doing what they do, there's only so much they can do. We can go and lose \$30 million a year like the Haas family was doing but we're not gonna do that. So if anyone wants me to do that I'm gonna have to say that we won't.

*[Ed. - According to Forbes/Financial World numbers the A's lost \$6-10 million per year during the last years of the Haas era, which would be worth \$9-15 million now. MLB's stance historically has been to consider Forbes' numbers inaccurate.]*

**ML: That's something I've been arguing for years.**

And baseball doesn't want us to do that. All these teams that have spent haphazardly without breaking even have gone and caused problems for themselves and baseball. Remember that baseball is a partnership. The rule of thumb for running a team before you get huge revenues is that if you can keep your MLB salary at 50% of your revenues you'll probably be at the break even point or make a few dollars. It's not an internal rate of return 20% or something like that. You shouldn't be in this business if you want that.

The great thing about Billy and Mike and their people is that they've been able to keep us competitive until we get a new ballpark – I haven't delivered. We're in a total revenue issue. We just need more revenue and we can't get it without a new ballpark. We need some scarcity. We can't have 70,000 seats or people yelling about tarps.

**ML: I'll get into that later.**

I don't have a yacht [laughs] that we're paying for out of secret proceeds from the ballpark.

**ML: We're talking about Oakland for a little bit. Has anyone presented you with other information about Victory Court, a sales pitch, or anything like that?**

Absolutely not. However, gotta be fair. I think Oakland thinks, "We're not dealing with Lew Wolff. We're dealing with this committee." If the committee has done that, I don't know about it. I think what's happened is that they've discovered what we've known. Through no fault of Oakland, the ability to build a new ballpark – well, you know that drawing a boundary around six blocks or ten blocks doesn't make a ballpark. Is there a soil test? Will you do eminent domain, will you take people's property? Do the off-ramps have to be replaced? Hundreds of items. And that kind of Socratic discipline – why should a fan in LF worry about that? Those rich owners over there are supposed to do it no matter what.

**ML: Let's move on to this freeway park. It was proposed by an Oakland architect, Bryan Grunwald, who occasionally posts on the blog. 980 Park is a concrete deck over a submerged section of freeway near downtown Oakland. You said that you consider it an A+ in planning and an F in implementation. Care to elaborate?**

The problem with that is that talking to you is easy. Talking to guy looking for \$2 ticket night on Wednesday is different. I can't even imagine the cost on that. Forget about a ballpark. Say you're putting up a hospital there or a park. I think we're talking a billion – I have no idea. Air rights, we have them all over California. I haven't seen too many places where there are building over there – bridges and stuff. Let's assume that we did that tomorrow. It would take a decade. I wouldn't know where to start. First of all, we'd say to Oakland or somebody, "Give us the platform and we'll build on it." The platform itself has got to be overwhelming. I love those kind of ideas. They win architectural contests, a student gets a master's degree for doing them, and we do have huge amounts of air rights all over the world. It just will not happen. If that's the best we can do, might as well forget it.

**ML: There are few places where air rights translate into anything. Those are places where the need is great, such as Manhattan.**

I just don't get it. It would be fun to have an architectural contest. But it's like an iceberg, beautiful at the top, huge (beneath the surface). If that's the best any of us can do, we have to forget it.

**ML: Let's shift over to San Jose now. You've had an ongoing dialogue with the City and Mayor about the Earthquakes stadium. How is that going?**

The Earthquakes stadium also has to be privately financed. Certainly it's a lot less expensive than a baseball park. I think – I don't have the numbers exactly – they just opened a new soccer stadium in Kansas City. I think it was \$150 million or something and I believe every penny of that was public money [Ed.: *Cost was actually \$200 million, all public*]. We've worked very hard. What we want in a soccer stadium is a place you can go – we're not looking to build Wembley Stadium – we're in the 15-18,000 seat goal in this market. We've worked really hard to get the cost down to about \$50 million, which everyone in soccer asks, "How can you do that?" Well, people can do it if it's their own money, it's not the government. There's no soccer stadium that I know, except maybe Home Depot Center (that was not fully public).

**ML: That was years ago. [Ed.: *Columbus Crew Stadium was also privately financed by Lamar Hunt.*]**

Well they also had a good deal from CSU-Dominguez Hills. I'd like to move it faster but we're doing it in stages. Right now we're going through a planning process, not for a building permit but a use permit. We spent money to tear down the FMC building, but we haven't pulled the string yet to build it because if you look at the economics of it you're only using it for 19 games or 20 games. The ancillary use of these facilities, which I think is better than what my consultants think, concerts aren't what they used to be, high school graduations. It's Silicon Valley, I think you can have product introductions there. A lot of these things that you can't predetermine. So what we've done is that if there are 10 steps to it we're in step 7 or 8. We've spent money to do that but we haven't pulled the string yet.

**ML: On a related note, I went to the game at Stanford against the Red Bulls. I hate to belittle Buck Shaw, but it's a small venue. Stanford, which was another example of something built with private funds, cost controlled by John Arrillaga. Many people came from down the Peninsula, there were plenty of the existing fan base, locals. For the fans it felt like it was overdue. Did the experience of that game – 40,000 people, the place was buzzing with excitement – change your thinking or reinforce it in terms of what the Quakes need to thrive?**

No. Two reasons. One, One of the people at MLS called me and asked if it was it the game or the fireworks. The game was around the 4th of July. If you look at our fireworks games in Oakland -

**ML: They're consistently higher in attendance.**

So I said to our guys, "Why don't we just work out a deal to play at Stanford all the time?" Stanford doesn't want that. I don't want it. No, the depth of the market means that except for three cities, maybe, soccer is not profitable. The owners – Anchutz, my guy John Fisher, the Krafts – they love soccer and they're gonna support it if it takes another decade to get it where it needs to be. We're the same way. But the market is not for 40,000 people. We wish it was. If we have 15-18,000 fans and they're really on top of the field – we're not trying to have private boxes, soccer is a family sport – we couldn't do Stanford every week in my opinion.

**ML – One of the things I noticed from the renderings is that other than the fact that it's three sides with one open, the design looks like a miniaturized version of White Hart Lane, where Tottenham Hotspur plays. Is there anything to that?**

We're close to them as you know. I don't think so, except that when you think about a soccer stadium the dimensions of a field are the dimensions of a field. The only real difference to me is if there's a track, which really screws it up. All we want to do is get noisy and close. I would say that 70 or 80% of them are like that.

**ML – The NFL just completed its CBA negotiations after 3 month lockout. MLB has been, as I understand it, having some ongoing discussions with the players union about their new CBA, which is expected to be done by the end of the season -**

End of the year. Or sooner.

**ML – Does what's happening here with the stadium and the unknown that it is right now have any impact with the CBA?**

No. However, I believe that, or I hope that we will have a non-confrontational negotiation, which has been ongoing. What you'll have is, I don't know the exact term, probably 3-5 years of what we call labor peace. We had that the last 5 years. I think some of the things that both sides are discussing – I don't want to get into that information – will be beneficial to all of baseball and all of the union. I don't think it'll be the threatening kind of thing we've seen in basketball.

**ML – There's been almost no media coverage except for the occasional article from a national baseball writer.**

I think it'll get a little more coverage as we get closer to finalizing an agreement. It may not be controversial at all. This is the year to finish that agreement if possible. We're working on it very hard. It isn't like one side is screaming at the other.

**ML – The players appear to be offering ideas that the owners may be interested in.**

I follow it but I don't want to get into it. The commissioner – you need to give him a lot of credit. His orders, and the head of the union, are we're in this business together. Let's work something out. I haven't heard anything earthshaking.

**ML – That's good to hear.**

Usually union negotiations get tougher close to the end. [laughs]

**ML – What do you think about talk – and this is coming from national writers who are spitballing – about contraction of the A's, Rays, or both?**

We (the A's) are against contraction. Nobody's called us up and said, "We're thinking about contracting you." Contraction has a lot more issues to it than just shutting down a team and so on. They'd pay us the value (of the franchise). Then you've got minor leagues, places, cities all over the country with ballparks based on our activities, not just Tampa. We want to do the opposite.

**ML – Do you think there's pressure to get this done (a ballpark) so that nobody even has to consider that step?**

That's a very good question. I think getting it done has nothing to do with contraction. Baseball may have as many teams as they need. Some years it'll be like we ought to contract. I do think that there's so much going on with the Mets and the Dodgers, you can only address so many things. All of us are multitaskers. I don't know that it's so true in baseball. I don't think it has to do with contraction. But sure, we and Tampa both need viable environments for our fans, or we won't have any. It isn't anything against any city.

**ML – Do you and Stuart Sternberg (owner of the Rays) ever commiserate at the owner's meetings about whose plight is worse?**

I've decided that mine is worse than his. He's a good guy.

## **ML – He's also a little younger.**

He's got more time. We don't commiserate so much but we are both concerned. Very concerned.

## **A's owner Lew Wolff calls for sale of Dodgers**

Janie McCauley, AP

OAKLAND, Calif. -- Oakland Athletics owner Lew Wolff is hopeful that Frank McCourt will soon sell the financially troubled Los Angeles Dodgers so baseball can move forward from the sticky situation.

Wolff, a successful retail developer based in L.A., told The Associated Press on Monday he spoke out publicly on the topic in support of Commissioner Bud Selig, a longtime friend and former fraternity brother at Wisconsin. Wolff first discussed his thoughts in an interview with the Los Angeles Times.

"For the good of baseball, I sense that all of us would like to get the Dodger situation behind us for everybody's benefit," Wolff said in a phone interview with the AP on Monday. "I was prompted to do this because of the attorney accusing Bud Selig of taking more money. Bud has been a friend of mine for 50 years. It's just not fair. I was just upset."

The Dodgers filed for bankruptcy protection in June, about two months after Major League Baseball assumed control of the club's day-to-day operations. McCourt blamed a cash-flow crisis on MLB's refusal to approve a multibillion-dollar TV deal McCourt was counting on to keep the franchise afloat.

Selig expressed concern about McCourt using that money toward his "personal needs" in the wake of losing control of the team and the owner's bitter divorce from Jamie McCourt.

Attorneys for McCourt have argued that Selig himself has taken money 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 told the Times. "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. But to try and equate or compare what Bud Selig has done with the administration of the current Dodger franchise is unsupportable."

Wolff said Monday he didn't want to "go any further than I did in that."

"They're in court. It will get settled," Wolff said. "Bud's done so much for baseball. I feel very strongly that he's the best commissioner in the history of baseball."

Wolff is still waiting for Selig to tell him whether he can go ahead with his proposal to move the A's from Oakland into Santa Clara County even though the San Francisco Giants hold the territorial rights in technology-rich Silicon Valley.

Selig appointed a committee in March 2009 to evaluate the issue facing the Bay Area teams, yet he has provided no timetable for when he might announce a decision.

## **Lew Wolff's comments on Dodgers' mess may finally reveal his true desires**

By [Sam McPherson](#), Oakland A's Examiner

Oakland Athletics owner Lew Wolff may have finally revealed his true colors today in comments made publicly about the troubled Los Angeles Dodgers franchise.

In comments [made to the Associated Press](#), Wolff noted, "For the good of baseball, I sense that all of us would like to get the Dodger situation behind us for everybody's benefit."

Wolff also told the Los Angeles Times that, "My hope is that the Dodgers will be sold to a party that will restart this great franchise".

Considering Wolff himself has run the A's franchise into the ground during his five years of ownership, it was a highly laughable comment for him to make publicly.

Last time anyone checked, Wolff's Oakland teams have never finished above .500 in a full season under his ownership -- while the beleaguered Frank McCourt's Dodgers were in the National League Championship Series two years in a row before his divorce case began to unravel the Los Angeles franchise.

And it was Wolff himself who chose to close the third deck of the Coliseum after buying the team in 2006, even though the A's had home-field advantage for the American League Championship Series later that year.

The team has been in decline since, both in attendance and on-the-field performance while Wolff has failed repeatedly to secure a site for a new stadium to be built -- while also caring little about his team's win-loss record.

Considering Wolff's Los Angeles real-estate roots and close ties to Selig -- the two were fraternity brothers in college, and Wolff recently noted, "Bud has been a friend of mine for 50 years" -- Wolff may be salivating at the chance to get his hands on the Dodgers instead of the A's.

And where would that leave the A's franchise, proud winners of nine World Series titles -- third-most in baseball history -- if Wolff "traded" Oakland Green for Dodger Blue?

The A's fate then could be in the hands of Selig, who could easily fast-track a franchise move to San Jose -- but won't, not even for his good friend of 50 years. And Oakland's lease to play at the Overstock.com Coliseum expires after the 2012 season.

Convenient, no?

Selig has actually known of the "San Jose A's" potential since 1997, and yet he still does nothing to put a baseball team in the tenth biggest city in the country. There are myriad reasons why, of course.

So as Wolff makes his silly comments and judgments of Frank McCourt, Oakland fans have to start seeing the writing on the wall.

And it's sad, considering just five years ago, the A's were a nationally-relevant team with an energized fan base -- before the big, bad Wolff came to town and shredded that success almost instantly.

If the A's end up in Charlotte or San Antonio in 2013, it'll all come down to the terrible ownership and the disgusting duplicity of Lew Wolff.

Not to mention Bud Selig, of course, who Wolff claims is "the best commissioner in the history of baseball."

To paraphrase John McEnroe, he CAN'T be serious.

But he is.

Thus, these two clowns deserve each other in the Pro Sports Hall of Shame, that's for sure. It's just wrong, though, that the city of Oakland and its fans are the ones who will pay the price.

At least Baltimore and Cleveland got new NFL teams after their beloved organizations left town. Heck, even Charlotte got a replacement NBA team. Atlanta got a second chance in the NHL, too.

Oakland will have no such luck as long as Selig remains entrenched as the baseball commissioner.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Catchers carry Cats to stunning walk-off win**

By Zeke Fine / Sacramento River Cats

Down 3-2 in the bottom of the ninth, Josh Donaldson hit a walk-off two-run home run for a River Cats 4-3 win over the Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

The home run, Donaldson's 15th of the season, was the River Cats' third walk-off home run since July 17.

"I was just looking for something I could hit, and was able to get enough backspin on the ball to end it," said the catcher.

Colorado Springs opened the scoring in the second inning, when Matt Macri hit a double to left field to score Ryan Rohlinger for a 1-0 lead.



Sacramento struck back in the third inning when Anthony Recker, normally a catcher but playing first base Monday, hit a solo home run to left field.

"I noticed the way (Colorado Springs starter Edgar (Gonzalez) worked LaRoche, and when it was 1-1 I figured he would throw me something off speed, and I got a changeup and was able to get a hold of it," Recker said on his approach in the at-bat.

Josh Outman started for the River Cats and turned in a solid performance, throwing 5.0 innings and allowing one unearned run on two hits and three walks for a no-decision.

Gonzalez, a former River Cat, took the mound for the Sky Sox and showed no mercy for his former team. Gonzalez threw 7.0 innings, allowing one earned run on two hits and two walks while striking out three for a no-decision.

The Sky Sox broke the tie in the seventh inning when Mike Jacobs hit a two-run double down the right-field line, bringing the score to 3-1.

Recker cut the difference in half when he hit his second solo home run in the eighth, making the score 3-2 heading into the ninth. After a scoreless inning from Neil Wagner, who threw 1.1 innings without a baserunner and one strikeout, the River Cats came to bat needing at least a run to have a chance to win.

Kevin Kouzmanoff led off the inning with a single between second and first, and was subsequently pinch-run for by Adrian Cardenas. Chris Carter then flew out to right, setting the stage for Donaldson's walk-off blast to left field. The River Cats' middle infield was also able to flash the leather, as both Andy Laroche and Adam Rosales had diving plays to stop base hits. The two teams will play the series finale Tuesday night at Raley Field at 7:05 p.m. Travis Banwart of the River Cats will take on Billy Butler of the Sky Sox.

### **Timmons Drives In Three As Hounds Win**

By Bob Hards / Midland RockHounds

In "Space Cowboys," Clint Eastwood, Tommy Lee Jones, Donald Sutherland and James Garner portray "veteran" aviators who, given the chance to become astronauts, save the planet. They are referred to in the film as having "The Ripe Stuff" (a take-off on "The Right Stuff").

First, let me make clear that, since most of the guys know my approximate age, I'm sure as heck not making fun here. Rather, this re-cap is being written with respect and a smile. The RockHounds quartet of Jason Bergmann, Adam Heether, Wes Timmons and Jon Meloan didn't save the planet, but they sure had "The Ripe Stuff" in the RockHounds' 4-3 win Monday. Adam Heether and Wes Timmons are 10-year minor league veterans. Heether, in addition to a nice play at third in the early going, walked twice with the bases empty and two out, each time starting a rally and scoring a run. Timmons also had an outstanding defensive play (at second base) early, and his first inning single drove in the game's first two runs and extended his hit streak to nine games (see below). Timmons had all three of the RockHounds' RBI in the game, with the final (and game-winning) run scoring on an error.

Jason Bergmann has made 155 starts in the Major Leagues, all with the Washington Nationals. While he didn't figure in the decision, Bergmann went 6.0 innings and allowed two runs (one earned) on four hits and one walk, striking out three. When Bergmann made his first start for the 'Hounds June 3, he had not pitched since the end of August, 2010 (Jason signed with the Red Sox in the off-season, but didn't get the opportunity to pitch in Spring Training). Monday's strong outing was Bergmann's fourth quality start in his last five appearances.

Jon Meloan has pitched in the Major Leagues for three clubs, the last of those the Oakland A's in October of 2009. He would undergo elbow surgery and miss all of 2010, making his next appearance in a game situation May 9 of this season for the RockHounds at Citibank Ballpark. Meloan pitched the eighth and ninth for this fifth save in six opportunities.

- The RockHounds won the series, 3-games-to-1 ... and the clubs will meet again in just 72 hours, opening a 4-game set at Corpus Christi's Whataburger Field Friday night. Between now and then, the Hooks travel to San Antonio for three games and the 'Hounds host the Frisco RoughRiders for three.

- Wes Timmons extended his hit streak to nine games, finishing 3-for-4 with a double and three RBI. Wes is 18-for-39 (.462) in the 9-gamer.

- The RockHounds were without first baseman Michael Spina, who began serving a 7-game suspension as the result of an altercation with umpire Adam Schwarz on a called third strike Sunday night.

**ROCKY TOWN** - The RockHounds now host the Frisco RoughRiders (Texas Rangers' Double-A affiliate) in a 3-game series, with 6:30 first pitches Tuesday and Wednesday and 7 o'clock on "Thirsty" Thursday. Check out all the details at [www.midlandrockhounds.org](http://www.midlandrockhounds.org).

### **Mistakes Loom Large As Ports Fall 9-6**

Stockton Ports

**MODESTO, Calif.** - Very rarely can a team get away with committing five errors in a ballgame. The Stockton Ports found this out the hard way on Monday night at John Thurman Field. Stockton's five errors led to four unearned runs as the Ports fell to the Modesto Nuts by a final of 9-6. For the Ports, it was their fourth straight loss overall as well as their fourth straight loss to Modesto.

The teams exchanged a run in the 1st inning. Conner Crumbliss opened the game with a single to center, and Myrio Richard followed with an RBI double to left to give the Ports a 1-0 lead. Modesto got a leadoff triple from Delta Cleary, Jr. in the bottom half of the inning, and he scored two batters later on a sac-fly from Nolan Arrenado to tie the game at 1-1.

Ports starter Murphy Smith (3-8) escaped a bases-loaded, no-out jam in the 2nd to keep the game tied at 1-1, but Smith couldn't avoid catastrophe in the 3rd. With one out, Arrenado doubled to center and Kent Matthes drew a walk to put two on. Kiel Roling came up next and hit a double-play ball to third baseman Jason Christian. Christian's throw to second was low and skipped into center field, allowing a run to score and both baserunners to be safe. While Angelys Nina was batting, the Nuts tried a double-steal and catcher Petey Paramore's throw to third appeared to beat the runner by plenty at third. Matthes, though, was ruled safe by the base umpire resulting in the ejections of Christian and Ports manager Webster Garrison after arguments ensued. Nina would then drive a base hit to center, allowing both runners to score and giving the Nuts a 4-1 advantage. Two batters later with two away, Beau Seabury doubled to right allowing Nina to score. Seabury would score when Scott Robinson followed with an RBI single to left to make it a 6-1 game.

Smith would suffer the loss on the night, going three innings and allowing six runs (three earned) on six hits while striking out two and walking two.

The Ports cut the deficit to three runs on a two-run homer off the bat of Paramore in the 4th to make it a 6-3 game. It was Paramore's fourth home run since returning to Stockton from Midland.

The Nuts, however, would put the game away with a three-run 6th off Ports reliever A.J. Huttenlocker. The inning started with an error committed by first baseman Anthony Aliotti. Two batters later, Matthes homered to left to put Modesto's lead back up to five runs at 8-3. Two batters later with two down, Nina doubled to right and Jared Clark drove him in with an RBI single, making it a 9-3 ballgame.

Huttenlocker went three innings and allowed three runs (one earned) on five hits while striking out two.

Nuts starter Parker Frazier (8-9) pitched into the 7th inning and would be hit up for a pair of runs prior to his exit. With one out, Mitch LeVier singled and Rashun Dixon followed with a double to left to score LeVier. With two out in the inning, Richard singled to left to score Dixon and cut the Ports deficit to 9-5.

Frazier would pick up the win, going seven innings and allowing five runs on nine hits while striking out three.

Stockton made one final push in the 8th. With Chad Rose in from the bullpen, Paramore singled with one out. Two batters later with two down, Dusty Coleman was hit by a pitch and LeVier drove an RBI single to center to make it a 9-6 game and bring the possible-tying run to the plate in the person of Dixon. At that point, the Nuts went to their bullpen again, this time for right-hander Coty Woods who came on and struck out Dixon to end the final Ports threat of the night.

In the 9th, Mike Marbry (SV, 8) came on and recorded his 8th save of the season with a perfect frame.

By beating the Ports, the Nuts are now within a game of first place in the North Division. Stockton and Modesto will play the finale of their three-game set on Tuesday at John Thurman Field. In a battle of right-handers, James Simmons (1-1, 6.35

ERA) will take the mound for the Ports, opposed by Alan DeRatt (4-3, 6.10 ERA) for the Nuts. First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

### **Timber Rattlers Score Five Unanswered**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

GRAND CHUTE, WI-The Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (14-22) scored three runs in the 10th inning to earn a 8-5 win over the Burlington Bees (12-24) before 2,123 fans at Time Warner Cable Field on Monday night.

The Timber Rattlers scored one run in the first inning against Burlington RHP Jonathan Joseph. CF Reggie Keen (1-4) walked, stole second base and moved to third base on a throwing error by Burlington C Beau Taylor. He scored on a single by SS Nick Shaw (2-5) for a 1-0 lead.

In the second inning, Wisconsin added two more runs. DH Mike Walker (0-4) walked and C Joey Paciorek (1-5) reached base on an error. 2B Mike Brownstein (3-5) hit a two-run single to score both men and make it 3-0 Wisconsin.

The Bees scored five runs in the fourth inning to jump out to the 5-3 lead. 3B Tony Thompson (3-5) smacked a solo home run to lead off the inning. RF Douglas Landaeata (1-5) doubled and scored on a triple by SS Yordy Cabrera (1-5). 2B Nino Leyja (1-5) tripped home Cabrera to tie the game at 3-3. CF Tyreace House (0-3) reached on an error to put runners at first and third base for LF Royce Consigli (3-4).

Both Consigli and C Beau Taylor added RBI singles to make it 5-3.

Joseph allowed three earned runs on three hits over three and two-thirds innings pitched. RHP T.J. Walz pitched two and one-thirds scoreless innings in his Burlington debut. RHP Zack Thornton pitched two scoreless innings.

Wisconsin scored two runs in the ninth inning to tie the game at 5-5.

The Timber Rattlers produced three runs with two outs in the 10th inning. RF Chad Stang (3-5) and Paciorek singled. Brownstein smacked a home run over the left field wall to give the Timber Rattlers just their second win in extra innings in 2011.

The Bees travel to Peoria to start a three-game series with the Peoria Chiefs on Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. RHP Nate Long (6-5, 3.34) gets the start for the Bees against LHP Eric Jokisch (7-3, 3.07) for the Chiefs. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:45 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at [www.gobees.com](http://www.gobees.com)

### **1-0 Shutout Win Over Brooklyn Monday**

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

BURLINGTON, VT --- Vermont starter Brent Powers tossed six scoreless innings as three pitchers combined on a five-hit shutout as the Lake Monsters defeated the Brooklyn Cyclones 1-0 in New York-Penn League action Monday night at historic Centennial Field.

Powers (2-2) allowed five hits with three walks and four strikeouts over his six scoreless innings for his second win in as many starts. The left-hander out of Sam Houston State has not allowed a run over his last 11 innings to lower his ERA from 5.74 down to 4.06 overall.

Reliever Jailer Castillo struckout two in his two hitless innings, while Jeff Urlaub struckout two in the ninth inning for his fourth save of the season. The shutout was the first of the season for the Lake Monsters and Vermont's first shutout since a 7-0 win over Staten Island on July 17, 2010. It was also the Lake Monsters first 1-0 victory since beating Aberdeen August 27, 2009.

Vermont manufactured the only run of the game in the third inning as Aaron Shipman led off with a single to left, advanced to second on a Chad Oberacker walk and moved to third on a Chih-Fang Pan groundout before scoring on a Chad Lewis RBI groundout to short.

Starter Jeff Walters (2-4) gave up a run on seven hits over 4 2/3 innings for Brooklyn (24-20), while Charley Thurber had two of the Cyclones five hits. Pan and Jordan Tripp both had two hits for Vermont (23-20), which took three of four from Brooklyn in the series and went 5-1 against the Cyclones in the season series.

The homestand continues for the Lake Monsters as Vermont hosts the State College Spikes on 101.3 ESPN night on Tuesday starting at 7:05 pm in the first of a three-game series. The Lake Monsters and Spikes also play Wednesday at 7:05 pm before wrapping up the homestand on Thursday with a special 11:05 am start.