

**Oakland A's hot hitters go cold in clutch in Seattle**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

SEATTLE -- Will the real A's team please step forward?

It's tough to tell right now which is the accurate version: the squad that tore the cover off the ball on the recently completed homestand or the group that's stumbled over the past two nights at Safeco Field.

The Jekyll-and-Hyde act continued in Tuesday's 4-2 loss to the Seattle Mariners, which dropped the A's to 18-37 on the road this season compared to 31-24 at home.

Mariners right-hander Felix Hernandez was stingy over 6 1/3 innings, as he almost always is when facing Oakland. But for the second straight night, the A's squandered a bases-loaded opportunity that could have changed the game.

They also had a comical defensive blunder in the first inning that helped put them in an early hole.

With one out, Brendan Ryan reached on an infield single to shortstop. As Eric Sogard threw to first, Ryan noticed no one was covering second and advanced easily. Then he saw no one was covering third and took that base as well, all while A's first baseman Conor Jackson held the ball waiting for someone to throw to.

"I've never seen anything like that," Jackson said. "I turn around, and he's halfway to second. No one was there, and I didn't want to throw it."

Sogard and A's manager Bob Melvin both said there was a mix-up in the infield rotation.

Second baseman Jemile Weeks was moving toward first. Sogard and third baseman Scott Sizemore both broke toward second when they saw Ryan advance from first, which left nobody to cover third.

The miscues put Oakland starter Rich Harden in an early jam. Harden walked Dustin Ackley to put runners on the corners with one out, then Mike Carp followed with a two-run double to left.

Harden (2-2) didn't hide his feelings over the defensive mistake.

"It's kind of embarrassing," he said. "I guess you've just got to put it behind you and go after the next hitter. But I was kind of surprised the way the game started."

Harden, who hails from nearby Victoria, British Columbia, entered the night 5-0 with a 0.86 ERA in nine appearances (six starts) at Safeco Field.

In the sixth, he piped a 3-2 change-up that Casper Wells hit for a two-run homer to left to make it 4-0.

Harden has allowed at least one homer in all six of his starts.

Hernandez (10-9), aka "King Felix," allowed five hits and two runs and struck out nine, much to the delight of the yellow-shirted fans sitting in a section of left field called the "King's Court."

Hernandez's only damage came on Sizemore's two-run homer in the seventh that made it 4-2. Hernandez is 3-0 against the A's this season with a 1.45 ERA, striking out 32 in 31 innings.

Trailing 4-2, the A's had the bases loaded with one out in the eighth against former A's reliever Jeff Gray.

But Kurt Suzuki and Eric Sogard both went down swinging to end the threat.

"We had a chance to win the game in the eighth inning, we just didn't get it done," Melvin said.

Oakland entered the night batting a major league-best .315 since the All-Star break and also led in doubles (47), slugging percentage (.480) and on-base percentage (.385).

The A's had 11 hits Monday, but they are 5 for 20 with runners in scoring position in the series.

They also had their Oakland-record streak of 17 straight games of eight or more hits snapped Tuesday, getting only seven.

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

By Joe Stiglich

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.

### **Chin Music: Cliff Pennington doing much better, targeting possible Friday return**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/2/2011 6:24pm

The news looks much better regarding A's shortstop Cliff Pennington, who was diagnosed with Bell's palsy last night. Pennington woke up feeling much better today, and said he can close his left eye and blink. He likely won't play until Friday's series opener at Tampa Bay, at the earliest. But both he and manager Bob Melvin were breathing a sigh of relief. Bell's palsy is a nerve condition that causes partial facial paralysis, and Pennington left last night's game with numbness on the left side of his face.

"I can blink, I can close," Pennington said. "I'm still numb, but it's night and day from yesterday. I'm going to do everything normal (as far as baseball activity). I'm going to keep going like normal, except I'm not playing."

Because he was having trouble keeping his left eye closed last night, he put trainer's tape over his eye so he could sleep. "I was so tired from stress that I slept great," he said.

-To provide depth on the bench, the A's recalled infielder Adam Rosales from Triple-A and designated reliever Jerry Blevins for assignment. Again, this DFA is procedural for Blevins because he has more than three years' service time in the majors. He has to pass through optional waivers before being sent down. He is still on the 40-man roster and won't be going anywhere.

Your lineups:

A's — Weeks 2B, Crisp CF, Matsui LF, Willingham DH, Sweeney RF, Jackson 1B, Suzuki C, Sogard SS, Sizemore 3B; Harden RHP.

Mariners — Ichiro RF, Ryan SS, Ackley 2B, Carp DH, Kennedy 3B, Olivo C, Smoak 1B, Wells LF, Gutierrez CF; Hernandez RHP.

### **A's embarrassed on defense, lose 4-2 in Seattle**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Oakland's defense went from inexplicably bad most of the year to just plain hard to watch in a 4-2 loss to the Mariners on Tuesday night at Safeco Field.

The A's were expected to be strong in the field, but they have not been at any point this season. Several players manning relatively unfamiliar positions might have contributed to Tuesday night's major first-inning snafu, but it certainly in no way excused it.

Seattle's Brendan Ryan took not one, but two additional bases after an infield single off Eric Sogard's glove.

"I can't say I've really seen anything like that," A's starter Rich Harden said. "Kind of embarrassing."

Sogard - playing shortstop but more of a second-base type - was near third when he tried to get Ryan's one-out bouncer with a backhand stab, but it kicked off his glove. He quickly regained it, but his throw arrived too late at first.

With Sogard near third and Jemile Weeks' assignment to back up first, there was no one at second, and Ryan just kept going. When first baseman Conor Jackson realized what was happening, he looked to second but the closest man to the bag was third baseman Scott Sizemore, racing over there too late, so Jackson held onto the ball.

Ryan just kept going, because no one was at third base. Jackson again looked, found no one, and watched as Ryan slid in safely, an extraordinary screwup for a major-league team. (To see the play, go to [t.co/5ufbqsi](http://t.co/5ufbqsi).)

"It was an extremely heads-up play by him," Jackson said of Ryan. "I turned around, he was halfway to second and there was no one there. I didn't want to throw the ball, and by the time someone got there, there was no one at third base."

Manager Bob Melvin explained that it was a communication breakdown; with both Sizemore and Sogard going for the ball and Sogard getting it, Sizemore should have covered second and Sogard third, but Melvin said he's not sure Sizemore has had the play come up since he was converted to third base.

Sogard said that when Ryan broke toward second, he and Sizemore "both started going that way and didn't even think about third."

Harden walked the next batter, Dustin Ackley, and designated hitter Mike Carp doubled in both runners. You could argue that the runs would have scored anyway, given the Carp double, but that's the fallacy of assuming that the results would be the same. For one thing, Harden probably would pitch Ackley and Carp differently without a man at third.

The last thing any team needs to do against Cy Young Award winner Felix Hernandez is to hand over any runs.

The Mariners added two more in the sixth when Casper Wells, acquired from Detroit last week, belted a two-run homer on a changeup.

"It came out of my hand differently and it stayed up and didn't have much movement," Harden said.

Harden appeared Boston-bound Saturday until his medical records upended a proposed deal. "Definitely not your typical week," he said.

Harden did make an error, and the A's have 16 of them in 18 games since the break and 88 overall, second most in the league.

### **Condition of A's Cliff Pennington improves**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

**Cliff Pennington** got some real shut-eye Monday night - to get his left eye to close so he could sleep, the A's shortstop had to use trainer's tape to hold down his eyelid.

On Tuesday morning, though, Pennington's case of Bell's palsy had shown major improvement. Pennington could close his left eye, and if that remains the case, he's likely to play at Tampa Bay on Friday.

"He's markedly better," manager **Bob Melvin** said. "I'm surprised. But they got on that in a hurry and it's really improved."

With Pennington out of action and **David DeJesus** still recovering from right thumb soreness, the team called up utilityman **Adam Rosales** and sent down **Jerry Blevins** (he'll be optioned to Triple-A Sacramento when he clears waivers.)

Had the A's not brought in Rosales, the lone bench player Tuesday would have been catcher **Landon Powell**. Rosales said he feels as if playing full time for two-plus weeks at Sacramento allowed him to get back in a good rhythm. He hit .250 with two homers there.

DeJesus took batting practice and he might be in the lineup today.

**Wuertz update:** Melvin said reliever **Michael Wuertz** has not received a cortisone shot for his right thumb injury; cortisone simply might mask whatever is happening, so the thumb will be immobilized for a week and then rechecked.

**Briefly:** The A's string of games with at least eight hits came to an end at 17, an Oakland record. ... **Scott Sizemore** sent **Felix Hernandez** out of the game with a two-run homer in the seventh. ... Sizemore's home run ended Hernandez's string of 21 2/3 scoreless innings against Oakland in Seattle. "As much praise as you can give him, we've got to beat him," first baseman **Conor Jackson** said. "We've got to figure out a way to score runs against him." ... The A's loaded the bases with one out in the eighth but **Kurt Suzuki** and **Eric Sogard** struck out. ... **Hideki Matsui** was batting .209 before the break and he has lifted his average 55 points in 18 games, to a season-high .264. He has an 11-game hitting streak. ... **Brandon Allen**, acquired from Arizona on Sunday, went 0-for-4 at Sacramento but made three strong plays at first base.

### Leading off

**Extra effort:** Gio Gonzalez, who starts today at Seattle, said he has worked a lot on his pickoff move this week. "I was giving it away before," the left-hander said. "It was like a sign, 'Hey, I'm coming over.' I'm trying to get better."

### Drumbeat: Cliff Pennington out with Bell's Palsy; A's call up Rosales - updated

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Safeco Field 4:03pm 8/2/2011

*UPDATE: Manager Bob Melvin believes shortstop Cliff Pennington will be able to play on Friday at Tampa Bay, and Pennington said he's much improved today, although he had to stick white athletic tape over his left eye in order to sleep last night. He can close his eye today, and just to be on the safe side, he'll be out of action tonight and tomorrow, and then the A's have a day off Thursday.*

*Melvin said there's a chance David DeJesus could play tomorrow. He also told us that Michael Wuertz did not get a cortisone shot yet for his right thumb injury - there was concern that it might just mask whatever is going on. So Wuertz's thumb will be immobilized for a week to see if it improves, and at that point, cortisone might be an option.*

The A's haven't announced it yet, but Adam Rosales is in the clubhouse and on the lineup card, and reliever Jerry Blevins is dressed and packed, ready to go meet Triple-A Sacramento in Omaha.

The A's needed another bench player - and Rosales is among the most versatile bench guys in baseball - because Cliff Pennington is out of the lineup with Bell's Palsy. He came out of last night's game because he couldn't close his left eye and his vision clouded as a result, but the hope is that he will only miss a few games at the most because of early and aggressive treatment of the condition, which causes usually temporary facial paralysis.

Blevins isn't overly happy about being sent out yet again - he's the designated yo-yo this year, and he'd hoped he might stick this time. This move, though, was no indictment of Blevins - the A's were down to a bench of catcher Landon Powell with Pennington and David DeJesus (right thumb) out. DeJesus hit in the batting cage and he'll take batting practice; he might be an option for tomorrow's lineup.

"I understand it, I get it, it's just not fun," Blevins said.

Here's the lineup behind Rich Harden: Weeks 2b, Crisp cf, Matsui lf, Willingham DH, Sweeney rf, Jackson 1b, Suzuki c, Sogard ss, Sizemore 3b.

Jack Cust, designated by the Mariners last week, visited the A's clubhouse. He's got five more days before his waiting period is over but he said some teams have expressed interest in him. Oakland has not called, however,

### **A's fall to M's in contest marked by the bizarre**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SEATTLE -- It was a must-see play the A's likely never want to see again.

Call it a wild defensive mishap. Perhaps bizarre, or just really bad -- a mess of a scene, reminiscent of a Little League affair, which unfortunately highlighted a 4-2 A's loss in Seattle on Tuesday.

No matter the description, it may never be repeated by any Major League club. Sports networks, though, will surely enjoy replays of it for quite a while.

In the meantime, the A's will keep a close eye on Brendan Ryan.

With one out in the first inning against right-hander Rich Harden, the Mariners' infielder beat out a grounder to shortstop Eric Sogard and was behind first baseman Conor Jackson as Jackson held the ball while facing the pitching mound. Taking notice of an empty second base, with Jemile Weeks having moved over to back up first, Ryan darted for second and slid safely into the bag without a throw.

The shenanigans, already of the embarrassing type, kept going when Ryan continued his journey to third base. Again, no one was guarding the bag, as Scott Sizemore had run toward second. All the while, Jackson remained at first with the ball and no one to throw to.

"I don't even know what to say," Jackson said. "I've never seen anything like that. That's a first. I turn around and he's halfway to second and no one's there. I didn't want to throw it, with no one out there, and then he gets all the way to third base."

Not surprisingly, it was a career first for Ryan.

"Not two [bases]," he said. "I've done second a few times, but not two of them. It's really just a wacky opportunity that presented itself and I was just looking for the next bag and was able to get it."

A's manager Bob Melvin simply chalked it up to "a communication problem."

"When Sizemore goes for the ball, and Sogard comes in behind him, Sizemore has to cover second, Sogard has third, Weeks is backing up first," he said. "It's not a lack of hustle or focus, just a lack of communication. When they saw him going to second, they both broke for second, and then he broke for third."

Sogard applauded Ryan's baserunning before quickly adding, "We should be there. We should be able to defend that."

"It's something we'll learn from and definitely won't happen again, that's for sure," he said.

The resulting scoring play was a single, with Ryan advancing to third on a fielder's choice. Really, though, it may as well have been deemed an infield triple. And Ryan, following a Dustin Ackley walk, proceeded to score on Mike Carp's ensuing two-run double to hand Seattle a 2-0 edge.

A speechless Harden could only shrug, sometimes with a smile, when asked about the play after the game.

"I don't know," he said. "I can't say I've ever seen anything like that. It's kind of embarrassing. ... You just gotta put it behind you and go after the next hitter, but it was just kind of a surprise there at the start.

"I don't know what to say. It caught everybody by surprise. It definitely changes the inning."

More like the game, as things didn't exactly get easier with Felix Hernandez on the mound for the Mariners as Oakland dropped its second straight contest.

Hernandez promptly continued his dominance over the A's, striking out nine in 6 1/3 innings, his lone mistake coming right before his exit in the seventh when he surrendered a two-run homer to Sizemore on a 3-2 pitch that cleared the center-field wall.

The Seattle righty owns a five-game winning streak against the A's dating back to the start of the 2009 season. A combined 64 1/3 innings have spanned those nine starts, with Hernandez fanning 67 along the way, and he is now 12-4 with a 2.59 ERA in 21 career starts against Oakland.

"His usual stuff," Jackson said. "Four plus-plus pitches. As much praise as we can give him, we gotta beat him. We have to figure out a way to score runs against him, that's the bottom line. But he's one of the best for a reason."

Harden, meanwhile, settled after the unsettling first frame and tallied four scoreless innings thereafter before surrendering a two-run shot to Casper Wells in the sixth, at which point he was lifted in favor of Fautino De Los Santos.

"It was a changeup," Harden said. "I felt like I threw some really good offspeed pitches today and felt pretty consistent with it, and that came out of my hand a little different, came up and didn't have as much movement. It's a pitch I have confidence in in a lot of different counts, and I just didn't have a good one."

The righty, who was nearly dealt to Boston on Saturday, struck out seven during his 5 2/3 innings of work for the green and gold before commenting postgame that it was "definitely not your typical week."

"He made two mistakes, and they cost him four runs," Melvin said. "Other than that, he was terrific again."

Oakland had its comeback chances in the eighth, with the bases loaded against reliever Jeff Gray with no outs, but Kurt Suzuki and Sogard's back-to-back strikeouts put the threat to rest -- paving the way for the team's 37th road loss of the season.

In the midst of all the strangeness, the A's snapped their club-record streak of 17 consecutive games with at least eight hits. They missed the mark by one, with Hideki Matsui accounting for three of the seven, bringing his Major League-leading post-break average to .485 (32-for-66).

The A's veteran, who entered the break batting .209, has since upped that number to .264.

"Very hard to do when you have that many at-bats accumulated already," Melvin said. "He's been known to be a second-half guy, but the streak that he's on is remarkable. You just don't move your average like that."

## **Pennington much improved after treatment**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SEATTLE -- The A's received encouraging news on Tuesday from Cliff Pennington, who showed up to Safeco Field just a day after being diagnosed with Bell's palsy feeling "100 times better."

The condition, a disorder of the nerve that controls movement of the face muscles, forced Pennington out of Monday's game against Seattle in the sixth inning when he could no longer see the ball, as his left eye continually watered as a result of his inability to blink.

Pennington went to bed wearing trainer's tape over his eye, and following plenty rest -- "I was so tired and stressed that I slept great with it," he said -- he woke in relief when he realized he could close it again.

"I can blink, and it can close," Pennington said. "I'm still a little numb, but it's night and day from yesterday. It's not gone, but if I make half the strides I made last night to tonight, then it'll be perfect."

The A's will play the cautious route with their shortstop, who likely won't play again until Friday at the earliest in Tampa Bay, following Thursday's off-day. However, Pennington took part in full baseball activity on Tuesday and felt that, if it were up to him, he could probably play in the team's game against the Mariners.

"Huge relief," he said. "It's a weird feeling, because I had never heard of it until the doctor said it. It's one of those things, any time you can't play, typically it's a baseball injury, but to have something like this come up, you're just thinking, 'What is this?'"

Bell's palsy has been known to last days, months or even longer, making Pennington's quick progress all the more significant. The turnaround, he believes, is the direct result of immediate treatment, as he was seen by the Mariners' team physician right away on Monday and given a full complement of medication for the night.

"I was surprised," manager Bob Melvin said. "They got on top of that thing in a hurry, and he looks a lot better today. We'll probably keep him out through the off-day and then see where we are in Tampa."

In Pennington's stead, Eric Sogard started at shortstop on Tuesday, and Adam Rosales was called up from Triple-A Sacramento to add bench depth.

## **Versatile Rosales recalled to provide depth**

SEATTLE -- With Cliff Pennington and David DeJesus out of the mix in the day-to-day category, A's manager Bob Melvin expanded his bench on Tuesday by recalling the familiar utility face of Adam Rosales from Triple-A Sacramento.

Left-hander Jerry Blevins was designated for assignment, but as was the case the previous two times such a move was made, he remains on the A's 40-man roster. Because Blevins is more than three years removed from his first appearance on a Major League roster, optional waivers are required when optioning him, which allows the A's to send him to the Minors while keeping him on the 40-man.

Just 10 days from Tuesday marks the one-year anniversary of Rosales' trip to the disabled list with an ankle injury, which coincidentally took place in Seattle, where the A's are currently in the middle of a three-game set with the Mariners.

"I wasn't sure what was going on with my foot at the time," Rosales said Tuesday, "so it's good to be back here and healthy."

This marks Rosales' second stint with the A's in 2011. He began the season on the 60-day DL as he continued to rehab his surgically repaired right foot -- which was operated on in December -- and he took part in a three-game rehab assignment with Sacramento before joining Oakland on June 6. In that stint, he collected just four hits in 33 at-bats over 12 games.

Rosales was optioned on July 16 as part of an organizational effort to get him consistent at-bats, and he responded by hitting .250 with two home runs and 11 RBIs in 17 games while playing mostly second and third base, and most recently, shortstop.

"I got a lot of quality reps in and tried to get as sharp as I can physically and mentally," he said. "It's good to compete down there and take strides forward. Sometimes things have to get worse before they can get better. I'm a firm believer in that. It's all been a learning experience."

The 28-year-old utility man lends Melvin both infield and outfield depth, and he's hoping to turn the opportunity into a full-time gig again so he no longer has to play the role of nomad.



"I haven't really got settled at all this year," Rosales said. "Everything's in boxes in my car."

Blevins, meanwhile, will rejoin the River Cats after allowing one run on two hits in two innings in Seattle on Monday in his lone appearance since his Saturday callup.

"It's too bad he's the guy that has to go again," Melvin said. "That's a tough role to have, as the guy that's going up and down. You bring him in for length and he goes two innings, and now he has to go down."

### **Worth noting**

- Manager Bob Melvin still believes outfielder David DeJesus (right thumb) could return to the A's lineup on Wednesday. DeJesus took part in batting practice on Tuesday, and how he came out of that session was to determine his availability.
- Right-hander Michael Wuertz, on the 15-day disabled list with right thumb tendinitis, will rest for a week's time, Melvin said. The plan is to immobilize Wuertz's hand, possibly with a splint, in an effort to avoid a cortisone shot, which at this point could mask the root of the pain.

"If it hasn't gotten any better after that," Melvin said, "they can give him a shot."

- Despite two off-days on Thursday and Monday, which sandwich a three-game road set in Tampa Bay, Melvin plans on staying the course with his rotation without skipping anyone.
- Right-hander Tyson Ross will start either Thursday or Friday for Triple-A Sacramento. It will mark his first start for the River Cats since he was lifted off the disabled list and promptly optioned to the Minors on July 25.

### **Newly acquired Furbush set to battle Gio in finale**

By Arden Zwelling / MLB.com

Charlie Furbush, acquired in Saturday's six-player trade with the Tigers for Doug Fister and David Pauley, will make his first start for the Mariners Wednesday night.

The start will be just his third of the season after Furbush started twice for the Tigers in early July and didn't fare well, lasting just 4 2/3 and 2 2/3 innings, respectively.

Furbush then was sent down to Triple-A Toledo and made a Minor League start -- throwing about 90 pitches in that mid-July outing -- before being brought back up to pitch out of the bullpen.

After a whirlwind weekend when he learned of his trade, flew to Seattle and then pitched an inning of relief on Sunday, the 25-year-old said he's had a chance to at least get his feet under him. Furbush said it has also helped to have outfielder Casper Wells -- who came to Seattle with him in the trade -- around for a little bit of moral support.

"That first day I felt a little lost, like the first day of school, but it helped [Monday] having a night game to get into the routine a little bit," he said. "And having Casper around has really helped, having somebody else to go through things with."

Mariners manager Eric Wedge said Furbush's outing will be limited, since he has worked primarily in relief for the Tigers this season, but the club wants to see what the newcomer can do in the final two months of the campaign.

"I don't like to put a pitch count on it, because that puts us at a disadvantage, but he's not built up to point where he can go out and pitch a full ballgame," Wedge said. "We'll work off of him, see how easy he's getting it and how things are going, and go from there. We have a number in mind with regard to where we want to keep him."

Oakland will counter with Gio Gonzalez, who has hit a minor snag in an otherwise exemplary season. The 25-year-old failed to get through the sixth inning for the third time in four starts his last time out, giving up five runs on nine hits over 5 1/3 innings against the Twins.

Gonzalez has been credited with 11 runs -- 10 earned -- over his last two outings and has struggled with his command recently, walking three batters in four of his five starts in the month of July. He is 1-3 with a 5.57 ERA over his past four starts, this after posting a 3-0 record with a 1.29 ERA in his four previous outings.

"The stuff still looks good, you just go through some periods where you don't have your best starts. And I think that's all it is right now," A's manager Bob Melvin said.

Despite the rough patch, Gonzalez still boasts excellent numbers with a 2.84 ERA, 1.32 WHIP and 129 strikeouts over 130 innings pitched.

### **A's: Club keeping an eye on Pennington**

Oakland shortstop Cliff Pennington sat out Tuesday night's 4-2 loss to the Mariners and could miss more time after being diagnosed with Bell's palsy following Monday's series opener.

Bell's palsy is a disorder of the nerve that controls movement of muscles in the face. Pennington first started to experience symptoms Sunday night when the team landed in Seattle. He attempted to play through it at first before exiting Monday's game in the sixth inning when he could not close his left eye.

After some fast-acting treatment from the Mariners team doctor, Pennington's condition has improved greatly, and he could return to action this weekend at Tampa Bay.

"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," Pennington 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."

### **Mariners: Wilhelmsen happy to be back**

Right-hander Tom Wilhelmsen rejoined the Mariners from Double-A Jackson on Tuesday after the team made a series of trades on the weekend.

The 27-year-old started for Jackson but will work out of the bullpen with the Mariners.

"We have to be careful with his innings," Wedge said. "We had him start for a while. Now we'll go from here."

Wilhelmsen went 4-5 with a 5.49 ERA in 14 games for Jackson after being sent down in mid-May.

"It went well," Wilhelmsen said. "It gave me more opportunities to work on the pitches I needed to work on. Changeups, locating my fastball. I enjoyed it and it's still a work in progress, but much better now than when I left. I liked it."

### **Worth noting**

- The A's have hit two home runs or fewer in each of their last 81 games, which is the third-longest streak in Oakland history.
- Oakland is 75-for-109 (68.8 percent) in stolen-base attempts this season, which is the third-lowest percentage in the American League.

- Ichiro Suzuki has recorded 271 career hits against the A's, which ties him with George Brett for second all time since 1968. He trails only Rod Carew (282). Ichiro is a career .329 (271-for-819) hitter against Oakland.

### **Tom Verducci's INSIDE BASEBALL**

Sports Illustrated, 8/2/2011

Arizona GM Kevin Towers telephoned Oakland GM Billy Beane at 11 p.m. Pacific Saturday and asked, "That deal we talked about a couple of weeks ago? Would you still do it?" Within five minutes, while Beane was driving his car, the deal was done: reliever Brad Ziegler moving from Oakland to Arizona for first baseman Brandon Allen and pitcher Jordan Norberto. Beane simply asked Towers to wait until the next morning to announce the deal so he could inform club personnel.

It was an old-fashioned small deal between two friends, and it would be the only trade Beane would make in July. Once the king of July, Beane -- who came to regard the season in thirds: the first to see what you have, the second to fix it and the third to let it ride -- otherwise found only frustration at the trading deadline.

Next month, as portrayed by Brad Pitt in the movie *Moneyball*, Beane will be coming to a theatre near you, but, for a fifth straight year, not to the playoffs, let alone even a winning record. The movie will come across as an historical piece, so far removed are the Athletics from any success and baseball from the era when Beane made up for a lack of resources with an edge in information that was chronicled in Michael Lewis' book upon which the film is based.

"Is it a more challenging environment? Absolutely," Beane said. "Ten years ago teams didn't value young players, other than as chips or assets to get the players they needed. Now, even the large market teams with great resources, everybody values their young players. You have large market teams valuing young players exactly the same as Tampa Bay, Kansas City or any small market team."

July for Beane was like sitting at a casino table with no whales. To complicate matters, he found old-school "gunslingers" such as Towers, a dying breed among his colleagues, replaced by young, well-educated number-crunchers who did their baseball undergraduate work as disciples of . . . Billy Beane.

Beane and Towers both played professionally, and bring a certain competitiveness -- an understanding of the rules of engagement -- to trade talks. They operate, as ballplayers do, without a fear of failure. This year Beane found too many phone calls that came his way that sounded like this: "I have interest in one of your players and this is what I'm going to give you for him."

"That's not deal-making," Beane said.

It's name-your-own price. The art of the deal has been replaced by the science of the deal, like an internet-savvy car shopper walking into a dealership with a research folder -- the buyer gives the seller a price.

With the speed and ubiquity of information, every club places a value on players in a fairly narrow range. It's a far cry from a decade ago, when whip-smart GMs such as Beane and Theo Epstein could pluck undervalued players out from under aging GMs whose generation still cherished flawed measurements such as batting average. Now, Beane found only frustration with the kind of homogenous, risk-averse thinking of the industry.

"What you'll find is that the window for a small market team will grow smaller and eventually go away completely," Beane said. "We had seven years. Tampa Bay -- and they are very, very smart -- has made it to the playoffs two out of the past three years, and may not make it this year, and then what? To have any kind of window will take building a team organically, having to have something like 80 percent of your roster [homegrown]. That is extremely hard.

"Eventually it becomes like Premier League soccer, where the teams that spend the most money are the teams that win every year. They'll all come from the top quartile in payroll."

Beane is correct in how the modern game has come to overvalue young players. The words "under control" -- as in contractual control -- rule the business of the game. It's why the Padres could trade Mike Adams (under control through 2012) and not Heath Bell (under control for two months) before the deadline. Draft picks -- the generic slots, not the specific players -- have become so wildly and unexpectedly valued that the free agent compensation system needs to be reworked. No one anticipated that hoarding picks would harm the hard-earned free agent value of established big leaguers.

Like most emerging trends, the valuation of young players is based on solid theory but has come to be overemphasized -- except in San Francisco, where old-school Yoda Brian Sabean shipped off a former first-round pick, Zack Wheeler, to try to win a second straight World Series by renting Carlos Beltran.

The emphasis on young players is such that Cleveland, suddenly blessed with one of these rare "windows," was criticized for trading two top pitching prospects to get 27-year-old star pitcher Ubaldo Jimenez, and the Yankees pronounced their pride in having traded nobody.

New York has forfeited some of its advantage in resources for a second straight year by holding prospects as if it were a small-market team. (Prospects are more easily replaced by large market teams -- via free agency, over-slot draft picks and international signings -- and by definition should have a value proportional to resources.) It cost the Yankees the pennant last year when they held Eduardo Nunez rather than include him in a deal for Cliff Lee. This year they will bring one reliable starter to the postseason, but still hold their best prospects.

Truth is, young players have acquired more perceived value than real value. First-round pitchers, for instance, still flame out about half as often as they make it. What's changed, though, is the attention and tub-thumping that's given to prospects. When the Yankees were trading off Jay Buhner, Doug Drabek, Fred McGriff and the like in the 1980s, they were little known

faceless names in agate type. Now, given the hyper-niche ways of new media, prospects are afforded glowing reviews, flowery scouting reports and, most famously, unquestioned status as the doppelgangers of famous major leaguers. So Matt Wieters isn't just promising, he's Joe Mauer with power. Justin Smoak is Mark Teixeira. Desmond Jennings is Carl Crawford. Jesus Montero is Mike Piazza. And so on.

General managers, already armed with metrics to enhance the value of young players (chiefly, they are cheaper and more durable), now are saddled with swollen reputations of young players that make moving them more risky -- from a public relations standpoint. Pat Gillick, the only Hall of Fame general manager of the free agent era, once traded Gio Gonzalez and Gavin Floyd for Freddy Garcia without getting the heat that Indians GM Chris Antonetti did for the Jimenez deal.

Drew Pomeranz, one of the pitchers Antonetti put in the deal, was drafted on national TV and become a familiar, can't-miss name. "The MLB Network is the worst thing to happen to baseball," one veteran player told me recently, knowing I appear on the network, "because every young player is a star."

*Moneyball* has become such a period piece it might as well have cast Helen Mirren or deployed the Ken Burns Effect on sepia-tinged photographs. The foundation of Beane's success actually was in giving the ball to Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito about 100 times a year. (Oakland, which made the playoffs five times in seven years from 2000-06, hasn't had a winning season since the last of them, Zito, left.) Beane did, however, maximize Oakland's window by finding value in players others missed.

As Beane's "advantage" became neutralized by the availability of information -- and now the herd mentality of overvaluing young players -- Oakland did not find the next so-called "market inefficiency." Worse, the Athletics whiffed in two emergent areas where ballclubs could carve out propriety advantages: "prehabilitation" (the nexus of medical and baseball information; identifying and reducing injury risks) and -- this is the real *Moneyball* story -- stadium revenue.

While most every other club leveraged their major league status for new and revamped ballparks and sweetheart deals, Oakland and Tampa Bay remain disadvantaged by playing in outdated ballparks -- though Oakland is the only one that does so while sharing a market with a team that showcases a gem of a ballpark of its own. The Athletics, waiting and waiting for Bud Selig to broker a deal to allow them to bolt for San Jose and its money, operate as if assigned to the "Jail" corner of a Monopoly board.

"The biggest problem we have is that until we get a stadium it's going to be treading water for us," Beane said. "There cannot be any long-term planning. It's likely to get worse before it gets any better. It's going to be more than challenging."

Things are so bad in Oakland when it comes to attracting players that Beane has taken to hyping the team's groundskeepers; that Oakland plays on one of the best-groomed fields in baseball. Alas, even that advantage only goes so far. When Beane presented his sales pitch to one free agent in recent years, the player responded, "Yeah -- until the Raiders start playing on it in August."

### **The Big Lew Wolff Interview, Part 3**

Marine Layer, [newballpark.org](http://newballpark.org)

*[Ed. - Before I start again I have to mention that there are some blogs out there who are cutting and pasting huge chunks of this interview for further commentary. I have no problem with that. I do have a problem with the fact that I haven't received a single request to use this interview for any kind of reuse of large chunks of it. I mean, really, it's not like I've spent a lot of time on this. It's not like people care about professionalism or common courtesy anymore. How about a heads up? Maybe a link to the original interview? It's the least you can do. The very least. We may not agree on much, but we can at least show courtesy and respect others' work. That's all.]*

**ML: You've frequently said here and everywhere that it's all about keeping the A's in the Bay Area, in this market -**

For our ownership.

**ML: Right. Recently, Giants president Larry Baer has hinted that while he supports the A's looking in their territory -- Alameda and Contra Costa counties -- but if they can't they're welcome to try somewhere else such as Sacramento. How do you respond to that "hint" by Baer and the Giants?**

If tomorrow you had the only McDonald's in San Francisco, and fourteen miles away there was another location in Oakland. And your SF McDonald's is worth \$10 million and the Oakland McDonald's is worth \$100,000. That was fine for you (SF). Now the Oakland location says they're closing up and they're moving outside of the territory. What happens to the only McDonald's then? Larry and the Giants would benefit hugely, I guess, in their minds. They dominate the market now, they may want to dominate it totally. Their market value might jump a huge amount.

However, I don't get it. I don't get why they're so adamant about this. It's just a difference of opinion.

**ML: Do you think the Giants have a motive for protecting their territorial rights other than what they've stated publicly? Which is -- they just want to pay off the ballpark.**

I'll have to say that going back to – forget that it's Oakland or San Jose – there are four two-team markets. *[Ed.: Note exclusion of DC-Baltimore]* Three already have the same boundaries. I think this one should too. I think we would have a great rivalry with them. Why shouldn't we have a beautiful ballpark? In fact, one of the backers and instigators is my partner and his family, the Fishers. I think if you actually went to a lot of the passive investors in the Giants – these are people who want to support the Bay Area, not just one team. What is it gonna hurt? In fact I think it's gonna be better for them too. Everybody has their own views.

**ML: There's been some talk from fans and media about challenging baseball's antitrust exemption. Knowing what you know, being in what they call "The Lodge", is there anything realistic about that?**

Well, today we live in a litigious society. If you want to sue over this chair you're sitting on you can sue the manufacturer because you're not feeling well. We are not of that ilk. We are a partner. Maybe this is an odd view, but I believe that we've entered a partnership. This is what the commissioner chose. As I said before, we're not even thinking about it (suing). It's not right based on being part of a partnership. Therefore it's not a lever for us, it might be for someone else. If the reverse is true, maybe a smart attorney running a baseball team might say, "We can do this, we can do that." *[Ed.: I chuckled]* We're not going to do it, that's all there is to it. It's just not right.

**ML: This seems to be something very consistent that you've said, even going back a couple of years ago. The partnership idea that all of the owners are in one boat and they're all supposed to be rowing in the same direction.**

I know I'm a little naïve when it comes to that, in the world that we live in, but that's how I'm gonna run it.

**ML: Okay. When it comes to making a decision, is it really all up to the commissioner?**

Yep. Well – that's a good question – he would need a vote of the owners *[Ed.: 3/4 of owners]*. Since I've been there, there haven't been a lot of votes. Maybe the Giants wouldn't vote for it or a couple of teams. Again, it's a collaborative thing. With all the work that's gone into this, whatever the decision is, it'll have a lot of backing. I think if he decides to let us move to San Jose that he'll get a lot of votes. I don't think the voting will be an issue. He even has the power to go beyond that if it's for the good of baseball. I really don't sit there and analyze this from a legal point of view. If the decision is "you can't" or "you can" the support will be to follow the commissioner's lead.

**ML: And that's really all you're looking for. Yes or no.**

Yeah.

**ML: You mentioned the Dodgers and Mets offhand. Are they on the front burner and the A's on the back burner, or does it not work like that?**

You'd have to ask the commissioner. No, I don't think we're on the back burner. I really think the Mets and the Dodgers are two different situations. But they're both important (teams), important markets, important to us. The Mets aren't suing baseball. They're just trying to survive – and maybe they made some errors with this Madoff thing – I don't know that much about it. The Dodgers are attacking, they put their team in bankruptcy. If they follow the constitution of baseball that's cause for taking over the team. I've got my own stuff I worry about every day. We need those markets to have ownerships that are committed and capable of not getting into these issues.

**ML: Commissioner Selig, when asked about what's happening with the A's a couple of times this year has said, "We're working on it," in nice, vague terms. Are they really still working on it? Seriously.**

[laughs] I think what he's working on – and I don't know – is unless Oakland knows something that I don't know. I answer is I think he's contemplative. Way beyond where I am. We talk several times a week, not on this issue but on others I'm involved in. I'm having a – I enjoy the commissioner. We've known each other a very long time, longer than I've known my wife – and we've been married 54 years. I think he's got enough information to make a decision. He may be trying to figure out a good way that the Giants are happy and we're happy. He tends to do that. And right now, what choice do I have? Last night we won a game. That's more fun than worrying about this crap.

**ML: I agree, I agree. Now let's talk a little about the Coliseum. I'm sure you're aware that attendance is up this year as opposed to last year, and over 2009 as well.**

When Russia went from communism to capitalism they had a huge jump in economics, but that's from a very low base. [laughs] When I talk to the commish he'll say to me, "You know, you're up 4.5%." The one thing he follows is attendance. Now I follow paid attendance, I'm not sure that he does.

**ML: Fair enough.**

Attendance is up (league-wide) according to my last conversation. They're up a little bit in the American League.

**ML: Yeah, I think it turned around after the weather.**

Now I don't know if it means in the ballpark. I look at Dodger Stadium and it looks almost empty sometimes.

**ML: I believe that it's paid attendance and it's somehow withstood the drop for the Mets and Dodgers.**

What happens is that some people are afraid to give up their tickets. I was hesitant to give up my Laker tickets. But then I look back and ask how many games did I go to since my kids all moved out of L.A. Do I really need these tickets? And then a year later I decide to do one more year. I worry about the impact of that.

**ML: I see.**

I just wish the Dodger thing was settled and we could move on.

**ML: In the past you've mentioned the Coliseum's defects and its chronic state of decay. Could a ballpark be built alongside or replace the existing Coliseum? For now let's put aside the financing – well no, we can't put it aside.**

No, let's put it aside for the moment. First I looked at the Coliseum, because there was nothing downtown. We're talking about the physical stadium. This is where I read the older (sports) writers, they're living in the past. A lot has changed for Oakland since then. The last year the Haases owned the team they had the highest payroll in baseball and drew 1.2 million. You might want to check that out.

**ML: They were.** *[Ed. - 1.2 million in the strike-shortened 1994 season, 1.1 million in each of the following two seasons.]*

*[Ed. - At this point Lew's son-in-law, Dean Rossi, comes by with his son, Arthur. It's mostly a personal conversation so I'll leave this out. Lew will drop Arthur off at the Coliseum to run around the clubhouse - every kid's dream - before heading up to City Hall to meet with Mayor Quan. Note: Two partners in Rossi's law firm help run Baseball San Jose.]*

So where were we? Coliseum.

**ML: So is it possible?**

Let's talk about it. Aside from the market being – Oakland used to have several major corporations, doesn't have them any longer. The whole thing with the Raider thing, Mt. Davis, we had nothing to do with that. You can never get sight lines that satisfy two sports in one venue anymore. Even inside it's not good to have hockey and basketball. You can do it but, you know.

There are so many physical issues. Right now if we wanted to move the fans closer, I don't know what to do. The field is 22 feet below sea level so there's no way to move forward without tearing down all the seats. You'd understand that better than most.

**ML: Yeah.**

The field is great until football. The field is great because we have a great groundskeeper, Clay Wood. As soon as the Raiders come in – it's just not good.

About the site. You can make all the drawings you want on that site. This is what really bothered me. The Coliseum wasn't even the #1 site in the HOK study. Even Fremont was in the study. The Coliseum had a little line about some kind of utility thing. I asked if there was a title report ordered for the Coliseum. In my world that's one of the first things you do. Nobody knew, the city didn't know, it was just a bunch of bureaucratic nothing. So we ordered the title report, which is just about this thick [fingers spread an inch apart]. There is an easement.

*[Ed. - The Coliseum Authority recently bought the land in question as part of its new Raiders stadium effort. Oakland Councilman Larry Reid envisions an ancillary development project similar to L.A. Live in downtown Los Angeles, next to Staples Center. The Authority is also proposing \$4 million in additional expenditures related to project study costs.]*

**ML: You mentioned this. It was the sewer interceptor.**

It's not an easement you can move. So any architect who wants to build over the freeway or whatever, needs to sit down and determine what easement does relative to placing a football stadium or arena. That kind of even minor detail, we could say, "oh we'll do it" but never do it. None of that's done. The average fan shouldn't have to bother with that. But that site isn't as simple as we thought.

One time I thought it would be a good idea to buy the triangle that heads out to Hegenberger (Malibu/HomeBase lots). I said, "Look, we don't know if we're gonna stay here, but we need that piece to do parking or mitigate, otherwise it's chaos if you're trying to develop that site." All of a sudden another architect comes up with an idea for these multistory garages. Well, who's gonna pay for those? And if you're on the fifth floor of a garage for a baseball team, you might as well stay home. So it was just a hundred inhibitions.

Now, we recently had someone come up to me, a legitimate guy. I didn't ask who it was as it came through someone else. He said, "Gee whiz, we think there's a way to remain in Oakland and live with the Coliseum" and so on. Well, tell me what it is. "If you guys want to sell the team" and all that stuff. I'd like to know what you're talking about before I would even contemplate that. Other owners haven't been able to do anything in Oakland (build stadia) either. We're not the only one. The Coliseum's an over 40-year old facility. Dodger Stadium is too. Dodger Stadium, I believe, would take a minimum of \$100 million to keep it going – and they keep it pretty well maintained. So you tell me what this would cost.

**ML: I have no idea.**

I don't either. They (Coliseum Authority) don't have any money. We're constantly making repairs that are not our obligation.

**ML: Really? Like what?**

Leaks and things. The scoreboard. There are two of them because of football. I think they're finally going to replace them, but if they don't there are no more parts. If a light goes out we borrow it from another one. It's aggravating. But they basically say they don't have any money. They still have bonds to pay off. The place is old and this is not the time for cities to write a check for sports.

**ML: Yet they're going forward with a study for the Raiders.**

All these studies. If I were an investigative reporter I'd like to know how much is spent. Supposedly that study is done. And that's fine, they should, the Raiders are fine. Where are all these things? Who's doing them? If it's a six month study what happened to the first two months? We have heard nothing. And we've been more tolerant than the other two teams (as tenants). We've never affected our rights there. If we win (legally), what do we win if they don't have any money? It was a baseball park once. I wasn't around when any of that happened, but the amount put into that sure seems strange to me. That was before my time.

**ML: The litigious part kind of speaks for itself at least for the other two teams.**

Look, I'm just not litigious. I think our legal system is killing us, so much initiative. I've been in business almost 50 years. I'm a real estate developer. Most of my contemporaries are suing someone every three months. I've had two lawsuits my entire career. I think everything can be settled. But you can't do it if someone's not willing to cooperate.

## **MINOR LEAGUE REPORT**

### **Red-hot River Cats' win streak reaches six**

By Max Lush, Sacramento Rivercats

After struggling with his command early, Sacramento starter Travis Banwart rebounded to record the victory in Sacramento's 8-6 win over Colorado Springs on Tuesday night.

A crowd of 11,268 at Raley Field saw Sacramento win its sixth game in a row and keep its division lead at 13.0 games.

Banwart, who is second on the club with 36 walks, began the game by walking the first two Colorado Springs batters on 10 pitches. Things got bleaker after a Mike Jacobs RBI single and a three-run blast from center fielder Joe Mather made it 4-0 Sky Sox.

The right-hander allowed those four runs on three hits and two walks while recording just one out. Then Banwart found the zone and recorded out after out. He no-hit the Sky Sox for the next 5.0 innings, allowing the River Cats to stay within striking distance.

"We just tried to slow him down and make sure his mechanics were working," Pitching Coach Scott Emerson said of Banwart. "When he slowed down and controlled his delivery he controlled the ball."

After the first inning, the River Cats blitzed the Sky Sox, outscoring them 8-2 the rest of the way for the series sweep.

Third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff led the charge in a four-run third inning, lacing a three-run bomb to right field to tie the game. Second baseman Adrian Cardenas led off the inning with a deep triple to right field and shortstop Dusty Coleman immediately drove him in on the next pitch to make it 4-1.

"I was just looking for a good pitch to hit and hit hard," Kouzmanoff said. "It felt good to get us back in the game and then Banwart pitched really well."

The River Cats added to their lead with a three-spot in the fifth. Kouzmanoff drove in his fourth run of the game with a bloop single to score Jai Miller. Designated hitter Chris Carter smashed a 3-2 pitch for a towering two-run shot onto the left field lawn to push the lead to 7-1.

After looking strong for the first two innings, retiring six of the first seven hitters, Colorado Springs starter Billy Buckner (4-5, 5.67) lasted 5.0 innings, giving up seven runs on seven hits and two walks while striking out six.

After the first, Banwart cruised into the sixth inning, displaying why he ranked third in the PCL before the game in WHIP (1.26) and batting average against (.247), allowing just one walk in the 5.0 innings since Michael Paulk's one-out double in the first inning. With one out in the sixth, the Sky Sox ripped off two singles. Right fielder Scott Beerer drove a two-out 2-2 pitch to drive in a run.

Beerier was Banwart's last batter of the night. The right-hander went 5.2 innings, allowing five runs on six hits and three walks while striking out just two, tying his second lowest punch-out total of the year. Banwart earned the win moving him to 6-7 on the season with a 5.14 ERA.

First baseman Brandon Allen made his River Cats debut after being traded from the Diamondbacks organization for Brad Ziegler. Although he went 0-for-4 on the night, Allen made his mark on the field. He made a nice over-the-shoulder catch in foul territory in the first inning and made an all-star like play in the eighth, diving to his left to knock down a sharp grounder before getting to his feet and tossing the ball to pitcher Bruce Billings for the out.

"I know from Reno that this team always gives a good game," Allen said. "We went down 4-0 and I felt like it was still 0-0."

Relievers Vinnie Chulk and Bruce Billings continued Banwart's success, combining to throw 2.1 innings and allowing just two hits.

The Sky Sox tacked on one more run in the ninth inning off of Fernando Cabrera, who earned his fifth save of the season. Cabrera allowed two hits and a walk while striking out one.

The River Cats took down the Sky Sox for the 11th time in 12 games this season, including sweeping both series at Raley Field. Sacramento has almost doubled Colorado Springs' run production in the 12 games, outscoring them 82-44. The sweep is the River Cats' fifth of the season.

The River Cats sixth win a row ties their longest streak of the season, pushing them to 25 games over .500, their highest point of the season.

Sacramento travels to Omaha to begin a four-game set with the Storm Chasers. The River Cats will send left-hander Carlos Hernandez (6-3, 4.52) to the mound to face Storm Chasers right-hander Sean O'Sullivan (3-2, 3.86) at 5:05 p.m.

### **Peterson, Timmons lead RockHounds' offensive onslaught**

By Oscar LeRoy , Midland Reporter-Telegram

Shane Peterson felt a whole lot better at the plate on Tuesday than maybe a few days ago when he was stuck in a rut.

Not only did the RockHounds defeat Frisco 13-8 at Citibank Ballpark on Tuesday but Peterson was a key in the 12-hit attack by going 3 for 3 with two doubles, two RBI and three runs scored.



Before Tuesday's game, Peterson was 4 for 28 in his last eight games.

"Once you come out of it, you can't help but feel good about it," Peterson said. "I felt good, a whole lot better than a couple of days ago. I just tried to relax a little bit and not try to make up for the last week in one at-bat because that's impossible. I just tried to go up there trying to put up strong at-bats."

Peterson along with Wes Timmons (3 for 5, four RBI) were the catalysts for the RockHounds' offense, which scored two or more runs in four innings. After Tuesday's game, Timmons is 6 for 10 with seven RBI in his last two games.

"Timmons has been a great addition to our club, not only with what he provides for us on the field but he's a great veteran guy in the clubhouse," Midland manager Steve Scarsone said. "And Peterson is starting to swing the bat better. He had a rough spell there but he continued to work and this might be an indication that he might have a hot spell coming up, which would be great."

Having some great run support likely helped RockHounds starter Shawn Haviland (5-9) settle down after a shaky start, as he allowed two runs in the top of the first inning and another run in the second for a 3-0 Frisco advantage.

But then in the bottom of the second inning, the RockHounds got their offense going by scoring five runs on five hits against RoughRiders starter Carlos Pimentel (4-8). Peterson started things off with a single to left and later scored on a Timmons single. Stephen Parker also had a big hit with a two-run single to give Haviland and the 'Hounds the lead for good, 5-3.

"It seems like when somebody gets a hit, others seem to catch on," Peterson said.

Scarsone said Tuesday's offensive output was an example of his team taking advantage of what the Citibank Ballpark field gives them.

"We don't necessarily get balls to carry because the wind generally tends to knock them down," he said. "But we have a fast infield, a fast outfield and I see a lot more hard-hit groundballs and they're using the whole field. It's paying off."

As the RockHounds scored three runs in the third and two each in the fourth and fifth innings, Haviland turned things around and pitched three scoreless innings before the RoughRiders scored two runs in the sixth to cut it to 12-5.

"I'm sure (Haviland) will be the first one to admit that it hasn't been the most productive year for him but he continues to work hard in between starts and it's carrying into better things in his outings," said Scarsone about Haviland, who has won his last four starts. "I noticed he was staying down in the zone and using his fastball more effectively. Even the runs he gave up weren't necessarily hard hit. He kept his composure and stuck with his game plan.

"It was a good start with some run support."

**'HOUND BITES:** The RockHounds were down to one bench player for Tuesday night's game thanks to the suspension of Michael Spina and the late scratch of Grant Green from the lineup due to some soreness, according to manager Steve Scarsone. Scarsone said it was a precautionary move and Green would have been available to play. ...The RockHounds added veteran left-handed pitcher Lenny DiNardo to the roster. DiNardo has spent time in the major leagues with Boston, Kansas City and Oakland. He was signed as a free agent by the Athletics in May after being released by the Red Sox and was 3-5 with a 6.67 ERA with Triple-A Sacramento this season. Scarsone said DiNardo will probably start for the RockHounds on Friday. Because of DiNardo starting, Scarsone said RHP A.J. Griffin will be sent down to Single-A Stockton to continue to get his starts. ...Shortstop Tyler Ladendorf made a couple of nice plays on Tuesday. In the first inning, he fielded a grounder barehanded to throw out Mike Bianucci. Then in the second inning, Ladendorf made a diving stop in the middle of the infield on a grounder hit by Tommy Mendonca, then flipped it to Wes Timmons to start a 6-4-3 double play. ...Second baseman Wes Timmons extended his hit streak to 10 games with an RBI single in the second inning.

**TODAY'S PROBABLES:** The RockHounds host Frisco in the second game of a three-game series at 6:30 p.m. today at Citibank Ballpark as Midland sends RHP Ethan Hollingsworth (4-3, 3.78 ERA) against RHP Richard Bleier (3-6, 6.48).

### **Modesto's Late Surge Sinks Ports 11-5**

Stockton Ports

**MODESTO, Calif.** - The Stockton Ports and Modesto Nuts have gone in opposite directions the past two weeks. On Tuesday night at John Thurman Field, Modesto kept soaring while Stockton kept sinking. Scoring nine runs over the final three innings, the Nuts came from behind to beat the Ports by a final of 11-5, completing their second straight three-game sweep of Stockton and sending the Ports to their fifth straight loss.

For the third time in the series, the Ports were the team to score first. Conner Crumbliss opened the game with a double to left, followed by a single from Myrio Richard to put runners at second and third with nobody out. Michael Gilmartin followed

with an RBI double to right to make it a 1-0 game and keep runners at second and third. With Anthony Aliotti at the plate, Richard was picked off third on a throw down made by catcher Jose Gonzalez. Aliotti would strike out looking for the second out and, two batters later, Jason Christian grounded out to end the inning with the Ports only plating a single run.

Modesto tied it at 1-1 in the bottom of the 3rd on a two-out RBI single from Josh Rutledge off Ports starter James Simmons.

Stockton retook the lead in the 4th on a leadoff home run hit by Christian out to right field to make it a 2-1 ballgame.

In the bottom half of the inning, the Nuts got a leadoff double from Kent Matthes, who scored on a one-out single from Angelys Nina to tie the game at 2-2.

Simmons would go a season-high five innings for the Ports and leave the game with a chance to be the winning pitcher. Simmons allowed two runs on five hits while striking out two.

Nuts starter Alan DeRatt allowed two runs in the top of the 5th as Stockton took a 4-2 lead. With runners at first and second and one down, Aliotti singled to right to score Crumbliss. The throw went to third where Richard slid in safely. The ball was then thrown across the diamond as Aliotti got caught in a rundown, but in the process Richard scored from third.

DeRatt received a no-decision, going six innings and allowing four runs on eight hits while striking out six.

Mike Hart (1-2) came in to start the 6th inning and gave up a leadoff home run to Nolan Arrenado which cut the Ports lead to 4-3.

Stockton got the run back in the 7th off Nuts reliever Leuris Gomez (4-2). With one out, Richard doubled and scored two batters later on a two-out single from Aliotti to make it a 5-3 Ports advantage.

In the last of the 7th, however, things started to go terribly wrong for Stockton. With runners at first and second and nobody out, the Nuts tried a double steal. Paramore's throw to third looked to beat the runner Gonzalez, but the base umpire ruled the runner safe. Delta Cleary, Jr. came up next and grounded out to second to bring in Gonzalez and make it 5-4. Two batters later with two out, Arrenado hit his second home run of the night off Hart, this one a two-run shot to left to give the Nuts their first lead at 6-5.

Hart would suffer the loss, going 1.2 innings and allowing four runs on four hits.

Mike Benacka came on in relief of Hart and escaped further trouble in the 7th, but would run into more bad luck in the 8th. With one out, Gonzalez singled and Christensen doubled to put runners at second and third. Benacka would strike out Cleary, but the ball skipped to the right of Lipkin and allowed Cleary to reach on a wild pitch. Benacka would strike out Rutledge for the second out, but then walk Arrenado to bring in another run to make it 7-5.

Scott Deal was summoned from the bullpen to face Matthes, and on Deal's first pitch Matthes hit a towering grand slam off the left-center field video board to give the Nuts an 11-5 lead. Four of the five runs in the inning were charged to Benacka, while Deal was responsible for just one run.

The Ports were shut out over the final two innings. Coty Woods and Will Harris tossed a perfect 8th and 9th, respectively, to close out the ballgame.

Gomez earned the win for Modesto, going two innings and allowing a run on two hits while striking out two.

After being swept, the Ports and Nuts are now tied for first place in the North Division. Stockton will return home and try to snap a five-game losing skid as they host the Visalia Rawhide in the first of a four-game set on Wednesday night. Rob Gilliam (10-5, 5.40 ERA) will head to the bump for the Ports, opposed by Rawhide left-hander David Holmberg (2-2, 5.01 ERA). First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

### **Chiefs Win 4-3**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

PEORIA, IL- The Peoria Chiefs (13-24) got an RBI double from CF Rubi Silva (3-5) in the bottom of the ninth inning to earn a 4-3 win against the Burlington Bees (12-25) at O'Brien Field in the opening game of a four-game series.

Both teams were caught in a "pitcher's duel" through the first half of the game Tuesday. Burlington RHP Nate Long allowed singles in the first, third and fourth innings. The Chiefs left runners at third base in the first, second and third innings. Peoria

LHP Eric Jokisch allowed a single to RF Ryan Pineda (1-3) in the first inning and a two-out single to 2B Wade Kirkland (1-3) in the second inning. Jokisch pitched five scoreless innings, walking three and striking out four men.

The Chiefs broke through with two runs in the sixth inning against Long. 1B Richard Jones (1-3) hit a single and DH Anthony Giansanti (2-3) jumped on a hanging pitch and pulled it over the left field wall for a two-run home run and a 2-0 lead.

Long pitched seven innings and allowed two runs on eight hits. He walked one and struck out seven men.

The Bees scored three runs in the eighth inning to take a 3-2 lead. C John Nester (1-3) doubled and went to third base on a wild pitch. LF Royce Consigli (0-4) walked and Pineda lifted a sacrifice fly to right field to score Nester. DH Josh Whitaker (1-4) doubled Consigli to third base. 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (1-3) hit a two-run double to give the Bees a 3-2 lead.

Peoria scored a single run in the eighth inning. Jones and Giansanti recorded back-to-back walks. SS Elliot Soto (1-3) hit an RBI single to score Jones and tie the game at 3-3.

The Bees and Chiefs play game two of their series on Wednesday night at 7:00 p.m. RHP Josh Bowman (7-3, 3.57) gets the start for the Bees against LHP Frank Del Valle (0-2, 5.23) for the Chiefs. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:40 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at [www.gobees.com](http://www.gobees.com).

### **7-run Inning Leads Vermont To 10-6 Win**

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

BURLINGTON, VT --- The Vermont Lake Monsters scored seven runs on eight hits in the bottom of the fourth inning to snap a 2-2 tie and went on to defeat the State College Spikes 10-6 in New York-Penn League action Tuesday night at historic Centennial Field.

The Spikes had taken a 2-0 lead with single runs in the first and third innings before the Lake Monsters tied the game in the bottom of the third on a double steal of home and a Chad Lewis RBI single. Vermont then sent 12 batters to the plate in the fourth to score the most runs in an inning this season and take a 9-2 lead.

Dusty Robinson got the inning started with a single in front of a Jordan Tripp groundout. Jacob Tanis followed with an infield single for the first of seven straight hits for the Lake Monsters. Diomedes Lopez had an RBI single to right, Sam Roberts singled to right, Sean Jamieson RBI single to center, Aaron Shipman two-run single to left, Bobby Crocker RBI single to center and Chad Lewis capped off the inning with an RBI double to left.

Vermont added another run in the sixth before State College scored four runs in the ninth, including a Walker Gourley three-run double, to cut the Lake Monsters lead from eight to four. Reliever Eric Potter struckout Derek Trent to end the game and give Vermont (24-20) its third straight win and fourth in five games on the homestand.

Crocker and Lewis both had three hits for the Lake Monsters, while Roberts went 2-for-4 with two runs and Shipman scored three runs. Seth Frankoff (3-2) allowed two runs on five hits over five innings for the win. State College starter Matt Benedict was charged with eight runs on nine hits over 3 1/3 innings to take the loss.

Vermont and State College meet again at Centennial on Wednesday at 7:05 pm on McDonald's Night with a free Big Mac coupon giveaway. The Lake Monsters and Spikes then wrap up the homestand on Thursday with a special 11:05 am start.