

**Oakland A's rough up Toronto: Hideki Matsui has four hits**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

TORONTO -- The A's underwent quite the mood swing over their three-city trip.

Having dropped four straight to begin the journey, they rebounded to win four of their final five, capping it with a 10-3 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays on Thursday at the Rogers Centre.

The A's appeared in trouble after getting swept by Seattle, the only team below them in the American League West standings. They responded by taking two of three each from Tampa Bay and Toronto.

As the A's boarded their flight home to complete a trip that totaled 6,544 air miles, their 4-5 record appeared rather spiffy.

It's all relative for a team that is still 22-40 away from [O.co](#) Coliseum.

"To take two out of three in both those places, compared to what we had been doing on the road is a nice pick-me-up," A's manager Bob Melvin said.

The A's broke open things early against Toronto starter Brad Mills (1-2), scoring six runs in the third inning before the lefty had even recorded an out.

That rally included Cliff Pennington's two-run double and Conor Jackson's two-run triple.

Hideki Matsui continued his impressive second half with a 4-for-6 day, but his biggest contribution arguably was the comic relief he provided on the bases.

On Jackson's triple, Matsui went back to second to tag before seeing the ball hit high off the left-field wall and bounce back toward the infield. Josh Willingham, running from first, was right on Matsui's tail and yelling "Go Matsui!" as they rounded third base.

"I was jogging and catching up to Matsui, so that tells you I'm faster than him," Willingham joked. "The ball was laying on the ground, and I'm five feet away from him. That's why I was yelling."

"I didn't know if Hideki was going to pass the baton to him," Melvin said.

In the sixth, when the A's scored four to make it a 10-2 game, Matsui delivered an RBI single to right and was three-fourths of the way to second before reversing course when he saw the throw come in to second.

Jays shortstop Yunel Escobar never saw Matsui and wheeled and threw home, at which point Matsui turned around once again and made it to second.

"I was trying to trick them is what I was trying to do," Matsui said through translator Roger Kahlon. "I was just making a fool of myself."

The A's still trail first-place Texas by 12½ games as the Rangers arrive in Oakland for a three-game series starting Friday, but there's a rejuvenated feeling surrounding the A's given the way they're hitting.

They saw their string of eight straight games with a homer end. But since the All-Star break, Oakland is batting .295 as a team, compared with .233 before the break. The A's entered Thursday leading the majors in on-base percentage (.366) and slugging percentage (.470) since the break.

Thursday's 11-hit attack came with second baseman Jemile Weeks getting a day off, so Scott Sizemore batted leadoff and contributed two doubles and two runs.

Right-hander Guillermo Moscoso (5-6), who has been inconsistent since the break, never gave the Blue Jays hope of getting back in the game. He went six innings and allowed three hits and two runs (one earned).

"It feels great, not just for me but the whole team," Moscoso said.

## Texas pitcher's comments invite fans' response

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

TORONTO -- Friday's series opener between the A's and Rangers carries some spice thanks to Texas left-hander C.J. Wilson's disparaging comments regarding A's fans and the Q.co Coliseum.

"I hate pitching there," Wilson was quoted by ESPN.com Wednesday. "The mound sucks, the fans suck. It's too bad because the fans that are there are really adamant. ... But, you know, some games you go there, and there's like 6,000 people."

A's pitcher Brandon McCarthy, a former Rangers teammate who opposes Wilson on Friday at the Coliseum, said fans have a chance to express their feelings on the matter.

"The people that should be angry are the fans," McCarthy said. "They can choose to respond how they want. If the fans are on him, then I'm sure he knows that that's what he leaves himself open for."

Wilson took his first shot at the A's in May, criticizing their selective hitting approach as "lawyer ball." In response, he received a signed baseball from several A's hitters that included the tongue-in-cheek message, "From the law office of ..."

That's presumably what prompted Wilson, eligible for free agency after the season, to say: "You don't have to worry about me signing there. The players on their team hate me."

McCarthy responded: "I think he misconstrues hate. If you need the 'world is against me' attitude and that's what makes you work, then that's fine."

A's catcher Kurt Suzuki said it was unfair to criticize A's fans as Wilson did.

"It's unfortunate to hear with the way things are going in this economy," Suzuki said.

Center fielder Coco Crisp (strained right calf) didn't play for the fourth straight game, and A's manager Bob Melvin said he was uncertain of Crisp's availability for the Texas series.

Melvin added that the team would wait until after the weekend to decide whether to place Crisp on the disabled list.

Reliever Michael Wuertz, on the D.L. with right thumb tendinitis, won't try throwing until Monday, and Melvin said Wuertz isn't likely to return until September.

Adam Rosales, who started at second base, is mired in a career-long 0-for-24 skid.

## Chin Music: C.J. Wilson's comments catch A's attention

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/11/2011 9:32am

We're 3 for 3 on open-roof days here at the Rogers Center. Blue sky and sunshine, so it should be good baseball weather. ...

The comments from Texas Rangers pitcher C.J. Wilson, in which he bashed the Coliseum and A's fans, should make for an interesting game Friday night. Wilson will pitch the opener of a three-game series against Brandon McCarthy, his former Rangers teammate. Check out Wilson's comments if you haven't seen them yet. "He said kind of what he wanted to say," McCarthy said. "The people that should be angry should be the fans. They can choose to respond how they want." Here's Kurt Suzuki's take on Wilson, a free agent after the season who says he would never play for the A's: "He's a good pitcher and he's probably going to make a lot of money soon. We don't have a stadium like the Rangers or Yankees, but we're fortunate to play for the Oakland A's and we're proud of it."

—Center fielder Coco Crisp is not playing today, and manager Bob Melvin is unsure of Crisp's availability for the Rangers series. But he said the team will hold off until after the weekend to decide if Crisp will go on the DL for his strained right calf. "I think we're prepared to go through the Texas series," Melvin said. "We're reluctant to DL him because he's such an important cog." But Melvin also said a calf injury is a big deal for a player such as Crisp, whose speed is so important to his game.

–Scott Sizemore makes a surprise appearance in the leadoff spot with Jemile Weeks getting a day off. Melvin likes Sizemore's on-base percentage and he thinks Sizemore is swinging the bat a little better lately. Adam Rosales is playing second base. "We want to keep (Weeks) healthy," Melvin said. "It looks to me like he's wearing down some."

–Michael Wuertz, on the DL with right thumb tendinitis, won't throw until Monday, and Melvin says it's likely that Wuertz wouldn't return until September.

Today's lineups:

A's – Sizemore 3B, Pennington SS, Matsui DH, Willingham LF, Jackson 1B, DeJesus RF, Suzuki C, Sweeney CF, Rosales 2B; Moscoso RHP.

Jays – Escobar SS, Thames LF, Bautista RF, Lind DH, Encarnacion 1B, Rasmus CF, Hill 2B, Arencibia C, Lawrie 3B; Mills LHP.

### **A's rout Jays - Rangers next amid controversy**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's are coming home off a better road trip than usual to face a first-place team amid some potential added tension - C.J. Wilson, tonight's starter for Texas, bashed Oakland and its fans.

On Thursday, Oakland defeated the Blue Jays 10-3 to win consecutive road series for the first time since the team's first road trip in April.

Conor Jackson drove in three runs, two on a triple in the third inning that provided the amusing sight of Josh Willingham, not a particularly fast runner, nearly catching up to Hideki Matsui and staying on his tail all the way to the plate.

"I knew he was right behind me because he was yelling, 'Run, Matsui, run!' " Matsui said, laughing, as Roger Kahlon interpreted.

Manager Bob Melvin added, "I didn't know if Hideki was going to pass the baton to him or if it was a race. I know Willingham got a chuckle out of it, and so did the rest of the dugout."

Willingham said, "He was jogging and I was catching up with him - I really wanted him to go. The ball was on the ground and I was 5 feet away from him."

Matsui, playing with a big knot on his lower left leg after being hit with a pitch the night before, had four hits, drove in two runs and scored two runs, and he's batting a big-league best .432 since the All-Star break.

Starting pitcher Guillermo Moscoso allowed three hits, two walks and two runs, one earned, in six innings for the victory.

The A's come home having won four of five to face Wilson, who told ESPN Dallas this week that A's fans "suck" because of their poor attendance, that he doesn't like pitching in Oakland and that A's players don't like him. He also said he wouldn't consider signing with Oakland when he becomes a free agent this winter.

Cue sarcastic sounds of disappointment from the A's.

"Why would anyone care what he thinks?" one Oakland player said Thursday, expressing the general feeling in the clubhouse.

Brandon McCarthy, Wilson's teammate in Texas, will start for the A's tonight.

"He's not really attacking the players, he's attacking the fans," McCarthy said. "I'm not sure why, but if he's got something on his chest, he got it off between that and the 'lawyerball' stuff."

"If he wants to make comments, obviously he's allowed to do that, and it's up to the other team to play well. The more you do that, the more you win the battle. Bickering back and forth doesn't do anything."

Another former Texas player, A's starter Rich Harden, said of Wilson's comments, "Not surprising."

Harden said he imagines that the Oakland fans will be able to voice their own thoughts about Wilson loud and clear tonight. "I think it will get them going," he said.

Harden chose to return to the A's as a free agent last winter, and unlike Wilson, he loves pitching at the Coliseum.

"I know we haven't been getting as many fans as everyone would like, but we have really good fans," said Harden, who starts Sunday. "That's something I've always appreciated. The fans we have are great. I'd like to see us put together a good season for them. Those comments by C.J. - that was kind of insulting to them."

### **A's Craig Breslow's struggles might be bad luck**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

By traditional measures, **Craig Breslow** is having a down year, but advanced metrics show that the left-hander might just be unlucky.

Breslow's batting average on balls in play (BABIP) is .394, the highest mark in the league. High BABIP can indicate a poor defense or sheer bad luck, because most pitchers have fairly similar BABIPs. (Then again, some statisticians believe that high BABIP also can indicate that a pitcher is becoming hittable.)

Breslow's BABIP last year was .228 and the season before .219.

"Someone has got to have the unluckiest season in baseball," Breslow said.

Breslow's season is a strange one, period. Before **Brett Lawrie's** grand slam Wednesday, Breslow had allowed only three of 22 inherited runners to score, one of the best marks in the league, but his numbers against left-handed hitters have been terrible: They are hitting .403 against him, right-handers .268.

There is thought that perhaps a heavy workload the past few years has caught up with Breslow, but he said his velocity is up and, he said, "I feel good and strong and healthy."

Breslow looked at some video, and he believes he's just missing his spots. He pitched the ninth Thursday and allowed a double.

**Briefly: David DeJesus** made some sensational catches in the series, none better than a diving backhand play in the seventh inning on a sinking liner by **Yunel Escobar**. ... **Coco Crisp** remained out with a right calf strain. If he isn't ready to return by Monday, he's likely to go on the disabled list. ... After the A's appealed to the league, Crisp was awarded a base hit on a play ruled an error in the first inning at Tampa Bay on Saturday. ... **Michael Wuertz** (right thumb) will throw Monday

but he's unlikely to rejoin the A's until the end of the month. ... The A's are close to signing third-round pick **B.A. Vollmuth**, a third baseman from Southern Mississippi.

## Leading off

**Thrill for rookie:** Reliever Trystan Magnuson, born in Canada, got to pitch against his favorite team Wednesday. "Getting to play here was a blast," Magnuson said. "It was awesome to get a chance to pitch my first time here."

## **Drumbeat: Finale at Toronto, no Coco Crisp; A's dismiss C.J. Wilson comments**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Rogers Centre 8/11/2011, 8:54am

Coco Crisp, as expected, isn't in the lineup today; he hit and did some other work on the field yesterday and still felt that right calf strain. I asked manager Bob Melvin at what point Crisp becomes a DL possibility, and he said if he's still not ready to go after the Texas series this weekend. The team obviously doesn't want to DL Crisp - he pretty much makes the offense go.

That series against Texas gained some spice yesterday when C.J. Wilson, who will start tomorrow night's game, said that the mound at the Coliseum "sucks, the fans suck." He also said he wouldn't sign with the A's as a free agent (I think the A's would have to actually want him first, and they've never suggested anything of the sort) and he said that the A's players don't like him.

That part is bang on the money. Asked about Wilson's comments this morning, one A's player said, "Who cares what he thinks?" - a sentiment expressed by many members of the team. One player suggested that responding to Wilson's comments only would feed into his desire for attention. Another pointed to this set of comments and Wilson's contention in May, as first reported by colleague John Shea, that the A's play "lawyerball," always trying to get borderline pitches, as an indication that apparently, Wilson has a real problem with the A's, rather than the other way around. But why? He's 3-5 with a 4.50 ERA against Oakland lifetime, and at the Coliseum, he's 0-2 with a 4.00 ERA, but does that warrant such spite? Strange. You'd think if there was a Bay Area team Wilson had real reason to hate, it would be the Giants, who beat him in Game 2 of the World Series last year.

Wilson's former teammate, Brandon McCarthy, starts for the A's tomorrow night, and, McCarthy said, "He's not really attacking the players, he's attacking the fans. I'm not sure why, but if he had something on his chest, he got it off. And the 'lawyerball' comments. Hopefully, we do what we're supposed to do and stick up for ourselves and our fans. That's the best way to go about it. If he wants to make comments, obviously he's allowed to do it, and it's up to the other team to play well. The more you do that, the more you win the battle, but bickering back and forth doesn't do anything."

Said A's starter Gio Gonzalez, with a smile, "He's entitled to his own opinion. I hope the Oakland crowd gives him a good welcome."

Here's the lineup behind Guillermo Moscoso: Sizemore 3b, Pennington ss, Matsui dh, Willingham lf, Jackson 1b, DeJesus rf, Suzuki c, Sweeney cf, Rosales 2b

It's just a day off for Weeks. Sizemore is in the leadoff spot because Melvin says he's swinging the bat better lately and the A's are facing a lefty, Brad Mills.

Melvin said that Michel Wuertz (right thumb soreness) won't start throwing until Monday. That makes any return before the end of the month unlikely.

## **A's bat around twice in trouncing Blue Jays**

### Moscoso bounces back from rough outings with six strong frames

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

TORONTO -- Any leftover tension stemming from the A's loss to the Blue Jays on Wednesday night transformed into an offensive surge.

After engaging in a benches-clearing altercation the night before, the A's utilized their remaining emotion to capture a 10-3 series-clinching victory Thursday, culminating a nine-game road swing with a 4-5 record.

Despite the losing mark, the A's exited Toronto rather pleased with their play, considering the journey began with an uninspiring three-game sweep in Seattle before the club took two of three from both the Rays and Blue Jays.

"I really liked the character after the three games in Seattle," said A's manager Bob Melvin. "We came into two tough places against teams that can swing the bat, and to take two out of three from what we had been doing previously on the road is a nice pick-me-up and a nice confidence rebuild."

"Anytime you can take a series, especially on the road, it's big," Josh Willingham said. "We hadn't necessarily played that great on the road leading up to this trip, so it feels good to win a couple."

Oakland compiled at least four runs in eight of those games, and the club scored four or more runs in two different innings Thursday, posting a six-spot against lefty Brad Mills in the third before tallying four more in the sixth.

It proved more than enough support for righty Guillermo Moscoso, who entered the day in need of a dose of help following a disappointing stretch of three outings in which he yielded 11 earned runs and eight walks in just 16 innings.

Moscoso appeared far removed from those woes, though, as he surrendered just one earned run -- two total -- on three hits with two walks and six strikeouts in six innings. His first three were perfect, and he didn't allow a hit out of the infield until his final frame.

"I felt great," Moscoso said. "I was making my pitches, working with the slider and getting some ground balls. That was the key, getting ahead of the count, letting me do whatever I want."

The A's, meanwhile, overcame four strikeouts against Mills through the first two innings by sending each of their starting nine to the plate in the game-changing third. A leadoff walk to Adam Rosales was followed by back-to-back doubles from Scott Sizemore and Cliff Pennington, the latter bringing in two runs.

Hideki Matsui's single brought in another and, after Willingham was hit by a pitch, Conor Jackson cleared the bases with a two-run triple that had Willingham on Matsui's tail as they rounded third.

"I said, 'Go Matsui!'" Willingham said, laughing. "And then I said, 'Hurry up!'"

"I noticed him there," Matsui said. "He kept saying, 'Run, Matsui!'"

Toronto narrowed the A's lead to four in the fourth, when Yunel Escobar walked and ultimately scored on a throwing error by Pennington, whose attempted throw to second base to start a double play sailed wide into the outfield.

J.P. Arencibia's solo shot off hard-throwing Oakland righty Fautino De Los Santos in the seventh marked the Blue Jays' final run of the day, but it barely made a dent in the extended lead gained by Oakland in the sixth.

Again, every A's player went to bat, this time against lefty Luis Perez. The Blue Jays reliever quickly endured a helping of misfortune, as Sizemore reached on a throwing error by third baseman Brett Lawrie.

Perez's luck didn't exactly improve. He allowed two runs on another RBI hit from Matsui and Jackson's sacrifice fly before making a throwing error of his own on Ryan Sweeney's infield single that allowed a pair of runs to score, giving the A's just their third double-digit run total of the season.

"That's what we need," Melvin said. "That's the type of team we are. We are starting to get the production in the middle of the order from Willingham and Matsui that you would like to see from those guys, but the surrounding guys have to give their share, and the guys before them have to get on. So it was a good team effort today, especially after a tough loss yesterday."

Matsui collected four hits and has now reached via hit or walk in 23 of his 24 games since the All-Star break, a span during which he's 41-for-95 (.432).

"I'll talk about him every day if you want to," Melvin said. "The run that he's on is remarkable. To look up today to see him close to .270, I don't know that I've been around a consistent run like that. He never ceases to amaze you. From the time I've been here, he's been swinging the bat in that fashion."

The offensive outburst enabled the A's to capture their second consecutive road series -- and fourth in their past five overall -- as they head home for a three-game weekend set against the rival Rangers, who swept four games in Arlington the last time the clubs met.

"Flying cross-country, it's always nicer after a win," Melvin said. "We have Texas in there, a first-place club that beat up on us pretty good the last time we saw them, so we know we have to come with our A-game tomorrow and play very well to beat them."

### **Wilson's comments give edge to opener with A's**

By Evan Drellich / MLB.com

The str8edgeracer has given, well, an edge to this weekend's three-game series between the A's and Rangers, set to begin Friday in Oakland.

Texas left-hander C.J. Wilson, whose Twitter handle is @str8edgeracer, said before Thursday's off-day that the Oakland Coliseum is far from his favorite park.

"I hate pitching there," said Wilson, who's enjoying another strong season with a 10-5 record and 3.35 ERA. "The mound [stinks]. The fans [stink]. There are no fans there. It's too bad, because the fans that are there are really adamant and stoked on the team. They play drums and they wave flags, and it's cool. But some games you go there and there are, like, 6,000 people there. It's kind of sad, because that's a Major League team, and there are guys out there that are obviously pretty good players. Guys like [Trevor] Cahill and Gio Gonzalez, obviously, they are All-Star pitchers, and I just wish the fan base supported them a little bit more."

Wilson has posted a 4.50 ERA against the A's in his career, though just five of his 34 career appearances against them have been starts, and only one was at the Coliseum.

Former Rangers southpaw Brandon McCarthy will toe the rubber for the A's, and he's well aware of Wilson's remarks.

"You're entitled to your own opinion," McCarthy said. "A lot of people wouldn't say that stuff, but if he does, it's on our fans to kind of show something Friday night and stick up for themselves, and it's up to us as a team to fight back and show him

we can beat him on the field and do everything we're supposed to do there, and send our message that way. Getting into a back-and-forth battle of words is just pointless."

McCarthy's pitched well of late, with eight shutout innings against the Rays on Saturday and quality starts in his past three outings. He's lowered his ERA from 3.74 to 3.31.

Despite Wilson's dislike for Oakland, he knows there's a danger in approaching a start against the A's less than seriously.

"The challenge of facing the A's is taking them lightly," Wilson said. "You can't do that. They're a Major League team. They've seen me so many times over the years that they know what I have, and they're going to have a good game plan. I want to go out there and win the game."

### **Rangers: Gentry raring to go**

- Outfielder Craig Gentry was reinstated from the seven-day concussion disabled list on Thursday's off-day, as expected. Right-hander Darren O'Day was optioned to Triple-A Round Rock to make room.

Gentry suffered a concussion on July 24 when his helmet fell off on a headfirst slide into second base. His neck twisted as he made contact with Blue Jays second baseman Aaron Hill.

### **A's: Coco still hurting**

- Coco Crisp may need a trip to the disabled list because of his strained right calf, but the A's plan to wait through the weekend before making that call.

"I don't know, it could be a couple more days," manager Bob Melvin said. "I think, potentially, we'll see where we are after the Texas series."

Ryan Sweeney started a fourth straight game in center on Thursday in Crisp's place. Michael Taylor or Jai Miller could be called up from Triple-A Sacramento if Crisp is placed on the DL.

### **Worth noting**

- Rangers infielder Michael Young has hit safely in 10 consecutive games and 18 of his past 19. He's hitting .395 during that stretch.
- Rangers second baseman Ian Kinsler has hit five home runs since the All-Star break, though four of them came against the Mariners.
- While the A's put up double-digit runs against the Blue Jays on Thursday, they did not homer, snapping a streak of 13 long balls in their past eight games. They hadn't homered in eight straight games since a streak of the same length from May 17-25, 2008.
- The series is the start of a 10-game road trip for Texas, with stops in Anaheim and Chicago to follow. The A's are starting a 10-game homestand, with the Orioles and Blue Jays visiting next. Both clubs own two straight series wins after the A's took their rubber match with the Blue Jays on Thursday, 10-3.

### **McCarthy takes high road after Wilson's jabs**

### **Starters face off in Friday's series opener between A's, Rangers**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com



TORONTO -- It's becoming rather easy for Rangers pitcher C.J. Wilson to make truth out of his recent comment that A's players "hate" him.

The Texas left-hander stirred an already brewing pot again on Wednesday, just a couple of months after he dismissed the A's hitting approach as "lawyer ball" when he walked a season-high five and allowed five runs despite giving up just two hits in seven innings while taking the loss.

This time, Wilson shot down the organization's fan base.

"I hate pitching there," Wilson said. "The mound [stinks]. The fans [stink]. There are no fans there. It's too bad, because the fans that *are* there are really adamant and stoked on the team. They play drums and they wave flags, and it's cool. But some games you go there and there are, like, 6,000 people there. It's kind of sad, because that's a Major League team, and there are guys out there that are obviously pretty good players. Guys like [Trevor] Cahill and Gio Gonzalez, obviously, they are All-Star pitchers, and I just wish the fan base supported them a little bit more."

A's right-hander Brandon McCarthy, who will face off against his former teammate in Friday's three-game-series opener in Oakland, was well-aware of Wilson's comments on Thursday morning but in no way was ready to jumpstart a war of words.

"You're entitled to your own opinion," McCarthy said. "A lot of people wouldn't say that stuff, but if he does, it's on our fans to kind of show something Friday night and stick up for themselves, and it's up to us as a team to fight back and show him we can beat him on the field and do everything we're supposed to do there, and send our message that way. Getting into a back-and-forth battle of words is just pointless."

Wilson is 1-2 with a 4.71 ERA in three starts against Oakland this season, and he has no plans of using his free-agent status this winter to make a move to don the green and gold.

"They hate me anyway, so it doesn't matter," Wilson said. "The players on their team hate me, whatever. I don't care. It's true -- dudes on their team don't like me. I get it."

"He seems to talk about us a lot," McCarthy said. "I think the easiest way to quiet somebody is to beat him, and beat him well, to the point where there's just nothing left to say. That needs to be our goal from now through the rest of September."

"Obviously, we're only fighting for pride at this point. The guys that are around next year can maybe lay down a message and let him know, Oakland's not your whipping bag. If we stick up for ourselves, things will get quiet pretty quick."

Following the weekend's series, the A's and Rangers play each other twice more in September, spreading out six games between the two venues. The A's entered Thursday 13 games back of their division rivals in the American League West, where they greatly distanced themselves before the All-Star break as victims of a four-game sweep in the Lone Star State.

"It's such a petty thing to be a part of, but when somebody wants to do that, you have to protect yourself," McCarthy said. "For me, being out there on the mound, I'm always trying to win. Whether or not something else surrounds the game, it's pretty inconsequential, especially something like this."

### **Decision on Crisp to come after set vs. Texas**

TORONTO -- The A's will wait out this weekend's series against the Rangers in Oakland before deciding whether a trip to the disabled list is necessary for Coco Crisp, who is still battling a strained right calf.

"I don't know, it could be a couple more days," manager Bob Melvin said. "I think, potentially, we'll see where we are after the Texas series."

The A's skipper was hopeful earlier in the week that Crisp could play in Toronto. But the outfielder, who underwent light baseball activity on Wednesday, was again missing from the lineup for Thursday's finale after "still feeling it some," Melvin said.

"I think maybe I downplayed it more," Melvin said. "It's a calf strain, which, for a runner like him, is an issue. Maybe my downplaying it was more hoping we had him back earlier. We would be reluctant to DL him just because he's such an important [player] for us. But I think we're prepared to go through the Texas series at this point."

Ryan Sweeney received his fourth straight start in center field Thursday in Crisp's stead. Should the A's need to bring up another outfielder, the club has several options at Triple-A Sacramento, including Michael Taylor and Jai Miller.

### **Worth noting**

- Right-hander Michael Wuertz, on the 15-day disabled list with right thumb tendinitis, is not expected to begin playing catch until Monday and is unlikely to return before the end of the month.

- Jemile Weeks received a day off Thursday, while Adam Rosales drew a start at second base. Weeks has started 54 of the club's 56 games since his June 7 promotion.

### **Matsui gets four hits in A's 10-3 win at Toronto**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TORONTO — After a rotten start to their road trip, Hideki Matsui and the Athletics are heading home on a high.

Matsui had four hits, Conor Jackson drove in three runs and Oakland beat the Toronto Blue Jays 10-3 on Thursday.

Swept in a three-game series at last-place Seattle to open their cross-continental journey, Oakland recovered by taking two of three in Tampa Bay and two of three from the Blue Jays.

"We came into two places that are tough to play against two good teams that swing the bat," Oakland manager Bob Melvin said. "To take two out of three in both these places with what we had been doing on the road is a nice pick-me-up and a nice confidence rebuild after a tough series in Seattle."

The Athletics are 22-40 on the road this season, and have won just 11 of their past 42 away from home.

"We had a tough series in Seattle but I think everybody took a good look at themselves," Matsui said through a translator. "Since we came to the East Coast, these were some tough opponents, but we made sure that we did the preparation that we needed to do and then executed on the field."

Oakland failed to hit a home run for the first time in nine games but still finished with its most runs since scoring 13 against Tampa Bay on July 27. Oakland's season high is 14 runs, set May 17 against the Angels.

Matsui had a 15-game hitting streak snapped Tuesday and was hitless in 10 at bats before hitting an RBI single in the third. He grounded out in the fourth but singled again in the sixth, seventh and ninth to finish 4 for 6. Matsui, who was hitting .209 at the All Star break, has raised his average to .268.

"The run that he's on is remarkable," Melvin said. "I don't know that I've been around a run like that, a consistent run. He never ceases to amaze you."

It was something of an adventurous day on the bases for Matsui, who was hit on the lower left leg by a pitch Wednesday and played despite minor swelling. Trotting home from second on Jackson's triple in the third, he was nearly caught by Josh Willingham, who crossed the plate just a few feet behind.

"I didn't know if Hideki was going to pass the baton to him," Melvin said.

Willingham, who said he was gaining on Matsui despite "jogging," made sure his teammate knew he was closing fast.

"He was right behind me yelling at me 'Run, Matsui, run!'" Matsui said.

The Japanese slugger was nearly thrown out at second after lining an RBI single to right in the sixth, but shortstop Yunel Escobar didn't see him coming and fired the relay to the plate, allowing Matsui to take second.

"I was trying to trick them," he joked. "Apparently I was just making a fool out of myself. I actually even laughed at myself afterward."

Oakland right-hander Guillermo Moscoso (5-6) allowed two runs, one earned, in six innings to earn the win. He walked two and struck out six.

"I felt pretty good, I was making my pitches," Moscoso said. "I was working the slider today. That was the key, to get ahead in the count with the first two pitches and I was able to do whatever I wanted."

Fautino De Los Santos and Brian Fuentes each worked one inning before Craig Breslow finished for the A's.

J.P. Arencibia hit his 19th home run for Toronto, a solo drive to center in the seventh, but it wasn't enough for the Blue Jays.

Oakland chased Toronto starter Brad Mills with a six-run third. Cliff Pennington hit a two-run double, Matsui followed with an RBI single and, after Willingham was hit by a pitch, Jackson hit a two-run triple and scored on a wild pitch.

Mills (1-2) allowed six runs and five hits in three innings, his shortest career start. The left-hander walked two and struck out five.

"It's not the first time I've had a bad inning and it won't be the last," Mills said. It's not the end of the world but I feel bad that I wasn't able to help the team get off to a good start."

Moscoso was perfect through the first three innings before walking Escobar to begin the fourth. One out later, Jose Bautista walked to put runners at first and second for Adam Lind, who grounded to shortstop. Trying for the double play, Pennington's relay to second base sailed into right field for an error, allowing Escobar to score and sending Bautista to third. Bautista came home one batter later on Edwin Encarnacion's infield single.

The Athletics padded their lead with a four-run sixth against reliever Luis Perez. Sizemore reached on a throwing error by third baseman Brett Lawrie, Pennington walked and Matsui hit an RBI single. Willingham walked to load the bases and Jackson hit a sacrifice fly.

After David DeJesus struck out looking, Kurt Suzuki walked to load the bases again before Ryan Sweeney hit an infield single, with a second run scoring on Perez's throwing error.

NOTES: Oakland 2B Adam Rosales went 0 for 4 with a walk, extending his career-long hitless streak to 0 for 24. ... Oakland has won four of its past five series. ... Athletics OF Coco Crisp (right calf) missed his fourth straight game and is expected to sit out the upcoming three-game series against Texas. ... Oakland RHP Michael Wuertz (right thumb) will not resume throwing until Aug. 15 and is unlikely to return before the end of the month. Wuertz was placed on the 15-day DL July 30. ... Toronto's Edwin Encarnacion has started taking fly balls in left field, manager John Farrell said, and could see some time in the outfield before the end of the season.

### **Don't Forget the A's**

Paul Hirsch, ALIVE East Bay, August, 2011

Sometimes it is difficult to remember that the Bay Area has two major league baseball teams. The task of making sure we don't forget about the team that did not win the World Series last year falls on veteran sports public relations professional Bob Rose, who has 30 years experience working for teams and leagues at the college and professional levels and is now Director of Public Relations for the Oakland A's.

"We take pride in providing great value to our customers," Rose said. "We think our promotions and pricing include everyone under the baseball tent."

Indeed, the A's go far beyond the traditional giveaways to make attending their games as affordable as possible. Guests on Tuesdays can park for free at the Coliseum, on Wednesdays thousands of tickets are priced at \$2, and on Thursdays there are free hot dogs available for the first 10,000 fans.

"The value we provide should resonate more than ever before," Rose said. "We are sensitive to people who might be struggling with the recession, with unemployment, with underemployment and with just deciding if they can afford to go to a game. We try and be one of the best live entertainment options by remaining affordable."

Affordability is one thing, but people must also be entertained. A huge advantage held by the A's is that baseball's two primary glamour franchises, the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox visit the Coliseum at least once each every season. The Giants also visit once a year, making it an easier trip for fans in Alive East Bay territory to see a team many of them followed from childhood.

As the clear second team in this market, Rose has challenges most of his colleagues across major league baseball do not face. The big local sports radio station, the largest Bay Area sports cable TV channel are both dedicated to the Giants, and the ballpark in San Francisco is newer and more picturesque. This forces Rose to get creative in disseminating his message.

"We work extra hard at servicing the media to make sure they have our messages and can provide them to our audience. We also work with our broadcast partners (the radio and TV stations that cover the A's games) to use the three hours of air time to communicate our story to our fans. Social media is a big part of our strategy. We have thousands of friends on Facebook and we tweet to reach out." Rose also mentioned that the A's have a traditional ad campaign with TV, radio, print ads and billboards throughout the region.

Winning of course is the biggest factor in a team's success, and the A's have not done a great deal of that lately. The team has not been to the post season since 2006 and has struggled most years to win half its games. "Winning and star players drive free media coverage," Rose said. "There is no doubt about that."

Since winning has been a challenge, the A's have relied on promotions, and being relentless with the media when there is a story. They promote the players who achieve outstanding individual success (like making the All Star team or the perfect game Dallas Braden pitched) or seize upon a fresh young star like new second baseman Jemile Weeks.

"We have to be more aggressive than the Giants because we do not get half their coverage," Rose said. "We try to be the more organic baseball organization and try to sell the product that is on the field."

For **ALIVE East Bay** fans the A's provide a much lower cost alternative and in some ways a more attractive schedule. Oakland's ballpark is a shorter ride and there is no bridge to cross to get to a game. We are fortunate to have two teams within easy driving distance and we should remember that both deserve our support, especially if we want to see all the teams from both the American and National League continue to visit the Bay Area.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **RockHounds see their first rainout of the season**

Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter-Telegram

Thursday night's game between the Midland RockHounds and the Tulsa Drillers at Citibank Ballpark was postponed because of rain.

The game will be made up as part of a doubleheader, consisting of two seven-inning games beginning at 5 p.m. today.

The probable pitching matchups scheduled should remain the same. In the first game, the RockHounds are expected to send left-hander Anthony Capra (1-4, 6.30 ERA) to the mound against Tulsa right-hander Cory Riordan (1-11, 5.54).

In the second game, the RockHounds are expected to start right-hander Sonny Gray against Tulsa righty Joe Gardner (0-1, 5.68). Gray is making his Double-A debut after being drafted 18th overall in June's draft by the Oakland A's. Gardner is a former Cleveland Indians farmhand who came over to the Colorado Rockies organization in the trade for pitcher Ubaldo Jimenez.

Thursday's game, scheduled for 7 p.m., never got underway as first the wind came and then the rain at about 6:40 p.m. The conditions made it pretty tough on the groundskeeping crew and RockHound employees to get the tarp on the infield.

The game was finally called at 8:20 p.m. as more rain was forecasted in the area along with lightning.

It is the first rainout of the season for the RockHounds.

### **Mavs Blast Ports 11-3**

Stockton Ports

**ADELANTO, Calif.** - The High Desert Mavericks play their home games in a ballpark that's very conducive to the home run ball, and on Thursday night they took full advantage. The Mavericks hit five home runs off Stockton Ports starter A.J. Griffin (3-3) as Stockton fell to High Desert for the first time all year by a final of 11-3.

High Desert's first batter of the game, Daniel Carroll, provided some foreshadowing with a leadoff home run to center to put the Mavs in front 1-0. In the 3rd, the Mavs cashed in on their only multi-run homer as Leury Bonilla hit a three-run blast to center to make it a 4-0 ballgame.

Griffin would be hit up for three more big flies, all of them solo shots. With two outs in the 4th, Joe Dunigan hit his first of two on the night. In the 6th, Steven Proscia and Dunigan each had solo shots, at the time making it a 7-1 game.

Griffin would go six innings and allow seven runs (all on home runs) on nine hits while matching a season-high with 10 strikeouts in a losing effort.

Stockton's offense mustered just one hit over the first five innings. The Ports scored their first run of the game in the 6th. With Leonardo Gil at second base and one out, Myrio Richard singled to right to score Gil to make it 5-1 at the time. The

Ports would go on to load the bases with one out, but on a ball that got through to the backstop, Richard would be caught in a rundown between third and home trying to advance, holding Stockton to just the lone run in the frame.

Mavericks starter Taylor Stanton (2-3) earned the win after going a season-high seven innings, allowing one run on four hits while striking out a season-high seven batters.

High Desert added a pair of runs in the 7th off Ports reliever Mike Hart. Both runs scored on a two-run double from Jamie McOwen to make it 9-1. The Mavericks tacked on two more in the 8th off Scott Deal on an RBI double from Trevor Coleman and an RBI single from Carroll to make it an 11-1 game.

Stockton added a pair of runs in the 9th on an RBI double to left from Michael Gilmartin and a throwing error committed by Bonilla the shortstop. Willy Kesler, though, would get Mitch LeVier to ground to second to end the game.

Kesler pitched the final two innings for High Desert and allowed two runs (one earned) on three hits.

Michael Choice extended his on-base streak to 47 games after being hit by a pitch in the 6th. It's the longest such streak this season in professional baseball.

Anthony Aliotti, after drawing a walk in the 9th, extended his on-base streak to 36 games.

The Ports and Mavericks play the second game of their four-game set on Friday night at Mavericks Stadium. Dan Straily (10-7, 3.82 ERA) will head to the hill for Stockton, opposed by High Desert southpaw Nate Reed (0-1, 5.91 ERA). First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

### **Bees Bats Break Out**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

DAVENPORT, IA - The Burlington Bees (16-30) exploded for 11 runs on 15 hits for an 11-6 win over the Quad Cities River Bandits (28-18) at Modern Woodman Park on Thursday.

The Burlington Bees scored three runs in the first inning. RF Jose Crisotomo (4-5) hit a one-out single and moved to second base when 1B Josh Whitaker (2-4) walked. SS Yordy Cabrera (1-5) hit an RBI double and C Beau Taylor (2-4) followed with a two-run single for a 3-0 lead.

The Quad Cities River Bandits scored three runs in the first inning before the Bees went to work again in the second inning. CF Tyreece House (1-4) walked and went to third base on a single by 2B Nino Leyja (3-6). A sacrifice fly to right field by Crisotomo scored House and an RBI double by Whitaker scored Leyja for a 5-3 lead.

The River Bandits scored a run in the second inning and the Bees put two more runs across home plate in the third inning on an RBI triple by Leyja and an RBI single by Crisotomo for a 7-4 advantage.

The Bees scored two runs in the fifth inning on a two-run home run by Crisotomo for a 9-4 lead.

Burlington scored single runs in the sixth and eighth innings for the 11-6 win.

BEES BUZZINGS: Crisotomo has gone 8-14 with nine RBIs over his last three games.

The Bees and River Bandits finish their series on Friday at 7:00 p.m. RHP Nate Long (6-6, 3.25) gets the start for the Bees against RHP Boone Whiting (3-1, 1.98) for the River Bandits. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:40 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at gobees.com.

### **Vermont Rallies For 7-4 Win Thursday**

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

AUBURN, NY --- Dusty Robinson and Xavier Macklin both had two-run doubles as the Vermont Lake Monsters scored four runs in the top of the seventh inning for a come-from-behind 7-4 New York-Penn League victory over the Auburn Doubledays on Thursday night at Falcon Park.

After Auburn had scored two runs in the bottom of the sixth to take a 4-3 lead, the Doubledays helped start the Lake Monsters seventh-inning rally by committing back-to-back fielding errors to open the frame. Then with the bases loaded and one out, Robinson lined a double to left field scoring Michael Fabiaschi and Chih-Fang Pan for a 5-4 lead.

Another Auburn walk, one of nine by Doubleday pitchers, reloaded the bases before Macklin snapped an 0-for-30 slump with a two-run double to left for a 7-4 Vermont lead. Five of the Lake Monsters eight hits in the game went for doubles, including back-to-back doubles from Bobby Crocker and Nick Rickles in the second inning.

Jeff Urlaub (2-0) allowed two inherited runners to score on RBI singles in the sixth, but also struckout four in 1 2/3 innings to earn the victory, while Tanner Peters walked two and hit a batter in the ninth but kept the Doubledays off the scoreboard for his 10th save. Peters is just the fifth Vermont pitcher in the team's 18-year history to reach double figures in saves.

Former Lake Monsters Russell Moldenhauer (0-for-3) and Justin Miller (0-for-4) both went hitless for Auburn (32-22), while former Vermont second baseman Hendry Jimenez was 1-for-3 for the Doubledays. Kelvin Lopez (1-2) allowed the four unearned runs in the seventh to take the loss.

The win snapped a four-game losing streak for Vermont (26-27), which begins a three-game series at Batavia on Friday night. Then after the New York-Penn League All-Star Game on Tuesday, the Lake Monsters return to Centennial Field on Wednesday to open a six-game homestand.