

Texas Rangers, C.J. Wilson enjoy romp over Oakland A's

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Texas pitcher C.J. Wilson might hate everything about O.co Coliseum, but it was pretty kind to him Friday night in a 9-1 romp over the A's.

The outspoken left-hander caused quite a stir this week when he said he hates pitching in Oakland for a variety of reasons.

But from the mound he maintained he despises, he limited the A's to four hits and one run over six innings and coasted to an easy victory.

Wilson (11-5) received a lot of help from his teammates, who scored six second-inning runs against right-hander Brandon McCarthy, who was 4-0 with a 2.78 ERA since the All-Star break.

As if things didn't go badly enough on the scoreboard for McCarthy, he was knocked out of the game in the fourth inning when he took a searing Endy Chavez line drive off his right knee and couldn't continue. The Rangers scored three more runs in the inning to go up 9-0, rolling to their sixth straight victory over the A's.

Other than a constant flurry of catcalls and a few banners in the outfield bleachers firing back at his comments, Wilson met with little resistance. He gave up a one-out single to Cliff Pennington in the third inning and another to Ryan Sweeney in the fifth, but the A's didn't break through until the sixth when Josh Willingham doubled with two outs and scored on Conor Jackson's double.

So does Wilson like the place a little bit better now?

"No," he said. "The funny thing is that the fans were very colorful in their distaste for the comments I made, and it actually kind of fired me up a little bit. It felt like a playoff game out there having the whole stadium against you except for the 15 people I had here."

Wilson walked three and struck out seven before turning it over to the bullpen to preserve his first win at the Coliseum. He had been 0-2 in 14 appearances, most in relief. One loss came April 29 by a 3-1 score.

This time, though, with many of the 20,288 in attendance screaming at him, Wilson found a groove, even though he threw 114 pitches.

"You just turn it into focus," he said. "It's something I used to do in Yankee Stadium a couple of years ago when I first came up because their fans are so 'anti.' The Yankee fans, there are 50,000 of them, and they'd stab you with a butter knife to help their team win."

McCarthy had won his previous three Coliseum starts but allowed as many runs in the second inning as he did in the three wins.

Six consecutive hitters reached base to start the second off McCarthy (5-6). There was no real big blow among the five RBI hits. The real killer may have been a misplay by Pennington on a potential double-play grounder by Mike Napoli after the first run had scored.

McCarthy finally got out of the inning and settled down. But with one out in the fourth, Chavez hit a missile that caromed so hard off the pitcher's knee it rolled well into foul territory in right field for a double.

"I just wasn't right today," McCarthy said. "I didn't feel right, nothing was there. I couldn't do the things I've been doing, and it was just one of those days. If there was a fitting end to a day like that, (getting hit by a line drive) was probably it."

After writhing on the ground near the mound for more than a minute, McCarthy was able to leave the field under his own power. The A's announced that the pitcher had suffered a knee contusion, but he did not require X-rays

Garner back where he started -- as an adviser

By Carl Steward, Oakland Tribune

Phil Garner hasn't worn an A's uniform since 1976 -- 35 years ago -- but he was happy to be back in green and gold Friday as a special adviser to the club for the remainder of the 2011 season.

"I'm very proud of that because there were some who would have said I never would have made 35 years and still be alive," Garner said. "I've come full circle, and it's great to back."

Manager Bob Melvin and general manager Billy Beane have been talking about bringing Garner into the organization for three to four weeks. Melvin reveres Garner, having been his bench coach in Milwaukee (1999) and Detroit (2000) before getting his first managerial gig with Seattle in 2003.

"I learned to manage from him," Melvin said. "I never even thought about managing before I was with him. But he took time to explain things to me, whether it was during a game or after a game, and walked me through it. A lot of philosophies of what I do are because of what he taught me."

Garner will be on the field before games working with players and coaches, then watch from the stands and provide evaluations and insights to the front office and the manager. He'll work primarily during homestands.

Garner, 62, has been out of the game since 2007 when he was fired by the Houston Astros, his third managerial assignment. He made it clear he's not here as a managerial candidate for next season, and more than likely, his presence strengthens Melvin's position to be rehired. Garner said he doesn't have a burning desire to manage again.

"You never say never," he said. "But right now, I'd like to do what I can to help out Bob and the Oakland A's."

Garner relished the thought of not only working with Melvin but also the club that originally signed him as a first-round pick in 1971. Garner spent the first four seasons (1973-76) of his 16-year big league playing career in Oakland.

"I've never really analyzed the game from the stands, so I'm really looking forward to it," he said.

Coco Crisp missed his fifth straight game with a right calf strain, but Melvin said Crisp did some running before the game and might be back this weekend.

Top draft pick Sonny Gray made his pitching debut with Double-A Midland on Friday night. Gray went 22/3 innings and allowed no runs on two hits and a walk, while striking out five.

A's, Brandon McCarthy take a knee

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

-- Brandon McCarthy gave up seven runs in 3 1/3 innings to Texas at the Coliseum on Friday night, but his stat line was only a secondary reason to term it a painful loss.

With one out in the fourth inning of the Rangers' 9-1 romp, McCarthy took an Endy Chavez line drive off the lower part of his right knee.

The ball caromed so far into foul territory down the right-field line that Chavez easily turned the hit into a double.

McCarthy, meanwhile, remained on the ground for quite some time. He was able to get to his feet and walked into the dugout. The A's announced that McCarthy has a right knee contusion and is listed as day to day.

"I'm not really thrilled with the whole day," McCarthy said in the postgame clubhouse, "but all things considered, (it was) not as bad as it could be."

The second inning was pretty bad for McCarthy (5-6) and the A's. The Rangers sent 10 men to the plate and scored six times. They had six hits, including an RBI single by former Giants catcher Yorvit Torrealba, extending his hitting streak to 10 games.

Coming into Friday, McCarthy was 4-0 with a 2.78 ERA in five starts since the All-Star break. In his previous outing, he tossed eight shutout innings against Tampa Bay last Saturday.

What went wrong against the Rangers?

"For some reason, I just wasn't sharp," McCarthy said. "I couldn't get any finish. I just didn't feel good at all today. It just wasn't right."

With a six-run cushion in the second inning, Texas lefty C.J. Wilson could pitch in relatively quiet conditions - something you wouldn't have predicted before the game.

That's because earlier this week, Wilson disparaged the A's lack of fans (he actually complimented the ones who come to the Coliseum) and the Coliseum mound. He said the A's players and fans hate him.

The 20,288 fans at the Coliseum loudly booed Wilson when he went to the mound for the first inning. Though only a few, fairly mild "Wilson sucks" chants were heard through the rest of his six-inning stint, Wilson apparently used the fans' disdain for him as motivation.

"The funny thing was the fans were very colorful in their distaste," Wilson said, "and that kind of fired me up."

Wilson (11-5) allowed one run on four hits. He struck out seven and walked three.

Though they certainly didn't like the outcome, the A's had to be thankful that the game at least started on time. After the Raiders' exhibition loss to Arizona on Thursday night, the Coliseum staff had the challenge of changing the field from its football configuration to a baseball one in less than 24 hours.

"I was here at noon and I looked at it and couldn't believe the thing would be ready," A's manager Bob Melvin said at about 5:15 p.m. "So, I tip my hat to everybody who's worked (on it). What it looked like at noon, what it looks like now, it's not even the same place."

There was a large grayish-brown swath in center field, courtesy of the temporary stands for football. Workers spray-painted the yard lines and hash marks green, though they remained visible. All things considered, the field could have - and has - looked worse than it did.

Phil Garner joins A's as a special adviser

Steve Kroner, Chronicle Staff Writer

-- **Phil Garner** has a history both with the A's and with **Bob Melvin**. On Friday, those histories became part of Oakland's present and at least short-term future.

The A's hired Garner as a special adviser for the remainder of the season.

He'll work with Melvin and the A's players before games, but will not be in the dugout during games. Garner will do most of his work when the A's are at the Coliseum. How much he'll do when the team is on the road is to be determined.

Melvin said Garner is "a resource for the players, a resource for me, the coaches, the front office; just a great guy to have in the organization."

Garner and Melvin were teammates on the 1988 Giants. Melvin served as Garner's bench coach with the Brewers in 1999 and Tigers in 2000.

"Bob had a sixth sense of how players' psyches were," Garner said. "He really had great analyses on players."

Said Melvin: "I never really even thought about managing before I was with" Garner. Melvin appreciated the time Garner spent with him during and after games, explaining the nuances of managing.

"A lot of my philosophies and what I do are because of what he taught me," Melvin said.

Garner, 62, made his major-league debut with the A's on Sept. 10, 1973. The man nicknamed "Scrap Iron" spent 16 years as a major-league infielder and 15 as a manager: with Milwaukee (1992-99), Detroit (2000-01) and Houston (2004-07).

He played in Oakland and Pittsburgh for the late **Chuck Tanner**, whom Garner called "the most optimistic person in the world."

"I hope that I can, in some small way, do the same thing for Bo that Chuck did for me."

Braden's gift to Wilson: Injured starting pitcher **Dallas Braden** took issue with Rangers pitcher **C.J. Wilson** and his disparaging rant on Oakland's field and its fans to ESPN.com Dallas this week.

He sent one of his perfect-game T-shirts inscribed with a message paraphrasing Mark Twain in more colorful language: "It's better to let people think you're a (jerk) than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. ... Hey, nobody's perfect!"

Leading off

Nice start: Right-hander Sonny Gray, the A's No. 1 draft pick from Vanderbilt, made his Double-A debut Friday. He gave up two hits in 2 2/3 shutout innings and struck out five in Midland's 5-1 win over Tulsa.

Drumbeat: McCarthy update

Steve Kroner at the Coliseum: 8/12/2011 9:06pm

The A's just announced that pitcher Brandon McCarthy has a right knee contusion and is listed as day to day. McCarthy left the game in the fourth inning after getting stung by Endy Chavez's line drive that turned into a double.

Drumbeat: The field and tonight's lineup

Steve Kroner from the Coliseum: 8/12/2011 4:25pm

It's a little less than three hours before the scheduled first pitch of tonight's Rangers-A's game and the Coliseum folks are working hard to get the field in some semblance of shape after last night's Cardinals-Raiders game.

Workers are green-spray-painting what were the yard lines and hashmarks. Center field, over which temporary seats go for football, is in the worst shape; a wide swath of grayish-brown will greet the men playing center tonight, Texas' Endy Chavez and the A's Ryan Sweeney.

I asked Sweeney about the difficulties in playing the outfield following a football game:

"Everybody's got to deal with it," Sweeney said. "You've just got to watch your footing. Look the ball into your glove. It's not going to take true bounces. ... There's not very much grass out there and it's kind of sandy. You never know where the ball's going to go."

Bob Melvin's lineup against every Oakland fan's favorite lefty, C.J. Wilson: Weeks, 2B; Sizemore, 3B; Matsui, LF; Willingham, DH; Jackson, 1B; DeJesus, RF; Suzuki, C; Sweeney, CF, Pennington, SS. Brandon McCarthy will be on the mound.

Drumbeat: Garner hire a plus for Melvin; A's Braden sends C.J. Wilson a message

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser, 8/12/2011 1:46pm

The A's hired former Oakland second baseman Phil Garner, who has had a long and successful past managing in the big leagues, to be a special advisor to GM Billy Beane.

But having a longtime big-league manager around will *not* make current manager Bob Melvin uneasy. Melvin has cited Garner as one of the people most important to his own career - he even wore No. 3 in honor of Garner when he managed the Mariners.

If anything this is an indication - not a guarantee, an indication - that Melvin, currently in the job on an interim basis, will be coming back next year. Garner is his guy. Melvin has been Garner's bench coach, and I wonder if Garner could be a possibility for that role with the A's next year.

The A's infield defense has been much worse than expected this year, and it certainly would make sense to have Garner take a look at that part of the team's game. He'll be out there tonight, and I'm sure that's going to be one of the things he'll be checking out.

I got a text from Dallas Braden today that he's left a little message for C.J. Wilson, the Rangers' starter tonight. Wilson took some shots at Oakland the other day, telling ESPN Dallas he doesn't like to pitch at the Coliseum, and the fans "suck." He went on to say that the fans who do show up are great - which has been a little lost in the retelling, I plead guilty on that charge - but he added that there are sometimes only 6,000 fans. Wilson also said the A's players hate him.

Well, with these comments and the lawyer-ball comments in May, Wilson might have brought that on himself, and that's the gist of Braden's message, which he inscribed on one of his perfect-game T-shirts, paraphrasing Mark Twain but in more colorful language. It reads, in part:

"It's better to let people think you're a (jerk) than to open your mouth and remove all doubt. ... Hey, nobody's perfect!"

Cynics might suggest that Braden, like Wilson not afraid of a little attention, is trying to grab some of the spotlight for himself, but knowing Braden, I think he just wants to stick up for the team and the fans. We know he doesn't put up with any slights, perceived or otherwise, and an opposing player saying anything disparaging about the team or fans is exactly the sort of thing that would get Braden riled up.

And...one of the first things Wilson ripped was the Coliseum mound. "The mound sucks," Wilson said.

That's *Braden's* mound he's talking about. And there's even a t-shirt for that. Maybe that could be the next item of clothing inscribed for Wilson.

If you missed it today, ex-Rangers Brandon McCarthy (who is starting for the A's tonight) and Rich Harden had thoughts about Wilson's comments, and Harden had plenty of nice things to say about A's fans.

A's stumble out of gate against Rangers

By Eric Gilmore / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- So much for making Rangers left-hander C.J. Wilson pay for his sharp criticism of everything from the A's pitching mound to their light attendance and their patient approach at the plate.

A's fans barely had a chance to boo Wilson before the game took a decidedly ugly turn in the top of the second inning Friday night, and all thoughts of retribution vanished.

The Rangers scored six runs in the second off A's right-hander Brandon McCarthy and cruised to a 9-1 win, beating Oakland for the sixth straight time.

As if that weren't bad enough for the A's, McCarthy took an Andy Chavez line drive off his right knee with one out in the fourth inning and had to leave the game. He suffered a contusion and is day to day.

"I don't know what it feels like to have a knee blown apart, to do something serious to it, but it didn't feel like anything too horrible," McCarthy said. "It wasn't even the first thing I noticed. Then when I tried to stand up, then I really noticed it. I was in pain, but I kind of knew it wasn't too horribly serious."

McCarthy and A's manager Bob Melvin said they won't know whether he'll be able to make his next start until Saturday at the earliest. Chavez hit the ball so hard that it caromed off McCarthy's knee all the way to the Rangers' bullpen down the right-field line.

"It was a pretty good shot. So not really sure," Melvin said. "The next day you usually have a little better indication whether or not he can make it to his next bullpen and his next start, but I'll have no idea until tomorrow."

McCarthy gave up eight hits and seven runs (five earned) in 3 1/3 innings. He entered the game with a four-game winning streak, matching his career high. He had gone 4-0 with a 2.78 ERA in five starts since the All-Star break before getting rocked by his former team.

Michael Young led off the second with a triple, ripping a shot off the right-field wall. Nelson Cruz singled Young home and went to second when Pennington botched Mike Napoli's grounder. Back-to-back singles by Mitch Moreland and Yorvit Torrealba and a double by Chavez made it 4-0.

McCarthy finally got the first out of the inning when Ian Kinsler popped up to second baseman Jemile Weeks, but Elvis Andrus singled home another run. Josh Hamilton made it 6-0 on a grounder to Pennington that looked like a sure double-play ball but turned into a fielder's choice when he bobbed it and could get only the force at second.

The Rangers added three runs in the fourth.

"For some reason, I just wasn't sharp," McCarthy said. "I couldn't get any finish. Just didn't feel good at all today. Just wasn't right."

Coming into the game, the A's were red hot, batting .296 since the All-Star Game break, the best mark in the Major Leagues. They had scored four or more runs in seven straight games and 19 of their past 20. But they had no answer to Wilson, who allowed just four hits and one run in six innings, striking out seven and walking three.

"The funny thing is the fans were very colorful in their comments they made," Wilson said. "It fired me up. It felt like a playoff game having the whole stadium against you except the 15 people who were there with me."

The A's didn't get a hit off Wilson until Pennington singled with one out in the third. They didn't score against him until the sixth, when Josh Willingham and Conor Jackson ripped back-to-back doubles to left, cutting the Rangers' lead to 9-1.

Jackson said the A's took Wilson's comments in stride and maintained that they had no affect on the game, once it began.

"He's seeking a little attention," Jackson said. "When you go out and pitch like that tonight, you're going to get it. You don't need to say the things that he did. It is what it is."

As hot as the A's hitters have been, there was still little chance they could overcome an early 9-0 deficit.

"It's just a rough day," McCarthy said. "You come out and put yourself in a hole like that in the second inning, I think that can kill the offense a little bit. It just killed some of the momentum. It was just one of those things where everything that could go wrong today did."

McCarthy exits after liner to leg

By Eric Gilmore / MLB.com

OAKLAND - A's right-hander Brandon McCarthy took a line drive from Rangers center fielder Endy Chavez off his right leg with one out in the fourth inning Friday and left the game with a knee contusion. He's listed as day to day.

Right-hander Trystan Magnuson replaced McCarthy with the A's trailing, 6-0.

Chavez' liner caromed off McCarthy's shin all the way to the Rangers' bullpen in right field, and he pulled into second with a double. McCarthy fell to the ground but was able to stand up. After being examined by trainers, he walked slowly to the dugout.

McCarthy gave up six runs in the second inning to the Rangers, his former team. The Rangers batted around in the inning. Four of the runs were earned.

A's field takes a beating during Raiders game

OAKLAND -- Less than 24 hours after the Oakland Raiders and Arizona Cardinals finished their NFL exhibition game at the Coliseum, the A's and Rangers were set to begin the first game of their three-game series Friday night at the multi-sport facility.

The field, understandably, was less than pristine. The yard markers and lines from Thursday night's football game, which didn't end until around 10:30 p.m. PT, were still visible, although they were spray-painted green. The outfield grass took a particularly hard hit because of temporary stands that covered the deeper parts of the field.

"I've played on it before after a football game," A's center fielder Ryan Sweeney said. "The grounds crew does the best they can, but there's only so much they can do. It just gets torn up, and there's not really a whole lot of grass and it almost turns into sand out there, so you just really don't know where it's going to bounce. So it's tough. You've got to watch the ball into your glove, obviously."

Right fielder David DeJesus, a former member of the Royals, said he's played a game at the Coliseum with Kansas City a few days after a football game, but never the day after. He expects to get some crazy bounces in the outfield.

"Those are going to happen," DeJesus said. "As an outfield unit, we just have to make sure we see the ball in, don't try to do too crazy of a thing out there. Look it into your glove and hit the cutoff man. That's all you can do here."

Because the grounds crew had so much work to do, neither the A's nor Rangers took batting practice on the field before the game. Both teams hit in the cages.

"I was here at noon and looked at it and couldn't believe it would be ready," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "Tip your hat to the people who got this done."

Crisp likely to avoid disabled list

OAKLAND -- A's center fielder Coco Crisp was out of the lineup for the fifth straight game Friday night against Texas with a strained right calf, but it looks as if he'll avoid a trip to the disabled list.

"He came out and did some running today," A's manager Bob Melvin said before the series opener. "I think we're getting closer. I don't want to predict a date, but we'll say we're closer."

Asked if he expected Crisp to go on the DL, Melvin said, "As of right now, I would say no."

The A's could use Crisp in their lineup. He's hitting .364 with 15 runs scored, four doubles, a home run and 10 walks in his past 17 games. In his past seven games, he's stolen seven bases. That includes a career-high four Aug. 6 against Tampa Bay, the last time he played.

Braden puts message in Wilson's locker

OAKLAND -- A's left-hander Dallas Braden may be on the disabled list, but he was healthy enough to fire back at Rangers pitcher C.J. Wilson before Friday night's game.

Wilson has said he hates playing at the Coliseum, pointing to what he said was a poor mound and to the typically small crowds that show up for A's games. Earlier in the season he criticized the A's patient hitting approach, calling it "lawyerball."

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, Braden texted the newspaper that he had left a message for Wilson in his clubhouse locker, inscribing it on one of his perfect game T-shirts.

Most of Braden's teammates downplayed the controversy involving Wilson, the Rangers' starter Friday night.

"We want to win the game," A's outfielder David DeJesus said. "There's no more fire than we usually have. We want to beat him every time he's out there, just like any other pitcher."

Cahill, Lewis renew rivalry in Oakland

By Cash Kruth / MLB.com

The Rangers' Colby Lewis and the A's Trevor Cahill will once again square off Saturday, a familiar occurrence a year ago, but one that hasn't happened yet this season.

In 2010, Lewis and Cahill faced each other five times, with the A's winning the first four before the Rangers finally edged Cahill in September.

"It seemed like every time we faced, it was pretty close," Lewis said. "It makes for good competition. He's going to be here for quite a few years, and I'll be around a couple more years, so we probably haven't seen the last of it."

"Within our league, you're going to face a lot of guys several times. I just happened to face him a lot last year. It's not a big issue. I still have to have a game plan and execute it, not worry about what the other guy is doing."

For the Oakland right-hander, Saturday's game also will be a welcomed homecoming. Cahill has struggled on the road this season, posting a 5.42 ERA on the road compared to a 2.52 mark at Oakland Coliseum. Plus, Cahill will be facing a Rangers squad he's dominated throughout his career.

"Every time I've faced them, going through the lineup, it's one of the better lineups you're going to face," said Cahill, who is 8-3 with a 2.19 ERA in 12 starts against the Rangers. "I think it's just kind of a coincidence that I feel that I've always had good stuff against them and my arm's always felt good and my command has been there."

"Just facing them so many times, they know what you've got, but then you also figure out their strengths and weaknesses, too. It works in both favors. I think I just try to switch it up and keep them guessing, and luckily I've always felt good against them."

Rangers: Lewis and long balls

Like Cahill, Lewis should be looking forward to pitching in the pitcher-friendly Coliseum. The right-hander has allowed 1.72 home runs per nine innings this season, the highest in the American League. If that ratio holds throughout the season, it would be the highest mark in Rangers history. Rick Helling allowed 1.68 home runs per nine innings for the Rangers in 1999, while the Major League record during the past 50 years belongs to Jose Lima, who allowed 2.20 home runs per nine innings for the Astros in 2000.

Athletics: Crisp should avoid DL

Center fielder Coco Crisp missed his fifth straight game Friday because of a strained right calf, but he doesn't appear to be heading to the disabled list. A's manager Bob Melvin said Crisp ran Friday and when asked if he expected Crisp to be placed on the DL, Melvin said, "As of right now, I would say no."

- Andrew Bailey has converted all six of his save opportunities since the All-Star break and is a perfect 29-for-29 in his career in the season's second half.

Worth noting

- Texas leads the season series, 7-4.
- The A's are hitting .292 since the All-Star break.
- A's DH Hideki Matsui is hitting .353 (6-for-17) with two homers in his career against Lewis.

Garner rejoins Oakland as special advisor

Three-time All-Star spent 16 seasons as player, 15 as manager

By Eric Gilmore / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Thirty-five years after playing his final game with the A's, Phil Garner returned to Oakland on Friday as a special advisor to manager Bob Melvin and the entire organization.

Garner managed for 15 seasons in the Major Leagues, spending time with the Brewers, Tigers and Astros. Melvin served as Garner's bench coach in 1999 in Milwaukee and 2000 in Detroit, and he credits him for his path to becoming a big league manager.

"He gave me my start," Melvin said before Friday night's game against Texas. "I learned to manage from him. We played together in San Francisco. Between he and [former A's third baseman] Sal Bando, who was the GM in Milwaukee at the time, they gave me my start and the opportunity and I learned so much from both of those guys. I owe them a lot.

"So to have a guy who has not only played in the World Series but managed in the World Series, it's another resource to have in this organization. It's a resource for the players, a resource for me, the coaches, the front office."

Melvin said he and A's general manager Billy Beane had been discussing the idea of hiring Garner for three or four weeks. It was Melvin who broached that possibility with Garner, who was retired and living in a suburb of Houston. Garner said it didn't take him long to say yes.

"Bo was my right-hand man for a number of years in Milwaukee and Detroit, did a tremendous job," Garner said. "We got along great. It was great when he called me and said, 'I want to run something by you.'"

Garner said that during part of his managerial career, former big league manager Chuck Tanner had a similar role for him.

"I hope I can do for Bo what Chuck Tanner did for me," Garner said. "Chuck was a great confidante, was great for the players, great for the staff. He was definitely the most optimistic person in the world."

Garner said it was easy to clear his schedule and get to Oakland.

"I don't have a whole lot I'm doing these days," Garner said, laughing. "I'm enjoying life, and I'm real good at doing nothing. I'm a real good grandpa. I work on my golf game and tennis game."

At this point, Garner's commitment with the A's lasts through the end of this season. He expects to attend most of the A's home games, spending time in uniform on the field during pregame work but watching games from the stands.

Garner last managed in 2007 with the Houston Astros. He said he doesn't expect to return to managing but hasn't ruled it out.

"I don't know if I'm old enough to come back and manage," joked Garner, who played the first four years of his 16-year Major League career with the A's, from 1973-76. "Jack McKeon has set the bar high. You never say never, but right now I want to help Bo."

Wilson responds: A's cede six-run second in loss

OAKLAND (AP) -- C.J. Wilson stopped a mini-slide with his first career victory in Oakland, and it didn't change a thing.

He still hates playing here.

Wilson pitched six effective innings to earn his first win in a month and the Texas Rangers beat the Athletics 9-1 on Friday night.

The left-hander was showered with boos in his first appearance at the Coliseum since his critical remarks on Wednesday, when he said he didn't like the mound or the weather in Oakland, and was critical about the attendance for A's games.

"It felt like a playoff game having the whole stadium against you," Wilson said. "The funny thing was it fired me up a little bit. It made me stronger. It puts it all in focus. You have to be able to compete in that type of environment."

Wilson (11-5) allowed a run and four hits, struck out seven and walked three. He was 0-2 with a 4.84 ERA in four starts since his last victory, on July 16 at Seattle.

"When you go a month without a win it grates on you," Wilson said. "I won a Go-Kart race the other day and it was my first win in a while. I was kind of stoked by that."

Endy Chavez had three hits, scored twice and drove in a run as the Rangers won for just the third time in their last nine road games. Michael Young added two hits and an RBI.

AL West-leading Texas remained two games ahead of the Los Angeles Angels, who won 5-1 in Toronto.

"C.J. knows what is at stake," Rangers manager Ron Washington said. "We need him to play good baseball. The way he pitched tonight is the way he's pitched most of the year. You know you're going to get everything he's got."

Brandon McCarthy (5-6) was knocked out of the game when he was struck by Chavez's line drive in the fourth, sidelined by a bruised right knee.

"I don't know what it feels like to have a knee blown apart or to do something serious to it but it didn't feel like anything too horrible," McCarthy said. "It wasn't even the first thing I noticed. When I tried to stand up, I noticed it. I was in pain but I knew it wasn't too horribly serious."

The ball hit off the outside of his right knee and ricocheted into the visiting bullpen down the right-field line.

"I'm not really thrilled with the whole day but all things considered it's not as bad as it could be," McCarthy said.

Trystan Magnuson replaced McCarthy, who allowed seven runs, five earned, and eight hits in 3 1-3 innings.

The Rangers grabbed control with six runs in the second inning. The first six batters reached against McCarthy, who also was hurt by some shoddy defense.

Young hit a leadoff triple and scored on Nelson Cruz's base hit. Mike Napoli reached on an error by shortstop Cliff Pennington before Mitch Moreland and Yorvit Torrealba had consecutive RBI singles. Chavez, Elvis Andrus and Josh Hamilton also drove in a run in the inning.

After McCarthy left the game in the fourth, Kinsler and Young each singled home a run. Another run scored on an error by right fielder David DeJesus.

Wilson seemed to enjoy the extra attention he received from the 20,288 fans in attendance, who booed his every step before the game. He improved to 1-2 with two saves and a 3.38 ERA in 15 career appearances in Oakland.

"You have to make it work for you," Wilson said. "It's the same in New York, where they will stab you with a butter knife to help their team win, or Boston or Anaheim when they bust out the rally monkey. Being a closer has helped me with that."

Wilson retired 17 of his first 21 batters before back-to-back doubles from Josh Willingham and Conor Jackson produced the A's only run.

NOTES: Young extended his hitting streak to 11 games. Torrealba extended his streak to 10 games. ... The A's six-game losing streak to the Rangers is the longest since a nine-game streak between June 19-Sept. 30, 1986. ... RHP Trevor Cahill will take the mound for the A's on Saturday. He is 8-3 with a 2.19 ERA in 12 career starts against Texas, including a 2-1 record with a 1.25 ERA in three starts this year. ... Former Athletics pitcher Colby Lewis starts for the Rangers on Saturday. He's allowed 11 runs over his last 18 innings but is 5-1 with a 3.11 ERA over his last 10 starts. He's allowed 28 home runs, second in the majors. Lewis is 4-1 with a 2.53 ERA in seven career starts in Oakland, pitching at least five innings and allowing three runs or less in all seven starts. ... The A's hired former major league manager Phil Garner as a special adviser. ... The A's announced they agreed to terms with INF B.A. Vollmuth, their third-round draft pick.

Texas sticks it to Oakland with ease, winning laughter at Coliseum

By Sam McPherson, Oakland A's Examiner

These are dark times for the Oakland Athletics.

Someone should tell Lew Wolff that it's a lot easier to get a new ballpark built if you have a decent team to play in it, because these A's stink.

Presented with a chance to play for pride against a loudmouth pitcher who dogged them this week, the A's went down quietly Friday night, meekly submitting to a 9-1 shellacking at the hands of C.J. Wilson and the Texas Rangers.

Pretty embarrassing, Oakland.

It was 6-0 before the A's got a hit. It was 9-0 before they got a second one. In fact, for awhile, Oakland had more errors than they did hits.

And to add insult to injury, Oakland starting pitcher Brandon McCarthy took a line drive off his right knee in the fourth inning and had to leave the game with a contusion.

The A's finally got a run off Wilson with a two-out flurry in the sixth inning, but he struck out seven in those six innings to back up his big mouth.

Oakland hitters struck out 11 times total on the night and couldn't even get a leadoff double home to score in the bottom of the ninth trailing by eight runs.

Throw in the three unearned gifts to the Rangers, and it was a night to forget at the Coliseum.

So while Lew Wolff criticizes the Los Angeles Dodgers ownership for mismanaging a great franchise and Billy Beane is nowhere to be seen or heard from, the A's simply fade into meaninglessness -- with little heart or soul in them, even with pride on the line against a punk on the mound.

Pretty sad, all things considered.

'MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Round Rock thumps first-place Sacramento

By Max Lush / Sacramento River Cats

Mark Hamburger had not started a game ever in his five-year professional career.

The last time he took the hill to start a game was when he attended Mesabi Range Community College in Minnesota.

The Round Rock right-hander had posted a career record of 15-18 with a 3.55 ERA in 168 relief appearances. Maybe he should have been converted to a starter earlier.

On a limited pitch count, Hamburger dealt 4.0 innings of one-hit ball as Round Rock topped Sacramento 7-3 on Friday night before 10,067 fans at Raley Field. Hamburger struck out five.

The River Cats could not scratch their way into the game until it was too late, scoring all of their three runs after sixth inning when they were already trailing 7-0.

By the time Hamburger left the game, the Express led 3-0 and Sacramento left-hander Josh Outman could not match Hamburger's brilliance. Outman (7-3, 3.95) struggled early, allowing at least a hit in four of his 5.0 innings, retiring the side in order. The left-hander allowed three runs on seven hits and walk while striking out five.

The weekend series features a possible championship preview, with both teams playing fantastic baseball throughout the season and leading their respective divisions.

Though the tilt featured the PCL's two best teams, the game was never close as the Express (70-50) won handedly over the struggling River Cats (70-50). The River Cats have now lost six in a row and the two teams are now tied atop the PCL for the best record in the league.

Sacramento also struggled to solve Round Rock reliever Zach Jackson, until the seventh inning when catcher Josh Donaldson launched his 16th homer of the season, a solo shot to left center with two outs.

Following Donaldson's bomb, Jackson unraveled in the eighth, allowing two more runs in the frame. The left-hander allowed three runs on eight hits and two walks. He also struck out three River Cats over 3.2 innings.

Round Rock remained un-phased by Sacramento's zebra-print jerseys, and added four runs in the seventh inning, capped off by a two-out two-run home run by right fielder Joey Butler off Justin Souza.

Souza allowed four runs in the seventh, throwing 2.0 innings of four-run, five-hit ball. The right-hander did strikeout five of the eleven batters he faced.

The River Cats were able to tack on two more runs in the eighth inning when first baseman Brandon Allen led off with a towering shot to center. The blast was his 21st of the season, and third in 10 games with Sacramento.

Kevin Kouzmanoff scored later in the inning on Chris Carter's RBI single. The River Cats also loaded the bases in the frame, following Adam LaRoche's two-out walk.

Round Rock right-hander Pedro Strop ended the River Cats bases-loaded eighth inning threat, getting pinch-hitter Adrian Cardenas to ground out to second on a fielder's choice.

The Express ripped off five doubles against Sacramento pitching, the most they have allowed this season. With Butler's seventh-inning homer, the Express also tied the most extra base hits allowed by the River Cats staff with six. The last time the River Cats allowed that many extra base hits was all the way back on May 29 at Reno.

Former River Cat Esteban German hurt his old team throughout the night, going 2-for-4 and a walk with two doubles a run and two steals. German played three seasons in Sacramento, and leads the franchise with 231 runs and 16 triples. He is also second in walks with 171 and games with 329.

"I spent most of my time here through 2001-2004 with some of their best teams. It was fun," German said. "It's exciting to be back. The last time I was here for the All-Star Game (2005), so it feels a bit like being at home."

Even with Friday's loss, the River Cats' magic number to clinch a postseason spot fell to 15 with 24 games left as Las Vegas lost to Nashville 13-3.

Game 2 of this series takes place at Raley Field on Saturday with first-pitch at 7:05 pm. The River Cats will send right-hander Travis Banwart (6-8, 5.07) to the mound against Express right-hander Brett Tomko (5-5, 6.96).

RockHounds sweep doubleheader from Tulsa

Oscar LeRoy, Midland Reporter-Telegram

Thanks to some clutch defense and some gutsy pitching during a Friday doubleheader against Tulsa the Midland RockHounds are right on the heels of the San Antonio Missions in the Texas League South Division standings.

The RockHounds extended their winning streak to eight games with 5-1 and 2-1 victories over the Drillers at Citibank Ballpark and moved within three games of San Antonio in the South after the Missions lost 3-1 at Springfield.

Because the RockHounds trail Frisco by double-digit games in the wild card standings, it's likely that they will have to win the second half South title to get in the playoffs.

Midland manager Steve Scarsone said with the way his team has been playing, the RockHounds are at least giving themselves a chance with 23 games left in the regular season.

"That's the challenge you want. It's up to us," Scarsone said. "If we continue to play like obviously we're going to be in most games. And when we get close to the end of the season, we'll have an idea where we're at."

The first game saw the Double-A debut of Sonny Gray, the Oakland A's first round pick (18th overall) in June's draft. Gray was on a strict pitch count against the Drillers but showed why he was a highly-touted pitcher coming out of Vanderbilt University as a junior, as of the 46 pitches he threw, 31 of them went for strikes.

Gray's first batter was Tim Wheeler, one of Tulsa's best hitters and a touted prospect in the Colorado Rockies organization. Gray struck out Wheeler swinging and then got a pat on the back from second baseman Wes Timmons, in a sense to welcome him to Double-A ball and give him a boost of confidence.

Gray went 2 2/3 innings, allowed no runs, two hits, struck out five and walked one in only his second professional appearance. His first came in the Arizona Rookie League where he went two innings, allowed one earned run, didn't walk a batter and had two strikeouts in a loss to the Arizona Rangers.

"It was good to see Sonny Gray come out and get some stuff done," Scarsone said. "It looked like he had a good idea of what he was trying to do. I didn't see any nerves or anything like that that kept him from staying within his game plan."

The 21-year-old right-hander got all the run support he needed in the first inning when Timmons came through with a bases-loaded single to left against Cory Riordan (1-12) to score Stephen Parker. But Tulsa left fielder Mike Mitchell misplayed the groundball and that allowed both Michael Spina and Shane Peterson to score to give Gray and the Hounds a 3-0 lead.

After the RockHounds extended their lead to 4-0 on a Michael Spina RBI single in the fifth, the Drillers got on the board in the sixth when Wilin Rosario hit a leadoff triple to left and then scored on a Tommy Field single.

But other than that inning, Lenny DiNardo (1-0) was strong in relief, allowing the one run on three hits, didn't allow a walk and struck out three in 4 1/3 innings.

Timmons, who was 2 for 3, added some insurance in the bottom of the sixth with a solo home run into the left field bullpen.

The second game saw both teams score a run in the first inning, Tulsa got an RBI single by Mike Zuanich, while the RockHounds tied the game at 1 when Matt Sulentic scored on a double play groundout by Stephen Parker.

After that first frame, Midland's Anthony Capra and Tulsa's Joe Gardner were locked in a pitcher's duel through the majority of the next four innings.

Gardner (0-2) settled down after that first inning, and at one point retired 10 of the next 11 batters he faced.

Meanwhile, Capra scuffled at times and went deep in counts, but somehow managed to get out of jams by making the right pitch or having his defense -- led by third baseman Parker -- come up with some key plays behind him.

"(Parker) not only made the routine plays but he gathered up hard-hit balls and made the plays. He's come a long way," Scarsonsone said.

The RockHounds finally got the go-ahead run in the fifth against Gardner. Adam Heether was hit by a pitch for 20th time this season to lead off the inning. He then moved to second and third on consecutive groundouts by Shane Peterson and Jeremy Barfield, before scoring on a single up the middle of the infield by Mitch Canham.

Tulsa threatened in the sixth and seventh innings but Brett Hunter (3-2) got out of a jam in the sixth, then Jared Lansford got out of a one-out, bases-loaded jam in the seventh when he got Mike Mitchell to hit into a game-ending 4-6-3 double play.

'HOUND BITES: Thursday night's rainout was the first rainout this season by a Texas League South Division team. The game between Arkansas and Corpus Christi in Little Rock, Ark., also got rained out, marking the 15th rainout of the season for a North Division team. ...RHP Jon Meloan (oblique) has been placed on the seven-day disabled list. ... RockHounds center fielder Grant Green now has an 11-game hitting streak after going 3 for 6 in the doubleheader. ... LF Matt Sulentic made a great catch to save some runs in the fourth inning of the second game. With two outs and the bases loaded Tulsa's Tim Wheeler drove a ball to deep left-center field but Sulentic ran it down at the warning track and did a little pivot to the wall to end the inning on a highlight. "That catch by Sulentic was a game changer," Midland manager Steve Scarsonsone said.

TODAY'S PROBABLES: The RockHounds welcome Northwest Arkansas for a three-game series at 7 p.m. today at Citibank Ballpark. RHP Shawn Haviland (6-9, 7.50 ERA) is the probable starter for Midland while the Naturals starter is to be announced.

Ports Offense Desolate In 4-0 Loss To High Desert

Stockton Ports

ADELANTO, Calif. - In a ballpark where offense rules, the Stockton Ports couldn't find much of it on Friday night. The Ports went 0-for-10 with runners in scoring position, while the High Desert Mavericks had half as many hits as Stockton but plated four runs en route to handing the Ports a 4-0 loss. After beating the Mavericks in their first six meetings head-to-head, the Ports have dropped the first two games of their four-game set in Adelanto.

The Ports squandered early chances beginning in the first when they stranded a runner in scoring position after Conner Crumbliss reached second base with one out. In the 2nd, Stockton had runners at the corners with one out after singles from Anthony Aliotti and Michael Gilmartin, but Mavericks starter Nate Reed (1-1) struck out Leonardo Gil and got Mitch LeVier to pop out to short to end the inning.

High Desert scored their first run of the night in the third. With runners at the corners and one out, the Ports narrowly missed turning an inning-ending double play. Crumbliss' throw to first on the turn was a bit high, pulling Aliotti slightly off the bag. A run scored on a fielder's choice groundout by Daniel Carroll to give the Mavs a 1-0 lead.

In the 4th, the Mavs had Stephen Proscia at third base with one out. Shaver Hansen hit a ground ball to first and Aliotti threw home to try for the out there. The ball went in and out of the mitt of Petey Paramore, allowing Proscia to score on what was ruled an E-2 and make it a 2-0 game.

The Mavericks added a pair of runs in the 5th. With one out, Carroll was hit by a pitch and Leury Bonilla followed with a triple to deep center that made it 3-0. Bonilla scored on an ensuing sac-fly from Jamie McOwen to give High Desert a 4-0 advantage.

Ports starter Dan Straily (10-8) allowed just four hits in his outing, but took the loss after going five innings and allowing four runs while striking out two.

Following Bonilla's triple in the 5th, Ports pitchers combined to retire the final 11 Mavericks hitters. Mike Benacka pitched two perfect innings while striking out four and Jose Guzman tossed a perfect 8th.

Stockton's offense, however, would scatter hits but come up empty in the run column. In the 7th inning, Reed's final inning of work, Gilmartin hit a leadoff double, but would only make it as far as third base before being stranded.

Reed earned his first Cal-League win, going seven scoreless innings and allowing six hits while striking out eight. Reed didn't walk a batter on the night.

Jose Jimenez pitched the final two innings for High Desert and kept the Ports off the board, despite giving up singles in the 8th and 9th.

The Ports stranded nine baserunners while going 0-for-10 with runners in scoring position. High Desert stranded three while going 0-for-5 with runners in scoring position. Their only run-producing hit was the RBI triple from Bonilla in the 5th. The loss for Stockton marks the 9th time they've been shut out on the season.

Stockton and High Desert will play the third game of their four-game series on Saturday night at Mavericks Stadium. Murphy Smith (4-8, 4.42 ERA) will take to the hill for the Ports, opposed by Mavericks right-hander Chris Sorce (7-9, 4.57 ERA).

First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

Bees Take Advantage of Errors

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

DAVENPORT, IA- The Burlington Bees (17-30) scored three unearned runs in the eighth inning for a 5-2 win over the Quad Cities River Bandits (28-19) in front of 5,722 fans at Modern Woodman Park on Friday night.

The Burlington Bees scored a run in the second inning. 1B Josh Whitaker (2-4) doubled and moved to third base on a groundout by DH Beau Taylor (2-4). LF Jose Rivero (1-3) singled and Whitaker scored for a 1-0 lead.

The Quad Cities River Bandits quickly took the lead with a two-run second inning. CF Nick Longmire (1-3) doubled and scored on a double by 3B Colin Walsh (2-4). An RBI single by DH Chris Edmondson (1-2) scored Walsh for a 2-1 lead.

2B Nino Leyja (1-5) hit a solo home run over the left field wall for a 2-2 tied score in the sixth inning.

The Bees took advantage of two big errors in the eighth inning to score three runs. Leyja reached on an error. RF Jose Crisotomo (1-4) singled and drove Leyja in. 3B Tony Thompson (0-4) reached on an error. Whitaker doubled over the left field wall for a 4-2 lead.

LF Jose Rivero (1-3) lifted a sacrifice fly to center field to score Thompson and make it 5-2.

RHP Nate Long allowed two runs on six hits over five innings in a no decision. RHP Zack Thornton (4-4) pitched three scoreless innings to get the win. RHP Pedro Vidal worked a scoreless ninth inning.

The Bees head to Beloit to take on the Beloit Snappers in the first of a three-game series on Saturday night at 7:00 p.m.

RHP Josh Bowman (7-4, 3.57) gets the start for Burlington against RHP Pedro Guerra (0-1, 13.50) for Beloit. Pre-game coverage begins at 6:40 p.m. on Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at gobees.com.

Vermont Wins 6-3 At Batavia Friday

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

BATAVIA, NY --- Chih-Fang Pan and Dusty Robinson both hit solo home runs, while Kurt Wunderlich allowed just one run on four hits over seven innings as the Vermont Lake Monsters moved back to the .500 mark with a 6-3 New York-Penn League victory over the Batavia Muckdogs at Dwyer Stadium on Friday night.

The only run that Wunderlich allowed was a two-out solo home run to Romulo Ruiz in the bottom of the first inning.

Wunderlich, who has allowed just five runs over his last 20 innings to lower his ERA from 10.59 to 6.06, never allowed more than one runner in any of the seven innings and was helped out by a Vermont defense that turned three double plays.

Pan extended his hit streak to 11 games and tied the contest in the fourth inning with his first home run of the season over the rightfield fence. The Lake Monsters took a 2-1 lead in the sixth as Bobby Crocker smacked a two-out double and scored on a Nick Rickles RBI single before Robinson belted his second homer of the season for a 3-1 advantage in the seventh.

The Lake Monsters manufactured another run in the eighth as Sean Jamieson led off with a single, moved to third on back-to-back groundouts and scored on a wild pitch. Batavia scored twice in the bottom of the eighth on a Cesar Valera RBI triple and RBI groundout to cut the deficit to 4-3, but Vermont scored a pair of unearned runs in the ninth on a throwing error by third baseman Garrett Wittels.

Rickles was 2-for-4 to extend his hitting streak to 10 games for the Lake Monsters, while Crocker has now hit safely in all 12 games started for Vermont with his sixth-inning double. Wunderlich (2-4) picked up his second win in as many starts, while Jailer Castillo tossed the final 1 1/3 scoreless innings for his first save. Hector Hernandez allowed two runs on five hits with one walk and eight strikeouts over six innings to pick up the loss for Batavia (25-29).

Vermont (27-27) has now won two straight games and remains two games in front of Connecticut (24-28) for first-place in the Stedler Division. Lake Monsters and Muckdogs play single games Saturday night and Sunday afternoon before a two-day break for the NY-Penn League All-Star Game Tuesday at Lowell.