

Red Sox sweep Oakland A's in long day of baseball

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's and Red Sox indeed played two, but even Ernie Banks' patience might have worn thin Saturday at Fenway Park.

A day-night doubleheader between Oakland and Boston was interrupted by a combined four hours of rain delays. When it was finally over, all the A's had to show for it were two losses, a 9-3 setback in the opener and a 4-0 loss in the nightcap.

"It was a long, tough day for us," manager Bob Melvin said.

"It's a lot easier to move on from those days if you win a game or two than to lose two, so it's a disappointing day."

Whether the teams should have completed two games at all -- given the conditions -- is debatable.

A heavy storm, courtesy of Hurricane Irene as it approaches New England, dumped rain much of the afternoon and night, leaving puddles and making playing conditions tough.

Play was halted for 45 minutes after the sixth inning of the first game. The teams returned to the field and squeezed in just one inning before another downpour caused another delay that stretched 2 hours, 15 minutes.

With Boston leading 9-2 and more heavy rain in the forecast, it was speculated that the opener might be called early -- since five innings were complete and the game was official -- in order to get the second game in.

But Major League Baseball expects the first game of a doubleheader to finish in its entirety before starting a second one.

Crew chief Tim McClelland said he consulted with Joe Torre, MLB executive vice president of baseball operations, between games.

"If you can't (finish) the game you're playing, how can you play another game?" McClelland said in justifying the decision.

But even he acknowledged the poor playing conditions for the second game.

"The infield's terrible, everything. It's no fun for anybody," McClelland said.

The teams took the field at approximately noon (local time) to start the opener. They walked off the field at about 11 p.m. when the second game wrapped.

"Personally, I've never seen that much rain come down and still play two nine-inning games," A's reliever Josh Outman said.

"But if they can do it here, (then you) stay around and play all 18 innings."

Red Sox lefty Jon Lester (14-6) said the first game probably should have been called.

"They're trying to get the game in, and I understand that," he said.

"But there's a point where you have to kind of say, 'OK, enough's enough.' "

A's right-hander Guillermo Moscoso (6-8) was chased after just four innings in the opener, allowing eight runs (seven earned) on nine hits.

The second game was halted in the top of the fifth with the A's trailing 3-0, and the teams retreated to their clubhouses for an hour.

Right-hander Graham Godfrey (1-2) was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento to start the second game and gave up three runs in four innings. He would have lasted longer, but Melvin pulled him after the delay.

Erik Bedard and three Boston relievers held the A's to three hits.

Outman, recalled Friday, impressed Melvin with four innings of three-hit ball, allowing just one unearned run and striking out seven.

"I don't remember him throwing that hard," Melvin said.

"That was an impressive performance."

Catcher Anthony Recker started the nightcap and notched his first career hit with a fifth-inning single.

A's update: Guillermo Moscoso struggles against Red Sox

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

BOSTON -- It was a long day for his team, but Guillermo Moscoso's work on the mound Saturday lasted only four innings.

The A's right-hander was tagged for eight runs (seven earned) while laboring through 93 pitches as Oakland lost 9-3 to the Boston Red Sox in the first game of a doubleheader.

That snapped a string of three straight solid starts for Moscoso, who gave up nine hits, including five for extra bases.

"Obviously it was not his best outing," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He got behind (in counts), and when you're getting behind to this team, you have to throw the ball over the plate. That's when damage happens."

Boston scored a run in the first and took the lead for good with three runs in the second, putting the Red Sox up 4-1. Jason Varitek's two-run homer was the big blow in that rally.

The Red Sox got to Moscoso for three more in the third. David Ortiz's two-run double off the Green Monster scored Adrian Gonzalez and Dustin Pedroia. Ortiz advanced to third when Cliff Pennington's E-6 throw home skipped past catcher Kurt Suzuki, and Ortiz scored on Carl Crawford's sacrifice fly.

Moscoso (6-8) came in having allowed just four earned runs combined over his past three starts (20 innings).

Reliever Jerry Blevins' shuttle between the majors and minors continued as he was designated for assignment in between games, making room for right-hander Graham Godfrey, who started the second game for Oakland.

Blevins remains on the 40-man roster but must pass through option waivers before joining Triple-A Sacramento. That process is a formality.

Blevins was on the Opening Day roster, but this is the fourth time he's been demoted. He had just been called up Friday, making the cross-country flight to join the A's for the start of the Boston series.

Blevins appeared in two games in his brief stay, giving up one run in three innings.

Jemile Weeks stole three bases in the first game and now has 19 for the season. That's the most by an A's rookie since Luis Polonia had 29 in 1987.

The A's lost the season series (2-6) to the Red Sox for the first time since going 4-6 in 2008.

Chin Music: A's-Red Sox nightcap in rain delay (surprise!)

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/27/2011 5:43pm

In a shocking development, another rain delay has halted play between the A's and Red Sox. Boston leads 3-0 in the top of the fifth with no outs, Anthony Recker on first for the A's and Jemile Weeks batting with a 2-2 count. Had Boston recorded three more outs, this game would be official and it could be declared a Red Sox victory. It really started pouring, so I don't know that they could have continued playing. I'm still scratching my head over why the second game was started to begin with. The heavy rain has been in the forecast all day.

If this game were postponed at this point and needed to be made up to decide Boston's postseason fate, the teams would replay the entire game. Oakland and Boston don't share any common days off, so making this one up would be tricky.

It's too bad for Recker, who could have his first major league hit wiped off the books.

Chin Music: Game 1 to resume at 2:35 (PT), with Game 2 to follow

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/27/2011 2:14pm

A Red Sox spokesperson just announced that Game 1 will resume at 2:35 p.m. (PT), with Game 2 to follow after a short turnaround. We'll see how this plan works out, but the tarp is off the field. The Red Sox official said the weather is supposed to take a turn for the better. Hmmm ...

Chin Music: The madness continues at Fenway — second rain delay

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/27/2011 12:38pm

The A's and Red Sox returned to the field, played one inning and then it started pouring again. So a second rain delay just began in the eighth. This is starting to get silly. Obviously, they want to try and get this first game completed in its entirety. What's in store for the scheduled second game is anybody's guess. But word in the press box was that they would like to try to play it tonight. That seems like a fantasy at this point. It's absolutely pouring now, with thunder and lightning adding to the fun. Even if it does stop, you have to wonder what condition the field will be in.

It's the umpires' call on whether to continue this game, and whether to play the second.

I just heard Lionel Richie's "All Night Long" playing over the PA. Are they trying to tell us something?

Chin Music: Rain delay in 7th inning — Red Sox leading A's 9-2

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/27/2011 11:29am

We're in a rain delay in the top of the seventh at Fenway Park, with the Red Sox leading the A's 9-2. The tarps are out. ... Stay tuned for further details ...

Chin Music: A's, Red Sox prepare to play two — the weather will have final say

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 8/27/2011 8:43am

Here's the lineups for the first game of the doubleheader ...

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

Red Sox — Ellsbury CF, Scutaro SS, Gonzalez 1B, Pedroia 2B, Ortiz DH, Crawford LF, Reddick RF, Varitek C, Aviles 3B; Lester LHP.

—The second game, set to begin at 5 p.m. (ET), could be in jeopardy because of rain in the forecast. I'm expecting a very long day at the ballpark. If there's any news regarding rain delays for either game, I'll post it here ...

—Hideki Matsui gets the early game off. He's just 1 for 7 in his career against Jon Lester — pretty small sample size — but he's 9 for 22 against Erik Bedard, who starts the second game for Boston.

—Between games, we'll get word about who the A's bump from the 25-man roster to make room for Graham Godfrey, who will be recalled to pitch the second game.

That's all for now ... Here's hoping for a day of uninterrupted baseball ...

A's long slog for naught in Red Sox doubleheader

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Boston -- Hurricane Irene and its precursors made regular appearances on Saturday at Fenway Park, turning the proceedings from a scheduled day-night doubleheader into basically an all-day attempt to find windows to play.

"It's just constantly changing," umpire crew chief Tim McLelland said between games. "Infield's terrible, everything. It's no fun for anybody."

The teams weathered two delays totaling 3 hours in Game 1 before the Red Sox finally nailed down a 9-3 victory - with the A's leaving the bases loaded when Coco Crisp flied out deep to the corner in right to end the game.

"He hit it good," Oakland manager Bob Melvin said.

The A's dropped the second game 4-0, and improbably, the game was played in full despite deteriorating field conditions. David Ortiz cracked a two-run homer off Graham Godfrey in the second inning, and Jarrod Saltalamacchia added an RBI groundout in the fourth. Oakland was shut out for the 14th time this season, the team's most since 1991.

"It was something," A's reliever Josh Outman said. "I've never seen that much rain come down and still play two nine-inning games."

The game was interrupted for one hour in the top of the fifth, with Boston needing just three outs to make it an official game. The rest of the night, the field was slick and A's first baseman Brandon Allen went down hard twice while trying to make plays. Outman, who worked the final four innings, had a strong outing, allowing three hits, a walk and one unearned run while striking out seven.

Oakland catcher Anthony Recker recorded his first big-league hit in the fifth.

During Game 1's second delay, which was more than 2 hours, there was talk that the first game might be called because there were more than five innings already in the books. With Irene chugging its way up the Eastern Seaboard, an abbreviated first game might allow an official second game.

The Red Sox had that scenario two years earlier, when the first game of a day-night doubleheader was shortened and the second game was played. McLelland told a pool reporter that that decision in 2009 "was an aberration" and that Major League Baseball's vice president of operations, Joe Torre, told the umpires during the delay that, "according to the rules, that can't happen or shouldn't happen."

The Red Sox made a push Saturday to get Game 1 called, according to a source. They were unsuccessful.

"If you can't play the game you're playing, how can you play another game?" McLelland reasoned.

In Game 1, ex-Oakland infielder Marco Scutaro recorded two doubles and a single, and Ortiz hit two doubles, and Jason Varitek whacked a two-run homer off Guillermo Moscoso and later added an RBI single.

In his worst outing of the season, Moscoso allowed nine hits and eight runs, seven earned, in his four innings of work, and he walked two and struck out none. "He got behind, and that's what they do - they see a lot of pitches, get a lot of baserunners," Melvin said of Boston. "And then you have to throw one over the plate."

Allen hit a solo shot in the second off Jon Lester, Allen's first career homer off a left-hander after 10 against right-handers.

Oakland's other run came in the third, when Jemile Weeks reached on a fielder's choice, stole second and, as part of a double-steal with Pennington, took third, too. Weeks stole a career-high three bases in Game 1.

The scheduled day/night doubleheader was the fifth in Oakland history.

Up/down stretch for A's reliever Jerry Blevins

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Boston -- **Jerry Blevins** had a strange day and a half or so.

The left-handed reliever traveled from Fresno to Los Angeles to Boston on the red-eye on Thursday night, arriving at 7 a.m. Friday. On Saturday, he threw the sixth inning, waited through a 45-minute rain delay, and then threw the seventh inning.

Then, after Game 1 of the doubleheader at Fenway Park, Blevins was designated for assignment in order to make room on the roster for Game 2 starter **Graham Godfrey**.

"This season, I just have to be ready for anything," Blevins said. "It's not easy."

Blevins must clear option waivers each time he is sent out, but they are a formality and he will back at Triple-A Sacramento within a few days.

Manager **Bob Melvin** said he did not have any trepidation about sending Blevins back out, saying the rain delay wasn't long enough to cause any real concern. Blevins allowed one hit and struck out one in his two innings.

Briefly: Scott Sizemore nearly beamed a patron sitting in the Green Monster seats with his homer on Friday night. "I didn't see it, but my wife told me I'd hit a lady," Sizemore said. ... Sizemore entered Saturday 7 for his past 13 and said, "I guess this is one of those stretches where I'm seeing the ball well. I'm swinging at the right pitches, my timing is good, my rhythm is good." He was 1-for-7 in the doubleheader. ... **Max Perlman**, a 35th-round pick out of Harvard in the June draft, jumped from rookie ball in Arizona all the way to Triple-A Sacramento on Friday to start in place of Godfrey. Perlman threw five scoreless innings at Fresno, walking one, allowing one hit and striking out two. Much was made about top draft pick **Sonny Gray** going to Double-A Midland, and Perlman waltzes up to Triple-A and shines. ... Vanderbilt's Gray also threw five scoreless innings Friday, allowing five hits and zero walks against Corpus Christi.

Leading off

On the left: Oakland is facing a glut of left-handed starters lately: The A's have seen lefty starters in 12 of the past 20 games, and they've gone 6-6. They're 22-23 vs. left-handers for the season, and they see another, David Huff, on Monday in Cleveland.

Drumbeat: Game 1 gets underway between A's and Red Sox; Game 2 iffy

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Fenway Park 8/27/2011 9:04am

Game 1 has started and here's the lineup behind Guillermo Moscoso: Weeks 2b, Pennington ss, Crisp cf, Willingham dh, Allen 1b, Jackson lf, Suzuki c, Sweeney rf, Sizemore 3b.

Manager Bob Melvin said that the weather for Game 2, which starts at 2 p.m. Pacific, is expected to be "spotty," and it sounds as if they've been told that if it starts to rain, it won't stop. In that event, Game 2 probably comes to a pretty quick halt. I think both teams are hoping that at least five innings are in the book at that point, but this is a park where the unexpected is the norm.

Hideki Matsui will play in Game 2, and so will David DeJesus catcher Anthony Recker.

I wonder if Brandon Allen might get a break in Game 2 - he's yet to get a day off and Conor Jackson (who is in left in Game 1) is a whole 1-for-3 against Erik Bedard.

Melvin mentioned Matsui's numbers vs. Game 1 starter Jon Lester (1-for-7) as a minor reason for sitting him in that one rather than the second one, but, Melvin emphasized, the matchup numbers mean little most of the time when it comes to Matsui - when he's hitting, he's hitting pretty much everyone. He's 9-for-22 lifetime against Bedard, and he was going to get one of the starts off - so that was a pretty easy decision, I'm guessing. He's available to pinch hit in Game 1, of course.

3-Dot Lounge

Bittersweet reality — Beane needs to fly

Bruce Jenkins, San Francisco Chronicle

As the rumors swirl around Billy Beane, realize one thing: His departure wouldn't hurt the A's. David Forst is a capable executive who has long been groomed for the general manager's job — and in any case, you can't hurt a franchise so irrevocably doomed.

The real question is whether Beane is willing to waste too many years of his professional life by sticking around, lamenting those crowds of 7,688 and waiting for a stadium that will never come.

I'd hate to see him go, for I've seldom run across a brighter, more engaging conversationalist in sports. It's hardly his fault that opposing players view the Coliseum as an eternal wasteland, or that Commissioner Bud Selig would apparently prefer the A's just disappear, into oblivion, rather than benefit from the elimination of the Giants' territorial rights.

Even if there were a dramatic breakthrough on that front, how long would it take before the A's actually break ground on a new stadium? I'd start with "forever" and go from there.

Beane's conscience should be 100 percent clear. It's the best possible transition time for his family and he's given the A's 21 years of distinguished service, complete with a stunning rejection of the Boston GM job in 2002. He's certainly thinking clearly, telling the New York Times last week, "The biggest problem is that until we get a stadium, it's going to be treading water for us. There cannot be any longterm planning. It's likely to get worse before it gets any better." Even if he's interested, the Cubs are hardly a lock for Beane, given that they're considering Ned Colletti (Dodgers), Theo Epstein (Red Sox), Brian Cashman (Yankees) and Andrew Friedman (Tampa Bay). If the Red Sox offer him a second chance, he should jump all over it. Better yet, Colletti returns to his native Chicago and Beane takes over the Dodgers — a project that is bound to succeed, and make Beane a hero, once the bickering McCourts are out of the ownership picture.

Just forget about Oakland, Billy. The story is told in those thousands of empty seats. A satisfying new life awaits.

Stacking the deck

The whole idea of seeding a tennis major is to keep the top contenders at a distance, gradually approaching showdowns as the final weekend approaches. Wimbledon has been known to get creative, taking into account recent performances, tournament history and just plain common sense.

The U.S. Open, which starts Monday, should have recognized Serena Williams as the consensus favorite and, at the very least, a top-eight seed. Instead, she's seeded a ridiculous 28th under an inflexible system (her world ranking is 29) and due to play No. 4 seed Victoria Azarenka in the third round. Even the most conservative critics are lamenting the injustice ... Yes, that new rule has more NFL kickoffs sailing into the end zones, but more returners are going for broke — at least for the moment. It's a refreshing change from the days of paranoia (2 yards deep? Just take a knee), but such defiance might not last into the regular season ... Forget all those ludicrous stories about locked-out NBA players threatening to play overseas. Focus instead on the Warriors' Stephen Curry, back home in Charlotte, N.C., and commuting some 30 miles to Davidson, where he's taking three classes as a full-time undergraduate. Curry always promised himself he'd finish school, after leaving early to enter the 2009 draft, and he has undergone an extensive workout/rehab routine to make sure his surgically repaired ankle will be fully healthy when (if) the season starts ... It's clear that Cal would rather not play football at Candlestick or the Oakland Coliseum if forced to move out of AT&T Park during the baseball playoffs. "The funny thing is, it would probably make the most sense to play the USC game at Stanford," notes Pat Gallagher, a sports-management consultant who worked in the Giants' marketing and business departments for 33 years. "It's a college stadium, and there's

no conflict (Cal/USC falls on a Thursday, Oct.13, with Stanford playing on the road that Saturday at Washington State). The biggest problem would be going to Palo Alto (laughs). I think that would make the Cal people a little squeamish." ... So you're watching "Chronicle Live," with a distinguished panel sharing screen time on "The Blitz," but you wonder if Comcast really cares what Ray Ratto, Tim Kawakami and Ann Killion have to say.

There's a constant flow of distracting information at the bottom of the screen, while nearly a third of the screen is devoted to recent Twitter messages from viewers. "Hey, why listen to our experts when you can read nonsensical, grammar- tortured comments from complete strangers?"

A's unable to salvage split of rainy twin bill

Godfrey's start shortened by delay; Recker gets first MLB hit

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- Anthony Recker's first Major League hit was nearly erased, Graham Godfrey's first start in the bigs since June almost wiped away.

And Josh Outman's return to a big league mound in a relief role? Nearly never happened Saturday.

Heavy rain threatened such a scenario, as the latter contest of the A's doubleheader with the Red Sox at Fenway Park was delayed after just four-plus innings with Hurricane Irene's arrival looming large.

The interruption lasted just an hour, but the A's ultimately fell for a second time. Oakland, which lost, 9-3, in a rain-delayed Game 1, endured no better luck in Game 2, falling, 4-0, on a seemingly never ending day.

"Long day," manager Bob Melvin said. "A long, tough day for us. It's a lot easier to move on from these days if you won a game or two than to lose two, so it was a disappointing day for us."

A strange one, too.

"Personally, I've never seen that much rain come down and still be able to play two nine-inning games," Outman said.

"That's new to me."

The conditions weren't perfect -- "It was sloppy, everybody was heavy, their shoes get clogged up," said Red Sox manager Terry Francona.

Godfrey, called up between games to make just his fourth big league start and first since June 23, was only allowed four innings as a result of the delay. But he threw 70 pitches, 51 for strikes -- six of which resulted in hits. He gave up three runs, walking none and fanning one.

The biggest blow came in the second, when David Ortiz tagged the A's rookie for a two-run homer following Dustin Pedroia's leadoff double. The frame was sandwiched by a pair of 1-2-3 innings that brought about five ground-ball outs, before Godfrey surrendered an RBI single to Jarrod Saltalamacchia in his fourth and final frame.

"There were a lot of things he was dealing with, just getting here, he hadn't pitched here in awhile, and against these guys, and the conditions," Melvin said. "All things considered, I thought he threw the ball pretty well."

Most impressive was Outman, who was called upon in the fifth to make his first relief outing since 2009 after being recalled from Triple-A on Friday. The southpaw was superb, giving up just one unearned run while striking out seven and walking just one through four innings.

"I thought he was terrific," Melvin said. "I don't remember him throwing that hard the last time he was up here. He was pretty consistently 92 [mph], 93 to 95, with a good slider, good changeup. That was an impressive performance. That was the best stuff I've seen from him."

Making it all the more satisfying was the location. Outman's last appearance at Fenway came in a start on June 3, when he surrendered five runs (four earned) in just 2 2/3 innings.

"I'm really happy," he said. "Obviously, last time I was here, I didn't fare so well, so it's nice to be able to come out here and have a strong outing."

Boston starter Erik Bedard, meanwhile, tossed four-plus scoreless innings, his lone batter in the fifth being Recker, who collected his first Major League hit on a line-drive single to left before the onset of the delay.

The A's catcher was at risk of the hit never making it to his career line, as he knew at least 4 1/2 innings would have to be played for the game to be deemed official.

"A couple of guys on my way in said, 'Hey, congrats on your first hit ... maybe,'" Recker said, smiling. "Fortunately, the game continued and, unfortunately, we didn't get the win."

Bedard gave up just one other hit, but walked four while throwing 86 pitches. Oakland left four men on against the lefty and fared no better against righty Alfredo Aceves, who pitched three scoreless innings. Daniel Bard and Jonathan Papelbon proceeded to shut down the A's in the final pair of frames.

"I don't know if the conditions got to us a little bit -- that's no excuse -- but we've been swinging the bats pretty well, and just really couldn't get anything going all day or night," said Melvin, whose club scored just three between the two games after tallying 36 runs in their previous 37 innings.

As a result, the A's evened their record to 3-3 on the road trip as they prepare for a four-game set in Cleveland beginning Monday. First comes an off-day, much needed following Saturday's shenanigans.

"I've never dealt with anything like this," Recker said. "It was crazy, but it's just something you have to get through."

Oakland's red-hot offense doused by Lester

Allen goes deep, but Moscoso allows eight runs over four frames

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- The A's are hoping they simply experienced a brief pause in their post-break offensive onslaught on Saturday, when their bats couldn't keep up with the Red Sox's in a 9-3 loss that featured two pauses of another sort in Game 1 of a twin bill.

The first rain delay lasted 45 minutes following the sixth inning. But after playing the seventh, the skies opened up again and the two teams had to endure a two-hour, 15-minute interruption before returning to action.

The combined three-hour delay forced the start of Game 2 to be pushed back by an hour and 52 minutes. There was thought that Game 1 could be shortened and Game 2 could then be played, as was the case for a Red Sox game in 2009, but umpire crew chief Tim McClelland noted "that was an aberration."

"According to the rules, that can't happen or shouldn't happen," he said. "They didn't want this. They wanted this game to finish."

It did, but not before Coco Crisp nearly narrowed a six-run deficit with two outs in the ninth, when he launched a ball from righty Michael Bowden with the bases loaded to deep right field, where Josh Reddick put a glove on it at the warning track to end the game.

A win wouldn't have been guaranteed in the event it escaped the park, but manager Bob Melvin saw the advantage had it actually done so.

"It gets [Jonathan] Papelbon in the game, therefore going forward with the second game, you've had their closer in a game already," he said. "Certainly the game's not over at that point, but it makes it that much closer and the heart keeps beating. It's too bad it didn't go out."

Instead, it put an end to a lengthy affair that proved all the more frustrating given the delays.

"There were no options, we were just waiting to get started again," Melvin said. "It's not ideal, but both teams have to deal with it."

Boston lefty Jon Lester fared quite well, holding the A's to just two runs and three hits through six innings, interrupting a strong surge that had resulted in 36 Oakland runs over the club's previous 37 innings.

Brandon Allen highlighted the limited activity seen at the plate, notching his fourth homer of the season in the second via a leadoff long ball. The A's only other run off Lester came in the third, courtesy of a sacrifice fly by Crisp.

The timing proved ill, as starter Guillermo Moscoso endured a rough outing, lasting just four innings and giving up eight runs (seven earned) on nine hits and two walks in the process while utilizing 93 pitches.

"Obviously not his best outing for us," Melvin said. "He got behind, and when you get behind this team, you have to throw balls over the middle of the plate. That's when all the damage happens."

Boston jumped out to an early lead in the first on Dustin Pedroia's RBI single, but it was the ensuing three-run second and third innings that left the most damage.

The former included Jason Varitek's two-run homer and an RBI double from Jacoby Ellsbury, while the latter brought about a two-run double from David Ortiz and Carl Crawford's sacrifice fly.

"I hit it pretty good," Varitek said. "I don't know. Sometimes balls when they're hit that direction take a left-hand turn toward that corner."

Oakland's bullpen trio of Craig Breslow, Jerry Blevins and Fautino De Los Santos limited Boston to one run through the final five frames, and Cliff Pennington's RBI single in the ninth -- his ninth hit in his past 20 at-bats -- marked the A's final run.

A's look to put hitting shoes back on vs. Tribe

By Chris Vannini / MLB.com

Saturday was a long day for the Athletics.

After enduring a doubleheader against the Red Sox with multiple rain delays at Fenway Park, the A's have an off-day Sunday. The rain doused the recently hot Oakland offense, but the A's are hoping to resume swinging the bat well when they take on the Indians for a four-game series, beginning Monday.

The Athletics have scored 39 runs over the past six games.

"We've been playing good offensively, and we've just been trying to put everything together," rookie second baseman Jemile Weeks said. "It's good for the confidence, and it helps you as an individual, feeling like you need to go out there and prove something to help out the team."

In the Indians, the A's will face a team that has been reeling in the past week-plus -- having lost six of its past nine -- but is still hoping to challenge for a division crown. While Oakland is far behind the leaders in the American League West, the club can spoil the hopes of opponents with its bats.

"The offense has come alive and stayed consistent to this point," A's manager Bob Melvin said, "and it certainly makes things easier on everybody when they're scoring some runs."

Indians: "Homecoming"

A staple of the Tribe teams in the 1990s, Jim Thome returned to Cleveland on Thursday after waiving his no-trade clause with the Twins.

In two games, Thome is 1-for-7 with a home run. He hit .287 with 334 home runs and 927 RBIs with the Indians from 1991-2002.

Athletics: Pitching woes

- After leading the American League in ERA before the All-Star break, Oakland's pitching staff hasn't been able to find the same success.

Entering Saturday, the A's ERA since the break was 5.03, which was third-worst in the AL and Majors.

- Monday's starter, Brandon McCarthy, is 6-1 in his past eight starts, posting a 4.01 ERA in that span.
- Oakland has hit 28 home runs in August and 10 through the first six games of the road trip. The last time the club had 28 homers in a month was August 2009.

Worth noting

- The A's went 1-2 against the Indians in a May series.
- Cleveland is 6 1/2 games behind division-leading Detroit, which is a season high.
- Saturday's doubleheader was the fifth in the Oakland history of the Athletics.

Blevins designated to open spot for Godfrey

Lefty reliever remains on Oakland's 40-man roster

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

BOSTON -- To make room on the 25-man roster for right-hander Graham Godfrey, who started Game 2 of Saturday's doubleheader, the A's made a familiar transaction.

Left-hander Jerry Blevins was designated for assignment, but as was the case the previous three times such a move was made this year, he remains on the A's 40-man roster.

Because Blevins is more than three years removed from his first appearance on a Major League roster, optional waivers are required when optioning him, which allows the A's to send him to the Minors while keeping him on the 40-man.

The southpaw was recalled by the A's on Friday for his fifth stint with the club this year, and pitched in each of the first two games in Boston, including the first contest of Saturday's twin bill.

Blevins combined to allow a run on four hits while striking out three through three innings in those appearances.

A's swept in doubleheader at Fenway

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — It started out as a promising weekend series for the Oakland Athletics. Then it was washed away on a day filled with rain delays and a sudden drought of offense.

A nearly 11-hour day ended for the Athletics when Cliff Pennington lined out to center, closing a 4-0 loss to the Boston Red Sox in the second game of a doubleheader sweep.

"Pretty much a miserable day," Oakland third baseman Scott Sizemore said. "The weather, the field conditions, everything."

Coming into Boston averaging nine runs per game over its previous four, Oakland's offense was mostly shut down by the Red Sox after a 15-5 win on Friday night.

"Based on the way we've been swinging the bats lately, really well," Athletics manager Bob Melvin said of how Boston's pitching looked against his team. "We just couldn't do anything all day, all night."

David Ortiz hit a two-run homer and four Boston pitchers combined on a three-hitter in the second game.

In the opener, Jason Varitek hit a two-run homer, Jon Lester allowed three hits in six innings and the Red Sox won 9-3. That game was delayed twice — 45 minutes after the sixth inning and 2 hours, 15 minutes after the seventh.

The highlight of the day for Oakland was a long out, ending the first game. Coco Crisp flied to the warning track in the deepest part of Fenway Park's right field with the bases loaded after scoring a run on three hits and a walk. It was the only time all day they had a multi-hit inning.

"Long day. Long tough day for us," Melvin said. "It's a lot easier to move on from these days when you win a game or two."

There was a one-hour delay in the top of the fifth in the nightcap. The first game had been moved up to noon from 1:10 p.m. to make room for the second game that was rescheduled from Sunday to avoid Hurricane Irene's effects.

Erik Bedard allowed two singles in four innings in Game 2 before being replaced by Alfredo Aceves (9-1) when play resumed. He pitched three hitless innings. Daniel Bard allowed a single in the eighth before Jonathan Papelbon pitched a perfect ninth.

Ortiz went 5 for 8, driving in four runs and scoring three in the doubleheader.

The Red Sox, 8-3 in their last 11 games, increased their AL East lead to two games over the New York Yankees, whose doubleheader at Baltimore was rained out.

Fans with tickets for the scheduled 5:05 p.m. start were allowed through the turnstiles during the second delay in the opener. The game ended at 6:08 p.m.

At night, the Red Sox took a 2-0 lead in the second against Graham Godfrey (1-2) when Dustin Pedroia doubled and Ortiz hit his 27th homer. They made it 3-0 in the fourth on consecutive singles by Pedroia, Ortiz and Jed Lowrie and an RBI groundout by Jarrod Saltalamacchia.

They scored their final run in the sixth off Josh Outman. With one out, Lowrie reached second on a two-base throwing error by Sizemore. After Carl Crawford flied out, Saltalamacchia hit a popup to short right field. First baseman Brandon Allen ran back but, as he looked up into the rain, the ball bounced off his glove and he fell. Saltalamacchia was credited with an RBI double.

Bedard walked just five batters in his other four games with Boston but walked four of the first seven Boston hitters. His last batter, Anthony Recker, singled for his first major league hit before play was halted in the fifth.

In the opener Lester (14-6) allowed two runs, one of them earned, walked two and fanned four, improving to 7-0 with a 1.54 ERA in nine afternoon starts.

Lester started under bright skies but heavy rain fell on and off during the middle innings before play was halted the first time as he prepared to take the mound in the seventh.

"The conditions were really bad. The mound wasn't bad, but anytime you took the ball out of your glove it was wet," he said. "I had no grip. I was trying to tell the umpires that. Maybe the second time it went to the backstop made them realize it wasn't safe."

Ortiz added a pair of doubles and drove in two runs and Mike Aviles collected three singles for Boston.

Allen hit a solo homer for Athletics.

The second delay of the opener came after Varitek bounced weakly to the mound, ending the seventh.

The Red Sox scored three runs in the second and third innings against Guillermo Moscoso (6-8) to open a 7-2 lead. After Moscoso retired the first two batters in the second, Josh Reddick walked before Varitek homered. Jacoby Ellsbury added an RBI double.

NOTES: Adrian Gonzalez's third-inning double in the opener gave him a career-high 183 hits. ... Francona said RHP Clay Buchholz, a key part of the rotation who has been on the DL since June 17 with a strained lower back, will be re-examined in "the next couple of days. But even if the examination is good, he's not allowed to throw until (Sept. 1)." ... Oakland stole its first three bases in the opener (two by Jemile Weeks, one by Pennington) without even a throw by catcher Varitek. ... The A's recalled Godfrey from Sacramento in between games and sent pitcher Jerry Blevins to the Triple-A team. ... After an off-day Monday, the Red Sox will send John Lackey (12-9) to the mound in Tuesday night's opener of a three-game series against the Yankees at Fenway. Oakland resumes play Monday with Brandon McCarthy (7-6) facing David Huff (1-2) in Cleveland.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Taylor's two home runs top Fresno

By Alex Sadorf / Sacramento River Cats

Michael Taylor's two home runs catapulted the River Cats to a 5-4 victory over the host Fresno Grizzlies on Saturday night. The outfielder's solo blast in the sixth-inning gave the River Cats the lead for good.

Jermaine Mitchell knocked his hitting streak to 13 games on Saturday evening with a double in his first at-bat. Mitchell did not stay on base long as he tried to go for the triple and called out on the throw.

Also in the first, Wes Timmons hit his second home run in as many games. It is also his second home run for the River Cats this season and put the Cats in the lead, 1-0.

The Grizzlies had trouble coming back until the third when Justin Christian hit a three-run homer over the left field wall. Christian's eighth home run of the year gave Fresno the lead at 3-1.

Billy Crystal, who is filming a movie in the Grizzlies' press box, was on air with River Cats radio broadcaster Johnny Duskow in the fourth inning.

Crystal said this about whether a Fresno baserunner should go half way on a fly ball: "It's 107 degrees ... I'm not going half way unless there's a lemonade on second base."

Taylor brought the Cats back into the game with a two-run homer in the fourth, his 14th of the year, also over the left field wall. Third baseman Josh Donaldson was on base after being walked by Grizzlies left-hander Jason Stevenson. The homer tied up the game at 3-3.

A second home run from Taylor in the sixth put the Cats back in the lead. It was a solo blast over the left field wall that gave Sacramento a 4-3 lead. "Both were fastballs but were intended to do different things," said Taylor of his home run pitches.

Ethan Hollingsworth made his first appearance with the River Cats. The right-hander went 5.0 innings, allowing four hits and three earned runs while striking out three. Hollingsworth was 6-5 with a 3.61 ERA in his 17 appearances with the Midland Rockhounds.

Both teams made a final stand in the ninth. Catcher Joel Galarraga singled on a ground ball to center field and was followed by an Adam Rosales single off a soft line drive to center field. Then right-hander Scott Munter walked Timmons to load the bases for Carter. Carter reached on a fielding error by shortstop Brandon Crawford, allowing Galarraga to score for a 5-3 lead.

Fresno rallied for one run in the ninth but it wasn't enough.

It is clear from Saturday's game that the River Cats have not let their clinched division title affect their game.

"You're playing for your career, every one in Triple-A knows that," Taylor said. "Selfishly, you're now using your playing time the best you can to get your numbers up."

The River Cats and the Grizzlies face each other for the last time this season Sunday evening at 6 p.m. at Chukchansi Park. Johnny Duskow will call game on 650 KSTE.

Frisco scores 3 in the second to beat RockHounds

From staff reports , Midland Reporter-Telegram

The Frisco RoughRiders scored all the runs they needed in the second inning to defeat the Midland RockHounds 3-1 in front of 7,363 fans Saturday night at Citibank Ballpark.

Frisco began the second inning with three consecutive singles — the last of which by Engel Betre scored Jonathan Greene.

Jared Bolden later added a two-run double against Midland starter Shawn Haviland (6-12) for the 3-0 lead.

Outside of that inning, Haviland had one of his better outings by going seven innings and allowed three runs on nine hits. He also struck out five and didn't walk a batter.

The only run the RockHounds got against Frisco starter Neil Ramirez (1-0) came in the fifth inning when Jason Christian hit a leadoff triple to right field and then scored on a Tyler Ladendorf groundout.

HOUNDS GET 300,000TH FAN: The Midland RockHounds franchise reached 300,000 fans for the first time in the 40-year history of the club on Saturday night

The 300,000th fan was Cecilia Jimenez of Fort Stockton. This was her first game of the season, but she has been coming to Citibank Ballpark for four years, according to a press release by the RockHounds. Jimenez received a prize package of RockHounds memorabilia as well as two tickets on American Airlines.

The 300,001st fan also received a Club prize package but no tickets. Caroline Taylor of Brownfield was making her first visit to Citibank Ballpark.

Green and Mitchell Earn Texas League Honors

By Greg Bergman / Midland RockHounds

Two members of the RockHounds have been named to the Texas League's Post-Season All-Star Team. The selections were announced today by league president Tom Kayser.

Grant Green and Jermaine Mitchell have been named Texas League All-Stars.

Balloting was conducted among the league's managers, broadcasters and writers.

Springfield Cardinals first baseman Matt Adams, who ranks second in the league with 30 home runs and leads the league with 94 runs batted in, was named the league's Player of the Year. Arkansas Travelers right-hander Matt Shoemaker (12-3, with a league-leading 2.21 earned run average to go with five complete games and two shutouts) was named Pitcher of the Year, and San Antonio's Doug Dascenzo was named Manager of the Year, guiding the Missions to an 87-42 mark entering Friday's play, and closing in on a sweep of both half-season titles in the Texas League South Division.

GRANT GREEN

Oakland's first round draft choice in 2009, Grant was the 13th player selected overall in that draft, and entered the season rated the A's top prospect by Baseball America.

After opening the year at shortstop, he has moved to center field, and has now played his last 35 games at that position. Offensively, he has been the RockHounds' most consistent hitter, ranking 10th in the league entering play of August 27 with a .295 average.

"Greeny" put together a monster, 15-game hit streak from July 30 through August 17, hitting .435 over those 15 games.

He was chosen to play in the Major League All-Star Futures Game, the second consecutive year he has been selected, and was named the game's Most Valuable Player.

While this is his first (official) Double-A season, Grant did play for the 'Hounds in the 2010 Texas League playoffs. His debut ranks as one of the great moments in the franchise's post-season history, as he homered on the first pitch he saw as a RockHound.

JERMAINE MITCHELL

Before his July 2 promotion to (Triple-A) Sacramento, Jermaine was one of the leading candidates for Texas League Player of the Year honors. At the time of his promotion, he led the league in batting average, hits, triples, on-base percentage and total bases, and ranked among the top five in at bats, extra base hits, slugging percentage and walks.

He will fall just 18 plate appearances short of qualifying for the league batting title at the end of the season (as of today, his average is 17 points higher than any other hitter).

The Texas native (he was born in Naples and lives in Daingerfield), was selected by the Oakland A's in the fifth round of the 2006 draft out of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He spent two full seasons and part of a third with the Stockton Ports of the (Advanced-A) California League before getting his first promotion to Double-A and the RockHounds last season, but hit just .223 in 37 games. His 2011 season was one of the most spectacular in recent franchise history, with first half numbers comparing favorably to those of two former RockHounds who went on to be named Texas League Player of the Year: Andre Ethier (2005) and Chris Carter (2009).

2011 Texas League Post-Season All-Star Team

<u>Position</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Team</u>
1B	Matt Adams	Springfield
2B	Thomas Field	Tulsa
3B	James Darnell	San Antonio
SS	Ryan Jackson	Springfield
UTL	Grant Green	RockHounds
OF	J.D. Martinez	Corpus Christi
OF	Jermaine Mitchell	RockHounds
OF	Mike Trout	Arkansas
OF	Tim Wheeler	Tulsa
DH	Tommy Mendonca	Frisco
C	Salvador Perez	NW Arkansas
C	Wilin Rosario	Tulsa
P	Brad Brach	San Antonio
P	Dallas Keuchel	Corpus Christi
P	Shelby Miller	Springfield
P	Garrett Richards	Arkansas
P	Matt Shoemaker	Arkansas
P	Joe Wieland	San Antonio

TEXAS LEAGUE MANAGER OF THE YEAR: Doug Dascenzo (San Antonio)

TEXAS LEAGUE PITCHER OF THE YEAR: Matt Shoemaker (Arkansas)

TEXAS LEAGUE PLAYER OF THE YEAR: Matt Adams (Springfield)

MIKE COOLBAUGH TEXAS LEAGUE COACH OF THE YEAR: John Moses (Corpus Christi)

66ers Punish Ports Pen in 6-3 Loss

Stockton Ports

It was a heartbreaking night for the Ports bullpen as they gave up all six runs to the Inland Empire 66ers in a come-from-behind win over the Ports by a final of 6-3.

The pitching early in the game was spectacular as both starters got off to a striking start. AJ Griffin for the Ports pitched 6.0 scoreless innings for the Ports. Griffin struck out eight in the appearance including five in a row starting in the third and culminating in Griffin striking out the side in the fourth.

Meanwhile the Ports offense broke through in the third against 66ers starter John Hellweg. Hellweg, who stands at 6'9" and throws consistently at around 96 MPH, started the third by hitting Ryan Lipkin with a pitch before Rashun Dixon hit a ground rule double to put two runners in scoring position. Leonardo Gil lined out to drive in Lipkin for the first run of the inning. Then with Conner Crumbliss batting, Hellweg threw a wild pitch to bring home Dixon.

The Ports tacked on a third run in the sixth off reliever Cody Evans, who earned the win this evening. Gil, who already had an RBI in the game blasted a home run to left field for the Ports final run of the evening.

In the seventh, Josh Lansford replaced Griffin, and the 66ers promptly broke through with their first run of the game. Randal Grichuk singled to left field and advanced to second as Carlos Ramirez walked. Grichuk advanced to third on throwing error by Lipkin and then scored on a force out for the first of their six runs.

In the eighth, AJ Huttenlocker came in to relieve Lansford. Huttenlocker, who has been a rock for the Ports all season, suffered one of his worst outings of his season and was quickly driven from the game. Huttenlocker's inning got off to a rocky start with an Adam Younger double, then a Travis Witherspoon single. A sac fly from David Harris plated Younger before a single from Kole Calhoun drove Huttenlocker out of the game.

Jose Guzman replaced Huttenlocker, inheriting two base runners in the process. Guzman got Eric Oliver to ground out, unfortunately allowing Witherspoon to score. Another quick groundout to end the inning closed the line on Huttenlocker, who went just 0.1 inning with two earned runs and bumped his ERA up to 1.92.

Guzman came back out to pitch the ninth, where his luck did not improve, and the 66ers were able to pull out the win. Younger was the hero of the game for the 66ers, as he blasted a two-run blast down the left field line to give Inland Empire the go-ahead runs. They tacked on an insurance run in the inning to bring their final total to six runs against the normally stellar Ports bullpen. Guzman took the loss, earning his fourth loss and blown save of the season.

The Ports try to avoid losing the series tomorrow as right hander Dan Straily faces off against Max Russell for the 66ers. The Ports Magic Number now sits at 2, as the Bakersfield Blaze also lost tonight.

Bees Sting Bandits

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

DAVENPORT, IA-The Burlington Bees (26-35) scored 12 runs on 11 hits to earn a 12-6 win over the Quad Cities River Bandits (36-25) before 6,630 fans at Modern Woodman Park on Saturday night.

The Bees scored three runs in the first inning against Quad Cities LHP Ryan Copeland (4-4). 2B Nino Leyja (2-6) singled and scored on a two-run home run over the center field wall by DH Josh Whitaker (3-4) for a 2-0 lead. 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (0-3) walked and went to second base on a ground out by C Beau Taylor (1-5). RF Douglas Landaeta (0-4) reached on an error and Kirby-Jones scored for a 3-0 lead.

Burlington scored a pair of runs in the three-run second inning on throwing errors. SS Yordy Cabrera (1-4) led off the inning and was hit by a pitch. He stole second and third base, scoring from third base on an errant throw by Quad Cities C Cody Stanley. Leyja followed with a double and stole third base. Another wide throw by Stanley caused Leyja to score. Burlington added another run in the inning on an RBI single by Taylor for a 6-0 lead.

The Bees put up a "three-spot" of runs in the third inning. 3B Ryan Pineda (3-5) led off the inning with a single and scored on a triple by Cabrera. Consigli pulled a two-run home run over the right field wall for a 9-0 advantage.

The Quad Cities River Bandits scored five runs on four hits against Joseph in the fifth inning to cut the lead to 9-5. The Bees got three runs in the sixth inning on a bases-clearing double by Pineda for a 12-5 advantage.

BEES BUZZINGS: Burlington placed OF Jose Crisotomo on the Disabled List before the game and activated C Juan Nunez from the Disabled List.

The Bees and River Bandits continue their series on Sunday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. RHP Nate Long (7-7, 3.33) gets the start for Burlington against RHP Trevor Rosenthal (6-7, 4.17) for Quad Cities. Pre-game coverage starts at 6:40 p.m. over Newsradio 1490 KBUR and online at www.gobees.com.

2011 Bees tickets are on sale now! To get single game tickets, or playoff tickets for game two of the first round of the Midwest League playoffs on September 8, please give the Bees a call at (319) 754-5705 (319) 754-5705, go online to www.gobees.com, or stop by the box office at Community Field during normal business hours.

Vermont 3-1, 13-inning Victory Saturday

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

NORWICH, CT --- Michael Fabiaschi's squeeze bunt in the top of the 13th inning scored pinch runner Chad Oberacker with the tie-breaking run as the Vermont Lake Monsters moved back into first-place in the Stedler Division with a 3-1 victory over the Connecticut Tigers in New York-Penn League action Saturday afternoon at Dodd Stadium.

Jacob Tanis was hit by a pitch to leadoff the 13th inning by Nick Avila, who then walked Aaron Shipman to put Lake Monster runners at first and second. Sean Jamieson then moved Oberacker and Shipman to second and third with a sacrifice bunt to first before Fabiaschi's squeeze bunt gave Vermont the lead. Bobby Crocker gave the Lake Monsters an insurance run with an RBI single to right scoring Shipman.

Connecticut had taken the lead with a run on three singles in the fourth inning off Vermont starter Brent Powers, who allowed just the one run on six hits with no walks and four strikeouts in six innings. The Lake Monsters tied the game with an unearned run in the sixth as Shipman reached second on a throwing error by shortstop Eugenio Suarez, moved to third on a Jamieson sacrifice bunt and scored on a Fabiaschi RBI single to center.

Vermont's bullpen allowed just one hit with one walk and four strikeouts over seven scoreless innings, including two hitless innings of relief from Jeff Urlaub, Tanner Peters and Nathan Kilcrease. Urlaub came on after a leadoff single in eighth and the three relievers combined to retire 17 of the last 18 batters they faced (Peters gave up a two-out walk in 11th).

Tiger starter Luis Sanz gave up just one unearned run on three hits over seven innings, while Melvin Mercedes two hits in four scoreless innings before Avila (3-1) allowed two runs in two innings for the loss. Connecticut (33-32) had a three-game winning streak snapped with the loss, while Vermont has won five of its first seven games against the Tigers to clinch the season series.

The victory was the second in just three extra-inning games this season for Vermont (34-32), which jumps back ahead of Connecticut by 1/2 game for the lead in the Stedler Division with eight games remaining on the schedule for the Lake Monsters.

Due to concerns with Hurricane Irene, the Lake Monsters and Tigers will not play at historic Centennial Field on Sunday. The teams were scheduled to complete a suspended game from June 25th and play a seven-inning game Sunday before wrapping up the series with a nine-inning game on Monday. They will now play the suspended and seven-inning game on Monday, while the nine-inning game has been cancelled and will not be made up.