

Oakland A's shut out Seattle Mariners 3-0

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's took a low-cost gamble in signing Brandon McCarthy last winter, not sure what they would get from the oft-injured right-hander.

McCarthy is validating that decision, and the latest example came Saturday when he three-hit the Seattle Mariners in a 3-0 victory before 19,732 fans at O.co Coliseum.

McCarthy's second career shutout and fourth complete game of the season, tied for sixth-most in the A.L., gave the A's their third straight win.

He struck out 10 -- tying a career high he had established in his previous start against Cleveland -- walked none and allowed just four base runners.

"The fact that there were no runners made it an easy decision for me (to send him out for the ninth)," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "It was just a great game. He deserved it."

Saturday was the first time McCarthy (8-7) was rewarded with a victory this season when he went the distance.

The A's mustered just four runs total in his three previous complete-game efforts, all road losses.

They got all the offense they needed in the fourth, when Cliff Pennington lined a two-run double to left off Michael Pineda (9-9). Scott Sizemore added a solo homer the next inning to provide some cushion.

With his pitch count at 98, McCarthy took the mound in the ninth to a standing ovation. He set the Mariners down in order, getting Mike Carp looking on a 91 mph fastball to end it.

"As much time as I've spent hurt, and you've got everyone out there behind you, it kind of makes you feel like you're on top of the world," McCarthy said. "I had to remember to focus and not get caught up in it."

McCarthy, 28, spent four stints on the disabled list with Texas from 2007 to 2009. He made just 11 appearances last season for Triple-A Oklahoma City because of a stress reaction in his right shoulder blade, a recurring injury that also landed him on the D.L. for 6½ weeks this season.

He was reinstated July 3 and is 7-2 with a 3.26 ERA since the All-Star break. His overall ERA is 3.41.

McCarthy signed a one-year, \$1 million contract with Oakland in December and arrived at spring training just hoping to win the fifth starter's job. Considering he's under team control and won't be eligible for free agency until after the 2012 season, he's positioned himself for a spot in next year's rotation as well if he remains healthy.

Melvin compared McCarthy's strategy -- spotting his fastball to both sides of the plate and keeping hitters off-balance with his cutter and sinker -- to that of former great Greg Maddux of the Atlanta Braves, Chicago Cubs and other teams.

"The main thing (Saturday) is he was getting ahead in the count," A's catcher Kurt Suzuki said. "He was moving the ball in and out, up and down."

Pennington, the shortstop hitting .395 with 15 RBIs in his past 10 games, got the green light with a 3-0 count in the fourth and lined a double the opposite way to score the first two runs.

"You knew he was going to get a fastball, and you have a guy up there that's our hottest hitter," Melvin said.

Pennington also teamed with second baseman Jemile Weeks for the day's defensive highlight in the ninth.

Weeks fielded Dustin Ackley's grounder up the middle and made a backhanded glove flip to Pennington, who had his momentum going toward first and fired a throw to nip Ackley.

Oakland A's update: Jemile Weeks works on not over-sliding bag on steals

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Jemile Weeks took the field with coaches early Saturday morning in hopes of correcting an unusual problem -- over-sliding the bag on stolen-base attempts.

The rookie second baseman has been tagged out three times this season after he's stolen a base only to have his momentum take him past the bag.

"It's just from me being aggressive, sometimes I get a little overaggressive," said Weeks, second among American League rookies with 21 steals. "I'm definitely not going to turn down the aggressiveness. It's just keeping my technique right."

A's first base coach Tye Waller, also the team's baserunning coach, said it's important that Weeks doesn't slow up as he approaches the base on a steal but rather starts his slide sooner.

"I just try to break it down," Waller said. "When you get your lead, when you take off, what's your mind doing? Where are you picking up the base? Where are you making up your mind to slide? All this really has to happen instinctively because you don't have time to think about it."

Waller, A's manager Bob Melvin and special assistant Phil Garner took part in the pregame session, with Waller marking off a spot in front of second base where Weeks might begin his slide.

Weeks is watching video of other base stealers -- including Boston Red Sox outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury -- to study their sliding techniques.

The A's also have Weeks experimenting with a feet-first slide rather than diving headfirst. Melvin says going in feet-first puts a player at less risk of an injury, and Waller believes going feet-first will help Weeks slide through infielders who might try to block the bag on a steal attempt.

Center fielder Coco Crisp fouled a ball off his right foot in the first inning and left the game in the fifth for pinch hitter Ryan Sweeney. Melvin said Crisp fouled a ball off the same spot on his foot Friday night and that Crisp would not play Sunday as a precaution.

First baseman Brandon Allen is 3 for 28 with 14 strikeouts in his past seven games.

Weeks extended his hitting streak to 11 games with a third-inning single.

Brian Fuentes was activated from the bereavement list, giving the A's an 11-man bullpen.

Chin Music: Weeks works on his sliding; McCarthy and Harden might get more rest

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 9/3/2011 12:41pm

It's a good day for baseball at the Coliseum as the A's try to make it two in a row over Seattle ...

Here's the lineups:

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

Mariners — Ichiro RF, Gutierrez CF, Ackley 2B, Carp DH, Smoak 1B, Wells LF, Seager 3B, Bard C, Ryan SS; Pineda RHP.

—A's manager Bob Melvin, base running coach Tye Waller and special assistant Phil Garner were on the field this morning working with Jemile Weeks on his sliding technique. Over-sliding the bag on stolen-base attempts has been a problem with Weeks since he's been in the majors. It's sort of amusing to watch, but the A's are treating it seriously, as is Weeks. He's been called out three times on bases he had swiped, only to pop off the bag and get tagged.

—Melvin said it's possible that Brandon McCarthy and Rich Harden, starting pitchers who have had their share of past injuries, could get extra time off in the final few weeks, with an occasional spot starter being wedged in to give those two a break. The A's just want to be smart with them.

—That's all for now ...

Brandon McCarthy sharp as A's blank Mariners 3-0

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Brandon McCarthy finally coupled a complete game with a victory, and to put a bow on things, his middle infielders turned in a doozy of a play in the ninth inning.

Second baseman Jemile Weeks went to his right for a grounder by Dustin Ackley and flipped the ball straight from his glove to shortstop Cliff Pennington, who threw to first for the out.

"Fantastic play, that was awesome," McCarthy said after the A's 3-0 win over Seattle on Saturday at the Coliseum. He added with a smile, "They're trying to upstage me."

McCarthy recorded his second career shutout, allowing just three hits and not walking a batter as the A's recorded their third win in a row.

"He kept it easy for us," Weeks said. "All we had to do was score."

Primarily using his cutter, darting it all over the strike zone, McCarthy tied his career high with 10 strikeouts, a mark he also achieved his previous start at Cleveland.

Manager Bob Melvin said it was an easy decision to send McCarthy out for the ninth: McCarthy was at 98 pitches and he hadn't been in trouble all day. Only two Seattle batters made it past first, and no one advanced beyond second.

The crowd gave McCarthy a standing ovation when he went back out for the ninth. McCarthy, who has spent a great deal of his big-league career on the disabled list with shoulder stress fractures, was extra appreciative.

"It makes you feel on top of the world," he said. "I had to remember to focus."

McCarthy had thrown three previous complete games this season and took the loss in all of them. Since 1995, the only other Oakland pitchers with three complete-game losses in one season were Mark Mulder and Barry Zito, in 2003.

"It's nice, the statistical oddity is over," McCarthy said.

The Weeks-Pennington play in the ninth was a slick exchange they'd tried several times this season unsuccessfully.

"That added a little bit of excitement," Melvin said. "It happened a little quick. Jemile had to transfer with the glove - that's the only way to do it."

Weeks said that his momentum was carrying him the opposite way, Pennington was right there, and, "He's got a great arm. I was just using that to my advantage."

Pennington's bat also was a boost for Oakland, continuing the trend of the past week and a half. In the fourth, after Hideki Matsui and David DeJesus singled off Mariners rookie Michael Pineda, Pennington whacked a 3-0 pitch to left, and both runners scored on the two-out double.

The A's are known as a team that doesn't swing much 3-0, but Melvin said that giving Pennington the green light there made sense. He's hitting .395 over his past 10 games.

"With Pineda, that was an easy decision," he said. "You know Penny is going to get a fastball, and he's out hottest hitter, and a left-handed hitter on top of it."

In the fifth, Scott Sizemore added a solo homer off Pineda, who had beaten the A's in each of his two previous career starts against them, allowing just one run in the process.

Before Saturday's game, Melvin said that while the A's won't go to a six-man rotation, per se, they might use a spot starter occasionally in order to give McCarthy and Monday's starter, Rich Harden, some extra rest. Josh Outman might get the call, or perhaps Graham Godfrey when Triple-A Sacramento's season finishes.

Coco Crisp came out of the game in the fifth inning with a bruised right foot after fouling pitches off it two games in a row. He'll be off today as a precaution.

Jemile Weeks gets advice on base stealing, sliding

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Jemile Weeks can steal bases, no question. It's staying there that's the problem.

The rookie has sailed right past the bag three times this season, twice head first and once, Friday night, feet first. So on Saturday, manager **Bob Melvin**, special adviser **Phil Garner** and first-base coach **Tye Waller** had Weeks out early, working on technique.

"They're trying to get me to slide a little bit earlier, make sure I'm in front of the bag or hitting on top of the bag and stopping my momentum," Weeks said. "It's just getting back to fundamentals."

Melvin said that they showed Weeks video of some successful base stealers who also start their slides on the late side, including Boston's **Jacoby Ellsbury**, who pops up when he reaches the bag, a tactic that might help Weeks.

Weeks has 21 steals, making him the seventh rookie in Oakland history to reach the 20-steal mark. He has seven steals in the past 10 games after 14 in his first 66.

Weeks extended his career-high hitting streak to 11 games with a single in the third.

Good cause: Today is the A's annual Breast Cancer Awareness Day, and proceeds from sales of commemorative pins, jerseys and hats, along with an A's autographed quilt raffle, will benefit the American Cancer Society, Cancer Prevention Institute of California and Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

More than 500 breast cancer survivors, led by bench coach **Joel Skinner's** wife, **Jennifer**, and Waller's sister, **Teri Duncan**, will form a symbolic ribbon on the field during a pregame ceremony.

Leading off

One more for a dozen: With Brian Fuentes returning from bereavement leave, the A's have an 11-man bullpen. Manager Bob Melvin said he plans to use the regulars as usual, leaving little time for newcomers Neil Wagner, Jason Rice and Andrew Carignan.

Drumbeat: Jemile Weeks gets some sliding practice, other A's tidbits

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 9/3/2011 12:18pm

Jemile Weeks has been tagged out sliding over the base three times on stolen-base attempts this season, two head-first and once, last night, feet-first. So this morning, manager Bob Melvin, special advisor Phil Garner and first-base coach Tye Waller were working with Weeks on his sliding technique.

Basically, they all concluded, Weeks is starting his slide too late, so he winds up continuing it right through the bag. So Melvin said Weeks either must start his slide a little earlier or he must learn to pop up when he gets to the bag.

Melvin said they also showed Weeks some video of some other top basestealers who start their slides a little late but do so successfully, particularly Boston's Jacoby Ellsbury.

The A's starters will all be on turn through the next time through the rotation, but from then on, the team might add a spot starter here or there to give today's starter, Brandon McCarthy, and Monday starter Rich Harden a little extra rest. Both have extensive injury histories.

Here's the lineup behind McCarthy: Weeks 2b, Crisp cf, Matsui DH, Willingham lf, DeJesus rf, Allen 1b, Pennington ss, Suzuki c, Sizemore 3b.

Melvin said that reliever Brian Fuentes will return from bereavement leave today. That means an 11-man bullpen for Oakland; Melvin said that the regulars will remain in their usual roles, so some of the recent additions - Neil Wagner, Jason Rice, Andrew Carignan - might not get a lot of work. Rice has yet to pitch in a game, Wagner looked good in two outings this week and Carignan in one last night.

McCarthy hurls gem as A's top Mariners

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Brandon McCarthy's offseason arrival was met with little fanfare.

There was little reason for any, as the righty's career up to that point was mostly defined by injury, and his name was not exactly strongly advertised.

And even when he won the fifth-starter job out of Spring Training, beating out Tyson Ross and Bobby Cramer, the hype remained nonexistent.

Not much has changed in the five months since, but outings like the one McCarthy enjoyed Saturday -- a 3-0 shutout over the Mariners -- may prompt some change in that regard.

The right-hander has quietly been the staff's most consistent over the year, minus the six weeks he missed with a shoulder issue. Saturday's showing marked his second straight complete game (his last an eight-inning outing) and fourth of the season, but it also finally represented his first win on such occasions.

"It's nice," McCarthy said. "The statistical oddity is over there. It's nice to be able to get deep in the game and keep doing what I was doing earlier in the game, not letting them catch me from behind. I was really encouraged with the fact I was able to get through the eighth and ninth."

The victory proved more than deserving -- a notion recognized by an A's crowd that gave the hurler a standing ovation as he strolled out for the final inning at 98 pitches.

"That was awesome," he said. "It's one of those things where as much time as I've spent hurt and you've got everyone out there and behind you when things are going well, it kind of makes you feel like you're on top of the world."

All the while, he had to maintain the focus that led him to that point, despite a sense of exhaustion felt since the seventh inning. The task, not surprisingly, proved seamless.

McCarthy allowed just three hits on the day, the first not coming until the fourth inning on Dustin Ackley's two-out line-drive single to right field. Ichiro Suzuki and Josh Bard notched the only other Mariners hits, and Seattle's only other baserunner was Kyle Seager, who reached base in the fifth on Cliff Pennington's fielding error.

Moreover, no free passes were handed out by McCarthy, who instead utilized his 114 pitches to tally a career high-tying 10 strikeouts, a majority of them coming on an effective cutter. The righty has fanned 10 in each of his last two starts, and 26 over his last 24 2/3 innings, a span during which he's allowed just a combined five earned runs.

"He just never made a mistake," Seattle's Josh Bard said. "Just cut, sinking, curving. Everything was on the edge. He threw the ball up, out of the zone. He was ahead all day."

"He was lights-out," Jemile Weeks said. "Kept it easy for us. All we had to do was score and keep the game where it was. It was our job to go out and play good defense for him and score some runs."

Run support wasn't a part of McCarthy's last start, a 2-1 loss in Cleveland, but that wasn't the case Saturday, when the A's beat Seattle rookie sensation Michael Pineda -- who entered with a 0.75 ERA in two starts against Oakland -- courtesy of Pennington's two-run double in the fourth and Scott Sizemore's fifth-inning homer, his eighth of the season.

"It seems like in a game like that, 2-0 to 3-0 feels like you're getting three more runs," manager Bob Melvin said. "With Pineda being as good as he was, every run counts, and psychologically, the third run was a huge run to add on. It gave him a little room to cruise."

Pennington's offensive output has become something of the norm in recent weeks, as the A's shortstop has collected 15 RBIs with a .395 average over his last 10 games. And making his production all the more noteworthy on Saturday was the fact his pivotal hit came on a 3-0 count.

A's hitters, normally, are notorious for keeping the bat still in such situations.

"With Pineda, it was an easy decision," Melvin explained. "You know you're going to get a fastball, and you have a guy up there that's our hottest hitter. It's a left-hander on top of it, so it was a pretty easy decision to give him 3-0."

Pennington added to the winning effort in the ninth, when he and Weeks combined for one of the fancier defensive plays of the A's season. Weeks reached for Ackley's ground ball up the middle, made a quick flip to Pennington with his glove and watched his partner fire an equally rapid throw to first for the second out of the inning.

"That play was awesome," McCarthy said. "They were trying to upstage me there. They're going to get all the highlights. I know they've been working on it for awhile."

"That added a little excitement in the ninth inning," Melvin said. "We've seen them do that before, but that one happened a little bit quicker. Weeks knew he had to get rid of that one in a hurry, and therefore couldn't transfer with his hand, which gets my heart fluttering a little bit, when you transfer with the glove, but that's the only way we would have gotten him right there."

Oakland's win, its third straight, secured a series victory over Seattle for the first time this season and gave the club nine shutouts on the year.

Cahill takes hill as A's go for sweep

By Cash Kruth / MLB.com

Blake Beavan knows what he is.

The Mariners right-hander doesn't have over-powering stuff that will light up a radar gun. What he does have, however, is precision control, which he has displayed often during his first Major League season. Not only did the youngster issue zero walks in his last start, but he's allowed two or fewer free passes in each of his 10 starts.

"I'm not a guy that tries to strike guys out or has unhittable stuff. I'm a guy that is going to give up hits and is going to give the defense lots of work," said Beavan, who starts Sunday against the A's. "I've always been a ground-ball pitcher. I've kept it that way, for the most part, since I've been up here. I've gotten more ground balls than fly balls. Really, just for me, [I'm] just trying to go deep in games, keep my pitch count down and give our team a chance to win, whether it's four or five runs, or two or three runs."

Despite his solid rookie campaign thus far, Beavan said he isn't satisfied with his season.

"It's just good to be up here and get to feel out all the hitters, really get to learn and see what they can do off of you and how your stuff plays at the highest level and just try to make adjustments when you can," Beavan said. "Most of the time, first time being up here, it's hard to make those adjustments sometimes during the game. It takes those bad outings to learn and see what you need to do next time when you come up against good teams, teams like we just got done playing, the Angels, rival teams. Hopefully we can be in their shoes next year and be chasing the playoffs."

Opposing Beavan is another guy certainly not satisfied with his 2011 season. A's right-hander Trevor Cahill takes the mound for Oakland, looking to rebound after a very poor August. In six starts last month, Cahill went 0-4 with a 7.15 ERA and .327 average against. That included an Aug. 1 loss against the Mariners in which the righty gave up seven runs on 12 hits in four-plus innings.

He closed August on yet another sour note, allowing five runs in 5 1/3 innings against the Indians.

"Even in the innings I didn't give up runs, I just felt like I was fighting myself," Cahill said afterward. "When you're doing that the whole game, it's tough to get big league hitters out. I feel like recently, I could command the ball even if I got hit, and today, I just felt like I didn't know where it was going."

Mariners: Wells out of slump

Outfielder Casper Wells broke out of his slump Friday, but went 0-for-3 Saturday. Wells, who has 10 home runs and 26 RBIs in just 204 at-bats, said he wasn't sweating his struggles.

"If you think about numbers it could eat you up," Wells said. "You just need to go out there and let your abilities take over. But it definitely felt good getting that hit."

- Rookie second baseman Dustin Ackley has recorded at least one hit in 51 of his 67 games and reached base safely in 56 of them.
- Center fielder Franklin Gutierrez is hitting .280 in his last 26 games.

Athletics: Lots of options

With the expanded September rosters, A's manager Bob Melvin has plenty of options among his relief corps. With Brian Fuentes' return from the bereavement list Saturday, Oakland has 11 arms in the 'pen.

"We know what our group's going to be in the plus-games, from the late sixth, seventh inning on, and now the balance is going to be finding innings for everybody else," Melvin said.

- Beavan defeated the A's on Aug. 1, allowing three runs on seven hits in 6 2/3 innings.

Worth noting

- Ichiro is a career .429 (9-for-21) hitter against Cahill and has a .363 career average in Oakland.
- Mariners rookie Kyle Seager is hitting .364 with 10 runs, seven doubles and two home runs in his last 15 games.
- Seventy-two of Seattle's 138 games have been decided by two or fewer runs.

Crisp to sit Sunday after fouling ball off foot

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- A's outfielder Coco Crisp left Saturday's game against the Mariners after fouling a ball off his right foot for a second straight day and will sit Sunday as a precaution.

Crisp took the ball off his foot in the first inning but played through 4 1/2 innings before Ryan Sweeney was inserted as a pinch-hitter in the fifth and remained in the game for the next frame in center field.

Crisp, who has played through multiple injuries this season, was 0-for-2 before his departure but had entered the game batting .289 with two home runs and nine RBIs over his previous 10 contests after collecting just five hits in his previous 34 at-bats.

Melvin has plenty of options out of bullpen

OAKLAND -- Lefty Brian Fuentes' return from the bereavement list on Saturday gave A's manager Bob Melvin 11 bullpen arms, making for plenty -- perhaps too many -- relief options.

"We know what our group's going to be in the plus-games, from the late sixth, seventh inning on, and now the balance is going to be finding innings for everybody else," Melvin said.

With the regulars remaining in their usual roles, some of the recent additions will be battling for innings. Right-handed newcomers Neil Wagner, Jason Rice and Andrew Carignan will likely be used -- as Carignan was in Friday's game -- in contests already decided by the later frames.

Still, Melvin will be keeping a close eye on all of them.

"It seems like we're stockpiling some pretty good power arms in the bullpen in the organization, which is good to see," he said. "You see a guy like [Fautino] De Los Santos and Carignan, we've got some pretty good arms down there.

"For the most part, they'll be games we're behind or fifth-inning type of situations if a starter comes out early. But there's always the caveat, they can move up if they pitch well and take advantage of the opportunity like De Los Santos has done."

De Los Santos was expected to slowly be eased into a significant bullpen role, but he posted a 2.35 ERA over the first 12 contests since his July 1 promotion and did not allow any of his nine inherited runners to score, influencing Melvin to rely on him for key seventh-inning situations sooner than anticipated.

De Los Santos entered Saturday with 37 strikeouts in 27 innings this season, averaging 12.33 per nine innings.

Rookie Weeks works on sliding technique

OAKLAND -- Jemile Weeks' overzealous ways on the base paths influenced some extra work on his sliding technique Saturday morning.

The A's rookie has been tagged out sliding over the base three times on stolen-base attempts this season, so he teamed with manager Bob Melvin, first-base coach Tye Waller and special adviser Phil Garner to work to avoid such outs.

Two of the outs have come from head-first slides, while the most recent in Friday's game came about following a feet-first move.

"He's been late in his slides," Melvin said. "There's a double-edged sword with that, because it means he's getting more strides in, which means he's getting to the base quicker, but he's going to have to find a way to have the bag stop him or pop up. We have to find a way for him to not continue to slide over the bag."

Their morning work extended off the field, as well, with Weeks joining the coaches to watch video of other notable basestealers who are also known to slide a little late. Among those viewed was Red Sox outfielder Jacoby Ellsbury.

"He's kind of a late slider too, but he pops up, which doesn't allow himself to go over the base," Melvin said.

The A's skipper prefers the feet-first slide, since several injuries to the hands and fingers are suffered from head-first slides, and said Weeks -- owner of 21 stolen bases this year -- is likely to stick to the latter form.

"He's really aggressive, and that's what you don't want to take away from," he said.

Worth noting

- Manager Bob Melvin said he's currently considering using a spot starter after the next turn through the rotation in an effort to give pitchers like Brandon McCarthy and Rich Harden with injured pasts some rest.

"If we can get [Trevor] Cahill and [Gio] Gonzalez to increase their innings, we can take them to another level next year," Melvin said. "It's the guys that have been injured we want to take care of and get them to the finish line healthy."

McCarthy throws 3-hit shutout; A's win 3rd straight

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Brandon McCarthy nearly got caught up in the moment when he received a standing ovation as he trotted out to the mound to work the ninth inning.

McCarthy pitched a three-hitter for his first shutout in more than two years, leading the Oakland Athletics to a 3-0 victory over the Seattle Mariners on Saturday.

"As much time as I've spent hurt, and you've got everyone out there and behind you when things are going well, it kind of makes you feel like you're on top of the world," McCarthy said. "I had to remember to focus and not get caught up in it."

McCarthy (8-7) matched his career high of 10 strikeouts and faced only four over the minimum while beating Seattle for the first time in three starts this season. He allowed three singles and finished the gem in style, slipping a called third strike past Mike Carp on his 114th pitch.

The Mariners didn't have more than one baserunner in any inning and only got two as far as second base.

"He just never made a mistake," Seattle catcher Josh Bard said of McCarthy. "Everything was on the edge. He was ahead all day."

McCarthy retired 11 of his final 12 batters and got a big lift from Oakland's defense in the ninth. Dustin Ackley, who had one of the three hits off McCarthy, hit a grounder up the middle that second baseman Jemille Weeks backhanded with his glove and flipped to shortstop Cliff Pennington, who threw to first for the second out.

"That play was awesome," McCarthy said. "They were trying to upstage me there. They're going to get all the highlights and it's well-deserved. That was a really nice play."

Pennington also had a two-run double and Scott Sizemore homered to help the A's win their third straight after dropping five in a row.

Oakland's second straight win at home came after a 4-6 road trip that included long rain delays, a doubleheader in Boston and a 16-inning loss to Cleveland.

Ichiro Suzuki and Josh Bard had the other two hits for the Mariners. Seattle also had a runner reach on an error but couldn't sustain much of anything against McCarthy, who seemed to be just as strong in the ninth as he was in the first.

"Sometimes when you haven't been out there in the ninth inning it can be difficult psychologically," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "But the fact that there were no runners made the decision easy for me. Just a great game."

McCarthy's fourth complete game of the season was his first shutout since blanking Houston on May 24, 2009, when he was still with Texas.

Seattle was shut out for the 13th time this season. The Mariners were held to three hits or fewer for the ninth time this year.

"The story for me was our offense, or lack of," Seattle manager Eric Wedge said. "A ton of swing and misses today. Their guy did a nice job, but I felt like we should have done a better job. We had some pitches to hit today, but we just look a little bit long up there with our swings today."

The A's didn't get their first runner until Kurt Suzuki's one-out walk in the third. Weeks followed with an infield single on a ball that glanced off the glove of diving second baseman Ackley.

Oakland got another infield hit almost the same way off Michael Pineda in the fourth when first baseman Justin Smoak knocked down Hideki Matsui's leadoff grounder but was unable to make a play.

The A's made the most of that one.

Matsui went to second on David DeJesus' one-out single, and both runners scored when Pennington doubled down the left-field line on a 3-0 pitch with two down.

Pennington also committed his team-leading 20th error of the season when he bobbled Kyle Seager's grounder in the fifth. It was the A's 109th error, the club's most since making a franchise-record 125 in 2001.

Sizemore hit his eighth home run of the season leading off the fifth.

Pineda (9-9) didn't pitch poorly, allowing only five hits and striking out seven. But the All-Star rookie didn't receive any run support and remained winless in his last five starts.

Suzuki finished 1 for 4 and needs 42 hits over the final 24 games to reach 200 for the 11th consecutive season.

NOTES

Oakland CF Coco Crisp left the game in the fifth after fouling a ball off his right foot.

The A's reinstated LHP Brian Fuentes from the bereavement list.

Casey Chavez finds place with A's in bullpen

By: [David Liepman](#), San Francisco Examiner 9/4/2011

When asked what actor portrays him in the upcoming film "Moneyball," Casey Chavez lets out a resounding laugh.

There were no casting calls for a bullpen catcher in the movie that features Brad Pitt as A's general manager Billy Beane.

On the baseball field, however, the bullpen catcher plays a vital role.

“My main job is to get the guys to hit the mound ready,” Chavez said. “From the second inning on, usually we’re on call. When the phone rings it’s go time.”

Chavez comes to work five hours before first pitch on game days. He prepares several bags of balls in time for the players’ arrival, rubbing mud into the balls for the bullpen pitchers and playing long toss with the starters.

It was five years ago when Chavez, who was at the time coaching at Stockton-Culver College in Missouri, got the call from older brother, Eric — the longtime A’s third baseman who now plays with the New York Yankees — inviting the younger Chavez to join the club.

Chavez played and coached college baseball since graduating in 1999 from San Diego’s Mt. Carmel High School, also the alma mater of Beane and Eric.

At Mt. Carmel, the younger Chavez displayed talent, but, according to the pro scouts, a lack of commitment. The slow-footed, strong-armed corner outfielder with a good bat was resistant to suggestions that he convert to the catcher position.

“I never learned the craft, the diligence or the enjoyment of learning one position,” Chavez said. “I just wanted to hit. I could always hit.”

Chavez, 30, who has ambitions of one day returning to college coaching, has fully embraced his role with the A’s.

“Everything I do is to try and support these guys’ careers,” said Chavez, who estimates that he catches and throws 200 balls each day. “I know I have a place, and it’s on the side, and I’m good with it. At the end of the day they’re the players.”

The Chavez brothers, this their first year with different teams, have forged a business venture that keeps them in daily contact.

When he’s not fulfilling his bullpen catcher responsibilities or helping his wife, Abby, with their newborn daughter, Samantha Belle, Casey Chavez is devoted to his position as president of Eric Chavez Baseball.

The baseball instruction and equipment company has introduced a variety of new gloves, including a catcher’s version that helps Chavez absorb the constant pounding his hand endures with those 200 daily catches. The company has also introduced new bats to the baseball landscape.

“If you don’t have absolute confidence in your equipment, you’re done,” Chavez said.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Carter's big night gives Cats ninth win in row

By Alex Sadorf / Sacramento River Cats

Chris Carter went 5-for-5 with six RBIs on Saturday evening to lead the River Cats to a 16-4 victory over the host Colorado Springs Sky Sox.

The season-high 22 hits marked the second consecutive game in which each River Cat starter had at least one hit. On Saturday, seven of nine River Cats had multiple hits. Carter's five hits tied a franchise record.

The River Cats offense got started with a six-run, two-out rally that started with a single from Stephen Parker. Shortstop Tyler Ladendorf then sent the ball high into right field for a single. Right fielder Joe Mather had some trouble with the ball and Parker was able to score on the play. Right-hander Alan Johnson then walked Jermaine Mitchell. Wes Timmons then delivered with an RBI single to left field to bring Ladendorf home and put the Cats up 2-0.

Sacramento wasn't done. With the bases loaded after another walk from Johnson, Carter hit a ball past third baseman Chris Nelson to score Mitchell. Designated hitter Josh Donaldson was also feeling the power and hit a line drive to right field to drive in Timmons and Cardenas. A ground-rule double over the right-field wall from Jai Miller brought Carter home for the final run of the inning, bringing the score to 6-0.

Designated hitter Matt Macri got things started for the Sky Sox in the third with his 23rd double of the season, a fly ball to center field. Ryan Rohlinger then reached first on an error that scored Macri. Catcher Jordan Pacheco helped the Sky Sox increase their presence on the scoreboard with a two-run double to score Rohlinger and Scott Beerer and bring the score to 6-3.

The Cats weren't going to let the Sky Sox get any closer though. In the fourth, with Timmons and Cardenas on base, Carter hit his 17th home run of the season, a bomb over the left-field wall. Sacramento regained a six-run lead at 9-3.

Colorado Springs wasn't backing down either and put another run on the board in the fourth. Taveras' RBI single to left field scored second baseman Jesus Merchan. The Cats maintained their lead however at 9-4.

A stellar seventh inning put the River Cats even further ahead. With Mitchell and Cardenas on the corners, Carter hit the ball to the left-field wall for a two-run double. Donaldson was then hit by a pitch to put two on for Miller to hit his 23rd double of the season, a fly ball to left field scoring both runners. Powell kept it going with a single fly ball to center field, which gave the speedy Miller enough time to run home and bring the score to 14-4.

Right-handed pitcher Jared Lansford made his River Cats debut on Saturday evening in the seventh, replacing Travis Banwart. Banwart took the win, evening his record at 9-9. Lansford, who was called up from Midland on Saturday, went 1.0 innings allowing no hits and no runs.

Sacramento put up two more runs in the eighth to tie their season high of 16 runs in a game. Cardenas, who has 42 multiple-hit games this season, doubled to score Mitchell. Carter followed with an RBI single for a 16-4 score, which the Sky Sox were not able to change.

Saturday night marked Carter's first five-hit game in Triple-A. With three singles, a double, and a home run, Carter was 5-for-5 and only a triple away from the cycle.

Sacramento, which has won nine in a row, has outscored opponents 57-17 over its last six games.

The River Cats and the Sky Sox battle again Sunday afternoon at Security Service Field. Tune into 650 KSTE at 12:05 p.m. for the third game in this four game series.

RoughRiders rough up Daley, RockHounds

Staff Reports, Midland Reporter-Telegram Midland Reporter-Telegram

FRISCO -- The Frisco RoughRiders pounded Midland RockHounds starting pitcher Gary Daley on the way to a 9-4 victory at Dr Pepper Park on Saturday.

The RoughRiders roughed Daley up for nine runs -- all earned -- on 10 hits and two walks over five innings. Reliever Zach Thornton came on in the sixth inning and quieted the Frisco bats for the rest of the game, but the RockHounds could never manage enough offense to ever threaten.

Already up 2-0, Frisco pulled away in the fourth inning when its first three batters each singled off of Daley to load the bases. Two batters later, Daley threw a wild pitch that scored Frisco right fielder Jonathan Greene from third and Jared Bolden smacked a ground ball single into center, scoring Mitch Hilligoss and Davis Stoneburner.

Bolden later scored on another Daley wild pitch, putting the RoughRiders up 6-1. Daley had four wild pitches in the game with three coming in the fourth inning alone.

The RoughRiders added three more runs off of Daley in the fifth for a 9-1 lead. The RockHounds scored a run on a fielder's choice in the eighth and got two more in the ninth, but couldn't get any closer.

Frisco and Midland meet in Game 2 of a three-game series at 6 p.m. today.

Smith Shines Again As Ports Down 66ers 7-1

Stockton Ports

SAN BERNARDINO, Calif. - One night after getting shut out 7-0, the Stockton Ports nearly turned the tables completely on the Inland Empire 66ers. Stockton scored seven runs on 11 hits en route to a 7-1 win over Inland Empire, evening their four-game series with the 66ers at a game apiece.

Stockton started the scoring in the 2nd. After being shut out in 20 straight innings by the 66ers dating back to last Sunday, the drought was ended when Ryan Lipkin led off with a home run to left-center to give the Ports a 1-0 lead. Mitch LeVier followed by reaching on a bunt single and stealing his first base of the season. LeVier scored on a two-out RBI single from Rashun Dixon to make it a 2-0 game.

The Ports added a pair of runs in the 5th off 66ers starter A.J. Schugel (1-2). With two on and one out, Michael Choice doubled down the left field line to score Conner Crumbliss and make it a 3-0 ballgame. Buddy Boshers came on from the bullpen and got Anthony Aliotti to ground to first, bring in another run to make it 4-0.

Schugel would take the loss on the night, going 4.1 innings and allowing four runs on six hits while walking two and striking out six.

Meanwhile, Ports starter Murphy Smith (6-9) followed up his best month of the season with a sparkling performance in his first September outing. Smith retired 14 of the first 16 batters he faced and allowed just two hits over the first five innings.

Inland Empire scored their only run of the night in the 6th. Jose Jimenez led off with a double, advanced to third on a sac-bunt, and scored on a groundout by Travis Witherspoon to make it a 4-1 game.

The 66ers threatened in the 7th. With two on and two out, Smith walked Michael Wing to load the bases, signaling the end of his outing. A.J. Huttenlocker came in from the Ports 'pen and got pinch-hitter Carlos Ramirez to pop to second to end the inning and the threat.

Smith picked up the win in another outstanding effort, going 6.2 innings and allowing just one run on five hits while striking out three and walking one. Huttenlocker tossed 1.1 scoreless innings of relief.

The Ports added to their lead in the 9th facing 66ers reliever Kyle Hurst. Dusty Coleman hit Hurst's first pitch of the night over the left field fence to make it 5-1. Leonardo Gil followed with a single and scored on an ensuing double from Dixon. Dixon eventually scored on a two-out single from Aliotti to give the Ports a 7-1 cushion.

Hurst pitched just the one inning and allowed three runs on four hits.

Jose Guzman pitched a perfect 9th to close the game out for Stockton.

The Ports and 66ers play the third game of their four-game set on Sunday night at Arrowhead Credit Union Park. Left-hander Jake Brown (5-7, 5.84 ERA) will head to the mound for Stockton, opposed by right-hander Cody Evans (2-0, 4.08 ERA) for Inland Empire. First pitch is set for 6:05 p.m. PDT.

Bees - Kernels Rained Out Saturday

Saturday's Bees-Kernels game has been cancelled. The game will not be made up. If you have a ticket for Saturday's game, it can be exchanged for a ticket to Sunday or Monday's game. Both games are at 2:00. For questions, call the Bees at (319) 754-5705.

Lake Monsters Shutout Tri-City 13-0

Lake Monsters

BURLINGTON, Vt.-- Three home runs including a rare inside-the-park homer triggered an eight-run first inning as the Vermont Lake Monsters cruised to a 13-0 win over the Tri-City ValleyCats in New York Penn League action Saturday night at historic Centennial Field.

The Lake Monsters (38-35) remain one game behind Connecticut (39-34), a 4-1 winner over Lowell on Saturday, for first-place in Stedler Division. A Vermont victory and Connecticut loss to Lowell on Sunday will give the Lake Monsters the division title due to a 6-3 record over the Tigers in head-to-head meetings.

Vermont starter Seth Frankoff (6-3) tossed six scoreless innings scattering four singles and one walk, while striking out five to earn his third win in as many starts. During this stretch Frankoff has not allowed a run and has given up only eight hits with one walk and 22 strikeouts over 19 1/3 innings.

Frankoff was given all the offense he needed in the first when the Lake Monsters sent 11 batters to the plate with three hitters, Dusty Robinson, Chad Lewis and Sean Jamieson, each belting two-run homers. Robinson's line drive went to deep center field and he circled the bases for the first inside-the-park home run at Centennial Field in the franchise's 18-year history. The team's last inside-the-parker was hit by Adam Seuss at Batavia on August 12, 2007.

The Lake Monsters added five more in the sixth on three doubles, including a three-run two-bagger by B.A. Vollmuth and a two-run double by Jordan Tripp.

All nine Vermont starters had at least one of the team's 13 hits with seven going for extra bases. Bobby Crocker's 3-for-5 effort led the charge with Robinson (2-for-4) and Nick Rickles (2-for-3) also having multi-hit games.

Andrew Muren and Neiko Johnson each had two hits for the ValleyCats (33-41), who mustered only seven singles in the contest against Frankoff and relievers Ryan Hughes and Logan Chitwood. Tri-City starter Juri Perez (1-6) lasted only two-thirds of an inning and took the loss.

Vermont and Tri-City wrap up the regular season Sunday at 1:05 pm at Centennial Field as the Lake Monsters look to win their first division title since 1996.