

**Numbers for Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez and Brett Anderson don't live up to Oakland A's 'Big Three' legacy**

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's began this season with optimism revolving around a trio of pitchers who seemed ready to create their own "Big Three" legacy.

However, that foundation on which the A's are building has shown cracks.

Trevor Cahill, Gio Gonzalez and Brett Anderson all have encountered obstacles of varying degrees in 2011.

Cahill, who won 18 games in 2010, has watched his season collapse after a 6-0 start.

Gonzalez made the A.L. All-Star team but has posted a 5.25 ERA in the second half.

Anderson, viewed by many as possessing the most upside of the three, has made just 32 starts since the start of the 2010 season because of elbow problems. He had reconstructive elbow surgery in July that could sideline him until 2013.

Clearly, the three have a long road to navigate before being grouped with Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito, starting pitchers who paved the way to four straight A's playoff appearances from 2000-03.

"These guys have got to learn how to pitch all the way through the season," A's pitching coach Ron Romanick said. "I know guys are a little tired. They're really good for stretches, but the consistency (is the key)."

Several breakdowns have led to the 65-78 record that the A's take into Friday's series opener at Texas. They hit .233 before the All-Star break, and their defense entered Thursday with an A.L.-high 112 errors.

**But pitching woes have stood out in the second half. A's starters have produced a 4.78 ERA since the break after posting a 3.17 mark before it.**

Cahill's decline is the puzzler. After going 6-0 with a 1.72 ERA and .209 opponents' batting average through his first eight starts, he is 4-13 with a 5.19 ERA and .284 opponents' average in 22 outings since then.

Cahill, 23, maintains he's not injured but is at a loss to explain his struggles.

"I started off really good, then I took some steps backward," he said. "I think maybe a lot of it is mental, I don't know. I'll get to the end of the year and compare and contrast, the good and bad, and see what the difference was."

His improvement is crucial, as the A's signed him to a five-year, \$30.5 million extension in April. Anderson, 23, is on a four-year, \$12.5 million deal he signed in April 2010, shortly before he began experiencing elbow trouble.

Romanick believes Cahill's key is throwing his two-seam fastball for strikes early in the count, which leaves hitters vulnerable to off-speed stuff. Too often, Cahill -- 10-13 with a 4.20 ERA overall -- hasn't been able to locate his two-seamer, and he's found trouble going to off-speed pitches too often.

"When he's down in the zone, changing speeds, he gets a lot of ground-ball outs," Romanick said. "When he can't do that, for whatever reason, mentally or physically, good-hitting clubs can make him throw more pitches."

Gonzalez, who turns 26 this month, went 8-6 with a 2.47 ERA in the first half but is 4-6 with a 5.25 ERA since then. He also leads the major leagues with 83 walks.

Gonzalez debuted in 2008 but is in just his second full season. Cahill and Anderson are in their third years.

They've found the going rougher than Hudson, Mulder and Zito did early on.

Mulder went 49-25 with a 3.98 ERA in his first three years, while Hudson went 49-17 with a 3.61 ERA, and Zito was 47-17 with a 3.04 ERA (winning the A.L. Cy Young Award in his third season).

It should be noted that those three were supported by better offenses, with hitters such as Jason Giambi and Miguel Tejada.

Two major league scouts said they're not concerned with the struggles of Cahill and Gonzalez, chalking it up to their youth. They also believe Anderson can rebound from his injuries.

"Go find the five best pitchers in baseball, and look at what they did at the same ages," said one scout, requesting anonymity. "I wouldn't be running away from that staff."

### **A's pitcher Dallas Braden rehabs shoulder, psyche**

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

-- For more than two months, "Missing" posters have dotted the A's clubhouse.

The wanted man: left-hander Dallas Braden.

Braden had shoulder surgery in May and since then, he has come into the training room for treatment, then quickly taken off back to Stockton well before first pitch.

His daily disappearances were noted, and not necessarily appreciated, in a clubhouse where teamwork and camaraderie is valued.

A's general manager Billy Beane, who gets shoulder treatment with Braden most days, even dropped a hint to Braden that he might want to increase his face time.

"I sort of put a smile on and said, 'Hey, we like to see you. It would be great for everyone to see you,' " Beane said. "Dallas is a smart guy. He got it." Braden did. On Aug. 31, he tweeted, "All September, I'm gonna be a teammate," and he was on the bench during Sunday's game.

Encouragement from Beane, Braden said, "Makes you feel like less of a loser."

Braden's absence was glaring because he is one of the A's longest-tenured players, he's considered a team leader - particularly by the young starters - and he's one of the few well-known A's players, in part because of his 2010 perfect game and in part because of his outsize persona and occasional outlandish comments.

After surgery, though, Braden said he was just too miserable to be in the clubhouse and unable to participate. It drove him nuts. He couldn't even watch the A's play on TV. It hurt too much.

Now, Braden said, "Mentally, I'm ready to turn the corner of self-loathing and get-your-(stuff)-together avenue and be around actual baseball players, surround myself with a positive environment.

"But for four months, there was no way I could walk into the clubhouse and look everyone in the face. I felt like if I couldn't help, I was hurting. I was embarrassed to show my face. You know you're worthless."

Even a torn shoulder capsule couldn't entirely silence Braden - he did take the time to slam Rangers starter C.J. Wilson when Wilson took some verbal shots at Oakland in August. But it was Braden's teammates who wanted some of his attention - and he didn't even stay around long enough for the team photo last month.

"On the teams I've been on, if you're in town, at least part of the time you're supposed to be in here," reliever Michael Wuertz said. "You show up and you support your teammates.

"It's hard being on the DL, it's tough watching, but you might see something that can help somebody else."

There is no hard-and-fast DL etiquette, though, because many players who don't live in the area year-round return to their offseason homes following surgery. Some teams tell injured players they don't need to hang around, sometimes for clubhouse space reasons. Other teams insist that players on the DL show up, sit on the bench and even make some road trips.

Brandon McCarthy has been in both situations - told to take a hike, told to stay around - and either way, the A's starter said, "You feel a little slighted."

"There are reasons teams would like guys around if they're going to be part of things going forward," McCarthy said, "but it's easy to understand the flip side, too - it's hard to be there if you can't even pick up a ball."

The A's now have a full-time trainer, Brian Schulman, at the Coliseum, even when the team is on the road, making it more feasible for players to remain in the Bay Area for treatment.

"It's kind of different for guys who are out for the season," said A's starter Rich Harden, who has been on the DL 10 times in his career. "I don't think anyone expects them to be on the bench every single day. But it's good to be around, if you're doing rehab here. That's an opportunity to spend time with the team."

"Brett Anderson has been here almost every single day. Guys like seeing that. That shows he feels like he's a part of the team."

Beane said the team doesn't want game attendance to be punitive in any way, and because he's gotten to know Braden well while they do the same shoulder rehab, Beane knows how much Braden was struggling with the fact that he couldn't contribute.

"He gets moody when he's not feeling good - but lately, he has been in great spirits," Beane said. "We're all very, very pleased with how he's coming along."

Beane had shoulder surgery in May - one day after Braden - so he understands all the ins and outs of Braden's treatment. "I'm embedded in our rehab program," Beane joked. "I'm like George Plimpton in 'Paper Lion' - I'm doing it myself. So when Dallas can do something, I understand what that means, and this was the first week he was able to throw the medicine ball. That's a big step."

Though Braden had shoulder-capsule surgery, which can be tricky, the pitcher said flat out, "I'll be ready for spring training."

"I know I could throw a baseball right now," he said.

Mets starter Johan Santana has struggled in his return from shoulder-capsule surgery, but Braden was lucky in one respect - his was done arthroscopically.

"I was fortunate," Braden said. "The capsule was torn completely in half, but the location made it possible to be scoped. I have three holes instead of a big long scar like Billy."

There remains another question mark about Braden's future - he is arbitration-eligible, and the team could choose to let him go.

"I wouldn't say that thought consumes me," Braden said, "but I am prepared. It is a very realistic possibility."

Braden, so closely associated with his hometown of Stockton, doesn't have any desire to go elsewhere, and it might help that his new rehab buddy is also the big boss.

"I know nothing is guaranteed, but my heart is in Oakland," Braden said. "I love this team, I love the front office, and I love the training staff."

And all this month, he'll be demonstrating that - in person.

## **A'S LEADING OFF**

**Red carpet time:** General manager Billy Beane and his wife, Tara, will attend tonight's world premiere of the movie "Moneyball" at the Toronto Film Festival. Beane also will attend the Sept. 19 Oakland premiere of the movie, which features Brad Pitt as Beane.

### **Out to pad lead, Texas to deal with red-hot McCarthy**

By Adam Berry / MLB.com

While the Rangers and A's square off in Texas for a three-game series this weekend, the greater competition will continue to unfold between Arlington and Anaheim.

Texas is welcoming Oakland to town and looking to increase its lead over the Angels in the American League West after dropping two of three to Tampa Bay. The Halos, meanwhile, will be tasked with trying to cut into the Rangers' lead while facing the Yankees, who own the AL's best record.

"It's a two-team race, and we have to keep racking up wins," Rangers right fielder David Murphy said. "Home-field advantage is called that for a reason, and of course we'd like to have it through the playoffs, but we know we're capable of winning on the road based on what we did last year."

But the Rangers must first lock down a playoff spot before they can worry about where they'll play come October, and that starts with winning a series against the A's. Texas will send right-hander Colby Lewis to the mound Friday to face Oakland righty Brandon McCarthy, coming off the best start of his career.

McCarthy threw his first Major League shutout Saturday against Seattle, allowing three hits and no walks while striking out 10 in a dazzling 114-pitch performance.

"He was lights-out," second baseman Jemile Weeks said after McCarthy's last start. "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."

If Lewis continues to pitch the way he has lately, the A's will have a pretty good chance of scoring some runs for McCarthy on Friday. Lewis is 0-2 with a 9.39 ERA over his last three starts, and he has gone 4-5 with a 5.70 ERA in 14 starts at home this season.

But the A's are exactly who Lewis wants to see amid a slump like that. The right-hander is 3-0 with a 2.60 ERA in four starts against Oakland this season.

"He had a bad outing. ... I'm not concerned," Rangers manager Ron Washington said after Lewis failed to get out of the fourth inning Saturday. "He's healthy. He just has to get the ball down."

### **A's: Crisp returns to lineup**

A's outfielder Coco Crisp returned to the lineup Wednesday after sitting out three games with a bruised right foot, going 2-for-4 with a double and a walk from the two-hole as Guillermo Moscoso flirted with a no-hitter and led the A's to a 7-0 win over the Royals.

"He's good enough to play and good enough to run and good enough to do the things that he normally does," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "I don't know that anyone's 100 percent this time of year."

- Weeks recorded the first four-hit game of his career Wednesday, finishing 4-for-5 with a double and an RBI. The rookie second baseman is batting .303 on the year, leads AL rookies in triples (eight) and ranks second in stolen bases (21).

### **Rangers: Cruz feeling better after running**

Rangers outfielder Nelson Cruz ran Tuesday for about 10 minutes at Tropicana Field, testing the strained left hamstring that landed him on the 15-day disabled list. Cruz said he wasn't concerned about pushing off and running, and he ran short distances Tuesday while also sprinting long distance once, saying he was "probably at 60 to 70 percent." Cruz is eligible to come off the DL next Tuesday, and he will begin to increase his workload upon returning home.

"He's coming along quicker than we thought he would be, but we're not going to push him," Washington said. "We didn't expect him to be where he is now. He's already taking batting practice. We're going to ramp [his rehabilitation program] up in Texas, but we don't need to push him."

- Ian Kinsler drilled two solo home runs Wednesday against the Rays, including a ninth-inning shot off Kyle Farnsworth that forced extra innings, and he now has seven homers in his last seven games.

### **Worth noting**

- The Rangers are 9-4 against the A's this season, winning the last eight meetings after an Oakland victory on May 9.
- With Wednesday's victory, the A's moved to over .500 (26-25) since the All-Star break, although the pitching staff's ERA is nearly a run higher than it was before the break. Oakland went 39-53 (.424) despite a 3.13 team ERA before the All-Star Game.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **Sacramento returns home facing elimination**

By Cassie Kolas / Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento faces elimination Friday night at Raley Field after the Reno Aces topped the River Cats 4-2 on Thursday night at Aces Ballpark.

The Aces were first to get on the board in the bottom of the fourth. The two-run rally began with a double by first baseman Andy Tracy, followed by a Cole Gillespie RBI single. Gillespie advanced to second on the throw and designated hitter Tony Abreu singled to bring him home and set the score, 2-0.

The River Cats had a player on second base in each of the first three innings, but were unable to capitalize. Second baseman Wes Timmons had a one-out double in the first and right fielder Jai Miller did the same in the second inning. Center fielder Jermaine Mitchell singled to open the third, and reached second on a wild pitch from Aces starter Barry Enright.

Lucas May blasted a solo homer that hit the Reno Aces sign above the left-center-field scoreboard to put Reno on top 3-0 in the fifth inning.

The homer represented the Aces' fourth in the first two games of this series.

First baseman Chris Carter answered May's homer with a blast of his own in the sixth inning to break the shutout, setting the score at 3-1. His solo home run was his second in two nights.

The Aces loaded the bases with one out in the sixth inning for May, who hit a sacrifice fly to center field to score Gillespie.

Reliever Vinnie Chulk replaced Sacramento starter Tyson Ross in the bottom of the seventh inning. Ross pitched 6.0 innings, allowed nine hits, four earned runs and dealt three strikeouts.

The only other time in his career that Ross started against the Aces came July 24 of this year. He received a no-decision after allowing five runs on four hits over 3.0 innings. The Cats won that game 11-10.

Third baseman Josh Donaldson refused to fold in the eighth inning as he knocked a solo shot on a fly ball to right field, closing the deficit to 4-2.

The River Cats return to Raley Field on Friday night as starter Travis Banwart (9-9, 4.63) tries to avoid a first-round playoff sweep from the Reno Aces. He will face Kevin Mulvey (4-9, 6.64) at 7:05 p.m.

### **Nuts Edge Ports 2-1 To Force Deciding Game 3**

Stockton Ports

MODESTO, Calif. - In a game that featured two of the California League's top pitchers, the Stockton Ports and Modesto Nuts played another classic in Game 2 of the California League North Division Mini-Series. One night after the Ports took a 1-0 series lead on a walk-off home run in the 12th, the Modesto Nuts survived a game in which the Ports went 0-for-8 with runners in scoring position and stranded 12 baserunners. Modesto scored a pair of runs in the 7th and it proved enough to beat Stockton by a final of 2-1, setting up a deciding Game 3 of the series on Friday night at John Thurman Field.

Stockton squandered its first chance to break through in the top of the 1st. Back-to-back singles from Myrio Richard and Conner Crumbliss put runners at the corners with nobody out. Nuts starter and Cal-League Pitcher of the Year Chad Bettis struck out Michael Choice. After walking Anthony Aliotti, Bettis got Michael Gilmartin to hit a grounder to first resulting in a fielder's choice force out at the plate. Ryan Lipkin grounded to third to end the inning.

Stockton's chances were minimal against Bettis after the 1st. Bettis scattered a pair of hits over the next four innings. In the 6th, Bettis allowed a leadoff single to Aliotti, who was moved up to second on a sacrifice bunt. Two batters later with two away, Mitch LeVier was intentionally walked and Dusty Coleman struck out swinging to end the inning.

Meanwhile, Ports starter Dan Straily was spinning a gem of his own. Straily pitched around leadoff singles in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th innings to keep Modesto off the board, inducing two double plays over the first four frames.

Straily finished his night by striking out the side in the 6th. He would receive a no-decision, going six scoreless innings and allowing three hits while striking out seven.

In the 7th, Stockton had another prime scoring opportunity. Rashun Dixon reached on an infield single to start the inning and was moved over to second on a sac-bunt from Richard. After Bettis struck out Crumbliss, they called for an intentional walk of Choice before going to the bullpen. Isaiah Froneberger (1-0) was summoned from the bullpen and, after walking Aliotti to load the bases, got Gilmartin to ground to first to end the threat.

Bettis would receive a no-decision, going 6.2 scoreless innings and allowing six hits while striking out nine.

Modesto would get the game's first runs off Ports reliever James Simmons (0-1). Nolan Arenado greeted Simmons with a double to left to open the 7th. After Angelys Nina struck out, Jared Clark broke the tie with an RBI double to left to give the Nuts a 1-0 lead. Dallas Tarleton came up next and struck out, and on the swing and miss for strike three Clark broke for third. Lipkin's throw sailed into left field, allowing Clark to score on the error and making it a 2-0 ballgame.

Simmons would pitch just the one inning and allow two runs (one earned) on two hits as he struck out the side.

Stockton's first run of the game came with one out in the 8th. LeVier hit a solo home run off Froneberger to make it 2-1 and signal the end of Froneberger's outing. Will Harris came on from the bullpen and struck out Coleman and Dixon back-to-back to end the 8th.

Froneberger would be credited with the win, going two-thirds of an inning and allowing just the home run to LeVier. Harris pitched just the final two-thirds of the 8th inning.

In the 9th, Modesto brought in their closer Mike Marbry (SV, 1) to face the top of the Ports order. Richard led off and hit a grounder sharply in the hole towards third. Arenado made a diving stop to his left, came to his feet and fired to first as Clark dug it on the other end for the first out. Two batters later with two away, Choice stepped up and hit a towering drive to left-center that came within inches of leaving the yard. It hit off the top of the wall and Choice was into second base with a double. After a wild pitch advanced Choice to third, Aliotti came up with a chance for more heroics, but struck out swinging after a lengthy battle with Marbry to end the game.

Marbry earned his first save of the post-season as he pitched a scoreless 9th.

Stockton and Modesto will play a deciding Game 3 of their mini-series on Friday night, with the winner advancing to face the San Jose Giants in a best-of-five North Division Championship Series beginning on Saturday. Murphy Smith (6-9, 3.94 ERA) will take the hill for the Ports, opposed by right-hander Parker Frazier (11-11, 4.50 ERA) for the Nuts. First pitch is set for 7:05 p.m. PDT.

### **Slimmed-Down Straily Defies Odds With Athletics**

By Casey Tefertiller, Baseball America, 9/2/2011

OAKLAND—Almost from the time Dan Straily stepped on a high school baseball field, people have been telling him to go away.

He never listened.

"I've been told too many times that I didn't have what it took to be a baseball player," Straily said. The 22-year-old righthander has made the long, difficult transition from an overweight, soft-tossing teenager to a successful professional pitcher.

Pitching every fifth day for high Class A Stockton, Straily was 10-8, 3.66 with 144 strikeouts in 150 innings and an impressive 1.22 WHIP. His name litters the California League leaderboards—he ranked sixth in ERA, third in whiffs and fourth in WHIP.

Straily did not make his Springfield, Ore., high school team as a freshman, but he refused to give up and eventually became the team's top pitcher. He spent a year at Western Oregon after being spurned by Oregon State, but he sought a better fit.

He found that fit at Marshall after playing with a couple of Thundering Herd players in a summer league. "I really wanted to play Division I baseball," Straily said, "and nobody else would open their doors. So I got my release from Western Oregon.

"When I left, they told me I'd never be able to play at a high level. That motivated me."

Straily flew across the nation to Huntington, W.Va., where he walked on with the Marshall baseball team. "I'd never been east of Idaho before," he said. "I'd never even been on an airplane."

He went 9-7, 4.28 in two years in the rotation to draw the attention of the Athletics, who called Straily's name in the 24th round of the 2009 draft.

He always has struggled with his weight, but at Marshall he packed up to 250 pounds on his 6-foot-2 frame and pitched at 240 as a junior.

"I realized it was unhealthy to be that young and that overweight," Straily said. So he embarked on intense physical training program and dropped to 214 pounds. With his new physique came improved velocity.

According to farm director Keith Lieppman, Straily is pitching this year in the low 90s with a plus breaking ball and a decent changeup. "He's had a great year," Lieppman said. "He's been one of the most consistent pitchers at that level."

## A's ACORNS

- The A's hope righthander Michael Ynoa will be ready to pitch during the Dominican League, at which time he'll be 20 years old. He was recovering from Tommy John surgery.
- This year's instructional league will feature the U.S. debuts of two impressive international signees: Korean catcher Seongmin Kim and Aruban outfielder Shawn Duinkurk.

### **Bees Force Game Three**

By Jon Versteeg, Burlington Bees

BURLINGTON, IA-RHP Josh Bowman (1-0) pitched six innings of one run baseball and the Burlington Bees scored four runs in the third inning to earn a 5-1 win over the Kane County Cougars in game two of the opening round of the playoffs on Thursday. The two teams will battle in a winner-take-all game three on Friday night at 6:30 p.m. at Community Field.

The Cougars opened the scoring with a run in the third inning. 2B Angel Franco (1-4) hit a solo home run over the right field wall for a 1-0 lead.

The Bees responded with an eight-batter third inning. SS Yordy Cabrera (0-2) walked and went to second base on a single by 2B Nino Leyja (2-4). RF Jose Crisotomo (1-4) followed with an RBI single to score Cabrera for a 1-1 tie. Crisotomo moved to second base on the throw and Leyja ended up at third base. DH Josh Whitaker (1-2) and 1B A.J. Kirby-Jones (3-4) followed with back-to-back RBI singles and 3B Tony Thompson (1-3) hit a sacrifice fly to right field to make it 4-1 Burlington.

The Bees got an insurance run in the eighth inning. Whitaker walked and went to second base on a single by Kirby-Jones. C Beau Taylor (1-3) walked to load the bases.

CF Douglas Landaeta (0-3) hit a sacrifice fly to right field to score Whitaker for a 5-1 lead.

The Bees and Kane County Cougars play game three at Community Field on Friday night. The Bees will host "Big Fun Friday" with \$3.25 16-ounce cans of Bud and Busch Light. RHP Jason Adam (6-9, 4.23) gets the start for Kane County against RHP Jose Macias (8-4, 3.46) for Burlington. Pre-game coverage starts at 6:10 on Thursday night on Country Legends 1360 and online at [gobees.com](http://gobees.com).

2011 Bees playoff tickets are on sale now. To purchase 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](http://www.gobees.com), or stop by the box office at Community Field during normal business hours.

### **Auburn Wins 3-2 Thursday In Game 2**

By Paul Stanfield / Vermont Lake Monsters

AUBURN, NY --- Wilfri Pena snapped a 2-2 tie with a leadoff home run in the bottom of the seventh inning to give the Auburn Doubledays a 3-2 victory over the Vermont Lake Monsters Thursday night at Falcon Park. The win ties the best-of-three series at one game apiece with the deciding game scheduled for Friday night at Auburn.

Pena, who hit .238 with one home run and nine RBI in 16 games for the Lake Monsters during the 2010 season, smacked a 3-2 pitch from reliever Kurt Wunderlich over the leftfield fence for his second home run for the Doubledays in 2011. It was also the team-leading ninth home run allowed this season by Wunderlich (0-1).

The home run came just after the Lake Monsters had tied the game 2-2 with a pair of runs in the top of the seventh. Nick Rickles led off the inning with a walk, advanced to second on a passed ball and scored on a Bobby Crocker line drive RBI single to center. Crocker moved up to second on another passed ball and to third on a Dusty Robinson bunt single before tying the game on a B.A. Vollmuth sacrifice fly.

Auburn had taken a 2-0 lead in the second inning as Justin Miller and Angelberth Montilla led off the inning with infield singles, then scored on a one-out two-run double from Billy Burns off Vermont starter Brent Powers. The left-hander allowed just those two runs on seven hits with five strikeouts over 5 1/3 innings.

Doubleday starter Taylor Hill gave up a double to Sean Jamieson to leadoff the game and a two-out walk to Crocker, but struckout Robinson to end the first. Hill then retired the next 12 Lake Monsters he faced, including seven by strikeout, for eight total strikeouts and just one hit allowed in five scoreless innings.



Reliever Manny Rodriguez tossed a 1-2-3 sixth inning for 16 straight Vermont batters retired before giving up two runs (one earned) on two hits with a walk in the seventh. Manuel Rivera struckout two in 1 1/3 innings to pick up the win, while former Lake Monster Aaron Barrett got Vollmuth to ground into a double play after a Robinson leadoff single in the ninth and struckout Jordan Tripp to earn the save.

Robinson was 2-for-4 for the Lake Monsters, who were held to just five hits in their first loss since winning the final four games of the regular-season and game one of the semifinals 7-1 on Tuesday. Montilla was 3-for-4 with a run scored for Auburn, while Burns and Pena both had two hits.

Seth Frankoff (6-3, 2.34), who has allowed just eight hits with one walk and 22 strikeouts in 19 1/3 scoreless innings over his last three starts, is scheduled to start game three on Friday for Vermont. Auburn will counter with Brian Dupra, who was 4-4 with a 3.46 ERA during the regular-season for the Doubledays. Friday's winner will face either Staten Island or Brooklyn in the championship series. Staten Island took game one 2-0 on Thursday at Brooklyn and game two is scheduled for 1:05 pm Friday at Staten Island.