

## A's News Clips, Sunday, September 11, 2011

### A's end 9-game skid vs. Rangers

Associated Press

The lengthy dry spell against the Texas Rangers is finally over for the Oakland Athletics, thanks to Scott Sizemore.

Sizemore's grand slam in the sixth inning helped the A's end a nine-game skid against Texas with an 8-7 victory over the AL West-leading Rangers on Saturday.

Manager Bob Melvin was tired of losing to the A's division rival, and he let the players know how he felt following Friday night's 13-4 defeat to Texas.

"These guys kind of had our number," Sizemore said. "Skip (Melvin) let us know (Friday) night that we had to put that behind us and come out (Saturday)."

With the score tied at 3, Rangers starter Alexi Ogando (12-8) hit Josh Willingham with a pitch leading off the sixth, and David DeJesus followed with a single. Texas manager Ron Washington replaced Ogando with left-hander Mike Gonzalez.

Ryan Sweeney attempted to bunt, and Gonzalez made a nice play to get a force at third. After Brandon Allen was retired on a foul popup, Gonzalez walked Kurt Suzuki to load the bases, and Washington again went to his bullpen and brought in Yoshinori Tateyama.

Sizemore was sent in by Melvin to hit for Eric Sogard, and Sizemore ripped Tateyama's high 1-0 fastball into the left field seats for his first career grand slam and a 7-3 lead.

Cliff Pennington added an RBI double off Tateyama later in the sixth to give the A's a five-run cushion.

Sizemore had his second career pinch homer, but a defensive play he made in the ninth at third base nearly matched his deep drive with the bases loaded. Sizemore leaned into the Oakland dugout to catch Ian Kinsler foul popup leading off the ninth, with catcher Suzuki grabbing Sizemore by the belt to make sure his teammate didn't tumble into the dugout.

Asked to compare the two plays, Sizemore smiled and said, "I've got to say the grand slam. You don't hit too many pinch hit grand slams."

Tateyama also allowed a grand slam to Boston's Carl Crawford last Saturday at Boston, the final batter he faced in that game. For the first time in Rangers history, a pitcher gave up grand slams to consecutive hitters.

According to research provided to the Rangers by Elias Sports Bureau, the last pitcher to allow grand slams to consecutive batters faced was Greg McCarthy of Seattle in 1998.

In his last five outings, Tateyama has been knocked around for 12 runs and 11 hits and four homers in four innings.

"The location is not there," the Japanese right-hander said through a translator.

Adrian Beltre's 299th career homer — a two-run shot in the sixth off starter Trevor Cahill (11-13) — pulled Texas within 8-5. Michael Young's two-run single in the seventh off Fautino De Los Santos made it 8-7.

Beltre, who had three hits to extend his hitting streak to 15 games, was the final batter for Cahill, who gave up five runs and seven hits over five-plus innings.

Andrew Bailey pitched the ninth for his 20th save in 22 chances, but it wasn't easy. Josh Hamilton drew a two-out walk, and Michael Young reached on an infield single, but Beltre lined out to second baseman Adam Rosales to end the game.

Hamilton hit a two-run game-winning homer off Bailey on July 9 and was 3 for 3 for his career against the A's closer. So Bailey wasn't going to give the slugger anything he could knock out of the ballpark.

"Obviously, everyone knows he hit the walk-off against me," Bailey said. "I wasn't trying to stay away from him or walk him, but I knew I had to be careful."

Ogando gave up five runs — three earned — and six hits in five-plus innings in his first for the Rangers since Aug. 31. His previously scheduled start was skipped to allow him additional rest.

Ogando had gone 7-0 in his first 12 starts but the converted reliever has struggled with his command and has dropped five of his last seven decisions.

"He kept us in the ball game," Washington said. "He's coming back. I felt like he did what he had to do."

Willingham led off the second with a line drive single up the middle that Ogando had to duck to avoid. DeJesus bunted, and catcher Yorvit Torrealba threw wildly to first for an error that allowed the runners to advance to second and third.

Ryan Sweeney followed with a two-run triple into the right field corner, and Suzuki added a sacrifice fly later in the inning for a 3-0 pad.

The Rangers got a run in the third when Ian Kinsler scored from third on Cahill's wild pitch, and Mitch Moreland's two-run double in the fourth pulled Texas even at 3.

NOTES: Rangers OF Nelson Cruz ran the bases for a second straight day as he rehabs from a strained left hamstring that put him on the 15-day DL on Aug. 30. The plan is for Cruz to take Sunday off from running on the field, then reevaluate his condition early next week. ... Hamilton was back in the lineup after missing Friday night's game to be with his wife for the birth of their fourth daughter. ... Oakland LHP Josh Outman gets a spot start on Sunday, replacing RHP Rich Harden. Outman will be making his ninth start of the season but his first since July 2. Outman struck out seven Boston hitters in a four-inning relief stint Aug. 27, but has pitched only 2 1/3 innings in two appearances since then. ... Harden won't start again until Wednesday night for extra rest. Rangers ace C.J. Wilson, a 15-game winner, takes the mound for Texas. ... OF Coco Crisp missed Saturday's game and has been ruled out for Sunday due to injuries to his ankle and foot.

### **Sizemore slams A's to elusive win over Texas**

By Louie Horvath / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- While the A's may not make the playoffs, they can still play spoiler to those teams jockeying for the postseason. Oakland did exactly that against the Rangers in an entertaining game on Saturday, snapping a nine-game losing streak against Texas by winning, 8-7, at the Ballpark in Arlington.

"It felt good regardless of any streak," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "You never like to get beat up by the same team, so it's nice to win. It's nice to win a close game, and we battled hard all game."

The A's leaned heavily on Scott Sizemore off the bench, as he belted a pinch-hit grand slam in the sixth inning and made a spectacular catch in the ninth to help preserve the lead.

In the sixth, it looked like the A's were in danger of missing a golden opportunity to put runs on the board after they chased Rangers starter Alexi Ogando in a 3-3 ballgame.

In the first at-bat against Rangers lefty reliever Mike Gonzalez with runners on first and second, Ryan Sweeney attempted to bunt the runners over, but Gonzalez threw to third to get Josh Willingham. Brandon Allen fouled out for the second out. Gonzalez appeared to pitch around Kurt Suzuki to bring up the left-handed Eric Sogard with the bases loaded.

When Melvin pinch-hit Sizemore, Rangers manager Ron Washington countered by bringing in Yoshinori Tateyama. Sizemore responded by hitting the second pitch he saw from Tateyama into the seats in left field.

"It was awesome," Sizemore said. "That was my first big league grand slam. For it to be a pinch-hit one and to give us the lead was even more special. I think I knocked out quite a few things with that hit, so it was a great experience."

For Tateyama, he became the first pitcher since Greg McCarthy of the 1998 Mariners to give up grand slams to two consecutive batters, having ended his last outing allowing a grand slam to the Red Sox's Carl Crawford.

"I thought I had the right matchup, but Sizemore got him," Washington said.

Oakland tacked on another run in the inning when Cliff Pennington drove home Jemile Weeks with a double to right field.

The A's gave back four runs in the next two innings, as Adrian Beltre hit a two-run homer and Michael Young drove in two with a single to center field.

The Rangers made one final push in the ninth inning with A's closer Andrew Bailey on the mound.

Ian Kinsler battled for nine pitches before Sizemore again came up big on a foul popup. Kinsler popped Bailey's 3-2 pitch high in the air, and it appeared destined to land out of play, but Sizemore reached over the dugout railing on the third-base side to snare the popup for the first out of the inning.

"That was a great play," Melvin said. "I was watching Suzuki, I didn't see Scotty come into the picture. You obviously want to keep him off the bases to start the inning, and he came out of nowhere. Scott not only helped us out with his bat, he helped us out with his glove from a guy that didn't even start the game."

That was far from the end of the uneasiness for Bailey. He retired Elvis Andrus with a strikeout and then faced Josh Hamilton. Hamilton memorably hit an upper-deck walk-off homer against Bailey on July 9 in Texas.

Bailey walked Hamilton and then appeared to get Young to ground into the game-ending out. After Pennington went far to his right to field the ball at shortstop, Allen put forth a great effort to stretch to catch the ball before Young reached first.

The stretch appeared to throw off first-base umpire James Hoye's point of view, as he ruled that Young beat the throw and was safe at first.

With Beltre coming up and two runners on base, the 46,151 fans began to get raucous, sensing a chance to steal the game back. That died quickly, when Beltre hit a line drive right to Adam Rosales at second base to end the game and give Bailey his 20th save of the season.

"You've just got to walk away from it and get the next guy," Bailey said. "He's not going to reverse that call. You let the manager go out there and handle that and keep your focus on the next guy. Luckily, they didn't put a hole in [Rosales'] glove."

Weeks got attention from the training staff during his eighth-inning at-bat, and he was subbed out after the at-bat for Rosales. After the game, Melvin said that Weeks had sustained a cramp.

While Melvin said Weeks would not play Sunday, he is expected to be available to pinch-hit.

### **Wilson looks to stay strong at home for Rangers**

By Quinn Roberts / Special to MLB.com

Rangers left-hander C.J. Wilson has performed at the highest level at the Ballpark in Arlington the last two seasons, and he'll face off against the A's in the rubber match Sunday.

He is 18-5 with a 3.84 ERA in 34 home starts over the past two years, which is tied for the fifth-most wins at home during that span.

Coming off his first career shutout against the Rays on Tuesday, Wilson has also dominated American League West opponents this season. He is 7-4 with a 2.85 ERA against the division. One more victory and it will be the most wins by a Rangers pitcher against the division in one season since the AL went to three divisions in 1994.

Such numbers couldn't come at a better time for Texas, which holds a slim lead over the second-place Angels in the AL West.

"These are all critical games," Wilson said. "We're just trying to put some distance between us and [the Angels]. The more games we win, the easier it makes it."

Meanwhile, Josh Outman will be on the hill for the A's, making a spot start to give Rich Harden extra rest.

Getting his first start since July 2 against the D-backs, Outman will be kept on a pitch count of around 100.

"That's five or six [innings], something along those lines. He's got good stuff, and he came in and pitched several innings of the extra-innings game that we had in Cleveland," manager Bob Melvin said. "He has gotten stretched out, I think that was four innings or something. He's pitched an inning since, he's pitched his bullpen, so he's ready to start tomorrow as far as preparation."

### **A's: Crisp out of lineup**

- Coco Crisp will be out for the rest of the series against the Rangers after sustaining a right ankle injury in the first inning of Friday's game.

"You could see early yesterday that his ankle and foot were bothering him," Melvin said. "I guess it swelled up again during the flight, and as he ran down the first-base line last night, it became an issue. He wanted to continue to play, but I had to get him out. He's not available [Saturday], and we've got to find what the problem is because it's really bothering him."

- Catcher Landon Powell was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento on Saturday to give the A's a third catcher.

### **Rangers: Hamilton back after daughter's birth**

- Josh Hamilton was in the Rangers' lineup on Saturday, one day after missing a game to be with his wife, Katie, who gave birth to their fourth child, Stella Faith, on Friday.

"He is going to be here the rest of the way," manager Ron Washington said.

- Nelson Cruz, who has been on the disabled list since Aug. 29 with a strained left hamstring, said he feels he is ready to return to the lineup.

"I feel I could play right now if they let me," Cruz said.

Cruz is eligible to come off the disabled list Tuesday. The Rangers may still want to send him to the Minor Leagues for some at-bats, yet that depends on Triple-A Round Rock or Double-A Frisco still being in the playoffs.

### **Worth noting**

- The Rangers will commemorate the 10th anniversary of 9/11 with a number of events, including a first-pitch ceremony on Sunday involving four people who were significantly involved on that day and afterward. The first 35,000 fans entering the park on Sunday will also receive a Stars and Stripes cap. During pregame activities, the Texas Army National Guard will present the colors and unfurl a giant American flag in center field. A moment of silence will be observed prior to the national anthem, which will be performed by the Garland Fire Department group Fireforce.
- The A's have committed 115 errors on the season, which is the second most in the Majors.

### **A's add third catcher, recall Powell from Triple-A**

By Louie Horvath / MLB.com

ARLINGTON -- Athletics catcher Landon Powell was recalled from Triple-A Sacramento to give Oakland manager Bob Melvin a third catcher, a luxury usually afforded Major League managers after roster expansion on Sept. 1.

"It's always nice to have a third catcher, because if you pinch-run for somebody and the other guy gets hurt, you don't want to be stuck in a situation where you have someone out of position catching," Melvin said.

Powell batted .176 in 32 games as the A's backup catcher earlier this season. In the 12 games he played in Sacramento, he batted .283 over 46 at-bats. He was optioned to Sacramento to make room for fellow catcher Anthony Recker.

Melvin said there is no plan for when Powell will get his first start after being recalled.

"I'm not sure how the playing time is going to play out," Melvin said. "We'll probably think a little bit more about that once we get home. I think tomorrow it will either be [Kurt] Suzuki or Recker, and then when we get home, we'll start to plan out playing time as far as Landon's involved."

### **Crisp won't return during series in Texas**

ARLINGTON -- Coco Crisp will be out for the rest of the series against the Rangers after sustaining a right ankle injury in the first inning of Friday's game.

"You could see early yesterday that his ankle and foot were bothering him," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "I guess it swelled up again during the flight, and as he ran down the first-base line last night, it became an issue. He wanted to continue to play, but I had to get him out. He's not available today, and we've got to find what the problem is because it's really bothering him."

Melvin said Crisp would not be available for Sunday's game either and that his inflamed ankle would be checked by doctors later on Saturday.

Crisp returned to the lineup Wednesday after missing three games with a right shin contusion. It is unclear whether this injury is related to that one, but it involves the same leg.

"We thought we were headed in the right direction with it," Melvin said. "From the last game, off-day, flight, whatever, it is significantly swollen up again."

### **Melvin reflects on visit to Ground Zero**

ARLINGTON -- Bob Melvin took time before Saturday's game against the Rangers to reflect on Sunday's 10-year anniversary of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

"We were at Ground Zero shortly thereafter with the Diamondbacks in the World Series," Melvin said. "To see what transpired firsthand was -- I've never seen anything like that before. The work that the rescue workers and the firemen and the police did there was miraculous. The spirit of the city was very uplifting to see in such a difficult time."

Melvin was a bench coach for the D-backs in 2001. The team won the World Series in dramatic fashion over the New York Yankees in seven games.

### **Melvin: Weeks' mishap part of the game**

ARLINGTON -- In the seventh inning of Friday's 13-4 loss in Texas, Jemile Weeks and David DeJesus didn't communicate properly on an Ian Kinsler popup that ended up deflecting off Weeks' glove and rolling into the outfield.

On Saturday, Oakland manager Bob Melvin chalked the mishap up to Weeks' youth and the ballpark noise.

"That happens, you'll find those plays anywhere over the course of a season, especially in places that are loud," Melvin said. "The more they play together -- and Weeks is still a rookie -- the more he'll know where DeJesus is playing and his range. With younger guys in the infield, sometimes situations like that pop up."

### **Worth noting**

- A's pitchers have struck out 89 batters in 86 1/3 innings over their previous eight games going into Saturday's contest. The 1,050 strikeouts on the season is the sixth-best total in franchise history.
- A loss on either Saturday or Sunday against the Rangers would officially eliminate the A's from playoff contention.
- Jemile Weeks has three straight multihit games entering Saturday, going 9-for-14.

### **Baseball plans day of remembrance for 9/11**

#### **Clubs to honor military, first responders at ballparks Sunday**

By Mark Newman / MLB.com

Major League Baseball offered a place of relief and a semblance of normalcy after the horrifying events that reshaped lives 10 years ago. On a solemn anniversary, it becomes a place of unity and remembrance once again at 15 ballparks on Sunday.

"All of us within Major League Baseball made a solemn promise after Sept. 11, 2001: We Shall Not Forget," Commissioner Bud Selig said. "On Sept. 11, 2011, in the memory of those who were lost, the 30 Major League clubs will honor our military, the first responders, public servants and the people who enrich their communities for others."

As first introduced in 2001, MLB will again symbolically cover the silhouetted batter logo on all jerseys to respectfully feature the U.S. flag -- and the Canadian flag for Toronto jerseys. A dedicated pregame ceremony and an on-field moment of

remembrance and silence will be held in each home park. Commemorative base jewels and lineup cards will be used. A 9/11 "We Shall Not Forget" remembrance logo is painted onto the foul-territory grass, and "God Bless America" will be performed during each seventh-inning stretch.

Each home U.S. ballpark, along with TV broadcast partners plus MLB Network and MLB.com, will show a special tribute video that includes footage from all 30 clubs and "God Bless America." Many clubs have allocated complimentary tickets for members of the military and first responders, recognizing them and public service contributors during pregame ceremonies.

"When I look back on those days once play had resumed, it gives me pride that the national pastime provided fans with some moments of normalcy and joy," Selig said. "That sense of community was never more profound than during the 2001 World Series, when the extraordinary solidarity of the Yankee Stadium crowds demonstrated the special place that baseball holds in our country.

"I am very proud of the efforts throughout Major League Baseball to remember and to commemorate, and like all Americans, it is my great hope that acts of kindness and service will renew the spirit of unity that resonated in our nation after Sept. 11."

Clubs are hosting service-based activities in support of the National Day of Service and Remembrance. In addition to the MLB-wide plans, here are some game-by-game specifics:

**Cubs at Mets:** John Franco will throw out the ceremonial first pitch to Mike Piazza before this night game at Citi Field, a reminder of the instrumental role they played in the club's relief efforts immediately following the tragedy. Mets players will pay tribute to New York's uniformed service men and women by wearing caps representing their organizations following the tradition started by the 2001 team. In advance of this game, the Mets and members of the Mets Alumni Association continued outreach efforts started by the club 10 years ago by visiting local firehouses.

Grammy Award winning singer Marc Anthony will perform the national anthem and American Idol finalist and Queens native Pia Toscano will sing "God Bless America." Anthony performed an emotional rendition of the anthem on Sept. 21, 2001, the first regular-season professional sporting event in New York after 9/11.

**Braves at Cardinals:** First responders were given 5,500 tickets, and those in attendance will be given a salute. There will be a video presentation of legendary Cardinals broadcaster Jack Buck's 9/11 poem "We Shall Overcome," and a ceremony with a World Trade Center survivor. An eagle will fly, and youths and players will come together on the field for the National Anthem (carried by Fox Sports Midwest).

**Royals at Mariners:** Some 3,000 tickets were distributed to area police, fire and emergency personnel and families. Members of Seattle Police, Fire and EMT will be introduced on the field pregame. Members of the Professional Firefighters of Kitsap County will present the colors as representatives of the King County Search and Rescue carry a giant flag in center field. The national anthem will be performed by the 56th Army Band from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, and "God Bless America" will be performed during the seventh-inning stretch by Keith Taylor of the Marysville Fire Department. Mariners broadcaster Rick Rizzs will read Buck's poem, which the late Dave Niehaus recited during previous 9/11 observances at Safeco Field.

**Marlins at Pirates:** The Pirates will hold a ballpark collection for the "Flight 93 National Memorial." Surviving family members of those killed in that plane crash will be invited to the game. Other Flight 93 events will preclude their attendance for pregame ceremonies, but those who do attend will be recognized during the seventh-inning stretch. The Pirates have donated at least 5,000 tickets to first responders and their families.

**Twins at Tigers:** The Tigers will recognize more than 400 first responders/public service members on the field, and the ceremonial first pitch will be thrown by 10 individuals from the greater Detroit community who shipped out to New York to assist NYPD and FDNY in 2001.

**Orioles at Blue Jays:** The Blue Jays will wear customized jerseys and caps to support both the U.S. and Canada. Pregame ceremonies will include a moment of silence, with Toronto police presenting the colors. A Toronto firefighter will perform the national anthem. In lieu of the ceremonial first pitch, the Blue Jays will place the game ball on the mound and scroll through the names of Canadians who lost their lives that day.

**Red Sox at Rays:** First responders from Pinellas, Hillsborough, Pasco, Manatee and Polk counties will be recognized. The first 10,000 kids 14 and under will receive a Rays Fire Helmet and the first 30,000 fans will receive a mini American flag.

**A's at Rangers:** The Texas Army National Guard is presenting the colors and unfurling the giant flag in center. Fireforce, a group of firefighters from the Garland Fire Department, will sing the national anthem.

Three individuals who were impacted by the 9/11 events and made life-changing decisions as a result of that day will be recognized with first-pitch honors. Capt. John Pearson of the Texas Army National Guard was on the maintenance crew for the plane that hit the Pentagon, signing it off for service and later joining the Guard and serving two tours in Iraq. Harold Elliott, retired Arlington Police Department Chaplain, began counseling New York firefighters and police officers affected at Ground Zero and now counsels others affected by 9/11. Mary John will throw the pitch along with her 9-year-old son Jeremy, whom she was carrying while pregnant and working that day on the 71st floor of the South Tower. Her husband Sujo was working on the 88th floor of the North Tower; both survived and the father is a motivational speaker around the U.S.

**Reds at Rockies:** Pregame will include a Green Beret Foundation check presentation, and Green Beret hero William Evander Lyles III will throw the first pitch. There will be a flag unfurling with first responders and an active and veteran military march. Neil Cole of the Denver Fire Department will perform the national anthem, with a flyover by the 120th Fighter Squadron Red Eyes. Fans will see fireworks during the anthem and when the Rockies take the field. Senior Master Sgt. Steve Kindermann of the Air Force Academy Band will perform "God Bless America."

In addition, 343 firefighters from nine states met at the CenturyLink building to climb 110 floors in full gear (75 pounds) to honor New York counterparts who did it 10 years ago, raising money for the Fallen Firefighters Fund. Four representatives from that "Denver Stair Climb" will be recognized before the game.

**Yankees at Angels:** The pregame ceremony will include six first-pitch participants who will throw to Torii Hunter, Mike Scioscia, Jered Weaver, Derek Jeter, Jorge Posada and Mariano Rivera. They include: Joe Turillo, retired FDNY lieutenant and 9/11 survivor; Robert Schiavone, former member of FDNY Ladder 39 and now in LA County Deputy Sheriff's department; Christopher Suprun, a firefighter/paramedic from North Carolina who responded to the attack on the Pentagon; and Navy Seals VR Mike Murphy, Eric Franssens and Chet Henderson, each of whom have served multiple tours of duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The national anthem will be performed by the Orange County Sheriff Bugle Corps. The Orange County Fire Authority Color Guard will present the colors while 250 local police, fire and military volunteers unfurl a giant American flag in the outfield.

**Dodgers at Giants:** In a pregame ceremony and throughout the game, fans will be asked to remember 9/11. As fans enter the gates, they will be given an 8 x 10 card with the American flag on one side. The other side of the card will list a name of one of the men, women or children who died that day.

**Padres at D-backs:** Sen. John McCain will place a ball on the Chase Field pitching mound before the game, as the D-backs pay tribute to military and first responders with a "Salute to Our Everyday Heroes." It concludes the host club's World Championship Reunion Weekend. A pregame ceremony will honor: Arizona Army and Air National Guard Chief Warrant Officer Mark Head, Air National Guard Tech Sgt. Cynthia Islava, U.S. Air Force 56th Fighter Wing Captain Karl Winter, U.S. Air Force 56th Fighter Wing Tech Sgt. Nina Mitcham, U.S. Coast Guard First Class Petty Officers William Shurtleff and Martin Wygant, U.S. Air Force Tech Sgt. Matthew Slaydon and Phoenix fire fighter Mike Zepeda. Color guards from the Phoenix Police Department, Phoenix Fire Department and Arizona Air National Guard will present the colors as Luke Air Force Base Staff Sgt. Marquia Giles sings the national anthem. A moment of silence will be observed and children of military personnel and first responders will take the field with D-backs players.

**Indians at White Sox:** The White Sox will salute 10 members from the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Chicago Police Department and Chicago Fire Department, as well as pilots and flight attendants from United Airlines and American Airlines. They will unfurl 10 red, white and blue stars on the outfield grass during the national anthem. A special video will play prior to the start of the game and when the White Sox players take the field they will each be greeted by a military member or first responder at their respective positions.

Miller High Life will host a reception for the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. Veteran Nick Colgin will throw out a ceremonial first pitch on behalf of IAVA. Colgin served as a combat medic in Afghanistan where he took part in more than 700 combat patrols and received a Bronze Star for meritorious service.

**Phillies at Brewers:** Brewers TV announcer Bill Schroeder, catcher Jonathan Lucroy and other players will visit a pregame party for veterans at the Klement's Sausage Haus in Miller Park parking lots. Veterans from various military branches will throw ceremonial first pitches. Fire Chief Russ Spahn of Greenfield, Wis., will perform the national anthem. Colors will be presented by representatives of the Milwaukee County fire and police departments and Sheriff's Office.

**Astros at Nationals:** A portion of the proceeds from tickets purchased at [Nationals.com/heroes](http://Nationals.com/heroes) for this "Heroes Day" game will be donated to the Pentagon Memorial Fund. In addition, volunteers will be on hand to distribute information on how to help support that fund.

A special public service announcement featuring First Lady Michelle Obama will be shown, encouraging fans to honor the heroes of 9/11 by volunteering for community service projects. Regularly scheduled gameday military initiatives will take place, including an in-game military tribute for several groups given premium seats; and the ongoing "Me and a Friend"



program, in association with the Department of Defense and the USO, allowing children of active duty service members to receive complimentary tickets for themselves and their friends.

After this game, the Astros will return home and will commemorate 9/11 with 2011 Heroes Night during Monday's homestand opener against the Phillies. As the Houston Fire Department Bagpipe Band performs "America the Beautiful," dignitaries in uniform will surround the field as part of a special pregame ceremony, and will carry out the giant flag. One "hero" from the Army, Navy, Marines, National Guard, Air Force, as well as Houston's police, fire and EMS departments, will throw out a simultaneous first pitch.

## **MINOR LEAGUE NEWS**

### **River Cats force Game 5 on Sunday (1:05 p.m.)**

By Alex Sadorf / Sacramento River Cats

Interstate 80 rivals Sacramento and Reno will play a deciding Game 5 on Sunday afternoon after the River Cats topped the Aces 8-2 on Saturday night at Raley Field.

"At least we put ourselves in a spot, and that's all we could ask for," second baseman Wes Timmons said. "A few days ago we were trying to take it one game at a time, and that's still how we are, trying to take it one game at a time. At least we're fortunate enough to at least be able to play (Sunday)."

Jermaine Mitchell got the River Cats started on the right foot with a hard hit triple to the center-field wall. Mitchell then easily scored off a line-drive single from Chris Carter, his fifth RBI this postseason.

Sacramento came out in the second inning ready to cause more damage. With right-fielder Grant Green on second base and designated hitter Stephen Parker on first, catcher Joel Galarraga hit a line drive single to left-center field to score Green and advance Parker to second. A sacrifice bunt from Tyler Ladendorf put Parker and Galarraga in scoring position. One out later, Timmons singled sharply to right field to score Parker and Galarraga for a 4-0 lead.

The River Cats further solidified their lead in the fifth. Ladendorf was hit by a pitch, and then took second off a pickoff attempt error from Gaby Hernandez. Timmons walked to put two on with two outs for Donaldson. Donaldson slammed the ball to the right-field warning track for a triple, his first in the postseason. Both runners scored and the River Cats reinforced their lead at 6-0.

The Aces weren't the only team with a Hernandez pitching Saturday night. The crafty lefty, Carlos Hernandez, took the mound for Sacramento. Hernandez went 5.2 innings, allowing two runs off six hits. He proved himself the winning Hernandez.

The sixth inning saw a couple of spectacular defensive plays from the River Cats. Green, who made his right field debut for Sacramento, made a spectacular sliding catch for the first out of the inning off Tony Abreu. Green's play was followed by a jumping, over-the-shoulder catch from left-fielder Adrian Cardenas on a line drive from Cole Gillespie.

Between those plays, Reno loaded the bases for first baseman Andy Tracy, who drove in Mark Hallberg and Ryan Langerhans with a single to right.

Reno was able to re-load the bases for catcher Lucas May with two outs after right-hander Justin Souza took the mound.

It was a tense few minutes at Raley Field as the tying run, May, went through 13 pitches from Souza before grounding out to third. In the at-bat, May nearly hit two game-tying home runs down the left-field line (both balls landed foul).

"It was a grind," Souza said of the at-bat. "Every pitch, I was trying to throw a strike. I couldn't let another guy on base. I was really concentrating, trying not to mess up. I didn't want to run the score up. Bases were loaded. Donaldson made a fantastic play for me to get the out."

The River Cats weren't going to let the Aces get any closer. With Ladendorf on first, Timmons blasted the ball over the left field wall to bring the score to 8-2. The two-run homer was Timmons' first postseason home run and the final run of the game.

"3-1 fastball," said Timmons, "I was really just trying to hit something hard. I guess the wind was blowing out just enough." The River Cats and the Aces face off in Game 5 on Sunday at 1:05 p.m. The River Cats are 1-4 in Game 5s in franchise history. Tickets are still available.

### **LeVier's Slam Helps Ports To Game 1 Victory**

Stockton Ports

**SAN JOSE, Calif.** - After outlasting the Modesto Nuts in a best-of-three mini-series, the Stockton Ports were looking to take away homefield advantage from the San Jose Giants in Game 1 of the North Division Championship Series on Saturday night. The Ports, buoyed by 5 RBI from Mitch LeVier, went into Municipal Stadium and took the first game of the best-of-five series with the Giants by a final of 7-6.

Michael Choice got the Ports off and running in the top of the 1st. After back-to-back strikeouts recorded by Craig Westcott, Choice drove a solo homer to left to give the Ports a 1-0 lead.

San Jose fired back in the bottom of the 1st against Ports starter Rob Gilliam. Gary Brown led off with a double to left. After a sac-bunt and a walk, Tommy Joseph singled to right to tie the game at 1-1. Ryan Cavan followed with an RBI single to right to give San Jose a 2-1 lead. Gilliam would get Alex Burg to hit into an inning-ending 6-4-3 double-play to escape further damage.

Stockton tied it in the top of the 2nd. With one out, Michael Gilmartin doubled to right and scored when LeVier singled to right with two outs to knot the game at 2-2.

LeVier struck for the game's biggest hit in the 4th. With the bases loaded and one out, LeVier hit a grand slam to right off Giants starter Craig Westcott (0-1) to put the Ports in front 6-2.

The Giants struck back for three runs in the last of the 4th. Gilliam's first pitch of the inning was hit over the right field fence by Jarrett Parker to make it a 6-3 game. Gilliam walked two of the next three batters and was lifted for A.J. Huttenlocker (1-0). After getting Ehire Adrianza to ground out, Nick Noonan singled up the middle with two outs to bring in two more runs and cut the Giants deficit to 6-5.

Gilliam would go 3.1 innings and allow five runs on four hits while walking five.

Noonan's two-run single was the only hit allowed by Huttenlocker, who would go on to earn the win after 2.2 scoreless innings of relief.

The Ports added a run in the 6th off Westcott on a two-out RBI single from Rashun Dixon to make it a 7-5 game.

Westcott took the loss, going six innings and allowing seven runs on seven hits while striking out five.

San Jose's bullpen kept the Ports off the board for the final three innings of the game. Chris Gloor and Stephen Harrold combined for three scoreless innings of relief.

Following Huttenlocker's effort, Connor Hoehn came on to start the 7th. Cavan, after getting hit by a pitch with two outs in the 7th, was thrown out trying to advance to second on a wild pitch to end the inning. In the 8th, with runners at first and second and two outs and Brown at the plate, Carter Jurica was caught trying to advance to second on a wild pitch to end the inning and the jam for Hoehn, who pitched two scoreless innings of relief.

Taking a 7-5 lead into the last of the 9th, the Ports summoned closer Jose Guzman (SV, 1) from the bullpen. Brown led off the inning with a single to left. Guzman responded with back-to-back strikeouts of Adrianza and Noonan. After Brown took second on a defensive indifference, Tommy Joseph singled to left to score Brown and pull the Giants to within a run at 7-6. Guzman, however, would get Cavan to strike out on three pitches to end the ballgame.

Stockton and San Jose will play Game 2 of their best-of-five series on Sunday night at Municipal Stadium. Left-hander Jake Brown (5-7, 5.55 ERA) will make the start for the Ports, opposed by Giants right-hander Chris Heston (12-4, 3.16 ERA). First pitch is set for 5 p.m. PDT.