



***Clips***  
*(September 13, 2011)*

*From LATimes.com*

## **Angels go quietly in lonely confines of Oakland**

**The A's take a 6-3 victory before less than 10,000 at the Coliseum, where the pennant-drive atmosphere is missing.**

**By Mike DiGiovanna**

Reporting from Oakland -- It's easy to get fired up for a September game against the New York Yankees in the thick of a pennant race in front of 40,000 fans in Angel Stadium.

Replicating that feeling in the desolate Oakland Coliseum, where it was so quiet Monday night a fan could have a conversation with the left fielder -- from the second deck -- can be a bit of a challenge.

The Angels seemed as lifeless as the mood in the home of the Athletics, where the actual attendance was thousands less than the announced crowd of 12,858.

Joel Pineiro walked two batters and gave up a three-run home run to Josh Willingham in the first inning, and three times, the Angels failed to score a runner from third with fewer than two out in a 6-3 loss to the A's that dropped them three games behind Texas in the American League West with 15 to play.

"It's definitely quiet, but no matter where you play, you have to play the game," Angels right fielder Torii Hunter said. "It didn't bother them. They beat us tonight."

Champagne has flowed freely for the Angels in Oakland, where they clinched division titles in 2004 and 2007, but their 2011 playoff hopes may die here. The Angels are 1-6 in Oakland this season and 5-12 here dating back to 2009.

"We've been outplayed by that team," Manager Mike Scioscia said. "They've pitched better than us. They've executed better."

Oakland left-hander Gio Gonzalez (13-12) gave up two runs and seven hits in 62/3 innings, but the Angels had him on the ropes in the second and fourth innings and barely bruised him.

Hunter singled and scored on Vernon Wells' one-out triple to right to make it 3-1 in the second.

A productive out -- a grounder to shortstop or second, a fly to the outfield -- would have scored Hunter, but 20-year-old outfielder Mike Trout struck out, and Erick Aybar grounded out to first.

The Angels threatened again in the fourth when Howie Kendrick led off with a single and took third on Hunter's double.

But Mark Trumbo struck out, Kendrick held on Wells' fly to shallow right, and Trout, who has two hits in his last 25 at-bats, lined out to center.

Counting Sunday's loss to the Yankees, the Angels have failed to score a man from third with fewer than two out in their last six attempts.

"Gonzalez made some good pitches, but we needed to do a little better job putting the ball in play there,"

Scioscia said. "We're trying to scrap back into a game. If we had gotten some of those runs across early, the game sets up a little better for us."

The Angels were 0 for 6 with runners in scoring position Monday after going 0 for 7 in those situations in Sunday's 6-5 loss. It's extra frustrating when all they need is an out to score a runner from third.

"We're in a pennant race," Hunter said. "You've got to do whatever it takes to get that run in, a ground ball to second base, anything. It seems so simple, huh? Try playing this game."

The harder some of the Angels' youngsters try, the harder the game seems to get. Trout, Trumbo, the rookie first baseman, and Peter Bourjos, in his first full year in center field, combined to go 0 for 12 with eight strikeouts Monday night.

Trumbo and Trout both were 0 for 4 on Sunday, and Bourjos dropped one ball for a costly error and misplayed another into a double.

"When you're losing, when you have a rough game, sometimes it can carry over," Hunter said. "The young guys have never been to the postseason, never been in a playoff race, and the league is going to make adjustments against them."

"Now they have to make adjustments. Just simplify things. Don't try to do too much. That's easier said than done, though."

*From LATimes.com*

### **Angels ace Jered Weaver to pitch on short rest**

**Mike Scioscia says the right-hander will definitely throw on three days' rest, most likely in Baltimore on Sunday so he can start against Texas in the season finale Sept. 28.**

**By Mike DiGiovanna**

Reporting from Oakland -- Angels Manager Mike Scioscia said Jered Weaver will "definitely come back on three days' rest at some point," most likely Sunday in Baltimore, so the right-hander can start the Sept. 28 season finale against Texas.

Weaver will start Wednesday's series finale in Oakland. If he comes back on short rest Sunday, he would avoid a four-game series next week in Toronto, where he was rocked for eight runs and eight hits in 42/3 innings of his last start there on Aug. 13.

That would also enable Weaver to make his final two starts of the season on regular rest at home, against Oakland on Sept. 23 and against the Rangers on Sept. 28.

Weaver is 8-1 with a 1.81 earned-run average in 14 home starts this season and 8-6 with a 3.03 ERA in 16 road starts. But in his first and only career start on short rest, Weaver gave up seven runs and eight hits in six innings of a 9-5 loss to Texas on Aug. 28.

"Your preference is to do it as early as possible," Scioscia said, "but you could also do it at the end of the

season, too."

The timing of the move, Scioscia said, will depend on Weaver's "pitch count and how he comes out of his start. We won't do it after a 137-pitch outing."

### **Wild cards**

Torii Hunter took a quick peek at a game on the clubhouse television Monday when the American League wild-card standings flashed on the screen, showing Tampa Bay 3 1/2 games behind Boston and the Angels five games back.

"What?" Hunter said. "What the heck happened?"

A week ago, New York and Boston appeared to be locks for the playoffs, but the Rays have won five games in a row, including a three-game sweep of Boston, and the Red Sox have lost five consecutive games and 10 of 13.

With a 5-2 win over Baltimore on Monday, the Rays moved to within three games of Boston, and they have a four-game series against the Red Sox this week. Tampa Bay also has six more games against the Yankees.

If the Angels finish strong and the AL East teams beat up on each other, could the Angels slip into the playoffs as a wild card?

"I haven't even thought of the wild card," pitcher Dan Haren said. "I assumed it was coming out of the AL East, but Tampa Bay is playing unbelievably, and Boston is scuffling. The wiser thing for us would be to win all of our games, and everything will work out."

### **Meeting of the minds**

Most of the Angels' front-office executives, major league scouts, minor league managers and coaches, roving instructors and trainers joined Scioscia and the major league staff in Oakland this week for the team's annual organizational meetings.

The team uses the meetings, which will conclude Tuesday, to evaluate the entire organization, gather information and opinions and begin to formulate a blueprint for the off-season. Owner Arte Moreno is not attending, however, because he is in Chicago on other baseball-related business.

### **Short hops**

Andrew Bailey, Oakland's two-time All-Star closer, was unavailable Monday night after being struck above the right eye by a ball hit by Kurt Suzuki while shagging during batting practice. Doctors ruled out a concussion, and the right-hander should be available Tuesday night. ... Haren's strikeout-to-walk ratio of 6.29 to 1 is the best in the AL and second-best in the major leagues behind Philadelphia's Roy Halladay (7.03 to 1).

*From LATimes.com Angels blog*

### **Joel Pineiro, Angels look for better results in Oakland**

Manager Mike Scioscia said Monday afternoon that Angels right-hander Joel Pineiro "is like night and day from what we saw the last time we were here." Pineiro better be, or it could be a rough night for him and the Angels in the Oakland Coliseum.

The last time Pineiro faced the Athletics here, on July 17, he walked the first three batters in a first inning in which he gave up eight runs -- seven earned -- and four hits and retired just one batter before being pulled from an eventual 9-1 loss. Pineiro said afterward that he couldn't find his normal grip on the ball, which kept slipping out of his hand.

A rough four-start stretch in which he went 0-3 and gave up 22 earned runs in 13 1/3 innings got Pineiro bumped from the rotation. But he regained his starting spot on Aug. 20 and has gone 1-0 with a 3.79 earned-run average in three games.

The Angels enter Monday night's game trailing the Texas Rangers by 2 1/2 games in the American League West. The Rangers are idle.

The A's got a scare before the game when Andrew Bailey was hit above the right eye by a Kurt Suzuki-hit ball while shagging in the outfield during batting practice. Bailey was on the ground for several minutes before walking off the field under his own power.

The right-hander has been ruled out for Monday night's game, but doctors have also ruled out a concussion.

The Angels lineup: 3B Maicer Izturis, CF Peter Bourjos, 2B Howie Kendrick, RF Torii Hunter, 1B Mark Trumbo, DH Vernon Wells, LF Mike Trout, SS Erick Aybar, C Jeff Mathis, P Joel Pineiro.

The A's lineup: 2B Jemile Weeks, SS Cliff Pennington, DH Hideki Matsui, LF Josh Willingham, RF David DeJesus, CF Ryan Sweeney, C Kurt Suzuki, 1B Brandon Allen, 3B Scott Sizemore, P Gio Gonzalez.

-- Mike DiGiovanna

*From OCREgister.com*

### **Oakland makes easy work of Pineiro**

**By Bill Plunkett**

**OAKLAND** - If the Angels thought they had all their problems fixed in time for their stretch run, two old ones have popped up again.

Returning to the scene of his worst start this season (a July beatdown), Joel Pineiro didn't make it out of the fourth inning as the Angels lost 6-3 to the Oakland A's Monday night in the opener of a 10-game road trip.

The loss dropped the Angels three games back of the first-place Rangers who did not play Monday. The Angels have now lost six of seven in Oakland this season and 11 of their past 17 here.

"Just the curse of the elephant," Pineiro joked, referring to the A's mascot. "No. I wish I knew what it was so I could turn it around."

The Angels thought he had turned his season around a week ago. Pineiro's most recent start had been his best in months -- a seven-inning, one-run outing against the Twins on Sept. 4 that earned Pineiro his first victory since July 9.

But Monday's start more closely resembled another July start – July 17 at the Oakland Coliseum when he retired just one of the nine A's batters he faced, walking four and giving up a grand slam in a 9-1 loss. That start seemed to ignite a downward spiral in the second half for Pineiro until he seemed to find some answers against the Twins.

Those answers deserted him Monday. He missed the strike zone with his first seven pitches, walked two of the first three batters he faced and gave up a three-run home run to Josh Willingham. The Angels never trailed by fewer than two runs again in the game.

"It was like déjà vu from that first start," Pineiro said of the debacle after the All-Star break. "But I got out of that first inning and thought I could battle back."

He did. But Pineiro still lasted only into the fourth inning when he gave up a single to Ryan Sweeney and a double to Kurt Suzuki to start the inning and was pulled by Angels manager Mike Scioscia.

Tyler Chatwood replaced Pineiro and allowed two runs to score in the fourth but pitched effectively in his 3 1/3 innings, creating a possible option at the back end of the rotation.

The Angels will still need four more starts from pitchers other than their big three (Jered Weaver, Dan Haren and Ervin Santana), starting with Jerome Williams Tuesday night. Since the end of June, the Angels are 9-15 when anyone else but their top trio starts and those fourth and fifth starters have a combined 6.05 ERA.

"We have a day off Thursday then we'll re-evaluate where we are," said Scioscia who has already said Weaver will pitch on short rest at least once. "We can't cut it down to three. But we'll see where we are."

It might not matter if the Angels' offense continues to relapse to its summer struggles in run-scoring situations.

They managed only single runs in the second and seventh innings against A's starter Gio Gonzalez and another in the ninth on a solo home run by Vernon Wells. The Angels were 0 for 6 with runners in scoring position and are now hitless in their past 13 at-bats with RISP – a summer plague returning after they had batted .387 (63 for 163) with RISP over their 20 games before Sunday.

Most egregious, they failed to score runners from third base with less than two outs on three occasions again Monday after failing in that situation three times in Sunday's loss to the Yankees as well.

"That's baseball – but it's the worst time," Angels outfielder Torii Hunter said. "In a pennant race, we gotta do whatever you can to get that run in. Ground ball to second, whatever.

"Sounds so simple, doesn't it? Try playing this game."

After Wells' one-out triple drove Hunter in with the Angels' first run in the second inning, he was stranded there. In the fourth, the Angels had runners at second and third after a leadoff single by Howie Kendrick and a double by Hunter but failed to score a run.

"Offensively, it was just a night where we didn't execute," Scioscia said. "Give a little credit to Gio. He made some pitches to get some strikeouts. ... But obviously we need to do a better job of putting the ball in play there.

"We're so much better (offensively) than we were earlier in the year. Hopefully, we're going to keep creating those situations and start cashing them in."

The Angels stranded six baserunners in the game, four in scoring position, and struck out 11 times. Their three youngest hitters – Peter Bourjos, Mark Trumbo and Mike Trout – combined to go 0 for 12 with eight of those strikeouts.

“They are young guys ... never been to the post-season, never been in a pennant race before,” Hunter said. “The league is going to make adjustments. Now they have to make their own adjustments.”

“Easier said than done.”

*From OCREgister.com*

## **Williams still evolving as a pitcher for the Angels**

**By Bill Plunkett**

OAKLAND - It's not just the puka shells that have changed.

“I remember him as a 19-year-old kid in the (Double-A) Texas League,” said Angels pitching coach Mike Butcher who was coaching the Angels' Double-A team in Arkansas when Jerome Williams was coming up through the San Francisco Giants' system. “He had a power fastball, a big, loopy curveball and a good changeup.”

“He's evolved his game in different ways. Now he has a four-seamer, a two-seamer, a cutter, a better curveball and a changeup.”

Angels veteran Torii Hunter recalls facing the right-hander during Williams' rookie season with the Giants (2003).

“He had a straight fastball and a slider,” Hunter said. “Now, he's learned how to cut his fastball, how to move the ball around. He looks like a totally different pitcher from what I remember.”

Hunter and Butcher have good memories, said Williams (who will make the fourth start of his rebirth with the Angels Tuesday night in Oakland).

“Not a little different – a lot different,” Williams said of himself. “I've changed my ways. Instead of being a young kid throwing – just throwing – I've had to learn to pitch.”

A big part of the metamorphosis, Williams said, was the cut fastball he started throwing in 2009 when he was pitching for the A's Triple-A affiliate in Sacramento.

“Eric Munson was catching me in Triple-A and I was having trouble with my slider,” Williams said. “I was wrapping the ball (in his delivery, causing it to roll rather than break sharply). He said, ‘Just throw the hell out of it. Don't worry about wrapping it.’”

“When I did that it just started cutting and cutting and cutting.”

One of Williams' teammates in Taiwan, former major leaguer Luther Hackman, helped Williams refine the pitch. The cutter has been a key part of Williams' success with the Angels.

“Guys were kind of sitting on my two-seamer,” Williams said. “Now I have something I can cut away from righties and into lefties.”

A first-round pick of the Giants in 1999, Williams is an example of a pitcher who had great physical tools at age 19 – but didn't learn to pitch until he was 28, 29 years old, Butcher said.

“The beauty of Jerome is he's still learning,” Butcher said.

## **SHORT TIMER**

Angels manager Mike Scioscia said right-hander Jered Weaver will “definitely come back on three days' rest at some point.” That short-rest start could come as soon as Sunday in Baltimore.

Weaver is scheduled to start the series finale in Oakland on Wednesday. He could then come back to start on Sunday in Baltimore, putting him back on regular rest for his final two starts (in the opener of the Angels' final homestand Sept. 23 against the A's and in the regular season finale against the Rangers on Sept. 28).

"There's a number of advantages on both sides," Scioscia said of using Weaver on short rest sooner rather than waiting until the final game. "I think your preference is to get it done as soon as possible. But it can be adjusted at the end."

Scioscia said the Angels did not need to lock in on a specific date for Weaver to pitch on short rest until they see how his upcoming start goes.

"I don't think we want him to do it after a 130-pitch outing," he said as an example. "We have a little time."

Weaver pitched on less than four days' rest for the first time in his career on August 28 in Texas. He allowed seven runs on eight hits and four walks in six-plus innings, letting a three-run lead slip away for the first time in his season and taking the loss.

## NOTES

The Angels have not set a game time for their regular-season finale against the Rangers (Sept. 28). The time will be contingent on the game's importance in the playoff race and possible TV coverage. Likely to be a day game, the official announcement should come soon.

*From OCREgister.com*

### **Five questions about ... the A's**

**By Bill Plunkett**

For the Angels, the road to the playoffs will have to include a good deal of actual time on the road.

With 16 games left to play, the Angels play their next 10 games on the road with a long trip starting in Oakland tonight. The Bay Area has not been a hospitable place for the Angels this season. They have lost five of six in Oakland this season and 11 of their past 16 there.

Before starting out on this 10-games-in-11-days road trip, we checked in with San Francisco Chronicle beat writer Susan Slusser for some perspective on the A's. Check out [Susan's coverage here](#) and follow her on Twitter @susanslusser.

#### **1) The A's are playing the Rangers and Angels 12 times (six apiece) in the final 19 games of the season. How much of a say will they have in the outcome of the AL West race?**

**A:** Maybe more than anyone would have thought a month or so ago, before the Angels began to make it a race again. I think any team near the bottom likes to have some sort of impact on the final outcome and indications are that Bob Melvin wants to put a representative lineup on the field each night. This is a team that also is playing a little better than it did the last time the Angels and Rangers saw them. Unfortunately for the Angels, the A's have played them pretty well this season -- and fared really poorly against Texas.

#### **2) The A's had one of the least productive offenses in MLB before the All-Star break but rank in the top third for most stats in the second half -- what happened?**

**A:** I think the question is: what happened in the first half? As you and I have mentioned before, Bill, this offense was supposed to be so much better this season, and the hitters just flopped the first half. Some of the resurgence is because Bob Melvin decided immediately that he'd stick Hideki Matsui into the lineup every



day, and once Matsui got hot, it helped everyone around him. And rookie Jemile Weeks has done a nice job, for the most part, at the top of the order. He and Coco Crisp batting 1-2 gives Oakland a lot of speed on the bases in front of Matsui and Josh Willingham, who are very good RBI men.

**3) Josh Willingham, Coco Crisp, David DeJesus and Hideki Matsui are all headed for free agency this winter. Which (if any) of them will be back with the A's next season?**

**A:** I think the A's would be happy to have Willingham back, and he has said he'd like to come back - but I believe he will get a substantially better offer elsewhere. Crisp is a pretty strong possibility, because he already has signed with the A's as a free agent once - he's one of the few hitters not scared off by the Coliseum. The A's love him in center, I think they'd love to have him back. DeJesus has been a big disappointment and won't be back - but there are lots of scouts looking at him right now and many teams believe he's due for a bounce-back year. He's a much better hitter than he showed this season, so that stands to reason. He won't be in Oakland, though. Pencil Michael Taylor in for right field.

**4) What have the A's learned about their group of young pitchers this season?**

**A:** They have a lot of talent, but they need to find consistency, particularly late in the season. Nearly everyone tailed off after the break, and that's despite the fact that their inning totals are well within the norm. Did the lack of offense early get to them? They all seemed to pitch better with no offense than with good run support, which is weird.

I think the A's already knew what they had in Cahill and Gonzalez, but a healthy Brandon McCarthy has turned out to be a big addition, and Guillermo Moscoso, a fill-in starter, has been mostly good and occasionally great. Also, young reliever Fautino De Los Santos has shown potential closer ability. That could make someone like Andrew Bailey expendable as Oakland tries to find the right formula to really rebuild the club.

**5) I'm confused by the previews for 'Moneyball: The Movie.' Without giving away the ending, can you clear something up for me – what year did Billy Beane take a “band of misfits” to a World Series title?**

**A:** You kidder, you. As you probably know, the central "winning" moments of the movie apparently will focus on the A's 20-game winning streak that season. Interestingly, the Angels factor into that - Billy Beane was just mentioning to me the other day that the team, and the front office, didn't really ever enjoy a moment of that winning streak, because the Angels were winning almost as many at the same time and sticking right with them. I think the A's won 20 in a row and gained all of, what, three games? That's insane.

To me, the funny part isn't the not winning the World Series part, it's the "band of misfits" - which included the Big Three (Tim Hudson, Mark Mulder and Barry Zito), one of the better rotations in the league the past decade; plus 2002 AL MVP Miguel Tejada. The A's didn't win that season because of Scott Hatteberg and Chad Bradford. No offense to them, they were nice pieces on that team. But it was the Big Three and Tejada, Eric Chavez, Ramon Hernandez, etc., who drove that team.

Probable pitchers for the Angels-A's series in Oakland this week:

- **Monday** (7:05 p.m., FSW) – RHP Joel Pineiro (6-6, 5.11) vs. LHP Gio Gonzalez (12-12, 3.43)
- **Tuesday** (7:05 p.m., FSW) – RHP Jerome Williams (3-0, 3.51) vs. RHP Guillermo Moscoso (8-8, 3.34)
- **Wednesday** (12:35 p.m., FSW) – RHP Jered Weaver (16-7, 2.44) vs. RHP Rich Harden (4-2, 4.74)

*From OCREgister.com*

## **Behind the scenes: Angels' fireworks crew**

**Let's go behind the scenes with the crew who sets off fireworks at Angel Stadium for every home game and Big Bang Fridays.**

**By Marcia Smith**

The Angels fan who drives a black GMC heavy-duty pickup with the “PYRO DAD” license plates arrives at least three hours before every Angels home game and five hours before 14 seasons of Big Bang Fridays.

Bob Lake, a licensed pyrotechnician for Rialto-based Pyro Spectaculars, is the steady-handed, mild-mannered man who triggers the fireworks at Angel Stadium, the unseen showman beneath the game's loudest, brightest, tallest and most explosive sideshow.

The sky is his stage. Act I begins during the national anthem when the singer hits “rockets.” Lake, from his second-level perch behind the plate, launches red comets more than 300 feet high from the three pits in the left-center field rockpile.

By the time singer reaches “red glare,” he has set off an explosion of small, white stars in a sky shrub that hangs about 200 feet above the ballpark.

Just before the singer belts out “bombs bursting in air,” he sends into flight a crackling array of mines that can shake the frothy heads off draft beers in center field.

The finale — boom, crackle, bang, boom! — comes just after we hear the last syllable in “the home of the brave.”

And that, as a pall of smoke settles over the outfield, is just the beginning of Lake's long night, which includes pyro blasts to celebrate each Angels home run and a potential finale encore after a victory.

“Everybody has a job but some are better than others and this one is pretty good,” said Lake, 60, of Cerritos, who left his job with the phone company 20 years ago to decorate the atmosphere full time.

On a recent Friday, Lake and his son, Casey, who drives his own pickup with “PYRO BOY” plates, partnered on the six-man crew that orchestrated the fireworks spectacular after the Angels played the Minnesota Twins.

“It's five hours of work for an eight-minute show,” Bob Lake said. “It hot, sweaty, hard work but when you see the fireworks go off and watch the people loving it, it's all worth it.”

Lake began his pyromania in 1990, joining a high school friend for the Saturday night fireworks shows at the Queen Mary. He lugged around shells and mortars for a free dinner and a T-shirt.

After five years around fireworks, he became a licensed pyrotechnician, sending his five letters of recommendation to the state fire marshal and passing a written exam. His older son, Scott, an Orange County firefighter and former pyrotechnician, added his father to the crew 14 years ago when the Angels began their Friday night postgame fireworks promotions.

“My wife worries but I think it's in our blood,” said Bob Lake, who has launched fireworks at Disneyland, inside Staples Center for Clippers and Sparks games, at the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics and during Los Angeles Avengers Arena Football League games.

His younger son, Casey, 31, also has a career in fireworks. He has gone on the road with AC/DC and stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Mick Jagger backstage at a Rolling Stones concert. He fit a few Angels games into his schedule before heading to Australia and Japan to tour with Motley Crue.

Angels players and coaches zipped by in shiny sports cars and SUVs, passing the empty parking lot 8A behind center field, where father and son and the Pyro Spectaculars crew unloaded a large Budget rental truck.

Bob Lake, a gray-haired, mustached man with wire-framed glasses, was wearing a faded company T-shirt, baggy jean shorts, a carpenter's apron, gardener's gloves and dusty athletic shoes.

"Let's get this stuff out of here," said Lake, hugging cardboard boxes each containing 17 pounds of fireworks and lowering them carefully into the arms of the younger guys with more limber backs.

Unloaded were a dozen boxes, four fire extinguishers, several wooden spools of wire, three coolers, two heavy trunks on wheels, and 70 color-coded wood racks each housing a row of five HDPE mortars.

From a manila envelope, Lake pulled show designer Ron Smith's blueprint and studied the layout for the fireworks that will discharge to the beat of songs by Queen. He directed the crew to arrange and nail together racks in modules or groups of three, four and five in three widely spaced areas around this section of parking lot turned discharge site.

Green racks contain 3-inch diameter mortars, purple racks 4-inchers, and orange racks 5-inchers. Each inch corresponds to about 70 feet of display height, meaning that aerial shells will illuminate between 210 to 350 feet above the ballpark.

Codes on the blueprint tell the crew which shells to put in which mortars. They wire the mortars and racks together and into a terminal. A computer, unlike Lake's manual control of fireworks during the anthem, home runs and victories, runs the Big Bang Friday show in a time-coded sequence choreographed to a 30th of a second.

It took about two hours of back-bending and hammering in the 95-degree heat to complete the outdoor setup. It's another two hours of heavy lifting to load shells into the rockpile's pits for the national anthem, up to six Angels home runs and potential sky celebration for a victory.

An hour before the game, Lake settled into his chair in a second-level office above the Diamond Club with an unobstructed view of the field and a pyrotechnician's computer built into the desk. He established radio contact with Angels entertainment manager Peter Bull and two Pyro Spectaculars crew members who stand guard around the rockpile to make sure the fallout area is clear of spectators.

Once the anthem is finished, Lake watched the game and armed his command center whenever the Angels batted. He has to be alert for their home runs, ready to hit the safety switch and pull the trigger on his joystick when a ball sails over the wall and Bull gives the cue, "Fire, Fire, Fire!"

It's 51/2 seconds from his fire to the sky's flash. (On Fridays, he also launches a teaser blast between the sixth and seventh innings to remind fans of the postgame show.)

"I feel like I'm celebrating too," said Lake, happy to punctuate and Angels homer and victories with a stampede of light and sound.

He can't clap. But the night can.

-- *Reporting from Anaheim*

*From OCREgister.com Angels blog*

## **C.J. Wilson an Angel?**

**By Sam Miller**

Jon Heyman:

• C.J. Wilson was originally looking for a deal comparable to the \$82.5 million contracts of John Lackey and A.J. Burnett and has only helped himself by going 15-6 with a 3.13 ERA in his second year as a starter. Wilson threw his first complete-game shutout Tuesday night in an 8-0 win over the Rays. Wilson is actually doing slightly better than last year, when he was 15-8 with a 3.35 ERA, and he benefits from a weak free-agent starting pitching class (CC Sabathia is the only one better than Wilson once he opts out). It'll be interesting to see whether Wilson shows loyalty to the Rangers who agreed to his suggestion and converted him from a closer. There are some, though, who could see Wilson wanting to go to his native Southern California. Money issues for the Dodgers and Padres could prevent them from making such a play but **the Angels are seen as a threat for Wilson even after locking up Jered Weaver (fellow starters Dan Haren and Ervin Santana can be free agents after 2012).**

I think Heyman picked the wrong verb there. Haren and Santana could be free agents after 2012, if the Angels let them, but they can't be free agents on their own desires. Both have team options in their contract, for what are essentially \$12 million apiece. Haren's is an absolute automatic, barring something terrible. It's a bit more plausible that the Angels would turn down Santana's, but it looks more likely at this moment that they'll pick it up.

Anyway. C.J. Wilson. He's old, but he's been a starter for only two years, so his arm isn't necessarily old. Say he gets five years and \$100 million. Want him? Want Texas to have him at that price?

*From SGVTribune.com*

## **Angels starter Piñeiro gets roughed up in Oakland again**

**By Gideon Rubin**

OAKLAND - Joel Piñeiro was making progress turning around his season after ironing out some midseason mechanical kinks, and he said felt especially good heading out to the mound for Monday's game against the Oakland Athletics.

"Once I came out of my bullpen I felt really good about myself (during) the warm-ups," he said.

But Piñeiro, who after a stint in the bullpen posted a respectable 3.79 ERA over his past three starts and was coming off his best start since coughing up eight runs in a third of an inning the last time he pitched in Oakland in July, turned in another stinker at an inopportune time from an Angels standpoint.

Piñeiro gave up a leadoff walk to start the game and a three-run homer two batters later that set the tone for a 6-3 loss to the A's in front of 12,858 at O.co Coliseum.

The loss dropped the Angels three games behind the Texas Rangers in the American League West with just 15 games remaining.

The Angels' struggles in Oakland continued, as they have lost six of seven games in Oakland this year and 12 of their past 17 dating to last season.

Piñeiro (6-7) allowed five runs (all earned) on five hits and two walks in three-plus innings.

"Maybe it's just that elephant, the curse of the elephant," Piñeiro said. "I don't know, really, I wish I knew so I could turn it around."

Piñeiro's start began inauspiciously, with him walking Jemile Weeks on four pitches leading off the first. Two batters later, he walked Hideki Matsui, and then Josh Willingham followed with a three-run homer that bounced off the top of the wall in left.

At that point, Piñeiro had combined for 11 earned runs allowed in two thirds of an inning in his past two starts in Oakland going back to the July 17 debacle - a 9-1 Angels' loss.

Angels manager Mike Scioscia said Piñeiro has struggled finding a release point that enables him to get on top of the ball. Piñeiro found his sweet spot, albeit briefly, as he retired seven of the next eight batters he faced, striking out three of four batters at one point.

But given the urgency of Monday's game, and perhaps Piñeiro's checkered past in Oakland, Scioscia would have no more of his starter after watching him struggle in the fourth inning, with the Angels trailing 3-1.

Piñeiro allowed a single to Ryan Sweeney, followed by a Kurt Suzuki double off the left-field wall to start the inning. Scioscia then summoned Tyler Chatwood, who inherited a second-and-third, no-outs situation.

Chatwood struck out Brandon Allen, but Scott Sizemore followed with a single that scored Sweeney, and Chad Pennington singled in Sizemore later in the inning.

The damage could have been worse if not for a nice play by third baseman Maicer Izturis, who was playing in when he backhanded a hard hit grounder by Weeks and threw out Suzuki at home.

The Angels scored their first run in the second when Vernon Wells tripled off the right field wall in the second scoring Torii Hunter with one out. But the Angels were unable to score Wells from third, as A's starter Gio Gonzalez struck out Mike Trout and got Erick Aybar to ground out to first.

The Angels threatened in the fourth when Howie Kendrick singled and Hunter followed with a double leading off the inning, but Gonzalez struck out Mark Trumbo and then got Wells to fly out to left and Trout to line out to center.

The Angels were hitless in six at-bats with runners in scoring position.

"Offensively, it was a night we didn't execute," Scioscia said.

The Angels, who struggled hitting with runners in scoring position in the first half, have reverted to early-season form in their past two games. They are 0 for 13 with runners in scoring position going back to Sunday's 6-5 loss to the New York Yankees.

"That's baseball, but it's the wrong time," Hunter said. "We're in a pennant race, we have to do whatever it takes to try to get those runs in whether it's hit those (ground) balls to second base, whatever it takes, anything."

"It seems so simple, huh? Trying playing this game."

The Angels wouldn't score again until Aybar's solo homer to left with two outs in the seventh. Pinch-hitter Alberto Callaspo and Izturis followed with consecutive singles that chased Gonzalez, but former Angels closer Brian Fuentes struck out Peter Bourjos to end the threat.

Wells homered leading off the ninth off Grant Balfour to make it a 6-3 game.

Gonzalez (13-12) allowed two runs on seven hits in 63 innings. He struck out six batters and allowed one walk.

"All is not lost," Hunter said. "We still can win the series. That's all you can ask for, but I've got to tell you any given day you can get beat by anybody."

*From SGVTribune.com*

## **ANGELS NOTEBOOK: Weaver expected to go on short rest again before regular season ends**

**By Gideon Rub**

OAKLAND - With the Angels headed down to the wire in baseball's most competitive pennant race, manager Mike Scioscia said it is not a matter of if, but when he turns his staff ace loose on short rest.

Scioscia said several factors will be considered as his coaching staff determines when they'll start using Jered Weaver (Simi Valley High/Long Beach State) on three days' rest. Those factors include how well he pitches and his pitch count.

"He will definitely come back on three days (rest) at some point," Scioscia said.

Scioscia said he's hopeful the move can get Weaver an extra start. Going into Monday, the Angels trailed idle Texas by 22 games in the American League West with 16 games remaining. Scioscia suggested the move would occur sooner rather than later.

Scioscia made similar moves in 2005, starting Bartolo Colon and Kelvim Escobar in a pennant race with the Oakland A's.

"Your preference would be to try to do it as early as possible but it could be adjusted at the end," Scioscia said.

The move appears to be aimed with the end of the season in mind.

If Weaver goes on three days' rest after his next start on Wednesday, he'd pitch Sunday against the Baltimore Orioles, and would be lined up to make his last two remaining starts on regular rest (against Oakland on Sept. 23, and against Texas in a Sept. 28 season finale).

Weaver pitched on three days for the first time in his career Aug. 28 in an outing that didn't go well for him, as he allowed seven runs (all earned) on eight hits and four walks in six-plus innings a 9-5 loss to Texas. Three of the seven runs he allowed came in the seventh, in which he was pulled after allowing three straight hits.

Weaver threw seven shutout innings of four-hit ball in his previous start (an 8-0 win against the Chicago White Sox on Aug. 24).

### **Mathis in the mix**

Although not known much for his offense, Angels catcher Jeff Mathis has a history of coming through with some clutch hits and has been an excellent postseason performer, batting a combined .450 (9 for 20) in four playoff series.

But that's not the main reason Scioscia has his light-hitting catcher starting with greater frequency in the pennant race.

Mathis was in the lineup batting ninth in the series opener against Oakland, hitting .183 with three homers and 22 RBIs going into Monday.

"Jeff works well with everybody," Scioscia said when asked if his ability to handle pitchers figured in his decision to start Mathis with Joel Piñeiro pitching for the Angels.

"Obviously we're looking for a bit of production" out of the catcher's spot, Scioscia said, "but as always, (Mathis) is in there for defensive presence that he brings."

*From Angels.com*

## **Angels' East Bay troubles continue**

**By Lyle Spencer**

OAKLAND -- Cavernous Oakland-Alameda Coliseum has left its imprint as the Angels' official 2011 house of horrors.

Needing a high-octane performance in their pursuit of the Rangers in the American League West race, the Angels had trouble getting in gear on Monday night and absorbed a 6-3 loss to the A's to fall to three games behind idle Texas.

Southpaw Gio Gonzalez frustrated the Angels for 6 2/3 innings, and the bullpen finished the job.

"Certain places, certain times, you struggle with over the course of a season," said Vernon Wells, who homered and tripled in a run but didn't get enough help. "Obviously, this isn't the time we want to be struggling -- here or anywhere."

Angels manager Mike Scioscia leaves the environment for others to judge.

"These guys know where they are," Scioscia said of his club. "They know they have to keep playing good baseball. I don't know if it's a freak season [against the A's]. We've been outplayed by that team. They've pitched better and executed better. They've beaten us in the season series.

"I don't put a lot of stock in where we play. They've executed very well, and we need to tighten stuff up."

Ignited by Erick Aybar's eighth homer, the Angels tried to send off some sparks with a two-out rally in the seventh. But pinch-hitter Alberto Callaspo and Maicer Izturis were stranded after consecutive singles when ex-Angels closer Brian Fuentes, replacing Gonzalez, struck out Peter Bourjos.

Before an announced crowd of 12,858, Angels starter Joel Pineiro walked two of the first three hitters he faced, and Josh Willingham made him pay with a three-run homer to left-center. It was No. 25 for the A's cleanup man, giving him 87 RBIs.

"I was looking for a double play," Pineiro said, "and the sinker's my go-to pitch. It stayed up and out over the plate. I put us in a big hole. I wanted to do it badly. It's just been a weird year for me. I feel fine physically. No excuses."

Willingham, with two singles to go with his big fly, seems to enjoy the role of spoiler.

"We knew when we were in Texas that we would have an impact on their playoff run, whether it would be good or bad," Willingham said. "Same with these guys. They're right there in the hunt, trying to make the playoffs, and we're going to play them five more times."

The Angels stirred in the second when Torii Hunter singled leading off and Wells banded an RBI triple off the wall in right. But the productive out didn't come. Young Mike Trout swung through a third strike, and Aybar grounded out.

While Wells and fellow veteran Hunter (single, double, walk) tried to lift the offense against Gonzalez, he tied up the young turks. Bourjos, Mark Trumbo and Trout were a combined 0-for-9 against the lefty with five strikeouts and 0-for-12 for the night with eight punchouts.

"He's tough for people who have seen him," Wells said. "Obviously, if you haven't seen him, he's going to be tough."

Another big opportunity got away in the fourth. Howard Kendrick singled leading off and Hunter lined a double to left, Kendrick stopping at third.

Gonzalez (13-12) put away Trumbo with a wicked 1-2 curveball, and when Wells flied to medium right, Angels third-base coach Dino Ebel kept Kendrick anchored in deference to David DeJesus' arm.

With a chance to tie it with a hit, Trout hit a bullet. But center fielder Ryan Sweeney squeezed it for the third out.

Pineiro (6-7) was gone after Sweeney's single and Kurt Suzuki's double with none out in the fourth.

"I felt great in the bullpen," Pineiro said. "The ball was coming out hot. Then I got on the mound, and I don't know what happened. Maybe I was nibbling or trying to find the strike zone, being aggressive with all my pitches. I really wish I knew, so I could turn it around."

In came Tyler Chatwood, who struck out Brandon Allen before Scott Sizemore and Cliff Pennington each singled home a run.

Pineiro had a solid start (three earned runs in seven innings) here on May 16. But on July 17, experiencing difficulty getting a grip on the baseballs, he was pounded for eight runs (seven earned) while getting just one out.

"It was like *deja vu* from that start, I guess," Pineiro said.

This time he was charged with five earned runs on five hits in three innings, his ERA rising to 5.33.

Chatwood, in his first relief appearance after 24 starts, yielded one earned run in 3 1/3 innings.

Wells launched his 21st homer, a solo shot, in the ninth against reliever Grant Balfour, who struck out the next three hitters to end it.

The third-place A's, 13 games below .500 and formally eliminated from playoff contention, are 6-1 against the Angels in the East Bay and 9-5 overall. Oakland has taken 10 of the past 12 against the Angels in its home yard.

"That's a good team, a really good team," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "We're lucky to have the success that we have against them to this point, and we'll just leave it at that."

Not since 2003 have the A's taken a season series from the Angels.

*From Angels.com*

### **Walden waits for chance to take October stage**

### **Angels rookie closer could play role like K-Rod nine years ago**

**By Lyle Spencer**

ANAHEIM -- Jordan Walden would love to be this October's version of a young Francisco Rodriguez, in the bright red colors of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim.

Yet, no matter what Walden does in the days ahead, his labor could not be as stunning, as mind-bending as what Rodriguez accomplished nine years ago.



"I don't think we have expectations on anybody doing what Francisco Rodriguez did in '02," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "If Jordan could contribute close to that, it would be very important."

Walden closes. Rodriguez was Troy Percival's setup man. There is a book on Walden, accompanied by a library full of video. Hardly a sentence had been written on Rodriguez when he made the baseball world take notice. The only available film was grainy, with Minor League lighting.

In spite of those contrasts, the man who knows best -- Scioscia -- sees similarities. Walden, a starter when he was taken in the 12th round of the 2006 First-Year Player Draft, has been a reliever for two seasons. Rodriguez had been converted from a starter to a reliever in '02. Frankie pumped premium gas with a big breaking ball behind it. Walden uses the same formula.

"Francisco had started his first three [professional] years," Scioscia said. "He was moved to the bullpen in Double-A and was unhittable when he went to Triple-A for the playoffs. We had a stacked bullpen in '02. We had Percy closing, so Frankie was eased into that role [in 2004 and '05]."

"Jordan got a chance to make the team quickly -- and close -- because of need. Walden got the opportunity earlier than Frankie."

Walden emerged as the closer, to his own surprise, in the first week of the season. Fernando Rodney was fighting his command in what turned out to be an ongoing struggle.

With triple-digit heat, the 23-year-old Walden is more explosive with his fastball than Rodriguez was when he arrived at 20 and throwing in the 93-97 mph range. The difference-maker was Rodriguez's wicked breaking ball.

Walden has a developing slider and changeup. A young K-Rod threw a paralyzing curve or slurve, depending on your perception. The changeup would come later.

Walden has been through the grind of a Major League season. It was all new and thrilling to Rodriguez.

"This is the deepest I've ever pitched in a season," Walden said. "I'm usually home in Texas by now. I've only been to the playoffs once in my life, in my rookie year in Orem. We got hot and won the [Pioneer League] championship after finishing under .500 in the regular season. You never know."

No, you don't. Certainly nobody knew what was coming when Hurricane Francisco arrived on the scene.

"That was a long time ago, 10 years," Rodriguez said. "I was excited, is all. I was so happy, because it never crossed my mind that I would make the playoff roster [after pitching] 5 2/3 innings [in September]. I came up late; I think it was Sept. 20. And I only pitched five games."

That turned out to be a huge plus. Hitters didn't know what was coming in the era predating exhaustive reports and banks of video.

"Frankie had ice in his veins," Scioscia said. "Our whole bullpen was like that in '02. We had some tough guys down there."

The bullpen Scioscia hopes to carry into this postseason would not be as deep or as dependable as the '02 group, adding to the burden on Walden and veteran setup artist Scott Downs. It's a testimony to Rodriguez's talent that he was able to so quickly claim the setup role in front of Percival.

"In the first series [against the Yankees], he pitched in the middle," Scioscia said. "As we got to the Minnesota series, we used him later. Then, of course, he had a big role in the World Series."

Rodriguez's '02 postseason numbers border on preposterous: 11 appearances, 5-1 record, four earned runs on 10 hits in 18 2/3 innings, with 28 strikeouts. K-Rod was born, from the keyboard of MLB.com's Tom Singer, and he lives on in Milwaukee now, setting up for another postseason run.

"No, never," Rodriguez said recently when asked about October anxieties. "I never feel nerves. I was excited. Surprised and happy, that's the only way I can describe it.

"And Scioscia gave me all the confidence back then. He threw me right in the fire, right away. He came out to me in the outfield one day and told me straight up, 'You know what? I'm going to use you, and in very important moments in the game. You better be ready for it.'"

The impact of that amazing run has endured.

"A lot," Rodriguez said. "After that, for the next four, five, six years, I was thinking about it, and I couldn't simulate what I did, what I felt. I was going through the videos we had of the postseason wondering, 'What was I thinking about?'"

"It seemed like I was not even thinking at all, I was just going with the flow, with the adrenaline of the postseason. I wanted to get that feeling back."

"I was," he concluded, "living a dream, basically."

Oakland closer Andrew Bailey has observed Walden this season and can see him emulating Texas' Neftali Feliz, whose debut season as a closer culminated in a World Series appearance last October.

"He's had some big pressure situations, some big games already just in his rookie year," Bailey said of Walden. "You look at what Neftali did in the playoffs, I think Walden will have the same success.

"He's an aggressive guy and he's not really going to change his game plan. He's not a finesse guy or a guy that's going to spot up. He's just going to have the same game plan of going out there and attacking guys."

Walden's freshman year has been more workmanlike than dreamlike. He has experienced downs to go with his highs, but he comes to the final days feeling unusually strong thanks to a stretch of inactivity that allowed his body to regenerate.

"I'm throwing like I did at the start of the season," he said. "The dog days are done with. That break when we were scoring a lot of runs and I wasn't getting save chances gave my arm a second wind. It was a good thing for me, looking back."

Looking back much deeper, Walden has no clear memories of October 2002. A month shy of his 15th birthday, he was living in Mansfield, Texas, still growing into an athletic body.

"I don't remember much about Frankie or the Angels back then," Walden recalled. "But I heard a lot about it later, after I signed.

"I was in big league camp with him once, his last year [2008]. But I was a starter and I never really had a conversation with him that I remember."

Even after his whipsaw delivery enabled him to dominate hitters in five appearances down the stretch in '02, striking out 13 hitters in 5 2/3 scoreless innings, Rodriguez wasn't expected to be a major factor in the postseason.

The Wild Card Angels, after all, had to get through the vaunted Yankees in the American League Division Series. The Bombers were still smarting from their Game 7 World Series loss to the Diamondbacks 12 months earlier.

Appearing in the final three games against the Yankees after the Angels dropped the opener at old Yankee Stadium, K-Rod was a package of dynamite. He was the winning pitcher in Games 2 and 3, striking out eight in the series while allowing two hits and two walks in 5 2/3 innings.

Next, in the AL Championship Series, came the Twins.

"We didn't even know who he was," said Torii Hunter, Minnesota's gifted young center fielder at the time. "We heard that Francisco Rodriguez was warming up in the bullpen, and we were like, 'Who's that?'"

"He came in with a lead throwing his fastball 96, 97 [mph], with that big curveball. We found out who he was."

Rodriguez picked up two more wins in that series, giving four of the seven postseason victories.

An October legend was emerging. Everybody knew who Francisco Rodriguez was when the Angels opened an all-California World Series against the Giants. Appearing in four games, striking out 13 while allowing six hits and one walk in 8 2/3 innings, K-Rod cemented the legend.

His teammates were among those who felt a sense of awe along the way.

"It's unbelievable," shortstop David Eckstein said. "You just have to stand back and almost be amazed. He's so young and so talented, but he understands the game. His maturity level is real high."

Second baseman Adam Kennedy watched K-Rod's magic and wondered what it must have felt like in the batter's box.

"Those pitches he has, I can't imagine what they're like to hitters," Kennedy said. "They're not comfortable at the plate. You've got some of the best hitters in the game having some half-swings up there. He looks like he wants to be out there. He knows what he's doing."

Center fielder Darin Erstad felt a sense of wonder in the storybook tale of the kid from Caracas.

"Where did this guy come from?" Erstad said. "What a fantastic job he's done in such a short time. For a kid to have that kind of composure is a big boost in the arm for our whole bullpen, [guys] who have worked so hard for us this year. What else can you say?"

Rodriguez was a thunderclap in that fall sky.

It is all in front of Walden now. Can he make his own crackling noises and forge another October legend in red?

Only the baseball gods know, and they're notorious for their unpredictable nature.

*From Angels.com*

## **Angels send rejuvenated Williams vs. A's**

**By Nick Kosmider**

When he broke into the Major Leagues with the Giants, Jerome Williams had a simple mindset on the mound -- throw the ball hard.

As his career has waged on, though, Williams, who will make his fourth start of the season for the Angels opposite A's right-hander Guillermo Moscoso on Tuesday, has watched his approach evolve.

"I'm more of a pitcher now," Williams said. "I trust my stuff. My cutter and sinker, keeping the ball down in good spots, that has been the big key for me. And my changeup has been moving a lot. I'm learning how to trust myself, trust my fastball. I'm using the cutter more. I still want to improve on it."

Williams is 3-0 with a 2.45 ERA in his three starts this season. He threw an eight-inning one-hitter against Seattle his last time out, with Trayvon Robinson's sixth-inning homer breaking up a no-hit bid.

"He has a presence about him of confidence, knowing he can do this," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "Part of it came from being in the big leagues a while, knowing he belongs here. He pitches with purpose. He's a talented guy. Maybe not where he was when he was drafted, but his stuff is good. He understands it better. That experience has been an influence."

Moscoso has been solid for the A's, particularly this month. He is 2-0 in September with a 0.57 ERA, and he has allowed two or fewer earned runs in five of his last six starts. Moscoso's first start of the season came on May 24 against the Halos, and he held them scoreless on three hits over six innings.

Moscoso is coming off a dominating performance against the Royals on Wednesday, when he took a no-hitter into the eighth inning before Kansas City's Salvador Perez hit a two-out single. He ended the night throwing 8 2/3 scoreless innings.

"You always want to go deep in the games," he said. "You have to make quality pitches and work hard to try to go deep in the game."

#### **Angels: Scioscia will maximize Weaver**

As the Angels desperately try to catch the Rangers in the American League West race, they are likely to rely on their ace to pitch on short rest.

Jered Weaver, who will pitch on his typical four days' rest on Wednesday, will pitch on three days' rest at some point during the final two-plus weeks of the season.

"He will definitely come back on three days at some point," Scioscia said, adding that Dan Haren and Ervin Santana also will be "under consideration" for working on shorter rest.

#### **A's: Bailey hurt in BP mishap**

A's closer Andrew Bailey was hit in the head by a line drive during the team's batting practice prior to Monday's game against the Angels.

The ball off the bat of Kurt Suzuki struck Bailey in the left temple, and he was accompanied off the field by a trainer. A visit to the team doctor indicated there was no concussion suffered, but Bailey was held out of Monday's game as a precaution.

#### **Worth noting**

- The Angels are 5-9 against the A's this season.
- Torii Hunter is the eighth Angels player to hit at least 20 home runs in four consecutive seasons.
- The A's 117 errors this season are the team's most since committing 125 errors in 2001.

*From Angels.com*

#### **Using Weaver on short rest back on agenda**

##### **By Lyle Spencer**

OAKLAND -- When Angels right-hander Jered Weaver goes to the mound on Wednesday in the series finale against the A's, he'll be working on his customary four days' rest.

Circumstances and positioning in the American League title chase against Texas could dictate moving the ace up on three days' rest again soon, Angels manager Mike Scioscia said.

"He will definitely come back on three days at some point," Scioscia said, adding that Dan Haren and Ervin Santana also will be "under consideration" for working on shorter rest.

"I don't think we'd want to do it after a 130-pitch outing," Scioscia said. "Your preference would be as early as possible, but you can do it at the end [of the season], too. We did it with [Kelvim] Escobar and [Bartolo] Colon in '05. I don't think it's going to be deal."

Weaver lost to the Rangers on three days' rest in Texas after Santana had won on short rest. It was a career first for both pitchers. Scioscia was encouraged by Santana's performance and not discouraged by Weaver's.

"Jered got through six [innings] with a double play on [Yorvit] Torrealba," Scioscia said. "His velocity was there. In the seventh they got, what, four pitches, four hits. That changed things a bit."

Weaver has had two starts since the Texas outing on longer than usual rest, adding to the possibility that he'll be asked to work on three days' rest soon -- perhaps on Sunday in Baltimore.

### **Angels have to solve Oakland problem**

OAKLAND -- The athletes in green and gold, the Athletics of Oakland, are the difference right now in the American League West race.

Take games against the A's out of the equation, and the Rangers would be chasing the Angels, not the other way around.

Heading into a critical three-game set with the A's -- all series are critical at this point -- the Angels are 5-8 for the season against their rivals to the north. Texas, meanwhile has beaten up on Oakland, taking 11 of 16.

Strip away those games and you get the Angels, at 75-58, leading Texas' 72-59.

Inside the division, the Rangers have lapped the Angels. Texas is 30-15 against the AL West, compared to the Angels' 24-24.

"We've got to start winning games against these guys," catcher Jeff Mathis said on Monday night before handling Joel Pineiro against A's southpaw Gio Gonzalez.

The Angels need to figure out Oakland-Alameda County Stadium, quickly. The A's have taken five of their six meetings this season and 11 of the past 16 overall in the East Bay against manager Mike Scioscia's troupe.

"When we played them earlier in the year," Scioscia said, "we weren't hitting and they were pitching very well. Our offense has been much more productive the last five or six weeks. We're the best team we've been all year right now."

With nothing to play for besides pride and job security, the A's have won six of their past 10. They are 39-32 at home for the season, compared to 27-48 on the road.

Oakland has three games left with Texas, at home, and six with the Angels.

Baseball's best road team for consecutive seasons in 2008 and '09, the Angels are 36-35 away from Angel Stadium this season.

### **Mathis slugs way back into lineup**

OAKLAND -- Angels manager Mike Scioscia has seen catcher Jeff Mathis go off on hitting streaks before.

"In the [2009] playoffs, that was a great run he was on," Scioscia said, referring to Mathis' 8-for-15 postseason outburst that included a walk-off double against the Yankees in the American League Championship Series. "He's had a few stretches like that."

While catching Dan Haren's shutout of the Yankees on Saturday night, Mathis had a perfect night offensively with a two-run homer, double, walk and sacrifice bunt. He was back in the lineup, catching Joel Pineiro, in Monday night's series opener against the A's.

"Obviously, we're looking for a little production back there," Scioscia said. "He gave us a lift with the bat the other night and, hopefully, he will down the stretch. But it's his defense that is valuable to us. Jeff works with everybody well."

His .183 batting average and .277 slugging mark keep his critics chirping, but the Angels' pitchers embraced the athletic, intensely competitive Mathis from the moment he stepped behind the plate -- and that hasn't changed.

"Jeff knows we have his back," Haren said. "We know what he means to us."

The Angels are 43-29 this season with Mathis catching, playing .500 in the rest of their games. In his career, the Angels are 213-154 when Mathis starts -- a .580 winning percentage.

To all those critics who keep asking why Scioscia plays him, that's the short answer. The manager likes to win.

*From SportsIllustrated.com*

### **A's chase Pineiro early again, beat Angels 6-3**

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) -- Maybe it's the sparse crowd. Maybe it's the cool Bay Area weather. Or maybe there's something about the spacious confines at the Coliseum.

Joel Pineiro's struggles in Oakland simply have him stumped.

"It's just the curse of the elephant I guess," Pineiro said, referring to Oakland's mascot, Stomper.

Josh Willingham hit his 25th homer and drove in four runs to help the Athletics chase Pineiro early again in a 6-3 victory over the Los Angeles Angels on Monday night.

Willingham's three-run shot in the first inning off Pineiro (6-7) started a second straight brief outing for the Angels right-hander at the Coliseum. Los Angeles fell three games behind first-place Texas in the AL West.

Pineiro allowed four runs on five hits in three-plus innings. His short start still lasted longer than his previous performance in Oakland on July 17, when he gave up eight runs in one-third of an inning.

"It was deja vu," he said.

Gio Gonzalez (13-12) struck out six and gave up two runs in 6 2-3 innings.

Erick Aybar and Vernon Wells each hit solo home runs late for the Angels, who had won six of their last eight games to climb back into the playoff race. With only 15 games remaining, time is running out to catch the Rangers.

"All is not lost," Angels right fielder Torii Hunter said. "We can still win the series, and that's all you can ask for."

Angels manager Mike Scioscia had hoped that Pineiro's struggles were over. He had a six-start winless streak until his last outing - allowing one run in seven innings in a 4-1 victory over Minnesota - and seemingly fixed the mechanics in his release point that were at the root of his problems.

All that washed away quickly.

Pineiro walked two of the first three batters and pitching coach Mike Butcher visited the mound for a chat before Willingham came to the plate. Willingham sent a 1-1 pitch soaring into left-center field, skipping off the top of the wall for a home run to put the A's ahead 3-0 in the first inning.

"We signed up for 162 of them. You have to play them all," Willingham said. "In Texas, we were aware we were going to have an impact on the playoffs, whether it was good or bad. It's the same with these guys."

After Hunter singled leading off the second, Wells hit line drive that ricocheted off the wall just below the foul pole in right. The ball skipped back over the outstretched arms of David DeJesus , giving Wells a triple and allowing Hunter to score to bring the Angels within 3-1.

Ryan Sweeney singled and Kurt Suzuki hit one his two doubles to start the bottom of the fourth. That was enough for Scioscia to pull Pineiro for Tyler Chatwood after a start that was reminiscent of Pineiro's last visit to Oakland, a 9-1 loss that was the shortest appearance by an Angels starter - not counting an injury or ejection - since Aug. 28, 2007.

The A's kept piling it on with a rare display of pop.

Scott Sizemore hit a run-scoring single and Cliff Pennington knocked a two-out RBI single later in the inning to put Oakland ahead 5-1. After Aybar hit his 8th home run of the season in the seventh, Willingham answered with an RBI single in the bottom of the inning to give the A's a 6-2 lead.

Wells homered for the 21st time this season in the ninth off Grant Balfour . Oakland has won 10 of the last 12 home games against the Angels.

"I don't know if it's a freak season," Scioscia said, "but we've been outplayed by that team this season."

NOTES: The A's held out closer Andrew Bailey as a precaution after he was hit just above his left ear by a foul ball from teammate Kurt Suzuki during batting practice. He passed an initial concussion test. Bailey said his vision momentarily went black but joked that his sunglasses saved him and he'll be fine. ... Scioscia said ace Jered Weaver , who is scheduled to start Wednesday in Oakland, could pitch on three days' rest Sunday at Baltimore. That would allow the right-hander to get an extra start in the season finale at Texas on normal rest. ... Oakland CF Coco Crisp was scheduled to have a precautionary MRI exam on his right foot, which he injured taking two foul balls off last week. Manager Bob Melvin said he was hopeful Crisp could return this season. ... The Angels will send RHP Jerome Williams (3-0, 3.51 ERA) to the mound Tuesday against A's RHP Guillermo Moscoso , who didn't allow a hit until the eighth inning in his last start against Kansas City.

*From ESPNLosAngeles.com*

## **The curse of the elephant**

**By Mark Saxon**

OAKLAND -- The Oakland Athletics have been stuck near the bottom of the division standings all year, play in a charmless football stadium dotted with a few scattered pockets of fans most nights, and might be about to stomp out the Angels' playoff hopes.

The Angels are getting used to unhappy trips to the East Bay.

Monday night was their saddest day here in a while, with more of the clutch hitting woes that have plagued them lately and some shoddy early pitching setting a bad tone for this crucial road trip. The 6-3 loss, with Texas idle, pushed the Angels to three games back in the AL West.

Losing in Oakland has become a yearly tradition for the Angels -- they're 2-10 here in their most recent games at whatever they're calling the Coliseum nowadays. It would be an interesting anomaly if it didn't threaten to make this season meaningless.

**Joel Pineiro** understands it as well as anybody and he doesn't understand it at all. Pitching to one of the worst lineups in the American League, Pineiro has been awful. He is 0-2 with a 29.70 ERA in his last two starts here. For the season, Pineiro is 0-3 with a 10.80 ERA against the A's.

"It's the curse of the elephant or something," Pineiro said. "I don't know really. I wish I knew, so I could turn it around."

The Angels wish they knew why they are 5-9 against Oakland this season. Their search for answers is about to intensify or there could be trouble, because five of their remaining 15 games are against these A's. Those three games against Texas won't be worth watching if the Angels don't take care of the Oakland problem first.

In addition to the Oakland problem, the Angels now have an OK problem. As in, "OK, shouldn't you be able to get in a runner from third base with less than two outs?" In six at-bats the last two days in which a well-placed ground ball or medium-deep fly would have driven in a run, the Angels instead struck out or popped up.

Monday it was a couple of youngsters who made those fundamental lapses, just as young players had fumbled away Sunday's loss to the New York Yankees. **Mike Trout** and **Mark Trumbo**, along with veteran **Vernon Wells**, failed to get the runner in. Trumbo, Trout and **Peter Bourjos** -- all in their first full seasons -- might be feeling some of the pressure of this race. Bourjos dropped the fly ball that handed the Yankees the win and those three combined to go 0-for-12 with eight strikeouts Monday.

"They're young guys," **Torii Hunter** said. "If you know the game and you look around, they've never been to the postseason, never been in a playoff race and also the league is going to make adjustments, especially during crunch time like this. Now, they have to make adjustments, simplify things. In a pennant race, you don't try to do too much, just simplify.

"It's easier said than done, though. I'd be good if I practiced what I preach."

*From ESPNLosAngeles.com*

## **A's 6, Angels 3: Three Up, Three Down**

**By Mark Saxon**

OAKLAND -- At a ballpark that feels like a mausoleum, the Angels played like their postseason hopes are about to be interred.

The A's defeated the Angels, 6-3, Monday behind stout pitching from lefty Gio Gonzalez and some awful Angels hitting in the clutch. The loss dropped the Angels to three games behind first-place Texas with 15 games left to play.

The Angels have lost six of their seven games in Oakland this season.

### **The Good:**

**Toriid.** These have been some of the most productive months of **Torii Hunter's** career, pretty impressive for



a 36-year old. Hunter is batting .345 since Aug. 1. He has 16 RBIs in his last 22 games and he has hit safely in 37 of his last 44 games. He did all he could to spark some offense, with a couple of hits and a walk, but the guys around him couldn't make much from it.

**Wells rockets.** **Vernon Wells** was as hot as he had been all season before the Angels got back home a couple of weeks ago. Wells fell back into his Anaheim funk, batting .219 on the homestand. But this road trip started on a promising note, with an RBI triple and home run.

**Small victories.** Yes, **Fernando Rodney** did walk two batters. That's what he does. But those were sandwiched by a couple of outs. That was a new wrinkle for the struggling reliever, getting somebody out.

### **The Bad:**

**Third-and-forever.** A few years ago, **Bill James** did some research and found out that batters drive in a runner at third base with less than two outs 55.5 percent of the time. In the last two games, the Angels are batting .000 in six at-bats in that situation.

Those six at-bats could go a long way to explaining why the Angels are on the fringe of this race instead of the thick of it. **Mike Trout**, **Mark Trumbo** (again) and Wells all failed to come up with a sacrifice fly, a well-placed ground ball or a hit to bring the run in.

**Oakland karma.** In his last two starts in Oakland, **Joel Pineiro** has a 29.70 ERA. Um, that's not very good, right? Pineiro didn't have quite as embarrassing a game as the previous time he was here, shortly after the All-Star break, but it came at a higher-profile time in the season. Pineiro has had a bad second half and he'll be a free agent this fall. One place he might want to avoid signing? Oakland.

**T and T.** Trumbo and Trout have helped fuel a little offensive renaissance in the past few weeks, but both guys are struggling badly. Trout has two hits in his past 25 at-bats. Trumbo is 0 for his last 9. Together, they went 0-for-8 with six strikeouts Monday, defusing rallies all over the place.

*From FoxSports.com*

### **Angels-Athletics Preview**

The **Los Angeles Angels'** struggles against the **Oakland Athletics** could keep them from making a late push in the AL West race.

The Angels are hoping another strong start from **Jerome Williams** on Tuesday night will help them begin to solve those woes.

Los Angeles is 24-25 against intradivision opponents this season, and its inability to beat Oakland consistently has played a part in that disappointing record.

The Angels (80-67) have dropped nine of their last 12 against the A's (67-80), and a 6-3 defeat Monday dropped them three games behind first-place Texas.

"We've been outplayed by that team this season," said manager Mike Scioscia, whose team is also 2-10 in its last 12 games in Oakland.

Los Angeles will play five of its final 15 games against Oakland and will welcome the A's to Anaheim from Sept. 23-25 before taking on the Rangers to conclude the regular season.

Williams (3-0, 3.51 ERA) will try to help his club by winning his fourth straight start. He yielded only one hit - a sixth-inning solo homer - in eight innings of Wednesday's 3-1 win over Seattle.

Before being called up from the minors Aug. 17, the right-hander hadn't appeared in a major league game in four years. During that time away, he played in Taiwan, Puerto Rico and a pair of independent leagues.

Williams also signed minor league contracts with four different clubs, including the A's in December 2008. He began his MLB career in 2003 across the bay in San Francisco, where he played two-plus seasons for the Giants and won a career-best 10 games in 2004.

"It's a great story," Scioscia said. "He has evolved as a pitcher, and if he can keep his stuff the way it is, he's going to pitch in the big leagues for a long time."

Williams will make his first start against Oakland since July 4, 2004. **Josh Willingham**, who homered and drove in four runs Monday, is the only current A's player to have faced him, going 2 for 4 with a home run.

Willingham, 8 for 19 with two homers and seven RBIs in his last five games, will try to help **Guillermo Moscoso** (8-8, 3.34) add to his impressive start to this month.

After giving up a career-worst eight runs in Boston to conclude August, the right-hander is 2-0 with a 0.57 ERA in his last two starts. He came within four outs of a no-hitter and within one of recording his first complete game Wednesday, giving up two hits and a walk in a 7-0 win over Kansas City.

Moscoso, who was sent to the minors twice this season, also set an A's record by retiring 30 consecutive batters - the final 13 he faced during a 9-2 win over Seattle on Sept. 2 and the first 17 versus the Royals.

"It's a credit to him and believing in himself," manager Bob Melvin told the team's official website. "You get sent down and, all of a sudden, if you're in the bullpen or not here, there's a lot of things that you're fighting through."

"You have to keep your belief that, 'I'm a starting pitcher, I'm a big league pitcher, and that's where I'm going to end up.' He holds onto that every day."

Moscoso made his A's debut by allowing three hits and three walks over six scoreless innings during a 6-1 win over the Angels on May 24.

*From USAToday.com*

## **Los Angeles Angels Team Report**

### **INSIDE PITCH**

The back end of the Angels' rotation continues to be a problem.

They thought they might have it solved last week with the resurrection of Jerome Williams and the best start in two months by Joel Pineiro. Williams remains a bright spot, but Pineiro regressed Monday night in Oakland and is once again a question mark.

Pitching for the first time in a week, Pineiro walked two of the first three batters he faced, then gave up a three-run home run to Josh Willingham and was out of the game in the fourth inning. The A's went on to take a 6-3 win. It was reminiscent of his July 17 start in Oakland, when he gave up eight runs while retiring just one of the nine batters he faced.

Williams will start Tuesday in Oakland.

Down the stretch, the Angels will need four more starts from pitchers other than their front three — Jered Weaver, Dan Haren and Ervin Santana. The team is 55-37 this season when Weaver, Haren or Santana starts, 25-30 when anyone else starts. Those back-end starters (Williams, Pineiro and rookies Garrett Richards and Tyler Chatwood) have gone 7-11 with a combined 6.05 ERA in starts since the end of June.

Manager Mike Scioscia has already said Weaver will definitely come back on three days' rest at some point in the final three weeks of the season (possibly as soon as Sunday in Baltimore). But the fourth and fifth starters need to hold their own at least a few more times.

"We have a day off Thursday, then we'll re-evaluate where we are," said Scioscia, whose team fell three games behind the idle Rangers in the AL West standings. "We can't cut it down to three (starters), but we'll see where we are."

## NOTES, QUOTES

—RHP Joel Pineiro allowed five runs in three innings Monday and is now 0-3 with a 10.80 ERA (20 earned runs in 16 2/3 innings) against the A's this season. Pineiro is winless in his past six road starts with a 10.50 ERA.

—LF Vernon Wells started at designated hitter Monday and went 2-for-4 with a home run, a triple and two RBI. Wells has hits in 15 of his past 18 games, going 22-for-67 (.328) with four doubles, two triples and four home runs in that stretch.

—RF Torii Hunter went 2-for-3 with a double and a run in Monday's loss. Since Aug. 1, Hunter is batting .346 (47-for-136), and he has hits in 37 of his past 44 games.

—RHP Jerome Williams will make his return to the Bay Area with a start against the A's on Tuesday. Williams was a first-round draft pick of the Giants in 1999 and won a total of 17 games for them in 2003 and 2004. He is 3-0 with a 2.45 ERA in three starts for the Angels including a one-hitter in his most recent start, Wednesday against the Mariners.

—LF Mike Trout went 0-for-4 with three strikeouts in Monday's loss. He has just two hits in his past 25 at-bats, both of those in Saturday's win over the Yankees. He is batting .167 (5-for-30) over the Angels' past 10 games.

**BY THE NUMBERS:** 1-6 — The Angels' record this season in Oakland, where they have lost 12 of their past 17 games.

**QUOTE TO NOTE:** "Just the Curse of the Elephant. No. I wish I knew what it was so I could turn it around." — RHP Joel Pineiro, jokingly explaining his bad starts in Oakland, where the A's mascot is an elephant.

## ROSTER REPORT

### MEDICAL WATCH:

—RHP Francisco Rodriguez (right shoulder inflammation) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to May 10, and he was transferred to the 60-day DL on Aug. 10. He will treat the problem with rest and rehab.

—1B Kendrys Morales (fractured left ankle) went on the 15-day disabled list retroactive to March 22. He was never able to progress to running the bases in workouts, let alone playing in games during spring training or on a rehab assignment. He had a second surgery on his ankle May 26 to address continued discomfort and lack of mobility. Morales, who was transferred to the 60-day DL on July 20, will not play until the 2012 season.