

Oakland A's, O.co Coliseum crowd produce little noise in loss to Los Angeles Angels

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

A typically tiny crowd made it a quiet Tuesday night at O.co Coliseum, and the A's appeared in no mood to disturb the tranquility.

A 6-3 defeat to the Los Angeles Angels was characterized by rallies that began with promise for Oakland only to be quickly extinguished.

That was a consistent problem for the A's before the All-Star break, but not so much in the second half.

"We had way too many opportunities to blow that game open," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "Guys that normally come through didn't. It was a rough night for us offensively."

Having split the first two games of this three-game set, the A's send Rich Harden to the mound Wednesday afternoon trying to take the series from the Angels, who remained three games back of American League West-leading Texas.

The A's fell to 67-81, officially extending their streak of consecutive seasons without a winning record to five.

Tuesday's announced crowd was 13,212, but as was the case with Monday's official turnout of 12,858, it appeared less than half that actually showed.

So empty and quiet was the Coliseum that center fielder Ryan Sweeney could be heard from the press box calling off a teammate to catch a first-inning fly ball.

Howie Kendrick hit a pair of two-run home runs for the Angels, including a shot off Michael Wuertz in the top of the ninth that turned a 4-3 game into 6-3.

But the A's hardly helped themselves at the plate by grounding into a season-high four double plays.

Trailing 3-0 in the bottom of the third, they had a run in and the bases loaded with no outs against Jerome Williams. The Angels starter walked Josh Willingham to force in another run, but the A's couldn't push any more across, as Scott Sizemore struck out and Sweeney hit into a 4-6-3 double play.

The A's evened it 3-3 in the fifth but should have had more. With runners on second and third and no outs, Sizemore was rung up looking and Sweeney flied out to shallow left. After Kurt Suzuki was intentionally walked, Brandon Allen bounced out to first.

Allen did snap his 0-for-22 streak with a double in the fourth.

Sizemore, who entered the day tied for third in the A.L. with 12 RBIs in September, struck out three times.

The Angels took the lead for good in the seventh when Erick Aybar scored from third on Maicer Izturis' chopper to shortstop. Cliff Pennington rushed an off-target throw home on the play.

A's starter Guillermo Moscoso was coming off a 129-pitch gem against Kansas City. But he lasted just 42/3 innings, allowing three runs and five hits in 92 pitches.

The Angels scored three times in the top of the third to take a 3-0 lead, snapping Moscoso's 152/3 inning scoreless streak.

A bright spot for Oakland: Willingham drove in two runs and established a career high with 90 RBIs.

Though the A's are eliminated from contention, Sweeney said taking the series from the Angels would mean something.

"We still want to go out there and win every game," he said. "(Texas and Los Angeles) are not too far away from each other."

Oakland A's update: Recent call-up Jai Miller savoring major league experience

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

How much playing time Jai Miller gets over these final two weeks remains to be seen, but the A's outfielder will savor the experience.

Miller, 26, is a veteran of 948 minor league games since being drafted by the Florida Marlins in 2003. He's appeared in just 23 big league contests.

Miller earned a promotion Sunday from Triple-A Sacramento with a monster season in the Pacific Coast League, hitting .276 with 32 homers and 88 RBIs. The home runs tied for fourth most in all of the minors.

"He's an outstanding defender, a good base runner," A's director of player development Keith Lieppman said.

Lieppman also praised Miller's athleticism, no surprise considering Miller's background at Selma (Ala.) High. A standout quarterback and point guard, the 6-foot-3 Miller signed a letter of intent with Stanford to play both football and basketball (he was recruited as a receiver in football).

He devoted much less time to baseball but hit .500 as a senior center fielder at Selma. After a good showing in workouts, he was drafted in the fourth round by the Marlins and signed, getting a \$250,000 bonus.

One reason for Miller's slow climb through the minors: strikeouts. Even this season, his best as a professional, Miller struck out 179 times, fourth-most in the minors.

He appeared in one game with Florida in 2008 and 20 games with Kansas City in 2010. Miller said last year's exposure with the Royals benefited him.

"Just that little bit of experience helped me," he said. "I wanted to get off to a good start this year. I did that, kept it going, and here I am."

Closer Andrew Bailey's concussion test and X-rays came back negative after he was struck in the left temple by a line drive Monday in batting practice. An MRI on Coco Crisp's injured right ankle also was negative, and manager Bob Melvin said he expects the center fielder to play again this season. Melvin wouldn't estimate when.

Left fielder Josh Willingham is the A's nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award, giving annually to a major leaguer for standout community service.

Chin Music: A's get good medical news on Bailey, Crisp

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 9/13/2011 6:06pm

It's another pleasant night at the Coliseum, where Guillermo Moscoso takes the mound for the A's against the Angels' Jerome Williams. Talk about two guys who weren't in the picture for their teams when this season began. Williams, the former Giant, has been very solid for the Angels. He's won all three of his starts since being called up from the minors Aug. 17.

—A's closer Andrew Bailey said he was expecting to be available tonight. His concussion test and X-rays came back negative after he was struck in the left temple by a line drive Monday in batting practice. Bailey still seemed shocked that Kurt Suzuki's liner made a beeline for him while he stood in left field. "'Zuk' really doesn't pull the ball in the first round (of BP)," Bailey joked. He still has a slight headache but does not seem too concerned. A's manager Bob Melvin said he would wait to see how Bailey felt after playing catch before deciding if Bailey was an option tonight.

Melvin added that yesterday's incident was one of those random occurrences that really can't be avoided. "There are so many balls struck during the course of the day — one guy hitting ground balls here, another guy throwing across the diamond. Really, it's amazing that it doesn't happen more often," Melvin said.

—Coco Crisp's MRI on his right ankle came back negative, and Melvin expects his center fielder to play again this season, but he wasn't giving a date. Ryan Sweeney draws the start again in center tonight.

—Moscoso makes his first start since throwing 129 pitches in his last outing Wednesday. Melvin reiterated how uncomfortable he felt as Moscoso's pitch count crept up in that start (he hadn't thrown more than 109 previously). But with Moscoso going

on five days' rest, Melvin said he won't keep Moscoso on a tight leash tonight. And Melvin had an interesting take on that 129-pitch effort. "I think in the long run it might be good for him. He started out here as basically a six-inning pitcher. Now he's going deeper in games. He wants to go deeper in games. And he's a guy that's been healthy, so I think all in all it's been good for him."

—First baseman Brandon Allen, in an 0 for 21 funk, is back in the lineup. Melvin said he thought Allen's at-bats got better as last night's game progressed, and he wants him to try building on that.

The lineups:

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

Angels — Izturis 2B, Kendrick 1B, Abreu DH, Hunter RF, Callaspo 3B, Wells LF, Aybar SS, Bourjos CF, Conger C; Williams RHP.

A's Brett Anderson following Stephen Strasburg

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Few people are watching Stephen Strasburg's relatively quick return from Tommy John surgery more closely than Brett Anderson.

Anderson, a left-hander, had Tommy John surgery in July. He said before Oakland's 6-3 loss to the Angels on Tuesday night that he is hopeful he can return one year after surgery the way Strasburg did this month for the Washington Nationals.

"He came back right at a year, which is just about perfect, and his stuff is back to where it was before," Anderson said. "He was pretty flawless his first outing."

Strasburg is on a limited pitch count in each start, and he will be on an innings count next season, but the 23-year-old right-hander has allowed only five hits and one run in eight innings and two appearances. He's also hitting 96 mph with his fastball.

Anderson, who is also 23, is inspired, and he might get in touch with Strasburg after the season, especially before Anderson resumes throwing, something he hopes will happen in November. Anderson is interested in Strasburg's daily routine once he started throwing again, and the two pitchers know each other a bit from Team USA.

Anderson said he's following Yankees pitcher Joba Chamberlain on Twitter to see how his recovery is going; Chamberlain had the same elbow-ligament-replacement procedure with the same surgeon (Dr. James Andrews) one month before Anderson.

General manager Billy Beane told Anderson he also should speak to former A's starter Tim Hudson, who returned to the Braves 13 months after surgery.

Beane, who had shoulder surgery in July, has been rehabbing with Anderson and Dallas Braden, so the pitchers are starting to think he's one of them.

"Billy might as well start throwing bullpen sessions when Dallas and I do," Anderson said.

Anderson is much more svelte than before he went on the disabled list. He has lost 21 pounds, the result, he said, of his daily workouts and eating more healthfully. "No Cokes," he said.

"He's shredded!" catcher Kurt Suzuki said of Anderson's improved musculature.

Asked if his improved fitness might translate to better agility when fielding, the occasionally awkward Anderson said, "I don't know about that. I just hope I don't fall down."

Anderson's next appointment with Andrews will be at the end of October, and he is hopeful that at that point, he'll be cleared to start throwing.

"That first throw will be kind of exciting," Anderson said. "Right now, it feels weird even to hold a baseball in my hand."

Howie Kendrick's HRs help Angels top A's

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The numbers didn't work in Oakland's favor Tuesday night. The A's were hitting into double plays and the Angels were getting homers from Howie Kendrick.

Kendrick cracked two two-run homers, one in the third and another in the ninth, to help the Angels to a 6-3 win at the Coliseum. Meanwhile, the A's hit into four double plays, two of which killed rallies.

"We had way too many opportunities to blow that game open," manager Bob Melvin said.

In the third, the A's had two runs in and had the bases loaded with nobody out when Jerome Williams struck out Scott Sizemore and got Ryan Sweeney to hit into a double play. The next inning, the A's had one out and men at the corners when Jemile Weeks hit into a double play.

In the fifth, Josh Willingham doubled in Cliff Pennington and the A's had two men in scoring position with nobody out, but wound up leaving the bases loaded.

Willingham has a career-best 90 RBIs and he is the first A's player to reach the 90-RBI mark since Frank Thomas had 114 in 2006.

Michael Wuertz allowed Kendrick's homer in the ninth and since coming off the disabled list Sept. 2, he has allowed eight hits, three walks and seven runs in two innings. A sore right thumb kept Wuertz out during August.

Bailey, Crisp OK: Andrew Bailey was good to go a day after taking a line drive off his noggin. The closer, hit in the left temple during batting practice Monday, said that an X-ray showed no fracture, and that though his jaw remained a little sensitive, he felt fine overall.

The results of an MRI exam on Coco Crisp's right foot were negative.

River Cats fall: Triple-A Sacramento lost 3-2 at Omaha in Game 1 of the Pacific Coast League finals. Tyson Ross starts for the River Cats tonight, opposing former A's starter Vin Mazzaro.

Leading off

Clemente nominee: Josh Willingham, who along with his wife, Ginger, raised more than \$100,000 for disaster relief in Alabama, was named the A's nominee for the Roberto Clemente award. The winner is announced during the World Series.

Drumbeat: A's get good news on Coco Crisp; Bailey expected to be available

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at the Coliseum 9/13/2011 5:08pm

Coco Crisp's MRI turned up no structural damage in his right foot and ankle, so manager Bob Melvin said that the A's should get their center fielder back at some point before the end of the season. Crisp was wearing a walking boot last night, but he didn't have it on in the clubhouse today and he is in uniform on the field right now during batting practice. He does have a little hitch in his step, but he's not really limping.

Andrew Bailey had an X-ray this morning, and Craig Breslow decided to conduct the pregame interview with him today, and on the media's behalf, asked Bailey about the X-ray - "No fracture," Bailey said - and about his availability today. "I've got to go out and play catch first and then I have to talk to the doctors," Bailey said.

UPDATE: I just ran down and checked in with Bailey after batting practice and he hasn't seen the doctors yet, but his throwing went well and he gave me the thumbs up when I walked into the clubhouse, so he thinks he's good to go.

Bailey and Melvin both believe there's a better chance that the A's closer would be available tonight than he was last night, when he was ruled out entirely after being thunked above his left ear by a line drive by Kurt Suzuki during batting practice. If the A's don't need to use Bailey tonight, though, I think Melvin and the training staff wouldn't mind at all.

Here's the lineup against onetime A's and Giants minor-leaguer Jerome Williams: Weeks cf, Pennington ss, Matsui lf, Willingham dh, Sizemore 3b, Sweeney cf, Suzuki c, Allen 1b, Taylor rf.

Michael Taylor is getting the start in right as Melvin tries to work the younger players in one at a time against contenders such as the Angels.

It's Guillermo Moscoso on the mound for the A's tonight; I asked Melvin if he'll have Moscoso on a more limited pitch count after throwing 129 his last time out (his previous second-half high had been 109, which is why Melvin didn't want to push it further last week), and Melvin said with an extra day off between starts, Moscoso should be fine. So no cutting him back to around 100 pitches or anything like that.

"Moneyball" commercials are showing on the scoreboards here during some inning breaks, and it's interesting to see the reaction from Angels support staff and media in the press box - because the movie is about the 2002 A's season, and the World Series winner that year was.....Anaheim.

They were all most amused by one "Moneyball" announcement that contended that Billy Beane "changed the way baseball is played." Well, the A's front office of the early 2000s did have an impact on some ways teams evaluate players, helping increase acceptance of advanced metrics - but actually changing the way the game is played? That's such a sweeping statement, it sounds preposterous.

And as Angels manager Mike Scioscia told me before the game, if there was a real "band of misfits" that year, it was the Angels, who started off the season very poorly, had several castoffs and waiver claims (David Eckstein, Brad Fullmer, Ben Weber, Brendan Donnelly), and wound up beating the Giants in the World Series.

That might make a great movie.

Willingham's RBI tear continues as A's fall

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's celebrated health prior to Tuesday's game, influenced by good news from the trainer's room surrounding Andrew Bailey and Coco Crisp.

Merry moments ensued on the field, where Josh Willingham reached a new career high with 90 RBIs and Brandon Allen snapped a career-high 0-for-22 streak.

The night ultimately culminated in a 6-3 defeat to the Angels, but those are the types of bullet points the A's must rest their eyes upon these days -- no matter how many more losses are added to their season total -- in order to keep chugging along.

Willingham went 2-for-3 with two RBIs and a walk on the night and is batting .341 with 11 RBIs over his last 12 games, numbers that are making for quite the finish to a season that will be followed by first-time free-agent status.

"He's obviously very important to the offense and the middle of the lineup, gets big hits," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "He's the guy we count on to drive the ball out of the park, and he's had a terrific year."

The A's outfielder, who collected a bases-loaded walk in the third and drove in a run on a double in the fifth, could potentially hit his way into becoming the first Oakland player to tally 100 RBIs since Frank Thomas notched 114 in 2006.

And while he'll likely garner attractive offers this offseason, Willingham has expressed interest in staying in Oakland, and the A's could stand to keep around some of their already low power supply.

Their need for production is obvious, as evidenced by Tuesday's showing. The A's were 4-for-11 with runners in scoring position and left a combined eight on base, hurting themselves four times on double plays -- including one that began off the bat of Ryan Sweeney that killed a third-inning threat against Angels starter Jerome Williams.

"You're trying to drive the ball right there, but he was throwing good sinkers when he had guys in scoring position," Sweeney said. "The game could have been totally different. We hit into a lot of double plays, myself included. We had runners in scoring position and just didn't take advantage of it."

Further proof came when the A's stranded runners on first and second in the first and left the bases loaded in the fifth.

"They had a lot of baserunners with seven walks and eight hits," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said. "Holding them to three runs with all those baserunners tells you our bullpen did the job."

"Our whole defense has been good all year. The infield defense has been not only solid. It has range and has been spectacular at times. Turning double plays ... it's all part of what we need to do to support our pitchers."

Still, the A's managed to hang on against Scioscia's squad until the Angels broke open a 3-3 game in the seventh thanks to Maicer Izturis' RBI fielder's choice against Fautino De Los Santos.

Each of Los Angeles' first three runs were posted in the third against hurler Guillermo Moscoso, who -- six days after coming just four outs shy of a no-hitter -- lasted just 4 2/3 innings, giving up five hits with one walk and two strikeouts while utilizing 92 pitches.

"The ball was coming out of his hand pretty good, but it seemed like it was up a little bit and in the middle of the plate, where normally he's pretty good about hitting corners and spots," Melvin said. "With the amount of pitches he threw the last time out and the amount of pitches he had at that point in the game, I felt it was time to get him out."

Erick Aybar led off the third with a line-drive double and, while advancing to third base on Peter Bourjos' popup in foul territory, took advantage of first baseman Allen's throw to third, which sailed past the bag to allow him to score. Izturis later singled, and Howard Kendrick brought him home with a two-run shot to center field.

"I was trying to go backdoor with a two-seamer there," Moscoso said, "and I left it up."

Kendrick added another two-run shot in the ninth off Michael Wuertz, his 18th on the season.

Williams, meanwhile, went 4 1/3 innings, giving up three runs on seven hits with five walks and four strikeouts, before four Angels bullpen arms combined for 4 2/3 scoreless innings.

"We had way too many opportunities to blow that game open, and we didn't come through with runners in scoring position," Melvin said. "Guys that normally come through for us didn't, and on top of that we hit into double plays. It was a rough night for us offensively when we had runners on."

As a result, the A's dropped to 67-81 on the season. With just 14 games remaining, the loss meant they extended their streak of consecutive seasons without a winning record to five. Moreover, they have to win out to avoid a losing season.

While the task is daunting and, on a realistic level, nearly impossible, the A's will move forward with the same attitude.

"This is an opportunity in what's a tough season for us to be able to play in these types of scenarios against teams that are in it," Melvin said. "It's added an incentive to go out there, and certainly you shouldn't be down for any game when you're playing these teams. Today was just a bad game for us. We didn't play well all the way around."

Angels hope to gain ground behind Weaver

By Quinn Roberts / MLB.com

In a place they've had little success this season, the Angels will send ace Jered Weaver to the hill Wednesday at Oakland Coliseum just when they need him the most.

Holding a 6-12 record against the A's in their last 18 games in Oakland, Los Angeles will look to Weaver to not only win the rubber match of the three-game set, but keep the team in the hunt for a playoff spot.

After a 6-3 win Tuesday, the Angels still trail the Rangers by three games in the American League West.

The team hopes Weaver can find the same magic that allowed him to deliver one of his finest performances of the season his last time out against the Yankees.

Surrendering just one run on three hits to New York, the right-hander tossed eight dominant innings, walking two and striking out 11 in a no-decision.

"We're very comfortable he's got a lot of gas left in his tank," Angels manager Mike Scioscia said of Weaver, who is 10 innings away from the career-high 224 1/3 he established last season.

"He had an extra day [of rest between starts] and rebounded well," Scioscia said. "He threw the ball as we expected down the stretch. It was a heckuva game he pitched."

Depending on how Weaver does Wednesday will also determine if Scioscia will move the Angels' ace up on three days' rest. That would come Sunday in Baltimore so he can start the series season finale against the Rangers.

"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."

Countering Weaver for the A's will be right-hander Rich Harden.

Averaging 10.82 strikeouts per nine innings this season, Harden holds the third-best mark in the AL among pitchers with 60 or more innings.

Tallying 10 in his last start against the Royals, Harden (4-2, 4.74 ERA) took a no-decision after he surrendered four runs in five innings.

"He was throwing 95 miles per hour and a funky, nasty changeup that doesn't fade, it was cutting," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "Guys were saying, 'Is that a slider or is that a changeup?' But he was punching us out left and right on it. He caught us in between -- it was hard, then soft, and it was hard to gauge it."

In his only other start against the Halos this season, he allowed three runs on four hits, while striking out nine in seven innings for a no-decision.

Angels: Success when big three on mound

The Halos are 55-37 in games started by Weaver, Dan Haren and Ervin Santana. However, the club is just 26-30 in games started by others.

As a unit, the starting rotation has held opponents to one run or fewer 39 times, second-most in the Majors.

A's: Crisp likely to return this season

Coco Crisp was in uniform on the field during Tuesday's batting practice, marking a positive sign for the injured A's outfielder.

Crisp's MRI on his sore right ankle came out negative, meaning there's a good chance he'll return by season's end.

"He's pretty tough and can play with some pain, so I don't rule anything out," manager Bob Melvin said. "I definitely believe he'll be playing here, I just don't know which day. I don't want to throw a date out there and put pressure on him."

- One day after being hit in the left temple by a line drive off the bat of Kurt Suzuki during batting practice, closer Andrew Bailey was available for Tuesday's game with the Angels after undergoing X-rays that proved negative, however he did not pitch.

Worth noting

- The Angels are 20-10 in games Weaver starts.
- The Angels are 12-3 in their last 15 home games but just 7-12 in their last 19 road affairs.
- When opponents score first, the A's are 22-62 this season.

Crisp likely to return this season

OAKLAND -- Separated from his walking boot, Coco Crisp was seen in uniform on the field during batting practice Tuesday, a positive sign for the A's injured outfielder.

All the while, manager Bob Melvin confirmed the good news: Crisp's MRI on his sore right ankle came out negative, meaning there's a good chance he'll return by season's end.

"He's pretty tough and can play with some pain, so I don't rule anything out," Melvin said. "I definitely believe he'll be playing here, I just don't know which day. I don't want to throw a date out there and put pressure on him."

Crisp's presence at the top of the lineup alongside Jemile Weeks, above RBI men Hideki Matsui and Josh Willingham, has made for a successful formula in the second half, though Melvin noted Cliff Pennington has also added a healthy dose of production in the No. 2 spot in Crisp's stead.

"I think he's done a good job wherever he's gone in the lineup," Melvin said. "He's been a little bit like [Scott] Sizemore, to where he hits anywhere in the lineup and is productive. Between the two of them, they've quietly had productive years for guys you don't really count on for that type of production."

Pennington entered Tuesday batting .323 with four home runs and 34 RBIs in 51 games since the break, giving him 57 RBIs on the season. Only Willingham (88) and Matsui (71) have more, while Sizemore rests right behind him with 51.

Bailey OK following liner to head

OAKLAND -- One day after being hit in the left temple by a line drive off the bat of Kurt Suzuki during batting practice, A's closer Andrew Bailey said he'd likely be available for Tuesday's affair with the Angels after undergoing X-rays that proved negative.

Bailey was to be seen by the team doctor prior to first pitch to confirm his status, but he felt confident about being ready since he experienced no serious lingering effects -- aside from the expected.

"Well, it feels like I got hit in the head by the ball," he said, smiling. "Just kinda faint, and I'm a little sensitive when I move my jaw or chew, but nothing's broken, just a minor bruise."

Manager Bob Melvin was also hopeful for Bailey's return, but he'd like to avoid using him if possible, with several other bullpen options available. Melvin noted that Monday's incident was one of those random occurrences that really can't be avoided.

"I'm actually surprised it doesn't happen more," he said. "There's so many balls struck during the course of the day. It's really amazing it doesn't happen more, but if you've been around, you know when to take a peek, and it was just one of those deals, certainly no one's at fault for it."

Angels pick up rare win in Oakland

ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Howie Kendrick homered twice, Erick Aybar scored the go-ahead run on a wild throw home in the seventh inning and the Los Angeles Angels picked up a needed and rare win at the Oakland Coliseum, beating the A's 6-3 on Tuesday night.

Maicer Izturis added two hits and an RBI and Aybar also had two hits for the Angels, who snapped a two-game losing streak.

Los Angeles remains three games behind division-leading Texas, which beat Cleveland earlier in the day. The Angels and Rangers finish the regular season with a three-game series in Anaheim.

Aybar, batting .476 over his last six games, singled leading off the seventh and was sacrificed to second. Hank Conger's hit moved Aybar to third before Izturis hit a grounder to shortstop Cliff Pennington. Aybar broke for home on the play and made it safely when Pennington's throw was wide of the plate.

Hisanori Takahashi (4-3), the first of four Los Angeles relievers used in the game, pitched 1 2-3 innings for the win while rookie Jordan Walden worked the ninth for his 30th save.

The Angels combined for seven walks but matched their season high of four double plays to limit the damage and win for only the third time in their last 13 games at the Coliseum.

It was also Los Angeles' sixth victory on the road since Aug. 1.

Kendrick hit a two-run home run in the third off starter Guillermo Moscoso, then added another two-run blast in the ninth.

Josh Willingham doubled and drove in two runs for the A's, who had won five of six against their AL West rivals before Tuesday's loss.

The A's left the bases loaded in the fifth and stranded eight runners overall.

Neither starter was around for the decision.

Moscoso carried a no-hitter into the eighth inning of his previous start against Kansas City on Sept. 7 and retired the first six Angels before Aybar's double in the third.

Peter Bourjos followed with a foul pop-up near the Angels bullpen that first baseman Brandon Allen chased down. Aybar wisely tagged up at second and beat Allen's throw to third, then scored when the ball skipped past Oakland third baseman Scott Sizemore and Moscoso backing up on the play.

Izturis singled to keep the inning going, and Kendrick capped it with his 17th home run of the season to give the Angels a 3-0 lead.

Angels' right-hander Jerome Williams had control problems in the bottom of the frame and nearly gave it all back.

A former first-round pick of the San Francisco Giants, Williams gave up an RBI double to Jemile Weeks and a bases-loaded walk to Josh Willingham — one of three free passes he issued in the inning.

Williams continued to struggle, giving up back-to-back walks in the fifth. Josh Willingham then doubled in front of diving right fielder Torii Hunter, scoring Cliff Pennington with the tying run.

Kendrick's second home run came off reliever Michael Wuertz. The Angels slugger, who has four multi-home run games in his career, has 18 homers this season.

Notes: Oakland CF Coco Crisp had an MRI on his sore right foot and manager Bob Melvin said he expects Crisp play again this season. ... Scioscia kept rookie 1B Mark Trumbo out of the lineup because he felt the veteran might be pressing a little. "This is a good time for him to catch his breath and hopefully finish strong," Scioscia said. "The last 10 at-bats you're seeing a little tighter grip on the bat. To reach our goal we need him to get back to where he could be. ... RHP Jered Weaver, second to Detroit's Justin Verlander for lowest ERA in the AL, pitches for the Angels on Wednesday. Weaver (16-7) has a three-game losing streak on the road. ... RHP Rich Harden (4-2), who last beat Los Angeles more than a year ago, goes for Oakland. ... Oakland Raiders defensive lineman Richard Seymour threw out the first pitch.

MINOR LEAGUE NEWS

Cats drop Game 1 of Championship Series

Sacramento River Cats

Sacramento has a hill to climb. But not one it hasn't already scaled.

The River Cats fell 3-2 to host Omaha in Game 1 of the Pacific Coast League Championship Series on Tuesday night at Werner Park. Lorenzo Cain's RBI single in the bottom of the seventh inning scored David Lough for the go-ahead run as the Storm Chasers took a 1-game-to-0 series lead.

Sacramento fell behind 2-games-to-0 in its first-round series against Reno before roaring back to win the series in five games. The River Cats, who posted a 47-25 road record this season, have lost all three road games in the playoffs thus far.

The two teams play Game 2 on Wednesday night at 5:05 p.m., with Sacramento throwing right-hander Tyson Ross (3-2 record, 7.61 ERA) against right-hander Vin Mazzaro (7-2, 4.29).

Irving Falu scored Jarrod Dyson in the first inning with an RBI single, giving Omaha a 1-0 lead. From there, Sacramento starter Graham Godfrey escaped a bases-loaded jam to escape the inning without anymore runs. Godfrey allowed a lead-off triple to Cain in the third, but escaped that inning scoreless.

Josh Donaldson homered to right field in the fourth inning to tie the score for Sacramento, and Chris Carter's RBI double in the sixth inning scored Jermaine Mitchell for a 2-1 Sacramento lead.

Lance Zawadzki doubled home Manny Pina in the bottom of the sixth to tie the game, and Cain gave Omaha the lead for good in the seventh.

Godfrey and Luis Mendoza went pitch-for-pitch in a battle of two of the PCL's top pitchers. Godfrey, who led the league with 14 wins, allowed two runs over 6.0 innings. Mendoza, who led the league with a 2.18 ERA, allowed two runs over 7.0 innings.

Sacramento, which is aiming for its fifth PCL Championship, returns to Raley Field on Friday for Game 4 of the series at 7:05 p.m.

Ports Head To Cal League Championship with 4-2 Win

Stockton Ports

The Ports are headed to the Championship! After falling behind in the sixth inning, the Ports rallied back to topple their division foes, the San Jose Giants, 4-2 on Tuesday night. A big seventh inning helped propel the Ports to the California League Championship Series.

The Ports got on the board first with a solo home run from Dusty Coleman. Coleman drilled a 2-2 pitch from Giants starter Andy Reichard to right field.

Ports Starter Dan Straily was on cruise control through the first three innings before running into trouble in the fourth. Straily loaded the bases with two outs, giving up singles to Nick Noonan and Jarrett Parker before walking Ryan Cavan. Straily settled down and got Alex Burg to strike out swinging.

The Giants tied it up in the fifth, when Straily gave up back-to-back doubles to Gary Brown and Ehire Adrianza. The Giants then took the lead in the sixth when Parker hit a home run that hit the foul pole along the left field line.

The Ports battled back in the seventh inning, taking the lead back and ultimately capturing the victory. Anthony Aliotti led off the inning with a single. Ryan Lipkin then hit a strong single, which he stretched into a double, narrowly missing a tag from Cavan. Edwin Quirarte came in to relieve Reichard and promptly hit Michael Gilmartin to load the bases. Mitch LeVier, who was the hero of game one, hit a single to drive in Aliotti and tie the game. Quirarte then threw a wild pitch, which allowed Lipkin to score and giving him the blown save. Rashun Dixon then grounded into a fielder's choice, which resulted in Gilmartin being thrown out at home. Myrio Richard grounded out to end the inning and the threat.

AJ Huttenlocker (2-0), who had come in to pitch in the seventh, struck out the side in the eighth, setting up the Ports for the win.

The Ports added a run in the eighth. Aliotti led off with a walk, and Lipkin reached on a throwing error that advanced Aliotti to third. Gilmartin, who had struggled at the plate all series, drilled a single to center field to score Aliotti.

Closer Jose Guzman came in to close the game for the Ports, and pitched a 1-2-3 inning. The Ports rushed the field in celebration lifting Guzman into a bear hug. The Ports now head to Lake Elsinore for game one of the California League Championships on Thursday. LHP Jose De Paula of the Storm will face off against RHP Murphy Smith at 7:05 pm.