

A's News Clips, Thursday, October 6, 2011

Oakland A's name Chip Hale as their bench coach

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's hired Chip Hale as their bench coach Wednesday, and they are zeroing in on candidates to fill the two biggest vacancies remaining on manager Bob Melvin's staff.

Two sources familiar with the A's thinking confirmed they are targeting Mike Aldrete as their new hitting coach and Bryan Price as their new pitching coach.

Aldrete, who played three seasons alongside Melvin with the Giants, is currently an assistant hitting coach with the St. Louis Cardinals, meaning the A's can't interview him until the Cardinals are eliminated from the postseason.

Price, the Cincinnati Reds pitching coach, served in the same role under Melvin when Melvin managed the Seattle Mariners and Arizona Diamondbacks, and the two are tight. Price has one year left on his contract with the Reds, but it's possible for him to be released from that and join the A's.

Melvin declined to comment on any candidates and said there was no timetable for hiring hitting and pitching coaches.

Hale, who was born in San Jose and starred at Campolindo High School in Moraga, replaces former A's bench coach Joel Skinner, who was let go last week along with hitting coach Gerald Perry and pitching coach Ron Romanick.

Melvin, who took over as the A's interim manager in June before getting hired full-time Sept. 21, said familiarity would be a key as he brought his own coaches aboard.

Hale, 46, served as Melvin's third base/infield coach with Arizona from 2007-09.

He spent the past two seasons in the same capacity with the New York Mets and was a finalist last winter to become the Mets manager before Terry Collins was hired.

"When Bob got the interim job, I started watching (the A's) a lot closer," Hale said. "I really feel like they have a lot of talent -- a lot of pitching and a lot of young, athletic players."

Hale grew up in Cupertino and lived there until the eighth grade, always cheering for the Giants and 49ers. But upon moving to Moraga, his allegiances shifted to the A's and he remembers frequent BART trips to the Coliseum during the early 1980s.

A 17th-round draft pick of the Minnesota Twins in 1987 after finishing his college career at the University of Arizona, he played parts of seven seasons with the Twins and Dodgers as a backup infielder.

Hale, who received a two-year deal to serve as the A's bench coach and Melvin's right-hand man in the dugout, was a minor league manager for seven seasons in the Diamondbacks' chain.

Melvin said one of Hale's primary tasks will be helping improve the A's defensively, and that he'll work in tandem with infield coach Mike Gallego -- one of two holdovers from Melvin's old staff along with first-base coach Tye Waller. Rick Rodriguez remains a candidate to return to his position as bullpen coach.

□ Former A's radio voice Bill King is a top-10 finalist for the 2012 Ford C. Frick Award, the annual honor that sends one baseball broadcaster to the Hall of Fame. The other finalists are Skip Caray, Rene Cardenas, Tom Cheek, Ken Coleman, Jacques Doucet, Tim McCarver, Graham McNamee, Eric Nadel and Mike Shannon. The winner will be announced Dec. 6 at the winter meetings.

Chin Music: Chip Hale hired as Oakland A's bench coach

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 10/5/2011 1:12pm

Just because the regular season ends doesn't mean the A's news stops ...

Chip Hale was announced as the team's new bench coach Wednesday, replacing Joel Skinner. It's a good local story. Hale, 46****, was born in San Jose and went to Campolindo High in Moraga, about a 20-minute drive from the Coliseum. He served as the New York Mets' third base/infield coach for the past two seasons, and he was a finalist to be their manager in 2011 before Terry Collins was hired. Not surprisingly, he has a history with A's manager Bob Melvin, having served as Melvin's third base/infield coach with the Arizona Diamondbacks from 2007-09. Melvin had said he wanted to bring in coaches he was familiar with, and I'd say that's especially true of a bench coach, who serves as the manager's right-hand man and takes over the club if the skipper gets ejected. Hale received a two-year deal, by the way.

That leaves three spots on Melvin's staff left to fill — hitting coach, pitching coach and bullpen coach (though Rick Rodriguez is a candidate to return in that last role).

Check out Chip Hale's stats from his playing career if you like ...

Oakland A's name Chip Hale as their bench coach

Staff, Oakland Tribune

Former Campolindo High School star and San Jose native Chip Hale has joined the A's as their bench coach, the team announced Wednesday.

Hale, the New York Mets' third base and infield coach the past two seasons, replaces Joel Skinner, whose contract was not renewed.

Hale previously served under Melvin as third base and infield coach with the Arizona Diamondbacks from 2007-09.

A former major league player, William (Chip) Hale III spent seven seasons as a minor league manager in the Arizona organization before joining Melvin. He guided the Triple-A Tucson Sidewinders to the Pacific Coast League and Triple-A titles in 2006 with a franchise-record 91-53 mark. His 220 wins and .542 winning percentage as Tucson's manager from 2004-06 is an all-time Tucson record.

Hale led Rookie-League Missoula to the Pioneer League's best overall mark (44-32) in 2000 and to the Northern Division's second-half championship in 2001. He was named the Pioneer League and Baseball America's Rookie-Level Manager of the Year in 2001.

Selected in the 17th round of the 1987 draft out of the University of Arizona by Minnesota, Hale spent portions of seven seasons as a player in the big leagues with the Twins and Los Angeles Dodgers.

Jon Miller supports Bill King for baseball Hall

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Every day that passes in which Bill King isn't recognized by the baseball, basketball and football Halls of Fame is another day those establishments get it wrong.

Baseball's Hall of Fame released its latest Ford C. Frick Award ballot on Wednesday, and the longtime A's radio broadcaster is among the 10 finalists for the fifth time. A 20-member electorate, 15 Frick recipients and five broadcast historians/columnists, will pick the 2012 winner.

Jon Miller, the voice of the Giants, is among the voters, as is Lon Simmons, the longtime Giants and A's broadcaster who spent 15 years working with King in Oakland.

Miller, like so many others who grew up listening to King's distinct calls, is amazed the greatest sports broadcaster in Bay Area history is omitted from any fraternity of play-by-play legends.

One of the best things about "Moneyball" the movie is listening to several of King's calls, including Scott Hatteberg's game-ending home run that capped the 20-game win streak in 2002. Miller said the call "sounds like a scripted narration of the game for the film. Truly great work by Bill."

Miller, the 2010 Frick Award winner, added, "I'm hoping that the 'Moneyball' movie will enhance his chances."

Until he died at 78 in October 2005, King worked 25 seasons as the A's lead play-by-play man. The Pro Football Hall of Fame (23 broadcasters have been honored with the Pete Rozelle Award) and Basketball Hall of Fame (22 with the Curt Gowdy Award) are just as guilty as the Cooperstown shrine (35 Frick winners), neglecting King's 27 seasons with the Raiders and 21 with the Warriors.

"He was the best basketball play-by-play man I ever heard," Miller said. "I've wondered for the last 20 years how he hadn't been honored at the basketball Hall of Fame yet. Nobody was a better football play-by-play man, either."

Other Halls of Fame that have struck out: the American Sportscasters Association HOF, the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association HOF in North Carolina and the National Radio HOF in Chicago.

So far, only the Bay Area Radio Hall of Fame has it right. King was inducted in 2006.

Frick finalists

Skip Caray, Rene Cardenas, Tom Cheek, Ken Coleman, Jacques Doucet, Bill King, Tim McCarver, Graham McNamee, Eric Nadel, Mike Shannon.

The winner will be announced Dec. 6 at baseball's winter meetings.

Longtime A's fan Chip Hale to assist Bob Melvin

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Chip Hale wasn't an A's fan until he moved to Moraga. Growing up in Cupertino, Hale was a Giants fan. Then, as a student at Campolindo High, he began taking BART to watch Billy Martin's A's teams.

"When I left the Bay Area, I was an A's fan," Hale said. "And I'm coming back an A's fan."

The A's named Hale, 46, their bench coach Wednesday. He spent the past two seasons as the Mets' third-base coach and served on Oakland manager Bob Melvin's staff in Arizona, but this is his first bench-coach job.

Hale played for the Twins and Dodgers, has managed in the minor leagues and would like to manage in the majors.

"That's why this is an important job for me," Hale said. "Especially under Bob, he's been an important role model for me."

Hale's first duty will be to organize spring training, and then he will focus on improving the defense.

Melvin described Hale's strengths as "high energy and attention to detail, similar to Phil Garner."

There was thought that Garner, a special adviser to the A's the final two months of the season, might be named bench coach, but Garner is enjoying semi-retirement. It remains possible he'll return as an adviser.

Bryan Price is expected to be the top target for the pitching-coach job, though he is under contract with the Reds for next year. He was on Melvin's staffs in Seattle and Arizona.

Former Oakland pitching coach Curt Young, under contract for 2012 with Boston, could be a possibility with the departure of Red Sox manager Terry Francona.

Drumbeat: A's broadcaster Bill King named to final Frick ballot

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser, 10/5/2011 3:42pm

Bill King was again placed on the final ballot for the Ford C. Frick award via fan vote. There are 10 names on the final ballot, which is voted on by 15 former Frick winners and five broadcast historians/columnists, and the winner will be announced Dec. 6. This will be King's fifth time on the ballot.

Whenever I talk to baseball broadcasters about King's candidacy for the Hall of Fame (the Frick award winners are in the broadcast wing of the Hall), they say they are unsure if King ever will get in. The late A's, Warriors and Raiders broadcaster was too much of an all-around talent, it seems. That sounds preposterous: He was great at *everything*. Shouldn't that be an added bonus, a plus?

Nope. The various sports love their specialists. They seem almost suspicious of those who show brilliance at more than just the one sport. And there is no doubt that Bill King was brilliant at all of them – he's the best basketball announcer of all time, in my opinion. But to ding him as a Frick candidate because he wasn't just baseball? Absurd.

There also seems to be a sense that there's an "order" that broadcasters should be voted in. I often hear "It's so-and-so's turn." And geography seems to play a role – the voters like to spread the love around, and that's more than reasonable, but I get the feeling that with so many Frick winners from the Bay Area, including Lon Simmons and Jon Miller both in the past eight years, that the voters wouldn't rush to put in another local broadcaster.

I don't really care what reasons anyone wants to give: Bill King belongs in the Hall of Fame. He was sensational, and he meant a huge amount not just to A's fans, but to all Bay Area baseball fans – and football and basketball fans. He was a unique talent. That should be counted as a good thing.

In other A's news today, Chip Hale, a Bay Area native, was named bench coach, and the Drumbeat about that can be found here, one jump down in the Drumbeat queue.

Drumbeat: Chip Hale named A's bench coach

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser, 10/5/2011, 3:12pm

The A's coaching staff is taking on a real Bay Area flavor: manager Bob Melvin is from Menlo Park and he attended Cal and played for the Giants, third-base coach Mike Gallego played for the A's – and new bench coach Chip Hale, named to the position today, was born in San Jose, lived in Cupertino through eighth grade and then went to Campolindo High School in Moraga.

Hale, the Mets' third-base coach the past two seasons, calls returning to the Bay Area, "Very special."

Until his family moved to the East Bay, Hale was a Giants fan, but he switched to the A's in high school. He recalls taking BART with his buddies to see Billy Martin's A's play.

"I left the Bay Area an A's fan," Hale told me, "and I'm coming back an A's fan."

Hale, 46, played at the University of Arizona, and in the big leagues, with Minnesota and Los Angeles. He was on Melvin's staff with the Arizona Diamondbacks, and before that, he'd managed in Arizona's minor-league system, so a bench-coach job is a big step for Hale – he does have managerial aspirations and bench coach is often a springboard job to a big-league managing job.

"That's why this is an important position for me, especially under Bob," Hale said. "Bob has been a real role model for me."

Hale received a two-year contract, and Melvin said Hale will be in charge of organizing spring training, among other things. Hale mentioned improving the infield defense as a particular area of emphasis, and that's the theme Melvin has hammered home, too.

Originally, this Drumbeat included information on Bill King being named to the final Frick ballot. That's now in this Drumbeat.

Hale rejoins Melvin to be A's bench coach

Leaves Mets staff to sign two-year contract with Oakland

By / MLB.com

Chip Hale was named bench coach of the Athletics on Wednesday, moments after it was announced he would not be returning as the Mets' third-base coach.

Hale, who signed a two-year contract, replaces Joel Skinner, whose contract was not renewed.

A San Jose, Calif., native who attended Campolindo High School in Moraga, Hale previously served under A's manager Bob Melvin as third base and infield coach with the Arizona Diamondbacks from 2007-09. During that time, he played a prominent role on Arizona's 2007 club that posted a 90-72 record and captured the National League West Division championship.

A former Major League player, Hale spent seven seasons as a Minor League manager in the Arizona organization before joining Melvin.

He steered the Triple-A Tucson Sidewinders to the Pacific Coast League and Triple-A titles in 2006 with a franchise-record 91-53 mark. His 220 wins and .542 winning percentage as Tucson's manager from 2004-06 is also a franchise all-time record. He led Rookie-level Missoula to the Pioneer League's best overall mark (44-32) in 2000 and to the Northern Division's second-half championship in 2001. Hale was named the Pioneer League and Baseball America's Rookie-level Manager of the Year in 2001.

Selected in the 17th round of the 1987 draft by Minnesota, Hale spent portions of seven seasons as a player in the big leagues with the Twins (1989-90, 1993-96) and the Los Angeles Dodgers (1997). He was a .277 lifetime hitter with seven home runs and 78 RBIs in 333 games, playing five different positions as well as designated hitter, and registering a .289 (52-for-180) average as a pinch hitter.

While at the University of Arizona (1984-87), he started every game of his collegiate career in setting a record that would not be broken until 2001. Hale established school career marks for most hits and walks, and batted .345 for the 1986 Wildcats team that won the College World Series.

The A's have three coaches in place for next season, as first-base coach Tye Waller and third-base coach Mike Gallego were asked to remain in their roles. Oakland must still fill vacancies for pitching coach, hitting coach and bullpen coach.

Ford C. Frick Award finalists announced

Winner will be unveiled on Dec. 6 at Winter Meetings

By Joe Frisaro / MLB.com

Their voices have reached millions by way of broadcasting big league baseball games, but only one will be heard next year in Cooperstown.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum on Wednesday announced the 10 finalists for the prestigious 2012 Ford C. Frick Award, which is presented annually for excellence in baseball broadcasting.

In alphabetical order, the finalists are: Skip Caray, Rene Cardenas, Tom Cheek, Ken Coleman, Jacques Doucet, Bill King, Tim McCarver, Graham McNamee, Eric Nadel and Mike Shannon.

The 2012 Frick Award winner will be announced on Dec. 6 at the Winter Meetings. Induction will take place from July 20-23, 2012 in Cooperstown, N.Y.

As part of the process, three finalists were selected by the fans during online balloting in September at the **Hall of Fame's Facebook page**.

A total of 37,212 votes were cast, a record under the current voting format. The three fan choices, respectively, are Shannon, Cheek and Doucet.

The remaining seven candidates were chosen by a Hall of Fame research committee. McCarver, Nadel and Shannon are the active broadcasters on the ballot. Cardenas and Doucet are the only other living candidates among the finalists.

Final voting for the award will be conducted by a 20-member electorate, comprised of the 15 living Frick Award recipients and five broadcast historians/columnists, including past Frick honorees Marty Brennaman, Jerry Coleman, Gene Elston, Joe Garagiola, Jaime Jarrin, Milo Hamilton, Tony Kubek, Denny Matthews, Jon Miller, Felo Ramirez, Vin Scully, Lon Simmons, Bob Uecker, Dave Van Horne and Bob Wolff; and historians/columnists Bob Costas (NBC), Barry Horn (Dallas Morning News), Stan Isaacs (formerly of Newsday), Ted Patterson (historian) and Curt Smith (historian).

Van Horne was the 2011 Frick Award winner.

Caray broadcast Braves games on TBS for 33 years; Cardenas helped create the first Spanish-language MLB broadcast in 1958 with the Dodgers, working a total of 38 years for the Dodgers, Astros and Rangers; Cheek broadcast 31 Major League seasons covering the Montreal Expos (1974-'76) and Toronto Blue Jays (1977-2004); Coleman spent 35 years with the Indians (1954-63), Reds (1975-78) and Red Sox (1966-74, 79-89); Doucet spent his entire 34-year career broadcasting for the Expos as the play-by-play radio voice on their French network (1969-2004); King worked for 25 seasons (1981-2005) as the A's lead play-by-play voice on radio; McCarver has broadcast for 31 seasons, the last 16 for Fox TV on its national broadcast, and he has a string of 21 seasons working the postseason; McNamee was a national pioneer in sports broadcasting, calling games for 13 seasons for Westinghouse and NBC, also calling 12 World Series; Nadel has spent the last 33 seasons with the Rangers, the longest tenure of any announcer in franchise history, and Shannon has called Cardinals games for 40 years following a nine-year playing career in St. Louis.

Frick Award voters look at a number of criteria, including longevity, continuity with a club, honors, national assignments such as the World Series and All-Star Games, and popularity with fans.

To be considered, an active or retired broadcaster must have a minimum of 10 years of continuous Major League broadcast service with a ballclub, network or a combination of the two.

Bill King a finalist for Ford C. Frick Award

CSNBayArea.com staff

The Baseball Hall of Fame announced today that legendary A's broadcaster Bill King is a finalist for the 2012 Ford C. Frick Award.

The award is presented annually for excellence in baseball broadcasting by the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum.

Greg Papa, Comcast SportsNet Bay Area broadcaster and former A's play-by-play man offered high praise of King at the time of his death in 2005:

"Bill is without a doubt the best radio play-by-play announcer I have heard in all of sports. His energy, preparation, his thoroughness, his word choice -- he is without peer."

The 10 finalists for the 2012 Frick Award are: Skip Caray, Rene Cardenas, Tom Cheek, Ken Coleman, Jacques Doucet, Bill King, Tim McCarver, Graham McNamee, Eric Nadel and Mike Shannon.

The winner will be announced on December 6 at the Baseball Winter Meetings and honored during Hall of Fame Weekend, July 20-23, 2012 in Cooperstown, NY.

Final voting will be conducted by a 20-member electorate, comprised of the 15 living Frick Award recipients and five broadcast historians/columnists, including: Marty Brennaman, Jerry Coleman, Gene Elston, Joe Garagiola, Jaime Jarrin, Milo Hamilton, Tony Kubek, Denny Matthews, Jon Miller, Felo Ramirez, Vin Scully, Lon Simmons, Bob Uecker, 2011 Frick Award winner Dave Van Horne and Bob Wolff, and historians/columnists Bob Costas (NBC), Barry Horn (Dallas Morning News), Stan Isaacs (formerly of NY Newsday), Ted Patterson (historian) and Curt Smith (historian).

Just Sayin': Another lost season in Oakland

by Jeremy Walsh, Lake County Record-Bee

Oakland Athletics fans and officials will look back at 2011 with mixed feelings.

The team failed on the field, finishing 74-88 and 22 games behind the American League West champion Texas Rangers, but has gotten more exposure than it has in decades with the release of the film version of "Moneyball."

The movie, which stars Brad Pitt as general manager Billy Beane, chronicles the 2002 A's team that shocked baseball purists by winning 103 games while trying to reinvent the way teams evaluate players.

The film is actually really good, and the team probably hoped the late-September release would coincide with an A's run to the postseason.

Unfortunately, the on-the-field product didn't live up to expectations and reminded fans that no Beane team (even the lauded 2002 group) has won a World Series.

So, A's officials are left in the same position they were in during the opening minutes of "Moneyball:" trying to figure out what went wrong last season and how to address free agency next season.

Beane's 2011 A's showed bright spots and glaring deficiencies.

Oakland had another strong pitching year, ranking 10th in ERA and batting average against, seventh in quality starts and fourth in shutouts.

But the offense struggled, a theme during the team's streak of five consecutive non-winning seasons. Oakland finished 20th in runs, 22nd in on-base percentage (.311), 24th in batting average (.244) and 25th in slugging (.369): all low totals that make it difficult to win in the AL.

The A's also had the second-most errors in baseball (124), a surprising twist for a traditionally respectable defensive team.

The poor offense and awful defense trumped the good pitching, which was a shame considering the year some A's hurlers had.

Gio Gonzalez led the starting staff with a career-best 16-12 record, finishing with a 3.12 ERA and 197 strikeouts.

Offseason acquisition Grant Balfour (5-2 with a 2.47 ERA in 62 innings) ended the year as one of the best relievers in baseball and closer Andrew Bailey had decent results (3.24 ERA with 24 saves) after missing the first couple months because of injury.

There were some frustrations on the mound though.

Trevor Cahill, who signed an extension early in the season, regressed during an inconsistent year (12-14 with a 4.16 ERA and 1.43 WHIP). Reliever Brian Fuentes (2-8 with three blown saves) cost the A's many early-season wins as replacement closer.

Injuries also forced the A's to underuse effective starters Brett Anderson (13 games), Dallas Braden (three games) and Rich Harden (15 games).

The A's offense had similar disparities, though more hitters had bad years.

Free-agent-to-be Josh Willingham had a stellar season, ranking 25th in home runs (29) and 20th in RBI (98) and giving the A's a power hitter for the first time since Frank Thomas in 2006.

Shortstop Cliff Pennington and designated hitter Hideki Matsui both finished with good results after rough first halves (hitting .303 and .295, respectively, after the All-Star break).

Rookie second baseman Jemile Weeks was the biggest surprise for the A's. The mid-season call-up hit .303 with a .340 on-base percentage, 50 runs, 26 doubles and eight triples in 97 games.

Then again, Weeks' success only serves as a reminder of Oakland's offensive struggles because he wouldn't have entered the lineup if opening-day second baseman Mark Ellis didn't get hurt while hitting around the Mendoza line.

Ellis wasn't the only inefficient starting infielder. In fact, opening-day first baseman Daric Barton and third baseman Kevin Kouzmanoff both got demoted because of awful play, and now all three are out of the equation.

Starting catcher Kurt Suzuki (.237 with 14 homers and 44 RBI) and right fielder David DeJesus (.240 with 10 homers and 46 RBI) also had down years.

The inconsistent hitting plagued the A's all season - and ultimately cost head coach Bob Geren his job in early June.

Now, the A's have a lot of questions as the offseason begins, especially with pending free agents Willingham, Matsui and Coco Crisp, and an outside chance Beane might decide to leave Oakland.

Some answers appear simple (like having consistent hitters and playing better defense), but A's fans need to hope the solutions begin to arrive during the next six months.

Here are a few year-end stats to consider:

- * The A's were 39-53 before the All-Star break and 35-35 after.
- * They were OK at home (43-38) but awful on the road (31-50).
- * The same goes for during the day (32-31) and at night (42-57).
- * All six infield positions made double-digit errors, including 28 at third, 26 at short and 19 for pitchers.
- * The A's scored 210 fewer runs than first-place Texas.
- * September (14-12) was the team's only winning month.

(Stats from ESPN.com)

Oakland A's GM Billy Beane, Post-Moneyball, Visits Athletics Nation - Part II

by Tyler Bleszinski, Athletics Nation 10/6/2011

Yesterday was the first part of the Billy Beane exclusive for Athletics Nation. Today you get part 2 where Billy delves into Moneyball, the minor league system and where he actually was for that mammoth 20th consecutive win.

Remember the conclusion hits Friday morning.

Tyler Bleszinski: If you were to grade each aspect of the team in 2011, how would they do - from bullpen to starting pitching, from the offense to the defense?

Billy Beane: Oh heavens Tyler, you don't expect me to answer that? That's what the pundits do at the end of the year, there's no sense in us chiming in. I think the sum of the parts, for some of the reasons we talked about earlier, wasn't what anyone would have wanted it to be. But if you look at individual performances, some have been what you would have hoped or expected. Just talking about some of the individuals, a guy like Josh Willingham, as we stand now 28 homers (29 now), close to 100 RBIs, I think that was certainly as much or more than we expected when we brought him over here. Brandon McCarthy has been a real find for us as he's been outstanding. I think Grant Balfour has been outstanding. He's done everything we've expected him to do after Brian (Fuentes) had a tough go there for a couple of weeks, but he sort of settled down and pitched very well. So the sum didn't work; some individual parts exceeded expectations. Understand that there were some significant changes when you look at Daric's year, not only the start he had but missing the rest of the year due to the injury. And Jemile (Weeks) coming up, I'm pleasantly surprised and while we all recognized his talent, I'm pleasantly surprised at how quickly he's adapted from an offensive standpoint. He truly has a chance to be a very, very exciting player in this league and for him to be doing what he's doing when I think that everybody expected him to spend the whole year at Triple-A, has been a very, very pleasant surprise. You know Sizemore wasn't exactly an expected acquire, but we were happy to get him and he's made the transition to third and still going through the growing pains, essentially his rookie year playing every day. But I think there is some hope there. But at the risk of going on about every single guy, I think that there have been some individual things that have been very good and as expected, but the sum of the parts because of some reason or another didn't work.

TB: You seem to have an ability, and I don't know whether it's strictly you or the organization as a whole, but regardless of how, the A's have an ability and maybe it's the ballpark that you guys pitch in, as well, but you seem to have an ability to put together a quality young pitching staff and bring in guys that are quality. Why do you think you guys have been able to be successful in repeatedly seemingly re-stocking great starting pitching? I mean you lose Hudson, Mulder, Zito, and now you've got an assortment of Cahill, Anderson, Gio, Dallas, you seem to be able to replenish that much more easily than the bats have been able to come. Why do you think you guys are so good at identifying starting pitching and getting them in there?

BB: If you do this job long enough, you end up being good at one thing and bad at another, and then it flip flops. When I first took this job, and I've said this many times, we hadn't developed a starting pitcher since Curt Young, so I do think you do run through some streaks in the organization. One of the things we realized with pitching - it sounds redundant - is you can never have too much pitching, but it's actually true. And we've lost some guys through injury; some of our best prospects have fallen to injury, significant injury. Certainly Brett and Dallas, but if you go down to the minor leagues, our best pitching prospects, Josh Outman we lost for a year, Joey Devine we lost for a year, Michael Inoa we lost for a year, as well. Even though we have some good ones, we should have more. And we didn't lose them for a month or two. But as to why we've had more pitching than another aspect of the team, some of it is just that we did focus on pitching when we made some trades because we realized that in this marketplace, you're going to have to draft or trade for it. But the idea that you're going to bring in a sort of veteran free-agent pitchers to put together a competitive staff is just probably not going to happen. You look at the small market teams that have had success; they've all built their pitching internally. Tampa Bay is a very recent example of that. Once again, I think it's in streaks. We focused on position players in the first round the last couple of years, save for this year when we took Sonny Gray, who we thought was the best player on the board. We feel very good about the progress of Grant (Green), Michael Choice and Jemile Weeks.

TB: How do you feel about the (minor league) system right now?

BB: There are some individuals that I think are good. I do believe injuries have had an impact. There are some very, very good pitching prospects we lost for a long time. The good thing is that they are a year off surgery so they should have an impact soon. We saw Josh come back this year after two years and I think he's just now getting his feet underneath him and he's starting to pitch like he did before he was hurt. Once again, you add those guys to the system. Michael Choice had a phenomenal year, I think we're all very, very pleased with what he did. Listen, I don't think we're at the spot we probably would like to be and we're probably not in a spot that's going to be able to sustain creating a group of players that are going to put you in a division race within the next year or two. We still have a long way to go is the quickest way of saying it.

TB: How do you feel about 2012 right now? Especially with the offense - I mean, the pitching seems like it's going to be there again in 2012 outside of missing a talent like Brett Anderson for probably, well, who knows at this point? I don't want to speculate. But how do you feel about the year, because the pitching should still be there? How challenging will it be for you to get an offense to support the pitching?

BB: We know how challenging it would be because we've tried it in years past to attract players and it's not just the compensation, its other factors involved as well. So, I think the answer we need to get in terms of where we're going will dictate what direction we go to. If I look at the teams in the division, Texas is very, very good and it's no surprise to be honest with you because they have spent a long time investing in their infrastructure going back six or seven years ago, where they bit the bullet and invested in Latin America significantly, invested in the draft at a higher rate than the rest of us. And right now, you're seeing the results of that. So, if we're ultimately going to compete with them on a year-by-year basis, we're going to have to do the same. And that means continuing - which we've done at a higher rate, but probably not the rate we need to - investing internationally. It means investing more money in the draft because that's where we're going to create a team that has a chance to win year after year, as opposed to putting something together that when one domino falls, the rest fall as well. In the early part of the decade, we could lose a guy due to an injury because there was so much talent around, and it was young talent that was going to be there year after year. We're not in that position now. I think, to get to that position, we're going to have to invest in those areas as opposed to investing in major league free agents who are going to be here a year or two at the age of 30 something. But if you're standing at one spot you might take a different approach. If you're staying here, then you might take it year by year and do things differently. Which is it's so critical to get a decision as to what we're going to be doing here in the next couple of years.

TB: It sounds like from what you're saying and somebody wrote this - I forget where, it was maybe the Mercury News - but somebody basically said that if you guys decide to go to San Jose, that the decision has already been made, and I don't know whether he had inside information from you or what...

BB: I'm not really big on sourcing, Tyler. But one thing about us is that we have a pretty tight-lipped group. The source thing usually isn't accurate.

TB: He speculated that if you guys get the decision that you're going to move to San Jose, you will immediately basically have a fire sale, get rid of all your more expensive talent and build toward 2015, or whenever it is, but if you're staying in Oakland you're obviously going to try to be competitive year to year until you guys can get a stadium there. Does that seem like an accurate representation?

BB: Yeah, although probably a little dramatic on the fire sale part. But once again, probably the simplest way I can put it is if you're going down South, you're certainly going to take a different approach than if you're staying here. Once again, I think it's important for us to get a decision because until we do, it doesn't make much sense to commit either way.

TB: You've probably have never been in the news as much as you have this month. You obviously have Moneyball out, so there's a whole new audience of people that have probably never heard of you before that are going to suddenly learn who Billy Beane is. There also happens to be a lot of rumors right now that you're the frontrunner to become the new general manager for the Chicago Cubs. Is it a little strange for you to be kind of thrust into the national spotlight this way?

BB: Well, that's the good thing about not reading the news a lot, as this is all news to me. Every GM in all 30 markets, you're in a public position so it's not like it is completely overwhelming or completely foreign to me. But certainly when you combine the movie recently - it certainly puts everything at a higher level. But I think at some point that will subside and sort of go onto the next thing. It wasn't like it just came out of nowhere. So I think myself and everybody around me has had some time to adjust and kind of get used to it. I certainly have gotten some calls and emails from some people that I wouldn't have expected.

TB: Such as?

BB: No one individual. Maybe it's just the numbers is probably a better way of saying it.

TB: There's nobody that would blow you away and would say, "Wow, I wouldn't have expected to hear from this person?"

BB: Let me think...

TB: I guess when you're hanging out with Brad Pitt and Tony Blair, probably nobody can blow you away.

BB: Well, I sort of personally have never been really star struck in a sense that way. I sort of take everyone and everything at face value. So I never really get star struck. I think it's more the number, and people I haven't heard from in years, in a good way. Friends that maybe I grew up with when I was very young or people I played with in the minor leagues, things like that.

TB: What did you think of the movie?

BB: It's a little surreal as you can imagine (*Editor's note - No, no I can not imagine*). I've seen it enough times so that I was de-sensitized and I think as I told Brad, "Hey, if it wasn't about me I would love it!" It was entertaining, but once again when you're watching a Brad Pitt movie and then you hear your name, it kind of snaps you back. I've seen so many different cuts and ultimately seen the final cut so many times that I was able to look at it as it was, which is a movie. And I think the best people around me, including people like yourself, and people who have seen it since it has come out have all seemed to enjoy it and that's a good thing.

TB: Obviously they took quite a few creative liberties with certain things. Is anything true to life like in the backroom interactions that you see? I'm thinking particularly of the scenes between you and Art Howe. In many people's opinion, Art didn't get a really good representation in the movie. But how true to life were some of those interactions?

BB: Well, anticipating this question from the very beginning, my response has always been - the parts you liked were true and the parts you didn't like were not true (laughs). The fact of the matter is that it's a movie, you know. It is a movie produced by somebody, directed by somebody, written by somebody, edited by somebody and that somebody wasn't me. But it's a movie. And so if you look at it through the lens of a movie, certainly the term "based on a true story" gives it some attempt at truth, but also remember the word "based." To go over it point-by-point, I don't really see the need nor would I have the time to do that.

TB: I'm not asking you to do that.

BB: No, I know and I'm not saying that you're asking. I sort of knew that it would be like pushing a boulder up a hill. You have to recognize that it was a movie based upon a non-fiction book.

TB: I think it was a tough job turning that into a movie. Michael's book to me didn't tend to lend itself to a movie, but I think they did an excellent job obviously fictionalizing some things. Just curious trying to figure out if anything that happened in the back rooms was kind of like something that was portrayed. I mean, can you at least answer that? Was anything that happened in the back room accurate?

BB: You answer one, you answer all. I think if anything, they captured the environment, I think is the best way to say it.

TB: The mentality?

BB: Yeah. I'm not sure that would be the right word, but the feel of the movie, the feel of the clubhouse, the feel of the meetings, the feel of the conversations you have, is probably the most general way I could say it. I thought they did a good job of doing that. And listen, they're making a movie and I thought they did a good job of taking the subject matter that you mentioned and turning it into something that was entertaining and thoughtful.

TB: Did you get emotional at all watching it? Particularly the 20th win...

BB: Yes. The first time I saw it, it was very nostalgic and the 20th win - I actually enjoyed the movie version more than the real life version. It wasn't nearly as enjoyable in real life because of the way the Angels were playing. We NEEDED to win every game. So in a sense, I don't think that any of us who were here really appreciated what that team had accomplished. So watching it come out again, it's hard to believe a) it happened and b) I finally did get to enjoy it. So that definitely was part of my reaction. I think every time I see it, I never get tired of seeing the father/daughter scenes, just because that was certainly a part of my life at the time and continues to be.

TB: What did Casey (Beane's daughter) think of it? Just out of curiosity, did she enjoy it?

BB: Yes, she did actually. She really did. She was off at college, so the first time for her to see it was actually at the premiere and she really enjoyed it and my brother loved it and it passed my mom's test, which was the most difficult. It was a neat environment at the premiere in Oakland. It was really a unique setting to premiere a movie where you have people that have some emotion invested on what's going on in the screen. I think many of the people I heard from, like some of the actors, said it was by far one of the best premieres they've ever been to.

TB: *Oh, that's great.*

BB: Yeah, it's neat. I had never been to one so I didn't really know what to expect.

TB: *You brought your mom and your daughter?*

BB: Yes, Casey and her roommate from college came out, and my brother flew out and my mother was here. There were a lot of friends and there are a number of people you run into that I've known for a long, long time and that I consider friends.

TB: *How many random interview request have you received since the movie came out? What are maybe some of the strangest ones?*

BB: There's been a lot, to say the least. It was difficult for Bob Rose (A's PR director), even leading up to the movie and you had to be a little bit selfish with your time. And there was no way I was going to fulfill all of them, nor did I really have the desire to. As I said long ago, even to Sony when they started making this thing a couple of years ago, listen my priority is my job and so you're just going to have to work around that. As it related to the interviews, I took the same approach. There was no way I was going to be able to do every interview and every request and at some point Bob had to send them to Sony to handle and screen because it was too much for Bob to handle, as well. Hopefully, that will subside; at least as we speak today, today (Monday after the movie came out on Friday) hasn't really been as bad on that front.

TB: *I can imagine...or maybe not.*

BB: Except for this Athletics Nation thing, which I enjoy doing.

TB: *That guy's totally monopolizing your time.*

BB: The thing is that there's a normal kind of cycle and there's normal people you talk to by virtue of the position I have and I have that responsibility. When you have interviews that you're doing that have nothing to do with your job and really nothing to do with the A's, that's when you start to get a little selfish about your time.

TB: *What? You don't want to chat with Access Hollywood?*

BB: They haven't requested, but I did have to take the approach on many of these that if there is no benefit to me in my job or the Oakland A's, then I'm just not going to do it.

TB: *I'm sure you've gotten this question a couple of times - as a matter of fact, I think I saw it in an article that was written in Athletics magazine - but I would certainly like to know how much you think you have evolved since that time period that Moneyball is based on. From what we were discussing earlier, you still seem like you're the hypercompetitive guy who hates losing. So, do you find that with yourself, and how much have you changed since the time frame of the movie?*

BB: Yeah, I would say that I'm probably a little more patient. But I think that's because one thing that I've always recognized is that when you have a very good, talented team then it's very easy to push and drive, because the self-esteem of everybody is very high because they know they're very good. You have to be careful doing that if you don't have a team that's on the same level, you know what I'm saying? At that point, you probably don't help their self-esteem, if that makes any sense. So you have to make sure that you're very careful and you're productive with your own ambitions and the ambitions you have for the team. You have to be careful that the talent level can match those and so you have to adjust accordingly.

TB: *How do you feel about your team now? You mentioned the strength of the team around you and I think that when I interviewed you a while back, I asked you what the best decision you made was and you said, Paul Depodesta. How do you feel about your team now? The people around you now, compared to the time period of the movie?*

BB: Well, I think it's great because in the baseball operations, the same people that were there then are here now. The exception here and there is those that have gotten promotions and things like that outside of the organization. So no, the same people here in many cases have been through the cycle not just once but a couple of times. We've got a group of people in director's positions that were a part of the '89 championship team and a part of the run we had at the early part of this decade. I felt good about them then and I feel great about them now. But you know at some

point that group, and every business needs to have something to work with and right now I think we're very much hamstrung by what's going on.

TB: When is the last time you threw a chair or toppled a desk?

BB: I've never toppled a desk, that I'll tell you. And any object coming from my hand, it's been a long, long time.

TB: Good to know. Did you have a chance to chat with Paul Depodesta about things and like, I know Peter Brand was mostly kind of...

BB: A homogenized character.

TB: Yeah, really truly not Paul.

BB: No, it was more of a homogenized character of a type that was coming into the game at that point. But yeah, I talked to Paul, you know we keep in touch; he's with the Mets now. He had just seen the movie for the first time last week and he's been traveling a lot. His new duties require him to do a lot of traveling. He's been commuting back and forth to San Diego, and I don't get to talk to him nearly as much as I used to because of his schedule, but we certainly keep in touch as I do with J.P. (Ricciardi) He's over there, too.

TB: Do you guys reminisce about that time?

BB: We said the same thing: both of us thought that you do kind of forget the caliber of the players that were on that team and in many cases, they're still playing today. Which is a real testament to how good they really were and continue to be for a long, long time. Between Johnny Damon and the other guys who left, I mean you're talking about that era, Damon, Giambi, those guys are still playing today, Hudson, and it's a testament to how good they were and are in some cases. I think we both sort of said the same thing, I don't think any of us enjoyed that 20-game win streak the way you think you would because of how well the Angels were playing. It was nice to see it and be relaxed and it's still hard to believe it turned out the way it turned out when you think of Hatte coming in and hitting that homerun after blowing an 11-0 lead.

TB: Did you actually leave and then come back like the movie illustrated?

BB: That was a strange night. You have to remember if you could put a GPS on most games with me, you would see this trail everywhere. That night was so long if you recall. Here's the interesting thing about my workout: when we were hitting a bunch of homeruns and scoring a bunch of runs, my workout would go to a certain point that I would have plenty of time to get ready. When we started leading the league in pitching in the most recent teams and we didn't score any runs, I would really have to rush to get my workout in. But that game was so long. I remember us being done with my workout about the third or fourth inning and not knowing what to do with myself for five innings as it turned out for a long, long time, so I was in a number of spots. And I remember that the final spot where I actually was in the manager's office because there really is nowhere to go. We have a box we can go to but it's not really easy to get to, you have to go through the stands and everything. I don't remember where I was when the game finished to be honest with you, but I remember spending a large portion of the time in the manager's office behind closed doors, just in there watching this whole thing unfold. But when it actually ended, I can't even remember where I was.

TB: Wow.

BB: Yeah, I wasn't really around for the hoopla when we actually won and all this stuff was going on. I was somewhere. I always try to avoid the hoopla when it's going on anyway.