

## A's News Clips, Thursday, October 13, 2011

### Drumbeat: Astros Coming to AL West?

Al Saracevic, San Francisco Chronicle, 10/12/2011, 12.24pm

A's fans, the Houston Astros might be coming to your town.

Like it or not.

As part of baseball's grand plan to realign its divisions and form two 15-team leagues, a likely scenario would be for the Astros to move from the six-team National League Central to the four-team American League West. Talk of an Astros league change has been ongoing for months, and Peter Gammons tweeted today a decision would come in November.

That would leave all six divisions with five teams, a fairer alignment that the players' union has preferred. It would put both Texas teams in the one league — in fact, one division — and set up a bunch of games at the Coliseum between the A's and Astros.

It might not sound too exciting, considering the Astros were the majors' worst team in 2011, losers of 106 games. Plus, in the past couple of years, they dumped many of their top players, including Hunter Pence, Lance Berkman, Michael Bourn, Roy Oswalt and Jeff Keppinger.

But it's probably the easiest scenario for baseball's decision-makers. The Astros are being sold, and Major League Baseball virtually can force the issue on new owner Jim Crane, who's buying the club from Drayton McLane for \$680 million, with a Nov. 30 deadline.

For the record, a Crane spokesperson told the Houston Chronicle there haven't been discussions about a move to the AL.

With 15-team leagues, an interleague game is required daily, and that surfaces a whole different debate on the designated hitter. There's also Commissioner Bud Selig's proposal to add a fifth playoff team (one extra wild card in each league) to the mix, which will gain more steam with the collective bargaining agreement expiring on Dec. 11.

With the Giants, A's and all other big-league teams releasing their 2012 schedules in recent weeks, the Astros-to-the-AL West plan wouldn't take effect until at least 2013.

Maybe by then, the Astros will be able to put up more of a fight.

### Inbox: Rebuilding awaits stadium decision

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

**What direction do you think the 2012 A's will take? Do you think they'll let their young prospects take the reins, or will it be a similar team to this year, with a mix of veterans and young players? I'd like to see Michael Taylor, Chris Carter and Grant Green get a legitimate shot at starting.**

**-- Mike W., Alameda, Calif.**

These questions could be more easily answered if the A's were awarded a stadium decision. The organization's hope is that it gets the green light to build a stadium in San Jose, and if that happens, the club would automatically enter rebuilding mode.

During that span, which could last three to five years, the focus would primarily be on player development so that a contending team could be created by the time the new stadium opens. In that scenario, most of the veterans who donned green and gold this year -- the Josh Willingham and Coco Crisps -- would likely take their free-agent status elsewhere, and the Taylors and Carters would be handed starting roles.

But the A's still don't know when the stadium issue will be resolved, and Willingham and Crisp will probably garner attractive offers, so I see both of their returns as rather iffy.

**I keep hearing general manager Billy Beane say that a decision will "soon" be made on the ballpark issue. "Soon" is a relative, general term. I like specifics. What is the time frame?**  
-- Richard D., Tucson, Ariz.

Unfortunately, "soon" is the only time frame that exists right now. Beane has surely heard the word before, and never without a resolution, but he seems to believe it this time. However, it's been 31 months -- yes, almost three years -- since a committee was appointed to analyze the stadium situation, and I'm not sure the recent and repeated usage of the word "soon" is all that reassuring for fans, since there are no other indications that anything is close.

**If the A's get the OK to move to San Jose and go into rebuild mode, would they look to trade Trevor Cahill and Gio Gonzalez to take advantage of such a small free-agent market for starting pitchers?**  
-- Blake D., San Francisco

No. I very much see Cahill and Gonzalez as part of the rebuilding process, especially given the fact that both have the potential to enter the prime stages of their respective careers at around the same time the new stadium would likely open. The rebuilding process doesn't always equate to a clean slate, and a team such as the A's still needs to draw fans to the Coliseum during that process. They would be building around the likes of Cahill and Gonzalez rather than on top of them.

**Why do the A's seem so reluctant to give Carter a full-time job and finally see what he can do as an everyday player in the Majors? It doesn't look like he has anything left to prove as a hitter at Triple-A.**  
-- Jason L., Concord, Calif.

I believe the A's do want to give Carter an extended look but just don't know where he fits into the long-term puzzle. Yes, he really doesn't have much else to prove at Triple-A, but the A's, who aren't ready to hand a rookie full-time designated hitter duties, have yet to see his full worth as a defender. He's extremely shaky in the field, making it hard to decide where exactly he belongs. For much of the 2010 season, they had him manning the outfield in Triple-A, and that experiment didn't equate to a good showing in the Majors. Then, when Carter got off to a slow start offensively in Sacramento this season, they transferred him back to his natural first-base position in hopes the move would also give him confidence on the offensive side. But even there he doesn't appear completely comfortable, and the A's already have first-base options in Brandon Allen and Daric Barton come spring. With the possible return of Hideki Matsui at DH, Carter may land in the outfield should the A's take the youth route next year.

**What teams are some of the A's playing for in the Winter Leagues, and how can we keep up with them?**  
-- Armando M., Lockeford, Calif.

Allen is embarking on his first winter ball appearance with Estrellas Orientales in the Dominican Republic. Right-hander Graham Godfrey is pitching in the same league, with Leones del Escogido, and catching prospect Josh Donaldson might be joining him. In addition, Adam Rosales is returning to the Mexican Winter League for a one-month stint with Mexicali before his November wedding. You can keep track of their performances, along with those playing in the Arizona Fall League, [here](#).

**Terdoslavich knocks in four in Saguaros' win**

**Braves prospect delivers bases-loaded triple in sixth-inning rally**

By Danny Wild / MLB.com

Joey Terdoslavich was the king of doubles in the Minor Leagues this season, so it's only appropriate that he's working hard and taking the extra base in Arizona.

The Braves prospect's bases-loaded triple in the sixth inning on Wednesday was the knockout blow for Surprise as the Saguaros defeated the Phoenix Desert Dogs, 5-3, in the Arizona Fall League.

Terdoslavich also doubled and drove in all but one of the Saguaros' runs.

"Normally, I like to take first the pitch every at-bat, but that situation was a little different," said Terdoslavich, who broke a 65-year-old Carolina League record with 52 doubles for Class A Advanced Lynchburg. "In those types of

situations, with a runner on third and less than two outs, you're looking for something up early I can drive to the outfield, get the run in.

"The first pitch was a fastball up in the zone and I just put a good swing on it," he said. "The center fielder [Anthony Gose] overran it a little and it hit off the wall, so I was able to get into third."

The switch-hitting first baseman got Surprise ahead early with an RBI double off A's right-hander Tyson Ross in the first inning. It was his third two-bagger in four AFL games.

"When I hit it, I had a 1-1 fastball up and away, and I missed it a little, got under a little," Terdoslavich said. "The left fielder [Rob Segedin] was going back on it and lost it in the sun a little, it hit off the middle of the wall. I hit it pretty good."

After his triple gave Surprise a 4-3 lead in the sixth, Terdoslavich trotted home on a base hit by Rays first-round pick Mikie Mahtook.

"They were playing the infield in," he said. "It was a hard chopper in the hole, their shortstop [Dusty Coleman] was at full extension, but he couldn't get to it. He hit it good. We're just staying with our approach and got some good pitches to hit, put some runs together."

For Terdoslavich, a 2010 sixth-round pick, the invitation to Arizona is a chance to work on his defense at a few other positions. A first baseman, he said he's worked at both infield corners this fall as well as the outfield before games.

"It's great so far, especially being on a winning team," the 23-year-old said. "We have a great bunch of guys, personalities, just great players on every team. It's a great league so far."

Terdoslavich is coming off a season in which he hit .286 with 20 homers and 82 RBIs. He ranked fourth in the Braves' system in RBIs and fifth in homers. The Carolina League midseason and postseason All-Star led the Minors in doubles as one of only two players to accumulate at least 50.

Terdoslavich is joined in the Surprise lineup by fellow Braves farmhands Christian Bethancourt and Todd Cunningham along with four Atlanta pitching prospects. He's determined to make the most of his time in the league.

"I'm just working on my approach when I'm out here, my approach offensively, refining my defense a little bit," he said. "[I want to] learn first base a little better and I'm taking fly balls in the outfield, at third. Just any way I can get better out here, any way I can take advantage, that's the whole reason we're here."

Rays right-hander Marquis Fleming (1-0) got the win in relief, throwing two scoreless innings after starter Neil Ramirez (Rangers) allowed a run on three hits over four frames.

Alejandro Ramos (Marlins) walked a batter and hit another in the ninth before striking out the Yankees' Corban Joseph to record his first save.

Ross went two innings and held Surprise to a run on two hits. Blue Jays southpaw Evan Crawford (0-1) took the loss after surrendering four runs on five hits over two frames.

Kevin Ahrens (Blue Jays), Gose (Blue Jays) and Joseph drove in the runs for Phoenix.

### **Pitcher Brandon McCarthy, Writer Jennifer Engel in Twitter War**

By Larry Brown, [Baseball](#), [Media News](#)

[Oakland A's pitcher Brandon McCarthy and sports writer Jennifer Engel got into a Twitter war after the writer took a seemingly unprompted shot at the pitcher.](#)

[While watching Game 3 of the ALCS Tuesday, Engel observed of Tigers pitcher Doug Fister, "Looking at tall and skinny Fister reminds me of Brandon McCarthy, except well Fister can actually pitch."](#)

[When McCarthy learned of the tweet, he retweeted it to his followers. Then he responded "Remember kids- when unable to write clearly or eloquently to defend an unoriginal premise- resort to cheap shots!"](#)

McCarthy's fans began to defend the pitcher to Engel, and her response was "yay, he did not suck w/As. For Rangers, epic fail that cost them good young L.

"Love Moneyball, love Billy Beane, really do. Problem in baseball when fans championing FIPs instead of Ws, stats instead of championships," Engel wrote. "Two final things. Yes McCarthy was better which is like being the tallest midget. And injury is coming, almost guarantee it.

"Love this banter, just unfair to call me anti-stat. I am not, firm believer in Moneyball principles. I am anti-McCarthy," she wrote.

Engel seemed to argue that McCarthy was not a good pitcher because his team did not make the playoffs. McCarthy had the best season of his career, going 9-9 with five complete games, 170.2 IP, and a 3.32 ERA. He also exhibited the best control of his career, posting nearly a 5:1 strikeout-to-walk ratio. Her argument made little sense, and McCarthy called her on that point.

He said that by her logic, Michael Young was not a good player until last year because he had never previously reached the playoffs. He topped it by saying saying "I'm not mad at this on a personal level. I'm mad that you can't defend your statements well enough to justify making them."

Judges declare McCarthy the winner by technical knockout. He may have a future in sports writing, or broadcasting when he's done with baseball. (Which will be sooner rather than later, according to Engel.)