

## A's News Clips, Monday, October 17, 2011

### Old Raiders, 2007 Warriors more moneyball than A's

Scott Ostler, San Francisco Chronicle

With all due respect to **Billy Beane** - who has just signed to play the role of **Brad Pitt** in a movie about the making of "Moneyball" - the 2002 A's were not the first moneyball team in the East Bay, nor the moneyball-iest.

The Raiders were the first and the Warriors the most.

**Al Davis** practically invented moneyball, defined as building a team using undervalued and overlooked assets. During the Raiders' glory days, Davis scooped up the head cases and rebels without causes, sprinkled in discards and has-beens, and won.

Black offensive linemen were undervalued in the '70s because some football geniuses thought the O-line was too cerebral for black players. Davis played **Gene Upshaw** and **Art Shell** and blew up the old-school thinking.

Davis hired undervalued coaches, because they worked cheap and usually took orders from him. Several of them directed the Raiders to Super Bowls.

Davis' system broke down in recent years because too many of his beloved knuckleheads couldn't or wouldn't play football. But Al's moneyball was fun and effective while it lasted.

The We-Believe Warriors of 2006-07 were way more moneyball than the 2002 A's, whose undervalued players had only supporting roles. The team was powered by stars - **Miguel Tejada**, **Eric Chavez**, the Three Aces.

As for the Warriors, the heart of that team was pure moneyball riffraff: **Baron Davis** was available because he had a bad back and a bad 'tude, **Stephen Jackson** was available because he was shooting up strip clubs, and **Don Nelson** was available because he was old and retired.

The Warriors mined the D-League that season more artfully than any playoff team before or since.

So why didn't Hollywood make a movie out of the Raiders or Warriors? Because Brad Pitt couldn't roll with the Al Davis or **Chris Mullin** hairdos.

### **Knuckleheads of the week: Baseball writers**

**Lance Berkman** is the NL Comeback Player of the Year? That, mlb.com writers, is a whiff.

**Ryan Vogelsong** came back from the other side of the world, geographically (Japan), and from the other side of the universe, emotionally. Don't you guys watch Showtime?

Berkman had a fine season after shedding 20 pounds last winter. So what he came back from was being fat.

Vogelsong's comeback was from the baseball equivalent of living in a cardboard refrigerator box.

### **Deep thoughts, cheap shots & bon mots ...**

-- **Tim Lincecum** is accused of trashing and looting his leased townhouse in the Mission, possibly the fallout of some crazy party. I'm torn. I don't know whether to hope Lincecum didn't tear that place apart, or hope he did.

-- At least Timmy didn't have his crazy parties in the clubhouse, during games.

-- The Raiders had 12 men on the field one play Sunday, and 10 on another play. Coach **HueJax** should make his coaches and players watch the "Sesame Street" episode sponsored by the Number 11.

-- Can't the Raiders paste bar codes on the players' helmets and have 'em run under a scanner when they check in and out of the game?

-- Lions coach **Jim Schwartz**, after last Sunday's win: "We'll start (preparing for) San Fran in about an hour and a half." San Fran? That kind of disrespect should fire up the 49ers and their Frisco fans.

-- HueJax, referring to Raiders mistakes last Sunday, said, "I know (**Al Davis**) right now is probably saying, 'Hue, dang it, what's going on?' " If so, Davis has already changed, because during his time on Earth he never said "dang."

-- This corner supports Cal coach **Jeff Tedford** in sticking with quarterback **Zach Maynard**. Hey, the 49ers gave **Alex Smith** seven seasons worth of mulligans. Tedford found a fun and dangerous (but to which team?) quarterback; let him get his sea legs. Plus, the brother-to-brother pass connection is cool.

-- Attention all media: Please stop wasting our time with updates from anyone involved in the NBA yawnout. Three things devoid of meaning: a football coach's praise for an upcoming opponent, a boxer's boasts before a bout, and anything said during a labor dispute. That stuff will produce enough hot air to blow-dry Def Leppard.

-- That's an '80s hair band.

-- **Rafael Nadal** is skipping the Queen's Club tourney that many consider a vital grass tuneup for Wimbledon. Why? Rafa says he might lose money there, due to heavy British taxes. I didn't realize Nadal was strapped for cash. What's he going to do that week? Get a job stocking shelves at Home Depot?

-- Maybe it just seems like Broncos coach **John Fox** is secretly hoping **Tim Tebow** falls on his face, to shut up those pesky Denver fans. You'll know something is up if Fox sends in six consecutive naked bootlegs.

-- Weenie Man, the Petaluma guy who tossed a hot dog at **Tiger Woods** on the last green at the Frys.com Open last Sunday, said watching a movie inspired him to do something "courageous and epic." Mission accomplished! But the man could have displayed epic courage simply by standing along the right side of the fairway on any of Tiger's drives.

-- Why a hot dog? Why not throw toast?

## **A's have the right location, wrong stadium**

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

What if the A's moved into a new ballpark and kept the same address?

It ought to be considered.

Talk has escalated of the Raiders and 49ers sharing the proposed Santa Clara stadium, which wouldn't have happened on **Al Davis'** watch for obvious reasons. Because California residents are too wise (or too broke) to approve public funding for filthy rich owners of pro sports teams - it's no surprise the NFL's three worst stadiums are in California - the Raiders' only hope for a new Bay Area facility is cuddling up to the 49ers.

NFL Commissioner **Roger Goodell** is open to that. So is Raiders CEO **Amy Trask**, though the Raiders aren't necessarily sold on Santa Clara.

Regardless, if and when the Raiders find new digs, the A's again would be sole tenants of the Coliseum, which would be every bit as stinky without the Raiders, with Mount Davis still clouding the picture and fans and players still subject to antiquated facilities.

The A's no longer would have to kowtow to the Raiders and might actually have some say on what transpires on the property - such as a renovation (see what the Angels did in Anaheim) or a complete leveling and starting anew. The latter being the preference.

The infrastructure is in place, and BART trains are running. It's not downtown or bayside, but it's easier to enter and exit than other proposed Oakland sites. Tearing down and rebuilding a baseball park in the same location is nothing new. It was done by the Cardinals, Phillies, Reds, Braves, White Sox, Yankees and Mets.

Commissioner **Bud Selig's** three-man committee examining the A's stadium situation, in its 31st month of dithering, could wait out the Raiders thing. These guys are good at waiting and apparently can't find anything worth a darn to report anyway. Why not step back further and wait for a Raiders-49ers joint production to play out?

The minute the football teams put their signatures to a stadium kumbaya, the Selig committee could recommend the Coliseum site for the A's. A cozy baseball-only park on the premises would re-energize the franchise, boost attendance and help make the A's more competitive.

I passed this by **Lew Wolff**, the A's managing general partner. Not surprisingly, he wasn't keen on the idea, saying he has looked into Oakland sites and wouldn't be able to privately finance a park as he could in San Jose. His focus remains San Jose or bust, even if Selig hasn't budged on dismissing the Giants' territorial rights to the area.

"It's not relative to our situation," Wolff said of a new Coliseum home, adding that Selig's committee hasn't suggested such an idea. "I can understand two football teams getting together in the same area. For us, there's nothing new, and no one has presented another plan other than what we have in place."

Wolff, predecessor **Steve Schott** and Selig all have said the A's can't survive at the Coliseum, but it would be easier to survive at a new Coliseum. If a rebuild becomes an option, majority owner **John Fisher** could either play along - as a perk, he could be allotted parking-lot space for business use (hotel, anyone?) - or sell the team to an outfit willing to give Oakland another try, starting with corporate sponsorships and personal seat licenses.

Another resource could be MLB, which certainly owes the A's for keeping the organization in limbo so long and should provide compensation. MLB did provide certain guarantees to the Marlins for building their new ballpark, which opens next season, and it would behoove Selig and Co. to help the A's make it work.

**Seventh heaven:** If you're only as good as your No. 7 hitter, the Rangers are awfully good, considering **Nelson Cruz** hits seventh. The former A's prospect collected 29 homers and 87 RBIs during the regular season and emerged as a key to the ALCS with six homers and 13 RBIs, including a grand slam to end Game 2 and an 11th-inning, three-run homer in Game 4.

In Bay Area World Series history, No. 7 hitters have included mostly catchers. **Gene Tenace, Dave Duncan, Ray Fosse, Terry Steinbach** and **Ron Hassey** for the A's and **Ed Bailey, Tom Haller,** and **Terry Kennedy** for the Giants. Last year, **Juan Uribe, Travis Ishikawa** and **Pat Burrell** shared the duties.

The seven hitter on the '27 Yankees, a team by which others are judged, was **Joe Dugan**, who hit two homers and had 43 RBIs that season. The '76 Reds, another powerhouse, were exceptionally deep, with **Johnny Bench**, whose numbers dipped that season, dropping to seventh for the World Series.

**Around the majors:** **Lance Berkman** was named MLB's NL Comeback Player of the Year. Should have gone to **Ryan Vogelsong**, whose comeback story is far more appealing. This is not about returning to All-Star form. This is about coming back, period. With an \$8 million salary, Berkman was supposed to be good. Vogelsong, making relatively nothing, wasn't. MLB's award, voted on by MLB.com's 30 beat writers, is fairly new, since 2005. A more established comeback award, presented by the Sporting News and voted on by players, has been around since 1965 and will be announced on Oct. 25. There's also the Players Choice comeback award, sponsored by the players' union and presented annually since 1997. Don't be surprised if Berkman wins those, too. ... **Jeff Suppan**, released by the Giants in spring training, showed up in St. Louis to throw out the ceremonial first pitch before Game 3. He pitched for both NLCS teams and spent this year in the Royals' farm system. He plans to make another run at the majors next year. ... In the Giants' worst season - 100 losses in 1985 - who had the highest on-base percentage (among those who spent most the season on the roster)? Hint: He's in uniform in the postseason. Answer: Brewers manager **Ron Roenicke**, at .408. The former outfielder hit just .256 but walked 35 times in 170 plate appearances.

### **Devine sees 2011 season as successful one**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Count Joey Devine among the optimist crowd.

Think of him as a realist, too.

The A's pitcher had to be both during a roller coaster season -- one which followed two years worth of Tommy John rehab -- that included command issues, back spasms and ended with a lengthy stint in the Minors.

And, currently, the right-handed reliever is stationed on the 60-day disabled list with a right rhomboid strain, though Devine -- now completely healthy -- understands the move was something of a necessity in order for the A's to make room on the 40-man roster for infielder Kila Ka'aihue, acquired in late September.

The average person might deem that a frustrating year, but Devine believes it was anything but thanks to a healthy perspective gained from chats he had not just with himself but with neighbor and former teammate Brian McCann.

The Atlanta Braves catcher gave Devine a friendly reminder.

"He said, 'Your body has basically been asleep through the last two years,'" Devine said. "It hasn't gotten used to the grind of a 162-game season. He said what's incredible that I did this year was wake my body up."

At the beginning of it all, Devine set one goal for himself.

"Coming into Spring Training, it was to get back and pitch in 50 games, whether it be in Single-A or extended spring training or the big leagues," he said. "Just pitch in 50 games, toe the rubber, feel what that feels like again."

Devine appeared in 26 games in Oakland, 23 in Sacramento. And a handful more in Spring Training -- upping his total to a number equaling more than the 42 games he pitched in 2008, which he considers his best career year, a year in which he posted a 0.59 ERA.

"To be able to do that, I have to almost pat myself on the back, knowing I was able to overcome a lot of things a lot of people probably couldn't," he said. "Going into this year, the competitor in me wanted to pitch 65 games, setting up in the big leagues and being in the backend of that bullpen. But the realist in me understands that after missing two years, that's a lot to ask of yourself."

When in Oakland, Devine displayed flashes of his 2008 form before admittedly "hitting a wall" after the All-Star break. On July 15, he threw just four pitches in cold weather before departing because of back spasms, and it was his back that essentially took the brunt of a worn-down state that is all too common after a lengthy period away from the game.

A week later in New York, he surrendered three walks and two runs without tallying a single out. Two days later, again facing the Yankees, he gave up another run, and on July 27 he was optioned to Triple-A -- the result of a productive conversation he had with manager Bob Melvin, who suggested he move to a non-pressure environment where he could work on things.

"The toll of a 162-game season was wearing on my body, but I was at least able to grind through and pitch through some of it when I went down," he said. "And I needed that, to be able to feel a 162-game season, April through September."

"I was very, very happy with how the year started and how it ended and how I was able to get through some obstacles there in the middle part of the season. At the end of the day, I knew it was a heck of a step forward in the right direction, and now I can't wait for 2012."

Devine, who is arbitration-eligible, figures to play a significant role in the backend of the A's bullpen next year alongside Andrew Bailey, Grant Balfour and Fautino De Los Santos.

"I was pretty excited, pretty pumped about what I was able to do this year," he said. "There are a lot of games I turn back and look at, and see that I was pitching like I did in 2008. Now this is the first year in a long time that I'm actually going to have a nice, relaxing offseason, without worrying about whether I'm ever going to throw a baseball again."

"I pitched in 50 games, and the goal next year is to go 70 games."

## **A's denied permission to interview pitching coach**

Csnbayarea.com, October 15, 2011

The Athletics were denied permission to interview Reds pitching coach Bryan Price, according to an ESPN report.

The Athletics are currently seeking a replacement for Ron Romanick, who was fired following his first season on the job. Bob Melvin, who took over for Bob Geren in June and just inked a three-extension to remain A's manager, is expected to have more input on the hiring of the next pitching coach.

The interest in Price makes perfect sense, as Melvin knows him well from their time together with the Mariners and the Diamondbacks. However, because Price still has one year left on his multi-year contract with the Reds, the Athletics will have to look in another direction.

## **Eaton, Rafters register walk-off win**

### **D-backs prospect homers, doubles, drives in three runs**

By Robert Emrich / Special to MLB.com

Adam Eaton has continued to wield the hot bat that made him a Minor League All-Star.

The D-backs outfield prospect homered, doubled and drove in three runs Saturday night as the Salt River Rafters walked off with an 8-7 victory over the reeling Phoenix Desert Dogs.

After watching the Desert Dogs jump out to a 3-0 lead in the first inning, Eaton tied the game with an RBI double in the bottom of the frame. The 22-year-old drove in another run with a groundout in the third, then went yard in the fifth.

Selected by Arizona in the 19th round of the 2010 Draft, Eaton has reached safely and scored a run in all eight Arizona Fall Games he's played. He's batting .382 with eight RBIs.

Eaton was named a California League All-Star after batting .332 with 54 runs scored and 24 stolen bases in 65 games for Class A Advanced Visalia. After a promotion to Double-A Mobile, he hit .302 with 10 steals and helped the BayBears win the Southern League championship.

Former first-round pick Tim Wheeler (Rockies) was 2-for-5 with a run scored and Dodgers prospect Kyle Russell hit a solo homer for the Rafters (9-2). With the score tied, 7-7, Kody Hinze (Astros) drew a one-out walk in the ninth, pinch-runner Brian Cavazos-Galvez raced to third on a throwing error by shortstop Dusty Coleman (A's) and scored the winning run on a wild pitch.

D-backs right-hander Kevin Munson (1-0) tossed a perfect ninth to earn the win after Tyler Stohr (Tigers) struck out the side in the eighth.

Blue Jays prospect Anthony Gose tripled, homered and scored twice for the Desert Dogs (3-8), who have lost eight straight. Brodie Greene (Reds) was 3-for-5 with two RBIs and **A's top prospect** Grant Green drove in a pair of runs.

Reds prospect Nick Christiani (0-1) retired one batter in the ninth and was charged with an unearned run on one walk.

## **Rafters' Arenado drives in another run**

### **Puckett hits three-run homer, but Dogs drop seventh straight**

By Andrew Pentis / Special to MLB.com

Ten games into the Arizona Fall League schedule, the Phoenix Desert Dogs have been two different teams: first, a dominating force and, lately, a doormat.

Rockies prospect Nolan Arenado singled in the tying run in a four-run seventh inning Friday as the Salt River Rafters rallied for a 7-5 victory over the last-place Desert Dogs.

Salt River (8-2) has won three in a row to remain atop the Eastern Division, while Phoenix (3-7) has dropped seven straight games.

The Desert Dogs took a 4-2 lead to the seventh, but Astros prospect Jake Goebbert doubled with one out and scored one out later on a throwing error by Blue Jays shortstop Adeiny Hechavarria. After another throwing miscue by Hechavarria allowed a run to score, Arenado singled home Adam Eaton (D-backs) and Ryan Wheeler (D-backs) put the Rafters in front with an RBI base hit.

Arenado, the Minor League RBI leader who enjoyed **drove in five runs** on Wednesday, has at least one RBI in six of his seven AFL games. He is Colorado's **No. 4 prospect**.

Rob Segedin (Yankees) led off the bottom of the seventh with his first AFL homer, but Salt River answered in the ninth as Jake Lemmerman (Dodgers) came home on a balk by Reds prospect Brad Boxberger.

The Rafters had gained an early edge as Rob Brantly (Tigers) smacked a two-out, two-run double off Reds left-hander Travis Webb.

Another Reds prospect, outfielder Cody Puckett, put the Desert Dogs in front an inning later with a three-run homer off starter Joe Gardner (Rockies).

Gardner, who was acquired from Cleveland in the trade involving Ubaldo Jimenez, gave up three runs on five hits in two innings. The Rockies' **No. 10 prospect** struck out four and threw 50 pitches.

Ryan Ortiz (A's) increased the advantage to 4-2 with an RBI single in the fourth, but Phoenix left the bases loaded in the fifth after Casey Weathers (Rockies) issued three consecutive walks.

## **Billy Beane**

By KATE MURPHY, New York Times 10/16/2011

Kate Murphy is a journalist in Houston who writes frequently for The New York Times.

Billy Beane is a former Major League baseball player and the general manager of the Oakland Athletics. His empirical method for picking undervalued players was the subject of Michael Lewis's book "Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game," which is the basis for the current movie.

**READING** I'm reading "The Tudors: The Complete Story of England's Most Notorious Dynasty" or *din-i-sty*, as they would say over there. I am a bit of an Anglophile when it comes to history and had seen the Showtime series, which I loved, and the book was a birthday present from my mother so I feel the responsibility to read it.

I have a subscription to FourFourTwo — it's a European-based soccer magazine — and I really look forward to it. I'm a big soccer fan. The passion and the emotion at games I saw in England during the off-season are similar to Southeastern Conference college football in the States. It's not only how great the football is, but fans travel to away games to create a unique atmosphere. If the Oakland A's play the Yankees and you go to New York, there are mainly Yankees fans.

**WATCHING** I like music documentaries. I just recently saw "We Jam Econo — The Story of the Minutemen," who were a California punk band from the '80s. The Minutemen were one of those bands that didn't really catch on in the mainstream and yet was incredibly influential on other artists that did make it.

The other one that I saw was "Hype!," which is about the Seattle grunge scene. It has great archive footage of bands like Nirvana and Sound Garden and also Alice in Chains playing in the Seattle bar scene. It's interesting how clusters of bands develop in certain areas.

**LISTENING** I listen to a lot of podcasts. My favorite is World Football Daily. It's a two-hour soccer podcast. It's got a lot of correspondents from all over the world who cover soccer. My go-to band is Oasis, but I have a friend in the music business who keeps me up to date with newer stuff, some of which I like, some I don't. He recently introduced me to Glasvegas and Cold Cave.

**EATING** You know that's a softball question; I love everything my wife makes. She never disappoints with her red velvet cupcakes. I'm also a sucker for pan-seared scallops. I had the best in my life at a dinner at the Toronto Film Festival prepared by the chef Tom Colicchio.

### **A's co-owner prepared to buy pieces of proposed ballpark land**

By Tracy Seipel

Last fall, when it became clear that San Jose's struggling redevelopment agency might not have the cash to buy the last two parcels of land needed to complete a downtown ballpark, Oakland A's co-owner Lew Wolff said he would step up to the plate to help purchase some or all of that land.

Nothing, he vowed, would get in the way of seeing his proposed ballpark become a reality.

Now it appears that Wolff may end up buying not only those two pieces, but several others that the agency had purchased over the years in preparation of landing a major league team.

The reason: to convince baseball Commissioner Bud Selig that the A's and San Jose -- who have been waiting more than two years for Selig's decision on

whether the team can relocate to San Jose -- mean business.

"We have no authority to move to San Jose," Wolff said Friday. "But each day we try to get as many ducks in a row as we can. And as far as we're concerned, that's the only location we can go to if we stay in the Bay Area."

Mayor Chuck Reed explained it another way:

"It's so that Lew can go to the commissioner of baseball and say, 'I control the dirt.' "

Reed characterized the plan as taking away "one more little reason the commissioner can't make up his mind."

On Tuesday, the San Jose City Council, acting as the San Jose Diridon Development Authority, will meet in closed session to discuss the price and terms of payment for an option agreement the city would offer Wolff for the sale of six properties. They amount to little more than half of the 14 acres earmarked for the stadium.

The negotiation status of two other parcels-- owned by AT&T and a Los Gatos family -- is unclear. The parcels are needed to complete the ballpark site.

Reed said the cash-strapped city cannot afford the parcels, so Wolff or his partners will have to acquire them.

The price to buy the option to reserve the six parcels of agency-owned land -- and the price and terms of the deal -- will be made public by month's end, Reed said.

The mayor said the price of the land, which agency documents have said cost a total of \$24 million, will most likely be less because of the drop in property values.

By early November, Reed said, he will ask the council not only to approve the option agreement to sell the land to Wolff, but also to transfer all proceeds from the sale back to the redevelopment agency.

Because the land was purchased with agency funds, Reed said, he wants to make sure they will be returned to the agency "to comply with whatever the requirements are under state law."



But City Attorney Rick Doyle said the council could also decide to keep the money in the Diridon Development Authority.

The authority was created last March to help protect the agency's land assets around Diridon Station from the state, which at the time was threatening to kill redevelopment agencies and divert the \$5 billion they collect annually to cash-strapped schools and local governments.

Gov. Jerry Brown has since signed legislation that essentially abolishes the agencies unless each agency pays the state enough money to stay alive. But the organization that represents the state's 398 active redevelopment agencies has sued the state. The matter is expected to be decided by the California Supreme Court by mid-January.

Doyle said the city approached Wolff about the land sale option and has been in talks with him for the past few months. He, Reed and Wolff said the development of the option agreement is not meant to signal that Selig -- or the committee he appointed in March 2009 to study the A's options -- have given any indication that Major League Baseball has agreed to break the territorial rights that the San Francisco Giants retain to the South Bay -- rights that the Giants refuse to relinquish.

Even if Selig were to give the A's the nod to move to San Jose, three-quarters of team owners would have to vote to OK his decision.

Should that happen, Doyle said, Wolff would have one more hurdle to overcome:

San Jose voters will have to approve both the ballpark and the sale of the land to Wolff.