

A's News Clips, Thursday, October 21, 2011

Baseball: Oakland A's in talks to bring back Curt Young as pitching coach

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's are in preliminary talks with Curt Young to bring him back as their pitching coach, a person with knowledge of the situation confirmed to this newspaper.

Young coached Oakland's pitchers from 2004-10 before leaving to join the Boston Red Sox in the same capacity this season. He has one year left on his contract, but given the sweeping changes taking place in Boston's front office -- general manager Theo Epstein is on the verge of joining the Chicago Cubs and manager Terry Francona was cut loose -- it is thought that Young might not be retained.

The A's fired Ron Romanick on Sept. 30 after just one season as pitching coach, and they reportedly were denied permission to interview Cincinnati Reds pitching coach Bryan Price for the opening.

A's general manager Billy Beane did not respond to a request for comment about Young.

In Young's seven seasons as pitching coach, the A's finished in the top four in American League ERA five times.

He endured a rocky first season in Boston, particularly down the stretch, as Red Sox pitchers posted a 5.84 ERA in September that contributed to the team's epic collapse in the standings.

The A's also are searching for a hitting coach, and sources told this newspaper two weeks ago that Mike Aldrete is high on their list of candidates. But Aldrete is a coach with St. Louis, and the A's wouldn't be allowed to contact him until after the Cardinals finish the World Series.

Cubs: Chicago's new front office tag team has yet to become official, but no one was denying the Theo Epstein-Jed Hoyer show is coming.

But Thursday, Epstein still was in Boston as general manager of the Red Sox and Hoyer in San Diego, general manager of the Padres.

In the vision of Cubs chairman Tom Ricketts, the two Red Sox Nation expatriates will become the Cubs' 1-2 punch in the front office.

The Cubs prepared for the possibility of a Friday news conference officially naming Epstein head of baseball operations in case a deal could be announced. To be settled: the Red Sox's compensation for letting Epstein go with one year left on his contract.

But Red Sox owner John Henry, perturbed the Cubs seemingly were leaking news the deal was done before it was done, texted The Boston Globe it was "not close."

As for Hoyer, the Cubs apparently won't owe the Padres compensation, with CEO Jeff Moorad willingly agreeing to let Hoyer leave for a more lucrative job.

The Padres are ready to promote Josh Byrnes to general manager if Hoyer leaves, three people with knowledge of the situation said.

Clemente Award: Boston's David Ortiz won this year's Roberto Clemente award, given annually to a major league player who gives back through community service and also excels on the field. The designated hitter hit .309 with 29 homers and 96 RBIs.

The free agent to be, in St. Louis to accept the award, said he would prefer to remain with the Red Sox, saying "Of course, I would like to come back."

Spahn Award: Clayton Kershaw of the Los Angeles Dodgers has won the Warren Spahn Award, given annually to baseball's top left-handed pitcher. Kershaw finished first among lefties in each of the categories included in the formula that determines the winner. He had 21 wins, 248 strikeouts and a 2.28 ERA.

Gyorko stays hot in Peoria, goes 5-for-5

Padres prospect reaches six times, but Javs fall to Dogs

By Andrew Pentis / Special to MLB.com

Jedd Gyorko enjoys hitting in Arizona. The losing isn't as much fun.

The **Padres' No. 4 prospect** went 5-for-5 at the plate and drove in three runs, but couldn't will the Peoria Javelinas past the Phoenix Desert Dogs in a 10-9 defeat.

With his team facing a seven-run hole in the bottom of the first inning, Gyorko singled home Scooter Gennett (Brewers) for the Javelinas' first run. The right-handed designated hitter also led off the third with a double, singled in Juan Centeno (Mets) in the fourth, drew a six-pitch walk in the fifth and singled again in the sixth.

Gyorko came to the plate with two teammates aboard and two outs in the bottom of the ninth. He laced a single into center field, again plating Centeno. Two batters later, fellow Padres farmhand Jaff Decker struck out to end the game.

"It always makes it better if you can get a 'W'," Gyorko said of his second career five-hit game.

All five of Gyorko's knocks came on fastballs.

"I was aggressive," Gyorko said. "I was looking for fastball all day."

San Diego's second-round draftee in 2010 recorded his first career five-hit game playing for Class A Advanced Lake Elsinore this season. He went 5-for-6 with a homer, two doubles and four RBIs in a 24-4 rout of Lancaster on June 7.

The 23-year-old slugger enjoyed a banner 2011 season. Splitting his time between the roles of designated hitter and third baseman, he batted .333 with 25 long balls and 114 RBIs in 140 games between Lake Elsinore and Double-A San Antonio. Both the Storm and Missions won league championships this season.

Through eight AFL games, Gyorko's bat has stayed hot. Including a **two-homer, five-RBI game** last Friday, the West Virginia University product is hitting .459, which puts him among the league leaders.

Javelinas starter Cody Scarpetta (0-1) couldn't record an out in the game's opening frame. **Milwaukee's No. 7 prospect** allowed seven runs on four hits, including a grand slam by Roberto Perez (Indians) and a two-run homer by Brodie Greene (Reds). Perez had entered the game with 2-for-22 at the plate in six games.

"We could have easily folded it up and went through the motions," Gyorko said. "When you play in Arizona, you're never out of the game. [Scarpetta] battled out there."

No. 2 Blue Jays prospect Anthony Gose led the Desert Dogs with three hits and a pair of stolen bases.

Gennett, as well as Mets prospects Centeno and Wilfredo Tovar, recorded three-hit games for the Javelinas.

Decker, **San Diego's No. 4 prospect**, went 1-for-6 at the plate, lowering his AFL average to .366.

Peoria (7-8) and Phoenix (5-10) remained in second and third place respectively in the three-team West Division.

Oakland A's Catcher Working to Raise Awareness for Donate Life

Landon Powell and his wife, Allyson, will host Donors on the Diamonds on Sunday at Fluor Field.

By Carolyn Farr Smith, patch.com

WHAT: Donors on the Diamond
WHEN: 4 to 7 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 23
WHERE: Fluor Field, Downtown Greenville

WHY: To raise awareness and donations for Donate Life South Carolina

TICKETS: \$75 for adults, \$25 for children; may be purchased [online](#).

WHAT TO EXPECT: Music from 80s cover band Retro Vertigo; a silent auction of autographed sports memorabilia to include jerseys signed by Derek Jeter and Chipper Jones; and a chance to see some other sports celebrities.

Organ donor? It was the box that [Landon Powell](#) checked at the DMV, when he renewed his driver's license. It didn't mean much to him at that time, but now his whole world has changed.

The 29-year-old professional athlete hasn't received an organ donation, but he will.

A baseball standout at the University of South Carolina, Powell was a first-round draft pick for the [Oakland Athletics](#) in 2004. But suddenly, his world changed.

Powell, who is now in his third season as a catcher with the A's, had always considered himself healthy and was used to strenuous workouts two to three times a day.

But in January 2009, he began to struggle. He said workouts got harder, his skin became jaundiced — and ultimately one day while exercising, he collapsed and his body began convulsing. Powell spent the next five nights at Greenville Memorial Hospital, not really knowing what was wrong.

"At first they thought it was pancreatic cancer," Powell said. "I was scared, one of the things I knew was that Patrick Swayze had just been diagnosed and none of the reports had been good."

Powell said finally they put a name to his illness — auto immune hepatitis. He said the best way to describe the illness is that each day his auto-immune system was trying to kill his liver.

Powell is treating the genetic disposition with medicine and while he only has received tissue transplants due to injuries, he has yet to seek an organ donation.

But it's his thoughts of what he will face in the future that have driven him to make a difference.

Powell, along with his wife Allyson, who is a Greenville native and Eastside High School graduate, will host the second-annual ["Donors on the Diamond"](#) on Sunday at Fluor Field.

While the desire is to raise money, Powell said the real goal is to raise awareness.

"When my wife and I looked into organ donation we 'Googled' organ donation and Greenville, S.C.," Powell said. "I was surprised by what we saw — 112,000 people were awaiting a transplant in the country, 1,000 of those people in South Carolina. It suddenly became so much bigger than baseball."

Powell said while in California with A's, he works to promote the work of [Donate Life South Carolina](#) by holding events with his team at the stadium to inform and to sign up donors.

"God gave me the ability to play baseball, but I want to be able to use that gift to do good things."

Next, Powell said he hopes to fly with one of the pilots who carries that "gift of life" to the next person.

"To see that glimpse of hope, to know that someone has a chance to live because someone else made that decision to donate their organs is a miracle," Powell said. "One person can save eight peoples lives."

Saving One Life

Jody Chesney never checked the box on the renewal form of her driver's license that said "organ donor."

She said she had a horrible misconception of what would happen to her if she had the little red heart showed up on the bottom of her license and she were injured in an accident.

"I was misinformed," she said. "Badly, misinformed."

Today, Chesney is well-informed and ready to spread the good word on how organ donation changed her family forever.

Because if it had not been for an organ donor, Chesney said she couldn't enjoy the little things in life — like taking a quick glance in the rearview mirror and seeing her 5-year-old son Tillman singing along to the radio, hearing his laughter or feeling his arms around her neck.

At 10-months-old Tillman had to have a heart transplant.

Chesney said she remembers the options as they were presented to her by doctors.

"I could hold him until he passed away, they could do reconstruction or he could have a transplant," Chesney said.

After a failed reconstructive surgery, a transplant became the only option. In the hospital for 13 months, Chesney never really knew if she would ever take her son home.

"He is my first child, my only child," Chesney said. "I'm blessed with a wonderful child because someone else made that decision. My heart aches for that family who gave life, because I can't imagine a day without my child."

Chesney said she learned more about organ donation and transplants through her son's transplant team. While Chesney said they still have to be very careful, Tillman is a typical little boy. He goes to preschool, plays with friends, and screams, and laughs, and lives each day to the fullest.

And on Sunday, he'll be at Donors on the Diamond ready to encourage others to to donate life.

"The gift of life is the greatest thing you can ever give someone," Chesney said. "Say 'yes.'"