

A's News Clips, Monday, October 24, 2011

Expert poring over long-lost Philadelphia A's records

By Frank Fitzpatrick, Philadelphia Inquirer Staff Writer

While *Moneyball* might be box-office magic, the baseball team at the heart of that hit movie desperately needs to pull a rabbit out of its green-and-gold hat.

Fifty-eight years after they abandoned Philadelphia, the Oakland A's are a mess. They finished 22 games behind AL West champ Texas this season and their worst-in-baseball attendance of 1.4 million was a whopping 2.2 million less than the Phillies drew in the Athletics' old hometown.

Curiously, though, as the Athletics' 2011 season headed for the Dumpster, a huge chunk of franchise history that long ago had been emptied into one has resurfaced.

Accounting ledgers and films from the 53 years Connie Mack's Athletics spent in Philadelphia - items historians had long believed were gone forever - showed up on eBay earlier this year.

The material had been salvaged from an Oakland Coliseum Dumpster decades ago by a ballpark employee who had kept it all in his garage until selling it at a flea market recently for less than \$200.

The flea-market purchaser quickly auctioned the lot on eBay early in 2011 and that's where Rob Rodriguez, a sports-memorabilia dealer in Reno, Nev., bought it all for \$4,000.

"I was just flipping through eBay's sports-memorabilia section when I noticed this stuff," said Rodriguez, 54. "I said, 'Wow, this looks great.' "

Exactly how valuable Rodriguez's mementos will be to collectors and historians isn't entirely clear. He has seen almost none of the 16-millimeter films, and the paper records are being examined by a Mack biographer in Texas.

At the very least, though, the treasure trove figures to shed light on how Mack and the original A's owners, the Shibe family, transformed one of baseball's greatest dynasties into a team that in its last 20 Philadelphia seasons finished last or next-to-last 14 times.

The paperwork spans the years from 1915 - two years after Mack's club had won a third World Series in four seasons - to 1954, when the woebegone franchise was sold and relocated to Kansas City. The A's moved to Oakland in 1968.

There are 1,700 pages of handwritten ledgers on salaries, business expenses, concession deals; hundreds of blank checks, including dozens that had been signed by Mack's son, Earle; and, most intriguingly, 15 canisters of 16-millimeter film.

"I've had some health issues," Rodriguez explained this week in a telephone interview, "and I've had a tough time finding a 16-millimeter movie projector. A local photographer had one, but before we could watch them, it broke. I did get to look at one, though. It was fascinating."

After the intervention of the Philadelphia A's Historical Society and Mack's grandson, Connie Mack III, a former U.S. senator from Florida, the records found their way to Texas author Norman Macht, who is completing a massive, three-part biography of Mack.

According to Macht, the ledgers detail just how successful the Athletics were until 1932, when they began selling off the best players from one of the best teams in baseball history.

While the A's were flush enough to issue \$600,000 in dividends from 1921 to 1931 (with \$300,000 going to Mack himself), as the Great Depression worsened they fell off a financial cliff.

Macht, whose second book in the Mack trilogy, covering the years 1915 to 1931, will be released this spring, said the team's financial fortunes mirrored their on-the-field accomplishments.

"The year 1932 was disastrous," said Macht from his home in San Marcos, Texas. "[Revenue from] home and road admissions dropped by about \$300,000."

Mack's team played in its third straight World Series - and ninth overall - in 1931. In its remaining 22 years in Philadelphia, the club never reached another.

Over the years, sportswriters and historians had inquired often about the Athletics' Philadelphia records. A new generation of club executives assumed they had vanished.

And until this year, no one had any reason to doubt them.

'Really cool stuff'

Historians such as Macht knew the ledgers existed because not long after the A's were sold to Kansas City businessman Arnold Johnson in 1954, Philadelphia newspapers included several mentions of them and even a photograph.

But Macht couldn't uncover them in either Kansas City or Oakland.

"I found a former secretary who remembered seeing the files in a closet gathering dust," Macht said. "She thought she recalled that during an office remodeling in the 1970s they had been thrown in a Dumpster behind the Coliseum."

She was right. What she hadn't known was that a stadium worker had found them and kept them closeted until, a year ago, apparently in need of money, he brought them to an Oakland flea market.

The man who bought the dusty collection there decided to sell them on eBay, the online auction site.

Rodriguez, as he frequently does, was scrolling through that web site's sports offerings when he spotted them.

"I'm always looking for baseball cards, autographs, really cool stuff," he said. "And this was definitely really cool stuff."

Rodriguez got involved in the 10-day bidding and, for \$4,000, won the items.

Looking through it all, he knew the value would be enhanced if he could prove the careful handwriting in the ledgers belonged to Mack, the Hall of Famer who was the manager and/or owner of the A's for all their Philadelphia existence.

He contacted the Philadelphia A's Historical Society, the organization which has a gift shop and library in Hatboro. Society vice president Bob Warrington, an historian and avid collector himself, suggested he contact Macht, whose 708-page first volume on Mack, *Connie Mack and the Early Years of Baseball*, was published in 2007.

Macht arranged for Rodriguez to send him the files. But weeks later, when he still hadn't received them, the anxious author enlisted the aid of Mack's grandson, who telephoned Rodriguez.

"[Sen. Mack] was wildly interested in the project," recalled Rodriguez, "and he asked if there were anything he could do to help speed it along. I told him I'd been ill, but that I was going to send the books as soon as I could."

They arrived at Macht's San Marcos residence in August and, as he finishes his third volume, the biographer has been studying them ever since.

The papers include a separate page for each of the Athletics, detailing their salaries and financial history. A few pages are missing, Macht said, including the one for Ty Cobb, the baseball legend whose final two seasons, 1927-28, were spent with the A's.

The records span the era in which Mack went from being a minority partner during the reign of the Shibe family to controlling owner. Many of the entries deal with mundane topics such as postage, field supplies, and concessions.

"Until he died in 1937, John Shibe appears to have paid \$2,000 - later \$3,000 - a year for the concession rights at Shibe Park," Macht said.

He also discovered that Mack, despite getting that \$300,000 in dividends during the team's gravy years, only took a modest salary.

"Mack never paid himself more than \$20,000 a year, some years less," Macht noted. ". . . When [his sons] Roy and Earle took over in 1951, they immediately [raised] their salaries to \$25,000 [each]."

In 1932, the season after their third straight World Series appearance, the A's payroll was \$253,000, Macht said, unsustainable in a year when ticket revenue plummeted by \$300,000.

Mack reacted by selling players. Al Simmons, Mule Haas and Jimmie Dykes brought \$150,000 in 1932, beginning a downward spiral from which the franchise never recovered.

"They still had several hundred thousand in indebtedness to the banks and things didn't look any better for 1933," said Macht. "In 1933, the gate fell by another \$200,000."

Facing a loss of more than a quarter-million dollars, the A's that year sold George Earnshaw and future Hall of Famers Mickey Cochrane and Lefty Grove.

Rare footage

As interesting as all that is, it's the 16-millimeter films, which Rodriguez believes may have been shot during A's spring trainings, that could have the most historical and commercial value. Footage of Hall of Famers like Grove, Cochrane, Simmons, Jimmie Foxx and Mack himself is in short supply.

"The one I saw, it was hard to pinpoint exactly when and where it was," said Rodriguez. "But once I get a good long look at it all, we'll know a lot more. I can't wait."

Free-agency carousel about to start spinning

John Shea, San Francisco Chronicle

Imagine **Grady Sizemore** patrolling center field for the Giants — a healthy Grady Sizemore, that is. As he was when hitting .281 and averaging 27 homers and 29 steals over his first four full seasons (2005 to 2008). Knee issues have sidetracked his career, and he's about to become an ex-Indian.

It could be worthwhile for a team to take a one-year flier on Sizemore, who hopes his Oct. 3 arthroscopic knee surgery will put him back in business.

Within three days of the World Series' final out, several players could be free agents if their 2012 options aren't exercised. A partial list includes Sizemore, **Fausto Carmona**, **Joakim Soria**, **Brad Lidge**, **Joe Nathan** and **Nick Swisher**.

In the same window, **CC Sabathia** must announce whether he'll opt out of his deal with the Yankees.

As for the rest of the freeagent list, here are some of the top ones, with possible destinations: **Albert Pujols**: He's baseball's best hitter, but there's no room for a first baseman on the Yankees, Red Sox, Phillies or other high-payroll teams. It will be tough for him to top \$200 million anywhere but St. Louis.

Odds of returning: High

If not Cardinals: Cubs

Long shot: Giants

Prince Fielder: The second best hitter on the market, and not a bad consolation prize.

His plump body hasn't led to injuries or a numbers dive. He has averaged 160 games and 38 homers over his first six full seasons. He's pursuing top dollar and won't accept a hometown discount.

Odds of returning: Low

If not Brewers: Nationals

Long shot: Orioles

Jose Reyes: He's a top-of lineup shortstop flirting with superstardom, a differencemaker for any team. Injury history is a red flag, especially with a price tag that could top \$100 million.

Odds of returning: Medium

If not Mets: Red Sox

Long shot: Nationals

Jimmy Rollins: The Oakland native turns 33 in November — a spring chicken by Giants shortstop standards. He's a five-tool leadoff hitter but not a big on-base-percentage guy.

He'll be cheaper than Reyes.

With fewer holes in their lineup (assuming **Buster Posey** is the catcher), the Giants can afford to keep **Brandon Crawford**

at shortstop, but Rollins would deepen any lineup.

Odds of returning: High

If not Phillies: Giants

Long shot: Braves

C.J. Wilson: He was 16-7 with a 2.94 ERA and 205 strikeouts this season but also the first pitcher in history to lose All-Star, Division Series, LCS and World Series games in the same year. He's the best freeagent starter, unless Sabathia opts out of his contract.

Odds of returning: Low

If not Rangers: Yankees

Long shot: Tigers

Carlos Beltran: As a Giant, he wasn't exactly Beltran circa 2004, though he did start hitting in September. Down the road, his wrist won't be an issue as much as tender knees, which will keep him out of center field. The Giants shouldn't offer more than three years. He might end up in the AL anyway, to make use of the designated-hitter rule.

Odds of returning: Medium

If not Giants: Indians

Long shot: Mariners

Josh Willingham: He had a career run-producing year with the A's, who might not want to pay what he'll get elsewhere. Willingham, a corner outfielder, would be perfect on a team seeking complementary pop from the right side.

Odds of returning: Low

If not A's: White Sox

Long shot: Reds

Michael Cuddyer: He plays a handful of positions. The Giants pursued him in July as a second baseman and could pursue him this winter as a left fielder. He played right field in 2011.

Odds of returning: Medium

If not Twins: Rockies

Long shot: Red Sox

David Ortiz: He's 36 next month and is still a reliable DH (.309, 29 homers, 96 RBIs). He might be done with the Red Sox. His "too much drama" line spoke volumes.

Odds of returning: Medium

If not Red Sox: Blue Jays

Long shot: Rays

Heath Bell: Part of a freeagent closer class that includes

Jonathan Papelbon and

Ryan Madson, Bell's willing to give the Padres a hometown discount, which they'd still consider pricy. Here's a whatif: The Giants trade **Brian Wilson** for a hitter and sign Bell.

Odds of returning: Low

If not Padres: Red Sox

Long shot: Angels

Cody Ross: Obviously, he's a big-game hitter, but he's becoming a free agent one year too late.

Odds of returning: Low

If not Giants: Mets

Long shot: Twins

Derrek Lee: He's still somewhat valuable at 35 despite slow starts in recent years. He had a .398 on-base percentage down the stretch for Pittsburgh.

Odds of returning: Low

If not Pirates: Angels

Long shot: A's

Coco Crisp: The man plays hard, running down flies and stealing bases. His on-base percentage isn't impressive for a leadoff man, but his 136 games this season were his highest total since 2007.

Odds of returning: Low

If not A's: Giants

Long shot: Marlins

Around the majors

It's questionable if **Yu Darvish,**

whose ERA each of the past five seasons in Japan was sub-2.00, will cost what Boston spent for **Daisuke Matsuzaka**

(more than \$100 million, including a \$51 million posting fee). The interest in Japanese pitchers doesn't appear to be as extreme as it once was. In fact, Darvish himself is having doubts about pitching in the majors. His upside is said to be higher than Matsuzaka's. ... The World Series teams have little in common when it comes to history.

While the Cardinals' career leader in games, hits and runs is **Stan Musial,** the Rangers' is

Michael Young. As the New York Times points out, Young has struck out three times in a game 36 times while Musial did it once, at age 42. ... **Arthur Rhodes** is this year's

Bengie Molina, able to cash in with World Series shares from both teams. ... Cardinals reliever **Octavio Dotel**, 37, is with his 12th team. One more, and he'll set a record for pitchers, surpassing **Mike Morgan** and

Ron Villone. Dotel, like Morgan a former A's pitcher, wants to stick in St. Louis. ... Amid discussions that the Astros could move to the American League to create two 15-team leagues, incoming owner **Jim Crane** is asking for a \$50 million moving fee. If he gets it, would that be a figure the A's could pay the Giants to move to San Jose?

BBWAA

Chronicle's Slusser named to top post

Henry Schulman, Chronicle Staff Writer

Susan Slusser, The Chronicle's Oakland A's beat writer, can add a new title: trailblazer.

On Saturday in Arlington, Texas, Slusser was elected vice president of the Baseball Writers Association of America, which means that in October 2012 she will become the first woman president of an organization that was founded in 1908, the last year the Cubs won a World Series.

The BBWAA has more than 700 active members and rotates its national presidency among 26 chapters. The last Bay Area writer to lead the organization was Kit Stier of the Oakland Tribune, in 1989. The late Bob Stevens was the only Chronicle sportswriter to be president, in 1971.

Slusser, 45, reluctantly accepts the notion that she is blazing a trail.

"It makes me uncomfortable when the gender issue is raised," she said. "I just see myself as a baseball beat writer. I don't think of myself as a woman baseball beat writer.

"One thing I wish was there were more women covering baseball. There is a huge underrepresentation of women and minorities among baseball writers. After an initial push hiring women and minorities, it's dropped off in recent years. I hope it's not a long time before more women are pulling leadership positions in the organization."

Fans might not realize how much the advocacy work of the BBWAA affects the way they follow their teams.

"There is no other pro sports league with the amount of access that baseball writers are granted," Slusser said. "Most of that is due to work of the baseball writers association."

More access translates into more news getting to the fans, not only through newspapers, but on the Internet.

A key issue for the association is how to incorporate Internet-only writers from companies such as Yahoo, ESPN and Baseball Prospectus. The BBWAA has been accused of being slow to accept these writers, many of whom offer newer sabermetric perspectives, though their presence in the organization is increasing.

Since BBWAA members vote on the Most Valuable Player and Cy Young awards, not to mention the Hall of Fame, expanding membership could change the nature of the balloting.

Slusser was installed as vice president at the BBWAA's semiannual meeting before Game 3 of the World Series.

A key issue on the agenda was Major League Baseball's desire to ban reporters from Tweeting in the clubhouse and during news conferences. Many fans have come to expect up-to-the-minute updates through social media. New rules are expected to be in place by spring training.

Slusser lives in San Carlos with her husband, San Jose Mercury News sportswriter Dan Brown. She earned English and history degrees from Stanford in 1988 and began her baseball-writing career shortly thereafter with the Sacramento Bee.

She also worked for the Orlando Sentinel and Dallas Morning News before her 1996 hire at the Chronicle, where she has covered the A's full time since 1999.

Slusser twice served on the BBWAA's board of directors, in 2004 and this year.

San Francisco Chronicle's Susan Slusser in line to become 1st woman to head BBWAA

By Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Susan Slusser of the San Francisco Chronicle has been elected vice president of the Baseball Writers' Association of America, putting her in line to become the first woman to head the organization in its century-plus history.

Bill Shaikin of the Los Angeles Times was elected president at the BBWAA's World Series meeting on Saturday, succeeding Ken Davidoff of Newsday, and Slusser was voted vice president. The vice president traditionally serves one year before becoming president.

Slusser, 45, has worked for the Chronicle since 1996 and has covered the Oakland Athletics since 1999. She covered the Texas Rangers for The Dallas Morning News in 1995-96.

The BBWAA was founded in 1908.

Oakland A's: Curt Young returns as pitching coach

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

After a turbulent season with the Boston Red Sox, Curt Young landed on his feet and in familiar terrain.

Young rejoined the A's on Friday as their pitching coach, signing a one-year contract with the franchise with which he's spent 23 years as a player and coach.

He replaces Ron Romanick, who spent one season as pitching coach and was not retained.

"It's a good feeling, knowing that (manager) Bob Melvin wants me to be part of his staff and the front office is comfortable bringing me back," Young, 51, said.

After a seven-year stint as A's pitching coach, Young took the same role last winter with the Red Sox, who entered 2011 as World Series favorites in the eyes of many. But a 7-20 collapse in September KO'd the Red Sox from the postseason.

With manager Terry Francona being shown the door, the team granted Young permission to interview with the A's despite having a year left on his contract.

Young's Boston staff posted a 5.84 ERA in September, and he's still coming to grips with how things slipped away.

"You think you did everything you can do to avoid that from happening," Young said. "(Maybe) it's something we can talk about as an A's staff when we get in that position, or when the season begins. I guess you learn from everything."

After the season, stories surfaced of Red Sox pitchers Josh Beckett, Jon Lester and John Lackey drinking beer in the clubhouse on days they weren't pitching.

"It's definitely something we all know is wrong," Young said. "I was never in the clubhouse to see it, and I definitely don't think it affected us in the win/loss column at all."

With Young as pitching coach from 2004-10, the A's led the American League in ERA (4.03) over that span.

Left-hander Dallas Braden said Young's familiarity with Oakland's staff will pay dividends.

"It's kind of like an uncle coming back to live with you for a while," Braden joked.

Melvin called Young "one of the more respected pitching coaches in the game." Melvin also acknowledged that the A's were denied permission to talk with Cincinnati Reds pitching coach Bryan Price, with whom Melvin has strong ties.

But Melvin and Young were Kansas City Royals teammates in 1992 and golfing buddies when Melvin lived in Arizona.

"We had two targets," Melvin said of the pitching coach search. "Either one, we would have been completely happy with."

The A's still need a hitting coach to replace Gerald Perry, whose contract was not renewed. Their top target is known to be Mike Aldrete, an assistant hitting coach with St. Louis. The A's can't interview Aldrete, a Stanford alum who played for the A's and Giants, until the World Series ends.

They're also without a bullpen coach, though Melvin said Rick Rodriguez is a candidate to return to that role.

Chin Music: Curt Young back as Oakland A's pitching coach

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 10/21/2011 12:55pm

Curt Young is back as the A's pitching coach, returning to Oakland after a one-season stint in the same role with the Boston Red Sox. Young signed a one-year deal with the A's on Friday, as things moved quickly after the Sox granted the A's permission to interview Young, who had one year remaining on his Boston contract. Here's a nuts-and-bolts story on Young's hiring, with an expanded story including quotes coming later in the day.

Remember, you can follow me on Twitter (@joestiglich) for immediate newsy tidbits and opinions about the A's.

Curt Young back as A's pitching coach

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

Arlington, Texas -- One year after leaving the A's for the Red Sox, Curt Young is back as Oakland's pitching coach.

Young served in the same position with the A's from 2004-2010, and during that time, the A's staff put up a league-best 4.03 ERA and held opponents to a league low .257 average.

"I'm disappointed with how our season ended," said Young of the Red Sox's late collapse, "but I'm excited to be back in Oakland and I'm looking forward to working with Bob Melvin."

Young was under contract for another year with Boston, but the Red Sox, who are undergoing an offseason shakeup, will pick up "a significant portion" of his salary, according to a team source.

The A's also had requested permission to speak to Reds pitching coach Bryan Price, who worked with Melvin when he was managing in Arizona and Seattle, but they were not allowed to pursue him.

"I'm very excited. This was by no means a second-choice kind of thing," said Melvin, who has known Young for years and played with him with the 1992 Royals. "We went into the offseason targeting two guys, both of whom we knew would be very difficult to get because of the commitments those teams had made to them, and we knew we'd be very lucky to get one of them.

"I definitely don't want anyone to think Curt was a second choice. I've seen him from the other side of the field - the pitchers respect him, and throughout the organization, everyone knows he's very valuable."

That includes most of the A's starters, four of whom - Gio Gonzalez, Trevor Cahill, Brett Anderson and Dallas Braden - have worked with Young nearly their entire careers.

"I started with Curt. Why not continue with him?" Gonzalez said. "I think it's a great thing. It feels like he just took a year off, took a vacation."

Young pitched for the A's for 10 years, and altogether spent 23 years in the Oakland organization before leaving for Boston.

"The roots run extremely deep," Braden said. "His pedigree is Oakland all the way. He's back in his element. He knows what wave to catch."

Holliday wants Aldrete to stay: It's an open secret around the A's and the Cardinals that Oakland hopes to snag St. Louis assistant hitting coach Mike Aldrete to be the A's hitting coach upon the conclusion of the World Series.

It hasn't escaped the attention of one of Aldrete's biggest fans, Cardinals outfielder Matt Holliday, himself a onetime Oakland player.

Holliday said during Friday's workout at Rangers Ballpark, "It'll kill me. I love Aldo. He's great. Honestly, I hope we find a way to keep him. If he does end up in Oakland, he'll do a great job there, but I'm hoping it doesn't come to that."

Drumbeat: Curt Young returns as A's pitching coach

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser, 10/21/2011 12:02pm

Just a quick post with the news of the day, and I'll try to update as needed, but the A's announced that Curt Young will be the team's new (old) pitching coach, coming back to his former club on a one-year deal.

As I wrote three weeks ago, the A's plan was to try to talk to Bryan Price of the Reds, who has served under A's manager Bob Melvin at two different stops, or to turn to Young, who spent the past year at Boston. Oakland was denied permission to pursue Price, but even though Young had another year left on his Red Sox deal, he was allowed to return to Oakland.

"I'm very excited, this was by no means a second-choice kind of thing," Melvin said. "We went into the offseason targeting two guys, both of whom we knew would be very difficult to get because of the commitments those teams

had made to them, and we knew we'd be very lucky to get one of them. I definitely don't want anyone to think Curt was a second choice. I've seen him from the other side of the field – the pitchers respect him and throughout the organization, everyone knows he's very valuable."

I haven't had a chance to speak to Young yet, and knowing him, he won't have anything negative to say about his time in Boston, but you have to think he's relieved to be leaving that drama festival. He's so calm and no-fuss, and it sounds from various reports as if that pitching staff was high-maintenance. Curt Young isn't a pitching coach who also wants to be a babysitter; he wants to get the work done, get it done right and move on to the next task.

The A's pitchers are glad to see Young back in the fold. Many were sad to see the departure of Ron Romanick, who was the pitching coach the past year after Young left, but having Young return is a plus in terms of familiarity and comfort factor.

"I started with Curt – why not continue with him?" starter Gio Gonzalez told me by phone from Florida. "I think it's a great thing. It's tough to lose Ronnie Ro but Curt coming back is awesome."

Young spent 23 years in the Oakland organization before his one-year departure. ("It was like a vacation," Gonzalez said.) So he's heading into year 24 with the A's.

"Curt's pedigree is Oakland all the way," starter Dallas Braden said. "He's back in his element. He knows what wave to catch."

Young returns to A's to be pitching coach again

Former Oakland pitcher worked with staff for seven seasons

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The East Coast detour didn't last very long for Curt Young, who on Friday rejoined the A's staff as pitching coach following a one-year stint with Boston.

It's the same position he held for seven seasons with Oakland before departing to the Red Sox last October. The 2012 campaign will be his 28th overall in the A's organization, the first 12 of which were spent as a player.

"It's exciting for me," Young said. "I really just want to keep it at that. I get a chance to come back and be very comfortable, knowing the pitchers already, the front office, the coaching staff. It's just exciting being able to come back."

Like many Red Sox coaches, Young had been given permission to seek employment elsewhere despite having one year remaining on his deal. Sox pitchers ranked ninth in the American League in ERA, and their September woes took the brunt of the blame for a well-documented collapse and missed playoff berth.

"Obviously it was a fun year in Boston, but not finishing the way we wanted to finish, I think has a lot to do with me being let go," said Young, who signed a one-year contract with Oakland.

Boston's loss, then, turned into a win for the A's and manager Bob Melvin, who was a Royals teammate of Young in 1992. The two also shared the same golf course during Melvin's time with Arizona.

"He's laid-back but very well respected," Melvin said. "Just easy to work with, from what I've heard, and I know a lot of our guys like him very much."

"I'm excited about it. I think it's a natural fit for many reasons -- a history with the organization, a history with the pitchers, a guy that I've known for a long time personally and has a great reputation professionally."

Initially named A's pitching coach prior to the 2004 season, Young's hurlers posted an AL-best 4.03 ERA and held opponents to an AL-low .257 average during those seven seasons. Moreover, seven A's pitchers were selected to the All-Star team during that time, and Huston Street (2005) and Andrew Bailey (2009) garnered Rookie of the Year honors.

His 2010 staff led the AL with a 3.56 ERA, including a 3.47 mark compiled by starters -- the lowest such number in the AL since the 1990 Red Sox posted a 3.32 ERA. Included on that staff were Trevor Cahill and Gio Gonzalez, who have since been joined by the emerging arms of Brandon McCarthy and Guillermo Moscoso.

"They're young and they're good," Young said. "You've got Gio and Cahill and hopefully Dallas [Braden] back. I know Brandon pitched well there, and I also realize they kind of rebuilt their bullpen a bit last year. They've got solid guys there. Just looking from the other side a few times we did play them, it's a solid pitching staff, definitely."

Young replaces Ron Romanick, who like hitting coach Gerald Perry and bench coach Joel Skinner was not retained at season's end. Chip Hale has since been named bench coach, and the A's are expected to target St. Louis assistant hitting coach Mike Aldrete to fill the hitting coach vacancy -- a move they can make once the Cardinals' postseason has concluded.

Pitching coach Young leaves Red Sox, rejoins A's

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) -- Bob Melvin is bringing back a familiar face to guide the Athletics' pitchers.

Pitching coach Curt Young is leaving the Boston Red Sox to return to Oakland and work under Melvin, who received a three-year deal in September to be the club's permanent manager.

The A's announced Friday that Young had signed a one-year deal to rejoin the club that originally drafted him in the fourth round in 1981.

Melvin won't have to worry one bit about Young getting up to speed with the staff. The A's figured the timing was right to reach out to Young with the uncertainty of Boston's field staff after manager Terry Francona was let go last month.

"It's great for a number of reasons," Melvin said in a phone interview Friday. "One, his history with the organization and he is one of the more respected pitching coaches in the game. We knew it would be difficult to get him but we thought it was a good time to ask. We're thrilled to get him. His familiarity with the organization and the pitchers was a comfort for me."

The 51-year-old Young, who pitched 10 of his 11 big league seasons for the A's, left Oakland last year for a stint in Boston after spending 23 years in the A's organization. He guided the 2010 group that had an AL-best 3.56 ERA and a league-leading 17 shutouts while holding opponents to a .245 batting average.

During Young's tenure from 2004-2010, A's pitchers led the American League with a 4.03 ERA and held opponents to an AL-low .257 average while allowing the fewest home runs (1,062) in the league. Young spent four years as a minor league coach in the organization before becoming pitching coach.

Melvin and Young spent a short time as teammates during the 1992 season with Kansas City. They have golfed together, too.

"This move provides Bob with not only an experienced pitching coach on his staff but also someone who has a lot of experience specifically with the organization and with the pitchers on this team," A's assistant general manager David Forst said. "On a personal level, Curt has always been well-liked by everyone in Oakland, and it'll be nice to have him back on our side this season."

Also Friday, the A's said they named Mike Henriques strength and conditioning coach for 2012.

Crawford sparks Scorpions past Dogs

Giants prospect homers, extends hitting streak to six games

By Robert Emrich / Special to MLB.com

Brandon Crawford had something of a lost season. He appears to have found himself in the desert.

The Giants infielder homered, singled and scored twice on Saturday afternoon as the Scottsdale Scorpions rallied for a 9-4 triumph over the Phoenix Desert Dogs.

Like the Scorpions, Crawford got off to a slow start. But he led off the sixth inning with his first Arizona Fall League homer to extend his hitting streak to six games. The former fourth-round pick singled and scored in the ninth as Scottsdale scored five times over the final two innings to end a three-game slide.

The 24-year-old shortstop batted .265 with four homers and 24 RBIs in 43 games across two Minor League levels before being promoted to San Francisco. He hit .204 with a .584 OPS in 66 games with the Giants.

Crawford raised his AFL average to .353 and has four extra-base hits in 34 at-bats.

Phillies prospect Darin Ruf also homered and drove in two runs for the Scorpions, while Nationals Minor Leaguer Zach Walters added his first Fall League long ball. Angels catcher Hank Conger doubled home a pair of runs and scored twice.

Giants prospect Austin Fleet (2-0) was credited with the win after striking out one in a scoreless inning. Starter Tyler Cloyd (Phillies) fanned six and gave up four runs -- three earned -- on five hits over five frames.

A's **No. 2 prospect** Michael Choice slugged his fifth homer for Phoenix to tie Robbie Grossman for the league lead. Blue Jays farmhand Kevin Ahrens plated three runs for the Desert Dogs.

Yankees right-hander Chase Whitley (0-1) was tagged with the loss after surrendering two runs on one hit in two innings out of the Phoenix bullpen.

DeVries pitches Sox to third straight victory

Twins prospect allows two hits over four more scoreless innings

By Danny Wild / MLB.com

A solid reliever for pretty much the past seven months, Cole DeVries has embraced a new role in Arizona.

The Twins right-hander won for the second time in four starts since transitioning from the bullpen, pitching four innings to extend his scoreless streak to eight as the Mesa Solar Sox beat the Phoenix Desert Dogs, 5-1, on Friday.

DeVries (2-0) held Mesa to a pair of hits and struck out one without issuing a walk. The 26-year-old has fanned six while allowing only three hits during the shutout streak.

The Mesa bullpen did the rest, limiting the Dogs to one run over the final five innings. Left-hander Cole McCurry struck out the side in the sixth around a two-out double by Brodie Greene (Reds) and fellow Orioles prospect Casey Lambert recorded the last five outs to seal the win.

DeVries made only two starts among 45 appearances between Double-A New Britain and Triple-A Rochester this season, going 4-2 with a 3.40 ERA. He's 2-0 with a 3.21 ERA over 14 innings with Mesa.

Cubs prospect D.J. LeMahieu's fielder's choice in the first staked DeVries to a 1-0 lead. The Solar Sox tacked on four runs in the fifth on RBI singles from Xavier Avery (Orioles), Brian Dozier (Twins) and Junior Lake (Cubs) before LeMahieu capped it with an RBI double.

Dozier, Lake and LeMahieu each had two hits.

Phoenix's lone run came in the eighth when Reds prospect Cody Puckett tripled to right and came home on A's farmhand Ryan Ortiz's single off Sean Gleason (Orioles). Yankees second baseman Ronnier Mustelier, batting .389, had the Desert Dogs' only two-hit effort.

A's right-hander Murphy Smith started for Phoenix and was charged with five runs on eight hits and a walk over 4 2/3 innings. He threw 69 pitches and suffered his second loss.