

A's News Clips, Monday, October 31, 2011

'Moneyball' statistics in surprising World Series

Gwen Knapp, Chronicle Columnist

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Baseball's new world champs locked down their title in a two-run inning that consisted of three walks and two hit batters. The entire World Series produced one stolen base, and it belonged to the losers.

"Moneyball" rules!

Just don't tell either of the World Series managers.

Tony La Russa said he walked out of a theater to protest the film's disrespect for scouts. Ron Washington became the Rangers' manager because of the A's disinclination to promote him from their coaching staff, and the movie depicts him as one of the leading old-school skeptics of Billy Beane's sabermetrics-based schemes.

We can break down all of the ways in which La Russa and Washington might be right and wrong, as well as the ways in which Beane has tried to reshape his strategy in the nine years since the "Moneyball" plot unfolded in real life.

Better yet, we could declare a truce in the baseball orthodoxy war.

Joe Morgan and Bill James can throw out the first pitch of the 2012 season together. The A's lineup can lead off with a speedy youngster, as it did for much of 2011, when Jemile Weeks' presence emphasized Beane's detachment from dogma. Pitch-count zealots simply can promise not to invoke Dusty Baker's name for 48 hours.

Over the past two months, the scope of the sport's drama opened wider than it had in 25 years. Atlanta fell apart. Boston, the game's diva, collapsed even more spectacularly. Tampa Bay and St. Louis rose from the debris.

"Moneyball" played on screens all over the country, and Bill Buckner turned up on "Curb Your Enthusiasm," delivering a parody for the ages. (There has not been a better crossover between sports and comedy, not even when Charles Barkley attacks a golf course.)

Then along came a postseason to rival 1986, when Buckner let the ball skip through his legs, the Mets and Astros went 16 innings to decide the National League pennant, and Dave Henderson knocked balls over the fence with his glove and his bat in Game 5 of the ALCS.

If this fall topped that one, innovation deserves a lot of the credit. The wild-card spots - introduced 16 years ago - created all of the tension on the final night of the regular season, and ultimately produced the Cardinals' 11th world championship. Four of the past 10 World Series winners have been wild-card playoff qualifiers.

Does living on the edge through September create an edge in October? Statistical analysis doesn't take such things into account, just as its adherents tend to dismiss the idea of clutch performance and emotional momentum.

The Phillies might have lost their emotional edge during a fairly aimless two-week stretch after they clinched their division. Then again, the numbers might have done them in just as badly: Their four-ace rotation couldn't logistically offer the same benefits in a five-game Division Series as it did over an entire regular season.

Either way, the Phillies looked flat, and they pressed terribly against Chris Carpenter in the clincher. His 1-0 win over Roy Halladay almost matched the epic showdown between Dwight Gooden and Nolan Ryan in '86.

Misguided purists have long lamented Bud Selig's decision to make the All-Star Game decide home-field advantage in the World Series. This was the first year since the change that had a seven-game Series, and the Cardinals got to finish at home despite winning six fewer regular-season games than the Rangers.

Giving home-field advantage to the team with the better regular-season record would make sense. But it would have made sense years ago, when the home-field edge simply alternated between leagues each season. In both 1985 and '87, the Cardinals went to Game 7 against teams that had 10 fewer regular-season wins. Both times, they lost, to the Royals and then the Twins. No one in the media made an effective call for change then.

Under the system of alternating years, home-field advantage would have belonged to the National League this season (the NL got even years after the canceled Series of '94 threw off the old pattern). Logic says Texas had a better chance to influence its fate under Selig's All-Star scheme, because Washington managed the American League team this summer. But animus toward Selig will drive exasperation over the format further than rational objections ever did in the past.

The human element of the game can't be dismissed, no matter how much the hard-line geeks try. Their analysis has changed the game forever, and for the better. The ability to walk was undervalued for years. The potential detriment of wild pitching wasn't fully realized because batters were regarded as wimps if they didn't swing at something.

The Cardinals' fifth-inning runs against a ragged Texas bullpen might have been a product of the premium placed on patience in recent years, but a very human element influenced the walk to Yadier Molina with the bases loaded.

The catcher had objected to strike 2, almost taking off to first base as if he'd walked. The next pitch looked suspiciously like a strike. It was close, and Molina should have been swinging. A properly old-school umpire would not have rewarded him for looking.

But Molina went to first. The run scored. The personal interaction made a difference, as did Molina's respect for the importance of walking. Both orthodoxies had been validated.

'Catfish' group still raising money for ALS research

By [Jeff Hampton](#). The Virginian-Pilot

Baseball great Jimmy Hunter's widow, Helen, was still in high school when her future husband signed with the Oakland Athletics and got his nickname: Catfish.

A's owner Charlie Finley wanted a catchy name for his pitcher, so he made up the story that as a boy, Hunter had slipped away from the house and caught two big catfish. Hunter's mother disliked the story because it made her look like she was not watching her children properly.

"Anybody who called him Catfish really didn't know him," Helen said Thursday morning, sitting at her kitchen table. "If you called him Jimmy, then he knew you were from home."

But the nickname has become a memorable marquee for at least three organizations trying to beat amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, best known as Lou Gehrig's disease. Hunter was diagnosed with ALS in 1998. He died Sept. 9, 1999, at age 53.

The Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation has raised approximately \$1 million in 12 years for victim care and research. Last month, the foundation revealed a new website highlighting the name at www.catfishfoundation.org.

In 2008, the group helped form the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Clinic in Greenville, the only one in the eastern part of the state. The state ALS chapter is also named after "Catfish" Hunter.

"Jimmy had given so much of himself," said Tommy Harrell, a long-time Hunter friend and foundation president. "We promised him we would take this thing and run with it. As long as I am breathing, I'm going to do it."

A Perquimans County farmer, Harrell stands over 6 feet tall with shoulders as broad as a tractor tire, but he can quickly get emotional over his old friend and the disease.

ALS strikes about 5,000 Americans a year, and it has no known cause and no cure. The disease affects the brain's ability to move muscles. After time, victims cannot move their arms or legs, and in some cases lose the ability to breathe. Life expectancy is three to five years.

Harrell was with the Bear Swamp-Beech Springs Ruritan Club in Perquimans County when members appointed him to start a foundation in honor of his friend Jimmy.

On May 8, 1999, the group held the first fundraiser, raising \$78,000 from chicken dinners, admission to an old-timers game and donations from all over the nation. Each year, the foundation hosts a softball tournament and a walk to raise money.

After getting his nickname, "Catfish" went on to win five World Series rings with the Oakland Athletics and the New York Yankees. He won 20 games or more for five straight seasons and pitched a perfect game in 1968. He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1987. His plaque there says, "The bigger the game, the better he pitched."

Just above the quote is the nickname "Catfish."

World Series' end signals A's it's time for moves

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer--

With the conclusion of the World Series on Friday night, the A's can now move forward on some offseason business - or not move forward, as the case may be.

The team is expected to name former Stanford, Giants and A's player Mike Aldrete their new hitting coach within the next few days; Aldrete is the assistant hitting coach for the Cardinals, and Oakland had to wait to speak to him until after St. Louis' season ended.

Starting Sunday, the A's also have exclusive negotiating rights for four days with their five free agents, but it is highly unlikely that the club will re-sign any of them. Full free agency begins Thursday.

Designated hitter Hideki Matsui was thought to be the most likely to return, especially considering that he is expected to command less than half of the \$4.25 million salary he earned last season, and because the A's will open next

season in Tokyo. Major League Baseball would very much like to see a showdown between Matsui and Seattle's Ichiro Suzuki in Japan.

However, the A's emphasis has turned to going younger and improving scouting and drafting, which might preclude re-signing Matsui, who is 37 and who had erratic production this past season. Interest in Matsui among team officials has waned as the A's continue to wait on a decision from MLB about their stadium situation, a drawn-out process that has created great frustration among Oakland's owners and front-office staff.

On the other hand, A's manager Bob Melvin and Matsui developed a strong relationship last season, and the team doesn't necessarily have a clear-cut answer at DH for 2012.

Matsui's agent, Arn Tellem, plans to meet with A's general manager Billy Beane early next week.

Oakland's other free agents are outfielders Josh Willingham, Coco Crisp and David DeJesus and right-handed pitcher Rich Harden.

Riveting Series Caps a Scintillating Season

By [TYLER KEPNER](#), [New York Times](#)

ST. LOUIS

They took it all the way, which was how it had to be. Anything less than a seven-game World Series would have felt wrong for this most wondrous of baseball seasons. The Texas Rangers and the [St. Louis Cardinals](#) stitched the final patch on a quilt that will keep fans warm all winter, and for many years to come.

The Cardinals captured their 11th championship on Friday with a 6-2 victory at Busch Stadium in Game 7 of the World Series. Fittingly, they came from behind to do it, just as they did in the regular season and all three rounds of the postseason.

They trailed Atlanta for a playoff spot by 10 1/2 games in late August, and roared back. They lost the first game in both National League playoff series, to Philadelphia and Milwaukee, and three of the first five in the World Series. One strike from elimination in consecutive innings in Game 6, they would not die.

As an underdog, the Cardinals are a tough sell: their most recent title came in 2006, and only the Yankees have won more. But their story will be a beacon to any team that ever seems out of the race. Remember the 2011 Cardinals. Remember the 2011 season, especially the last two months.

This was the first time since 2002 that a World Series extended to Game 7, capping a season that stretched as long as it ever has. It was the 38th postseason game of a possible 41, matching the most ever in the 17 years of the current format.

The scintillating sixth game on Thursday was the 13th to be decided by one run, setting a record. Even the losers recognized history as it happened.

"As crazy as this series has been, it definitely doesn't surprise me that it's going seven games," the [Rangers'](#) David Murphy said early Friday morning. "I mean, what do you say about this game besides, 'Wow?' So many great plays on both sides. This game had everything."

David Freese won that game, 10-9, on a homer in the 11th inning. He had saved the Cardinals with a two-out, two-strike hit, a triple in the ninth inning. Lance Berkman did it in the 10th, with a two-out, two-strike single. The game will take its place on the short list of true classics.

Baseball will benefit from what might be called unintentional brinksmanship: pushing a conflict to the edge of disaster to achieve a desired result. From the frantic scramble on the final night of the regular season to the heart-pounding playoffs, the result is heightened interest in a sport that for decades was its own worst enemy.

"Somebody said on television, baseball has had a coming-out party since Labor Day," Commissioner Bud Selig said before Game 7. "I don't think so. I think it's always there."

Maybe so, but Selig knows the pain caused by the work stoppages of the 1970s and 1980s and the catastrophic 1994 strike, which canceled the World Series. And that was not all of it.

Some of the game's biggest stars turned out to be rogues: gambling undid Pete Rose, the steroids saga disgraced Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens. Even this season included the inglorious retirement of Manny Ramirez, who was facing a 100-game ban for his second positive steroids test.

Other problems remain: the Los Angeles Dodgers are in bankruptcy court; the Oakland Athletics and the Tampa Bay Rays are trapped in outmoded ballparks; the Mets' finances are in peril. But more and more, the game is at the forefront.

The N.B.A. players are locked out. The N.F.L. spent the summer in a lockout before reaching a deal. But baseball is close to completing a collective-bargaining agreement, its third in a row without a work stoppage.

"Our conversations, they've been quiet, they've been thoughtful, they've been constructive — both sides," Selig said. "Given where we used to be, we've come a long way, and this is what I like."

Even front-office intrigue is fascinating enough to carry a major movie, "Moneyball," and make fans pine for their own roster wizard. Theo Epstein, who helped build the Boston Red Sox into champions after 86 years of dismay, now guides the even more hapless Chicago Cubs.

The Cardinals' best player, Albert Pujols, is facing free agency, and Selig said he hoped Pujols stays in St. Louis. The Milwaukee Brewers, the team Selig once owned, appear likely to lose their own star first baseman, Prince Fielder, who will also be a free agent.

But both teams have strong supporting casts, and the Brewers' renaissance in baseball's smallest market was a highlight of the season. Their Central Division neighbors, the Pittsburgh Pirates, contended deep into the summer.

The large-market Yankees and Philadelphia Phillies had the best records in their leagues, the Yankees' season punctuated by milestones for Derek Jeter and Mariano Rivera, the Phillies' by dynamic pitching and a franchise-record 102 victories. Yet both teams were bounced in the first round, an apt follow-up to a decade (2001-2010) that produced nine different champions.

"There is parity like we've never had before," Selig said.

Selig chafes at how the N.F.L. is hailed for its parity, when his game has a lot of its own. Selig is trying to widen the postseason field even more by adding another wild card to each league; baseball would still have fewer playoff teams than any other sport, he often notes.

Selig has held that stance despite the madcap finale of the regular season, on Sept. 28, which seemed to show that plenty of teams already get in on the drama. Four games, played simultaneously, directly affected the wild-card races.

The Cardinals got a shutout from their ace, Chris Carpenter, and clinched when the Braves lost. The Rays, after trailing the Yankees by seven runs, got a two-out, two-strike, game-tying homer in the ninth from the journeyman Dan Johnson. An Evan Longoria homer eliminated the Red Sox, who had lost in Baltimore just three minutes before. Boston lost 20 of 27, and a nine-game wild-card edge in the process.

In the playoffs, the stars lived up to their billing. Miguel Cabrera mashed for the Detroit Tigers, and Justin Verlander, flinging fastballs at 100 miles an hour, willed them to the sixth game of the A.L. Championship Series against Texas.

Ryan Braun hit .405 in the postseason for Milwaukee, which won a playoff series for the first time in 29 years. Pujols joined Babe Ruth and Reggie Jackson as the only players with three home runs in a World Series game.

The Rangers, born in Washington in 1961, are the oldest franchise without a title. They came as close as they could to winning — twice — and had one more shot in Game 7, bursting to a 2-0 lead in the top of the first inning. But it did not happen, and now they join the 1986 Red Sox as the only teams to lose the World Series after coming within an out of a championship.

Exquisite victory, excruciating defeat. Exhilarating season.

Weeks earns GIBBY Rookie nomination

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Jemile Weeks' June arrival, some say, has affected the level of consideration he's received for American League Rookie of the Year Award honors.

But with the help of fans, Weeks has the chance to land atop the ranks for another recognition, the annual **Greatness in Baseball Yearly (GIBBY) Award** for top rookie.

Major League Baseball's A-listers will take home GIBBY trophies -- the ultimate honors of baseball's awards season -- based on votes by the fans at MLB.com, media, front-office personnel and MLB alumni.

The 2011 GIBBYs feature nominees in 19 categories. Individual honors will go to the top everyday player, starting pitcher, closer, setup man, rookie, breakout player, comeback player, defensive player, wow factor, manager, executive and postseason performer.

GIBBY trophies also will be awarded for the year's best play, moment, performance, oddity, walk-off, fan moment and postseason moment from MLB.com's Must C highlight reels.

Fan voting ends Dec. 4, and you can vote up to 25 times per category. Winners will be announced Dec. 16 from 6-8 p.m. PT on MLB Network and MLB.com.

The 24-year-old Weeks, the younger brother of the Brewers' Rickie Weeks, paced the A's in triples (eight), multihit games (35) and games of three hits or more (14). His team-leading .303 average ranked best among AL rookies with at least 400 plate appearances and would have ranked second best among all rookies in Oakland history next to Mitchell Page (.307).

Among AL rookies, Weeks led the pack in triples, tied for second in stolen bases with 22 and ranked third in hits (123) and doubles (26) in 97 games -- numbers that helped A's fans forgive general manager Billy Beane for trading longtime mainstay Mark Ellis to Colorado.

"We've always had high hopes for him," Beane said at the end of the season. "I didn't think he'd be here until next year. You can see what he did, arriving a half-year before anyone thought he would be ready. He's a dynamic player. He was a bright spot for us."

Free-agent spending on hold for Beane, A's

Stadium resolution impacts current, future roster decisions

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Two offseasons have passed without a stadium decision for the A's, who are in danger of watching a third unfold in the coming months.

It's a storyline all too familiar for Oakland general manager Billy Beane, who believes he will have his answer soon.

But until that time comes, Beane and Co. are stuck in waiting mode, and the unknown could equate to big ramifications for the 2012 roster, as any spending and subsequent pursuit of free agents -- including their own -- are on hold until signs of a resolution on the stadium issue are in sight.

By delaying such decisions on free agents, the A's run the risk of losing the likes of Josh Willingham and Coco Crisp, along with any shot at any other premium free agents available on the open market.

The club's best chance at retaining Willingham, who led the team in home runs and RBIs, is during the five-day window following the World Series when teams have exclusive negotiating rights with their own free agents.

Once that window closes, at which point the A's will probably still be left without a stadium issue, Willingham will hit the open market and seek a deal likely greater than the one the A's would be able to offer him.

Crisp might very well be in the same boat, and if both don't return, outfielders will represent the team's most pressing need, as David DeJesus also isn't expected back. The A's, then, might opt to take the young route with a few familiar faces, including Michael Taylor and Jai Miller.

In the event a stadium is approved for the A's, the team would immediately begin pouring money into player development and scouting in order to build a contending team that would be ready to christen its new home in three or four years.

For now, though, spending isn't much of an option for the A's, who will simply be forced to continue playing the waiting game despite hopes of improving upon a disappointing 2011 season that brought about a meek offensive showing.

CONTRACT ISSUES

Free agents: Coco Crisp, OF; David DeJesus, OF; Rich Harden, RHP; Hideki Matsui, DH; Josh Willingham, OF

Eligible for arbitration: Andrew Bailey, RHP; Daric Barton, IF; Dallas Braden, LHP; Craig Breslow, LHP; Joey Devine, RHP; Gio Gonzalez, LHP; Brandon McCarthy, RHP; Landon Powell, C; Adam Rosales, IF/OF; Ryan Sweeney, OF

Club options: Michael Wuertz, RHP, \$3.25 million (with \$250,000 buyout, declined)

Non-tender possibilities: Powell, Rosales

AREAS OF NEED

Outfield: With the A's potentially losing all three of their starting outfielders, this is perhaps the biggest area of need. But without the stability to spend aggressively because of the stadium situation, or the club's ability to attract big-name free agents, the A's may have to turn to the outfield trade market, as they did last winter. Don't be surprised, though, if they choose to employ from within.

Third base: Though the jury is still out on Scott Sizemore, the A's seem to like his potential as an everyday third baseman, particularly with continued improvements made on defense. The front-office folks have been high on him for years, and it appears top third-base prospect Stephen Parker could still be a year away from being Major League ready. Given the lack of depth, this could be a definite area for upgrade this offseason.

Designated hitter: This remains a long-term area of concern for an A's team that again ranked near the bottom in the Majors in homers. There's a strong possibility of a Matsui return, especially with manager Bob Melvin -- perhaps his biggest supporter -- in the fold. But should the Japanese veteran depart, the A's will be left with a major hole to

fill. Their hope was that Chris Carter would be ready to grab hold of the job by now, but a sluggish start to his big league career hasn't helped that cause. If the club is forced to pluck from the free-agent pool, options are expected to be limited to either the elderly -- think Jason Giambi -- or the expensive -- think David Ortiz.

2012 payroll: The A's carried around a \$65 million payroll in 2011, and it's not yet known how much that figure will move going forward, given the fact that the stadium situation has temporarily stalled. Just five players are already under contract for 2012, their total salaries accounting for less than \$22 million. That same number, perhaps one of even lesser value, is likely to account for arbitration-eligible players, seemingly giving the club wiggle room if allowed to spend.

De Los Santos leads Surprise one-hitter

Marlins' Dominguez homers, supports Saguaros' pitching clinic

By Andrew Pentis / Special to MLB.com

How good are these Surprise Saguaros in the Arizona Fall League? Well, they were at their best on Saturday afternoon.

Starter Miguel De Los Santos completed five innings of one-hit ball, four relievers tag-teamed to complete a rare one-hit shutout and **top Marlins prospect** Matt Dominguez belted a two-run homer in the Saguaros' 11-0 rout of the host Phoenix Desert Dogs.

Surprise (16-6) has cruised to the AFL's best record because of its league-leading offense, but pitching reigned supreme in their latest win. The club's five hurlers combined on the first scoreless one-hitter since the then-named Surprise Rafters accomplished the feat and topped Team China 17-0 on Oct. 27, 2007.

De Los Santos (Rangers) retired the first 10 batters he faced before Cody Puckett (Reds) singled toward first baseman Joe Terdoslavich (Braves) with one out in the fourth inning. It was, in baseball terms, "a cheap hit."

Puckett "checked his swing, and the first baseman threw behind me," De Los Santos said. "I thought it was an error, but they called it a hit."

The only other batter to reach opposite De Los Santos, Grant Green (A's), struck out but found his way to first because strike three was also a wild pitch. The 23-year-old native of the Dominican Republic tied AFL pitchers' season-high in strikeouts (eight) and innings (five) and threw 49 of his 64 pitches in the zone. He credited, in part, his changeup -- the best in Texas' system, according to *Baseball America*.

"My tempo was pretty good," said De Los Santos, who spent the past Minor League season divided between Class A Advanced Myrtle Beach and Double-A Frisco. "My changeup was working because I was throwing my fastball for strikes."

De Los Santos' first three AFL appearances were in relief, his last three starting. He has compiled a 3-0 record and a 3.18 ERA.

Reliever Brendan Lafferty (Royals) retired all three batters he faced in the sixth, Bryan Paukovits (Royals) pitched around a walk to Roberto Perez (Indians) in the seventh, Kirby Yates only issued a base on balls to Dustin Coleman (A's) in the eighth and Jeremy Jeffress (Royals) struck out two for a 1-2-3 ninth.

"I was confident in my bullpen," De Los Santos said. "My guys, they did pretty well; I knew they were going to do well."

The starter had to feel good about his lineup too. Despite Dominguez entering Saturday 1-for-20 at the plate over his past five games, the 22-year-old third baseman sent a 1-0 pitch from Tyson Ross (A's) into the left-field seats for Surprise's 2-0 first-inning edge. Dominguez also was hit by a pitch in his five plate appearances.

Prior to his struggles, Florida's first-round Draftee had longballs in consecutive games, on Oct. 14 and 17, including an opposite-field grand slam on the latter date. Dominguez is batting .231 but has collected 13 RBIs through 13 AFL games.

Dominguez spent most of this past Minor League season at New Orleans -- his first trial at Triple-A -- where he batted .258 with 12 home runs and 55 RBIs in 87 games. He finished the year in the Majors: In 17 games there, he batted .244 (11-for-45).

Ross (1-1) allowed three total hits in three innings before exiting. The right-hander was bested by his lefty counterpart.

Dominguez's fellow Marlins farmhand, shortstop Paul Gran, hit a grand slam, his first Fall League homer, during the Saguaros' six-run seventh inning. Elio Sarmiento (Rangers) also contributed a solo shot.

Anthony Seratelli (Royals) went 3-for-4 at the plate, raising his AFL average to .395. Leonys Martin, the Rangers' **No. 10 prospect**, also went 2-for-4 and scored three runs.

Bethancourt shows off bat, arm in AFL

Braves prospect goes yard, tosses out runner but Surprise falls

By Andrew Pentis / Special to MLB.com

Christian Bethancourt swung and threw as hard as he could on Friday afternoon in the Arizona Fall League, but his efforts fell short.

The Braves' **No. 4 prospect** smacked a three-run home run and caught a would-be base-stealer, but the opposing Phoenix Desert Dogs scored the game's final 10 runs to top the Surprise Saguaros, 11-5.

Bethancourt put the Saguaros ahead, 5-1, in the third inning when he pulled a 1-1 fastball from Dogs starter T.J. McFarland (Indians) over the left-field wall.

"He threw me a fastball in my first at-bat and got me out. He made the mistake [of] throwing the same fastball, and it was over the plate," said Bethancourt, 21, who later led off the eighth inning with a double but was left stranded at second base.

In the top of the third frame, Bethancourt also demonstrated his defensive abilities, throwing out an ambitious Corban Joseph (Yankees) at second base.

"Change-up right down the middle, I made the throw. It was high, but we got him," the catcher said. "I know that players like to talk about my arm, but I just like to use it when I have to use it."

In 99 games in the Minors this season, split between Class A Rome and Class A Advanced Lynchburg, Bethancourt batted .289 with five home runs and 53 RBIs. He said he lacked concentration at times during the year, fretting too often over an 0-for-4 day at the plate or one too many strikeouts.

Through 11 AFL games, he is batting an even .350.

The rest of Friday's game was the Michael Choice show. The A's **No. 2 prospect** belted his sixth AFL homer for the game's first run, victimizing starter Sean Gilmartin (Braves) in the opening inning.

Choice also collected a pair of two-run singles, the first of which came in the seventh inning against J.J. Hoover (Braves) and broke a 5-5 tie.

"He's a pretty good hitter. He was tough to pitch to," said Bethancourt, "because he was always on the ball [whether] they were fastballs, change-ups or curveballs."

The 21-year-old A's slugger is batting .362 and has 14 RBIs in 12 games.

McFarland gave up five runs on six hits and four walks while striking out four batters over 3 2/3 frames. He remains 2-0, having not earned a decision in his past three starts.

Counterpart Gilmartin allowed two runs on five hits over five frames. Atlanta's first-round Draftee last June fanned four batters and walked a pair.

Centeno comes through in clutch for Peoria

Mets catching prospect singles in run in 11th against Phoenix

By Danny Wild / MLB.com 10/28/2011

After driving in just 11 runs in 52 games this year, Juan Centeno isn't known as an RBI man. But he came through with an important one for the Javelinas on Thursday.

The Mets catching prospect singled home the eventual winning run in the top of the 11th as the Peoria defeated Phoenix, 7-5.

Centeno, a 32nd-round pick in 2007, batted .318 with seven extra-base hits this year for Class A Advanced St. Lucie. The 21-year-old finished Thursday's game 2-for-5 for his third multi-hit performance in eight games -- one of which he was used only as a defensive replacement. Overall, he is hitting .333 with two doubles and five RBIs.

The game reached the 11th because of the Desert Dogs' resilience in the bottom of the ninth, when they scored two runs off the Padres' Miles Mikolas to tie it up. Cleveland catcher Roberto Perez hit a two-out homer, while Adeiny Hechavarria (Blue Jays) singled, advanced to second on a wild pitch and then scored on an error by the Brewers center fielder Logan Schafer.

Peoria started the scoring in the second, putting up three runs thanks to Wilfredo Tovar's two-RBI triple and a sacrifice fly by Oscar Taveras.

Phoenix responded with three of its own in the bottom of the frame. Chad Huffman (Indians) and Ronnier Mustelier (Yankees) singled to start the second. Rob Segedin (Yankees) followed with a homer to center off Terry Lyons (Cardinals).

St. Louis' Matt Adams, the reigning Texas League Player of the Year, ripped an RBI double to right off Wes Etheridge (Blue Jays) in the fifth after Reds reliever Aroldis Chapman walked Jefry Marte (Mets) with two outs. San Diego's Jason Hagerty followed Adams with an RBI single, putting the Javelinas ahead by two.

Chapman made his second relief appearance of the fall, throwing 13 of his 27 pitches for strikes over 1 2/3 innings. The Reds fireballer was charged with one run on a hit and a walk as he tunes up to transition to the rotation this winter with a Caribbean League club.

Lyons (Cardinals) started for Peoria and allowed three runs on seven hits over five innings, while Phoenix starter Murphy Smith (Athletics) yielded three runs on four hits in three frames.

The Yankees' Dan Burawa (1-3) took the loss after surrendering two runs on two hits and a walk in one inning.

The Mariners' Brian Moran (1-0) struck out two over two scoreless innings for the win.