

**Greene drives in three in Desert Dogs' win**

**Reds prospect helps put Solar Sox on brink of elimination**

By Ashley Marshall / Special to MLB.com

Brodie Greene has shown continued growth throughout the Arizona Fall League. On Saturday afternoon, he played the role of spoiler.

The Reds infield prospect singled twice and drove in three runs as the Phoenix Desert Dogs pushed the Mesa Solar Sox to the brink of elimination for a playoff spot an 8-2 victory.

The loss dropped Mesa (16-17) four games behind first-place Salt River (20-13), which clinched the East Division title on Saturday night with a 7-3 triumph over Peoria.

Greene staked Phoenix to a 1-0 lead in the first inning when his infield hit scored Blue Jays outfielder Anthony Gose. He singled up the middle and stole second but was stranded in scoring position in the third.

After grounding out in the fifth, the 2010 fourth-round Draft pick padded the Desert Dogs' lead an inning later with a two-out bases-loaded single.

Greene is hitting .301 with three homers and 13 RBIs in 19 AFL games. The Texas A&M product batted .287 with 14 homers, 81 RBIs and 38 stolen bases in 131 games between Class A Advanced Bakersfield and Double-A Carolina during the regular season.

Indians catching prospect Roberto Perez hit a two-run homer and scored twice, while Yankees outfielder Rob Segedin doubled twice, walked and scored a run for Phoenix.

The support was more than enough for starter David Phelps (2-2), who allowed a run and scattered seven hits over 4 1/3 innings. The Yankees' **No. 8 prospect** walked one and struck out four in his seventh AFL start.

Pirates right-hander Gerrit Cole, the No. 1 overall pick in this year's Draft, bounced back from a rough outing in last weekend's Rising Stars Game. He gave up a run on two hits while fanning four over three frames. Cubs southpaw Jeff Beliveau (0-1) took the loss after surrendering three runs on three hits in one inning.

Orioles prospect Joe Mahoney went 2-for-4 with an RBI double to extend his hitting streak to 10 games for the Solar Sox. Aaron Hicks, the Twins' **No. 1 prospect**, also had a pair of hits out of the No. 9 spot in the lineup.

**Harper, Trout help Scorpions tame Dogs**

**MLB.com's top two prospects drive in runs in seven-inning win**

By Danny Wild / MLB.com

Bryce Harper and Mike Trout have bonded quickly off the field in the Arizona Fall League. Their chemistry between the lines isn't bad, either.

Harper went 2-for-3 with an RBI to extend his hitting streak to 16 games and Trout -- MLB.com's **No. 1 prospect**, knocked in another run Friday as the Scottsdale Scorpions scored three times in the third inning and held on to beat the Phoenix Desert Dogs, 3-2.

The Scorpions got all the runs they needed in the scheduled seven-inning contest on RBI singles from Trout and Brandon Crawford (Giants) and a double by Harper. Phillies farmhand Cody Overbeck started the third with a double and came home on Trout's line drive to right that dropped in front of A's prospect Grant Green. Joe Panik, the Giants' top pick in the 2011 Draft, singled off Tyson Ross to move Trout into scoring position for Crawford, who blooped a single into left.

Harper, the No. 1 overall selection in the 2010 Draft, followed with a two-out double to right off reliever Tyler Sturdevant (Indians) for a 3-0 lead.

Harper, batting .321, also singled leading off the sixth. He has six homers and 25 RBIs over 21 games in his second AFL stint.

Trout, who reached the Majors this summer with the Angels, hasn't fared quite as well. He's batting .253 and entered Friday's game hitting .194 in his last 10 starts. The RBI was only his fourth in 23 games.

Red Sox right-hander Jeremy Kehrt (2-0) made his ninth appearance and second start, holding the Desert Dogs to a run on two hits and three walks over two innings. He struck out one.

Ross (1-3), an A's prospect, was charged with three runs on five hits over 2 1/3 innings. He did not walk or strike out a batter. Indians lefty T.J. McFarland looked sharp in relief, throwing four scoreless frames to close out the game for Phoenix.

The Dogs scored in the second when Yan Gomes drew a one-out walk and came home on fellow Blue Jays prospect Anthony Gose's single to center. Jake Diekman worked out of trouble in the seventh after Ryan Ortiz's run-scoring single made it 3-2. The Phillies prospect struck out Dusty Coleman (A's) and Gose before retiring Green -- the A's **No. 1 prospect** who hit a grand slam Thursday -- for the final out.

### **Interview with Coco Crisp: Baseball player and so much more**

By Joseph Landini, Sportrageous 11/14/2011

Coco Crisp is a Major League Baseball player who has made a name for himself as one of the most exciting guys in the game. Between his combination of speed and power, Crisp has become one of the most solid outfielders in baseball. Outside of baseball, Crisp is just a normal guy by helping out whenever he can and even doing other sports on occasion.

Growing up, Crisp was not just a baseball player. His father was a fighter, so Crisp was into the contact sports, such as football, boxing, and even karate. While playing all these sports, Crisp began to excel in baseball. "I started to become really good at it, so I took the appropriate steps toward being even more successful," said Crisp. It was also a plus in the sense that his father also had a major love for the game.

When asked what his favorite moment of his career was, Crisp didn't have a difficult time just pinpointing one. "My big league call up has to be on top. That phone call was so exciting, and catches you totally off guard," explained Crisp. Coco at that time called all his family and friend to tell them the big news. "It was like winning the lottery," he continued. Crisp also mentioned how winning the World Series was like nothing else. He talked about how you work so hard to get there, then you are there, and once you win it how unbelievable of a feeling it is.

Growing up loving baseball, Crisp had various idols in the game he watched. "Every aspect of the game had a player to go with it," he explained. When Crisp was younger he wanted to become a switch hitter, so he watched Ken Griffey Jr. bat left handed, which is also where his power came. Locally in California he would always watch the late Brett Butler, while for his speed aspect, Ricky Henderson was his guy. When he was young Crisp attempted to collect all of Henderson's baseball cards. He told a story about how every other weekend he and his father would go to swap meets, and other card stores looking for new cards so he had them all. Lastly, Ozzie Smith was another player Coco grew up liking. Being drafted as a middle infielder, Crisp would love to watch Smith play. "Every time I would go to a game Ozzie was playing in, I was hoping to see something spectacular, hoping to see a back flip," Crisp said.

For the Oakland Athletics this past season Crisp sported a .264 batting average to go along with eight homeruns, 54 RBI, and an impressive 49 stolen bases and an almost perfect fielding percentage (.997). The Athletics, as a whole, finished third in the American League West with a 74-88 record. Crisp said, "We had a team that could compete, but we under performed." He went on to say how the backbone of the team, the pitching staff, was injured which hurt them as well. Crisp was surrounded by a great group of guys, but was not satisfied with his overall performance. His power numbers and average were down from years past, but injury did hold him down. "It just seemed like every time I got hot, I'd get injured," commented Crisp. He talked about because of this he could not get into a rhythm, thus not being able to help the offensive struggles. Outside of the offensive struggles he was happy and thought he did a good job stealing bases.

Also last season, Crisp was being shuffled in the lineup, due to him being a veteran and his versatility. "I'm very easy going, because no matter what I knew how to stay within myself," he said. Crisp mainly batted in any of the first three spot in the lineup. Coco explained all the advantages in hitting in each of those spots. If he batted third, he was able to have more chances of knocking in runs. "Hitting third was not typical, but I have done so in my career whenever I am hot," said Crisp. As for hitting in the two hole, Crisp is comfortable in this position, because he loves to bunt, move his runner over, thus giving his team a better chance of scoring. Lastly, was the lead off position, which is where Crisp mainly hits in the lineup. The lead-off spot is where Crisp is most used to because of his speed, and ability to steal bases.

Coco Crisp's contract with the Athletics expired making him a free agent this off-season, looking for a new place to excite the crowd. "It's a waiting game, and patience is key," Crisp said, commenting on free agency. Crisp loves being home with

his young children and his wife, making California a nice place to be. Talking and being close with his family was a way mentally to get through the entire baseball season. "It is a tough grind, you need to lean on people," Crisp said. He talked about how being in Oakland was an easy commute to home on certain days. Despite this, Crisp wanted to make it clear that he was not opposed to anything. Aside from being home, when it comes to free agency, winning was another factor. "Winning always makes the baseball experience better," exclaimed Crisp. He would go on to say how he would love another opportunity to win a championship. There are always rumors out there of where he will go, but Crisp said, "Nothing is close or concrete yet, so we will see how things go."

Crisp is not just crafty with the baseball, but with another ball as well. Crisp talked about how back in the day he could bowl over 200 consistently. After his two shoulder injuries in 2009, Crisp said it was hard. He went on to tell a story on how the other day he went to the lanes by himself to bowl a few games. "I bowled 140-140-140, and just said to myself that today was not my day," Crisp laughed. Crisp enjoys the game of bowling, and may even have a future in it. "With some training, after baseball, I could give the PBA a run," stated Crisp.

Coco is currently involved with the Read Across America program locally. Crisp went to schools, read books to the children, and told them what reading did not him. "For Me, talking in front of people was difficult for me when I was younger," explained Crisp. He talked about how he gave the children tips on helping them with that problem. Some of the tips included not worrying so much, and concentrating on their breathing. "For me, doing this really touches home," said Crisp.

Although his destination for next season is not mapped out yet, Crisp does have some personal goals in mind already. "The numbers will always be there, I just need to continue to play hard and stay on myself to set a good example," he explained. Crisp finally talked about how his season would turn out the best way. "As long as I'm going out working hard and having fun, then things will work out.

### **For Executives, Cases for Hall Are Not Strong Enough**

By STUART MILLER, New York Times

For five days last week, I blogged about the players eligible for the Hall of Fame on the Golden Era ballot, advocating for three to be inducted and five to be turned away. I feel strongly that Minnie Minoso has been unfairly overlooked, and I'm convinced that Gil Hodges's managerial magic combined with his playing career should put him over the top and that Ron Santo, as one of the 10 best third basemen to play the game before 1990 (despite having the advantage of hitting in Wrigley Field), deserves entry. And while I wouldn't be horrified if Jim Kaat, Allie Reynolds, Louis Tiant, or especially Tony Oliva and Ken Boyer made it in, I don't think they belong.

But of all the names on the list, I think I feel most passionate about someone who was not a slugger or a pitcher, but an insurance executive. Players prove their value on the field every day. For an owner or another executive to make it into the Hall, he or she would have had to make definitive, positive and lasting contributions to the game. The notion that Marvin Miller, who truly revolutionized the sport by fighting for free agency, got turned away is absurd enough. But it makes the idea of inducting Charlie Finley — who in many ways represented all that is wrong with baseball's owners — seem especially difficult to justify.

Finley's Oakland A's won three World Series, but there are other owners who have done that, so it's likely that the case would be made on the innovations he championed. No, not the orange baseballs or the mule mascot, but the designated hitter and night World Series games. Both are mixed blessings (just ask any child how much he or she saw of this year's Game 6 classic), but they're not nearly enough to offset how Finley treated his chattel, sorry, players.

Finley was antagonistic toward many players and managers. His nadir came in the 1973 World Series when he publicly humiliated second baseman Mike Andrews. After Andrews made two crucial errors in an extra-inning loss against the Mets, Finley made Andrews sign paperwork claiming he was injured so Finley could remove him from the roster. The team nearly mutinied and the commissioner intervened, but it was emblematic of Finley's approach.

He was also incredibly cheap — he reportedly saved money by recycling uniforms from year to year and by making players replace their own broken bats. And, of course, when free agency arrived, Finley pulled off the neat trick of making Bowie Kuhn into a heroic figure. Finley was so disgusted by raising salaries he started selling off stars like Joe Rudi and Vida Blue for cash to wealthier teams. Kuhn intervened, citing the "best interests of baseball" clause that enabled him to block Finley's fire sale. Anyone who violated the "best interests of baseball" for bottom-line business decisions probably should not be on a plaque in the Hall of Fame.

The other executive on the list is Buzze Bavasi. There's no real knock on Bavasi, but it's tough to put him in on the same level as the few other team architects like Ed Barrow, Branch Rickey and Pat Gillick, who are in. Supporters cite his integral role in the Brooklyn Dodgers' minor league system in the early days of integration, and the pennants and World Series won while he was running the Brooklyn and then Los Angeles Dodgers from 1951 to 1968. But while he was certainly on the right side of the angels in integration, he was essentially following Branch Rickey's lead and often his direct orders.

As for his baseball savvy, well, the four pennants and one World Series title captured from 1952 to 1956 were largely won on the backs of talent already assembled: Bavasi inherited Pee Wee Reese, Gil Hodges, Jackie Robinson, Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe and others. The Dodgers did sign Roberto Clemente on his watch, but Bavasi failed to protect him on their roster and he slipped away to Pittsburgh.

Bavasi should get credit for his patience with Sandy Koufax and for the team he built in Los Angeles that reached four World Series and won three from 1959 to 1966. But Bavasi also failed to adapt to changing times, and his track record at subsequent jobs running the expansion San Diego Padres and then the California Angels was spotty. The Padres never had a winning record in his eight-year tenure, and the Angels won two divisional titles in eight years. Again, none of this is to say that Bavasi was not a good man or a very good executive. If he is elected, it will certainly not tarnish the Hall. But given how long Minnie Minoso, Ron Santo and Gil Hodges have waited, they should have the spotlight to themselves this year if any of them get in.

*Stuart Miller is the author of "Good Wood: The Story of the Baseball Bat."*

## **Inside Baseball**

### **Michael Lewis and Billy Beane talk Moneyball.**

By Simon Kuper, Financial Times, 11/13/2011

The moment you see Michael Lewis and Billy Beane together, you realise how *Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game* got written. The book that changed baseball—and then most other ballgames—isn't so much a book. It's more a conversation. This morning the writer and the baseball executive meet in the tumbledown Oakland Coliseum, where it all began, and pause only occasionally to answer a question. Most of the time they just continue their decade-old conversation.

Lewis, who lives around the corner in Berkeley, noticed in about 2001 that something strange was going on at the Coliseum. The Oakland A's baseball team were routinely beating teams with several times their budget. Clearly they must be doing something clever. The pre-eminent business writer of our times came to visit.

The A's' general manager, Beane, let him in. He had read Lewis's debut book *Liar's Poker*, and he was curious. He cautiously told Lewis how the A's were using new statistics to find good players ignored by other clubs. For instance, baseball teams had spent a century focused on a hitter's "batting average". It turned out that something called "on-base percentage" was much more telling. Beane was increasingly letting his twentysomething Harvard-educated statistician Paul DePodesta choose players on his laptop. The gnarled old A's' scouts didn't like that.

Today, Beane recalls: "Michael said within three minutes: 'I know exactly what you guys are doing. You're arbitraging the mispricing of baseball players.'" When Lewis mentioned his own experience of arbitrage on Wall Street in the 1980s, Beane got interested. "We really were looking to Wall Street as a guide," he says.

The two men kept talking, sometimes about baseball, often not. Out of their conversations came *Moneyball*, the book, which has sold more than one million copies worldwide. *Moneyball* the movie, starring Brad Pitt as Billy Beane, is released in the UK on November 25. But "Moneyball" is also a phenomenon, which after changing baseball is now sweeping almost all ballgames, from British soccer to Australian rules football. And it's a phenomenon that reaches beyond sport. With hindsight, what Lewis captures in his book—the triumph of the highly educated over the lesser educated—is exactly what happened in the American economy.

At 49, Beane still sports something of the Charles Atlas physique that once lured half the country's baseball and football scouts to his parents' house in San Diego. This morning he also sports a fresh coffee stain on his shirt, timed just right for the FT's photo session, "because I'm me". Lewis has an imperfectly tamed southern accent, a pink preppy shirt and an expensive watch befitting a journalist who reputedly earns \$10 a word. We settle into one of the Coliseum's poky offices—Bulgarian ministry of transport, c1976—and they reminisce about how they met.

"It was in spring training of '02," says Lewis, whose articulation will drive the conversation.

"March of '02," says Beane, who is happy to play backup. Like many autodidacts, he feels his lack of formal learning, and his conversation is peppered with phrases such as, "I wish I had a better term for this...."

Lewis says: "What triggered it was I had been thinking about doing a piece."

"A newspaper article," adds Beane.

At first Beane still didn't want to give much away. However, the two men had scarcely begun their conversations when Lewis's daughter Dixie was born, and the writer disappeared for weeks. That reassured Beane: "We figured, we were not that interesting." He was right. Lewis wasn't even intending to make the A's the focus of his article. He certainly wasn't planning to focus on Beane himself. "He's problematic as a character," analyses Lewis, "because he's not that interested in himself, and deflects that sort of attention."

"I was never a great character," puts in Beane.

"But there was a moment," continues Lewis, "when I thought, 'Ha, I can work with this.' We went down to—"

"Modesto, we drove," says Beane.

"We drove," continues Lewis. "We were coming back and it was night and dark, because I remember I couldn't see my notepad. And you started talking about your relationship to the game. I can't remember what it was now, but it was interesting. I got home, I had notes all over the paper, I was writing over my own handwriting, but I started scribbling. You would only talk to me when the lights were out. But I thought that he could work."

And so Moneyball became in large part the drama of Billy Beane: the autodidact who gave himself an education. When Beane was 18 years old, Stanford University had offered him a football and baseball scholarship. He and his parents—bright people without much money who had married young and joined the military middle class—were ecstatic. A good college was everything they wanted. But then the New York Mets offered Beane \$125,000 to play baseball instead, and he felt he ought to do it. The movie shows the teenager, around the kitchen table with his parents in the simple family home, making the fateful decision. The filmmakers catch the scene well, but, as Beane says, "I'm not sure they could capture the complete horror."

"Listen," he adds, "I'm trying not to talk about myself here. I don't look at life as a bunch of hindsight reviews of your decisions. But that's exactly what I wanted to do, to attend Stanford University."

Beane's life since—his compulsive reading, his discovery of the Moneyball system, his later discovery of soccer—is a long attempt to give himself the university education he never had. Just as Sergey Brin and Larry Page created Google partly because they went to Stanford, Beane created Moneyball partly because he didn't.

"His worst nightmare is that we all sit around talking about what makes him tick," says Lewis, and then goes right ahead and talks about what makes Beane tick. "It was interesting to me when I met him that someone who had been denied the conventional college path had that hunger. He was reading all kinds of stuff, and kind of indiscriminately. He's an omnivore: he eats badly and well, and he reads badly and well."

"There's this horrible thing that happens with fancy educations, that some incurious people will go to Princeton, Harvard, Yale, Stanford and come out and think they know everything. It's a huge advantage to him that he has some slight anxiety left that he didn't go to Stanford."

"I would agree," adds Beane quietly.

Lewis says, "It keeps him agitated about new things."

Hang on: Lewis had a fancy education at Princeton and is still "agitated" about new things.

"Yes, but I was a bad student," replies Lewis. "That curiosity, he'll lose it eventually because he's going to get old, and the older you get the harder it is to take an interest in new things. I find it in myself: noticeably, you have to force yourself. And in pro sports you don't find a whole lot of curiosity. Baseball is a stupid-making enterprise in that nobody wants to be singled out or say something dumb. You wander in the clubhouse and it's amazing how incurious the players are. One reason I was attracted to Scott Hatteberg [the former A's player] as a character: he was just curious: 'What the hell are you doing here, man?'"

Beane never fulfilled the teenage promise the scouts had wrongly seen in him. Perhaps he was too introspective, too self-questioning to succeed as a ballplayer. But he was always curious. Aged 27, a mediocre player for the A's, he had done what no healthy 27-year-old major-leaguer ever does: he walked into front office and said he wanted to quit playing to become an advance scout. Just around that time, baseball was developing its own revolutionary intellectual movement: sabermetrics, rooted in the acronym SABR, which stands for the Society for American Baseball Research. The sabermetricians, a grouping of mostly odd-looking statisticians whose dean was Bill James, janitor in a pork-and-beans factory in Kansas, were very much outside professional baseball. When Beane became a scout, James was already a cult hero. He'd shown various age-old baseball strategies to be useless. Yet hardly anyone in professional baseball knew his name.

Sabermetrics enchanted Beane. To this day he keeps some of James's typewritten, mimeographed Baseball Abstracts in his office. "I'll never throw them away," he told me once. He quickly decided he wanted a sabermetrician of his own. In the film, Pitt and Jonah Hill (as the fat geeky statistician) capture the jock-nerd relationship well. It's love, but it's mutual. Hill is wowed by the alpha male Pitt, and Pitt loves Hill for his mind.

Anyone in baseball could have pinched James's ideas, but there are specific reasons—beyond Beane's personal journey—why the A's got there first. First, they had no money. As Pitt tells his scouts in the movie, "The problem we're trying to solve is there are rich teams, and there are poor teams." He pauses, before adding: "Then there is 50ft of crap, then there's us." The A's needed to find talent cheap. Second, the Coliseum is just a traffic jam away from the US's most innovative region. "We're in the shadow of Silicon Valley here," marvels Beane. It's surely no coincidence that the hippies, the breakdown of the family, the high five (supposedly invented by the A's player Glenn Burke), the personal computer, Google, the iPhone and Moneyball all came out of northern California.

Innovation hurts. After Beane began using numbers to find players, the A's' scouts lost their lifelong purpose. In the movie, one of them protests to Pitt: "You are discarding what scouts have done for 150 years." That was exactly right. Similar fates had been befalling all sorts of lesser-educated American men for years, though the process is more noticeable now than it was in 2003 when *Moneyball* first appeared. The book, Lewis agrees, is partly "about the intellectualisation of a previously not intellectual job. This has happened in other spheres of American life. I think the reason I saw the story so quickly is, this is exactly what happened on Wall Street while I was there. You had the equivalent of the old school..."

"The fat mortgage traders at Salomon Brothers," I interject. (Declaration of interest: *Liar's Poker* explains so clearly what a bond is that it got me through my job interview at the FT in 1994.)

"Yes," says Lewis, "who had high-school degrees from New Jersey and traded by their gut. But they are replaced by hairless wonders from MIT."

Hairless wonders like the young Lewis?

"I wasn't as bright as they were, but, yes, when I came out of the training programme at Salomon Brothers it was pretty clear I was going into the cutting-edge group filled with the people from MIT, as a lesser light, a salesman rather than a trader.

"The intellectuals had an advantage because the securities had got more complicated. The Black-Scholes options pricing model had been invented [a mathematical formula for pricing options developed by two professors, which helped kickstart trading in derivatives]; the guys from New Jersey didn't understand it. And so there was never any question about who was going to win. It was quick and ruthless. The old guys just shuffled off to less and less important parts of the business and that sort of person wasn't hired again."

In baseball, though, the old scouts did find a new purpose. Lewis says, "I never thought scouts were totally pointless, I thought they were just looking for the wrong things. I told Billy: 'If I were you I'd hire a bunch of female journalists who go and find out about the lives of these players. Find out if they're alcoholics, that stuff.'"

To a degree, this happened. Today a laptop evaluates a player's quality, and the scouts evaluate his personality. They are needed now for their soft skills.

For years Moneyball worked for Oakland. The A's won more games than they lost every season from 1999 to 2006. Their peak was 2002, the year Lewis hung around the Coliseum, when the unlikely bunch of rejects assembled by Beane won 64 per cent of their games. The movie's emotional peak is their 20th successive victory.

"Remember?" Beane asks Lewis. "We had a long conversation here during the 20th game."

"I was there," says Lewis, pointing around the tiny office, "you were here."

Lewis had arrived at the Coliseum early in the game, and banged randomly on the building's locked front door: "He answered the door!" Lewis recalls. "He said, 'Sshh, come on.' And we sat right here, we watched the game."

Beane says, "Well, we didn't watch it." Beane never watches A's games. "The game was on in the background and I didn't want to pay attention to it. I'm an emotional guy, who has the ability to make emotional decisions, but I want to make rational decisions so I removed the emotional part. Michael became my history tape that night."

Does Beane really spend games listening to documentaries about history?

"You name it. I think I know Maximilien Robespierre's life better than he does."

When Beane first saw the manuscript of *Moneyball*, he presumed nobody would ever read it. Even so, he was aghast: his character swore! "I come from a military family," he explains. "I said to Michael, 'My Mom's going to read this book.'"

"It was too late to do anything," sighs Lewis.

But the former ballplayers who then ran baseball were even more aghast. The notion that numbers could trump gut outraged them. Unfortunately for them, a year after the book appeared, the Boston Red Sox, with the 30-year-old Yale graduate Theo Epstein as general manager, won the world series of 2004 using Moneyball methods. In 2007 the Red Sox won again. Other teams began hiring Epsteins and Beanes rather than clubbable ex-players. Last season only three of 30 GMs in the major leagues had played professional baseball, none of them very successfully. Beane has ended up restricting job opportunities in baseball for people from backgrounds like Beane's.

There are two silly objections often made to Lewis's book. The first is that if Moneyball works so well, then why haven't the A's had a winning season since 2006? We meet on a sunny October morning, mid-playoffs, a perfect day for baseball, but the team's season has long since ended.

However, the people who make this objection don't seem to grasp the basic principles of imitation and catch-up. Once all teams are playing Moneyball, then playing Moneyball no longer gives you an edge. Indeed, the richer clubs have the means to play it smarter. The New York Yankees recently hired 21 statisticians, Beane marvels.

The other common snipe is that Beane should never have spilled his secrets to Lewis. That ruined the A's, the critics say. But Lewis dismisses the charge. First, he notes, Beane had never imagined their conversations would spiral into a book. Lewis says, "I was going to do something little. By the time I thought I was going to do something big I'd hung around so much it would have been socially awkward to ask me to leave."

Second, notes Lewis, by 2002 *Moneyball* was already spreading. The book ends with the Red Sox offering Beane the highest GM's salary in baseball history. Only when Beane turned them down, having decided after Stanford that he'd never do anything just for money again, did the Red Sox hire Epstein. "The market was moving already," says Lewis. "The teams that wanted to do it were going to do it anyway, so no book was going to make any difference. My view is the only effect of the book was to give them [the A's] the credit. If no book had been written, Theo would have been branded the man who reinvented baseball."

Do books never make any difference? The bestselling author chuckles. "*The Blind Side* [also by Lewis] caused a number of white people to adopt black people. I got letters about that. *Liar's Poker* caused any number of young people to go work on Wall Street. I've had thousands of letters from people who've said, 'I'm on Wall Street because of you.' I always think, 'I'm so sorry I've had that effect on your life.' So I have shifted individual decisions, but I don't have a sense of having changed the culture."

At least books beget films. Ten years ago, Beane could not have foreseen that one day Brad Pitt would be sitting in the A's changing room (which looks more like a junk room) eating pizza and trying to figure out Beane's psyche. Pitt and his twins also visited Beane and his twins at home, much to the excitement of Beane's wife and nanny.

The movie was made chiefly because Pitt wanted it made. That begs the question of why he cared so much. When I ask Beane, he squirms: he hates talking about Pitt because it makes him sound like a wannabe celebrity. He is midway through a long garbled answer when Lewis interrupts: "I think he [Pitt] saw himself in Billy."

Why? "At the core of the book," explains Lewis, "is misperception of value of people. It resonated with him because of his own acting career. Because he's constantly on the receiving end of other people's evaluations. At the beginning of his career, he's thought to be a pretty actor. His skill is not judged, it's his looks. And you could tell, he's weary of being judged by his looks. 'Is this the way people get screwed up ideas of other people and their value?'"

When Lewis first saw a rough cut of the movie, he said his gut reaction was, "Thank God it doesn't suck." But after he left the cinema, satisfaction crept up on him. He felt the director Bennett Miller had "got" the same core theme that had attracted Pitt: the misperception of people's value. Lewis says, "What he did that was so clever: at every level of that film he echoed that theme. So Jonah Hill's misperceived as just this bawdy, comic actor. Jonah Hill's value is discovered as a serious dramatic actor. The Coliseum, perceived as a shithole, is gorgeous in that movie. I thought, he's figured out that that's the thing he needs to reprise in different ways."

We both turn to Beane: what was his gut reaction? He reflects: "For the first two minutes I feel like I'm watching a Brad Pitt movie. Until you hear your name and you squirm." But it wasn't the film that worried Beane. "The most stressful part of this whole thing was the idea that I was going to have to walk the red carpet. I said, 'How quickly can we run across this thing?'"

Lewis breaks in: "To be totally fair to Billy, he likes attention less than anybody who's got as much attention as he has. You're shy, that's what it is! You just hide it well."

Actually, admits Beane, the film did give him one good celebrity moment. Unusually for anyone in professional sport, Beane counts among his many obsessions punk and indie music. (The Clash poster on Pitt's office wall in the movie is strictly accurate.) When the film came out in north America, Beane found himself at a table at the Toronto film festival organised by *Moneyball's* producer, Sony Pictures. He says, "I was sitting next to the Sonys. Brad and Angelina Jolie were over there. And right there was this guy, and the whole night I kept thinking, 'Man, that guy looks just like Chris Cornell from Soundgarden.' So the guy gets up to leave and I turn round and say, 'That guy's trying too hard because he's trying to look just like Chris Cornell.' And he goes, 'Oh, that is Chris Cornell from Soundgarden.' I went, 'What? I've been asking him to pass the scallops all night!' And off I go and introduce myself to him. That was my closest lookie-me moment."

At this point Lewis exits the Coliseum to plug his newest bestseller, *Boomerang*, about the global financial crisis. The interview is over. However, ending any conversation with Beane is a struggle. He starts talking about how with the movie finally out, he can get back to the important things: family, work, and obsessing about soccer. The other day he was in London, at a conference at Chelsea Football Club, thronged by soccer people trying to learn Moneyball methods. Beane has come to love London. "I even like coming in from Heathrow," he admits. "Hammersmith, and I think of the Clash song. The Kings Road—this is where the Sex Pistols started. Then I start thinking, 'Where did that darn fire start, during Samuel Pepys' diary?' Just going on a cab ride is fascinating for me."

We chat about Moneyball's inexorable spread through all sports. I tell him about the England cricket team's recent victory in the Test series with India. England's coach, Andy Flower, is a devotee of Moneyball. Before the series his statistician, Nathan "Numbers" Leamon, carried out a Moneyball-style analysis of India's great batsman Sachin Tendulkar. "Numbers" discovered that Tendulkar struggles early in his innings to score runs on his "off side"—that is, when the ball is bowled on the side of his bat rather than his legs. In the 22 years that Tendulkar has played Test cricket, nobody had previously spotted this. England bowled to Tendulkar's off side early in his innings, and repeatedly dismissed him cheaply.

Beane is amazed that cricket has only just started doing this analysis. On the shelf behind him, he finds the A's' statistical file for their recent routine series against the Detroit Tigers. The file is perhaps 40 pages thick. Beane leafs to the pages for one of the Tigers' batters, Alex Avila. A chart shows exactly how Avila has fared in each tiny section of his strike zone, and how that varies depending on the phase of his at-bat. The chart looks, as Beane likes to say, like a piece of analysis done at a hedge fund.

That's Moneyball. Beane puts the file away. He still likes this stuff, but there's so much else to think about. He walks me to the car park, where he engages the friend who drove me here in a 15-minute conversation about growing up in San Diego.

### **Internal Affairs: Is there a tacit agreement to bring the A's to San Jose?**

By the Mercury News

Another month, another rumor about the Oakland A's coming to San Jose.

Exhibit A: New York Daily News sports writer Bill Madden's Nov. 5 baseball notebook that asked, "Are the Oakland A's finally about to know the way to San Jose?"

Citing "baseball insiders," Madden wrote breathlessly that "the reason A's co-owner Lew Wolff, the L.A.-based real-estate developer and close personal (baseball commissioner Bud) Selig ally, is not going to be a bidder in the Frank McCourt Dodger auction (as had been frequently speculated) is because the commissioner has given him tacit assurance that his effort to move the A's to a new stadium in San Jose is eventually going to be approved.

"Once Selig completes his major accomplishment of ridding the game and liberating the Dodgers of McCourt -- which hopefully will be before Opening Day -- he can turn his attention to the A's, who have been waiting more than two years for his relocation study committee to deliver its report on San Jose and the San Francisco Giants' territorial rights there."

Phew! Those Big Apple sports writers sure do like big, long sentences.

In any case, IA immediately chased down Wolff. "Nothing has changed," he assured us. "There's nothing new. I wish there were."

When asked about the "tacit approval" and whether there was any truth to the notion that Selig's decision will be announced after the Dodger business is settled, Wolff said:

"I have not gotten tacit approval, if that's what you're asking. But I have not received tacit non-approval either. We're still waiting and looking forward to it being resolved and hoping it will happen sooner rather than later."

The information is there, if you're willing to go after it.



If you want to uncover the salary of a state employee or check an audit of a state agency or look into a contract awarded to a vendor, it's at your fingertips.

It's just that you'll have to navigate through the websites of various state agencies, now that a single website that had provided access to all the information has been shut down as part of Gov. Jerry Brown's quest for efficiency and cost savings.

And instead of directly accessing the sometimes juicy officeholders' statements of economic interest, now you'll have to submit a public records act request with the Fair Political Practices Commission.

Brown's executive order to offload [www.transparency.ca.gov](http://www.transparency.ca.gov) came nearly two and a half years after it was created by former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"It was set up by the prior administration to address a set of problems such as questions over staff travel" and other expenditures, said Elizabeth Ashford, Brown's spokeswoman.

She said the cost of maintaining the website was about \$50,000 a year, money that "could be spent elsewhere."

She assured IA: "This is not an attempt to mask anything. If it were, all of the information wouldn't be available on the other sites."

The old site directs people to four other websites: the Fair Political Practices Commission, the state controller's office, the Department of General Services e-procurement site and the Bureau of State Audits. A note on the old website says Brown is "committed to keeping state government open and transparent while eliminating inefficiencies and unnecessary costs."

Phillip Ung, a lobbyist for government watchdog group Common Cause, wasn't impressed. He said it's ironic that Brown speaks of his commitment to openness while making it more difficult to find information.

"Transparency is never efficient in government," Ung said. "The most efficient government is one that doesn't disclose anything."

Downtown has the condos; all it needs are the brokers

It seems that the valley's real estate brokers are avoiding downtown San Jose as if it were some kind of mosh pit for undesirables, when in fact it's a fun-filled center of urban living.

At least that's the theory, bolstered by a recent survey by Pacific Marketing Associates that showed only 30 percent of the condo sales downtown were handled by brokers, far below the typical 70 percent for home sales in surrounding suburbs.

There are anecdotes of brokers steering clients away from downtown, the company says. That's one of the reasons condo sales have been so sluggish.

To correct that impression, The 88, a condo tower on East San Fernando, is offering brokers \$1,000 premium on any condo sold in the tower and in contract between now and the end of December. There are more than 150 condos to be sold in three downtown high rises, with \$3 to \$4 million in commissions awaiting adventurous brokers, according to PMA, which markets and sells new homes.

"We've done everything we can to make it easy, including parking opportunities and a short-term incentive program," said PMA's Paul Zeger. "It's an opportunity to show the product and demonstrate the quality of life available in downtown San Jose."

The program was launched last week by The 88, PMA, the Santa Clara County Association of Realtors and the Downtown Association. The message to brokers: Downtown is vastly different from what it was many years ago.

Really.

Need some help with a job? Well, what are friends for?

Far be it from us to doubt District Attorney Jeff Rosen's squeaky-clean motives. But IA couldn't help but notice that the first-termer, who ran on an ethics platform, got the Board of Supervisors last week to essentially lock in a high-paying, powerful job for his best friend, Chief Assistant District Attorney Jay Boyarsky.

Under the current long-standing rules Boyarsky, the second in command over some 170 attorneys, is a political appointee who serves at the pleasure of the DA. If the DA loses an election or dies -- and the new DA doesn't wish to retain him -- the chief assistant must return to his previous "underlying" position.

In Boyarsky's case, that would mean dropping three levels down, to a relatively lowly line-deputy job. That's never happened, Rosen said, because all the office's other chief assistants were top managers before their appointments.

But under new civil service rules approved by the Board of Supervisors last week at Rosen's request, Boyarsky will move into retired assistant district attorney Rolanda Pierce-Dixon's old job. That becomes a permanent position after Boyarsky completes 18 months' probation.

The personable Boyarsky, who by all accounts seems to be doing a good job, also will retain the title and duties he had before as chief assistant -- and the same 7.76 percent pay increase.

Rosen told IA in an email that the new rules, which go beyond the changes that protect Boyarsky, give him "the flexibility that I needed to effectively manage" the office. "Since Jay directly supervises all five assistant district attorneys (who have underlying status as assistant district attorneys), I thought it was unfair that he did not have that same underlying status."

### **Max Stassi hits Homers for the Hungry**

#### **Appeal-Democrat staff report**

Five months after going underneath the knife, former Yuba City High baseball standout Max Stassi is showing that his surgically-repaired right shoulder is near 100 percent.

Stassi, a highly-touted Oakland A's catching prospect, has been on the mend since undergoing season-ending surgery in late May. He's been rehabbing ever since, but judging by the swings he took on Saturday afternoon, the shoulder looks to be healing just fine.

Hosting his third annual "Homers for the Hungry" event at Winship Field in Yuba City, Stassi sent 78 balls flying over the outfield fence to raise money for local food banks and "Hands of Hope," a non-profit organization for the homeless.

It was the first meaningful cuts he's taken since his surgery and his performance at the plate brought plenty of cheers from the spectators and supporters that filled the entire set of bleachers at his old stomping grounds.

"I started swinging the last week of August, but it's been a progression," Stassi said. "I started with a fungo bat, then moved to a regular bat and did some tee stuff. It's been a long process, but it's going great now."

Playing for the Class-A Stockton Ports, Stassi had his season cut short when he underwent a procedure to repair damage in his throwing shoulder. Doctors went in and shaved a part of the acromion bone away from a tendon, allowing Stassi to have full range of movement once again.

"It's kinda like a bone spur," Stassi explained. "There was no structural damage with the labrum or rotator cup, so that's a plus. Those things can be career threatening."

Stassi raised \$9,000 in the first year of his fundraising venture and more than \$7,000 last year when colder temperatures and rain pushed the event back a month.

With sunny and warm weather on Saturday, a large crowd filled the stands and watched as Stassi clubbed 32 home runs in the first 15-minute period before taking a break. He then added 46 long balls in the second session.

In all, he helped raise an estimated \$20,000 this year.

"My first offseason, I was sitting around not doing a whole lot and just working out. I figured it was a great way to help the community," Stassi said. "With the economy being the way it is, there's a lot of hungry people out there and this is my way of helping out."

"It's a lot of fun and it keeps getting better and better every year."

### **Former Yuba City star Max Stassi to hold food bank fund-raiser**

Bill Paterson, sacramentobee.com

Stockton Ports catcher Max Stassi will host his third annual "Homers for the Hungry" charity benefit 11 a.m. Saturday, rain or shine, at Yuba City High School.

Stassi is accepting pledges for every home run he hits during a 30-minute session, with money raised going to local food banks and Hands for Hope, an organization that helps homeless families.

The event is open to the public and admission is free. There will be food, drink and games as well as a raffle for autographed memorabilia.