

A's News Clips, Thursday, December 1, 2011

David DeJesus leaves Oakland to join Chicago Cubs

Oakland Tribune staff report

David DeJesus' brief, disappointing stay in Oakland is officially over. The free-agent outfielder has joined the Chicago Cubs, agreeing to a two-year contract with a club option for 2014, the Cubs announced Wednesday.

DeJesus, who'll turn 32 later this month, had the worst offensive year of his nine-year career with the A's in 2011. DeJesus had career lows with a .240 batting average and a .698 OPS (on-base plus slugging) in his only season with Oakland, which acquired him in a trade with Kansas City for pitcher Vin Mazzaro and a minor-leaguer last offseason.

The A's, who offered the Type B free agent DeJesus arbitration last week, will receive a supplemental pick in 2012.

Oakland's regular 2011 outfield of DeJesus, Josh Willingham and Coco Crisp were all free agents after the season. While the A's reportedly have some interest in retaining Crisp, Willingham, a Type A free agent who will net Oakland two draft choices, is expected to sign elsewhere.

Oakland currently has just four outfielders on its 40-man roster, with Ryan Sweeney the only one who has seen any significant time in the majors. Other A's outfielders on their roster include Michael Taylor, Jai Miller and Jermaine Mitchell.

Chicago will pay DeJesus at least \$10 million to be their regular right fielder. DeJesus reportedly will make \$4.25 million in each of his first two years, with the Cubs option for 2014 worth \$6.5 million with a \$1.5 million buyout.

DeJesus becomes the first player acquired by new Cubs president Theo Epstein, the former Boston Red Sox general manager who has long coveted DeJesus.

In 1,007 major league games, nearly all with Kansas City, DeJesus has posted a batting average of .284 with 207 doubles, 50 triples, 71 home runs, 436 RBIs and a .356 on-base percentage.

Chin Music: David DeJesus signs with Chicago Cubs

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune, 11/30/2011 12:52pm

Scratch one outfield option off the A's list for 2012. ... David DeJesus signed a two-year deal with the Chicago Cubs that guarantees him \$10 million, with a club option for 2014.

It's no secret that DeJesus' first (and only) season with Oakland was a disappointment — he hit .240 with 10 homers and 46 RBIs, and his struggles contributed greatly to a poor offensive first half that buried the A's in the AL West. The team offered him arbitration last week, and being that DeJesus is a Type B free agent and declined arbitration, the A's get a sandwich draft pick between the first and second rounds as compensation.

It's a great deal for DeJesus, who lives in the Chicago area and reportedly will be the Cubs' starting right fielder. There seemed little chance he would return to Oakland even after being offered arbitration. But now that he's officially gone, it sheds more light on the A's uncertain outfield situation. Left fielder Josh Willingham appears all but gone to free agency, and though Fox Sports' Ken Rosenthal has reported the A's are interested in retaining free agent center fielder Coco Crisp, they clearly have holes to fill. The A's could lean on a combination of Ryan Sweeney, Michael Taylor, Jai Miller, Jermaine Mitchell and recently acquired Cedric Hunter for their outfield. But all are unknown quantities other than Sweeney, and how comfortable would you feel plugging in any combination of those players and counting on them to produce?

The outfield is definitely an area to watch as this offseason unfolds. I'd be surprised if the A's don't make more moves to address that area one way or another ...

Yawning over my Baseball Hall of Fame ballot

Ron Kroichick, Chronicle Columnist

Next year, baseball's Hall of Fame ballot (for the class of 2013) shapes up as a fascinating referendum on an entire era. Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens, Mike Piazza and Sammy Sosa will appear on the ballot for the first time, each dragging along hefty steroid suspicions.

This year's ballot (for the class of '12), announced Wednesday, brings no similar drama.

Thirteen candidates make their inaugural appearance, and there's no need to ponder the impact of performance-enhancing drugs. That's because none of the newcomers - not one - merits serious consideration.

The official press release from the Hall of Fame trumpets American League batting champions Bernie Williams and Bill Mueller. Williams hit .297 in his career and played center field on four World Series-winning teams with the Yankees.

Excellent player. Classy guy. Not a Hall of Famer.

Giants fans no doubt remember Mueller, who spent his first five major-league seasons in San Francisco. He hit .291 for his career and won the 2003 batting title (.326) with the Red Sox.

Solid player. Nice career. Not even close to Cooperstown-worthy.

Ruben Sierra? Forever known as the "village idiot," thanks to Tony La Russa.

Vinny Castilla? Wondrous at high altitude.

Tim Salmon? Tailed off too much in his 30s.

The larger point here: This is not the Hall of Above Average, or even the Hall of Very Good. Cooperstown should be reserved for transcendent players, those who took your breath away.

Only one of the 14 holdovers (Barry Larkin) got my vote last year. Larkin could find himself all alone this time - I also tapped Roberto Alomar last year, and he got in - though Jack Morris and Alan Trammell annually cause prolonged contemplation.

Many of my fellow voters are much more lenient, and that's their prerogative. Someone needs to be the baseball Scrooge.

That might be my motto next year, too.

Drumbeat: DeJesus to Cubs, where will Willingham go? Plus: Bailey rumors

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser 11/30/2011 5:02pm

I wrote near the end of the season that the Padres had interest in David DeJesus, so I'm unsurprised to see him land with a two-year deal with the Cubs: Jed Hoyer and Jason McLeod of the Padres' front office joined Theo Epstein in Chicago's front office last month.

I'm hearing two potential landing spots for another of the A's free agents: the Red Sox are expected to have interest in Josh Willingham should the team fail to re-sign David Ortiz (I've had that confirmed by two sources), and the Twins are likely to

pursue Willingham should Michael Cuddyer not return. I'm surprised Willingham's name isn't out there more: He had a terrific offensive season in a poor offensive ballpark and without a ton of protection in the lineup. He'd be a strong addition for most teams. He's also a solid citizen, good in the clubhouse, all that stuff. And I say that with no personal bias: He's not a media guy. He's not a good quote. He is perfectly polite but he has little interest in talking.

The Red Sox, like the Marlins, seem to be linked to just about everyone. They're among those rumored to have interest in A's closer Andrew Bailey, who almost certainly will be dealt this offseason. Another club with rumored interest: Texas. Usually you could shoot that down because the A's seldom deal within the division, but if GM Billy Beane believes the team is in a three-year rebuild aimed at a possible new stadium, well, moving Bailey to the Rangers isn't really that blasphemous. If the A's aren't expected to contend for three years, what would it matter? (All things being equal, though, I think Beane would prefer to send top players out of the division.) Texas had interest in Bailey before the trade deadline, so it makes sense the Rangers would still like him now.

I think Beane and assistant GM David Forst will be very popular during next week's winter meetings in Dallas. Any team that needs a closer or an All-Star starting pitcher (there is a great deal of interest in Gio Gonzalez) will be paying the A's hotel suite a visit. While Bailey is a strong bet to be dealt, Gonzalez remains less likely. It would take a massive haul to get him. Think: a team's undisputed top prospect, and a couple others thrown in.

As for DeJesus, many scouts believe that he will have a good bounce-back year. You'd almost think he'd have to after a really dreadful season in Oakland. He might be a good National League player – he has some speed, he plays defense reasonably well. Here's guessing that, like some other former A's, he goes elsewhere and prospers.

Steroids cloud McGwire's chances of Hall entry

In sixth year on ballot, A's/Cards slugger hopes for voting rise

By Matthew Leach / MLB.com

*Mark McGwire is a candidate on the National Baseball Hall of Fame ballot for the sixth year. The Class of 2012 will be announced on Jan. 9. You can watch the announcement live at 2 p.m. ET on an MLB Network simulcast on **MLB.com**.*

As the Cardinals' hitting coach, Mark McGwire has achieved something he long wanted: he's just a guy on the St. Louis coaching staff. He does his work -- quite successfully this year -- and stays out of the spotlight.

The famously private McGwire is no longer the star attraction for reporters that he was when he was hired for the 2010 season. Unfortunately for McGwire, the same seems to apply to his Hall of Fame candidacy. He's no longer the lock for enshrinement in Cooperstown that he appeared to be 10 years ago. He's no longer the lightning rod that he was two years ago after admitting to steroid use.

These days, the iconic slugger is one of many names on the ballot, so far receiving more than enough support to stay on it but not enough to put himself in the picture for future induction. Entering his sixth year on the ballot, the question is whether McGwire will start the kind of climb that could get him into the Hall by the time his allotted 15 years are up.

McGwire, who retired as the No. 5 home run hitter of all time (he's now 10th), looked like a stone-cold lock for immortality back when he called it a career following the 2001 season. Since then, the question of illegal performance-enhancing drugs in baseball became a front-burner issue, and McGwire was the first true casualty in Hall of Fame voting.

Last season, McGwire returned as the Cardinals' hitting coach. He repeatedly apologized for his use of steroids, and although some argued that he didn't go far enough, McGwire came forward in a way that few of his contemporaries have. And yet he stepped backward, rather than forward, in the voting.

The 2011 results saw McGwire receive his lowest vote total and lowest percentage of any of the years he's been on the ballot. McGwire received 115 votes, 19.8 of the electorate, after holding steady at 21 percent or more in his first four years.

"Big Mac" was named on 23.5 percent of ballots his first time around, ranking ninth among all candidates. It was more than enough to keep him on the ballot for another year. McGwire's second year on the ballot, 2008, saw virtually the same result. Once again he finished ninth in the balloting. He received 128 votes, or 23.6 percent.

In McGwire's third year as a candidate, his vote total and percentage both dropped, but he bounced back. In the 2010 balloting, McGwire once again returned to exactly 128 votes, which this time was good for 23.7 percent of the vote. Then he dropped off last year, not an encouraging sign at all.

A candidate must receive 75 percent of the vote from Baseball Writers' Association of America members to gain election to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Second baseman Roberto Alomar (90 percent) and pitcher Bert Blyleven (79.7 percent) earned their ticket to Cooperstown on the 2011 ballot. Former Reds shortstop Barry Larkin (62.1 percent) and starting

pitcher Jack Morris (53.5 percent) are the top returning vote-getters from last year's ballot. Results of the 2012 election will be announced on Monday, Jan. 9.

Before 2010, McGwire admitted taking androstenedione, a steroid precursor, but nothing stiffer than that. In January of '10, he stepped forward, admitting to steroid use and apologizing for it. McGwire staunchly continued to maintain that his statistics were not inflated by his use of the drugs, but his contrition was hard to miss.

"I wanted to talk about this five years ago, but I wasn't in position to do it," McGwire said after his nationally televised apology. "I think everybody that's a human being has held something in that they wanted to release for quite some time. Once they do it, it takes a day or two to really let it sink in, and then you realize that, yeah, it's off my chest. I'm ready to turn the page and move on with my life. It's something that I totally regret. I can't say that I'm sorry enough to everybody in baseball and across America, whoever watches this great game."

As a player, McGwire was a true offensive force and, perhaps, an under-appreciated fielder. McGwire was a 12-time All-Star, a Gold Glover in 1990 and finished in the top 10 in Most Valuable Player balloting five times.

He ranks eighth all-time in slugging percentage, 10th in home runs and first in at-bats per home run. McGwire played on six playoff teams, three pennant winners and the 1989 World Series champion A's.

The career .263 batting average is a negative, but take away the drug use, and it is indisputably a Hall of Fame career.

"For me, there isn't anything that's changed about, No. 1, how much I believe in him, and No. 2, what that means as far as his career and his production and some of the historic things he did," said Tony La Russa, who managed McGwire in both Oakland and St. Louis. "I'm hoping that he gets that honor sooner rather than later.

"I don't know how to tell you the context as far as an answer. I just know there are issues that guys, fans raise, media raise, and however they get sorted out."

When McGwire made his full-season debut in 1987 for a young and emerging Oakland team, he was a phenomenon. He hit 49 homers, most of them mammoth and majestic. He drew 71 walks, showing the strike-zone judgment that would be nearly as much a part of his profile as his power. And he did it in a brutal hitters' ballpark several years before the offensive explosion of the 1990s took hold.

He followed that up with 32, 33 and 39 homers for the pennant-winners from '88 to '90, then struggled badly in 1991. A rebound brought 42 homers in 1992, but McGwire battled injuries throughout '93 and '94.

When McGwire returned healthy in '95, though, he was a force like never before. He hit for a higher average than he had in the past. He drew even more walks. And he hit homers at a rate even he hadn't previously managed. From 1995 through 2000, his last really effective season, McGwire went deep 316 times, an average of once every 8.06 at-bats.

McGwire was a dominating force in the lineup until injuries finally took him down. He struggled through 2001 before hanging it up at age 38.

Suzuki trying to pack on pounds this offseason

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- Imagine consuming 4,000 calories per day, every day.

"That's not normal, I don't think," Kurt Suzuki says.

But the practice has become routine this offseason for the A's catcher, who is attempting to add on 15 pounds by the start of camp in an effort to help him sustain strength through the season.

"You're training to play not just once a week, but every day," he said. "That takes a toll on your body, especially being a catcher in the middle of the summer, when you're out there in 90- and 100-degree heat. It takes a lot of energy, and you do tend to shed weight."

Speaking by phone near his home in Southern California on Wednesday, Suzuki noted several times that he's well aware how -- in his terms -- "gluttonous" his diet sounds, especially when breaking down a typical daily eating schedule.

Suzuki starts his day by 8 a.m., taking in a breakfast panini -- check that, two of them -- along with a serving of fruit. At 10 a.m., he begins his workouts, which can last from 1 1/2 to three hours, and consumes an energy bar in the middle and a 600-calorie protein shake at the end.

Not long after is lunch, which one day consisted of a pair of turkey burgers, a salad and more fruit. Something similar in stock to a barbecue chicken flatbread follows -- not as dinner, but simply as an afternoon snack. The dinner menu, rather, might look like this: steak, mashed potatoes, vegetables and yet another salad.

And don't forget the evening snack before bed. Think cheese or slices of deli meat and a handful of nuts and fruit.

"It's crazy," Suzuki said, laughing. "I'm constantly feeding my face. It's not easy, that's for sure. And there's also a fine line between putting on 15 good pounds and putting on 15 pounds of pointless weight."

With the help of a nutritionist and a service that delivers his daily intake of food, Suzuki believes he's found balance. He got a jump start on the meal plan not long after season's end, beginning in October and gaining five or six pounds in the first five weeks. And even though a procedure on his wisdom teeth that called for a liquid diet essentially put him back at square one nearly two weeks ago, he's hoping he's on track again.

"I basically lost all the weight I had put on," he said. "I'm starting to feel better. I'm on my way. Last year, I was really focusing on repairing my body, kind of like physical therapy. I had a lot of sore muscles and joints, so last year was more about lighter weights, where as this year my body feels good, so I'm hammering out the weights and going a little heavier and trying to put on some thighs."

The 28-year-old Suzuki entered Spring Training this year at 193 pounds, but at one point in the season was down to 185 -- the lowest weight he can recall in years and a number much lower than the 200 pounds he carried coming into his first big league camp. So when he met with Oakland's training staff in September standing at 190 pounds, they devised a plan to get him to the 205-pound mark by February.

"My whole goal this offseason is to get to that target weight and possibly even more than that to give me some leeway," he said. "You look for ways to improve. Obviously, last year was definitely not one I'll really remember on a good note. And I'm not saying the reason I didn't perform last year was because of my weight. I'm not looking for excuses, just ways to improve."

"We had a great conversation and felt that maybe it could help me feel better. And if you feel better, maybe you perform better. Those two go together. I have my fair share of things to work on, but this is a step in the right direction to help myself improve as a player, and if you do that, you help your team improve."

The A's backstop hit just .237 with 44 RBIs in 134 games during the 2011 season -- the average representing a career low and the sixth lowest in the American League -- with a career-low .301 on-base percentage, which was the 10th-lowest mark in the league.

"I feel like my power numbers were there," said Suzuki, who tallied 14 home runs. "But the hits weren't coming consistently. I think I became too result-oriented. If I go up there and just think about hitting the ball hard instead of thinking I need to get a hit, it will probably be a lot easier on the mind and on the body to react. It's obviously easier said than done, but I really believe a lot of my struggles were mental, not mechanical."

The proof was in the film. Suzuki, admittedly not a big fan of watching too much video of his swings, studied the 2008-10 versions of himself.

"We looked at swings and compared them all," he said. "They didn't look different; they were the same. It was pretty incredible, and it kind of drove me crazy and put more thoughts in my head, but it was just mental."

Now removed from a frustrating season, Suzuki is gearing up for the third year of a four-year contract that takes him through 2013 and includes a club option for 2014. He has plenty of supporters, including manager Bob Melvin -- "He's one of the most positive thinkers I've ever been around," Suzuki said -- plus his equally active wife, Renee, and baby daughter Malia Grace.

"I feel great about where I am right now," he said. "I'm losing one pound a week. It's crazy I can't gain any more considering everything I'm eating, but hopefully the pounds add up and I can head into the season ready to go."

DeJesus agrees to \$10 million, 2-yr deal with Cubs

Associated Press

David DeJesus could become the starting right fielder for the Chicago Cubs after agreeing to a \$10 million, two-year contract.

"Ultimately we feel that he is an above-average defender in right field. He's played there quite a bit, actually moving over from center field a few years ago," new general manager Jed Hoyer said Wednesday. "I think he has the ability to do a lot of things. He makes contact, he gets on base. He doesn't have a lot of home run power, he has a lot of doubles power. I think he can hit all over the lineup. I'll leave that up to Dale. It's nice to have a player that's versatile."

A. 284 hitter during nine years with Kansas City and Oakland, DeJesus batted just .240 in his lone season with the Athletics. He batted .265 against right-handers and only .174 against lefties last season. But he did improve as the year progressed, batting .270 in the second half after hitting just .220 in the first.

He gives the Cubs versatility in the outfield and a reliable glove. Chicago could still be in the market for another left-handed hitter.

But Hoyer declined to comment on the possibility the Cubs could pursue the top left-handed hitter on the market, first baseman Prince Fielder, or Albert Pujols.

"We never talk about free agent players. In the past, we're a major market team and we're going to be involved across the spectrum. I'm not going to address whether we're on or off individual players, other than the fact we're in contact with a lot of teams and a lot of agents," Hoyer said.

"We're doing everything we can to improve the team for next year and the future."

Baseball's winter meeting take place in Dallas next week.

DeJesus brought a 241-game errorless streak into the 2011 season, the longest active streak among big league outfielders at the time. He made four errors in 250 chances with Oakland, a .984 fielding percentage.

He suffered a serious thumb injury in his final season with the Royals in 2010.

"With David, I think he was one of the most sought-after players on the trade market in 2010 before he hurt his thumb," Hoyer said. "He goes to Oakland and he struggles. Looking inside his year a little bit, his second half was much stronger than his first half. That made us feel good. We always try to look at a player's last three or four years, not just highly focused on that last year. We feel very good that he's going to come into Chicago and bounce back."

DeJesus' deal includes a 2014 club option. What his arrival means for young outfielder Tyler Colvin is not clear. Colvin hit 20 homers as a rookie in 2010 but struggled last season before being demoted to the minors.

"We signed DeJesus looking to round out our lineup. We'll do everything we can to put the best group out on the field," Hoyer said. "Tyler, he has to bounce back and that starts in spring training. To say that he's out of our plans would be wrong."

2011 Year In Review: Sacramento Pitchers

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Dec 1, 2011

Our "2011 Year In Review" series continues with a look at the pitchers for the Oakland A's Triple-A affiliate.

Sacramento River Cats Pitching At A Glance

Team ERA: 4.21 (second out of 16 teams)

Strike-outs/Walks: 1118/480 (most out of 16 teams/fourth-least of 16 teams)

Team WHIP: 1.39 (tied for best in the league)

Note: this article covers all pitchers who threw at least 35 innings for the Sacramento River Cats in 2011.

With 88 wins, the Sacramento River Cats were the best team in the Pacific Coast League in 2011. Late August and September promotions hurt the River Cats in the playoffs, but during the regular season, they were dominating. A big part of that domination came from the mound, where the River Cats had one of the top staffs in the PCL. They were second in ERA and first in strike-outs and their pitchers didn't walk many batters, either. River Cats' pitchers also worked harder than most in the league, pitching a league-most 1289.2 innings.

The staff was led by right-handed starter Graham Godfrey, who would have finished second in the PCL in ERA if he had had enough innings to qualify (two stints in the major leagues prevented him from reaching the requisite number of innings pitched). Godfrey was brilliant the entire season for Sacramento, winning a team-high 14 games, posting a 2.68 ERA and a 1.14 WHIP in 107.1 innings pitched. He allowed more than two runs only four times and never allowed more than four runs in any of his 19 appearances. Godfrey held opposing batters to a .227 average and coughed up only six homeruns. Lefties hit only .223 against him and righties batted only .230. Godfrey was rewarded with two stints in the big leagues and a Triple-A All-Star nod from Baseball America. He continued to pitch well this winter in a four start stint with the Leones del Escogido of the Dominican Winter League, posting a 3.31 ERA in 16.1 innings. He is expected to compete for a spot in the A's rotation this spring.

Travis Banwart's ERA wasn't as sexy as Godfrey's, but he was the staff leader in terms of innings pitched and starts this season. The right-hander had a solid first full season at Triple-A (he pitched half a season at that level in 2010), posting a 4.63 ERA and striking out a team-best 120 in 149.2 innings. Banwart also finished the season on a roll, posting a 3.39 ERA after the All-Star break. Ironically, his strike-out totals dipped as his ERA did, but his homeruns allowed also dropped dramatically during the second half. Homeruns were the biggest issue for Banwart this season, as he allowed 22. The Wichita State alum was left unprotected for the upcoming Rule 5 draft. Assuming he isn't selected in that draft, he should return to Sacramento next season and is a candidate to make a Godfrey-like jump to the big leagues in 2012.

Carlos Hernandez didn't join the team until late May, but he still managed to finish second on the River Cats' staff in innings pitched with 109.1. The left-hander began the year with Double-A Midland, but was one of the first pitchers the A's called on to fill a spot in Triple-A when injuries and promotions created openings. Hernandez had an up-and-down first season with Sacramento. At times, he was nearly unhittable, but he was also vulnerable to the occasional "blow-up" game. Most of those "blow-up" games occurred away from Raley Field. Hernandez's road ERA was more than double his home ERA (7.05 to 3.10, respectively). He had a decent overall K:BB ratio of 80:32. Hernandez has been a starter for most of his professional career, but his best chance in the big leagues could be as a reliever. The A's may put him back in the rotation to begin the 2012 season, but it wouldn't be a surprise to see Hernandez rack up a number of relief appearances this year, especially since the A's don't currently have a lot of left-handed relievers in the upper-levels of their organization. Like Banwart, Hernandez was left unprotected for the Rule 5 draft.

Another lefty who made a solid contribution to the River Cats' staff in 2011 was Josh Outman. Pitching his first season since having Tommy John surgery in 2009, Outman made 17 starts for the River Cats. He also appeared in 13 games for the A's. With Sacramento, Outman overcame a rough April to put together a solid season. He went 8-3 with a 3.91 ERA and he had 72 strike-outs in 78.1 innings. Walks were a problem for Outman, however, as he issued 47 free passes. That problem

would continue during his major league stint, as well. Outman's control did improve as the season wore on, however, and control issues are not uncommon for pitchers recovering from Tommy John surgery, so there is reason to be optimistic that walks won't be quite as big an issue for Outman in 2012. Even before the injury, he was never considered a "plus-command" pitcher, however, although his high strike-out totals have helped to minimize that issue over the years. Outman has had success during his career as both a starter and as a reliever. He is expected to be in contention for a rotation spot with Oakland this spring, but he could wind-up in the A's bullpen if he doesn't land the starter spot.

Yadel Marti, the former Cuban national team star pitching in the US for the first time, made 14 starts and two relief appearances for the River Cats in 2011. He was hit hard with Sacramento, allowing 100 hits in only 82.1 innings. Marti pitched to contact much of the season, striking out only 50. Although he spent the majority of the year with the River Cats, he finished the season with Double-A Midland, an indication that he had fallen on the A's minor league depth chart. The 32-year-old is currently pitching well for the Leones de Ponce in the Puerto Rican Winter League. It has been reported that he is hoping for a release from the A's this off-season so he can find another organization that will give him an opportunity in the big leagues. Thus far, the A's haven't made any transactions involving Marti.

The majority of the starts not made by Godfrey, Banwart, Hernandez, Outman or Marti were split between Guillermo Moscoso, Tyson Ross and Lenny DiNardo. Moscoso was only with the River Cats early in the season, as he was given an opportunity at the major league level and never relinquished his spot in Oakland's rotation. The right-hander had a 3.88 ERA in nine appearances (eight starts) for Sacramento. In five of those outings, he allowed one or no runs. With the big league team, Moscoso had a 3.38 ERA in 128 innings. He is currently penciled in as the A's fifth starter for 2012.

Ross was scheduled to be the River Cats' Opening Day starter, but he was promoted to the big leagues before the PCL season could begin. He spent the first two months of the season with the A's, first in the bullpen and later in the starting rotation. Ross pitched well for the A's, posting a 2.75 ERA in 36 innings before landing on the disabled list with an oblique strain. He was expected to return to Oakland after a rehab stint, but Ross was never able to get back on-track in the minor leagues and he spent the rest of the year in the minors. In nine starts with the River Cats, Ross had a 7.61 ERA. He struck-out 34 in 36.2 innings, but he walked 22 and allowed 52 hits. Ross pitched better during the Arizona Fall League. Although his ERA was 5.94, he struck-out 13 and walked only five in 16.2 innings. He is a wild card for the A's coming into spring training. If healthy and in control of his mechanics, Ross could be a strong candidate for the A's starting rotation or the back-end of their bullpen. If he is still out of sorts, however, he will likely return to Sacramento.

DiNardo was picked up by the A's midway through the season. He made 13 appearances for Sacramento (nine starts) before he was sent down to Double-A Midland. He would finish the year with the Rockhounds. DiNardo struggled early with the River Cats but improved after four poor starts. Overall, his ERA with Sacramento was 6.49. He allowed eight homeruns and 25 walks in 61 innings. DiNardo is currently a minor league free agent and is pitching in the Dominican Winter League.

The River Cats' bullpen was led by a number of veteran relievers. Former Giants' reliever Vinnie Chulk had a team-high 69.2 relief innings. He posted a 3.36 ERA and saved four games while striking out 55 and walking 26. He is currently a minor league free agent. Veteran right-hander Fernando Cabrera also had a solid year for Sacramento. His 2.71 ERA was second-best on the staff and he had a 73:26 K:BB ratio in 63 innings. Cabrera also saved nine games. The A's never called up Cabrera, however, who failed to make an appearance in the big leagues for the first time since 2004. He is also a minor league free agent.

Willie Eyre was a mid-season PCL All-Star for the River Cats and he had nine saves for Sacramento. In 62 innings with the River Cats, he posted a 3.48 ERA with 45 strike-outs and 28 walks. Eyre was granted his release by the A's late in the season so he could sign with a club that needed him at the major league level. He found that fit with the Baltimore Orioles and had a 3.44 ERA in 18.1 innings with Baltimore during the final six weeks of the season.

Right-hander Trystan Magnuson was one of the River Cats' top relievers during the first half of the season. In 45.1 innings with the club, he posted a 2.98 ERA and struck-out 46 while walking only 19. Magnuson had a couple of stints with the A's, appearing in nine games. He finished the year on the 60-day disabled list with a shoulder injury and was dropped from the A's 40-man roster and later traded to the Toronto Blue Jays during the off-season. Ironically, the A's had acquired Magnuson from Toronto before the start of the season.

Like Eyre, right-hander Joe Bateman was released by the A's mid-season so he could pursue better opportunities with another organization. The veteran reliever appeared in 26 games for the River Cats before his release, posting a 5.40 ERA in 43.1 innings. He struck-out 35 and walked 15. Bateman eventually signed with Tampa Bay and finished the season with Triple-A Durham. He had spent the previous two seasons in the Rays' chain.

With the mid-season departures of several veteran relievers, the A's called on Justin Souza to fill one of the open slots in the River Cats' bullpen. After missing the first few months of the season recovering from an elbow injury, Souza began the year with Double-A Midland and was dominant with the Rockhounds. He posted a 1.33 ERA in 20.1 innings for Midland before getting the call to Sacramento. With the River Cats, he had a 4.85 ERA with a 31:11 K:BB ratio in 42.2 innings. Souza is a candidate for a non-roster invite to big league spring training this year if he isn't selected by another team during the Rule 5 draft.

