

A's News Clips, Friday, January 27, 2012

A's make Gomes signing official

By Joe Stiglich, Bay Area News Group

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The right-handed hitting Gomes, 31, is expected to draw playing time in the outfield or at DH against lefties.

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Local sports digest: A's co-owner Lew Wolff reportedly would 'have no problem' with Manny Ramirez joining the team

Bay Area News Group

The A's continued their offseason overhaul by finalizing a one-year deal with outfielder Jonny Gomes on Thursday, and adding Manny Ramirez to the mix reportedly wouldn't bother co-owner Lew Wolff one bit.

Wolff told the San Francisco Chronicle on Thursday that he would "

have no problems with that on (Ramirez's) talent and his ability. His last experience in Tampa Bay, what I'm hearing, he was a good clubhouse guy."

Ramirez, a 12-time All-Star, is attempting a comeback, and recently was linked to the A's in a report by ESPN Deportes.

Ramirez can't play for anyone until the last week in May while he serves a 50-game suspension for violating the league's drug policy last season. Wolff told the Chronicle that the suspension would not reduce the A's interest, though he said ultimately it would be general manager Billy Beane's decision to bring in Ramirez.

"Why wouldn't we (be interested) if a guy serves his term?" Wolff said. "What's more, is he in shape? Does he want to come to us? Do we want him? I really don't see any non-baseball reason for not having him. I wouldn't want to not have a player because he made a mistake and paid the price for it, but that's really up to Billy."

The deal with Gomes reportedly is worth \$1 million, with \$200,000 in possible incentives.

To make room for Gomes on the 40-man roster, the A's designated infielder Adrian Cardenas for assignment. Cardenas was a highly touted prospect when he arrived from Philadelphia in the Joe Blanton trade of 2008, but he has yet to carve a spot in the majors. The A's have 10 days to trade, release or send Cardenas to the minors if he clears waivers.

The right-handed hitting Gomes, 31, is expected to draw playing time in the outfield or at DH against lefties. Coco Crisp and Josh Reddick are the A's projected outfield starters, left to right. Smith and Reddick hit left-handed and Crisp is a switch hitter. Gomes, a Petaluma native, hit .209 with 14 homers and 43 RBIs last season for Cincinnati and Washington.

"Clearly we're left-handed-heavy in both corners and in our potential first base/DH options," A's assistant GM David Forst said. "We've been on the lookout for an experienced right-handed bat, and Jonny has had a lot of success hitting left-handers over the years."

Cardenas was the key prospect obtained in the Blanton deal, but he has yet to reach the majors and his primary position, second base, is blocked by Jemile Weeks. He's a career .303 hitter in the minors and also can play third base and the outfield, but has never reached double-digit homers in a single season.

Forst said the would like to retain the 24-year-old Cardenas if he clears waivers.

"There's a lot of people in this organization who believe in Adrian and put in a lot of time (with him)," A's assistant GM David Forst said. "This time of year, you end up having to make tough roster decisions."

The Giants and free-agent right-hander Clay Hensley have reached agreement on a \$750,000, one-year contract.

The Giants said Thursday it is a non-guaranteed big league deal for Hensley, who still must pass a physical before the club makes a formal announcement.

Hensley was with San Diego when he gave up Barry Bonds' 755th career home run on Aug. 4, 2007, that tied the eventual home run king with Hank Aaron.

The 32-year-old Hensley went 6-7 with a 5.19 ERA in 37 appearances and nine starts last season for the Marlins.

Boston confirmed the signing of former Giants outfielder Cody Ross to a \$3 million, one-year deal.

Petaluma's Gomes pleased to add to Bay Area buzz

Susan Slusser, Chronicle Staff Writer

The A's officially introduced new outfielder/designated hitter **Jonny Gomes** on a conference call Thursday, and Gomes, who'd agreed to a one year, \$1 million deal on Monday, said he's excited to be part of the "real good buzz" around Bay Area sports these days.

Gomes, who is from Petaluma, noted that he's spent seven seasons in the big leagues, but it's only now that he's joined a local team that "everyone is like, 'Oh, you *do* play.' "

Gomes said he's not concerned about the Coliseum's reputation as a pitcher's park, because "I'm a guy who, when I get it, it's going to go."

He has homered at every American League park except Chicago, and, he said, "Hopefully I'll get that one off the board."

Gomes, whose offseason workout partner in Arizona is former A's second baseman **Mark Ellis**, said his main goal is to stay healthy. He's had only one trip to the disabled list in his career, for a rotator cuff impingement in 2006.

Assistant general manager **David Forst** said that, considering how many left-handed hitters the A's have, "I don't think there will be any shortage of at-bats" for the right-handed Gomes. Forst also said that, based on reports and defensive metrics, the A's believe that Gomes has improved as an outfielder in the past year.

At 31, Gomes will be something of an elder on a young team ("I'm not rebuilding, that's how I explain it," he said) and earlier in the week, the A's signed starter **Bartolo Colon**, 38, in part to take some pressure off the team's young starters, according to Forst. He added that there will be plenty of opportunities for any pitchers who perform well.

Colon and **Brandon McCarthy** are expected to be the two starters who will pitch in the A's series in Tokyo at the end of March, with an Opening Day starter likely to be named early in the spring because the team will need to get the two men onto a schedule.

With the Gomes signing, the A's roster is somewhat set for the spring. Forst said the team is always looking to improve whenever possible, but the A's are no longer looking to add in any particular positions.

To make room on the 40-man roster, infielder **Adrian Cardenas**, obtained in the 2008 **Joe Blanton** trade with Philadelphia, was designated for assignment. Forst said the team is hopeful that Cardenas, 24, will clear waivers and remain with the organization.

The A's reportedly have signed 17-year-old Dominican shortstop **Yairo Munoz**, but the deal will not be official until Munoz's paperwork goes through, which can be a lengthy process with the background checks now required.

Got something to say to Lew Wolff? Show up Sunday

John Shea, Chronicle Staff Writer

You think the A's are ignoring their East Bay fan base? You think San Jose is a better fit? You still wondering why All-Star pitchers Gio Gonzalez, Trevor Cahill and Andrew Bailey are gone? You want Manny Ramirez as your DH?

Feel like telling Lew Wolff?

Bring it.

Wolff is making himself available to fans at the Coliseum on Sunday as part of the team's resurrected fan fest, which was skipped the past three years. Fans can meet the managing general partner one on one to "discuss a variety of topics in an intimate setting," according to an A's news release.

"I thought it might be a good opportunity to have a little fun and at the same time have some one-on-one with a random selection of fans who would be interested in talking to me," said Wolff, who added, "I may be sitting there by myself."

While majority owner John Fisher remains concealed from fans and the media, Wolff has taken considerable heat as the front man crusading for a move to San Jose - though the organization's fate is in the hands of Commissioner Bud Selig, who appointed a committee to examine the ballpark dilemma nearly three years ago.

In Sunday's link-with-Lew sessions, it seems everything is on the table - unless, of course, Selig calls with a gag order. "I have talked to quite a few people who've written me or called me," Wolff said. "I like doing it. ... I like it when someone actually listens to me."

In an interview with The Chronicle, Wolff gave his take on why the A's are rebuilding and trading so many quality pitchers, citing the improbability of contending in a division with two teams' payrolls topping \$100 million and a desire to be competitive if and when the A's move into a new park.

"Each move has been very carefully thought through," said Wolff, adding the A's farm system is vastly improved and the draft budget has been increased. "We're also looking to say, 'Gee, we'll hopefully get a new venue in three or four years, and who's going to be ready for that?' I think we'll have a better team (in 2012) or equal to last year's, which is wonderful. They'll be younger and learning a lot."

Rounding out roster

After restocking with prospects, the A's began rounding out their roster with experienced players, including Bartolo Colon and Jonny Gomes.

Might be one more. Manny, anyone?

"I would have no problems with that on his talent and his ability," Wolff said of Ramirez, who's flirting with a possible comeback. "His last experience in Tampa Bay, what I'm hearing, he was a good clubhouse guy."

Before playing a game in 2012, Ramirez, who turns 40 in May, must serve a 50-game suspension for his latest performance-enhancing drug bust. Wolff said signing Ramirez would be a baseball decision more than anything else and general manager Billy Beane's call.

"Why wouldn't we (be interested) if a guy serves his term?" Wolff said. "What's more, is he in shape? Does he want to come to us? Do we want him? I really don't see any non-baseball reason for not having him. I wouldn't want to not have a player because he made a mistake and paid the price for it, but that's really up to Billy."

Wolff said the payroll will be just over \$50 million, by far the lowest in the division. The Angels' projected payroll, with Albert Pujols aboard, is \$150 million. The Rangers', including Japanese pitcher Yu Darvish, is \$130 million. Even the Mariners will top \$80 million.

While the A's initially reported a loss in 2011, Wolff revealed they made a slight profit because the World Series extended to seven games.

"We made \$370,000, and that's *after* revenue sharing, not before," said Wolff, who confirmed last year's revenue-sharing check was \$32 million. "I have to admit, without revenue sharing, we'd have a huge loss, and we don't want revenue sharing. We'd like not to be a receiver if we could."

Thus, the ballpark pursuit.

On 'front burner'

At this month's owners meetings, Selig said the A's are on the "front burner" and MLB is acting at a "quick pace." A move to San Jose would need the Giants' territorial rights overturned, and Wolff hopes to get a resolution long before the next owners meetings in May.

"I don't want to wait till May. It's really up to baseball," said Wolff, who's promising a privately financed project. "I think the Giants have done a terrific job. We'd just like the same opportunity."

What if San Jose doesn't pan out? Would Fisher and Wolff sell the team?

"I don't know. That's the thing. I'm getting beaten up, but I've never threatened to go anywhere else," Wolff said. "We don't want to own a team outside the Bay Area. I have not spent any time on that. I refuse to, actually. Teams have made threats. The Giants threatened to move someplace (in 1992). The White Sox did the same thing. I'm not looking to leverage anybody. I'm just looking to build a new ballpark in a market where we could all share it."

Wolff's defense

Amid speculation that Wolff didn't try to make it work in the East Bay and always had targeted San Jose, he points to his 227 pages of documents detailing his effort between 2003 and 2006 to build in Oakland, as well as his hefty financial commitment in Fremont.

Asked which Oakland site was the best opportunity, Wolff suggested the Coliseum parking lot. Roadblocks included building over an East Bay Municipal Utility District easement, the difficulty of adding parking garages and expected issues raised by other tenants during construction.

"There were numerous detailed problems and issues, but nobody really was interested in addressing them," said Wolff, who recalled the Joint Powers Authority's unwillingness to equally share the cost of an analysis during the team's previous ownership.

"I never hear anyone say, 'What did the city, county or (Joint Powers Authority, which oversees the complex) do or try to do?' Even on paper. Oakland has so many other priorities, and I understand that. So even if we had full cooperation, I'm not sure we could've done it in Oakland.

"Even if there is disagreement or distrust in my efforts, the committee appointed by MLB has not, in concert with Oakland, refuted a single aspect of the effort we made, to my knowledge. We've been and will continue to be a good business citizen of the city and county and hope our efforts are recognized by the majority of our fans and citizens."

A problem could be the Coliseum lease, which expires after the 2013 season. It's possible the JPA could force the A's hand and push for a long-term lease, knowing the A's would have no other place to play - the Giants' park? Wrong territory - while waiting for a new yard to open in 2015 at the earliest.

The A's proposed an extension last summer, and nothing came of it. Wolff said the matter now is in the hands of Selig's committee.

Meet Lew Wolff

Fans wishing to meet one on one with Lew Wolff at Sunday's fan fest should register at the information booth on the plaza between the Coliseum and arena between 9 and 10:30 a.m.

Offseason transactions

Some of the bigger transactions made by the A's since the end of last season:

Oct. 30: OF David DeJesus, OF Josh Willingham, OF Coco Crisp, RHP Rich Harden and DH Hideki Matsui filed for free agency. DeJesus and Willingham have signed with other teams. Crisp re-signed with A's on Jan. 5. Harden and Matsui are still free agents.

Dec. 9: Traded RHP Trevor Cahill, LHP Craig Breslow and cash to Arizona for OF Collin Cowgill, RHP Jarrod Parker and RHP Ryan Cook.

Dec. 22: Traded LHP Gio Gonzalez and RHP Robert Gilliam to Washington for RHP A.J. Cole, RHP Brad Peacock, C Derek Norris and LHP Tom Milone.

Dec. 28: Traded RHP Andrew Bailey and OF Ryan Sweeney to Boston for OF Josh Reddick, 1B Miles Head and RHP Raul Alcantara.

Jan. 16: Traded RHP Guillermo Moscoso and LHP Josh Outman to Colorado for OF Seth Smith

Jan. 24: Signed free-agent RHP Barolo Colon.

Jan. 26: Signed free-agent OF Jonny Gomes.

Outfielder Gomes reaches deal with A's

Oakland adds depth, gives veteran one-year, \$1 million contract

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- The A's have added yet another veteran to their outfield mix in right-handed-hitting Jonny Gomes.

The 31-year-old Gomes reached a one-year deal with his hometown team on Thursday. According to a source close to the situation, the deal is for \$1 million, with incentives that could bring it to \$1.2 million.

To clear a spot on the 40-man roster, the A's designated infielder Adrian Cardenas for assignment.

With the addition of Gomes, a career .281 hitter against lefties, Oakland solidifies its outfield depth with a player who should nicely complement the left-handed-hitting duo of left fielder Seth Smith and right fielder Josh Reddick. He also offers manager Bob Melvin yet another option at the designated hitter spot.

Gomes, a Bay Area native, posted a .209 average with 14 home runs and 43 RBIs in a combined 120 games for the Reds and Nationals last year. The majority of his appearances came in left field.

He spent the first six seasons of his professional career with the Rays, and since 2003, he has compiled a lifetime .242 average and a .780 OPS. Gomes' most productive season came in 2010, when he hit .267 and drove in 86 runs while appearing in a career-high 148 games for Cincinnati.

A's agree to terms with outfielder Jonny Gomes

By JANIE McCAULEY, ASSOCIATED PRESS

OAKLAND — Jonny Gomes takes pride in his versatility. He can play the corner outfield, and he's an experienced designated hitter.

That certainly will be helpful for Oakland manager Bob Melvin with a young roster.

The A's and Gomes finalized a \$1 million, one-year contract Thursday after reaching a preliminary agreement last week. He will bring a veteran presence as well as key depth.

Gomes already has a nice fan base in the Bay Area. He grew up in nearby Petaluma, where he is loved.

"Everybody's really excited. It's kind of ironic telling the family ... starting my pro career in Tampa, it's about as far away you can get from home, people say, 'Oh, you do play,'" Gomes said. "I'm getting tons of positive feedback."

The 31-year-old hit .209 with 14 home runs and 43 RBIs last year for Cincinnati and Washington in his ninth major league season. He will provide outfield depth for the rebuilding A's, who haven't had a winning record or made the playoffs since being swept in the 2006 AL championship series by Detroit.

"I'm not rebuilding — that's how I keep explaining it," Gomes said. "My role is how it is every single year, when my number's called I want to be ready."

Oakland's starting outfield is slated as newly acquired Seth Smith in left, re-signed Coco Crisp in center and new acquisition Josh Reddick in right. Collin Cowgill, acquired from Arizona in December, also is in the mix off the bench.

Gomes is prepared to play right, left or designated hitter — while also providing a clubhouse presence.

"I'm well traveled and have been under some great managers," he said.

Pulling on the green and gold at FanFest this weekend will mean a lot to Gomes, who loved the Bay Area sports teams growing up but especially the A's after they won the earthquake-interrupted 1989 World Series against the San Francisco Giants.

"I was wearing a whole lot of A's gear growing up — don't know how you couldn't with the Bash Brothers and Rickey Henderson," he said. "Winning the '89 World Series helped with jumping on that bandwagon."

The A's cleared room on the 40-man roster for Gomes on Thursday by designating infielder Adrian Cardenas for assignment.

A's FanFest links players, salutes 20-game streak

SF Examiner staff Report

With spring training less than a month away, Oakland fans can get a chance to meet players and coaches before they head out to the Cactus League at A's FanFest on Sunday. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will be held at Oracle Arena.

Close to 30 players are expected to be in attendance, including Coco Crisp, Jemile Weeks, Dallas Braden and new additions Josh Reddick and Seth Smith.

FanFest will offer fans photo opportunities, autographs sessions, question-and-answer sessions, among other activities.

Also, to commemorate the 40-year anniversary of the 1972 World Series championship and the 10-year anniversary of the team's 20-game winning streak that played a big part of the movie "Moneyball," Gene Tenace, Vida Blue and Joe Rudi (from the 1972 team) and Scott Hatteberg and David Justice (from 2002) will attend FanFest.

A limited number of fans will have the opportunity to meet one-on-one with A's owner Lew Wolff to discuss a variety of topics. Fans are invited to sign up for the meeting at the information booth on the plaza located between the O.Co Coliseum and Oracle Arena from 9 to 10:30 a.m.

Meanwhile, FanFest will be the first opportunity for fans to purchase single-game tickets for the 2012 season. Tickets for A's home games can be purchased beginning at 9 a.m. Sunday at the Coliseum box office, online at www.oaklandathletics.com/tickets or by calling (877) 493-BALL. Oakland is using dynamic pricing for all of its home games this season.

Geaney Forges Unique Path To Athletics Front Office

By Casey Tefertiller, Baseball America 1/20/2012

OAKLAND—No prescribed method for breaking into baseball existed, so **Sam Geaney** paved his own road to the Athletics front office.

While an undergraduate at California, Geaney set up a website where he provided scouting reports on players in the high Class A California League. He traveled the circuit, talking with scouts and evaluators, just getting his name out there.

That creative method helped Geaney, a political science major, land an internship and ultimately a full-time job with the A's.

Geaney's rise continues. Oakland named the 26-year-old its coordinator of international scouting on Jan. 5. "I'm thrilled to be able to work with our guys, to be out in the field and continue to learn as a scout," he said.

The A's have high expectations for Geaney.

"Sam will be a tremendous asset in his new role," scouting director **Eric Kubota** said. "He basically has been training for this job his whole life. Not only is he very strong administratively, but he has proven to be a strong evaluator as well. He has great passion for the game and scouting, specifically, and he won't be outworked."

Geaney definitely was not outworked during the summers of 2003-04. The former Berkeley (Calif.) High catcher had moved on to Cal, trading his shinguards for a clipboard as he viewed and evaluated prospects.

"I treated it as if it was my job," Geaney said. "I tried to soak it up—get out early, try to absorb as much as I could. It gave me an excuse to sit behind the plate."

Sitting behind the plate meant a chance to meet and speak with professional scouts, a group that can be clannish at first, then embracing as they recognize a kindred spirit.

Geaney rose to full-time scouting assistant in 2007, helping Kubota with duties in the office, but he gradually got more time in the field. The A's promoted him to coordinator of scouting in 2009, and he spent the past two springs helping to cross-check players, a job he says allowed him to grow as a talent evaluator.

A's ACORNS

- Geaney replaced **Dan Kantrovitz**, who left the organization to become amateur scouting director for the Cardinals. Kantrovitz spent two years in the role and revitalized the club's international presence.
- The A's hired **Ron Marigny** as Midwest scouting supervisor, a role he previously held with the Angels. **Trevor Ryan**, a member of UCLA's coaching staff last year, joined the A's as a Southwest area scout.

Athletics' Tanner Puts Instruction To Good Use

By Casey Tefertiller, Baseball America

OAKLAND—The Waycross, Ga., lad with the wayward fastball spent most of the 2011 season sitting unused in the University of Georgia bullpen, just hoping that something could change in his future.

Righthander **Cecil Tanner** always has had the raw ability: his fastball touches 98 mph and his hammer curve ranks as plus. The problem has been finding the strike zone.

The Athletics took a 23rd-round flier on Tanner last year and began addressing his control issues. The results started coming together during instructional league, where Tanner earned most improved pitcher honors.

"He just became a man," pitching coordinator **Gil Patterson** said. "He would come into a situation and shut it down."

The 6-foot-6 Tanner calls his time in instructs "a world of difference" when compared with his college days and his brief pro experience.

"(The A's) had me working on a couple of major points—repeating my delivery and pitching to contact," he said. "But the biggest thing was my confidence."

When Tanner had a successful outing, Oakland coaches would emphasize what he did well, building confidence all autumn.

Tanner also strived to repeat his delivery and thus throw more strikes. The 21-year-old also worked his fastball and curve in the strike zone, trying to get batters to hit the ball rather than whiff.

"I've always tried to strike people out before," Tanner said. "But this is a lot more efficient."

Tanner made 15 appearances in the Rookie-level Arizona League last summer, allowing 17 hits and 27 walks in 21 innings, while striking out 26 and allowing 17 runs.

Tanner eschewed the Braves as a 36th-round pick out of high school in 2008 to attend Georgia. He put up a 12.41 ERA in 27 relief appearances as a sophomore, walking 44 in 25 innings, then barely pitched as a junior, walking 10 in seven relief appearances.

"The last two years, my control wasn't there. That's solely my fault," Tanner said. "Toward the end, I started losing confidence in my ability to throw strikes, (but) when I got drafted it was a new start."

A's ACORNS

- Oakland will hold its first-ever minor league minicamp prior to spring training in an effort to provide more instruction. Pitchers and catchers will report on Feb. 24, and position players will arrive on Feb. 28.

- The A's will play an affiliate game against Triple-A Sacramento on March 31. Oakland travels to Japan to open the season against the Mariners on March 22-29, then returns to play the River Cats.