

A's News Clips, Tuesday, January 31, 2012

Oakland drops Victory Court ballpark

By Angela Woodall, Oakland Tribune

The state take-back of redevelopment money has forced the city to abandon plans for a waterfront ballpark -- the linchpin of efforts to keep the A's in Oakland.

"We are no longer advocating for Victory Court," Gregory Hunter, head of the soon-to-be-dissolved Oakland Redevelopment Agency, said Monday during a meeting of the Alameda County supervisors.

The city can no longer afford Victory Court without redevelopment dollars, Hunter said.

That means the focus is solely on revamping the O.co Coliseum complex with retail, restaurants, hotels and new sports facilities for the Raiders and Warriors.

The plan would include a new ballpark for the A's if the team stays in Oakland.

"The Coliseum is the appropriate (site) to retain the A's," Hunter said.

The city has already selected a team of consultants to conduct an environmental impact review of the Coliseum site, the first step in the planning process.

The group includes Oakland-based JRDV; the sports facility architectural firm HKS; and Forest City, developers of the Uptown apartments in Oakland and former owners of the New Jersey Nets.

But the dissolution of Oakland's redevelopment agency also has complicated their contract.

The city set aside \$4 million in redevelopment money for initial planning and the EIR, but had to shelter the funds from access by the state by moving them into another fund.

That puts the city at risk if the state rejects the tactic.

Oakland City Council members have yet to approve the \$3.7 million contract. The vote was scheduled for a Jan. 25 meeting but was postponed because the details of the contract are still being negotiated, assistant city administrator Fred Blackwell said.

City officials, however, hope to have the item on the agenda as soon as possible and wrap up the EIR within 15 months after that, said Eric Angstadt, deputy director of community and economic development.

He told county supervisors that the city is trying to push forward quickly in order to catch up with Santa Clara and San Jose. The San Francisco 49ers have few obstacles to starting construction on a stadium in Santa Clara besides a grass-roots group threatening to derail the plan. The Raiders could opt to share that facility.

The A's are eager to move to San Jose, where an EIR already has been completed on a proposed ballpark, but that project still faces several hurdles. However, A's co-owner Lew Wolff has offered to put up money to help expedite the construction.

The Warriors want a new arena, as well, but the team's contract at O.co Coliseum doesn't expire until 2027. The basketball team could leave before the lease expires in 2027 but would have to pay a hefty fee to do so.

Hunter and Angstadt were on hand Monday to give supervisors an update.

The county and city share jurisdiction over the Coliseum complex, but the relationship has been a rocky one for years. Supervisors complained the city had not included the county or the Joint Powers Authority trustees, who oversee the Coliseum complex, in discussions leading up to the choice of the EIR contractors. It appears most of the conversations were with the JPA staff, who do not have decision-making authority.

Now supervisors will be discussing what role to play in the process as it moves forward.

Supervisor Keith Carson said he, like the fans, supports keeping the teams in Oakland.

But he also wanted to do what is in the best interest of the county, which, he added, "is not in the sports business."

Major Lee-ague: A's contract info

Jane Lee, mlb.com, 1/30/2012 3:27pm

Here's a look at all the details of several A's players' contracts:

Daric Barton (\$1.1 million base salary) gets \$50,000 for 350 plate appearances, 400 plate appearances and 450 plate appearances, and \$100,000 for 500 plate appearances. He would get \$100,000 for a Silver Slugger; \$50,000 for a Gold Glove; \$50,000 for an All-Star nod; and \$100,000 for MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third). Plus, he would get \$50,000 for being named LCS MVP and \$100,000 for WS MVP.

Dallas Braden is set to make \$3.35 million and can earn another \$75,000 for 15 games started, 20 games started, 25 games started and 30 games started, and \$100,000 for 32 games started.

He can earn \$100,000 for winning Comeback Player of the Year, plus \$100,000 for the Cy Young (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); \$50,000 for a Gold Glove; \$50,000 for an All-Star nod; and \$100,000 for MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third). And, if the A's make the playoffs, he could earn \$50,000 for being named League Championship Series MVP and \$100,000 for World Series MVP

Bartolo Colon has a \$2 million base salary and can earn up to an additional \$1 million for 25 games started (\$150,000 for 10, 15, 17 and 20 starts, plus \$250,000 for 25 starts). In addition, he'll receive \$150,000 for pitching 150 innings, plus the same amount for 170, 180 and 190 IP; and \$250,000 for 200 IP.

Colon can also earn \$100,000 for winning the Cy Young (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third) and equal cash for taking home the MVP. Other potential award earnings include: \$100,000 for World Series MVP; \$50,000 for LCS MVP; \$50,000 for a Gold Glove; and \$50,000 for an All-Star nod

Coco Crisp's two-year deal with a club option for 2014 includes \$100,000 for WS MVP; \$50,000 for LCS MVP; \$100,000 for winning a Silver Slugger; \$50,000 for a Gold Glove; \$50,000 for an All-Star nod; \$100,000 for MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); and \$250,000 if he gets traded. In addition, Crisp's contract includes use of a suite at the Coliseum six games per year.

Joey Devine enters the year with a base salary of \$737,500 but can earn an additional \$12,500 for making 27 appearances and 30 appearances; \$27,500 for 35 and 40; \$32,500 for 45; and \$35,000 for 50 and 55 games. He can also earn up to \$170,000 for 45 games finished.

Award incentives in Devine's contract include: \$50,000 for Comeback Player of the Year; \$100,000 for Rolands Relief Award (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); \$50,000 for a Gold Glove; \$50,000 for an All-Star nod; \$100,000 for the Cy Young (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); \$100,000 for MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); and \$100,000 for WS MVP and \$50,000 for LCS MVP.

Johnny Gomes' one-year, \$1 million deal includes \$200,000 in incentives (\$100,000 for 300 plate appearances and another \$100,000 for 350 plate appearances). He can also earn \$100,000 for a Silver Slugger; \$100,000 for MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); \$50,000 for making the All-Star team; and \$100,000 for WS MVP and \$50,000 for LCS MVP.

Brandon McCarthy is set to bring in \$4,275,000 as a base salary. The righty can earn \$100,000 for the Cy Young; \$50,000 for a Gold Glove; \$50,000 for an All-Star nod; \$100,000 for MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); \$100,000 for the Rolands Award (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third); and \$100,000 for WS MVP and \$50,000 for LCS MVP.

Adam Rosales, earning \$600,000 this year, can reel in an additional \$25,000 for 200 plate appearances and 300 plate appearances. An All-Star nod gives him another \$50,000, and he can earn \$100,000 as a Silver Slugger, \$50,000 as a Gold Glove winner and \$100,000 as the league's MVP (\$75,000 for finishing second, \$50,000 for third). Plus, he would get \$50,000 for being named LCS MVP and \$100,000 for WS MVP.

Oakland A's History: Q&A With Jose Canseco

From 1986 through 1992, there was arguably no more famous baseball player than Oakland A's outfielder Jose Canseco. Canseco's name has been attached more to infamy over the past decade, but he still rates as one of the best players in A's history. The former American League MVP is trying to get back into the game as a designated hitter. We recently spoke with Canseco about a whole range of topics.

Jose Canseco is one of the most polarizing sports figures of the last 20 years. The 1986 AL Rookie of the Year and 1988 AL MVP turned the sport of baseball on its head when he released his controversial autobiography "Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, and How Baseball Got Big" in 2005. The book spurred a hearing before the US Congress on steroid use in baseball and was one of the driving factors behind Major League Baseball's decision to commission the Mitchell Report, which led to steroid testing in the game.

Before the book, however, there was Canseco the baseball player. In 17 major league seasons, Canseco hit 462 homeruns and drove-in 1407 runs. His career OPS was 867 and he had only four seasons during which his OPS was below 800. Canseco is most well-known for his time as a member of the Oakland A's, when he was part of a team that won three consecutive AL pennants, one World Series and four AL West titles over a span of five seasons. In 1988, Canseco achieved his most notable personal milestone, becoming the first player to hit 40 homeruns and steal 40 bases in a single season. He and fellow slugger Mark McGwire were branded the Bash Brothers and were the centerpiece of the most feared line-up in baseball at the time. In many ways, the A's great run under future Hall of Fame manager Tony LaRussa came to an end the day that Canseco was traded to the Texas Rangers in 1992.

Canseco's impact on baseball during the late-1980s wasn't just on the field. He was one of the first baseball players to be a true media celebrity. His name was connected with pop culture icons such as Madonna and he made regular appearances in gossip columns around the country.

Although he last played major league baseball in 2001, Canseco doesn't consider himself retired. He believes his career was cut short prematurely after that 2001 season – during which he posted an 843 OPS and homered 16 times in 76 games for the Chicago White Sox. Canseco is currently working out in Las Vegas and hoping for another opportunity to show a big league team what he can do. Active on Twitter, Canseco recently asked A's General Manager Billy Beane for a tryout with the green and gold.

If Canseco never plays another game for the Oakland A's, his place in the team's record books is still secure. Canseco is fourth all-time in Athletics franchise history (and third in Oakland A's history) in homeruns with 254. His OPS+ of 136 with the A's ties him with Rickey Henderson for seventh in franchise history and fourth in Oakland history.

We recently caught-up with Canseco, who talked about his memories of his time with the A's, his feelings about the backlash against players of the "steroid era," whether he regrets using steroids and more...

OaklandClubhouse: What sort of activities are you involved with these days? I read that you are living in Las Vegas.

Jose Canseco: Doing appearances at trade shows and working out with kids. Still practicing a lot. I'm obviously still trying to get back into baseball in some way, shape or form.

OC: I saw that you were promoting a type of bat that you were using in your workouts. Were you involved in developing that bat or is that just a product that is out there that you like to use?

JC: It's called the SAM bat. I was actually one of the first individuals to use it. The bat is out of Canada by an individual named Sam, who was hand-making them at the time. He asked me to use it and I have been using it ever since. It's a great bat. Actually about four or five days ago, I was taking batting practice with a bunch of minor leaguers – helping them with their technique – and I think you can go on my Facebook page and see a video of me hitting the ball. They actually measured it out at 550 feet (click [here](#) to view the video).

OC: You mentioned that you were actively seeking to play professionally this season. If you don't receive an offer from a major league organization, are you willing to explore independent league teams if those opportunities present themselves?

JC: Yes, absolutely. In a perfect world, yeah, you'd want to play affiliated baseball with a major league team and, if not, in their minor league system, but definitely I love the game. I want to play. I can still hit. If it comes down to playing anywhere, I'd be open to it. I think I've got an invite to Mexico and some independent baseball leagues, but I'd love to be in the major leagues.

OC: You mentioned you were working with some minor leaguers. Is coaching something that you'd be interested in pursuing

as well?

JC: I think so. I think I know the game so well. I think that coaching and, at a minimum, hitting instructing would be a good fit. Down-the-line, when I'm done playing physically, I'd love to manage.

OC: The A's just had their FanFest this weekend and there was a lot of talk about the history of the club. They didn't go into the 1980s teams that much, but obviously those teams – especially the three that went to the World Series – were among the best in A's history and maybe in baseball history. What was it like to be a part of a team like that with such a large collection of stars and to be part of a team that the rest of the league was chasing for those three or four years?

JC: I think back then we had so many well-known names that we had like a rock star team. We had not only the best team in baseball at the time – and maybe in history – but we also had a lot of entertainers. We had a lot of characters, a lot of guys who represented a lot of different things. For me, it was one of the best teams not just playing-wise, but one of the best teams entertaining-wise, ever.

OC: Looking back at it, is there a moment that stands out for you as the best moment of your time with the A's? Is it winning the World Series or getting the 40/40? Or do you have more of a collection of memories that blend together rather than one or two that really stand out?

JC: I think the two that stand out the most, as a team winning the World Series and individually was accomplishing the 40/40 one because that had never been done before. Those were some great memories and some great years. I love the Bay Area and I loved living out there. I just had an all-around great time.

OC: Reading your book "Juiced" you talked about the struggles of being a 15th-round pick and trying to be noticed amongst players who were drafted in the higher rounds. What is it like for a player who is drafted in a lower round? How do you convince an organization to take note of you when they haven't invested the kind of money in you that they invested in the top-round guys?

JC: I think one of the most important things is just to put up great numbers. That's what they are looking for. Put up such good numbers and do things so different than any other player that they just can't avoid you. I remember my breakout year was with Double-A Hunstville. I hit something like 25 homers in 58 games and had close to 90 RBIs. If that doesn't attract attention, I don't know what will.

OC: You were part of the A's at the start of when they made their rise from an also-ran to the AL title winner in 1988. You joined the club in September of 1985 and then Tony LaRussa and Dave Stewart and others started coming on board the next year. By 1987, could you sense that this was going to be a special team, or did it take you by surprise when the A's were as good as they were in 1988?

JC: I think Sandy [Alderson, the A's General Manager at the time] did a great job in developing the team and acquiring outside help while also using the farm system. When I first came up in September of '85, there were no fans coming out. All of a sudden I'm Rookie of the Year in '86 and then by '87, '88, the team looked really different – 30% different – and we were selling out the place. Of course, I was going for the 40/40 record [in 1988]. In two years, the team had turned it around completely, and that was due to the management of LaRussa.

OC: Are you in touch with LaRussa at all or any of the A's players or coaches from those times?

JC: No, no. Sadly no.

OC: Would you like to be more involved with the A's organization, whether it be FanFest-type activities or as a roving coach or things like that?

JC: Oh, I'd love to. Of course, definitely.

OC: The A's current GM Billy Beane, of course, was a teammate of yours in 1989. Did you get to know him much that year or was it too quick of a season to really get to know someone?

JC: Yeah, I have a lot of memories of him. Really nice guy. He called me the nickname 'Hosie' that they had. When I first saw him, he's a good looking guy and I thought he'd be on the rise within the organization and play a lot of years in the big leagues. I really don't know what happened [with his playing career]. I really don't know why he didn't pan out. He was a very social guy. He hung out with a lot of the players. And eventually became the A's GM and I guess inspired that movie, "Moneyball," which I saw about a week ago. I loved the movie.

OC: I was going to ask you if you'd seen or read "Moneyball". Is it funny to think of the A's as a small-market team when

they were the big money team when you played for them?

JC: It seems like compared to the Yankees, every other team is a small-market team. [laughs] To begin with, [in 2002] I think the A's had a budget of something like \$40 or 50 million, which was a very small budget competing with teams that I think were averaging like \$70 million. So almost double. And then you look at the New York Yankees and back then they were at something like \$115 million, and now they have far surpassed that. I guess that would be a small-market team, but what Billy Beane did with that team and to win 20 games in a row? That's just unbelievable. That will probably never happen again. The odds are so stacked against you and so many things have to go right. I just don't see that happening again.

OC: Do you follow the major leagues now? Is there a team or a particular player that you enjoy watching?

JC: I still watch teams that I played for in the past – the Oakland A's, the Boston Red Sox, Tampa Bay. Those are the exciting teams to watch. I watch some of the Yankees just because of Yankee Stadium and the fact that they always have a historical feeling about them. But to me right now, Albert Pujols is the best hitter around. He'll eventually be a designated hitter, but he'll probably be the best designated hitter in history once he starts doing that. I like watching the big power hitters like Prince Fielder and so forth. We'll see happens with these guys.

OC: There was a lot of discussion a few weeks ago surrounding the Hall of Fame induction about players from your era who are now on the ballot, the so-called "steroid era". What is your feeling on how players from your era should be judged? Do you think they should be judged just solely on the numbers or should the steroid factor be taken into account?

JC: Here's the fact of the matter: I have an identical twin brother [Ozzie]. He used the same steroids. He did the same workouts. He ate the same food and he never became a superstar in the big leagues. So to me, steroids are completely overrated. You cannot dictate a player's whole entire career on steroid use. That's just ridiculous.

A lot of these players, for instance, Mark McGwire, when he first came into the league, he hit 49 homeruns in the Oakland Coliseum, which back then was rated the worst ballpark to hit homeruns and to hit for batting average. If he had been anywhere else, he probably would have broken the homerun record there. I think steroids are completely overrated and I think eventually they should let these players in. Steroids don't make a player and they don't make a human being. A lot of these guys were already superstars or would have been superstars no matter what. As a matter of fact, I don't use any illegal drugs now and I can hit a baseball 500-feet at 47 years old.

OC: Looking back at it, do you regret ever having gotten involved with steroids?

JC: Of course you regret getting involved with something that turned out to be so negative, especially for me. I definitely regret it looking back, for sure.

OC: In terms of McGwire, he's starting to get back into the game quietly [as a hitting coach with the St. Louis Cardinals] but his votes for the Hall of Fame are still way off induction. Do you see him as a Hall of Fame player having played with him as long as you did?

JC: Absolutely. No doubt Hall of Famer and he will eventually be in the Hall of Fame.

OC: Barry Bonds was another contemporary of yours. His vote is coming up soon. Are you ever in touch with him at all? It seems like you guys have had to deal with similar backlashes from the baseball establishment and the fans.

JC: Well the backlashes haven't been even close. He got to play out his career into his 40s and I got blackballed at baseball at age 36 and am still feeling the repercussions of it in a lot of ways. But, again, Barry Bonds never said he used steroids. He was never caught using steroids. It was never proven that he used steroids. He's definitely a Hall of Famer, no ifs, ands or buts about it.

OC: Why do you think it is that you were blackballed and guys like Manny Ramirez are being seemingly welcomed back into the game late in their careers even with suspensions for steroids on their records?

JC: I think it's very simple. I was the first player who was extremely successful in the big leagues who was using steroids. If you look at some of my pictures, I looked like a bodybuilder playing baseball. I think that history shows that corporate entities always need an example and I was the scapegoat. What Major League Baseball didn't rely on was me writing that book and showing the fact that 80-90% of players were using steroids. At that point in time when that was proven, Major League Baseball had to protect its players instead of blackballing them like they did me.

OC: Switching gears for one last question, you have been very active on Twitter (@JoseCanseco) and with social media in general. Have you enjoyed being able to interact with fans through that medium?

JC: Yeah, I enjoy doing it. I think my daughter taught me how to do all of that. She's pretty internet-savvy. I think people are interested in what their favorite players or people they have idolized growing up what they are doing now or what they are up to. Especially when you are trying to get back into the sport you actually love.

Comparing the A's of the 70s to the A's of today

Casey Pratt, CSNBayArea.com

Stingy ownership? Check.

Sparse crowds? Check.

Green and Gold uniforms? Check.

Three World Championship trophies? Nope.

At A's Fan Fest I had the privilege of sitting down for one-on-one style interviews with the current A's roster, and a select few legendary A's players from the dynasty in the 70s. During the interviews something struck me. The 2012 A's and the 1972-1974 A's are similar in many ways. Same stadium, same franchise, similar challenges.

The difference lies in the passion the A's players of the 70s had. The team was united in one common goal. To win. But their reasons for winning were convoluted and very interesting.

You see this was a time before arbitration and free agency, and then A's owner Charlie Finley had the players under his control and knew there wasn't anything they could do about it. Or so he thought. The players knew if they won, and kept winning, and improving their stats, then Finley would have no choice but to give them raises. The result was three-straight World Series titles from '72-'74. A feat only accomplished by one other franchise, the New York Yankees from '98-'00.

Now players are different. These guys aren't scratching and clawing for every penny. There are many layers of protection built in to give them leverage and keep their pockets lined with cash. However, the A's can find a way to do what the Swingin' A's of the 70s did -- build a successful farm system and create their own dynasty.

Charlie O. Finley's A's were built from the ground up. To name more than a few, Reggie Jackson, Dick Green, Bert Campaneris, Joe Rudi, Catfish Hunter, Blue Moon Odom, Rollie Fingers, Gene Tenace were all members of the Athletics farm system.

Maybe the A's of today can use their restocked farm to build their own dynasty. The similarities are striking. Before the 70s Athletics became champions, they were honing their craft as the Kansas City Athletics. Maybe these Oakland Athletics will be building toward a proud future in a new home as well.

They also had similar attendance issues. Even though the A's of the 70s were the best team in baseball, they still had problems drawing fans. The A's only drew 2.8 million fans combined in their three championship seasons.

I even see some similarities in the managers that lead the A's then and now. Dick Williams was a guy that Joe Rudi told me the players liked. But he was the first to call you out for making a fundamental mistake. Bob Melvin is the same way, but maybe a little less abrasive. Melvin, known as a player's manager, still made the team take extra infield when their defense wasn't tight. Melvin was also a fan of those championship A's. He wears Sal Bando's No. 6 in tribute.

So can the current A's pull it off? The odds are stacked against them. I can tell you though that they have their eyes firmly locked on the prize, even if you the fans, or some of us in the media don't believe in them. When I asked Jemile Weeks for a prediction for the 2012 A's, he answered, "Playoffs." I asked Michael Taylor the same thing, his answer, "World Series Champions."

Here we are in 2012, and 40 years ago today the A's were about to go on a historical run of three consecutive World Series titles. Lets hope the new look A's can find a way to capture some glory of their own someday.