

Oakland A's notebook: Brad Peacock roughed up by Albert Pujols, L.A. Angels

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

The A's got a look Monday at the Los Angeles Angels lineup they will see often this season.

They can only hope the results will get better after the Angels beat them 9-1 in Albert Pujols' Cactus League debut with his new team.

Pujols went 2 for 3 and drilled an RBI double off young A's right-hander Brad Peacock, who faced what was close to the Angels' opening-day lineup. The only missing piece was designated hitter Bobby Abreu, who was scratched because of illness.

"I'm going to be in the big leagues, I've got to face them anyway," said Peacock, who has only three career major league appearances. "I might as well get it out of the way and see how I do. I learned a lot today."

Mainly he needs to keep the ball down more. Peacock, 24, allowed four runs and four hits in 12/3 innings.

A's manager Bob Melvin said a tight strike zone also hindered Peacock.

"I thought he got squeezed a little bit, and it affected the way he had to pitch," Melvin said.

Peacock was sidelined briefly last week with back stiffness but said he is now feeling fine.

The A's also faced left-hander C.J. Wilson, the Angels' other marquee free-agent signing whom they know well from his days with Texas. Wilson delivered two shutout innings.

Melvin said he wasn't getting caught up in the Angels' additions. Los Angeles seems equipped to give two-time A.L. West champ Texas a run for its money this season, with the A's and Mariners seemingly far behind.

"They added a middle-of-the-order bat that I know they're excited about," Melvin said. "But doesn't affect what we're going to do."

Closer candidate Grant Balfour had his second straight rocky outing, lasting just two-thirds of an inning and surrendering a two-run homer to Chris Iannetta and three walks.

Melvin maintained that he isn't worried about Balfour, who has allowed three home runs and five runs in two outings (12/3 innings).

Balfour said he typically has shaky springs and doesn't get too concerned over early struggles. But Melvin said: "At some point in time you've got to change your mindset about that. You can talk yourself into it. But I know the competitor he is."

Monday marked the A's first split-squad day. Their other team beat the Chicago Cubs 8-7 in Mesa, with shortstop prospect Yordy Cabrera delivering a go-ahead home run in the ninth.

Bartolo Colon made his first start with the A's and allowed three runs and four hits in 22/3 innings.

Designated hitter Manny Ramirez went 0 for 3 with a strikeout against the Angels. He is 0 for 5 this spring.

Daric Barton will be sidelined three days after getting a cortisone shot in his right biceps, and Melvin acknowledged it could get tough for Barton to win the first-base job.

"Certainly he's going to have to be able to throw and play first base, and it's going to be a little bit longer to come," Melvin said. "I don't want to rule anything out at this point, but you can count the days."

Melvin said he doesn't feel an urgency to get Coco Crisp time in left field. The A's might insert Yoenis Cespedes in center and shift Crisp to left.

"I'm confident that if we had to do something with Coco in left that he'd be able to handle it very quickly," Melvin said. "But we're not close on that yet."

Attendance was announced at 3,511, less than half of capacity at Phoenix Municipal Stadium.

Kawakami: Sorry A's, but Giants hold all the cards

By Tim Kawakami, Mercury News Columnist

There is still work to be done. Plenty and plenty of work left to get the A's to San Jose, so much work that it's quite possible that it never happens, after all this time.

Tons of work. Massive amounts of negotiations—have they even started the true negotiations yet? Major hurdles to leap.

Not much else is clear. Possibly nothing else is clear, as the A's and Giants continue their territorial stare-down over the A's dream of moving to San Jose.

If the commissioner's office had an easy answer for this, Bud Selig would've come up with it years ago, and instead, he and his allies have come up with nothing at all.

They've only stalled for time, done committee work, stalled for more time, and now more time.

The A's could still get to San Jose and probably should get to San Jose, but that's not what this is about.

It's about deal position, and right now, the Giants have it.

The Giants have the rights, the A's need to move, neither is budging, and MLB is still trying to figure out how to navigate this without impinging on the Giants' rights.

Which was the gist of Bill Madden's widely-read piece from over the weekend, drawing responses from wide and far.

A's frontman Lew Wolff, the commissioner's office and others quickly insisted that no decision to keep the A's from San Jose has been made. I would think that's true, because NOTHING has been decided.

But that wasn't really the point of Madden's column. The point: The other owners are highly unlikely to give the A's the three-quarter vote necessary to override the Giants' rights to San Jose.

I think that sounds fairly accurate, just limited to the vote likelihood.

The rest of baseball might see the benefits of the A's in a lucrative new stadium in supra-lucrative San Jose, yes, that's true.

But more specifically...

Why would the Yankees, Mets, Cubs and White Sox gladly wipe away a big-market team's territorial rights... when that precedent might set up another team to move into North Jersey or the west suburbs of Chicago?

There are other teams that would be worried about big-market rights, too.

I think this is what Selig has spent the last few years surveying: Can the A's get the vote, and if they can't... umm... can they sit down with the Giants and figure out a deal on this?

And it doesn't look like the MLB is encouraging the A's to go after that vote.

That doesn't mean the A's can't move to San Jose. It just means they'll have to negotiate with the Giants to do so, and there is the problem.

The Giants have the hammer, and have always had it — they're stronger than the A's and one huge reason for that is that they've had the Silicon Valley territory as a luxurious feeder for AT&T Park.

The Giants aren't giving that up unless they're forced to do it (and if the A's don't have the votes, that's not possible) or they're bribed to do it.

Madden's piece was just another piece of it — the A's probably aren't getting a free ticket to San Jose.

And if Wolff and John Fisher threaten the Giants with that prospect (if you won't bargain fairly with us, go ahead, let's bring it to a vote!), I doubt the Giants will blink.

So there will have to be serious negotiations. The Giants hold the cards. They haven't been bluffed into talking numbers yet, so whenever they do sit down, the A's will have to start with a very large number.

And the Giants still might say no.

I don't know if there's a deal out there to get the A's to San Jose. But I think we all know that the Giants have played this ferociously, and any ground they give up will be incredibly costly.

To the A's.

Former Oakland A's standout Don Mincher dies at 73

By Jon Becker, Bay Area News Group

Former major leaguer Don Mincher, a two-time All-Star first baseman who contributed a key hit in the Oakland A's first World Series championship, died after a long illness Sunday night in Alabama. He was 73.

Mincher played for five teams during a 13-year career, which included parts of three seasons in Oakland. His best season with the A's was 1970 when he led Oakland with a career-high 27 home runs and his 74 RBIs were one less than team leader Sal Bando.

"Minch was kind of a silent leader (for the A's)," said A's clubhouse manager Steve Vucinich, the only man who has been with the organization since it moved to Oakland in 1968. "We had our leaders in Sal and Reggie (Jackson), but he was respected by everyone when he came over."

After being traded to Washington in a deal for Mike Epstein in 1971, Mincher's second stint in Oakland came in 1972 when Charlie Finley acquired him for bench help. His only at-bat in the 1972 World Series came in Game 4 against the Cincinnati Reds and resulted in a game-tying, pinch-hit RBI single in the ninth inning. The A's won that game and went on to beat Cincinnati for the first of their three consecutive World Series titles.

The World Series pinch-hit single turned out to be the final at-bat of Mincher's career.

He wound up with 200 career home runs and a lifetime batting average of .249. In addition to helping the Minnesota Twins advance to the World Series in 1965, Mincher made the All-Star team with the California Angels in 1967 and Seattle Pilots in 1969.

Mincher was the president of the Double-A Southern League from 2000 until he had to retire due to health reasons last year. He also was the general manager of the Double-A Huntsville Stars from 1985-2001 — the Stars were an A's affiliate from 1985-1998.

"I used to see him when we would play an exhibition in Huntsville," Vucinich said. "He was always a gentleman."

He and a group of other investors purchased the Huntsville team in 1994 in order to keep them in Alabama. Mincher also served as the Stars' broadcaster.

"I'm proud of my career," he once told the Huntsville Times, "but I'd like to be recognized not only for what I did as a player, but doing other things in the game."

According to the Huntsville Times, Mincher is survived by his wife Pat, son Mark, daughters Lori Lumpkin and Donna Hopper and six grandchildren.

Oakland A's Daric Barton sidelined for three days with right biceps issue

By Joe Stiglich, Bay Area News Group

Daric Barton will be shut down for three days after getting a cortisone shot in his right biceps, and manager Bob Melvin acknowledged it's going to be tough for Barton to win the first base job as things are playing out.

"Certainly he's going to have to be able to throw and play first base, and it's going to be a little bit longer to come," Melvin said Monday. "I don't want to rule anything out at this point, but you can count the days."

So it appears the first base battle is a three-man race between Brandon Allen, Chris Carter and Kila Ka'aihue.

In other injury news, utility infielder Adam Rosales has been slowed by a sore left shoulder after losing his balance and falling last week at the team's practice facility.

He has yet to play in a game but Melvin said Rosales should see a couple of innings of action Monday. Rosales was not on either lineup sheet for the A's split-squad games against the Angels and Cubs.

New to pitching, Doolittle in command on mound

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Phoenix -- When Sean Doolittle took the field against the Cubs this week, he hadn't appeared in a big-league spring game in three years.

The last time, Doolittle was a hot-shot first-base prospect for Oakland. On Sunday he was on the mound, a left-handed pitcher who has the A's believing he might be a superb reliever in the not-so-distant future.

And after Sunday's nice outing - Doolittle walked one and struck out two in a scoreless inning - he, too, can envision himself as a big-league pitcher.

"Absolutely," Doolittle said Monday in the A's clubhouse. "I've had a lot of success in bullpen sessions, live batting practice, but until it's a real game situation, you don't believe it. To do that, amidst all the jitters and emotions, that's huge for me."

Just getting into a game of any sort, at any position, is a triumph for Doolittle, 25, whose career was disrupted by injuries much of the past three seasons. Last summer, Doolittle was just about to resume playing after two knee surgeries when he developed a tendon problem in his right wrist.

"I was looking at another surgery, another offseason of rehab," Doolittle said. "I thought, 'What am I doing?' "

Dismayed at the possibility of another lost season, Doolittle began throwing some bullpen sessions, more as a distraction than anything else. He knows what he's doing - Doolittle was a pitcher as well as a position player at Virginia, and he left as the school's all-time leader in RBIs (167) and wins (21).

"We said, 'For fun, let's start the process,' " A's director of player development Keith Lieppman said of converting Doolittle. "We did it mainly to help occupy his time, because it had gotten to the point where Sean was going crazy with the frustration. It was awful watching him suffer. How many times can you get shut down?"

"So it was done to appease him - but we've realized subsequently that we really have something."

Still, Doolittle was three years removed from pitching. When he went to the instructional league in the fall, no one was quite sure what to expect, so imagine the A's delight when Doolittle was clocked throwing 97 mph.

"Sean has an overpowering fastball," said Max Stassi, who caught Doolittle last fall. "His changeup has really developed. His slider is nearly there. He's got three great pitches, and he has a lot of confidence and works quickly. I know he'll be successful with his mind-set and what he's been through."

Minor-league pitching rehab coordinator Garvin Alston worked extensively with Doolittle, saying, "Sean is so astute it was easy, but I didn't know it would go so well so quickly. He's going to take his lumps sometime, but right away, the ball was jumping out of his hand. And he still has a hitter's approach - he can use that to his advantage."

"I love everything about him; I think he was destined to do this. I think Sean can be an impact reliever, and very soon."

Most A's players remember Doolittle as a slick-fielding first baseman who banged a couple of homers during camp in 2009 and looked poised to be a big-leaguer there.

"He was unreal at first base, the way he picked it," Stassi said. "His approach at the plate was great. He was definitely ready to go to the big leagues as a first baseman."

"I remember watching him defensively and thinking, 'Pure talent,' " A's starter Dallas Braden said. "Soft hands, great baseball savvy, good hitter, we thought he'd be at that position a long time."

Braden added with a grin, "What really ticks me off is that he puts down the bat, and he picks up 97 mph - he can go jump in the lake. But there's no doubt in my mind, I'll call it right now: He'll be the surprise of camp. He throws 95, and it's right on you."

Manager Bob Melvin repeatedly has paid Doolittle the best compliment he could hear at this stage: Melvin said that Doolittle looks like a pitcher, not a converted first baseman. One scout who saw Doolittle pitch Sunday said he was hitting 93 mph and worked both sides of the plate effectively.

"It's a good story about perseverance and flexibility," Lieppman said. "To see the glimmer turn into a flame, that's been fun."

New Angel Albert Pujols impresses against the A's
Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

Baseball's behemoth winter transaction came courtesy of the Angels, and Monday, that team's big addition, first baseman **Albert Pujols**, made his Cactus League debut.

Pujols, who signed a 10-year, \$254 million deal with the Angels in December, faced one of the A's primary offseason acquisitions, right-hander **Brad Peacock**, with two on in the first. Pujols ripped an RBI double, and he scored on **Vernon Wells'** two-run single.

Peacock, obtained in the **Gio Gonzalez** deal with Washington, said of facing a lineup of Angels' regulars in his A's debut, "If I'm going to be in the big leagues, I might as well get it out of the way on the first day."

What about longtime Cardinals star Pujols in particular?

"I thought it was great I got to see Albert Pujols; it was kind of cool," Peacock said.

Peacock said he tried not to look at Pujols at all when he was in the batter's box, but he left a curveball up, he said, "and he crushed it."

Peacock, a contender for one of the final rotation spots, said he learned a lot from the experience - particularly to keep the ball down.

Manager **Bob Melvin** thought that a particularly tight strike zone, maybe too tight, did Peacock no favors, and he said, "I'm not at all disappointed in his outing. I thought his stuff was very good."

Another new Angel, **C.J. Wilson**, started and allowed one hit and one walk in two innings.

Injury updates: Infielder **Adam Rosales** is limited to playing in the field for several more days because of left shoulder soreness, the result of slipping during conditioning drills last week. Rosales finished the game against the Angels at shortstop.

First baseman **Daric Barton** received a cortisone shot for a sore right biceps tendon; he also had a cortisone injection for right shoulder soreness last week. Barton, who will be shut down for three days, had right shoulder surgery in August and was not expected to be able to throw in games until mid-March. While that timetable might now be pushed back, it's hoped he will be able to serve as a designated hitter near the end of the week.

With the A's leaving for Japan on March 22, it might be tough for Barton to make the team.

Céspedes, day two: Pitching coach **Ariel Prieto** came over from minor-league camp in order to help fellow Cuban **Yoenis Céspedes** adjust to his new environment, and the A's are expected to assign Prieto to the big-league coaching staff full time.

Bert Campaneris, one of the A's all-time greats and himself a native of Cuba, was at Phoenix Muni and hoped to get a chance to speak to Céspedes.

"I spent so many years with the A's, it's nice to see another Cuban here," Campaneris said. "I hope he does well."

A'S 8, CUBS 7; ANGELS 9, A'S 1

Notable: Oakland split split-squad games Monday, winning at Mesa and losing at Phoenix Muni. ... Joey Devine threw another scoreless inning, the only A's regular who did. ... Cliff Pennington and Michael Taylor had two hits apiece at Phoenix; Seth Smith and Josh Reddick did at Mesa, with Reddick recording a triple. ... Bartolo Colon, in his A's spring debut, allowed four hits and three runs in 2 2/3 innings against the Cubs; he also struck out one.

Quotable: "Pujols showed who he is, first day out, first two at-bats, first two hits. That's why they paid him what they paid him."

- *Second baseman Jemile Weeks on Albert Pujols' 2-for-3 Angels debut.*

Today's game: A's (Tommy Milone) at Brewers (Yovani Gallardo), 12:05 p.m. Webcast only.

Bruce Jenkins' A's-Giants spring-training notes

Bruce Jenkins, Chronicle Columnist

The doubleheader is an ancient relic on today's sporting scene, gone the way of pay telephones and the manual typewriter. Once a staple of Sunday afternoons, it no longer appeals to players, executives or even the majority of fans.

It does exist, though, with a little imagination. On Monday in the Cactus League, the A's (day) and the Giants (night) each played games in their home ballparks. A few observations on how this Bay Area extravaganza went down:

-- Albert Pujols, new to the L.A. Angels, took his first cuts of the spring at Phoenix Stadium - and they were worth the price of admission.

As he stepped into the box against the A's Brad Peacock in the first inning, Pujols jabbed wickedly at the dirt with his right cleat, at least 15 times, to give himself proper back-leg traction. You could have buried a pack of Camels in that hole. Crowding the plate, with a wide and intimidating stance, he absolutely owns the box. Most hitters get themselves situated in one spot or another, but Pujols' presence is downright smothering.

On a 1-1 pitch, Pujols drilled a run-scoring double down the left-field line. Next time up, again with a 1-1 count against left-hander Carlos Hernandez, he crushed a single to left. Two at-bats, two laser beams, and basically everything you needed to know about the Angels' most important acquisition in years.

-- Scores tend to be wildly unrealistic in the spring, but this one - Angels 9, A's 1 - vividly illustrated the gap between the two American League West teams. With free-spending Texas picking up Japanese pitching sensation Yu Darvish, the Angels' C.J. Wilson calls this new rivalry "like Boston and New York 10 years ago."

-- I've never seen a better pair of hands than Mike Gallego's. He couldn't hit a lick, but when he played infield for the A's, he left the impression that he could field a thousand groundballs without a hitch. There was a scary scene in the second inning when the Angels' Erick Aybar took a cut and the bat flew out of his hands. Gallego, among the coaches

sitting in chairs alongside the A's dugout, played it off the screen and made a clean grab before it hit the ground. Slick.

-- Yoenis Céspedes is really starting to cut loose in batting practice. The A's players were awestruck during his morning session as he unloaded tape-measure shots, a couple of which cleared a 30-foot wall of advertising just to the left of the center-field scoreboard.

-- One of Cuba's all-time greats, former A's shortstop Campy Campaneris, is spending time around the club as it prepares to honor the 1972 world champions. Looking content and physically fit (he turns 70 on Friday), Campaneris made certain to have a chat with Céspedes, about to play his first season upon defecting from Cuba.

-- Still hard to believe: There was a time in the offseason when, if Coco Crisp had signed elsewhere as a free agent, the A's would have had *no* outfielders of consequence. At the moment, thanks to all those trades, they have 15.

-- The Giants don't have a fourth outfielder in the classic sense, only the man who loses the first-base job, Aubrey Huff or Brandon Belt. So it was interesting to watch Gregor Blanco's impressive performance against the Brewers Monday night. This is no kid; he's 28 years old, owning 710 at-bats (.258) with Atlanta and Kansas City over three seasons, but he's a solid left-handed hitter with tremendous speed.

Everyone in the ballpark knew Blanco would be turned loose on the bases. With an average lead but an exceptional jump and instant acceleration, he twice stole second. Although he came to camp as a nonroster invitee, the Giants thought highly enough of Blanco to give him the number 7. On a team lacking depth, you never know.

-- The Royals have so much young talent, they've cast aside some decent veterans of late, including Blanco and 27-year-old shortstop Joaquin Arias, each of whom signed minor-league deals with the Giants over the winter. Arias, a former Yankees prospect who looks *very* smooth in the field, moved Blanco to third with a well-placed grounder to the right side in the second inning, then scored him with another infield out in the fifth.

Smart baseball gets noticed on this team - especially if you had to sit through last year.

-- Set against the backdrop of a tree-laden neighborhood in gorgeous, late-afternoon light, Buster Posey and Freddy Sanchez went through their paces on a back field at Scottsdale Stadium before the game. Manager Bruce Bochy, hands on hips, was a most interested observer. There wasn't much to see, just two guys running 50-yard semi-sprints in a wide arc, but this was no ordinary scene. It was the season.

Drumbeat: Oakland A's: Adam Rosales to play today, Barton to get cortisone shot

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Phoenix Muni, 3/5/2012, 9:37am

Adam Rosales hasn't appeared in a game yet because of left shoulder soreness (he fell on it while running the bases last week), but manager Bob Melvin said that Rosales will get in for a few innings today. Melvin is thin in infielders to begin with, and today the A's play split-squad games with the Cubs and the Angels. Rosales' defense hasn't been impacted by the shoulder soreness, just swinging the bat.

UPDATE: Rosales told me he won't hit today, he'll just play in the field. He said he won't be able to hit for several more days.

Last spring, Rosales was returning from foot surgery and he was unable to get in a full spring training, which Melvin believes had an effect on Rosales' entire season. If Rosales is able to play from here on out this spring, he should avoid a repeat of last spring. He's still considered a very strong candidate to make the team as a utility player, but the team's final decision at third this month also will play a role. The A's also see Eric Sogard as more as a utility player, with an emphasis on second and short, but Sogard is hitting as well as anyone right now and that third-base job is open. If Josh Donaldson fails to win the third-base job, he can play catcher, third, first, second and in the outfield. Rosales plays all over the diamond, too, but lacks Donaldson's catching experience.

Daric Barton's shot at an Opening Day roster spot appear to be receding. He will have another cortisone shot today, keeping him out of games for a few more days, and he cannot throw for more than a week, at the earliest, potentially longer given his recovery from right shoulder surgery. The top contenders at first base right now appear to be Brandon Allen and Kila Ka'aihue, and Allen's seven-RBI day yesterday isn't going to hurt him. He looks locked in and he's saying the right things, crediting his teammates for his success and saying that the competition is bringing out the best in everyone.

As expected, Ariel Prieto has come over from minor-league camp to help Yoenis Cespedes adapt; the former A's pitcher, also from Cuba, is likely to be added to the big-league staff full-time.

My colleague Bruce Jenkins [had a terrific piece on Cespedes and Manny Ramirez](#), plus Billy Owens' and Chili Davis' thoughts on Cespedes, in today's Chronicle.

Were it not for Allen's seven-RBI day, my lead A's note today would have been on [the A's latest front-office addition, Kate Greenthal](#), who is the first woman to work in the team's scouting department. That note, about the diverse Oakland front office, is now the second item in the A's beat, and here's one fun additional fact about Greenthal: She was once a contestant on "The Price is Right."

UPDATE: Lots of former A's greats are popping by camp, and today it was Rollie Fingers and Campy Campaneris. Campy is one of the all-time great Cuban players and he told me he was hoping to get a chance to talk to Cespedes.

"I spent so many years with the A's, it's nice to see another Cuban here," he told me. "I hope he does well."

Davis in for long haul as A's hitting coach

Switch-hitters especially benefiting from instructor's expertise

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- The hitting coach carousel that resides in Oakland has been in constant motion in recent years.

Chili Davis became the latest to hop on for a ride, and he's not intent on making it a short one. That's just fine with his players, who have been cheering him on from the sidelines from Day 1.

"He's a guy that could be here for a while," shortstop Cliff Pennington said. "He's already a steady presence."

And that's just after three weeks of camp activity.

Pennington was introduced to three different hitting coaches during his first four seasons in Oakland: Ty Van Burkleo, Jim Skaalen and Gerald Perry. He, like many of his teammates, understands that the job is often a victim of turnover -- even more so in an A's organization that hasn't produced a winning record since 2006, largely due to hitting woes.

Last year, the A's combined for a .244 batting average that tied for 23rd in the Majors -- 12th in the American League -- and a .680 OPS that ranked ahead of only the Pirates, Giants, Twins, Padres and Mariners. Perry, more of a quiet presence, was dismissed shortly after the season, at which point manager Bob Melvin took advantage of the opportunity to handpick his new hitting coach.

He had just one person in mind.

"Chili has always been an impact clubhouse guy, and that's something I've respected," said Melvin, a former Giants teammate of Davis. "When he was a player, other guys migrated to him to ask him questions. He was always one of those guys that was also kind of like a second hitting coach. Guys would always be drawn to him. That was early on, even when I played with him in the mid-80s."

Fast forward two decades, and Davis still seems to be wearing a magnet. The 52-year-old former outfielder and designated hitter, who served as the hitting coach for Boston's Triple-A Pawtucket affiliate last year, quickly drew the attention of several players, particularly those who share in the switch-hitting talent Davis employed in his 19 big league seasons.

He ranks fifth in homers, sixth in RBIs and eighth in walks among switch-hitters in Major League history. Along with Pennington, the table-setting duo of switch-hitters Coco Crisp and Jemile Weeks have already benefited greatly from Davis, who ensures he didn't return to the Bay Area to babysit but, rather, be a sounding board for players interested in learning a thing or two.

"He's a player's coach, and on a young team that's exactly what you need," Weeks said. "His style of coaching is player first, and then he brings in his expertise. I like his style. He tries to pick your brain and see how you like to hit and what works for you. That's the biggest positive. He works off of you."

Weeks' first Cactus League home run came from the right side of the plate, where he's intentionally putting in more work this spring. So is Pennington, with plenty of help coming from Davis.

"The biggest thing is managing a right-handed swing, because left-handed you get so many more at-bats over the course of a season," he said. "Typically, it's your natural side, but it's the side you might use just every few days. Switch-hitting, it's one of those things, unless you've done it, it's really hard to know exactly how we feel. You really are two different players as a switch-hitter, and he understands that."

Davis received a handful of big league offers over the years before saying yes to Oakland. But, each time, he chose to remain on the smaller stage, working as a part-time hitting coach for the Dodgers' instructional league team and the Australian National Team in 2003-04 before joining Boston's organization last year.

Those experiences have lent Davis a perspective he says he might not have otherwise gained if starting his coaching career in the Majors.

"Trying to get your philosophies across to players is to understand the players and their comfort zone and to try to work from there with them," he said. "There's no one way to go about it with so many guys, and I think the biggest thing I learned in the last two years when you're dealing with professional hitters, that one of the most important things is for them to see that you really care and you're consistent with the things that you say to them, that you are really paying attention."

It's evident that a different uniform hasn't changed Davis' approach.

"He's out there all the time, always available for us," Pennington said. "That's what you want, somebody who's just willing to spend time with you, because a lot of times that's all it takes. Once you develop that trust factor with the coach and you start to understand each other, the results start to come."

"There are different ways to say the same thing, and some guys you click with and some you don't. That's what separates one from another, and so far Chili and I are on the same page. He loves hitting, and when you're out there with him you can tell."

Davis is playful and energetic, yet calming and very much intent in the way he goes about his work.

"I remember I used to distract him a little bit as a catcher," Melvin said, "and he would say, 'I don't have time for that right now. I gotta hit.' He's all business at the plate, and I think he expects that out of his hitters as well."

Cabrera caps big A's rally with decisive homer

Allen drives in eighth run of spring; Colon lasts 2 2/3

By Carrie Muskat / MLB.com

MESA, Ariz. -- Yordy Cabrera, a non-roster invitee, led off the ninth inning with a tie-breaking home run to lift the Athletics' split-squad team to an 8-7 victory Monday over the Cubs.

The Athletics took a 1-0 lead in the second, when Josh Reddick tripled and scored on Brandon Allen's sacrifice fly for his eighth RBI this spring. Allen drove in seven runs on Sunday in Oakland's 12-10 win over Chicago.

Blake DeWitt belted a homer on the first pitch he saw from A's starter Bartolo Colon with two outs and two on in the Cubs' second for a 3-1 lead. Colon, who is scheduled to start March 29 in Tokyo against the Mariners in Oakland's second regular-season game, was pulled after 2 2/3 innings.

Ryan Dempster made his first Cactus League start, giving up one run on two hits over two innings in front of 5,809 at HoHoKam Park.

The Cubs added three runs in the fourth on a sacrifice fly by Steve Clevenger, an RBI double by Josh Vitters and an RBI single by Darwin Barney.

The Athletics closed to 6-5 in the sixth against Marco Carillo as Reddick hit an RBI single, Wes Timmons hit a sacrifice fly and Landon Powell added a two-run double. Brandon Moss hit an RBI double with one out in the seventh off Manuel Corpas to tie the game and then scored on Michael Choice's single.

Chicago had runners at first and second with two outs in the seventh, when Blake Lalli hit a game-tying RBI single.

Up next for Athletics: Lefty Tommy Milone, one of the players acquired from the Nationals in the Gio Gonzalez deal, will get the start on Tuesday, when the Athletics travel to Maryvale Baseball Park to face the Brewers and Yovani Gallardo. The game will be broadcast on MLB.TV and in an exclusive A's webcast. Oakland may want to keep Brandon Allen in the lineup. The first baseman drove in seven runs on Sunday and added one RBI on Monday against the Cubs.

Peacock endures rocky debut as A's fall

Starter allows four runs in 1 2/3: Weeks drives in lone run

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Albert Pujols wasted no time at the plate in his first at-bat of the spring, collecting an RBI double to jump-start the Angels to a 9-1 Cactus League victory over the host A's at Phoenix Municipal Stadium on Monday.

Pujols went 2-for-3 on the day, and fellow newcomer C.J. Wilson pitched two scoreless innings in his debut, while Chris Iannetta provided his new team with a two-run homer. The Angels combined for 11 hits total, while Oakland -- playing in a split-squad game -- managed just six.

Wilson gave up one hit with one walk and no strikeouts, faring much better than opponent Brad Peacock. The A's right-handed starter, making his spring debut, gave up four runs in 1 2/3 innings, allowing four hits with one walk and one strikeout.

Asked about facing Pujols, Peacock called it "pretty cool" and said, "I was trying not to look at him and just focus on throwing the ball over the plate. I left one up and he crushed it."

"It was great," said Pujols. "Probably the third time seeing live pitches, which is good. Spring Training, you want to have good success, you want to feel good about yourself for the season. But I think the most important thing is to try to get yourself prepared for the season. As long as you get your at-bats, and good quality at-bats, and get your ground balls, get your swings, when it's time to turn on the light, it's time to go."

"He comes up there in the first inning, knocks in a run, we're all looking at each other in the dugout laughing like, 'Oh yeah, that's Albert. That's what his job is. He knocks in runs,'" said Wilson. "You just know you can count on him."

Iannetta's third-inning home run came against right-hander Grant Balfour, who has surrendered three long balls in two Cactus League appearances. The Oakland reliever also walked three in just two-thirds of an inning.

The A's lone run of the day came in the fifth, when Jemile Weeks brought home Michael Taylor via a sacrifice fly. Manny Ramirez, making his second start at DH, went 0-for-3 with one strikeout.

Up next for A's: Southpaw Tommy Milone is scheduled for his second round of Cactus League action on Tuesday, when he'll take to the bump against the host Brewers in Maryvale, Ariz., for a 12:05 p.m. PT start, on MLB.TV. Milone has flashed pinpoint control from the start, making him a favorite to land a rotation spot. Opposing the youngster is Milwaukee right-hander Yovani Gallardo.

Barton shut down after latest cortisone shot

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

PHOENIX -- Daric Barton was scheduled to have his second cortisone shot in his surgically repaired right shoulder on Monday and will be shut down for another three days.

Barton won't be able to throw for at least a week, and his chances at an Opening Day roster spot are slimming by the day. Manager Bob Melvin is not ready to say as much, but at the same time is being realistic about the situation.

"Certainly he's going to have to be able to throw and play first base, and certainly that's going to be a little longer to come," Melvin said. "I don't want to rule anything out at this point, but you can count the days."

After experiencing some soreness in his shoulder while attempting to throw last week, Barton underwent an arthrogram MRI -- it delivers a series of images using a dye injection -- that also included a cortisone shot to help calm down the shoulder. The team's medical staff, in also consulting with Dr. Lewis Yocum, who performed Barton's surgery, then decided a cortisone shot in his biceps tendon would hopefully deliver the last bit of relief needed to get him on the field.

"The doctor felt like it was as good as it looked and this will take care of it so we can get him in some games at [designated hitter]," Melvin said. "We'll see when the throwing comes along, but we certainly don't feel like this is a setback. It's actually probably the last thing to move forward at a better pace."

"I sure hope so," said Barton. "I feel like I've had enough setbacks. It's frustrating not being able to go out there."

Barton was out to 120 feet in his throwing program before soreness forced him back to 90 feet. Now, he'll have to start the whole process all over again.

Meanwhile, Brandon Allen and Kila Ka'aihue appear to be the favorites to land the everyday first-base job, with Chris Carter still considered a candidate. Allen put together a seven-RBI day on Sunday and collected another on Monday against the Cubs in Mesa, while Ka'aihue started at first in Phoenix for a matchup with the visiting Angels, going 0-for-4.

Sore shoulder shouldn't limit Rosales' bench bid

PHOENIX -- Manager Bob Melvin revealed Monday that Adam Rosales had yet to appear in a Cactus League game because of shoulder soreness that surfaced last week.

Rosales fell on his left shoulder during a series of running drills and has since been limited to baseball activity. However, Melvin was set to play him on defense only in Monday's game against the Angels in Phoenix and, barring any further setbacks, he should be able to get enough at-bats this spring to still be considered for a bench spot on the club's Opening Day roster.

"It's getting better," Rosales said. "It's just a little frustrating because I've been itching to get out there."

Melvin is hopeful Rosales can avoid a spring similar to the one he endured last year, when he was on the mend from foot surgery. He began the season on the disabled list and never found a groove at the plate once being reinstated in June, ultimately hitting just .098 in 24 games over three stints with the A's. Much of those struggles, Melvin believes, stemmed from Rosales' inability to get the needed spring at-bats.

"[Utility players] are no more ready during the course of the season to play than when they come out of spring," he said. "Last year that wasn't the case for Rosales, and it set him back, and I think, to an extent, it affected his whole season."

Rosales is considered a strong possibility to break camp on the roster, but the A's also like the versatility Eric Sogard brings to the club. Sogard, who can play all over the infield, represents something of a dark horse for the third-base

job should Josh Donaldson fail to win it. Should Melvin go that way, Donaldson could make the team as a utility guy over Rosales because of his ability to catch, too.

Athletics bring in Prieto to help Cespedes

PHOENIX -- A familiar face was brought in to A's camp on Monday to help out a new one.

Former A's pitcher Ariel Prieto, who is the pitching coach at Oakland's short-season Class A affiliate, is on hand to aid Cuban outfielder Yoenis Cespedes in his transition to the big leagues. There's a strong chance Prieto sticks around in that capacity on a full-time basis, leaving behind his Minor League role.

The A's have yet to announce anything regarding the situation.

Like Cespedes, Prieto himself defected from Cuba, and in 1995 the A's made him their first-round Draft pick. The highly touted pitcher went just 15-24 with a 4.85 ERA in his six-year big league career, five of which were spent in Oakland.

Worth noting

- Right-hander Brad Peacock was greeted by quite the task in his spring debut Monday, as the visiting Angels ran out the majority of their regulars in a potent lineup that includes Albert Pujols, who knocked an RBI double in his first at-bat.

Peacock called facing Pujols for the first time "pretty cool" and said he tried not to look at him when he was in the box. In 1 2/3 innings, the righty was tagged for four runs on four hits with one walk and one strikeout.

Manager Bob Melvin, though, believes the numbers don't tell the whole story and said Peacock got squeezed by home-plate umpire Derryl Cousins more than once and, as a result, had to throw more balls down the middle of the plate than he'd prefer. He considers Peacock to be in the mix for a rotation spot.

- Though right-hander Grant Balfour gave up his third home run of the spring and walked three in two-thirds of an inning on Monday, Melvin said "it will take a lot more of those outings for me to worry about him." Balfour has admittedly been known to fare poorly during spring games.

A's gain split decision

PRESS DEMOCRAT WIRE SERVICES

Josh Reddick collected two more hits and Brandon Allen drove in his eighth RBI of the spring Monday as an A's split squad beat the Chicago White Sox, 8-7, Monday in Mesa, Ariz.

Reddick is off to a fast start after coming over from Boston in the Andrew Bailey trade. He tripled in the second inning and is 5 for 8 this spring.

Considering the A's suddenly have a crowded outfield with the signings of Yoenis Cespedes and Manny Ramirez to go along with Jonny Gomes, Coco Crisp and Seth Smith, the hot start by Reddick can only help his chances.

"That's why we are here," Reddick said. "You work all offseason to be ready to go from the start."

Non-roster invitee Yordy Cabrera led off the ninth inning with a home run against right-hander Tony Zych, lifting Oakland to the victory.

A's starter Bartolo Colon allowed a three-run homer to Blake DeWitt in the second inning. Colon allowed three runs and four hits in 2» innings.

Cubs starting pitcher Ryan Dempster made his spring debut, giving up one run and two hits in two innings.

ANGELS 9, A'S (SS) 1

At Phoenix, Albert Pujols went 2 for 3 in his spring debut for the Angels, including an RBI double in his first at-bat.

A's starter Brad Peacock had to leave after getting five outs. He was scheduled for two innings. Pujols helped him reach his pitch count early.

"I tried not to look at him," Peacock said. "I was trying to hit my spot but left a curveball up for him and he crushed it."

Peacock struggled in his first start in his first major league camp, allowing four runs on four hits and a walk. Peacock was one of four players acquired from Washington for Gio Gonzalez on Dec. 23.

A's designated hitter Manny Ramirez went 0 for 3 and is hitless in five plate appearances. He has seen a total of 11 pitches and had not hit a ball out of the infield until flying out weakly to right in the sixth.

Left-hander C.J. Wilson, the Angels' other big free-agent acquisition, also debuted. He gave up a hit and walk in two innings.

A'S INJURY REPORT

Daric Barton will be shut down for three days after getting a cortisone shot in his right biceps, and manager Bob Melvin acknowledged it's going to be tough for Barton to win the first base job as things are playing out.

"Certainly he's going to have to be able to throw and play first base, and it's going to be a little bit longer to come," Melvin said Monday. "I don't want to rule anything out at this point, but you can count the days."

So it appears the first base battle is a three-man race between Brandon Allen, Chris Carter and Kila Ka'aihue.

In other injury news, utility infielder Adam Rosales has been slowed by a sore left shoulder. He has yet to play in a game but Melvin said Rosales should see a couple of innings of action Monday.

A's fall to Angels, top Cubs in split squad action

csnbayarea.com

Angels 9, A's (SS) 1

BOX SCORE

PHOENIX (AP) His first time up to bat for the Angels, Albert Pujols hit an RBI double.

So far, so good.

The new Angels slugger finished 2 for 3, ending his spring debut by popping up with the bases loaded in the third inning of Los Angeles' 9-1 win over an Oakland Athletics split squad Monday.

"That was fun," Pujols said of batting in each of the first three innings. "Hopefully we get to do that a lot this season."

Left-hander C.J. Wilson, the Angels' other big free-agent acquisition, also debuted. He gave up a hit and walk in two innings.

Pujols agreed to a \$240 million, 10-year deal over the winter, leaving the St. Louis Cardinals after 11 seasons.

Now he'll routinely face AL pitchers after hammering the senior circuit for more than a decade.

"When I made the ballclub in '01 I didn't know anyone in the National League," Pujols said. "You are your own scouting report."

Athletics starter Brad Peacock had to leave after getting five outs. He was scheduled for two innings. Pujols helped him reach his pitch count early.

"I tried not to look at him," Peacock said. "I was trying to hit my spot but left a curveball up for him and he crushed it."

Wilson, who came to California from the Texas Rangers, said he used to play fantasy baseball when he was in the minors - and drafted Pujols at least once.

"It's kind of funny," Wilson said. "He came up there and drive in the run and we all looked at each other in the dugout and said `Yep, that's Albert.' That's what he does.

"I'm happy to be in the [Albert Pujols](#) fan club."

NOTES: A's DH Manny Ramirez went 0-for-3 and is hitless in five plate appearances. He has seen a total of 11 pitches and had not hit a ball out of the infield until flying out weakly to right in the sixth. . Peacock struggled in his first start in his first major league camp, allowing four runs on four hits and a walk. Peacock was one of four players acquired from Washington for [Gio Gonzalez](#) on December 23. . Angels 2B [Howie Kendrick](#) homered to straightaway center in the second and C [Chris Iannetta](#) added a two-run shot in the third. . Athletics 1B [Daric Barton](#) received a second cortisone shot in his right shoulder and will be sidelines for the next three days. . Angels DH [Bobby Abreu](#) was slated to bat sixth but was scratched due to an undisclosed illness. He was replaced by [Hank Conger](#), who hit ninth.

A's (SS) 8, Cubs 7

BOX SCORE

MESA, Ariz. (AP) [Ryan Dempster](#) got off to a rough start last year and never recovered in one of his worst seasons with the Chicago Cubs.

Nothing he can do about it now. He is focused on bouncing back this year.

Dempster made his spring debut Monday and pitched two innings in Chicago's 8-7 loss to a split-squad of Oakland Athletics. The right-hander, who went 10-14 with a 4.80 ERA last season, allowed one run and two hits.

"It's why I've worked really hard this winter," said Dempster, who struck out two and walked none. "Anytime you've had a subpar year, you don't like it a whole lot and you want to try and do a whole lot better the next time out. You work out and do what you can to be prepared."

[Josh Reddick](#) collected two more hits for Oakland, and [Brandon Allen](#) hit a sacrifice fly off Dempster in the second to give him eight RBIs this spring.

Non-roster invitee Yordy Cabrera led off the ninth inning with a home run against right-hander Tony Zych, lifting Oakland to the victory.

[Blake DeWitt](#) hit a three-run homer off A's starter [Bartolo Colon](#) in the second inning. [Jeff Baker](#) added two hits, including a double, and scored two runs for Chicago.

Reddick is off to a fast start after coming over from Boston in the Andrew Bailey trade. He tripled in the second inning and is 5 for 8 this spring.

Considering the A's suddenly have a crowded outfield with the signings of Yoenis Cespedes and Manny Ramirez to go along with [Jonny Gomes](#), [Coco Crisp](#) and [Seth Smith](#), the hot start by Reddick can only help his chances.

"That's why we are here," Reddick said. "You work all offseason to be ready to go from the start."

Reddick only saw three pitches from Dempster but said he could tell that the starter had a good changeup.

Working in the off-speed stuff early might be the key to Dempster getting off to a fast start. He was 1-3 with a 9.58 ERA in six April starts last season.

Cubs manager Dale Sveum, who expects to announce an opening-day starter within a week, speculated from having conversations with Dempster that the poor opening month might have been because he relied too much on his fastball.

"He had an unbelievable spring training where he had unbelievable command of his fastball and that might have gotten him into a little bit of trouble because he mentioned he wasn't using his secondary pitches as much because he was so caught up in having great fastball command in spring," Sveum said. "He didn't work on his off-speed stuff in spring training.

"The bottom line is, he knew he was better than he showed last year and I think he's on a mission to prove that he's the pitcher he was before that."

NOTES: Cubs C Geovany Soto (groin) is expected to see his first game action somewhere between Wednesday and Saturday. ... Jeff Baker and Joe Mather had two hits apiece for Chicago. Mather also had two stolen bases.

Bob Melvin refreshed, recharged with Oakland Athletics

Scott Bordow, Arizona Republic News

Bob Melvin had just finished throwing batting practice Monday when a familiar face approached him and extended his hand.

Melvin knew who Rollie Fingers was, of course. Every kid who grew up in the Bay Area in the 1970s was familiar with Fingers, his handlebar mustache and the flourish with which he closed games for the Oakland Athletics during their three-year (1972-74) championship run.

Somehow, though, this was the first time the two men had met. They exchanged pleasantries for a couple of minutes before Melvin got back to the business of managing the A's.

"I grew up watching him," said the 50-year-old Melvin, who was born in Palo Alto, Calif. "I knew everybody on those A's teams."

Yes, these are good times for Melvin. Less than three years after he was unceremoniously fired by the Diamondbacks, he's back in the dugout, managing the team he adored as a kid and wearing No.6 in honor of his favorite player, former A's third baseman and captain Sal Bando.

"It's awesome. It really is," Melvin said. "It's one thing to be able to do this and have a third opportunity (Melvin was the Seattle Mariners' manager in 2003 and 2004) but to be able to do this at home, for a team I watched growing up, it's special for me, no question about it."

Melvin will admit now that he was hurt and angry when then-Diamondbacks General Manager Josh Byrnes fired him in May 2009 and replaced him with A.J. Hinch, the vice president of player development. (Chalk that up under moves that didn't work out too well.)

But the time away from the dugout — Melvin was a scout for the New York Mets in 2010 before being rehired by the Diamondbacks last summer as a special adviser — refreshed his spirit and recharged his batteries.

"I was a little bitter about it," he said. "But you have to get over that to move forward. There's no longer any bitterness. I'm happy as heck for what's gone on over there. It made me realize how much I love doing this and how lucky I am to do this."

Managing the perpetually rebuilding A's might seem like anything but lucky. Oakland has had five consecutive losing seasons, plays in an rundown ballpark — little progress has been made on the team's hopeful move to San Jose — and is so desperate for box-office buzz it recently signed Manny Ramirez, a two-time offender of Major League Baseball's drug policy.

Melvin, however, didn't hesitate when General Manager Billy Beane offered him the interim job last summer or when Beane put a three-year contract in front of him in September. Nor did he have second thoughts after the A's gutted their pitching staff in the off-season, trading closer Andrew Bailey and starters Gio Gonzalez and Trevor Cahill.

To Melvin, Oakland is a blank canvas, and he's holding the paintbrush.

"As a coaching staff, you should be excited about putting your potential handprint on a team moving forward, especially with as many good, young players as we have here," he said.

OK, but just how does Melvin approach a season in which his top two starters are Brandon McCarthy and Bartolo Colon, and the team might overachieve if it wins 70 games?

What does he tell his team? Because "Wait until 2015" doesn't play well in the clubhouse.

"I know we're in a certain mode," Melvin said, "but if I as the manager start talking about rebuilding, it means winning isn't important, and winning at the big-league level is the most-important thing.

"I don't care who you are or what you are ... it's no different for us than the Rangers, Angels or whatever. They expect to win, and so do we. Now, they may have long-term goals and we're not going to get that far out there. We know with all our young players we're not the best we can be right now. We're going to strive to be better every single day. That's the message. And I do have conviction about that."

Let's hope the A's are as patient with Melvin as he'll be with his team. He's a good man, a good manager, and there's nothing he'd rather do than turn the A's into winners again.

That would be a save Fingers could appreciate.

Oakland A's Prospect Profile: Jose Macias

Melissa Lockard, OaklandClubhouse.com

Mar 5, 2012

One of the early stories of Oakland A's big league spring training has been the development of position player-turned-pitcher Sean Doolittle. A's minor league right-hander Jose Macias knows all about making that switch. We take a closer look at Macias, who has gone from light-hitting college infielder to effective professional pitcher in just two years.

Player Info

Name: Jose Macias

Date of Birth: 07/18/89

Height/Weight: 6'2"/180

Bats/Throws: R/R

How Acquired: Selected in the 18th round of the 2010 draft by the Oakland A's

Background

Macias' path to professional baseball was an unusual one. A native of Venezuela, Macias and his family moved to New York when he was in junior high school. He spent some time playing shortstop and pitching in high school, but when he began his collegiate career, he was strictly an infielder. While playing for Monroe College in New York as a freshman, Macias hit .373. That strong season earned Macias a spot in the summer New England Collegiate Baseball League. Through a connection at the NECBL, Macias garnered the notice of Franklin Pierce University, and he transferred to the school for the 2009 season.

Macias spent the 2009 season as the shortstop for Franklin Pierce, but he hit only .266, although he showed promise defensively. He began experimenting with pitching during the summer leagues before the 2010 campaign and the FPU coaching staff shifted Macias into their starting rotation for the 2010 season.

That decision proved to be fortuitous for the Ravens. Macias flashed a low-90s fastball and a good slider right away and found immediate success on the mound. He would finish his only full collegiate season as a pitcher with a 9-1 record and an 0.87 ERA. Macias demonstrated that he could throw strikes consistently, walking only 22 in 92.2 innings and striking out 118.

Despite being only a two-pitch pitcher (fastball and slider) and having only one year of pitching experience under his belt, Macias was taken by the A's in the 18th round of the 2010 draft. The A's have been careful with Macias' development the past two seasons, having him focus extensively on adding a change-up to his pitching arsenal.

Macias spent most of his 2010 debut season with the A's Rookie League team in Arizona. He breezed through 14 AZL innings, posting a 1.29 ERA with an 11:3 K:BB ratio. The A's gave Macias a look with the full-season Low-A Kane

County Cougars at the end of the season and he ran into his first speedbumps as a pitcher, allowing five runs on 10 hits and three walks in seven innings with the Cougars.

The A's kept Macias at extended spring training to begin the 2011 campaign. There he impressed the A's coaching staff with his improved secondary pitches and his ability to hit his spots. Oakland sent Macias out to Low-A Burlington in late May. He pitched well in his first two starts for the Bees but lost his feel for the strike-zone and for mixing his pitches in early June, and the A's sent Macias down to the short-season New York-Penn League to start for the Vermont Lake Monsters.

It wasn't long before the A's brass realized that Macias was too advanced for the New York-Penn League. After four starts during which Macias posted a 21:6 K:BB ratio and a 3.27 ERA, Macias was brought back up to Burlington and he would spend the rest of the season as part of the Bees' rotation. After his brief stint with Vermont, Macias had a 3.28 ERA with a 44:12 K:BB ratio in 57.2 innings. He would finish the year with a 3.46 ERA and a 62:18 K:BB ratio in 80.2 innings with the Bees.

Scouting Report

If there is one trait that encapsulates Macias as a pitcher it is that he is a quick study. Whenever he has been presented with a new challenge, he has risen to that challenge with relative ease. Last year, Macias set out to incorporate a change-up into his repertoire, a pitch he had just learned after joining the A's in 2010. The change-up quickly became a solid weapon for Macias, who showed sophistication on the mound by using his change-up and slider in fastball counts. He also showed resilience, bouncing back from a rough start to his month of June to pitch well the rest of the season.

Macias isn't an overpowering pitcher, but he can keep his fastball in the 89-91 MPH range and he spots it well. His slider is his best pitch and the change-up showed a lot of promise in 2011. Macias can locate all three pitches and he walked only 24 in 102.2 innings last season. He is an excellent athlete and he has a smooth, repeatable delivery.

The right-hander has the height to be a starter, but he is still filling out his frame. There may still be room for him to add some velocity to his fastball as he matures physically. Although Macias is already 22 years old, he has a lot less mileage on his arm than most pitchers his age and should have plenty of years of pitching ahead of him. Macias has been a starter since he made the transition to the mound, and with his command and the addition of his third pitch, he is likely to remain a starter for now. It wouldn't be surprising to see the A's work with Macias to add a fourth pitch – perhaps a cut fastball – given how quickly he has been able to make other adjustments.

Outlook

Macias will be battling this spring for a spot in the High-A Stockton Ports' starting rotation. The Ports figure to have a talented starting five, but Macias has a strong chance of landing in that rotation thanks to the way he finished his 2011 campaign with the Bees. A flyball pitcher, Macias will be tested in the hitter-friendly California League, especially in the smaller Southern California ballparks.

Despite having only one full season of pitching under his belt, Macias looked strong throughout the 2011 campaign and should be able to shoulder a full load of innings in 2012. Between extended spring training and the regular season, Macias threw roughly 125 innings last year. If healthy, he should have an opportunity to reach the 140+ innings mark this season.