

## A's News Clips, Monday, March, 19, 2012

### Oakland A's Kurt Suzuki homers against ex-teammate Trevor Cahill

By Joe Stiglich, Oakland Tribune

Kurt Suzuki and Trevor Cahill got a kick out of facing each other for the first time Sunday.

Score one for the A's catcher, who took Cahill deep for a two-run homer in their only matchup during Oakland's 11-2 victory at Salt River Fields.

"He kind of gave me a little stare coming off the field," Suzuki said afterward. "I was just laughing at him."

Cahill, traded from the A's to the Diamondbacks in December, said he was a little too amped as he faced his former team.

But he gave up just the two runs in three innings before a brief but heavy hailstorm halted play for 36 minutes.

Suzuki helped nurture Cahill from an inconsistent rookie in 2009 to an All-Star in 2010.

"He always wanted to throw the slider, and I never let him throw the slider," Suzuki said. "I thought he was gonna start throwing me some sliders."

When Cahill fell behind in the count 3-1, he figured Suzuki would look for his bread-and-butter sinker. So Cahill threw a straight four-seam fastball that Suzuki lined over the left-field wall.

"That didn't work out," said Cahill, who was expecting a good-natured text message from Suzuki. "I kept looking at him running around the bases. He didn't look at me. He's all business."

Cahill, who was dealt along with reliever Craig Breslow for starting pitcher Jarrod Parker, reliever Ryan Cook and outfielder Collin Cowgill, has struggled over three spring starts, giving up 11 hits and seven earned runs in eight innings.

The A's might face Cahill in a game that counts in June, when they travel to Arizona for a three-game interleague series. He acknowledged he should have a good scouting report on his old team.

"But it goes both ways," he said. "They've seen me and know what I'm going to throw."

Breslow worked two innings for Arizona and allowed Brandon Moss' two-run homer.

Reliever Joey Devine will begin the season on the 15-day disabled list because of a right-biceps injury.

Manager Bob Melvin also said first baseman Daric Barton -- who has come back slowly from shoulder surgery last season -- will not travel to Japan for the A's season-opening series March 28-29 against Seattle.

But Barton remains on the roster and will rejoin the team in the Bay Area for four exhibitions. Melvin said Barton remains a contender for the first base job along with Brandon Allen and Kila Ka'aihue.

"We want to make sure his progress is such that he can play several games in a row, and he can throw (with no problems)," Melvin said.

The oft-injured Devine hasn't pitched since March 8 because of inflammation in his biceps. Because the A's begin their season early, they can backdate his D.L. stint to March 24. That means he could be activated as early as April 8, in which case he would miss just four regular-season games.

In Devine's absence, Fautino De Los Santos figures to assume a more prominent late-inning role. Andrew Carignan, Cook and Travis Schlichting also could help fill the void.

Tyson Ross threw three shutout innings against the Diamondbacks and continues to make a strong bid for the rotation. The former Bishop O'Dowd High and Cal star is 2-0 with a 0.90 ERA through four starts.

When Ross has his command, Suzuki said he's very tough.

"Tyson is 6-(foot)-6. He's slinging that ball in there 94, 95 (mph). That's not a comfortable at-bat."

The A's announced in a release Sunday night that first baseman Chris Carter, outfielder Michael Taylor and reliever Neil Wagner were optioned to Triple-A Sacramento.

Carter and Taylor, both top prospects at one point, had seen their playing time dwindle as camp wore on and had not distinguished themselves in the innings they did get.

Reliever Erick Threets, from Livermore, was sent down earlier in the day.

Yoenis Cespedes played center field but was pulled, along with other starters, after the delay. He reached on a fielder's choice grounder in his only at-bat but was picked off first by Arizona catcher Miguel Montero.

The storm didn't last long but made an impact.

"Hail was bouncing off my mask," Suzuki said.

### **Joey Devine, Daric Barton won't join A's in Japan**

Susan Slusser, San Francisco Chronicle

**Scottsdale, Ariz.** -- Neither **Joey Devine** nor **Daric Barton** will accompany the A's to Japan, but the two differ when it comes to their roster status:

-- Devine will go on the disabled list as he recovers from biceps and flexor-tendon tendinitis, and he'll be eligible to rejoin the team April 8.

-- Barton, who is coming back from right shoulder surgery, will remain on the roster, though he'll stay behind in Arizona. The A's are allowed a 28-man roster (25 of those active) for the two regular-season games in Tokyo, allowing the team some personnel leeway.

Keeping Barton active is an indication that he's still right in the middle of the first-base competition, despite playing only one game at the position this spring.

"I worked so hard this offseason to be ready, and it's been a tough road," said Devine, who has been limited to 26 appearances the past three years because of injuries. "Part of me feels like I let the team down. But I know I'll be ready to go when they come back.

"It stinks not to go - baseball over there is incredible. But I want to be ready for the full year and not rush. I'm only missing four games. I'll get it right."

Barton was partly disappointed not to go to Japan because his father had planned to go with him, but he is happy to remain on the roster.

"In the long run, this will be the best for me, to play seven days in a row here, get a lot of extra at-bats, playing in the field," he said. "I'll be ready for the Bay Bridge Series."

Barton has options remaining, and the other two primary contenders at first base, **Brandon Allen** and **Kila Ka'aihue**, do not. The other possibility, **Chris Carter**, was optioned to Triple-A Sacramento on Sunday, not a surprise given his limited playing time.

Devine threw off the mound for the first time since March 8, a 20-pitch session, all fastballs, that he called outstanding.

**Suzuki vs. Cahill: Kurt Suzuki**, who had joked the day before that the A's would "rake" former teammate **Trevor Cahill**, hit a two-run homer off Cahill in the second.

Cahill watched Suzuki round the bases, and Cahill said, "I thought he'd be laughing, but he didn't look at me. All business."

When the game was delayed by hail and rain after three innings, Cahill was rooting for a rainout. "If it was canceled, I could just say that (homer) didn't count," Cahill said, smiling.

**Briefly:** Along with Carter, the A's optioned outfielder **Michael Taylor** and reliever **Neil Wagner** and also reassigned left-handed reliever **Erick Threets**, who grew up in Hayward and Livermore, to minor-league camp. Manager **Bob Melvin** said Threets impressed the Oakland coaching staff, and there is likely to be a need for him at some point if he continues to pitch well at Triple-A Sacramento. ... **Jarrod Parker**, obtained from Arizona in the Cahill deal, will start against the Diamondbacks today. Parker is still in the running for a rotation spot. ... **Brad Ziegler**, a longtime Oakland reliever, is scheduled to work against the A's today.

## **A's 11, Diamondbacks 2**

**Notable:** The A's improved their Cactus League-best record to 13-4-1. ... **Tyson Ross** allowed four hits and one walk and struck out one in three scoreless innings, lowering his spring ERA to 0.90 and putting himself in strong contention for a rotation spot. ... **Kurt Suzuki** hit a two-run homer off former teammate **Trevor Cahill** in the second, and **Brandon Moss** hit a two-run homer off ex-A's reliever **Craig Breslow** in the fifth. Moss is batting .526 after a three-hit day.

**Quotable:** "There's probably a text on my phone from him, guaranteed."

- *Suzuki on homering off friend and former batterymate Cahill.*

**Today's game:** Diamondbacks (**Josh Collmenter**) vs. A's (**Jarrod Parker**), 1:05 p.m. Radio: 95.7 FM.

### **Drumbeat: Kurt Suzuki homers off ex-A's All-Star Trevor Cahill in hail-delayed game**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Salt River Fields, 3/18/2012, 3:42pm

Kurt Suzuki told me – jokingly, at least somewhat – yesterday that the A's were going to "rake" their former teammate Trevor Cahill today, and then Suzuki followed through with a two-out two-run homer in the second inning of the A's 11-2 win over Arizona. The A's improved their Cactus League best record to 13-4-1.

Both men had some fun with that afterward; Suzuki knows Cahill's stuff better than anyone in the world after catching him for three years, and the two are good friend. "There's probably a text on my phone from him, guaranteed," Suzuki said with a laugh.

Cahill said he'd already received a text from A's shortstop Cliff Pennington, but he was going to wait for Suzuki to text him.

He said he fell behind Suzuki and thought Suzuki would look for a sinker, so he threw him a four-seamer. "That didn't work out," he said.

Then he watched Suzuki round the bases. "I thought he'd be laughing, but he didn't look at me. All business," Cahill said.

Suzuki said that after the homer, Cahill looked at him in the dugout. "He kind of gave me a stare. I was just laughing at him," Suzuki said, adding that the next inning, when Cahill was running out on the field, he sent a sort of dismissive flicking motion Suzuki's way.

Suzuki said he thought Cahill might throw him a slider "because I never let him throw sliders. But it was a four-seamer, middle in, and the rest is history. 'Mahi-mahi,' as Jonny Gomes would say. Strong, strong."

After three innings, the game was delayed by hail and rain. Cahill was hoping for a rainout at that point. "If it was cancelled, I could just say that didn't count," Cahill said of the Suzuki homer.

Cahill and A's starter Tyson Ross finished up their work in the covered batting cages, and when play resumed, Kila Ka'aihue homered for Oakland and then another former A's pitcher, left-hander Craig Breslow, served up another homer, a two-run shot by Brandon Moss.

Ross allowed four hits and a walk in three innings, and he struck out one. His spring ERA stands at 0.90 and his odds of gaining a spot in the rotation are increasing every time out. I'd say he's a favorite at this point, along with left-hander Tommy Milone, leaving the final spot for either Jarrod Parker – who starts against his former team, Arizona, tomorrow – or Graham Godfrey. Brad Peacock is likely to head to Triple-A Sacramento to start the season to polish up some things, but there is a very strong chance we'll see him in Oakland this year.

Suzuki was complimentary of Ross, saying when he gets the ball over the plate, he's very tough. "He's 6-6 and slinging it in there 94-95 mph," Suzuki said. "That's not a comfortable at-bat. ... I love it. Tyson know that I'm one of his biggest fans."

Hail hit in the bottom of the third and Suzuki said it was bouncing off his mask. "I turned to the umpire (Hal Gibson) and said, 'Are you serious right now?' And he said, 'I'm getting it, too, it's not my call,' " Suzuki said, describing the hail as marble-sized.

### **Drumbeat: Devine to go on DL; Barton won't go to Japan, will stay on roster**

From Chronicle Staff Writer Susan Slusser at Phoenix Muni, 3/18/2012, 10:08am

As expected, Joey Devine and Daric Barton will not go to Tokyo with the A's on Thursday, they'll both stay behind to get work at extended spring training because of their limited availability during camp.

The two will not have the same roster status while the team is away, however. Devine will go onto the DL, so he will not take up a roster spot: The team can backdate the transaction to March 24, so Devine will be eligible to play on April 8, missing only four regular-season games in all if he continues to recover well from a bout of biceps and flexor tendon tendinitis.

Barton's status is very interesting: He will remain on the roster, because the team can employ a 28-man roster in Japan and really has even more spots than that – they will not need three of their starting pitchers in Tokyo, nor will

they need any of those three until April 9. Brandon McCarthy and Bartolo Colon are scheduled start the first four regular-season games. So the A's can carry extra relievers and position players, especially in Japan.

The fact that the A's are keeping Barton on the roster – he does have options left – means that the team believes he is strongly enough in the first-base race that he could well be on the 25-man roster on April 6. Otherwise, they could stick him on the DL, too, because he is coming off right shoulder surgery, and he'd be eligible to come off April 8 just like Devine.

I'm not sure whether this says more about Barton, who when healthy is the best defender among the first-base options, or about the other leading candidates at the spot, Brandon Allen and Kila Ka'aihue. I'm pretty sure we can leave Chris Carter out of the equation for now – he has options left and he has not been getting the same time at first base as the other candidates, essentially because he does have options and Allen and Ka'aihue do not.

It's probably safe to assume neither Allen nor Ka'aihue has laid firm claim to the job if Barton, who has played all of one game at first base this spring, will take up a roster spot in Japan without even traveling there.

Devine is assured of a roster spot when healthy. He's considered one of the A's best relief options in the later innings, and he could be a closer candidate at some point this season. The only thing that has held him back is health; he has made 26 appearances in the past three seasons. So, in a strange way, the DL stint shows Devine's firmly on the roster, while Barton is not on the DL because *no* decision has been made there and the team wants to see him in those four exhibition games (at Sacramento and then the Bay Bridge series) before the regular season resumes April 6.

The A's can take 30 players to Tokyo, and must set a 28-man roster for the two games against Seattle, the same roster for both regular-season games.

Erick Threets, who is from the East Bay, was sent down to Triple-A Sacramento this morning. He had a very strong camp, and while he was disappointed to be cut, manager Bob Melvin told him to continue to do what he's doing at Sacramento, because there always comes a time when the big-league team needs pitching.

### **Reliever Devine to start season on disabled list**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- The disabled list is becoming all too familiar for A's reliever Joey Devine, who will begin the season there as he works back from right biceps tendinitis.

Devine, 28, has spent 542 days of the past four years on the DL. He didn't pitch at all in 2009 and '10 while he rehabbed from Tommy John surgery, and his most recent injury is the result of lingering effects from the procedure.

Devine was scheduled to throw off the mound on Sunday, and if all went well he would be penciled in to pitch in Tuesday's game. But the A's, who depart for Japan on Thursday, have decided it best not to rush him.

"It just got to that point," manager Bob Melvin said. "He's an important cog that we need, so we have to make sure we get him back on a schedule where we're not rushing him, taking him to Japan and not being able to pitch him regularly on the schedule that we'd like to."

Because of the club's early start to the regular season in Japan, with games against the Mariners scheduled for March 28 and 29, Devine's 15-day DL transaction will be retroactive to March 24, making him eligible to return April 8. Should he be deemed 100 percent healthy by then, Devine will have only missed four games.

The right-handed reliever made just three appearances this spring, his most recent one coming March 8, when he was forced to throw 35 pitches. He walked three and surrendered four runs in just two-thirds of an inning. It was that night and the following morning when inflammation in his arm surfaced.

Once healthy, Devine is considered a significant piece to a mostly young A's bullpen, which will count on lefty Brian Fuentes and right-handers Grant Balfour and Fautino De Los Santos to commandeer the late innings. He is also

considered a potential closer candidate at some point in the season, which speaks volumes about how much the A's value him, despite the fact he's made just 26 big league appearances in the past three seasons.

All of them came in 2011, when he posted a 3.52 ERA and 1.26 WHIP with 20 strikeouts in 23 innings before being optioned to Triple-A and enduring back spasms.

"We need to get Joey pitching the way he was, certainly when I first got here last year," Melvin said. "He was a guy we leaned on very heavily, especially in the seventh inning. Typically, that can be a monumental inning in that a lot of times a starter is coming out with guys on base, and he was the guy for a period of time that was really doing that job. We want to make sure that when he comes back, he is ready and has gone through all the proper innings and so forth."

The 2008 season remains Devine's best, as he compiled a 0.59 ERA over 45 2/3 innings in 42 games as a rookie. Since the earned run became an official stat for the American League in 1913, it represented the lowest mark in Major League history among those with 25 or more innings pitched.

With Devine out of the mix to begin the season, the A's have at least four open bullpen spots, one of which will presumably go to southpaw Jerry Blevins. Right-handers Ryan Cook, Andrew Carignan and Travis Schlichting and lefty Jordan Norberto are strong options for the other three.

### **Moss' four RBIs help A's beat familiar faces**

#### **New D-backs Cahill, Breslow give up homers to former team**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Pitching against their former A's team just four months after being dealt, Arizona hurlers Trevor Cahill and Craig Breslow each gave up home runs, as Oakland claimed an 11-2 victory over the split-squad D-backs at Salt River Fields on Sunday.

Cahill, making his third Cactus League start, surrendered a two-run shot to Kurt Suzuki in the second inning, while Breslow was tagged for a two-run homer in the fifth by Brandon Moss, who added a two-run single to his four-RBI day in the seventh.

Sunday's matchup included a 36-minute rain delay, forcing Cahill and A's starter Tyson Ross out after just three innings. But Ross continued to impress in that time, giving up four hits with one walk and one strikeout while lowering his spring ERA to 0.90.

"The key with him is putting his fastball over the plate," Suzuki said of Ross, a strong candidate for the rotation. "You see that 6-foot-6 figure, flinging the ball in there at 94, 95 [mph], that's not a comfortable at-bat, that's for sure."

Third baseman Matt Davidson was responsible for both of the D-backs' runs, courtesy of a two-run homer off A's reliever Neil Wagner in the fourth.

Oakland's record of 13-4-1 is the best in the Cactus League.

**Up next for A's:** Right-hander Jarrod Parker, the A's **top prospect**, is set to face his former D-backs team at Phoenix Municipal Stadium for his final Cactus League start on Monday, with first pitch scheduled for 1:05 p.m. PT. Parker, making a final push for a rotation spot, has been impressive in three spring appearances, pitching to a 2.45 ERA with nine strikeouts in 7 1/3 innings.

**Up next for D-backs:** After a split-squad afternoon on Sunday, the D-backs head to Phoenix Municipal Stadium on Monday to take on the A's. Right-hander Josh Collmenter (0-1, 13.50) takes the hill for Arizona against Oakland's Jarrod Parker (1-1, 2.45). Collmenter surrendered three hits and three runs (one homer) in two innings in his last outing, against the Rockies.

### **Barton to stay on roster but won't be in Japan**

By Jane Lee / MLB.com

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Count Daric Barton out of the Japan trip. But don't count him out of the first-base mix.

The two would seem to go hand in hand, considering the A's will play in two regular-season games with the Mariners in Tokyo on March 28-29. But the club can carry a 28-man roster overseas, before designating a 25-man roster of players eligible for those games. That means Barton, working his way back from right shoulder surgery, can remain on the 28-man roster during that time while participating in extended spring training to compile the innings he needs to be ready for the April 6 opener in the States.

Barton isn't guaranteed a roster spot at that time, but the A's decision to keep him on the roster for now, rather than demote him to the Minors, reflects their desire to give him every chance to compete for the Opening Day job he's held in three of the past four seasons. He'll get that opportunity when the club returns to the U.S. on March 29 and plays in four exhibition games in the six days that follow.

"We want to make sure his progress is such that he can play multiple games in a row and throw," manager Bob Melvin said. "He's a guy we're going to need, so he'll be on a schedule here, and once we get back, he'll be able to play in all the exhibition games leading up to Opening Day."

The club's decision to have Barton take up a roster spot but not travel showcases its indecision surrounding first base, where neither Brandon Allen nor Kila Ka'aihue have evidently made a strong case for the job. Chris Carter has also been mentioned in first-base talk, but because he has options, unlike Allen and Ka'aihue, it's safe to assume he'll be in Triple-A to start the season.

Barton is considered the strongest defender of the bunch, despite making eight errors in 67 games during a forgettable 2011 season. He hit just .212 with no home runs during that time and was optioned to Triple-A in June, appearing in 17 games with Sacramento before going on the disabled list. The year before, he hit .273 with 10 homers, 57 RBIs and an American League-leading 110 walks, while committing 10 errors in 159 games.

### **Suzuki gets best of former batterymate Cahill**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- Kurt Suzuki wanted to have a little fun. Trevor Cahill wanted to get his work in.

Fun won.

The A's catcher, facing his former batterymate for the first time in an Oakland-Arizona matchup on Sunday with a runner on base, watched Cahill fall behind on him, 3-1, before throwing a four-seamer that found its way to the left-field grass area at Salt River Fields for Suzuki's first spring homer.

"I thought he'd be thinking I'd throw him a sinker, so I threw him a four-seamer, and that didn't work out," Cahill said.

"You obviously know the release points, know the type of movements," Suzuki said after the A's 11-2 win. "I thought he was going to start messing around. He's always wanted to throw a slider, and I never let him throw the slider, so I thought he'd throw me some. But he came right after me with the sinker, threw me one changeup and then the four-seamer, middle in, and the rest is history."

Cahill, dealt to the D-backs in November for a trio of prospects, eyed Suzuki as he ran around the bases but was never once able to establish eye contact. Only when Cahill was running off the field, peering into the visitor's dugout, did he give Suzuki a stare.

"And I was just laughing at him," an amused Suzuki said.

The home run almost didn't count, as thunder, lightning and hail threatened the game. But only after three innings -- required to make a Spring Training game official -- was the game halted before resuming 36 minutes later.

"I wanted it to get canceled so I could say it didn't count," Cahill said.

### **A's cut four players, including righty Threets**

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. -- The A's made their second round of cuts on Sunday, with outfielders Michael Taylor and Chris Carter and relievers Neil Wagner and Erick Threets the latest to be sent out.

Threets departed to Minor League camp in the morning, and the A's announced the other moves later in the day.

Though plenty intrigue has surrounded the prospect duo of Taylor and Carter in recent years, their demotions were not a surprise, given the fact both have Minor League options and were not seeing much playing time or performing at a high standard when they were.

Threets, a Bay Area native and non-roster invitee on the comeback trail from Tommy John surgery, fared well in camp, but so have several other relievers already on the 40-man roster. The veteran southpaw allowed just one run in 6 2/3 innings for a 1.35 ERA with five strikeouts.

"I thought he pitched well," manager Bob Melvin said. "There are going to be some disappointing cuts here with some guys that have performed well here, and he's one of those guys. Really, my message to him was, 'Try not to be too disappointed, go down there and do your thing because sometimes you start with a certain amount of guys that, typically, over the course of the season, you add to that.'

"He's definitely a guy that opened our eyes. He pitched well and is disappointed, and I understand that."