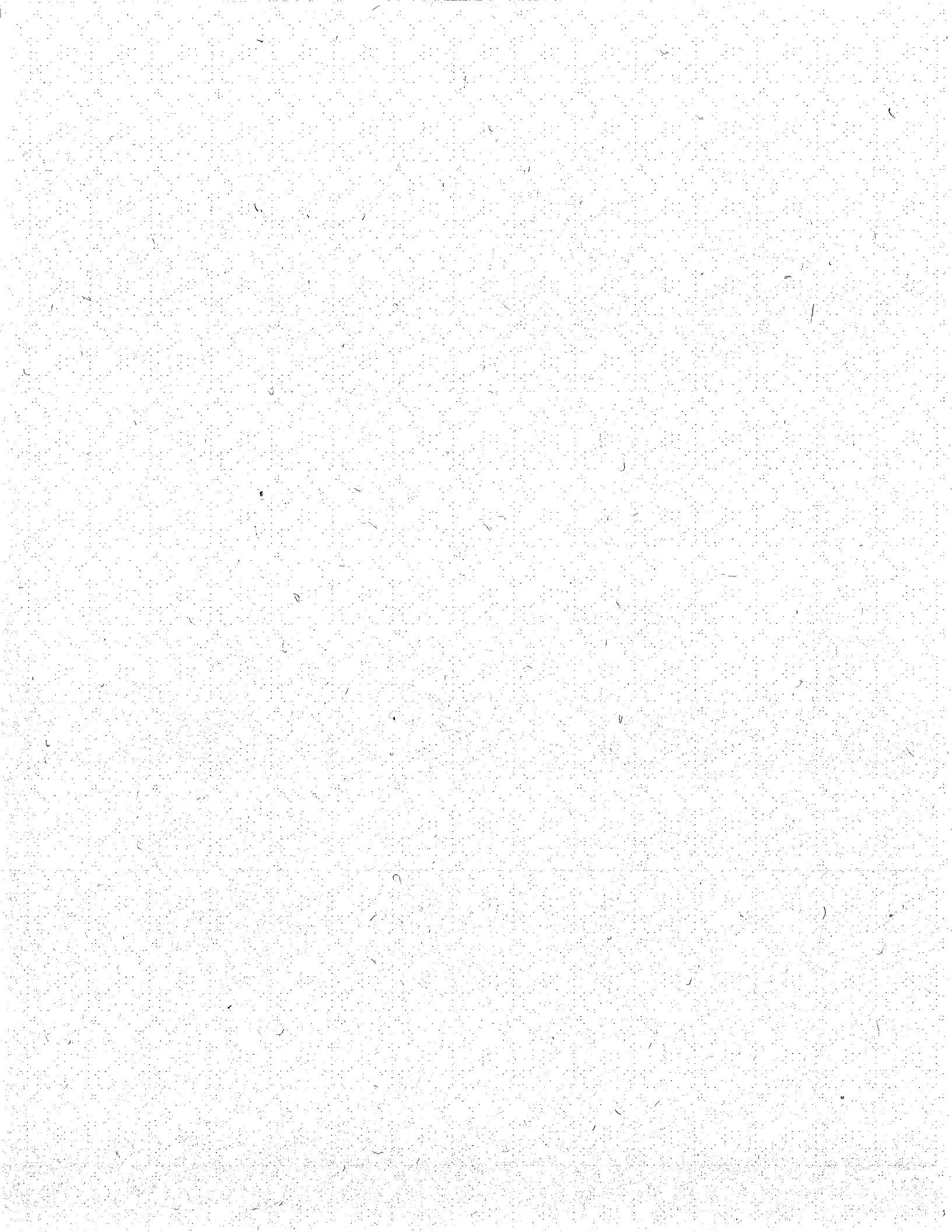




**New York Yankees Clips**  
**Saturday, May 26, 2012**



[ESPN.com](http://ESPN.com)

## Yankees find happy place in Oakland, hand A's third straight loss

*Associated Press*

OAKLAND, Calif. -- The [New York Yankees](#) knew it would just be a matter of time until their big bats finally started connecting.

[Mark Teixeira](#) and [Nick Swisher](#) hit two-run homers to help the Yankees win for the seventh straight time in Oakland, beating the Athletics 6-3 on Friday night.

[Robinson Cano](#) also homered and [Ivan Nova](#) (5-2) allowed three runs in seven innings to give the Yankees their third straight win following a stretch of six losses in seven games. The Yankees have hit six homers in the past two games.

"The last few games have been good for us," Teixeira said. "We're used to scoring that many runs. It's kind of more normal for us. ... We're a team that's used to hitting a lot of them and we'd like to hit a little bit more."

[Tyson Ross](#) (2-5) allowed the three long balls, which proved to be too much for Oakland's struggling offense to overcome as the A's lost their third straight game. [Josh Reddick](#) and [Kila Ka'aihue](#) hit solo homers for Oakland.

The Yankees have overwhelmed the A's of late, especially in Oakland. Their last loss at the Coliseum came on April 22, 2010, in a game remembered for the dustup between [Alex Rodriguez](#) and [Dallas Braden](#) over A-Rod's jog across Braden's mound after a foul ball.

There were no such controversies this game as the Yankees' bats show signs of waking up after scoring just 15 runs during that recent seven-game stretch. But some of their struggling high-priced stars have come through of late. Rodriguez homered twice in a win Wednesday against Kansas City to give him seven homers, and Teixeira connected against the Athletics.

"These guys are too good for this to continue to go on," manager Joe Girardi said. "All clubs go through it at times and it's no fun when you're going through it. It feels like, 'When is it going to end?' sometimes. We're starting to swing the bats better."

Home runs are a good sign for the Yankees, who are 24-11 when they go deep and winless in 10 games without a home run, and they had little trouble going deep against Ross.

[Rafael Soriano](#) pitched the ninth for his fourth save in as many opportunities.

New York scored three unearned runs in the third thanks to an error by center fielder [Coco Crisp](#). Cano's drive with two outs and a man on first hit off Crisp's glove for a two-base error that scored [Curtis Granderson](#). Teixeira followed with his sixth homer to make it 3-0.

"Those three runs, that's the difference in the ballgame right there," Crisp said. "We are playing a team of high caliber. You want to go out there as solid as possible. From the defensive end, we've been doing a great job. You get a couple of plays that don't end up the way they're supposed to, they can play a big part in the game."

After Reddick hit a solo homer in the bottom of the fourth for Oakland, the Yankees broke it open in the fifth with a solo shot by Cano and a two-run homer from Swisher to make it 6-1 and knock out Ross. That ended a stretch of 63 straight at-bats without a homer for Swisher.

"During the season, you have a lot of highs and a lot of lows," Swisher said. "The past couple weeks for us haven't been exactly what we wanted."

Ross allowed six runs -- three earned -- and 11 hits in 4 1/3 innings as his struggles against lefties continued. He allowed nine hits in 15 at-bats against lefties and has allowed an AL-worst .425 average against them this season.

"I think they just see the ball a little bit better against me," Ross said. "The split-change is something I need to keep working on to disrupt their timing and get them off all the hard stuff that's coming in there. I'm just going to keep working and try to mess around with that grip a little bit and take some more velocity off that."

### ***Game notes***

The A's hope to get 3B Brandon Inge (strained right groin) back on Monday after he plays two games in Sacramento this weekend. OF Yoenis Cespedes (strained left hand) will try to take BP on the field Saturday and could start a rehab assignment next week if that goes well. ... Eric Chavez, who played with Oakland from 1998-2010, returned as a visitor for the first time. He lamented how close the A's were to winning it all in the early 2000s and then looked over at teammate Derek Jeter and said, "They didn't practice that play," referring to Jeter's famous relay flip that helped the Yankees beat Oakland in the first round in the 2001 playoffs. ... Former Yankee Bartolo Colon (4-4) will start the middle game of the series for Oakland against Bay Area native CC Sabathia (5-2). ... The Yankees signed RHP John Maine to a minor league deal. Maine, a 15-game winner with the Mets in 2007, has not pitched in the majors since 2010.



**MLB.com**

## **Yankees slug three homers to overwhelm A's**

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com | 5/26/2012 2:30 AM ET

OAKLAND -- The Yankees have no problem with thinking of themselves as a team that leans on the home run. When their lineup is able to get their power game on track, the results usually wind up being favorable.

It worked that way on Friday, as Mark Teixeira, Robinson Cano and Nick Swisher homered to help the Yankees open a long road trip in style, outslugging the Athletics 6-3 on Friday at O.co Coliseum for their third straight victory.

"Home runs are great," said Teixeira, who hit one of the Bombers' three blasts off Oakland starter Tyson Ross. "You're going to go through stretches where you're not going to get hits with runners in scoring position.

"You're going to hit balls at people. That's the name of the game sometimes. But home runs don't get caught and we're a team that's used to hitting a lot of them. We'd like to hit a little bit more."

Beginning a nine-game trek that also takes them to Anaheim and Detroit, the Yankees boosted starter Ivan Nova by shrugging off the offensive woes that plagued their last homestand, when hits with runners in scoring position proved difficult to come by.

"It's nice. It feels like we're all getting locked in," Swisher said. "But it starts with that good pitching. Nova did such a tremendous job, and we jumped out to that lead early."

Nova pitched a solid seven innings of three-run ball to post a victory for the first time in three starts, logging just his second win in his last six efforts.

"He's won a lot of games for us the last two years, and we want to get him on a roll," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "We think it's important for him to get on a roll the way he was last year. It was a good start for him tonight."

Nova served up a pair of home runs, solo blasts to Josh Reddick and Kila Ka'aihue, but remained unbeaten in his last 12 starts away from Yankee Stadium, faring 9-0 with a 3.35 ERA over that span.

"I'm still [giving up] home runs, still making mistakes," Nova said. "But you know, I have to forget about that today. We won, and I've got to enjoy the win and keep working hard and try to do better next time."

New York got to Ross, making his first career start against the Yankees, for three unearned runs in the third inning. Cano laced a liner to center field that Coco Crisp misplayed for an error, with the ball ticking off his glove as Curtis Granderson scored.

Teixeira made the A's pay for the miscue one batter later, as the slugger unloaded on a 2-1 pitch for a two-run homer. The blast was the sixth of the year for Teixeira, who has vowed to go back to his old swing and forget about hitting for average following a sluggish start.

"We've talked about that, just swinging hard and not worrying about trying to guide the ball anywhere," Teixeira said. "I'm letting it go, got a good one up in the zone tonight and that home run was big for us and big for me."

Ross escaped a bases-loaded, one-out jam in the fourth by inducing an Alex Rodriguez double play, but he wasn't long for the game, permitting 11 hits in 4 2/3 innings.

"They're a good-hitting team, and they showed that tonight," Ross said. "I felt like I was throwing the ball well early, and then I left some pitches up, and they made me pay for it."

Cano blasted a solo shot, his sixth, to open the fifth and Swisher knocked Ross out with a two-run shot on a full-count offering, his eighth homer.

"That felt great," Swisher said. "I just had a different approach today, just trying to drive the ball a little more. Like my grandma always said, 'Just hit the damn ball.' I said, all right, that's what I'm going to try to do."

The Athletics, the American League's lowest-scoring offense at 3.70 runs per game entering play on Friday, threatened against Nova in the fifth.

Nova, who battled a tight right hamstring in his preparation for the start, was able to escape with just one run scoring, opening the frame permitting a Josh Donaldson single and Daric Barton's double.

Kurt Suzuki teed off on a long sacrifice fly to center field that Granderson ran down, but Nova got the next two outs to hold the damage there.

"I have to try to do better every time I go out there," Nova said. "I liked the way I threw the ball today. I was more down [in the zone], especially early in the game."

The Yankees have won their last seven games in Oakland dating back to July 2010, their longest streak since the building opened in 1968. But more importantly for the Yankees, they could be primed for a big week ahead.

"That's what you want, you want them to get on a roll and feel good about themselves," Girardi said. "It can lead to big things."

## BASEBALL

# BOMBERS BASH A'S



## Tex, Swisher HRs power victory

BY MARK FEINSAND  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

OAKLAND — The pieces may finally be coming together for the Yankees.

After watching Alex Rodriguez break out of his power slump Wednesday, Joe Girardi saw Mark Teixeira and Nick Swisher go deep Friday, part of a 6-3 win over the A's to begin a nine-game road trip.

Teixeira and Swisher each hit two-run home runs, pacing an offense that appears to be finding itself after a rough stretch the past two weeks.

"We're capable of scoring some runs in bunches and putting up some big numbers," Girardi said. "It's always nice for a starting pitcher to get a big lead so he can get to work."

Ivan Nova (5-2) shook off a minor hamstring issue and delivered seven solid innings of three-run ball, holding the A's to six hits and one walk while striking out four.

The win was only the second in the last six starts for Nova, who had given up five earned runs or more in four of his previous five outings.

"He's won a lot of games for us the last couple of years," Girardi said. "We want to get him on a roll. It was a good start for him tonight."

The Yankees were up to their old tricks in the early innings, wasting opportunities in each of the first two frames as they went 0-for-3 with runners in scoring position against starter Tyson Ross (2-5).

They broke through in the third, getting some help along the way. Curtis Granderson singled with

YANKEES	6
A'S	3

one out, but Cano launched a hard line drive to center that looked like it would end the inning.

Coco Crisp overran the ball, which glanced off his glove. Cano cruised into second base on the error while Granderson scored all the way from first, giving the Yankees a 1-0 lead.

Four pitches later, Teixeira pushed the lead to three, drilling a two-run homer to right field, his sixth of the season.

"When you get an extra opportunity, you want to cash in on it," Girardi said. "We did."

The Yankees had a chance to blow the game open in the fourth, loading the bases with one out. The rally didn't last long, however, as Alex Rodriguez grounded into a

6-4-3 double play to end the inning.

Nova was cruising through the A's lineup, getting nine straight outs after allowing a leadoff single in the first. Josh Reddick put Oakland on the board with a solo shot to right in the fourth, but Nova went back to work, retiring the next two batters to hold the 3-1 lead.

Cano belted a homer to center field to open the fifth, then Swisher added an opposite-field, two-run shot to left later in the inning to give Nova some breathing room at 6-1. For Swisher, it snapped a 63 at-bat homerless skid.

Nova needed some of the cushion, as Josh Donaldson singled and Daric Barton doubled to open the home half of the fifth, setting the A's up for a big inning. Kurt Suzuki hit a sac fly to deep left-center, where Granderson tracked it down to limit the damage to one run.

Nova did the rest, getting Cliff Pennington to hit a harmless grounder to first before striking out Jemile Weeks to hold the lead at four runs.

Kila Ka'aihue pulled the A's within three with a homer to lead off the seventh, but Nova got through the rest of the inning before turning the game over to the bullpen.

NorthJersey.com

## Yankees blast three homers to win 6-3 in Oakland

SATURDAY, MAY 26, 2012

BY PETE CALDERA

STAFF WRITER

THE RECORD

OAKLAND, Calif. — A fly ball off the glove of Oakland center fielder Coco Crisp helped the Yankees to their first run, and Mark Teixeira followed up by hitting one that nobody could catch.

In all, the Yankees clubbed three home runs off A's right-hander Tyson Ross in a 6-3 victory before 33,359 fans Friday night at Oakland Coliseum — the first stop on a three-city, 10-game trip.

“We are going to be on the road a long time,” manager Joe Girardi said before the game, hoping his club might finally find some traction. “We want to get on a roll and that’s been hard for us to do (thus far).”

It helped that Ivan Nova went seven innings and worked his way out of a potentially damaging fifth inning.

Rafael Soriano posted his fourth save as the Yankees (24-21) won their third straight. Since the start of the 2008 season, the Yanks have beaten Oakland (22-24) 28 times in 35 games.

Nova also showed no signs of being hindered by a bone bruise suffered two starts earlier, or a hamstring issue that popped up following his last start.

The Yankees had handed Nova (5-2) a 6-1 lead in the fifth on a solo homer by Robinson Cano and a two-run shot by Nick Swisher — his first homer since May 6, a span of 63 at-bats.

“We’re a much better hitting club than what we’ve shown in the month of May,” said Girardi, whose club took advantage of Ross’s elevated pitches and some shoddy A’s defense.

Ranging to his left, Crisp should have caught the final out of the third inning to keep the game scoreless. Instead, the ball hit by Cano clanged off Crisp’s glove for a two-base error and allowed Curtis Granderson to score from first.

Teixeira followed up by blasting a two-run shot to right for his sixth homer of the year.

Girardi had reinstated Teixeira as the No. 5 hitter against the right-handed Ross, partly to counter against Oakland's lefty relievers. Teixeira has also benefitted from recent rest, including Thursday's off day, to boost his recovery from a bronchial infection.

After Cano led off the fifth with his sixth homer of the year, Teixeira ran himself into an out at third base – a gamble that he lost after a soft pop fly to left couldn't be handled by Seth Smith.

But after Smith threw out Teixeira attempting to stretch a double, Raul Ibanez doubled to deep center and Swisher hit an opposite-field homer to left that ended Ross's night.

To that point, Nova had yielded just a solo homer by Josh Reddick in the fourth.

With a terrific catch against the center field fence, Granderson helped Nova avoid big trouble in the fifth.

Daric Barton's double had put runners at second and third with none out when Kurt Suzuki sent Granderson on the run. It wound up as a mammoth sacrifice fly, with Barton moving to third – only to be stranded there.

Nova ended the inning by freezing Jemile Weeks on a breaking pitch for strike three.

During the week, Nova's hamstring had become "a little tight," Girardi said. "I don't even know if it came from the start (last Saturday, a 6-5 loss to Cincinnati).

Girardi said that Nova got in all of his normal between starts work, but that Nova was still "a little sore" from the right ankle bruise suffered in Baltimore on May 14.

Nova gave up three runs on six hits and one walk with four strikeouts, while Ross yielded six runs (three earned) on 11 hits and two walks in 4.1 innings.

One of those walks was a fourth-inning intentional pass to Granderson, loading the bases to get to Alex Rodriguez (2-for-5).

Coming off a two-homer night on Wednesday against Kansas City, A-Rod rolled into an inning-ending double play.



## Yankees best Athletics, 6-3, with trio of home runs

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 1:20 AM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 1:50 AM



By **Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger**

OAKLAND, Calif. — An unapologetic Joe Girardi has taken to calling his team a “home run hittin’ club.”

It’s an appropriate label by the Yankees manager given his lineup’s reliance on the long ball. But as the Yankees continue to struggle hitting with runners in scoring position, the homer happy approach is better than the alternative, which they proved once more last night while beating the A’s 6-3.

Mark Teixeira and Nick Swisher each hit two-run homers and Robinson Cano added a solo shot. The Yankees’ three homers accounted for five of the team’s six runs against overmatched A’s right-hander Tyson Ross (2-5), who surrendered 11 hits in just 4½ innings.

Even though the Yankees finished just 2-for-10 with runners in scoring position, they emerged from the opener of a nine-game road trip with a victory, their third in a row overall. The three-game winning streak is the team’s first since May 10-12.

Yankees right-hander Ivan Nova (5-2) improved to 9-0 in his last 11 road starts dating back to last June by holding the A’s to just three runs in seven innings.

Rafael Soriano worked the ninth for his fourth save.

With plenty of run support, Nova limited the listless A’s offense, which had collected just four hits over their last two games entering play last night.



Nova felt tightness in his hamstring in the days leading up to his start. But the pain wasn't enough to keep him from preparing with his normal routine. He looked comfortable last night, even when the A's forced him to work out of jams.

Of course, he also faced an offense that offered little resistance. For all the Yankees' struggles with men in scoring position — they entered play ranked second to last in the American League with a .233 average — the A's tied with the Mariners for worst in the AL at .219.

It showed as Nova worked out of trouble in the fifth, when the A's put runners on second and third with nobody out, and came away only with one run on a sacrifice fly. The only other damage came from Josh Reddick, who hit a solo shot in the fourth.

Not that the Yankees were without their own imperfections.

In the fourth, they put runners on second and third with nobody out, and still managed to come away without scoring a run. Alex Rodriguez, fresh off his two homer game on Wednesday, amplified the failure when he hit into a double play.

But as has been the case all season, when the Yankees hit home runs, they can overcome almost anything.

The Yankees' first break came from A's center fielder Coco Crisp, who in the third inning misplayed a Robinson Cano liner, allowing Curtis Granderson to score from first. The error, which came with two outs, opened the door for Teixeira.

"Hopefully, he gets going for us," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said before the game, when he put Teixeira back in his customary No. 5 spot in the batting order.

Teixeira responded by pulling a two-run homer over the scoreboard in right field. Teixeira's homer, his first since May 14, pushed the Yankees ahead 3-0.

# Yankees go deep to back Nova, beat up on woeful Oakland

By GEORGE A. KING III

*Last Updated:* 6:51 AM, May 26, 2012

*Posted:* 2:52 AM, May 26, 2012

OAKLAND, Calif. — Before pressing forward into today's reading experience let's get this up front: The Athletics reek.

Everybody knew they couldn't hit and last night the A's showed they are allergic to catching the ball and can't pitch it, either. Makes you wonder why San Jose, Calif., is lusting for the club.

Of course, the Yankees didn't decline the mountain of offerings presented by the A's and took full advantage of the feeble effort to post a 6-3 victory in front of an announced assembly of 33,559 at the Coliseum, easily the prevalent pigsty on earth.

Oakland center fielder Coco Crisp's fielding blunder in the third led to three unearned runs. Tyson Ross gave up 11 hits — three of them home runs — and six runs (three earned) in 4 1/3 innings. And the A's, who started the game with a pitiful .210 team batting average, didn't increase it.

"When you get an extra opportunity you want to cash in on it and we did," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said of making Crisp's error on Robinson Cano's fly ball hurt.

## BOX SCORE

Ivan Nova, who was pitching with a right hamstring problem and coming off two poor outings, allowed three runs and six hits in seven innings. He improved to 5-2 and the Yankees are 7-2 in Nova's nine starts.

"I am not going to say my hamstring is 100 percent but my arm felt good," said Nova, who surrendered two homers and has given up a dozen this year after allowing 13 in 27 starts and one relief appearance last season.

Mark Teixeira, Cano and Nick Swisher homered for the Yankees, who have scored 14 runs the past two games after plating five in the previous three.

"The last two games have been more normal for us," said Teixeira, whose cough has decreased to the point at which he tried unsuccessfully to stretch a fifth-inning double into a triple.

Swisher homered and doubled to left field from the left side of the plate.

"I took a little different approach, I tried to drive the ball more," said Swisher, who had an ice pack on his right ankle after the game. He fouled a ball off his foot during the home run at-bat in the fifth inning. "It's all right, you can't hurt steel."

Boone Logan worked a perfect eighth and Rafael Soriano recorded the final three outs for his fourth save.

The third straight victory — one short of the longest winning streak this year — allowed the 24-21 Yankees to remain 4 1/2 games behind the AL East-leading Orioles.

The Yankees have won 28 of their last 34 games against the A's since the beginning of the 2008 season. They are 14-3 in the last 17.

"We have played well out here and we have to continue that to get on a roll," Girardi said prior to the victory.

Not everything clicked for the Yankees. Yes, Teixeira's two-run homer was hit with runners in scoring position and so was Swisher's. But the Yankees went 2-for-10 in the clutch and have a dozen hits in their last 94 at-bats with runners in scoring position.

"Home runs don't get caught," said Teixeira, whose two-run homer made Crisp's error hurt.

Girardi believed Cano's fly ball that Crisp overran and scored Curtis Granderson from first should have been ruled a hit.

"I was surprised it was an error," Girardi said.

## **Yankees make it three in a row**

Posted By Chad Jennings On May 26, 2012

When they're at their very best, the Yankees are in scoring position as soon as they step to the plate. A lineup full of home run hitters powered its way to a 6-3 win in Oakland tonight, going deep three times and giving Ivan Nova his second win since April 20. Mark Teixeira, Robinson Cano and Nick Swisher each homered for the Yankees, accounting for all but one of the runs they scored. The Yankees first run scored on an error by center fielder Coco Crisp. Nova allowed three runs through seven innings, matching his longest outing of the year. He struck out four and walked one.

## Postgame notes: "Just hit the damn ball"

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On May 26, 2012

No need to complicate things. This Yankees offense isn't at its best when it's delivering clutch hits with runners in scoring position. This lineup is at its best when it's hitting balls out of the ballpark like it did tonight.

"Forget about all the technique of it and go out and concentrate on the baseball," Nick Swisher said. "Like my grandma always said, 'Just hit the damn ball.'"

That's what the Yankees did tonight. Five of their six runs came on homers, and their two hits with runners in scoring position were home runs. Robinson Cano hit the 150th of his career. Swisher hit his first since May 6. Mark Teixeira hit his second since May 4.

"You're going to go through stretches where you're not going to get hits with runners in scoring position," Teixeira said. "You're going to hit balls at people, that's the name of the game sometimes. But home runs don't get caught, and we're a team that's used to hitting a lot of them. We'd like to hit a little bit more."

No team can live and die entirely by the home run, but this lineup is built to hit them, and the Yankees are 24-11 when hitting at least one ball out of the park. Driving the ball is the surest way to see results, and the Yankees saw plenty of results tonight. It wasn't only the home runs, they also had four doubles by four different hitters, and they had five guys had two hits in the game. Derek Jeter was their only starter who failed to reach base. It's only the second time since April 23 that the Yankees have scored at least six runs in back-to-back games.

"You want them to get on a roll and feel good about themselves," Joe Girardi said. "It can lead to big things. ... These guys are too good for this (slump) to go on. All clubs go through it at times, and it's no fun to go through it, and it seems like 'when's it gonna end' at times, but we're starting to swing the bats better."

[2] • Another solid start from Ivan Nova, who was much happier with his location this time. When he's struggled, it's been fastball location that left Nova most disappointed. "His location is something at times he can improve on, and I thought he was better tonight," Girardi said.

- One concern is that Nova's already allowed 12 home runs this season, one fewer than he gave up all last season. He gave up two of them tonight, both solo shots. "There's no reason to give too many homers," Nova said. "I'm making mistakes, leaving the ball up, and it's on me. I have to try to do better every time I go out there. I like the way I threw the ball today. I was more down, especially early in the game."

- Nova is 9-0 with a 3.35 ERA in his past 12 road starts. His road winning streak is one away from tying Roger Clemens and Andy Pettitte for the longest by a Yankees pitcher since 1995. Nova is 3-0 with a 4.26 ERA on the road this season, but 2-2 with a 6.46 at home.

- Nova's hamstring injury has been something of a mystery, but he said it happened after his workout and bullpen on Tuesday. It got tight and left him a little worried initially, but it didn't really bother him tonight. "I'm not going to say my hamstring was 100 percent, but I feel really good," Nova said. "The only thing (that matters) is my arm feels good, and the injury that I have is not so serious."

[3] • Five of Teixeira's six home runs this season have come on the road.

- Jeter struck out three times tonight, his first three-strikeout game since May 17 of last year. He had a total of three strikeouts in his past eight games.

- Eric Chavez was on the disabled list when the Yankees came to Oakland last season, so this was his first time playing in his old home ballpark. He was booed in his first at-bat, which surprised me, but didn't surprise Chavez. "When Jason (Giambi) left, they asked me, 'What do you expect the fans to do?'" Chavez said. "I said, 'Well, he's playing for the Yankees. They should boo him.' I would expect the same thing. I wrote the manual."

- Although he was thrown out trying to stretch for a triple, there was one encouraging sign when Teixeira was thrown out at third base during the fifth inning. He wasn't coughing. "I'm feeling a lot better," he said. "The days off have helped. Yesterday was very nice. I'm just trying to make a little bit of progress every day." Teixeira said he wouldn't have been close to third base 10 days ago.

- By the way, what was he thinking in that situation, with no outs? "Man, I always think I'm faster than I am," Teixeira said. "We're up 4-1, whenever it's a close game or you're down, you don't want to make the first out at third. I just wanted to push the envelope a little bit. Give the left fielder credit, he turned around and made a nice throw."





Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Rapid Reaction: Yankees 6, Athletics 3

**What it means:** That the 11-day, nine-game, three-city road trip is off to a good start, although a win for the Yankees in Oakland is not exactly a rarity; tonight's 6-3 victory was their seventh straight at the Coliseum dating back to July 5, 2010. Also their third in a row overall.

**Boss-a Nova:** Ivan Nova worked seven strong innings, allowing three runs and six hits, to earn his fifth win of the year against two losses. Only nitpick: Two more HRs allowed, giving him 12 in 56 IP this year; in 2011, he allowed just 13 all season (165-1/3 IP).

**Fireworks night:** Mark Teixeira, Robinson Cano and Nick Swisher all took Tyson Ross out of the yard, the last chasing Ross from the game with one out in the fifth. Swisher had not homered since May 6, a span of 63 ABs.

**Coco muffs:** A's centerfielder Coco Crisp seemed to be tracking Cano's two-out liner to right-center in the third, but somehow, the ball glanced off his glove for a two-base error. It turned out to be especially costly because not only did it score Curtis Granderson (single), it kept the inning alive for the next batter, Teixeira, to hit No. 6.

**Another save for Sori:** Interim closer Rafael Soriano remained perfect, getting his fourth save in as many opportunities, allowing a two-out double to John Donaldson in the ninth but striking out Daric Barton to end it.

**RISP-y Business:** Yanks once again struggled w/RISP -- just 2-for-10 -- but the three home runs relegated that number to the Realm of Meaningless Statistics.

**Lou Gehrig lives:** Once again, an opposing manager walked the bases loaded to pitch to Alex Rodriguez, and once again, A-Rod failed to hit the grand slam (No. 23) that would pull him even with the Iron Horse for the all-time record. Worse, A-Rod rapped into an inning-ending double play. On the plus side, A-Rod also had two singles and a stolen base.

**Cardinal sin:** Teixeira committed it right after Cano's home run, getting thrown out at third for the first out of the fifth inning trying to stretch a double, a fundamental mistake compounded when the next hitter, Raul Ibanez, doubled into the gap and Swisher followed with his home run.

**Captain Collar:** This is how great a season Derek Jeter is having: he went 0-for-5 (3 Ks) tonight and his average "dropped" to .339, the lowest it's been since the third game of the season.

**What's coming:** Since you're all watching, reading and thinking Rangers (or Devils) tonight, no column on this one. But I will be filling the blog with as many worthwhile tidbits as I can scare up in the post-game clubhouse.

**Manana:** Yankees fans nostalgic for the Bartolomania! era get a one-day trip back in time on Saturday, when Bartolo Colon (4-4, 4.09) faces CC Sabathia (5-2, 3.78) in a 4:05 p.m. start.



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Nova limits the damage

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**Ivan Nova** won his fifth game of the year tonight, pitching seven strong innings against the Oakland Athletics and allowing three runs and six hits in the Yankees 6-3 victory.

But two of those hits were home runs, long ones, too, by **Josh Reddick** and **Kila Ka'aihue**, continuing a disturbing trend by Nova of surrendering long balls. He has now given up 12 home runs in his first nine starts (56 innings), just one fewer than he allowed all last season in 165 innings.

"I think it's because he's been up in the zone sometimes and I think that's an adjustment he needs to make," **Joe Girardi** said. "Solo homers you can usually live with as long as you don't give up too many of them in one game. But it is something he needs to improve on."

Nova's ERA dropped slightly, from 5.69 to 5.46, and his assessment of his own performance was similar to the manager's.

"Leaving the ball up and making the same mistake, throwing the wrong pitch at the wrong time and the hitters are getting really comfortable," he said. "It's something I've got to keep working on, and hopefully it stops right there. I know I'm going to give up a home run one day, but not too many like this year so far."

Nova was hampered somewhat by some tightness in his right hamstring, suffered during his bullpen session on Tuesday. "I'm not going to say my hamstring was 100 percent, but I feel OK," he said. "My arm feels good, so the injury that I have is not so serious."

But a couple of days ago, it was bad enough that Nova was concerned he might not be able to go tonight. "The first couple of days, it was hurting," he said. "Yesterday I came here and got treatment and it was much better today. I always tell them, don't take me out of the game, let me pitch."

Nova's seven innings matched his longest outing of the year, accomplished twice previously this season.



FILE PHOTO BY DAVID FOKKES

In some situations, Mark Teixeira points out, it's better to swing and miss than swing and put the ball in play. He hopes his new aggressive approach will pay dividends.

# Tex: Too much contact

■ **Wants to get aggressive,** start doing some damage

■ **He's been merely putting** ball in play, and that's not him

BY ERIK BOLAND  
erik.boland@newsday.com

OAKLAND, Calif. — It sounded counter-intuitive, which Mark Teixeira readily acknowledged.

"I've been putting too many balls in play," the struggling first baseman said recently. "That sounds crazy, but I don't think I've been as aggressive at the plate."

And so Teixeira, who entered Friday night's game against the Athletics hitting .226 with a .291 on-base percentage, is altering his approach.

Teixeira, whose overall production is down — five homers and 21 RBIs — explained the "putting too many balls in play" comment.

"When I'm swinging, instead of fouling a pitch off or missing — there's nothing wrong with missing the first pitch of the at-bat — but if you ground it out or

pop it up, man, I just wasted that at-bat," he said. "Maybe it's good to not see as many strikes and kind of lock in on your pitch and what you want to hit."

Hitting coach Kevin Long said it's about Teixeira doing more "damage," and agreed with the first baseman's contention that he's been focused too much on contact, resulting in more weak groundouts and pop-ups.

"Swinging and missing on those pitches can kind of give [ hitters ] new life," Long said. "As opposed to putting that ball in play and you're out."

Long said the hope is to get Teixeira more aggressive "toward right-centerfield."

"He wants to be more aggressive as far as driving the ball and thinking more damage as opposed to just staying inside it," Long added.

When he has been at his most productive, Teixeira said, he misses his share of pitches.

"I've never been someone that just wants to put the ball in play," he said. "In years past, say it's a 1-0 pitch or a 2-0 pitch, and it's maybe a little bit up or a little bit down, you swing and you foul it off or you

Saturday



**Yankees**  
at Oakland  
TV: YES, 4:05 p.m.  
Radio: WCBS (880)

swing and miss. Now I'm putting that ball in play, which [stinks]."

Simply put, he's not jumping on as many pitches.

"I'd rather hit 39 home runs than 20 or 15, I'd rather drive in 111 runs than 80," Teixeira said. "So I'm going to be more aggressive, I'll tell you that much."

Teixeira hit fifth Friday night, two days after hitting third. In the two games before that, Joe Girardi dropped him to seventh.

"I think we probably worry about that too much," Teixeira said of the batting order. "The competitor in me says I want to hit where I've always hit, and we've had a lot of success here, we've won a lot of games with me hitting third. And I think we're just trying to figure it out . . . But it's not oh, you're hitting a certain spot in the order, I'm going to

start hitting now."

**Notes & quotes:** David Robertson (strained left oblique) and Brett Gardner (strained right elbow) are in Tampa. Girardi said Robertson played decent Thursday and "felt pretty decent today" but added there's still some "stiffness," likely because he hadn't thrown in two weeks. Gardner is scheduled to swing Monday. Regarding whether either player will be able to join the team during this 10-day trip, Girardi said: "I'm not sure it's going to happen." . . . An MRI performed on the left elbow of top pitching prospect Manny Banuelos revealed no damage. "The ligament checked out fine," Girardi said. "He just has some soreness, but he'll be down for a while."

**NOW ONLINE**

Friday night's Yankees-Athletics game ended too late for this edition. For the game story, go to [newsday.com/yankees](http://newsday.com/yankees)



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## No coughin' for Teixeira

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**Mark Teixeira** hit a two-run homer in the third inning of Friday's win over the A's, but it was a less-auspicious play that told **Joe Girardi** his first baseman might finally be recovering from the lingering bronchial ailment that has plagued him since the first week of the season.

That was in the fifth inning when, after **Robinson Cano** had led off with a home run, Teixeira tried to stretch a double into a triple and committed the cardinal sin of making the first out of an inning at third base. But instead of being annoyed, the manager was encouraged.

"I was mostly concerned if he was gonna cough after that, and I didn't see it," Girardi said. In fact, I didn't see him cough much at all today. So that's good."

Teixeira's two hits tonight didn't do much to raise his average, which is languishing at .231, but it did provide a sign that maybe he is on the verge of breaking out of his season-long slump, too.

"I'm feeling a little better," he said. "Just trying to grind through it, trying to be a little more aggressive at the plate, swinging hard, not worrying about trying to guide the ball anywhere, letting it go, got a good one up in the zone tonight and that home run was big for us, big for me."

As for his base-running gaffe, Teixeira had a very plausible explanation: "I always think I'm faster than I am."

And he had an even better one for why home runs are the best kind of hit: "Home runs don't get caught."

Now, that's nothing to sneeze at. Or cough over.

05/25/12 10:20 AM ET

## **Yankees to sign former Mets righty Maine**

By Evan Drellich / MLB.com

The Yankees will sign right-hander John Maine to a Minor League deal, a baseball source told MLB.com on Friday.

Maine, 31, was released by the Red Sox on good terms two weeks ago. He signed with Boston in January. He has not pitched in the Minors this season, and last pitched in the Majors in 2010, with the Mets. He is said to be in good health after undergoing shoulder surgery in 2010.

The Yankees have not commented on their plans to sign Maine, who has been working out with them since parting ways with the Red Sox. He will not immediately be assigned to Triple-A.

Maine is 41-36 with a 4.35 ERA in 108 career Major League appearances, 105 of them starts.

NYTIMES 5/26/12

## Yankees Sign Maine, Former Mets Pitcher, to Minor League Contract

By DAVID WALDSTEIN

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Yankees signed the former Mets pitcher John Maine to a minor league contract on Friday. Maine, a right-hander, will join the Yankees' extended spring training program in Tampa, Fla.

Maine had signed a minor-league deal with the Boston Red Sox over the winter and was throwing the ball hard again in spring training. He remained in Boston's extended spring training, but the Red Sox were unsatisfied with his slider. They had no plans to assign him to a minor league team, so they granted him his release, and he tried out for the Yankees last week.

Maine, 31, has not pitched in the majors since an abbreviated outing for the Mets at Washington on May 20, 2010, which signaled a turbulent end to his career as a Met. He was pulled out of the game after only five pitches because the Mets thought he was hiding an injury as his fast-ball velocity dropped off.

After the game, Maine said he was healthy, which prompted the pitching coach Dan Warthen to say that Maine was a "habitual liar," meaning he would not be

truthful about his health so that he could continue pitching. Maine was offended by the comments.

The next day, Maine was placed on the disabled list with weakness in his shoulder.

Jerry Manuel, then the Mets' manager, said: "We can't afford to watch him pitch left-handed. That's out of the question. But he might have more stuff lefty, I don't know. We'll have to try that. No, we couldn't afford to do that."

Maine later had surgery on his right shoulder, effectively ending his Mets career after five seasons in which he was 39-32 with a 4.17 earned run average.

The highlight of his Mets tenure was the 2006 playoffs, when he was 1-0 with a 2.63 earned run average. In Game 6 of the National League Championship Series, he held the St. Louis Cardinals to two hits in five and one-third scoreless innings.

Maine was granted free agency after the 2010 season and then signed a minor league deal with the Colorado Rockies, but he made only 11 starts in the minors, going 1-3 with a 7.43 E.R.A.

**CHAVEZ'S FIRST RETURN** Eric Chavez made his return to Oakland for the first time since he left

the Athletics after his 13th season with them, in 2010. Chavez, who is from San Diego, sees himself as such a West Coast person that he always thought he would never play in New York. He even had the Yankees and other East Coast teams on his contractual list of no-trade destinations.

But he signed with the Yankees for the 2011 season and liked it so much he came back this year.

"I remember I never wanted to play in New York, and here I am, back-to-back years," he said.

Chavez was on the disabled list last year when the Yankees played at Oakland.

His greatest regret, he said, was not going further with the Athletics in the 2001 playoffs. That was the year the Athletics lost to the Yankees in five games in a division series.

As Chavez spoke, Derek Jeter, who made the famous flip play in that series, was dressing in the next locker over, and he made some choice wisecracks.

At that moment, Chavez was talking about how he always admired the Yankees.

"Except for one guy," he said with a laugh. "And they didn't practice that play, either."

Chavez, who was in the lineup



BARTON SILVERMAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

John Maine, who last pitched in the majors with the Mets in 2010, will report to extended spring training in Tampa, Fla.

as the designated hitter, said his parents were driving up from Southern California to watch him play.

**ROBERTSON PROGRESSES** Relief pitcher David Robertson played catch Thursday in Tampa and felt "decent" on Friday, according to Manager Joe Girardi, but still has some stiffness in his left rib cage

after having strained an oblique muscle May 11. He is scheduled to throw again on Monday. Robertson was hopeful he could join the team in Detroit in a week, but Girardi was skeptical ... Brett Gardner, also on the disabled list with a strained elbow, is scheduled to practice swinging a bat Monday.



## Yankees sign ex-Met Maine

OAKLAND, Calif. — In their never-ending search for organizational pitching depth, the Yankees signed former Met John Maine to a minor-league deal Friday.

Maine, 31, who has not pitched in the majors since 2010, is 41-36 with a 4.35 ERA in seven seasons. Maine, who has battled multiple shoulder problems, went 39-32 with a 4.17 ERA in five seasons with the Mets (2006-10). He signed a minor-league deal with the Red Sox in January but never appeared in a game and was released May 10.

The Yankees worked out Maine last week at their minor-league complex in Tampa and saw enough life in his arm to sign him to the no-risk, potential high-reward deal. His attempt to work his way back to the majors will begin in Tampa in extended spring training.

BY ERIC BOLAND

# Yankees sign former Mets starter Maine: report

POST STAFF REPORT

*Last Updated: 3:48 PM, May 25, 2012*

*Posted: 12:21 PM, May 25, 2012*

The Yankees have signed former Mets starter John Maine to a minor league deal, according to multiple reports.

The Post reported last week that the team invited Maine to their minor-league complex in Tampa to throw for Yankees brass.

Maine has not pitched in the major leagues since he was with the Mets in 2010. He signed with the Rockies last season and made 11 starts for their Triple-A team, but posted a 7.43 ERA. The 31-year-old righty was signed by the Red Sox before the season, but was released on May 10.

The last start Maine made in the major leagues, on May 20, 2010, ended after one batter when then Mets manager Jerry Manuel pulled him from the game. Maine would later have surgery on his throwing shoulder.



## Yankees sign former Mets pitcher John Maine

Published: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 1:40 AM Updated: Saturday, May 26, 2012, 1:46 AM



By **Marc Carig/The Star-Ledger**

OAKLAND, Calif. — The Yankees' never-ending search for possible rotation depth has led them to a former Met who's hoping for a second chance.

Right-hander John Maine, whose career stalled because of shoulder problems, signed a minor-league deal to join the Yankees Friday. The 31-year-old will report to extended spring training in Tampa, Fla., general manager Brian Cashman said.

Maine owns a 41-36 career mark with a 4.35 ERA in seven big-league seasons. He enjoyed his best years with the Mets and in 2007 finished a career-best 15-10 with a 3.91 ERA in 191 innings for them. But he hasn't pitched in the majors since undergoing shoulder surgery in May 2010.

Maine had also signed with the Rockies and Red Sox, who released him May 10, though he did not make an appearance with either club.

Maine is the latest reclamation project the Yankees have undertaken in the last few years.

The team has enjoyed some success in such cases, as it did last season with Freddy Garcia and Bartolo Colon. Both eventually earned spots in the rotation.

Garcia signed a free-agent deal to return to the Yankees this winter but he eventually lost his spot after struggling to begin the season.

Colon, meanwhile, signed a deal to join the A's. He starts against the Yankees today.

- **Reliever David Robertson felt lingering soreness** in his left oblique muscle, though he otherwise emerged from his throwing session Thursday with no issues.

Manager Joe Girardi said Robertson will play catch once more Monday at the team's complex in Tampa.

Robertson had expressed hope that he could return before the end of the team's road trip, but Girardi said the goal may be out of reach.

Robertson has been on the 15-day disabled list since May 14.

"I'm not sure it's going to happen," Girardi said.

Outfielder Brett Gardner is still scheduled to swing a bat on Monday in Tampa. He has suffered setbacks since landing on the disabled list on April 18 with a sore elbow.

- **The Yankees intend to remain cautious** with 21-year-old pitching prospect Manny Banuelos, who landed on the disabled list with soreness in his left elbow.

Tests have shown no damage to Banuelos' ligament, though Girardi said the pitcher will remain shelved for awhile.

It's Banuelos' second stint on the disabled list this season. He had been sidelined by back issues. In six starts with Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, Banuelos is 0-2 with a 4.50 ERA.

- **Yankees designated hitter Eric Chavez heard** a smattering of boos Friday night in his first game in Oakland against the A's. Chavez, who missed last year's only trip to Oakland with a foot injury, won six Gold Gloves in 13 seasons with the A's.

"I'm just happy to be back," said Chavez.

CBSSports.com

Posted: 11:03 am May 25, 2012

## Yankees sign John Maine to minor-league deal

By Matt Snyder | Senior Baseball Blogger

Though he's not quite the big name Mark Prior is, John Maine is also a right-handed pitcher who continues to try and come back from injury woes. Next stop for Maine is the Yankees system, as they have signed him to a minor league deal, CBSSports.com's Jon Heyman reports.

Maine, 31, was a mostly productive pitcher for the Mets from 2006-08, but injuries (namely to his throwing shoulder) derailed his career. He last threw in the majors in 2010, when he was 1-3 with a 6.13 ERA and 1.82 WHIP for the Mets.

In 2011, Maine made 11 starts for the Rockies' Triple-A affiliate, going 1-3 with a 7.43 ERA and 2.07 WHIP. He signed with the Red Sox in January, but was released earlier this month without having pitched in the minors.

Maine's best season was 2007, when he was 15-10 with a 3.91 ERA, 1.27 WHIP and 180 strikeouts in 191 innings.



Friday, May 25, 2012

## Yankees, John Maine have deal

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By Andrew Marchand  
ESPNNewYork.com

Looking to add depth to the organization's pitching, the [Yankees](#) have signed former [Mets](#) right-hander [John Maine](#) to a minor league contract, Yankees general manager Brian Cashman confirmed.

Maine, who hasn't pitched in the major leagues since 2010, is expected to be insurance if he can come close to the form that saw him win as many as 15 games with the Mets five years ago.

Since 2008, Maine has struggled with shoulder injuries. Last year, after posting a 7.43 ERA in 45 innings with the [Colorado Rockies'](#) Triple-A team, he left the organization in June. This spring, Maine was in camp with the [Boston Red Sox](#).

"He's interested in trying to get back to the big leagues, so we will see," Cashman said Friday.

Maine, 31, will go to work for the Yankees in Tampa, Fla., at extended spring training. The Yankees have been a haven for such reclamation projects. Some pitchers have made it all the way back, like [Bartolo Colon](#) last year, and some have not, like former Cubs phenom [Mark Prior](#).

The Yankees also recently looked at [Armando Galarraga](#), formerly of the [Detroit Tigers](#). Galarraga, who came up one out short of a perfect game two years ago with Detroit, ended up signing with the [Houston Astros](#).

The Yankees were expected to have a wealth of starting pitchers this year. However, [Michael Pineda](#) was declared out for the season with shoulder problems and [Freddy Garcia](#) struggled to the point that he was removed from the rotation.

After left-handers [CC Sabathia](#) and [Andy Pettitte](#), other current starters [Hiroki Kuroda](#), [Phil Hughes](#) and [Ivan Nova](#) have all been up and down this season.

To find his way all the way to the major league rotation, Maine will have to be better than not just one of the current five starters, but also Triple-A pitchers [D.J. Mitchell](#) and Adam Warren. The Yankees' top two pitching prospects, Manny Banuelos and [Dellin Betances](#), are also at Triple-A, but neither is considered a major league option right now. Banuelos is on the disabled list with a sore elbow.



YANKEES NOTEBOOK

# Timeline for Robertson's return uncertain

By Chad Jennings  
cjennings@ohud.com

OAKLAND — Yankees reliever Dave Robertson is playing catch again, but his hopes of returning to the team by next weekend's series in Detroit might be overly optimistic.

"I'm not sure that's going to happen," manager Joe Girardi said. "I think players are always hopeful. They don't always put the timeline together."

At the Yankees' complex in Florida, Robertson played catch on Thursday, and he's scheduled to do the same on Monday. He hasn't pitched in a game since May 11 and hasn't done any baseball activity since being placed on the disabled list



David Robertson's return from injury is still up in the air.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

on May 15.

"I think there's some stiffness there," Girardi said. "He's had inactivity and hasn't used that area in probably about 15 days. We have to be a little bit cautious in the beginning to make sure nothing's there."

The Yankees plan to have left fielder Brett Gardner begin taking swings on Monday. He's been out since April 18 with a strained right elbow and suffered a setback during a premature rehab assignment earlier this month.

**Former Yankees outfielder arrested:** Chad Curtis, who won two World Series rings with the Yankees in the late 1990s, has been charged with five counts of criminal sexual conduct after accusations he inappropriately touched two students at a Michigan high school.

According to The Associated Press, the complaints came from two teenage girls at Lakewood

High School where the 43-year-old Curtis was a volunteer and in line to become the school's football coach.

**Yankees sign former Mets starter:** The Yankees have agreed to a minor-league deal with former Mets starter John Maine, who will report to extended spring training to serve as potential pitching depth.

Maine has not pitched in the major leagues since undergoing shoulder surgery in 2010. He was released by the Red Sox earlier this season having never appeared in a minor-league game for them. In his career, Maine is 41-36 with a 4.35 ERA in the big leagues.

**Yankee clippings:** Dumped to seventh in the

order earlier this week, Mark Teixeira returned to the No. 5 spot on Friday. Girardi said he wanted to use Teixeira to split lefties Robinson Cano and Raul Ibanez because the Athletics carry four left-handed relievers. ... The Yankees were relieved to find that prospect Manny Banuelos has no ligament damage in his sore left elbow, suggesting he's not a candidate for Tommy John surgery. He's on the Triple-A disabled list. ... Today's Oakland starter is Bartolo Colon. He'll be the third starting pitcher the Yankees have faced this season who used to pitch for the Yankees (also Carl Pavano and Hector Noesi).

# Robertson won't be going Tiger hunting

By GEORGE A. KING III

*Last Updated: 6:11 AM, May 26, 2012  
Posted: 2:55 AM, May 26, 2012*

OAKLAND, Calif. — There was a time last week when it appeared David Robertson had a chance to come off the disabled list next weekend against the Tigers.

However, with the right-handed reliever reporting to the Yankees' minor league complex in Tampa on Thursday to start a throwing program that will be followed by minor league rehab games, Detroit isn't a destination for Robertson.

"Not at all," general manager Brian Cashman said.

Robertson hasn't pitched since May 11 due to a left rib cage problem.

According to manager Joe Girardi, Brett Gardner will swing a bat Monday to test the strained right elbow that has kept him out since April 17.

"We will know more Monday," Girardi said.

Asked if Alex Rodriguez's two home runs Wednesday against the Royals would spark his third baseman, Girardi went further.

"Hopefully it sparks everybody," Girardi said before last night's 6-3 victory against the Athletics, in which the Yankees hit three homers. "We are a much better hitting club than we hit in the month of May."

In 22 games this month, the Yankees are batting .258 (197-for-763).

Girardi doesn't know how long pitching prospect Manuel Banuelos will be sidelined, but he was relieved the ligament in his left (pitching) elbow doesn't require surgery.

"You hear ligament and it's a red flag, you think Tommy John [surgery]," Girardi said. "The ligament checked out fine."

This is the second time this season Banuelos has been on the DL for Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre. The previous trip was for a rib cage problem. In six games, he is 0-2 with a 4.50 ERA.

After hitting Mark Teixeira third for the fourth time Wednesday, Girardi had him batting fifth last night. It was the 34th time the switch-hitting first baseman batted in that spot, and it paid off as he slugged a two-run homer in the Yankees' three-run third inning, his sixth homer of the season and fifth on the road.

Teixeira is still bothered by a bronchial condition that has been around since early April but, according to Girardi, doesn't want any more time off. He didn't start three games last weekend at home.

"It's more manageable for him," Girardi said of the cough. "It's hard to give a 35 homer, 110 RBI guy time off. He doesn't want time off, he wants to play. Right now we are going to play him."

Teixeira is hitting .231 with 23 RBIs in 42 games.

Russell Martin is batting an anemic .177 (20-for-114) after going 1-for-4 last night, but Girardi said he has spotted signs the catcher could be close to breaking out of the season-long slump.

"He has run into bad luck," Girardi said.

After watching him throw in Tampa, the Yankees have signed right-hander John Maine to a minor league contract and he will work in the extended spring training program.

Maine, 31, hasn't pitched in the big leagues since 2010 due to right shoulder problems. He was 39-32 in five seasons with the Mets and was in camp with the Red Sox this spring.

Last night was Eric Chavez's first trip back to the Coliseum, where he spent 13 seasons with the A's. Last season, he was injured when the Yankees visited the East Bay.

"I will keep my head down and do my job," Chavez, whose brother, Casey Chavez, is the A's bullpen catcher, said before the game.

Chavez, who went 0-for-3 with a walk last night, was booed by the Oakland crowd.

"I was asked about it when Jason [Giambi] got booed and I said, 'He is a Yankee.' What do you expect?" Chavez said. "It was the same thing. I wrote the manual. It was very cool and very different but it was nice to be back."

As is their custom, the Yankees optional batting practice yesterday at the Coliseum was well attended.

Among those working out were Derek Jeter, Robinson Cano, Nick Swisher and Martin.

A's lefty Tommy Milone will start tomorrow. The Yankees have never faced him. Milone is the ninth pitcher this season to never have pitched against the Yankees and fourth in a 10-game stretch from May 17-21. The Yankees are 4-4 this year in games against pitchers they have never seen.

Former Yankee Bartolo Colon starts today for the A's. He is the third former Yankees starter to face his old club this season. Carl Pavano and Hector Noesi are the other two.

The Yankees have scored at least five runs in each of their last five games against Colon and lost just three times in their last nine games in which he was the opposing starter (since 2001).

Jeter started last night's action with an AL-leading 64 hits, but went 0-for-5 with three strike outs. That was five less than former Yankee Melky Cabrera's MLB-leading 69 for the Giants.

Jeter had hit safely in 14 of his last 16 games and 36 of 43 overall in 2012.

NorthJersey.com

## Yankees Notes: Girardi slowing David Robertson's timetable

SATURDAY, MAY 26, 2012

THE RECORD Not so fast

David Robertson might have been too ambitious in his recovery timetable. The reliever hoped his strained left oblique would heal in time for him to rejoin the club in Detroit next weekend.

"I'm not so sure that's going to happen," manager Joe Girardi said. At Tampa, Fla., Robertson played catch on Thursday, the first time he's thrown since landing on the disabled list on May 15.

"He felt pretty decent [on Friday]," said Girardi, though Robertson experienced some stiffness – which the manager felt was based on the right-hander's inactivity. "We have to be a little cautious in the beginning."

### Remember Maine

Ex-Mets right-hander John Maine was signed to a minor league contract and will soon join the Yankees' extended spring training program. Maine, 31, last pitched in the big leagues in 2010, when he was 1-3 with a 6.13 ERA in nine starts as a Met.

Shoulder problems derailed Maine's career with the Mets. Maine's best season was in 2007, when he posted a 15-10 record and a 3.91 ERA with 180 strikeouts in 191 innings. Maine started his career with the Baltimore Orioles.

### Briefs

At Class AAA Empire State, promising lefty Manny Banuelos underwent an MRI for his sore left elbow. The ligament checked out fine according to Girardi, but Banuelos has no specific timetable to come off the disabled list. ... Brett Gardner (elbow strain) won't swing a bat before Monday at Tampa.

Mark Teixeira was back in the No. 5 spot in the lineup against a right-handed starter after a brief time at No. 7. Teixeira still has a lingering cough from his bronchial infection but "right now, we're going to play him," Girardi said.

— Pete Caldera



Friday, May 25, 2012

## No D-Rob or Gardy until New York

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Both **David Robertson** and **Brett Gardner** are in Tampa on rehab assignments, but from the way **Joe Girardi** was talking before tonight's game against the A's in Oakland, it's not likely either of them will be ready to play before the team returns to Yankee Stadium on June 5.

Girardi said Gardner, who has not played since April 17 due to a strain of his right elbow, will not even try to swing a bat before Monday. Robertson, on the DL since May 14 with strained left oblique, played catch on Thursday and according to the manager, "felt pretty decent."

But Girardi said Robertson still felt some stiffness in the area of the injury and although he is slated to throw lightly again on Monday, there is still no timetable for him to throw off a mound. "We have to be a little bit cautious in the beginning to make sure nothing's there," Girardi said.

Last week, Robertson had expressed hope that he could rejoin the team when it gets to Detroit for a three-game series on June 1. But Girardi said he doubted that would happen.

"I think players are always hopeful. They don't always put the timeline together," Girardi said. "I'm not at all sure that's going to happen."

Daily News 5/26/12

# Girardi cautious with Robertson

**O**AKLAND — Dave Robertson began a throwing program Thursday in Tampa, and although the reliever is hoping to rejoin the Yankees in Detroit next weekend, Joe Girardi isn't so sure that's a reality.

"I'm not sure that's going to happen," Girardi said. "I think players are always hopeful. They don't always put the timeline together."

Robertson hasn't pitched since May 12 because of a strained left oblique, and although he's eligible to come off the disabled list on Tuesday, his next throwing session isn't even scheduled until Monday.



BY MARK FEINSAND

Girardi said Robertson felt "pretty decent" on Friday, but there is no timetable yet for him to get on a mound. "I think there's some stiffness there," Girardi said. "He's had inactivity and hasn't used that area in probably about 15 days. We have to be a little bit cautious in the beginning to make sure nothing's there."

Brett Gardner is also in Tampa to continue rehab on his injured right

elbow, but he isn't slated to swing a bat until Monday.

## REMEMBER MAINE?

The Yankees have signed John Maine to a minor-league deal, adding the former Met for organizational pitching depth.

Brian Cashman confirmed the signing, which was first reported by MLB.com. The Yankee GM said Maine will report to Tampa to work out in extended spring training.

The 31-year-old hasn't pitched in the majors since 2010, his last season with the Mets. He started nine games that season before

undergoing shoulder surgery.

## MINOR SETBACK?

Manny Banuelos was placed on the seven-day disabled list by Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre this week with a left elbow injury, but Girardi said Friday that tests revealed no structural damage to the prospect's prized arm.

"His ligament checked out fine," Girardi said. "He's just got some soreness."

Banuelos, considered to be the Yankees' top pitching prospect, is 0-2 with a 4.50 ERA in six starts this season.


**EXTRA INNINGS**

**STAT OF THE DAY**

**12** Ivan Nova is undefeated in his last 12 road starts dating back to last June. He's 9-0 in those starts.

**NEXT GAME**

Today, 4:00, at A's: CC Sabathia (5-2, 3.78) vs. Bartolo Colon (4-4, 4.09); TV: YES





## The next D-Rob? Montgomery has the Yankees attention

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On May 25, 2012

[<sup>1</sup>]After blowing a one-run lead in the seventh inning on Sunday, the Tampa Yankees put a tied game in the hands of 21-year-old reliever Mark Montgomery. He faced three batters in the eighth inning, three more in the ninth, and struck out all six of them. The Yankees walked off with a win a half inning later.

"I haven't seen anybody say anything about this guy," Yankees vice president of baseball operations Mark Newman said. "This guy is worth paying attention to."

The Yankees took a bunch of good young relievers in last year's draft — Newman also mentions Branden Pinder and Philip Wetherell as legitimate standouts — but it's clear that Montgomery has the Yankees attention, and it's probably time that he grabs your attention as well.

Signed out of Longwood University in Virginia, Montgomery has some in the Yankees organization wondering if he's the next Dave Robertson. Like Robertson, he's racking up massive strikeout totals in the minors — 86 through 50.1 professional innings so far — and he's poised to move quickly like Robertson.

The outpitch, though, isn't a Robertson curveball, it's a hard-breaking slider that has confused several scouts. Newman said he's seen some reports that call it a split, and some that suggest he throws both a slider and a split.

"It's a slider that's hard and very straight down at like a 45-degree angle break," Newman said. "... This guy's legit. The numbers tell you he's legitimate, but the stuff is more than pretty good."

The Journal News 5/26/12

# Yankees hope A's provide boost

By Chad Jennings  
cjennings@lohud.com

OAKLAND — Best way to change the story and forget about a losing streak? Get on a winning streak. And for the Yankees, there might be no better place to do that than Oakland.

Kicking off nine-game road trip, the Yankees walked into the Coliseum on Friday having won six straight games in that building. They'd won 10 of their past 11 on the road against the Athletics.

"I just think we've played well when we've played them," manager Joe Girardi said. "We've played pretty well out here as well. We've got to have that continue because you want to get on a roll, and that's one thing

## YANKEES BLOG

Stay up to date on the Yankees with The LoHud Yankees Blog at [yankees.lhblogs.com](http://yankees.lhblogs.com).

that's been hard for us to do this year."

A modest two consecutive wins leading into this road trip counted as the Yankees' longest winning "streak" since they won three in a row May 10-12, two weeks earlier. Since then, the Yankees have searched for consistency. They've searched for it in the rotation, and they've searched for it in the lineup, and by the time this road trip comes to an end, it will be June.

Hard to lean on the "it's early" excuse at this point.

"There's a lot of guys

that aren't off to the starts or haven't hit to what they're capable of doing to this point," Girardi said. "It necessarily hasn't been one guy. I think sometimes when it's one guy it's not as noticeable in a sense, because you're still scoring a lot of runs, but there's some guys that we really need to get going."

Nick Swisher has fallen into a deep slump this month. So has Mark Teixeira. Both have good career numbers against the Athletics.

"There's been some at-bats where I know we've expanded and done some things we shouldn't have done," hitting coach Kevin Long said. "At times our approach hasn't been good to certain guys, and at times it has. We just have

to be more consistent day in and day out."

Consistency has been a buzzword for these Yankees, and not in a good way. Early in the season, it was the rotation that struggled while the lineup stayed productive. Then the rotation got in a groove and the lineup struggled. Lately the rotation has been better, but with some inconsistencies, while the lineup has been atrocious with runners in scoring position.

Oddly enough, it's the bullpen — which has put two key relievers on the disabled list and is usually an inconsistent group even at the best of times — that's provided the most stability.

To find that sort of reliability throughout the roster, Oakland and Ana-

heim — where the Yankees go next — might be good places to start. Both are sub-.500 teams, with the lowest run totals in the American League. Their pitching staffs are good, but their unimpressive lineups might take some of the pressure off the Yankees' hitters.

The Yankees also have a three-game series in Detroit — middle of the pack at the plate and on the mound — before finally getting home next Monday.

"I think it's extremely important because we are going to be on the road a long time," Girardi said. "Get off to a good start. We talk about winning series, and to win the first series, I think it'll be helpful."

## The difference two games can make

Posted By [Chad Jennings](#) On May 25, 2012

During the season, all of my days off come when the Yankees are home. I pick those days ahead of time, usually a few weeks in advance, and there's always a chance I'm going to miss something significant. An injury. A pivotal game. A milestone achievement. Something might happen on a night I'm not working and I'll regret missing it.

This week, I was off on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Did I miss something significant?

On Tuesday, the Yankees got another strong pitching performance out of Phil Hughes and won despite scoring only three runs. The offense wasn't great, but the pitching staff picked up the slack, and that hasn't happened very often this season. On Wednesday, Alex Rodriguez hit two home runs and the Yankees scored more than seven runs for the third time since that Boston comeback on April 21. The lineup finally had a big night, and it needed one of those.

But I've seen Hughes pitched well in the past. I've seen this pitching staff carry the team to a win, I've seen A-Rod go deep twice in a game and I've seen this offense score a bunch of runs. Whether those two games really meant something depends entirely on what happens next. It depends on this team truly turning a corner. If they didn't, we'll forget about those two games by the end of the weekend.

My question is this: As the Yankees begin their first West Coast trip of the year, did those two games change the way you feel about the direction this team is heading?

**MLB.com**

## **Sabathia to duel former teammate Colon**

By Quinn Roberts / MLB.com | 5/26/2012 2:00 AM ET

Ready to show the Yankees just what they've been missing, A's right-hander Bartolo Colon will take the hill on Saturday against his former club for the first time at the Coliseum.

A starter for New York all of last season, in which he went 8-10 with a 4.00 ERA, Colon is 4-4 with a 4.09 ERA in his first season with the A's.

While Colon won three of his first four starts to begin the year, it took the righty five more outings before picking up another victory on Sunday against the Giants. Colon tossed five innings, surrendering two runs and striking out seven thanks to a dominant two-seam fastball.

"The pitch acts a little bit like a boomerang at times," A's manager Bob Melvin said. "That's his go-to pitch and everybody knows it's coming and it's still difficult to deal with because it's on the corner and a lot of times starts off the corner."

Colon will be up against Yankees ace CC Sabathia, who is trying to snap a two-game losing streak after starting the season 5-0.

He took a tough-luck loss on Sunday against the Reds, giving up three runs on six hits in seven innings after holding Cincinnati hitless through the first 15 batters he faced.

Sabathia will also look to get the Yankees off to a 2-0 start on their current nine-game road trip after a 6-3 win on Friday.

"I think it's extremely important to get off to a good start because we are going to be on the road a long time," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "We talk about winning series, and to win the first series, I think it'll be helpful."

### **Yankees: Girardi sticking with Martin**

- Even with Russell Martin struggling at the plate, Girardi has elected to stay with the second-year Bombers backstop.

So far this season, Martin is batting just .177 with four home runs and 10 RBIs in 39 games. However, he does have a .326 on-base percentage, something encouraging to Girardi.

"Russell's run into some bad luck," Girardi said. "The one thing Russell has done is he's gotten on base. When you look at his average and then you look at how much he's been on, it's really pretty incredible.

"If he was hitting normal, he'd probably have an on-base percentage over .400, but I've seen some good signs from him. He's hit some balls harder, and we know he's capable of doing more."

#### **A's: Inge expected to be back next week**

- Manager Bob Melvin reiterated on Friday that third baseman Brandon Inge should be able to come off the disabled list the first day he is eligible to be activated on Monday.

Inge, who's been on the DL since May 13 with a right groin strain, was sent to Triple-A Sacramento for a two-day rehab assignment beginning Friday. The plan was for Inge to play six innings for the River Cats on Friday and a full nine innings on Saturday.

He went 7-for-23 with four home runs and 16 RBIs in his last six games before landing on the DL, including a walk-off grand slam against the Blue Jays on May 8.

#### **Worth Noting**

- Yankees right-hander David Robertson played catch on Thursday in Tampa, Fla., and felt "pretty decent," according to manager Joe Girardi. Robertson had said that he hoped to join the Yankees in Detroit on June 1, but Girardi indicated that he was not sure that was going to happen.
- A's right-hander Brandon McCarthy (right shoulder) played catch for the first time since hitting the disabled list Friday, and manager Bob Melvin said, "He felt good."
- The Yankees have won seven straight games at Oakland Coliseum dating back to July 5, 2010.



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## First Pitch: From folk hero to enemy

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**Bartolo Colon** was the unlikeliest Yankee success story of 2011, a roly-poly 38-year-old with a mysteriously rebuilt arm who came out of nowhere firing 94 MPH heat on the corners for the first half of the season.

Bartolomania gripped Yankee Stadium every five days last year, and then, suddenly, it was over, the chubby little guy's effectiveness gone by September and no spot for him on the post-season roster in October. And during the pre-**Hiroki Kuroda/Michael Pineda** off-season, when the Yankees were pitching deprived, they made no effort to lure Bartolo back for one more try.

But Colon caught on with the Athletics, his eighth major league team in 15 seasons, and he had a great April, pitching eight innings in one-run ball against the Mariners in Tokyo in the second game of the season, and throwing two scoreless games, one of seven innigs against Seattle and another of eight innings against the Angels. At the end of the month, his ERA was 2.53.

But the decline that set in after the All-Star break last year has already shown signs of surfacing in Colon this year. He has lost 2 of 3 in May, his ERA has risen to 4.09, and in onbe of those starts, he couldn't even get out of the third inning.

So it will be interesting to see how Colon handles the Yankees today, and vice versa. It's not like it will be an emotional homecoming; at this point of his career, Colon is a pure mercenary and his demeanor last season was very much that of a hired gun.

And the last time the Yankees faced him, on July 6, 2007, the Yankees strafed him for seven runs in two innings when Colon was an LA Angel. His career record against the Yankees 4-5 with a 6.07 ERA in 12 career starts.

But when Colon is on, he is a tough day for just about anyone, and his last time out, a five-inning stint against the San Francisco Giants, was his best performance in a month. It is more than possible, maybe even likely, that Colon will pump himself up for a big game today.

**The Question:** Considering what the Yankees pitching staff has gone through this season, do you think it would have been worth it to take a chance on Bartolo one more time this season?



**Up Now:** A bevy of blog items from last night's 6-3 win, including **Ivan Nova's** gopher problem, **Mark Teixeira's** unconventional test of his bronchial passages, the hitting advice **Nick Swisher** got from his grandma, and how **Eric Chavez** instructed the Oakland fans on how to treat him for his homecoming.

**Coming soon:** Another fine What2Watch4, and blogs from the pre-game clubhouse, which opens at 12:30 p.m. New York time. **CC Sabathia** (5-2, 3.78) faces Colon in this afternoon's game, first pitch at 4:05 p.m.

**Question No. 2:** Even though the story has been debunked, do you think it would help or hurt the Yankees if **Hal Steinbrenner** decided to sell the team? Let us know, and as always, thanks for reading.

05/25/12 10:15 PM ET

## Yankees sticking by slumping catcher Martin

By Bryan Hoch / MLB.com

OAKLAND -- It is a familiar refrain from Joe Girardi, a defensive catcher himself during his playing days, that the Yankees manager would prefer to get stellar defense from his catcher than offense.

Still, the Yankees could use more punch from Russell Martin. The second-year Bombers backstop entered Friday's game batting just .173 with four homers and 10 RBIs in 38 games, but Girardi said that Martin's .321 on-base percentage is encouraging.

"Russell's run into some bad luck," Girardi said. "The one thing Russell has done is he's gotten on base. When you look at his average and then you look at how much he's been on, it's really pretty incredible.

"If he was hitting normal, he'd probably have an on-base percentage over .400, but I've seen some good signs from him. He's hit some balls harder, and we know he's capable of doing more."

Martin had a batting average of just .190 on balls in play (BABIP) entering play on Friday, by far the lowest mark of his career. He had a .252 BABIP last year for New York, hitting .237 with 18 homers and 57 RBIs.

### Nova starts for Yankees despite hamstring issue

OAKLAND -- Yankees right-hander Ivan Nova is battling a minor right hamstring issue, though it was not enough to place his start on Friday into jeopardy.

"It was a little tight. He's fine," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said. "There's no issue with that. He said he feels good and there's no issues."

Girardi said that Nova was able to do all of his work normally leading up to his start on Friday against the Athletics, and that the lingering bone bruise on his right foot may have caused a chain reaction of soreness in his leg.

"Sometimes when you have ailments in your lower extremities, you might walk a little different, run a little different," Girardi said. "That causes something to get sore. But he checked out fine."

### Bombers bits

- Yankees prospect Manny Banuelos was diagnosed with left elbow soreness, a relief to the organization. Ranked the club's No. 1 prospect by MLB.com this spring, Banuelos is on the Minor League disabled list with Triple-A Scranton/Wilkes-Barre.

- Yankees right-hander David Robertson played catch on Thursday in Tampa, Fla., and felt "pretty decent," according to manager Joe Girardi. Robertson had said that he hoped to join the Yankees in Detroit on June 1, but Girardi indicated that he was not sure that was going to happen. Outfielder Brett Gardner is also expected to try swinging a bat on Monday and is unlikely to be available before the Yankees return to New York.

- On this date in 1947, the Yankees defeated the Red Sox, 17-2, at Yankee Stadium to snap a streak of three consecutive shutout victories.

# Yankees confident with Soriano in ninth-inning role

By DAN MARTIN

*Last Updated: 11:57 AM, May 25, 2012*

*Posted: 12:27 AM, May 25, 2012*

Joe Girardi left open the possibility that Rafael Soriano could remain the team's closer even after David Robertson gets back.

The manager said on Wednesday he's "comfortable" bringing in the right-hander to finish games and it's clear to Soriano's teammates that he feels he belongs there in Mariano Rivera's absence.

"I think you feel a little extra intensity coming from him since he's taken over," said Russell Martin, who caught each of Soriano's last two saves. "That's the only thing I see. There's more conviction. He's comfortable and confident in that role. It's good for the team and I'm sure it's good for him."

Soriano figures to get tested on the Yankees' upcoming road trip, which begins tonight in Oakland. In a small sample size, the former Rays closer has done well in a similar role in The Bronx.

Since Robertson gave up four runs to the Rays on May 9 — which was just his second save opportunity after Rivera got hurt — Soriano has picked up three saves in four appearances.

In those four games, Soriano has given up one run in 3 1/3 innings, while striking out two and walking none. He's also held opponents to a .214 batting average.

And while Soriano had been better even prior to that than his disastrous 2011 season, he has improved even more lately, since in his first 12 games this year, although he struck out a dozen hitters, he also issued eight walks and allowed a .271 batting average (and .375 OBP).

The increased effectiveness hasn't been a surprise to many.

"His record speaks for itself," Curtis Granderson said. "He's shown he had to the ability to do it in the past and he's done it. He just hasn't had a chance to have the opportunity to do it on a consistent basis since he's been here."

But Rivera's torn ACL and Robertson's strained oblique — and inexperience in the role — may change that.

Girardi didn't make any guarantees — probably with good reason.

Robertson could return to action by next weekend in Detroit and a lot could change before then, since Soriano still hasn't shown he can succeed consistently as a Yankee.

His 45 saves in 2010 with Tampa Bay, though, mean something to Robinson Cano.

"It's good to have a guy that's been there before," the second baseman said. "He's faced tough situations and in the AL East. It's not like he didn't do it against good teams, so he knows what it takes to do it."

No matter how well he does, Soriano won't make anyone forget about Rivera and the ease with which he finished games.

Soriano gave up a run in his first save chance and on Tuesday, he was able to protect a one-run lead against the Royals only when Alex Rodriguez and Mark Teixeira combined on an strong defensive play to prevent the tying run from scoring from third.

Even if he doesn't make it easy, Soriano is back where he thinks he belongs.

"Whenever you've been a closer and done well, that's what you are," Boone Logan said. "This is what he's designed to do. He's been there and done it and has the track record to prove that he's a go-to guy. It's in his blood."



Saturday, May 26, 2012

## Swisher: Thanks, Grandma

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**Nick Swisher** spent much of the afternoon taking extra batting practice with hitting coach **Kevin Long**, but he said the best advice on hitting he ever got came from his grandmother, Betty.

"My grandma always said, 'Just hit the damn ball,'" Swisher said. "So that's what I tried to do."

Of course, **Betty Swisher** never told Nicky exactly how to go about doing that; she figured he could take care of that himself. And when A's starter **Tyson Ross** threw him a 3-2 fastball in the fifth inning, Swisher knew what to do with it, lining it the opposite way into the left-field seats, a two-run shot that knocked out Tyson and gave the Yankees a 6-1 lead. The HR was Swisher's 8th of the season and the two ribbies gave him back the team lead with 29.

The shot was even more impressive because earlier in the at-bat, Swisher fouled a ball off his right calf that left him hobbling around the clubhouse after the game with a large ice pack taped to it. Swisher batted once more after that --he struck out against **Jerry Blevins** in the seventh -- but said the ding would not affect him on Saturday.

"Can't hurt steel," he said.

Grandma Betty couldn't have said it any better.



NorthJersey.com

## Key stretch for Yankees

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 2012  
BY JEFF ROBERTS  
STAFF WRITER  
THE RECORD

The losing had to end before it went any further.

Andy Pettitte talked about it while standing in front of his locker following Wednesday night's 8-3 victory.

A few minutes later, Alex Rodriguez did the same thing.

The Yankees had lost six of seven games before taking two straight from the Kansas City Royals. And they said they needed those victories because tonight they begin what could be a season-defining nine-game, 10-day road trip in Oakland.

They will face the A's, Los Angeles Angels — and most likely ace Jered Weaver (6-1) — and the Detroit Tigers — and most likely ace Justin Verlander (5-2).

All three clubs are below .500, but the Angels and Tigers were among the preseason favorites in their divisions.

The trip offers an opportunity for the Yankees to gain ground on the American League East-leading Orioles. It also offers the same pitfalls all cross-country trips do, especially after the team's recent difficult stretch.

The Yankees play 15 of their next 21 games and 18 of their next 27 on the road.

But they left New York on Wednesday night on the right note against the Royals (17-26).

"[The wins] are important," Pettitte said. "West Coast road trips are usually tough, and we need to play well. That's all there is to it.

"You don't want to continue to struggle and be on a bad stretch [going out there], that's for sure."



Nothing had been for sure with the Yankees (23-21) in the nine games (2-7) heading into Tuesday. The stretch was sparked by a brutal team-wide slump at the plate in which the Yankees scored just 18 runs in the eight games prior to Wednesday's eight-run outburst.

That's why manager Joe Girardi and general manager Brian Cashman reportedly held a team meeting before Tuesday's 3-2 victory.

The message was low-key: Keep the difficult stretch in perspective. The brass believes in you.

But it was noteworthy simply because Cashman rarely addresses the team.

And maybe not-so-coincidentally, the Yankees won both games since.

The rough patch even motivated Rodriguez to address teammates after Monday's loss.

"It was one of the things I told the guys," he said. "Let's go out and win the next two and go to the West Coast and start playing good Yankee baseball. ...

"The one thing is don't underestimate this team. It's not our first rodeo."

But two wins against the inexperienced Royals doesn't mean all the Yankees' problems are solved.

The offense still managed only eight hits Wednesday against 22-year-old Will Smith — in his major-league debut — and the Royals' bullpen.

But the team is feeling good about itself — thanks to Rodriguez's two home runs Wednesday and another outstanding start by Pettitte — which was "real important" heading into Thursday's off-day, according to Girardi.

"We just got done playing 16 games in a row, and if it was worse than that [2-7 stretch] and you don't win a series, I think guys are just going to start thinking more about at-bats and pitches they made," he said.

"I think with a couple of wins in a row, they'll put that behind them and just relax."

And being on the road offers some advantages.

"It's a bonding time," Girardi said.



Friday, May 25, 2012

## D-jected: Troubling holes in Yanks' IF, OF

*"Our defense has been OK. We have had some guys who have been out of position. We have people, because of injury, playing places where they don't normally play. The balls that we get to, we are going to be really good at. I think our guys are very professional and they are going to do their job when they get to the ball."*

-- **Joe Girardi** prior to Wednesday's game against the Royals

Statistically speaking, the Yankees' defense doesn't rate as highly as Girardi's assessment, perhaps because they don't get to as many balls as they should.

### **Advanced Defensive Stats**

#### **Defensive Runs Saved**

\* Measures ability turn balls into outs

\* Other factors:

- Deterrent Value of Arm
- Double Play Defense
- Bunt Defense

\*Yankees: Rank 4th-worst in MLB

#### **Good Plays/Misplays**

\* Advanced scoring system based on video review

\* 30 categories of Good Plays (GFP)

\* 50 categories of Misplays (DM&E)

#### **Team Defensive Efficiency**

\* What % batted balls become outs

By most, if not all, of the advanced defensive metrics, the Yankees rate poorly relative to the other teams in the majors. And though 44 games does not provide enough data to make predictions for the

rest of the season, it does allow the ability to assess where some of the trouble spots lie.

We use a combination of measures via [Baseball Info Solutions](#), a company that provides defensive data to teams and media, as well as the Team Defensive Efficiency stat tracked at [Baseball Prospectus](#), and our own batted-ball data.

Those stats are explained in the charts to the right of this piece.

Let's look how the Yankees rate in a number of areas related to these stats.

### **Gold Glove candidacies for Teixeira, Cano?**

Two Yankees defenders are off to good starts this season-- **Mark Teixeira** and **Robinson Cano**. Each has saved the Yankees three runs this season, and plays like the game-ending stretch at first base and the Web Gem-worthy double play that Teixeira started in Wednesday's win help the statistical cause.

Teixeira ranks second in the majors in GFPs with 27, and his Good Play/Misplay Ratio is 5.4-to-1, the best among anyone in the AL. His offensive struggles and health issues have not hurt his play in the field.

Cano's strength has been in turning the double play as the pivot man. There have been 21 double-play chances in which Cano was the pivot man at second base. The Yankees have turned 17 of them, or 81 percent, the third-best pivot rate in the majors.

### **Grounded**

#### ***% Ground Balls Turned into Outs AL East Teams***

	<b>Hits/Errors Ground Balls</b>		
Blue Jays	102/17	597	80%
Red Sox	124/6	569	77%
Orioles	128/22	594	75%
Rays	138/21	543	71%
Yankees	135/12	491	70%

>>MLB Average: 75%

The Yankees' biggest defensive liability may be their inability to turn ground balls into outs.

Opponents have reached base 30 percent of the time when hitting a ground ball, whether by hit or

error.

The chart on the right shows how the Yankees' rate at turning grounders into outs, particularly compared to AL East teams.

Our data shows specifically that the Yankees are getting hurt by ground balls to the left of second base.

Derek Jeter, rates poorly, at -5 Defensive Runs Saved. Alex Rodriguez checks in as having cost the Yankees a run.

Jeter's issue is that a lot of ground balls have scooted through holes usually covered by a major league shortstop. He's made up for that with 11 GFPs and only 6 DM&E. His Good Play/Misplay rate is third-best among shortstops.

On the other hand, Rodriguez, who was one of the best-rated third basemen defensively last season, has only 4 GFPs and 6 DM&E. Last season Rodriguez fared much better, with a 26/17 GFP/DM&E tally.

### **Outfield Issues**

The Yankees miss **Brett Gardner**, whose play was Gold-Glove worthy last season, but they have other things to worry about in the outfield.

### ***New York Yankees***

#### ***Runs Saved by Position***

##### **MLB Rank**

P -10 Last

C 2 4th

1B 3 5th

2B 3 6th

SS -7 4th-worst

3B -2 11th-worst

LF -2 11th-worst

CF -5 3rd-worst

RF -6 3rd-worst

The primary one is that for the second straight season, **Curtis Granderson** and **Nick Swisher** are not rating well. Combined, they have -8 Defensive Runs Saved (in other words, their defense has cost the Yankees eight runs).

The primary culprit in their bad ratings is that they are yielding hits on balls hit over their heads. Our hit location data charts the Yankees as having allowed 58 batted balls to center field, and the two outfield gaps, that traveled an estimated 350 feet or more and stayed in the ballpark.

Yankees outfielders allowed 26 hits on those balls. The average major league team is allowing 20.

One of the other things that hurts Granderson is that runners have taken 20 extra bases on the 29 times they've had the opportunity to advance (ie: take a base on a sacrifice fly or go first to third/second to home on a single). That's out of line with the normal rate of advancement on Granderson's arm (about 50 percent).

Perhaps that, like some of the other things mentioned in this story, will correct in time. They are among those that bear watching over the next 4½ months.



## Former Yankee Chad Curtis charged with sexual misconduct

Published: Friday, May 25, 2012, 10:48 AM Updated: Friday, May 25, 2012, 11:00 AM



By **The Associated Press**

WOODLAND, Mich. — Former major league outfielder Chad Curtis has been charged with sexual misconduct after two teenage girls accused him of touching them at a Michigan high school where he volunteered.

A former Yankee, Curtis, 43, was arraigned Thursday at Barry County District Court on five counts of criminal sexual conduct and was freed after posting \$25,000 in cash on a \$250,000 bond, County Undersheriff Robert Baker said.

The charges are based on complaints from two teenage girls who are students at Lakewood High School, according to Barry County Prosecutor Tom Evans. He told WZZM-TV that he authorized the charges against Curtis.

Curtis was volunteering at the school in Woodland, about 50 miles southeast of Grand Rapids, and was in line to become the school's football coach before the accusations emerged.

David Dodge Sr., whose firm is representing Curtis, said he couldn't say much about the case except that Curtis "denies any criminal wrongdoing."

Between 1992 and 2001, Curtis played for the then-California Angels, Detroit Tigers, Los Angeles Dodgers, Cleveland Indians, Yankees and Texas Rangers. He won two World Series rings with the Yankees.



# DRAMA'S BREWING

## Expert: Roger's DNA on waste kept in beer can



As perjury trial of Roger Clemens (l.) concludes sixth week, he and attorney Rusty Hardin find forensic expert testifies that medical waste Clemens' former trainer, Brian McNamee, turned over to government — some of which he stored in Miller Lite can — contains traces of the former Yankee pitcher's DNA.  
Photos by Elisa Miller and AP

BY NATHANIEL VINTON  
NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

WASHINGTON — If there is a "smoking gun" in the Roger Clemens perjury trial, jurors saw it Friday during a day-long review of DNA testing that identified traces of the pitcher's cells on and within a collection of steroid-laced medical waste.

Among the items tested was a needle used for intramuscular injections that was shown to contain what was probably Clemens' genetic material within the barrel of the needle — the evidence that may end up getting him in the end.

The results of the tests may be damning for Clemens, but one of his attorneys seemed to find wiggle room during cross-examination of government witness Alan Keel, the seasoned DNA analyst from a private laboratory in California who performed the tests.

"I would expect to find this profile unique to only one person that has ever lived on the planet," Keel said several times in testimony about DNA profiles he extracted from the waste, which Clemens' former trainer, Brian McNamee, turned over to the feds in 2008.

Keel spent all day on the witness stand describing his forensic examination of a needle, tissues, blood-stained gauze and cotton balls that McNamee says he saved in 2001. Keel revealed that he found DNA of both Clemens and McNamee on the

items, and left it for lawyers on each side to battle over the implications.

There were cotton balls stained with Clemens' blood, Keel said of one that there was a 1 in-173 trillion chance that another randomly selected Caucasian American would produce the same genetic markers.

But perhaps the most critical item was a needle that Keel flushed with a solution, dislodging cell debris that he said was compatible to a sample Clemens gave to federal agents in 2008 for comparison. Keel said he found just a tiny amount of material — six to 12 cells — and calculated the probability of another match at 1 in 449.

"Is there any way to fake this?" assistant U.S. Attorney Courtney Saleski asked Keel.

Keel answered no, adding that the amount of genetic material within the needle was so small that he believed no one could ever have fabricated it, an idea that the Clemens defense team has been putting before the jury throughout the six-week trial.

"In my opinion," Keel said, "it would be

virtually impossible for someone to have left only the trace amount of material by design."

On cross-examination, Clemens defense attorney Michael Attanasio referred repeatedly to the Miller Lite beer can that McNamee stuffed some of the medical waste into before secreting it to his Queens basement in 2001. Medical waste from other players was stored alongside the waste.

Attanasio asked if there could be a better environment for cross-contamination than the sloshing mix of beer, steroids and DNA at the bottom of a discarded beer can. He got Keel to admit that drinking from a beer can could leave a deposit of cells on the mouth of a can.

McNamee has testified that he saved the medical waste in 2001 after injecting Clemens with steroids. He turned it over to federal agents in January of 2008, and the government used private and public labs to analyze the materials. Previous scientific witnesses in the trial found traces of anabolic steroids on the materials.

Attanasio asked hypothetical questions

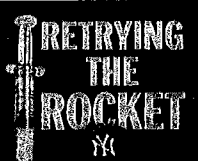
that had McNamee collecting the can after someone drank from it, collecting cotton balls after a person cut themselves shaving, and positing that Clemens could have bled from a blister he received from throwing fastballs.

Attanasio quizzed Keel about the funding of his lab, Forensic Science Associates, which does a wide range of DNA analysis that is often used in criminal cases, both for prosecutors and defense lawyers.

Jurors were attentive, judging by about 20 follow-up questions they asked at the conclusion of Keel's testimony. They have been hearing about the waste throughout the trial, over which U.S. District Court Judge Reggie Walton presides. (One juror is likely to be replaced by an alternate next week after learning at the end of the day Friday that her mother had died.)

On Tuesday, jurors will hear from two more government witnesses: Anthony Corso and Erik Prokorak. Corso, who hired McNamee as his personal trainer in 2003, is expected to say McNamee told him in 2005 about saving the waste (denying the implied defense theory that McNamee created the waste after getting snagged in a drug-distribution probe in 2007).

Prokorak is a forensics specialist from the FBI who specializes in DNA. He is expected to clarify some of the remaining mysteries of the medical waste.



For blow-by-blow coverage of the Roger Clemens perjury trial, follow @NYDNSportsTeam on Twitter.com today and throughout the rest of the trial.

# EXPERT: CLEMENS' DNA FOUND

BY JIM BAUMBACH  
AND TOM BRUNE

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WASHINGTON — A forensic analyst testified in the Roger Clemens trial Friday that he found the former Yankees pitcher's DNA on one needle and two cotton balls that his accuser Brian McNamee says he saved after a steroid injection in 2001.

Alan Keel, a DNA expert at Fo-

rensic Analytical Sciences, said his tests found Clemens' DNA on two cotton balls from inside the beer can in which McNamee said he stashed evidence, and he also found DNA compatible with Clemens' on a needle top from outside the can.

Clemens attorney Michael Attanasio challenged the findings, asking Keel why he didn't test certain pieces of evidence and calling the results of the DNA testing on the needle "weak," much weaker than the results that found Clemens' DNA on the cotton balls.

Jurors showed a keen interest in Keel's testimony, which took all day Friday, and at the end submitted many questions for him on technical DNA issues, the possibility of manufacturing the DNA evidence and his ties

to prosecutors.

On the witness stand for the second day, Keel said under questioning by Assistant U.S. Attorney Courtney Saleski that the evidence of Clemens' DNA on the cotton balls was indisputable, calling it "unique to only one person who lived on the planet."

But Keel said that in the needle, he only found six to 12 cells, a very small amount of biological material. The DNA results left a 1-in-449 chance among American Caucasians that Clemens' DNA is unique.

That's compared to the 1-in-15.4 trillion and 1-in-173 trillion probabilities on the cotton balls.

The smaller trace of Clemens' DNA on the needle is not indicative that it had been planted there, Keel said, because it



Forensic evidence is "unique" to Clemens, an expert testified.

would be more difficult to produce that kind of small result.

"Is there any way to fake this?" Saleski asked.

"No," Keel said.

Attanasio emphasized Keel's

finding that 1 in almost 450 people would match the seven markers in the test that found Clemens' DNA on the needle. Keel agreed that as a result, hundreds of thousands of people in this country might possibly match those seven markers.

Attanasio raised the possibility that the items could have been cross-contaminated by other items after being placed in a beer can with leftover beer or saliva, and then being "jostled" inside the FedEx box that held the can and other material for seven years.

Saleski responded with her own hypothetical: that the needle with Clemens' DNA had somehow slipped out of the beer can, which had been dry and didn't transfer blood or other biological materials among the items.

## Expert: DNA Rocket match

*Last Updated:* 4:01 AM, May 26, 2012

*Posted:* 2:55 AM, May 26, 2012

WASHINGTON — A needle stored with a beer can appeared to contain an extremely tiny amount of Roger Clemens' DNA, which turned out to be good news and bad news for both sides in the perjury trial of the seven-time Cy Young Award winner.

A forensic scientist yesterday linked Clemens to cotton balls and a syringe needle saved from an alleged steroids injection 11 years ago. His testimony, laced with statistics and probabilities, was one of the last pieces of the government's case in its effort to prove the former Yankees pitcher lied to Congress in 2008 when he denied using performance-enhancing substances.

Under cross-examination, Clemens' lawyer got the expert to acknowledge there were "hundreds of thousands" of white males in the United States who could be a match for the scant amount of DNA found on the needle, and it's "conceivable" the cotton balls were contaminated by beer and saliva.

Prosecutors had hoped to wrap up their case heading into the long holiday weekend as the trial reached the end of its sixth week, but the DNA expert's testimony took much longer than expected. U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton ended the session early when a juror learned her mother had died.

The judge said he doesn't expect the juror, a woman who works in law enforcement with the local public transportation authority, to return. Two jurors have previously been dismissed for sleeping, and another departure would leave only one alternate.

The government's key witness, longtime Clemens strength coach Brian McNamee, says he injected Clemens with steroids in 1998, 2000 and 2001 and with human growth hormone in 2000. He said he kept the needle and other waste from a 2001 injection in and around a beer can for more than six years before turning it over to federal investigators.

Alan Keel of Forensic Science Associates told jurors the DNA found on two cotton balls was "unique to one person who has ever lived on the planet" — Clemens. He said one of the cotton balls had a random match possibility of one in 15.4 trillion for Clemens' DNA, and the other was one in 173 trillion.

NorthJersey.com

## Expert says DNA on medical waste matched Roger Clemens'

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 2012 LAST UPDATED: FRIDAY MAY 25, 2012, 8:38 PM  
BY FREDERIC J. FROMMER  
ASSOCIATED PRESS  
THE RECORD

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WASHINGTON — A forensic scientist testified Friday that two cotton balls and a syringe needle allegedly saved after a steroids injection tested positive for Roger Clemens' DNA, a key moment as the government tries to prove the former pitcher used performance-enhancing drugs.

Alan Keel told jurors that the DNA on both cotton ball matches were "unique to one person who has ever lived on the planet" — Clemens. He said that one of the cotton balls had a random match possibility of one in 15.4 trillion for Clemens' DNA, and the other had one in 173 trillion, when comparing to the population of white people in the U.S.

The needle was not as conclusive, because Keel was only able to get a handful of cells. That match was one in 449.

Brian McNamee, Clemens' former strength coach, earlier testified he collected the medical waste after injecting the pitcher with steroids in 2001, and turned them over to federal authorities in 2008. Earlier government witnesses testified that steroids were found on the medical waste.

Clemens is accused of lying to Congress in 2008 when he denied using performance-enhancing drugs.

The government hopes that Clemens' DNA — which helped make him one of the most successful pitchers in baseball history — will help them convict him of a federal crime.

While Keel's testimony was a milestone moment for the government, the defense indicated early on it wouldn't contest that the needle had both steroids and Clemens' DNA on it. But Clemens' lawyer Rusty Hardin said in his opening statement that the defense will contend that McNamee put the steroids in the needle after injecting Clemens and that the coach in fact had used the needle to inject Clemens with vitamin B12. Clemens has maintained for years that he received B12 shots and the local anesthetic lidocaine but not performance-enhancing drugs.

Prosecutor Courtney Saleski tried to pre-empt that by asking Keel if there was any way to "fake this."

Keel said no.

"If this were contrived, I would expect to obtain much more biological material," he said — in other words, it would be hard to fake a sample with such a small amount of biological material on it.

The gauze pad, meanwhile, matched McNamee's DNA, to an even greater probability than Clemens did for the cotton balls. Keel said that the match was 1 in 1.8 quintillion people for white Americans. A quintillion has 18 zeroes in it.

During cross-examination, Clemens lawyer Michael Attanasio tried to suggest the possibility of contamination in the items McNamee saved.

But Keel said that if there were contamination, he would have expected to find McNamee's DNA on the needle. But he found only found Clemens'.

Attanasio suspended his cross-examination for the lunch break and planned to finish it Friday afternoon.

Also Friday, U.S. District Judge Reggie Walton said he would have a hearing on Monday, June 4, to discuss the defense subpoena for the testimony of Rep. Darrell Issa, chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. That committee held the congressional hearing that Clemens testified before in 2008. Issa, a California Republican, was not chairman at the time, but he participated in the congressional deposition of Clemens and criticized the panel, then run by Democrats, for having the hearing on steroids in baseball.

Issa and the committee have filed a motion to quash subpoenas for the congressman and for committee documents. They argue the subpoenas are barred by the Constitution's speech or debate clause, which protects elected officials from being questioned in a lawsuit about their legislative work.

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AP Sports Writer Joseph White contributed to this report.



## BASEBALL

## ESSAY

# If Tradition Holds, Hope and Wit Will Shower the Mets' Stadium in Sheets

By GREG W. PRINCE

The long march of Mets history resumes Sunday after a 16-year break, as Banner Day materializes anew before the club's 1:10 matinee game against the San Diego Padres. If precedent is a reliable indicator, paint will be spilled, linens will be ruined and at least a few people will have something clever to say.

Stretching from the twilight of the Mets' Manhattan origins in September 1963 to the end of their Dallas Green period in August 1996, Banner Day was the quintessential Mets promotion, a tradition for a franchise that often seems uncomfortable acknowledging it has them.

There was no declaration that Banner Day would be discontinued, nor does it appear that the last of the marchers directed through Shea Stadium's center-field gate wound up lost in the infamous auto yards across the street and never re-emerged, thus taking Banner Day with them. No, like the regular wearing of Mets pinstriped uniforms with blue Mets caps and the annual celebration of Old-Timers' Day, Banner Day was simply allowed to flutter away.

Now it is back, for the team's 50th-anniversary season (even if Mets alumni continue to be invited home only in low-key dribs and drabs). The procession that will briefly occupy Citi Field on Sunday was officially sanctioned after enough fans lobbied for its revival, an echo of how the first banner event came to be 49 years ago.

Back then, free expression, bedsheet style, had taken over the Polo Grounds with sentiments that could be simultaneously enthusiastic and sardonic: "We Don't Want to Set the World on Fire, We Just Want to Finish Ninth."

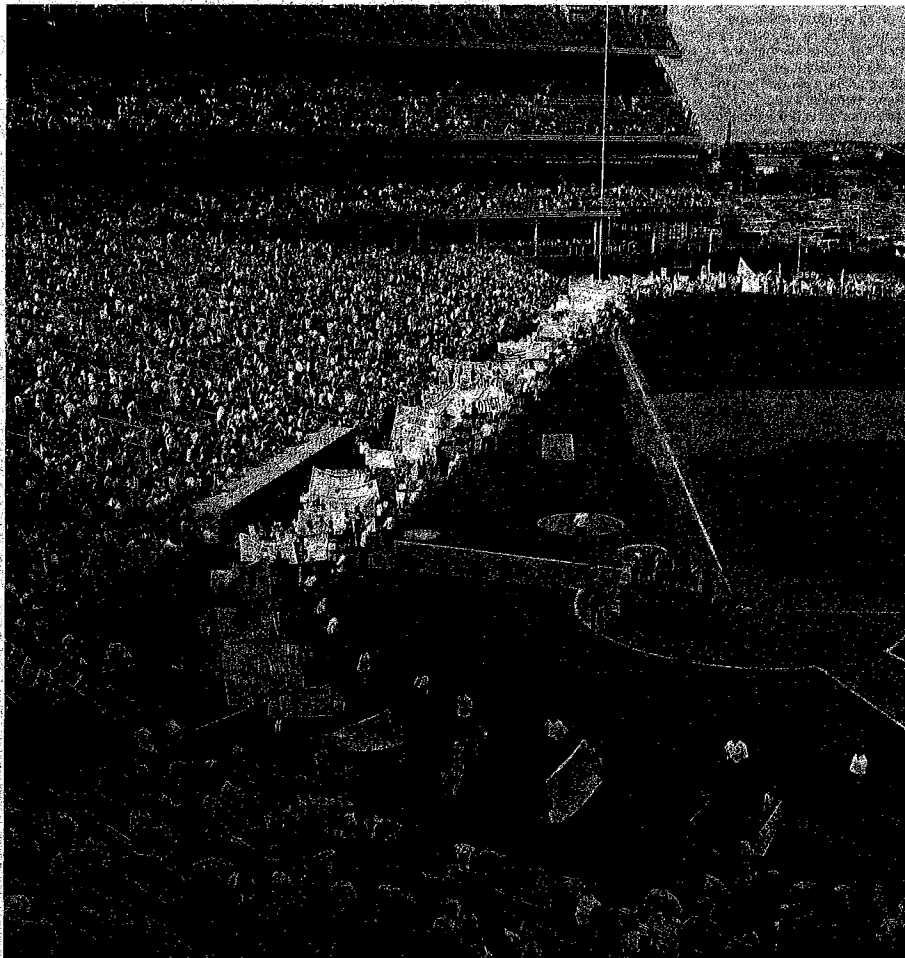
Mets management was briefly befuddled until it sportingly got out in front of the metaphorical parade and annually invited its sloganeering public down to the field between games of a doubleheader to unfurl its thoughts and compete for supposedly valuable prizes.

But the shiny objects awarded were secondary to the chance for Mets fans to say with water colors what they had been feeling in their hearts, despite what sometimes got stuck in their craws.

And as for those emotions, well, it was easy enough in the giddy summer of 1969 to do what one Banner Day participant did and draw an astronaut and predict the Mets would "put the pennant on the moon." And why not draw a box of "Gooden Plenty" in the mid-1980s to celebrate the exploits of the Mets ace?

But all those titillating seasons when being a Mets fan required real fortitude? That's what put the real wild behind Banner Day.

One Banner Day sample from one of those hapless years illustrated to me what incredibly hopeful souls we Mets fans tend to be, amid all the grumbling and frustration. It was July 8, 1979, also a Sunday, also against the



On Banner Day at Shea Stadium in August 1968, fans paraded their handiwork for judging by a panel near home plate.

Padres. The Mets had lost Friday night in 12 innings (despite loading the bases with nobody out in the 11th; yes, I was there), then lost Saturday afternoon, 11-3.

They thus entered their Sunday doubleheader in last place with a 32-46 record, 16 games out

of first. Lee Mazzilli's impending All-Star heroics notwithstanding, there was nothing to suggest the Mets were not what their record told us they were.

Yet on Channel 9, I saw streams of fans demonstrating that they did not care. On their

banners, the Mets were tops, or just a couple of sharp player moves away from getting there. The one banner that stood out for me, probably because I liked the dance ditty of the moment that inspired it, declared, "Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now!" From what I could divine, whoever printed it didn't mean "stoppin' us from finishing in the cellar for a third consecutive season."

(Four days later, White Sox fans rioted at Comiskey Park's only Disco Demolition Night. Some fan bases do better with fan participation than others.)

When I finally saw the Banner Day phenomenon in person, it was during the fiasco season of 1993, when the Mets would finish at 59-103. By then, scheduled doubleheaders were generally extinct and the parade had been relegated to pregame status.

These were sour times at Shea, with the club sunk to seventh in a seven-team N.L. East and players detonating firecrackers, squirting bleach and evincing general misanthropy. I don't remember what the banners I witnessed that August afternoon said exactly, but I clearly remember what they didn't say. I kept waiting for "Jeff Kent

Can't," "Anthony Young Is Prematurely Old" or "Chico Walker Should Take a Hike," but such hostility was not in evidence, as far as I could tell. Instead, it was lots of love and lots of hope for a team unlikely to engender either.

For sure, irreverence has been part of Banner Day; sarcasm has sneaked in, too. But there was always a celebratory nature to the event that overwhelmed whatever misery and miasma afflicted the fan base in a given season. To go to the trouble of creating banners, schlepping them, lining up and waiting, sometimes interminably — one year there was an 18-inning first game of a Banner Day doubleheader — requires more devotion than anger.

Which brings us to the 2012 Mets, who are far more likable and competent than that 1993 bunch, although no one is seriously expecting this group to shoot a National League pennant into space in October. Still, when I am watching the banners go by on Sunday at Citi, I fully expect an array of upbeat communiqués, and certainly no blank bedsheets.

After all, the last thing a true Mets fan would wave is a white flag.

## Freedom of Expression, but Only Partly

The resumption of Banner Day on Sunday comes with a proviso: the Mets reserve the right to deny access to the parade to anyone deemed to have an inappropriate banner.

But just what is inappropriate? Foul language is obviously prohibited, but what about a banner that pokes fun at the Mets because of their entanglement with Bernard L. Madoff or their inability to resign Jose Reyes? Would those be considered inappropriate, too?

Dave Howard, the Mets' executive vice president for business operations, declined to provide specific examples Friday. "We'll know it when

we see it," he said of banners that might potentially be ruled out of bounds.

Whatever banners fans decide to bring, they will need tickets to the game to participate in the event. Those who intend to take part must check in at the Bullpen Plaza at 126th Street and 37th Avenue. Registration begins at 10 a.m.

Dwight Gooden, Rusty Staub and the broadcaster Howie Rose are among the judges who will select three finalists. The overall winner will be picked by fans at home and at Citi Field, via texting, Twitter and Facebook.

(NYT)

Greg W. Prince blogs about the Mets at the Web site *Faith and Fear in Flushing*. His coming book series, "The Happiest Recap," chronicles the "500 most Amazing wins" of the Mets' first half-century.



# FOXSports.com

## Rays skipper Maddon has the 'it' factor

**KEN  
ROSENTHAL**  
UPDATED MAY 25, 2012 5:54 PM ET



### BOSTON

He is the “it” manager in baseball, the most innovative, most interesting and one of the most successful.

### GREAT AMERICAN RACE

The Junior Circuit is poised for **epic AL pennant chases** this season.

The **Rays'** Joe Maddon writes lineups with obscure journeymen batting cleanup. Builds quality bullpens with unheralded relievers. Shifts his infielders with such manic zeal, it's as if he can't stand to see the same defensive alignment twice.

Yet, for all his mad-scientist tendencies, Maddon is one of the most normal managers you'll ever meet, taking baseball only so seriously, pursuing cycling and other interests, working to build a community center to unite the white and Hispanic communities in his hometown of Hazelton, Pa.

And oh yes, he also fancies themed road trips — the latest of which was the “Ken Rosenthal/Nerd” trip to Boston for this weekend's series against the Red Sox (MLB on Fox, Saturday, 7:15 p.m. ET).

The Rays not only wore bow ties and made a contribution to BowTie Cause — the non-profit company that supplies me with bow ties to raise awareness for various charities and organizations — but several players also donned suspenders, skinny jeans and odd-shaped glasses.

Can you imagine the **Yankees** doing such a thing?

### THIS WEEK'S BOW TIE

See what charity this represents, see **the bow ties** Rosenthal has worn and learn **about BowTie Cause**.

The Rays lose players to free agency. They lose 'em to injury. They annually field one of the game's lowest payrolls. Yet, playing in arguably the sport's toughest division, they have made the playoffs in three of the past four years, and would qualify again if the season ended today.

The front office, led by general manager Andrew Friedman, might be the biggest reason the team remains elite. But Maddon, the American League Manager of the Year in 2008 and '11, not only implements the front office's vision, but also applies his own unique philosophies.

Maddon, 58, is the kind of guy you'd like to sit down with in a bar to talk a little baseball, a little life. We didn't hit a bar on Thursday night, though that probably would have been his preference. Instead, we sat down on a couch in the Rays' hotel lobby. I turned on the tape recorder and off Maddon went.

### **Why the themed road trips?**

Before dressing as nerds, the Rays had gone all-black in tribute to the late Johnny Cash on one trip and staged a pajama party on another, and those were only two of Maddon's inspired ideas. "It's team-building," Maddon says. "It's a camaraderie component. There's also a certain amount of risk-taking where people dress in a manner they wouldn't normally dress and feel slightly uncomfortable. They walk into a hotel lobby and there's a camera in their face and they have to react to it. I like that uncomfortable moment.

"Beyond that, I think it's fun. And beyond that, I'm poking fun at the group that insists on wearing \$3,000 suits on chartered airplanes. I've never understood how that related to winning in any way, shape or form.

"I believe this: There is a lot of discipline to be derived from freedom. When you are working with a highly professional, motivated group that is accountable, the more freedom you give that group, the more discipline you're going to get in return."

### **Drew Sutton hitting fourth? Really?**

Sutton, 28, was traded twice on Sunday — first from the Braves to the Pirates, then from the Pirates to the Rays. At that point, the switch-hitting infielder had appeared in 86 games in the majors, 799 in the minors.

The Rays promoted Sutton immediately to replace the injured **Jeff Keppinger**, and Maddon inserted him in the cleanup spot on Wednesday against Jays lefty **Ricky Romero**.

### **COSTUME BALL**

Joe Maddon's Tampa Bay Rays are known for **wild, themed road trips**.

"Honestly, among the guys that we had, he was the best suited to make contact after (Matt) Joyce," Maddon says. "If the first three guys were to get on base, I felt against that pitcher, Romero, that he'd have the best chance to move the baseball — period.

"**Luke Scott** (a left-handed hitter who batted fifth) would have been a little bit more difficult. Although I like the lefties against (Romero), he probably would have chosen to not really give Luke anything to

hit where he felt more comfortable coming after Sutton. And Sutton has had a history of being better against lefties than righties.

“Furthermore, watching Sutton the day before (in his Rays debut), I liked the way his whole approach was. Without getting too technical, he just really followed the ball well. And he has had a history of looking over a pitch. He doesn’t expand the strike zone. All those different reasons came into it.”

Naturally, Sutton went 2-for-4 with a double and three RBI in the Rays’ 5-4 victory in 11 innings.

### **But doesn’t Maddon worry that people think he’s nuts?**

“No. Not at all,” Maddon says. “It’s about trying to do what I think is the right thing on that particular day.”

Ten Rays currently are on the disabled list, including third baseman **Evan Longoria** and left fielder **Desmond Jennings**.

“We’re banged up,” Maddon says. “We have a lot of things going on right now. Where people are confused by it, to me it makes all the sense in the world. It’s not taking a leap of faith at all.

“The thing that I have working to my advantage sometimes is that I’ve had the chance to work in the minor leagues for as long as I did (Prior to joining the Rays, Maddon spent 31 years with the **Angels** organization, joining the major-league staff in 1996. He was the Angels bench coach for most of his final 10 seasons in Anaheim including the last six — 2000 to 2005 — under Manager Mike Scioscia).

“I had a chance to apply a whole bunch of different things based on situations. All this stuff, I’ve done it. You have to be creative in the minor leagues. There are all kinds of crazy things going on. You have to do things a little bit differently, based on personnel, based on injuries, guys that you’ve lost (to higher levels).

“For me, a lot of this stuff that people think is unusual, I’ve tried in a different venue. More people are watching right now. But that doesn’t prevent me from wanting to do it.”

### **Why all the defensive shifts?**

“That’s something I always did with the Angels back in the day, being in charge of the defense with more rudimentary data,” Maddon says. “But the more advanced stuff we’re doing now is driven by data we’re receiving from our advance scouting. I think our advance scouting is the best.

## **BRAINS AND BRAWN**

Only about 4 percent of **MLB players are college grads**. See who's at the top of the class in baseball.

"It's a nice morphing of ideas. When I got this job (in November 2005), these are the things I wanted to do. Playing four outfielders a couple of years ago, Andrew (Friedman) and the boys were all on board with that. So now we've become more sophisticated regarding how we set this up."

Is it fair to say that the Rays have taken it to another level this season?

"It's fair to say. We've done different things," Maddon says. "People talk about beating the shift. It happens so infrequently and sometimes when a hitter chooses to do that, it actually works to your benefit."

"We take all that into consideration. People may say, 'You have **Carlos Pena** bunt, etc.' But we have different ways of looking at it from an offensive perspective. We do it at certain times, again based on statistical stuff."

**OK, but would he do the same things if he managed the Yankees?**

"Yes and no," Maddon says. "If you're managing the Yankees, you have more of a set lineup. So from an offensive perspective, the awkward lineups . . . probably not. They've been pretty set with that. But from a defensive perspective, absolutely. From a bullpen perspective, absolutely. None of that would change."

"People want to discuss lineups. It's whether you have the finances to purchase that kind of a batting order, or if you develop it, then be able to maintain it and not have it leave you. But to me, (the lineup) is the least interesting part of the whole thing, anyway. The most interesting is your defense and your pitching and your bullpen."

**OK, what about the bullpen?**

"I've always liked a formulaic approach," Maddon says. "I've always recognized reverse splits (left-handed pitchers who can get out right-handed hitters, and vice versa). I've always recognized groundball pitchers vs. flyball pitchers. Our scouting department gives me more specifics so I can make more informed decisions as opposed to what I thought I was seeing."

"I still believe the guy who is able to get the last three outs of a game, if he is able to do that on a year-by-year basis, is invaluable — i.e., **Mariano Rivera**, (Jonathan) Papelbon. They make managing the first eight innings so much easier."



"If you have that guy, you could divvy up the outs you need in the sixth, seventh and eighth much more openly, or without any concern. You know the ninth inning is being taken care of. That's why I will never underestimate the importance of a solid ninth-inning reliever, a closer.

"Prior to that, it's about the leveraged moment. And that should be based on how your relievers match up against that part of the batting order."

### **OK, what about life? How difficult is it to stay balanced?**

"It's important for me to create that balance. I believe in balance," Maddon says. "If you want to go off on one direction solely, I think at some point burnout does occur, a part of your existence is going to suffer.

### **WHAT'S YOUR HOBBY?**

See what baseball players enjoy **doing in their downtime**.

"I really believe by being so balanced it permits me to think like I think on the dugout or field. And furthermore, I've always had varied interests. It would be so boring to be nailed down to one thing, my occupation and that's it.

"Every person, every human should be about more balance in their lives. I'm talking about family, religion, occupation, interests — whether it's reading, riding a bicycle, charity, whatever it might be. You need to create balance.

"To run away from that, to just say I'm the first one at the ballpark and the last one to leave, I was that person for a while and then I stopped. It was too much. It wasn't good for me."

He seems to have it figured out, all of it.

More fun awaits, this weekend at Fenway.

## High-scoring Blue Jays sending mixed signals

### Back end of rotation a concern, but hitting can make up for it

By Matthew Leach / MLB.com

As the Blue Jays prepare for a three-game weekend series against the world-beating Rangers in Arlington, it's worth noting that quietly Toronto is enjoying a solid season in the game's toughest division. If the season ended now, the Blue Jays would actually be in the postseason for the first time since they won the World Series in 1993.

Of course, the season doesn't end for another four months or so, raising the question of whether they can keep it up. And the answer, as nearly always, is maybe. Toronto's offense has been opportunistic but still has room to be more productive, while the team's pitching staff may be headed for something of a fall.

The Blue Jays' offense makes little sense from most angles, but ultimately it adds up. Sort of.

The most noteworthy aspect of Toronto's hitting performance is its timing. The Blue Jays have an overall team batting line of .241/.310/.408 (batting average/on-base percentage/slugging percentage), for a pedestrian OPS of .718 that ranks eighth in the American League. Weighted on-base average (wOBA) and Baseball Prospectus' True Average (TAv), two measures of overall offensive performance, both rank them as a middle-of-the-pack offense. The Blue Jays are sixth in the league in each metric.

And yet in the one number that truly matters, they're doing great. They are third in the AL in runs scored. And it's largely a matter of when the hits have come. With runners in scoring position, the Blue Jays have been exceptional. Their composite batting line in RISP situations is .286/.356/.462, the .818 OPS ranking third in the AL.

Normally, you'd think that was a performance bound to normalize. Teams and players can't simply choose to hit better in big situations. But in Toronto's case, it might be the overall numbers that move to match the performance in the clutch.

That's because many more Blue Jays hitters have underperformed than overperformed. The only player who can really be said to have exceeded expectations is Edwin Encarnacion. Meanwhile, Brett Lawrie, Yunel Escobar, Colby Rasmus and of course Jose Bautista have put up lesser numbers than any reasonable projection would have forecast.

Add that with an overall team BABIP (batting average on balls in play) of .267, second lowest in the Majors, and there's very good reason to think that the Toronto lineup has more room to improve than to fall off.

It will need to, because the Blue Jays' pitching does appear to be bound for regression. In some of the same ways as the Toronto offense, the club's pitching has benefited from some exquisite timing.

While the Blue Jays' team strikeout-to-walk ratio is second-to-last in the league, and they've allowed the third-most homers in the AL, the team's ERA stands a solid sixth. That's not especially sustainable.

The Jays are a very solid defensive team, so not all of their .260 BABIP allowed is luck. But some of it is, and that number is likely to normalize. Meanwhile, the team's strand rate, an indication of how many baserunners are being kept from scoring, is the best in the AL at 77.1 percent. That's another number that you can expect to seek its level on a low-strikeout pitching staff.



Brandon Morrow has long been expected to deliver on his promise, as he's doing in 2012, and Ricky Romero will probably in fact improve. But the back of the rotation may be pitching on borrowed time. Kyle Drabek has a nice strikeout rate but is walking far too many batters, while Henderson Alvarez is doing the opposite -- not walking batters, but not striking them out either.

Both pitchers have artificially low ERAs thanks in part to low BABIPs, and both can be expected to come back to earth a bit. That doesn't mean they can't be effective, but neither is likely to remain in the low 3.00s in ERA for the rest of the year.

So overall, odds are that Toronto's finished product on the pitching side will look a little worse as the year goes on. But if the hitters can step forward as it appears they might, perhaps the Jays can grab a playoff spot, even in the brutal AL East.

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## Sources: Jones, O's near megadeal

**FOX Sports Ken Rosenthal and Jon Paul Morosi**

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UPDATED MAY 25, 2012 11:47 PM

The **Orioles**, building on their early-season momentum, are close to signing center fielder **Adam Jones** to a club-record contract extension, major-league sources say.

### CASH COWS

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The deal, according to one source, will be “well north” of the two largest deals in team history — Miguel Tejada’s six-year, \$72 million free-agent deal and **Nick Markakis’** six-year, \$66.1 million extension.

Jones, 26, is eligible for free agency after next season. He has emerged as a leader, offensive centerpiece and defensive stalwart for the Orioles, who entered Friday with a 28-17 record, the best in the American League.

The signing of Jones is almost certain to be well-received in Baltimore, where the Orioles are trying to end their streak of 14 consecutive losing seasons.

Jones is among the league leaders in several offensive categories. He ranks fourth with a .958 OPS, is tied for second with 14 homers and also is tied for eighth with 29 RBI.



## Joe Lemire > INSIDE BASEBALL

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### Royals' Moustakas leading charge of rising sophomores

Before his first game in the Bronx, Royals third baseman Mike Moustakas walked out beyond the centerfield fence and visited Monument Park. He soaked in the history, read the remembrances of the all-time great players and took note of the plaques celebrating the legacy of George Steinbrenner and commemorating the tragedy of 9/11.

"I know it's not the old Yankee Stadium," he said, "but it's still Yankee Stadium."

None of the players he grew up watching had their careers cast in bronze yet, in part because Moustakas is only 23 and one of the players he most remembers -- Derek Jeter -- was in the opposing dugout, still an active player.

That evening Moustakas, batting cleanup, homered off the rightfield foul pole in his first at bat, barely a year after his teammate, Eric Hosmer, became the youngest player to homer at new Yankee Stadium at the age of 21 years and 199 days. That was the first home run of the first baseman's big league career. The next night he hit his second, and Hosmer's breakout debut season was underway.

Last year, Hosmer and Moustakas, Kansas City's top two hitting prospects, had divergent rookie campaigns. Hosmer batted .293 with 19 home runs and a .799 OPS in 128 games, reinforcing everyone's projections of greatness. Moustakas, on the other hand, was batting as low as .182 on Aug. 16; only a furious six-week rally to end the season raised his average to .263, but he still hit only five home runs in 89 games.

In 2012, however, their roles have reversed. Hosmer, now 22, is batting just .191, though he seems to have suffered significant bad luck -- his batting average on balls in play is also .191, more than 100 points below the league average -- and has had an encouraging week; he is 6-for-18 since taking a two-day hiatus to clear his head, including a three-hit game against the Yankees on Wednesday night.

Moustakas is hitting .279, which may only be 16 points better than last year, but his power has returned. The one-time minor league home run leader -- he hit 36 split between Double-A and Triple-

A in 2010 -- has already hit seven in 2012. He's slugging .497, three points behind the Tigers' Miguel Cabrera for best among AL third baseman, and his OPS is .830, second behind Cabrera's .847.

If there's a lesson to be gleaned, it's the volatility of a young player's first few seasons. Whether it's the so-called sophomore jinx or a rapid refinement with experience, the peaks and valleys are more pronounced early on.

"Thinking about it, I was 22, 23 years old playing major league baseball with the best pitchers in the world and against the best competition in the world," Moustakas said. "All that stuff's going to come. I was just worried about getting comfortable, getting my feet wet and figuring out how things operate."

That included learning the rigors of major league travel and its long six-month schedule. More importantly, Moustakas had 365 plate appearances against big league pitchers, allowing him to adjust to their new plans of attack -- pounding him inside, for instance, or pitching backwards in counts (like using offspeed pitches in fastball counts).

Early last August Kansas City manager Ned Yost kept Moustakas out of the lineup for two days -- similar to the tactic used last week with Hosmer -- and allowed him and hitting coach Kevin Seitzer to get to work. Among the changes was getting Moose not to do too much with his front side, which he was leaning on to generate power, yet making him vulnerable on offspeed pitches.

Moustakas heeded the advice and from that point on he hit .379 (53-for-140) with four of his five home runs. Including the first part of the 2012 season, Moustakas has hit .328 since last Aug. 17, the ninth-best average in baseball.

"When you start struggling in baseball, you start making adjustments," Moustakas said. "Sometimes the adjustments aren't the right ones to make. I started making adjustments here and there that weren't good. It kind of went downhill, and then I started to make adjustments after that instead of just going back to what I know worked."

Moustakas had, in the words of Seitzer, "accomplished everything that he had needed to accomplish in the minor leagues." Therefore, despite his struggles, there was little to be gained by a demotion, especially when the Royals weren't in contention and stood to benefit more from the young player receiving steady playing time. And his end-of-year surge gave him a confidence boost into the offseason.

"It helped a lot," he said. "I went through a rough time, but I was able to battle back and get out of that slump. My teammates were huge in that. They came up to me every day and said, 'You're doing all right. Things are going to be okay.' It was every day. I believed it. At some point you have to start believing it."

Over the winter Moustakas also sought the counsel of his uncle, Tom Robson, who was a hitting coach alongside manager Bobby Valentine with the Rangers, Mets and Chiba Lotte in Japan. (Robson also was the hitting coach with the Reds.) Robson worked with Moustakas on techniques that had made him so successful in Double A and even earlier in his career -- and, again, now.

Moustakas isn't the only second-year player whose fortunes have changed this year. Here are four more who are enjoying much better seasons than they had as rookies:

### **Jose Altuve, Astros 2B**

Houston's 5'5" second baseman hit for a respectable average last year (.276) but drew only five walks in 234 plate appearances -- or one every 46.8 PAs, the majors' second-worst rate among players who

batted at least that many times -- and had only 13 extra-base hits. In only 182 plate appearances in 2012, however, he's exceeded both totals, having walked 13 times (one every 14 PAs) and having smacked 15 extra-base hits while improving his average to .309.

### **Andy Dirks, Tigers LF**

Dirks struggled in his first taste of big-league action last year, batting .251 with a .296 on-base percentage while playing a utility outfield role. This season, however, he has received steady at bats in leftfield and the Tigers' decision to give him consistent playing time has paid off: He's batting .321 with a .904 OPS that is 201 points higher than his was last year and 165 points higher than the .739 league average for the position.

### **Kyle Drabek, Blue Jays SP**

As the top prospect acquired in Toronto's trade of Roy Halladay to Philadelphia in Dec. 2009 and the son of former Cy Young winner Doug Drabek, Kyle Drabek understandably arrived with considerable hype. Yet he was just 4-8 with a 5.83 ERA in his first 95 2/3 big league innings in 2010 and '11. He was no sure bet to crack the Opening Day rotation this spring but won the job in training camp and hasn't looked back. Drabek is 4-4 with a 3.27 ERA in 52 1/3 innings over nine starts. In only two outings has he allowed more than two runs.

### **Josh Reddick, Athletics RF**

In 125 plate appearances in 2009 and '10 Reddick had a paltry .182/.208/.331 line with the Red Sox, numbers that rose to .280/.327/.457 with seven homers in 278 PAs in 2011, which was officially his rookie year. While trades to Oakland and its cavernous ballpark rarely unleash a player's latent power, Reddick has packed a considerable punch since joining the Athletics, hitting 11 homers in 43 games and doing so at roughly the same rate home or away. (He has five HRs in 20 home games and six HRs in 23 road games.) His overall line is .272/.337/.527 and his .864 OPS ranks first on the team.





05/26/12 12:30 AM ET

## Led by impressive arms, Nats no novelty

By Mike Bauman / MLB.com

ATLANTA -- The question typically posed at this time of the year for a surprise contender like the Washington Nationals is: "Can they hold up over the long haul?"

The more accurately phrased question for the 2012 Nationals might well be: "With pitching like this, why wouldn't they hold up over the long haul?"

The novelty value of the Nationals having, for instance, the second-best record in the National League is wearing off. The fact that they are in first place in the NL East after 45 games, also has lost its shock effect. And this is, after all, the NL's toughest neighborhood.

The Nationals beat the Atlanta Braves Friday night, 7-4, moving their record to 27-18, an even .600. The Braves, banged up and losers of five straight, are not operating at their peak right now. And they would need to be closer to that peak just to take a series from a team with the kind of pitching like Washington's.

Chipper Jones, the face of the Braves and a future Hall of Famer, a credible fellow in other words, lavished praise on the Nationals' pitching staff Friday. But there wasn't anything he said that seemed at all overstated or excessive.

Jones said that Stephen Strasburg is one of the most talented pitchers he has ever faced, suggesting that Strasburg is a "hybrid," a mixture of "a Kerry Wood in his prime and Justin Verlander."

But this is much bigger than one pitcher, even when that pitcher is Stephen Strasburg.

"They have five guys that have established themselves as the best starting staff in the game," Jones said of the Nationals. "They have the best starting five in the game -- no doubt. They have power at the top of the rotation. They have power all the way through. All their guys throw 94 to 98, sometimes 100 [mph]."

"Their bullpen is nothing to sneeze at. They have some good quality lefty-righty arms. The reason they have been able to sustain their level of play through all their injuries to their everyday players is the fact their pitchers keep them in the game, night in and night out. That's the right formula."

The statistics back Jones' claims. Coming into the weekend, the Nationals' pitching staff led the Major Leagues in team ERA, starters' ERA, strikeouts, batting average against, fewest hits per nine innings, WHIP, fewest baserunners allowed per nine innings, OPS against and fielding-independent pitching.

It is getting a little late to consider this kind of performance as some sort of early-season aberration, some kind of staff-wide fluke.

Friday night, in a contest between the top two teams in the NL East, the Nationals had what for them was a pitching issue. The Nationals struck quickly for four runs in the first off Tim Hudson, one of the top pitchers on Atlanta's staff, or any staff for that matter.

But Washington starter Ross Detwiler was not finding the strike zone with enough consistency, and when Detwiler hit 100 pitches with one out in the fifth, Nationals manager Davey Johnson pulled him, two outs short of qualifying for the



victory. Johnson acknowledged that he had grown frustrated watching Detwiler not attack the strike zone with enough aggressiveness.

"Det' has been outstanding," Johnson said. "He's got a great arm, great stuff. But that was especially difficult for me."

On another staff, Detwiler's 3.88 ERA could make him the No. 2 starter. Here, with Strasburg (2.21), Gio Gonzalez, (1.98), Jordan Zimmermann (2.47) and Edwin Jackson (3.38), Detwiler is fifth of five.

When he was relieved by Chien-Ming Wang, just off the disabled list, the thought occurred that, should Detwiler continue to struggle, Wang might eventually turn into Detwiler's replacement in the rotation. Detwiler has been off his best form in his last three starts and this was his shortest start of the season. Wang picked up the victory, giving up one run in three innings. Wang twice won 19 games for the Yankees earlier in his career and when he is right he has a heavy, effective sinker. But Johnson wasn't giving questions about a change in the rotation any immediate credence.

The more lasting concern for the Nationals would be scoring runs. They came into the weekend ranked 13th in the NL in runs scored. They have reasonable hope of becoming better as they become healthier. The Nats have a large presence on the disabled list, but their cleanup hitter, Mike Morse, who suffered a lat strain, is expected back in early June.

Still, this is a pitching-first operation. If the young and exceptionally talented Nationals' rotation can continue to be as extraordinary as it has been over the first fourth of the season, there isn't any reason to expect that this team is somehow going to evaporate.



05/23/12 10:18 PM ET

## What do we know as Memorial Day nears?

### Aside from Rangers, contenders all have question marks

By Peter Gammons / MLB.com

We know, barring plague or pestilence, that the Texas Rangers are going to play in the postseason.

Many have written the assumption that the Orioles' first-place standing at the season's one-quarter mark will never hold, and it may well be correct to assume that the Twins, Royals, Padres and Rockies are already in too deep -- the fact that the Padres have already used 41 players, including the five Minor League free-agent pitchers currently on their pitching staff, makes their active roster worth less than \$30 million.

But otherwise, what *do* we know? The lead story in last Sunday's Boston Globe was about the embarrassment of the "last-place Red Sox," the morning after they won a gut-wrenching game in Philadelphia against the similarly last-place Phillies.

When the Red Sox finished a three-city road trip (and 20 games in 20 days), Boston was a game in the loss column behind that day's final Wild Card team, the Toronto Blue Jays. The Red Sox had nearly \$70 million invested in players who were on the disabled list, which they've used 15 times, while the American League East-leading Orioles and Rays had 10 players on the DL.

"Most of us have no idea what we're going to look like until the middle of July," said Orioles manager Buck Showalter. "I know we don't."

"Other than the Rangers, who does know what they have or what they're eventually going to need?" asked Indians general manager Chris Antonetti.

"I don't ever remember a season in which so little was clear a quarter of the way into the season," said the Reds' esteemed veteran GM, Walt Jocketty."

It is a very good year to have the postseason expanded, since nearly halfway to the Trade Deadline, at least two-thirds of the teams in the two leagues can justifiably argue that the final playoff position could be visible on the horizon on Labor Day, which could mean that only 7-10 teams will be able to justify to their fans selling at the Deadline.

"Those who are sellers will likely be able to extract more than usual, because there will be less on the market and more teams trying to improve," said one National League general manager. "This year, we've seen the importance of keeping players healthy. Look, the Rangers are really good, but when Neftali Feliz hurt his elbow this week, the Rangers had only had to use 25 players and had never had to use the disabled list."

Several general managers believe that health, Triple-A depth, deep pockets and returning players may determine more in the final two weeks than the usual Deadline acquisitions.

Much was made of the Indians' collapse last season after their strong start, but whether one prefers Wins Above Replacement, Value Above Replacement Player or whatever, the fact is that the team Cleveland put on the field the last 3 1/2 months was worth several fewer wins than the lineup that, when healthy, was leading the AL Central.

Do we yet have any real sense of what the Yankees and Red Sox are, as they hover around the .500 mark? Are the Yankees aging, or are they simply in a team funk? Will they get David Robertson back healthy, and what will Andy Pettitte turn out to be?

Now that Alfredo Aceves is up to fourth in the league in saves (with three four-plus-out saves, thrice the number of the runner up), how does anyone know what the Red Sox will be come midseason -- when they have Jacoby Ellsbury, Carl Crawford and Ryan Kalish healthy, rather than the Che-Hsuan Lin/Marlon Byrd/Daniel Nava outfield they ran out this week? And what will they be if Clay Buchholz figures it out?

We may know that the Blue Jays will always be good and competitive, but what if they get the left-handed bats of Colby Rasmus and Adam Lind going, and Sergio Santos is healthy and closing?

As for the Orioles, Showalter went to see Brian Roberts play in a rehab game Wednesday night. What if Brian Matusz is close to what he was on Tuesday and Zach Britton comes back?

So what happens in the AL Central if the Indians, already third in the league in quality starts, get more consistency out of Justin Masterson and Ubaldo Jimenez, and Grady Sizemore contributes?

Chris Perez has become an elite closer, perhaps better than what the Tigers have closing, and asking Masterson and Jimenez for consistency may not be asking for more than what the Tigers are asking of Rick Porcello and Max Scherzer. Porcello's stuff Tuesday was several ticks up from last season, and Scherzer is coming off a 15 swing-and-miss strikeout performance, so there is hope. By the way, the White Sox were the only team in the Central to begin the day with a positive run differential and have the pitching -- watch Addison Reed -- to hang.

Oh, yes. There is no way Albert Pujols won't hit -- short of a serious injury -- and that the Angels won't get hot. How hot will depend on defining the bullpen, getting Dan Haren rolling, getting Torii Hunter back and keeping Mike Trout and Mark Trumbo in the lineup every day.

It's the same with the NL. We won't know who and what the Phillies are until they get Chase Utley and Ryan Howard back, and Jimmy Rollins jumps back to being a lot more than a .295 on-base percentage guy.

Not only did the Marlins win 16 of their first 21 games in May, as Giancarlo Stanton's knee started getting healthy, but one now wonders what they will be if Josh Johnson, Jose Reyes, Heath Bell, Hanley Ramirez, Logan Morrison, Gaby Sanchez and Chris Coghlan all play as they can.

The Braves' Brian McCann and Jason Heyward are capable of monster finishes. What are the Nationals if they have Ryan Zimmerman healthy, get Jayson Werth back in August and both Drew Storen and Brad Lidge are healthy for three months? And with the way Terry Collins has molded the Mets, what happens if Johan Santana has a 15-start run and Jason Bay and Ike Davis hit for three months? The Mets are better than anyone thought in March and are capable of getting better.

We've seen the Reds start to move, with Homer Bailey and Mike Leake getting going. They have to see if Todd Frazier can hit and play third base, or whether future Hall of Famer Scott Rolen can play again. But if Nick Masset and Bill Bray return to what could be a tremendous bullpen, then manager Dusty Baker can decide whether or not Aroldis Chapman can close the entire season, or whether they want to put him in the rotation the final six weeks.

Can the Dodgers continue at this rate without an acquisition or two? Arizona may have been 11 1/2 games out on the morning of May 23, but where will the D-backs be if they get Ian Kennedy and Daniel Hudson on a roll, with Wade Miley and Joe Saunders, and Justin Upton puts up a four-month Most Valuable Player surge?

Honestly, we know very little right now.

"The Rangers are the best team in baseball, we know that," said a GM. "They're in. If the Giants and Rockies keep struggling, the Dodgers are probably in. I think everyone in the game believes the Rays will get into the postseason because of their pitching and the culture Joe Maddon has built. But I will make the argument that if Ellsbury, Crawford, [Kevin] Youkilis and Buchholz come back, that the Red Sox could be the second-best team in the American League. Or that the Nationals, Reds or Marlins could go into September the three best teams in the National League."

This is more like a "Perry Mason" rerun. We don't need to know whodunit -- or will do it -- before Memorial Day.

## Transactions - May 25

Previous

### ■ David Pauley - RP - Angels

Angels sent RHP David Pauley outright to Triple-A Salt Lake.

Pauley was designated for assignment Thursday but has cleared waivers and will remain in the organization. The 28-year-old posted a 4.82 ERA and 1.93 WHIP over four games with the Halos earlier this month.

May. 25 - 1:50 p.m. ET

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### ■ Gaby Hernandez - SP - Diamondbacks

Diamondbacks signed RHP Gaby Hernandez to a minor league contract.

Hernandez had been pitching in the Frontier League. He'll be assigned to Triple-A Reno, where he posted a 5.97 ERA in 15 starts last season.

May. 25 - 10:17 a.m. ET

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### ■ Miguel Montero - C - Diamondbacks

Jon Paul Morosi of FOXSports.com reports that the Diamondbacks and Miguel Montero have agreed on a five-year, \$60 million contract extension.

The deal is expected to be made official at a press conference Saturday. Montero was due to hit free agency this offseason, but he'll now be locked up through the 2017 season. The 28-year-old backstop is off to a bit of a slow start this year, but the Diamondbacks clearly didn't want to risk losing one of the better offensive catchers in the game.

May. 25 - 7:06 p.m. ET

Source: Jon Paul Morosi on Twitter

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### ■ Ronny Paulino - C - Orioles

Orioles recalled C Ronny Paulino from Triple-A Norfolk.

He'll take Luis Exposito's spot as Matt Wieters' backup. Paulino was sent down earlier this month despite hitting .300 over 30 at-bats with the O's. He returns after batting .283/.313/.391 at Norfolk.

May. 25 - 3:25 p.m. ET

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### ■ Luis Exposito - C - Orioles

Orioles optioned C Luis Exposito to Triple-A Norfolk.

Exposito managed just one hit in 17 at-bats as Matt Wieters' backup. He's replaced on the roster by Ronny Paulino.

May. 25 - 3:26 p.m. ET

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### ■ Bill Hall - DH - Orioles

Orioles designated INF-OF Bill Hall for assignment.



Hall's playing time with the O's was limited, as he had two hits -- including a homer -- over just seven at-bats covering two weeks. He should clear waivers, but it remains to be seen if he'll accept a Triple-A assignment.  
May. 25 - 3:40 p.m. ET

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■ **Stuart Pomeranz - RP - Orioles**

Orioles recalled RHP Stuart Pomeranz from Triple-A Norfolk.

Pomeranz tossed four scoreless innings for the O's earlier this month before being sent packing. He'll work in middle relief.  
May. 25 - 3:42 p.m. ET

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■ **Diory Hernandez - 3B - Cubs**

Cubs signed INF Diory Hernandez to a minor league contract.

Hernandez was released by the Astros Wednesday after batting just .159/.240/.159 over 50 plate appearances. He'll provide depth at Triple-A Iowa.  
May. 25 - 10:19 a.m. ET

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■ **Zach McAllister - SP - Indians**

Indians optioned RHP Zach McAllister to Triple-A Buffalo.

McAllister has fared well in his chances with the Tribe this season, holding a 3.96 ERA, 1.24 WHIP and 22/6 K/BB ratio across 25 innings, but he's no longer needed with Josh Tomlin ready to return from the DL.  
May. 25 - 12:28 p.m. ET

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■ **Juan Diaz - SS - Indians**

Indians recalled INF Juan Diaz from Double-A Akron.

Diaz was batting just .232/.280/.348 with three homers at Akron. He'll provide infield depth.  
May. 25 - 12:30 p.m. ET

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■ **Wil Nieves - C - Rockies**

Rockies purchased the contract of C Wil Nieves from Triple-A Colorado Springs.

He'll take the place of the injured Ramon Hernandez (hand) on the active roster and should split playing time with rookie Wilin Rosario in the short-term. Nieves, 34, owns a lousy .221/.268/.289 batting line in the big leagues and can be ignored in fantasy leagues.  
May. 25 - 5:05 p.m. ET

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■ **Hector Gomez - SS - Rockies**

Rockies transferred INF Hector Gomez from the 15-day disabled list to the 60-day disabled list.

The move clears a spot for Wil Nieves on the 40-man roster. Gomez hasn't played all season due to a groin injury.  
May. 25 - 5:07 p.m. ET

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### ■ John Danks - SP - White Sox

White Sox placed LHP John Danks on the 15-day disabled list, retroactive to May 20, with a sore left shoulder.

The move announced Thursday and has not become official. Danks is dealing with soreness behind his left shoulder, and although he hopes to return in early June, it's no sure thing. Jose Quintana has been called up and will take Danks' spot in the rotation Friday.

May. 25 - 2:21 p.m. ET

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### ■ Jose Quintana - SP - White Sox

White Sox recalled LHP Jose Quintana from Double-A Birmingham.

Quintana made his major league debut on May 8 against the Indians by pitching 5 2/3 innings of shutout relief in the first game of a doubleheader. He'll start on Friday against the Indians. The 23-year-old southpaw has a solid 2.77 ERA and 41/14 K/BB ratio in 48 2/3 innings over nine starts at the Double-A level this year, but we'd hold off using him in fantasy leagues.

May. 25 - 2:23 p.m. ET

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### ■ Ryan Raburn - OF - Tigers

Tigers activated Ryan Raburn from the bereavement list.

Raburn was away from the team for a few days following the death of his grandmother. He is batting just .144/.213/.216 in 34 games this year for Detroit.

May. 25 - 1:13 p.m. ET

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### ■ Luis Marte - RP - Tigers

Tigers activated RHP Luis Marte from the 15-day disabled list.

Marte had been slated to be part of the team's Opening Day bullpen before suffering a hamstring injury late in spring training. He's healthy now and will work in middle relief.

May. 25 - 9:27 a.m. ET

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### ■ Austin Jackson - OF - Tigers

Tigers placed OF Austin Jackson on the 15-day disabled list, retroactive to May 17, with an abdominal strain.

Jackson doesn't sound confident that he'll be better anytime soon. "When I tried it in batting practice a couple of days ago," he said, "it didn't feel any better, and since then, I haven't done much except rest. I have to get a closer look at it to see if there's anything slowing the progress down." We should have a better idea how long Jackson will be sidelined following Friday's MRI.

May. 25 - 9:32 a.m. ET

Source: Detroit News

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### ■ Dan Jennings - RP - Marlins

Marlins recalled LHP Dan Jennings from Triple-A New Orleans.

He'll take the place of Mike Dunn on the active roster. Jennings, who had a brief stint with the big club in late April, has a solid 0.95 ERA and 17/5 K/BB ratio over 19 innings at the Triple-A level this year. Look for him in middle relief.

May. 25 - 5:13 p.m. ET

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■ **Jerry Hairston Jr. - 3B - Dodgers**

Dodgers activated INF Jerry Hairston, Jr. from the 15-day disabled list.

Hairston will start at third base and bat fifth Friday night against the Astros. The veteran infielder has been on the 15-day disabled list since May 7 with a strained left hamstring. No word yet on the corresponding roster move.

May. 25 - 6:39 p.m. ET

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■ **Justin Sellers - SS - Dodgers**

Dodgers placed INF Justin Sellers on the 15-day disabled list, retroactive to May 23, with a bulging disc in lower back.

Sellers was scratched from Wednesday's lineup with what was described as back stiffness, but he's obviously dealing with something more serious. Jerry Hairston, Jr. is back from the disabled list and will take his spot on the active roster.

May. 25 - 6:54 p.m. ET